

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Haemonius illas contulit pestes Athos, 720  
 has Pindus ingens, illa Pangaei iugis  
 teneram cruenta falce deposuit comam ;  
 has aluit altum gurgitem Tigris premens,  
 Danuvius illas, has per arentes plagas  
 tepidis Hydaspes gemmifer currens aquis,  
 nomenque terris qui dedit Baetis suis  
 Hesperia pulsans maria languenti vado.  
 haec passa ferrum est, dum parat Phoebus diem ;  
 illius alta nocte succisus frutex ;  
 at huius ungue secta cantato seges. 730

Mortifera carpit gramina ac serpentium  
 saniem exprimit miscetque et obscenas aves  
 maestique cor bubonis et raucae strigis  
 exsecta vivae viscera. haec scelerum artifex  
 discreta ponit ; his rapax vis ignium,  
 his gelida pigri frigoris glacies inest.  
 addit venenis verba non illis minus  
 metuenda.—sonuit ecce vesano gradu  
 canitque. mundus vocibus primis tremit.

MEDEA

Comprecor vulgus silentum vosque ferales deos 740  
 et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,  
 Tartari ripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus.<sup>1</sup>  
 supplicis, animae, remissis currite ad thalamos novos :  
 rota resistat membra torquens, tangat Ixion humum,  
 Tantalus securus undas hauriat Pirenidas. 745

<sup>1</sup> *Peifer puts full stop after domum, and corrects ligatae squalido : M specu | supplicis . . .*

## MEDEA

roots—all these she handles. Haemonian Athos contributed those baneful herbs, these, mighty Pindus; on the ridges of Pangaeus that plant was lopped of its tender foliage with a bloody sickle; these Tigris fed, checking his deep flood the while; the Danube, those; these, gem-studded Hydaspes, flowing with warm waters through thirsty tracts, and the Baetis, which gave its name to its own country,<sup>1</sup> pushing into the western sea with languorous flood. These plants felt the knife while Phoebus was making ready the day; the shoot of that was clipped at midnight; while this was severed by finger-nail with muttered charm.

<sup>731</sup> She seizes death-dealing herbs, squeezes out serpents' venom, and with these mingles unclean birds, the heart of a boding owl, and a hoarse screech-owl's vitals cut out alive. Other objects the mistress of evil arts lays out, arranged in separate heaps; in some is the ravening power of fire; in others numbing frost's icy cold. She adds to her poisons words, no less fearsome than they.—But listen, her frenzied step has sounded, and she chants her incantations. All nature shudders as she begins her song.

[*Enter MEDEA, singing an incantation.*]

### MEDEA

I supplicate the throng of the silent, and you, funereal gods, murky Chaos and shadowy Dis' dark dwelling-place, the abysses of dismal Death, girt by the banks of Tartarus. Leaving your punishments, ye ghosts, haste to the new nuptials; let the wheel stop that is whirling his body, and Ixion stand on earth; let Tantalus in peace drink his fill of the

<sup>1</sup> Provincia Baetica, in Spain.

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vos quoque, urnis quas foratis inritus ludit labor, 748  
 Danaides, coite : vestras hic dies quaerit manus. 749  
 gravior uni poena sedeat coniugis socero mei : 746  
 lubricus per saxa retro Sisyphum volvat lapis.<sup>1</sup> 747  
 Nunc meis vocata sacris, noctium sidus, veni 750  
 pessimos induta vultus, fronte non una minax.

Tibi more gentis vinculo solvens comam  
 secreta nudo nemora lustravi pede  
 et evocavi nubibus siccis aquas  
 egique ad imum maria, et Oceanus graves  
 interius undas aestibus victis dedit ;  
 pariterque mundus lege confusa aetheris  
 et solem et astra vidit, et vetitum mare  
 tetigistis, ursae. temporum flexi vices :  
 aestiva tellus floruit cantu meo, 760  
 coacta messem vidit hibernam Ceres ;  
 violenta Phasis vertit in fontem vada  
 et Hister, in tot ora divisus, truces  
 compressit undas omnibus ripis piger.  
 sonuere fluctus, tumuit insanum mare  
 tacente vento ; nemoris antiqui domus  
 amisit umbras, vocis imperio meae  
 die reducto ; Phoebus in medio stetit  
 Hyadesque nostris cantibus motae labant :  
 adesse sacris tempus est, Phoebe, tuis. 770

<sup>1</sup> The transposed order of ll. 746-749 is Bothe's: Richter follows this: Leo, the traditional order.

## MEDEA

Pirenian spring. You, too, whom a fruitless toil mocks with urns full of holes, ye Danaids, come hither: this day needs your hands. On one alone, my lord's new father, let a penalty rest heavier—let the slippery stone roll Sisyphus<sup>1</sup> backward 'o'er the rocks.

<sup>750</sup> Now, summoned by my sacred rites, do thou,<sup>2</sup> orb of the night, put on thy most evil face and come, threatening in all thy forms.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>752</sup> For thee, loosing my hair from its bands after the manner of my people, with bare feet have I trod the secret groves and called forth rain from the dry clouds; I have driven the seas back to their lowest depths, and the Ocean, his tides outdone, has sent his crushing waves farther into the land; and in like manner, with heaven's law confounded, the world has seen both sun and stars together, and you, ye bears, have bathed in the forbidden sea.<sup>4</sup> The order of the seasons have I changed: the summer land has blossomed 'neath my magic song, and by my compelling Ceres has seen harvest in winter-time; swift Phasis has turned his waters backward to their source, and Hister, divided into many mouths, has checked his boisterous streams and flowed sluggishly in all his beds. The waves have roared, the mad sea swelled, though the winds were still; the heart of the ancient woods has lost its shadows, when the bright day has come back to them at commandment of my voice; Phoebus has halted in mid-heaven, and the Hyades, moved by my incantations, totter to their fall. The hour is at hand, O Phoebe, for thy sacred rites.

[*She offers various gifts to HECATE.*]

<sup>1</sup> Sisyphus was father of Creon, and he alone is not to be relieved of his toil. This toil is even to be increased, and so bring greater anguish to Creon.

<sup>2</sup> Hecate as the moon-goddess.

<sup>3</sup> Hecate is *triformis*, *triceps*. <sup>4</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Bears."



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Tibi haec cruenta sarta texuntur manu,  
 novena quae serpens ligat,  
 tibi haec Typhoeus membra quae discors tulit,  
 qui regna concussit Iovis.  
 vectoris istic perfidi sanguis inest,  
 quem Nessus expirans dedit.  
 Oetaeus isto cinere defecit rogas,  
 qui virus Herculeum bibit.  
 piaie sororis, impiae matris, facem  
 ultricis Althaeae vides. 780  
 reliquit istas invio plumas specu  
 Harpyia, dum Zeten fugit.  
 his adice pinnas sauciae Stymphalidos  
 Lernaesa passae spicula.  
 sonuistis, arae, tripodas agnosco meos  
 favente commotos dea.

Video Triviae currus agiles,  
 non quos pleno lucida vultu  
 pernox agitat, sed quos facie  
 lurida maesta, cum Thessalicis  
 vexata minis caelum freno 790  
 propiore legit. sic face tristem  
 pallida lucem funde per auras,  
 horrore novo terre populos  
 inque auxilium, Dictynna, tuum  
 pretiosa sonent aera Corinthi.  
 tibi sanguineo caespite sacrum  
 sollemne damus, tibi de medio  
 rapta sepulchro fax nocturnos  
 sustulit ignes, tibi mota caput 800  
 flexa voces cervice dedi,  
 tibi funereo de more iacens  
 passos cingit vitta capillos,

## MEDEA

771 To thee I offer these wreaths wrought with bloody hands, each entwined with nine serpent coils; to thee, these serpent limbs which rebellious Typhoeus wore, who caused Jove's throne to tremble. In this is the blood which Nessus, that traitor ferryman, bestowed as he expired. With these ashes the pyre on Oeta sank down which drank in the poisoned blood of Hercules. Here thou seest the billet<sup>1</sup> of a pious sister but impious mother, Althaea, the avenger. These feathers the Harpy left in her trackless lair when she fled from Zetes. Add to these the quills of the wounded Stymphalian bird which felt the darts of Lerna.<sup>2</sup>—You have given forth your voice, ye altars; I see my tripods shaken by the favouring deity.

787 I see Trivia's swift gliding car, not as when, radiant, with full face, she drives the livelong night, but as when, ghastly, with mournful aspect, harried by Thessalian threats, she skirts with nearer rein the edge of heaven. So do thou wanly shed from thy torch a gloomy light through air; terrify the peoples with new dread, and let precious Corinthian bronzes resound, Dictynna, to thy aid.<sup>3</sup> To thee on the altar's bloody turf we perform thy solemn rites; to thee a torch caught up from the midst of a funeral pyre has illumed the night; to thee, tossing my head and with bended neck, I have uttered my magic words; for thee a fillet, lying in funeral fashion, binds my flowing locks; to thee is brandished the gloomy

<sup>1</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Althaea."

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* the arrows of Hercules, poisoned with the gall of the Lernaean hydra.

<sup>3</sup> The moon in eclipse was supposed to be suffering under the spell of magic, which spell might be removed by beating on brazen vessels and by making other loud noises.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tibi iactatur tristis Stygia  
 ramus ab unda, tibi nudato  
 pectore maenas sacro feriam  
 brachia cultro. manet noster  
 sanguis ad aras; assuesce, manus,  
 stringere ferrum carosque pati  
 posse cruores—sacrum laticem  
 percussa dedi. 810

Quodsi nimium saepe vocari  
 quereris votis, ignosce precor;  
 causa vocandi, Persei, tuos  
 saepius arcus una atque eadem est  
 semper, Iason.

Tu nunc vestes tinge Creusae,  
 quas cum primum sumpserit, imas  
 urat serpens flamma medullas.  
 ignis fulvo clusus in auro 820  
 latet obscurus, quem mihi caeli  
 qui furta luit viscere feto  
 dedit et docuit condere vires  
 arte, Prometheus. dedit et tenui  
 sulphure tectos Mulciber ignes,  
 et vivacis fulgura flammae  
 de cognato Phaethonte tuli.  
 habeo mediae dona Chimaerae,  
 habeo flammam usto tauri  
 gutture raptas, quas permixto 830  
 felle Medusae tacitum iussi  
 servare malum.

Adde venenis stimulos, Hecate,  
 donisque meis semina flammae  
 condita serva. fallant visus  
 tactusque ferant, meet in pectus

<sup>1</sup> Of the yew or cypress, trees naturally connected with death and the world of death.

## MEDEA

branch<sup>1</sup> from the Stygian stream; to thee with bared breast will I as a maenad smite my arms with the sacrificial knife. Let my blood flow upon the altars; accustom thyself, my hand, to draw the sword and endure the sight of beloved blood. [*She slashes her arm and lets the blood flow upon the altar.*] Self-smitten have I poured forth the sacred stream.

<sup>812</sup> But if thou complainest that too often thou art called on by my prayers, pardon, I pray; the cause, O Perses' daughter,<sup>2</sup> of my too oft calling on thy bows is one and the same ever, Jason.

<sup>817</sup> Do thou now [*she takes a phial*] poison Creusa's robe that, when she has donned it, the creeping flame may consume her inmost marrow. Within this tawny gold [*she takes a casket*] lurks fire, darkly hid; Prometheus gave it me, even he who expiates with ever-growing liver his theft from heaven, and taught me by his art how to store up its powers. Mulciber hath also given me fires which subtly lurk in sulphur; and bolts of living flame I took from my kinsman,<sup>3</sup> Phaëthon. I have gifts from Chimaera's middle part,<sup>4</sup> I have flames caught from the bull's scorched throat, which, well mixed with Medusa's gall, I have bidden to guard their bane in silence.

<sup>833</sup> Give sting to my poisons, Hecate, and in my gifts keep hidden the seeds of fire. Let them cheat the sight, let them endure the touch; let burning fire

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Hecate; the bow is typical of her aid in magic.

<sup>2</sup> Both Medea and Phaëthon were descended from Phoebus.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* the goat part, which vomited fire.



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

venasque calor, stillent artus  
 ossaque fument vincatque suas  
 flagrante coma nova nupta faces.

Vota tenentur; ter latratus  
 audax Hecate dedit et sacros  
 edidit ignes face lucifera. 840

Peracta vis est omnis; huc natos voca,  
 pretiosa per quos dona nubenti feras.  
 ite, ite, nati, matris infaustae genus,  
 placate vobis munere et multa prece  
 dominam ac novercam. vadite et celeres domum  
 referte gressus, ultimo amplexu ut fruatur.

CHORVS

Quonam cruenta maenas  
 praeceps amore saevo  
 rapitur? quod impotenti  
 facinus parat furore?  
 vultus citatus ira  
 riget et caput feroci  
 quatiens superba motu  
 regi minatur ultro.  
 quis credat exulem? 850

Flagrant genae rubentes,  
 pallor fugat ruborem,  
 nullum vagante forma  
 servat diu colorem.  
 huc fert pedes et illuc,  
 ut tigris orba natis  
 cursu furente lustrat  
 Gangeticum nemus 860

## MEDEA

penetrate to heart and veins; let her limbs melt and her bones consume in smoke, and with her blazing locks let the bride outshine her wedding torches.

<sup>840</sup> My prayers are heard: thrice has bold Hecate bayed loud, and has raised her accursèd fire with its baleful light.

<sup>843</sup> Now all my power is marshalled; hither call my sons that by their hands thou mayst send these costly gifts unto the bride.

[MEDEA's sons are brought in.]

Go, go, my sons, born of an ill-starred mother, win to yourselves by means of gifts and much beseeching your mistress and stepmother. Begone and quickly come you home again, that I may enjoy one last embrace.

[*Exeunt sons towards the palace; MEDEA in the opposite direction.*]

## CHORUS

Whither is this blood-stained maenad borne headlong by mad passion? What crime with reckless fury is she preparing? Her distraught face is hard set in anger, and with fierce tossings of her head she haughtily threatens e'en the king. Who would think her an exile?

<sup>858</sup> Her cheeks blaze red, pallor puts red to flight; no colour in her changing aspect does she keep long. Hither and thither she wanders, as a tigress, robbed of her cubs, ranges in mad course through the jungles of Ganges.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Frenare nescit iras  
 Medea, non amores ;  
 nunc ira amorque causam  
 iunxere ; quid sequetur ?  
 quando efferet Pelasgis  
 nefanda Colchis arvis  
 gressum metuque solvet  
 regnum simulque reges ?  
 nunc, Phoebe, mitte currus  
 nullo morante loro,  
 nox condat alma lucem,  
 mergat diem timendum  
 dux noctis Hesperus.

870

NVNTIVS

Periere cuncta ! concidit regni status !  
 nata atque genitor cinere permixto iacent.

880

CHORVS

Qua fraude capti ?

NVNTIVS

Qua solent reges capi—

donis.

CHORVS

In illis esse quis potuit dolus ?

NVNTIVS

Et ipse miror vixque iam facto malo  
 potuisse fieri credo. quis cladis modus ?  
 avidus per omnem regiae partem furit  
 ut iussus ignis ; iam domus tota occidit,  
 urbi timetur.

## MEDEA

866 How to curb her anger Medea knows not, nor yet her love; now that anger and love have joined cause, what will the outcome be? When will the wicked Colchian be gone from the Pelasgian borders and free from terror at once our kingdom and our kings? Now, O Phoebus, speed thy chariot with no check of rein; let friendly darkness veil the light, and let Hesperus, vanguard of the night, plunge deep this fearful day.

[Enter MESSENGER, running from the direction of the palace.]

MESSENGER

All is lost! The kingdom's props have fallen!  
Daughter and father in commingled ashes lie.

CHORUS

By what snare taken?

MESSENGER

By the common snare of kings—by gifts.

CHORUS

What snare could have been in them?

MESSENGER

Myself, I also marvel, and, though the woeful thing is done, can scarce believe it could be done. What stay is there to ruin? The greedy fire rages through the palace's every part as if 'twere bidden so. Already the whole house has fallen, the city is in peril.



# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CHORVS

Vnda flammas opprimat.

NVNTIVS

Et hoc in ista clade mirandum accidit :  
alit unda flammas, quoque prohibetur magis,  
magis ardet ignis ; ipsa praesidia occupat. 890

NVTRIX

Effer citatum sede Pelopea gradum,  
Medea, praeceps quaslibet terras pete.

MEDEA

Egone ut recedam ? si profugissem prius,  
ad hoc redirem. nuptias specto novas.  
quid, anime, cessas ? sequere felicem impetum.  
pars ultionis ista, qua gaudes, quota est ?  
amas adhuc, furiose, si satis est tibi  
caelebs Iason. quaere poenarum genus  
haut usitatum iamque sic temet para :  
fas omne cedat, abeat expulsus pudor ; 900  
vindicta levis est quam ferunt purae manus.  
incumbe in iras teque languentem excita  
penitusque veteres pectore ex imo impetus  
violentus hauri. quidquid admissum est adhuc,  
pietas vocetur. hoc age et faxis sciant  
quam levia fuerint quamque vulgaris notae  
302

## MEDEA

### CHORUS

Let water put out the flames.

### MESSENGER

Nay, in this disaster this marvel, too, has happened : water feeds the flames, and the more 'tis checked, the more fiercely burns the fire ; the very defences<sup>1</sup> does it seize upon.

[*Enter MEDEA, in time to hear the last words.*]

### NURSE [*to MEDEA*]

Quickly begone, Medea, from the land of Pelops ; seek headlong any land thou wilt !

### MEDEA

What I—shall I give ground ? Nay, had I fled already, for this I should return. Strange nuptials see I here.

[*She becomes absorbed in her own thoughts.*]

Why, soul, dost falter ? Follow up the attack so well begun. How small a part of thy vengeance is that in which thou art rejoicing ! Thou dost love him still, mad one, if 'tis enough for thee that Jason wifeless be. Seek thou some unaccustomed form of chastisement, and now thus prepare thyself : let all right give way ; let honour begone, defeated ; light is the rod which innocent hands uplift. Bend to thine anger, rouse up thy halting purpose, and with all thy strength drain from thy heart's very depths its old-time violence. Let all that has ere been done be called but piety. To the task ; let them know how petty, of what common stamp, were the crimes

<sup>1</sup> Water, the natural defence against fire.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quae commodavi scelera. prolusit dolor  
per ista noster; quid manus poterant rudes  
audere magnum? quid puellaris furor?  
Medea nunc sum; crevit ingenium malis. 910

Iuvat, iuvat rapuisse fraternum caput;  
artus iuvat secuisse et arcano patrem  
spoliasse sacro, iuvat in exitium senis  
armasse natas. quaere materiam, dolor;  
ad omne facinus non rudem dextram afferes.

Quo te igitur, ira, mittis, aut quae perfido  
intendis hosti tela? nescio quid ferox  
decrevit animus intus et nondum sibi  
audet fateri. stulta properavi nimis—  
ex paelice utinam liberos hostis meus 920

aliquos haberet! quidquid ex illo tuum est,  
Creusa peperit. placuit hoc poenae genus,  
meritoque placuit; ultimum, agnosco, scelus  
animo parandum est. liberi quondam mei,  
vos pro paternis sceleribus poenas date.

Cor pepulit horror, membra torpescunt gelu  
pectusque tremuit. ira discessit loco  
materque tota coniuge expulsa redit.  
egone ut meorum liberum ac prolis meae  
fundam cruorem? melius, a, demens furor! 930

incognitum istud facinus ac dirum nefas  
a me quoque absit; quod scelus miseri luent?  
scelus est Iason genitor et maius scelus  
Medea mater. occidant, non sunt mei;  
pereant—mei sunt. crimine et culpa carent,

## MEDEA

I wrought to serve him. In them my grief was but practising; what great deed had prentice hands the power to do? What, a girl's rage? Now I am Medea; my wit has grown through suffering.

<sup>911</sup> Glad am I, glad, that I tore off my brother's head, glad that I carved his limbs, that I robbed my father of his guarded treasure,<sup>1</sup> glad that I armed daughters<sup>2</sup> for an old man's death. Seek thou fresh fields, my grief; no untrained hand wilt thou bring to any crime.

<sup>916</sup> Whither, then, wrath, art tending, or what weapons art thou aiming at the forsworn foe?<sup>3</sup> A dark purpose my fierce spirit hath resolved within me, and dares not yet acknowledge to itself. Fool! fool! I have gone too fast—would that mine enemy had children by his paramour! [*She pauses and then addresses herself.*] All offspring that thou hast by him are Creusa's brood. Resolved is this way of vengeance, rightly resolved; for a last deed of guilt, I see it now, must my soul make ready. Children that once were mine, do you pay penalty for your father's crimes.

<sup>926</sup> Horror has smit my heart! My limbs are numb with cold and my heart with terror flutters. Wrath has given place; the mother has all come back, the wife is banished. Can I shed my children's, my own offspring's blood? Ah, mad rage, say not so! Far, even from me, be that unheard-of deed, that accursed guilt! What sin will the poor boys atone? Their sin is that Jason is their father, and, greater sin, that Medea is their mother. [*She pauses.*] Let them die, they are none of mine; let them be lost—they are my own. They are without crime and guilt, yea, they are

<sup>1</sup> The golden fleece.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of Pelias.

<sup>3</sup> Jason.



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sunt innocentes—fateor, et frater fuit.  
 quid, anime, titubas? ora quid lacrimae rigant  
 variamque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor  
 diducit? anceps aestus incertam rapit;  
 ut saeva rapidi bella cum venti gerunt 940  
 utrimque fluctus maria discordes agunt  
 dubiumque fervet pelagus, haut aliter meum  
 cor fluctuatur. ira pietatem fugat  
 iramque pietas. cede pietati, dolor.

Huc, cara proles, unicum afflictæ domus  
 solamen, huc vos ferte et infusos mihi  
 coniungite artus. habeat incolumes pater,  
 dum et mater habeat. urguet exilium ac fuga.  
 iam iam meo rapiuntur avulsi e sinu,  
 flentes, gementes oculis. pereant patri, 950  
 periere matri. rursus increscit dolor  
 et fervet odium, repetit invitam manum  
 antiqua Erinys. ira, qua ducis, sequor.  
 utinam superbae turba Tantalidos meo  
 exisset utero bisque septenos parens  
 natos tulissem! sterilis in poenas fui—  
 fratri patrique quod sat est, peperit duos.

Quonam ista tendit turba Furiarum impotens?  
 quem quaerit aut quo flammeos ictus parat,  
 aut cui cruentas agmen infernum faces 960  
 intentat? ingens anguis excusso sonat  
 tortus flagello. quem trabe infesta petit  
 Megaera? cuius umbra dispersis venit  
 incerta membris? frater est, poenas petit.

## MEDEA

innocent—I acknowledge it; so, too, was my brother. Why, soul, dost hesitate? Why are my cheeks wet with tears? Why do anger and love now hither, now thither draw my changeful heart? A double tide tosses me, uncertain of my course; as when rushing winds wage mad warfare, and from both sides conflicting floods lash the seas and the fluctuating waters boil, even so is my heart tossed. Anger puts love to flight, and love, anger. O wrath, yield thee to love.

<sup>945</sup> Hither, dear children, sole comfort of my fallen house, come hither and link your entwining limbs with mine. Let your father have you unharmed, so but your mother may have you too. But exile and flight press hard upon me; now, now will they be torn from my bosom and carried away from me, midst tears and sighs and kisses.—Let them be lost to their father; they are lost to me. My grief grows again and my hate burns hot; Erinys, as of old, claims my unwilling hand. O wrath, where thou dost lead I follow. I would that from my womb the throng of proud Niobe had sprung, and that I had been the mother of twice seven sons! Too barren have I been for vengeance—yet for my brother and my father there is enough, for I have borne two sons.

<sup>958</sup> Whither hastes that headlong horde of Furies? Whom seek they? Against whom are they preparing their flaming blows? Whom does the hellish host threaten with its bloody brands? A huge snake hisses, whirled with the writhing lash. Whom does Megaera seek with her deadly torch? Whose shade comes there dimly seen, its limbs all scattered? It is my brother, and 'tis punishment he seeks. We'll pay, yes, all the debt. Plunge your brands into

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

dabimus, sed omnes. fige luminibus faces,  
 lania, perure, pectus en Furiis patet.

Discedere a me, frater, ultrices deas  
 manesque ad imos ire securas iube ;  
 mihi me relinque et utere hac, frater, manu  
 quae strinxit ensem—victima manes tuos 970  
 placamus ista.—quid repens affert sonus ?  
 parantur arma meque in exitium petunt.  
 excelsa nostrae tecta conscendam domus  
 caede incohata. perge tu mecum comes.  
 tuum quoque ipsa corpus hinc mecum aveham.  
 nunc hoc age, anime ; non in occulto tibi est  
 perdenda virtus ; approba populo manum.

IASON

Quicumque regum cladibus fidus doles,  
 concurre, ut ipsam sceleris auctorem horridi  
 capiamus. huc, huc fortis armiferi cohors 980  
 conferte tela, vertite ex imo domum.

MEDEA

Iam iam recepi sceptra germanum patrem,  
 spoliisque Colchi pecudis auratae tenent ;  
 rediere regna, rapta virginitas redit.  
 o placida tandem numina, o festum diem,  
 o nuptialem ! vade, perfectum est scelus ;  
 308

## MEDEA

my eyes, tear, burn; see, my breast is open to the Furies.

<sup>967</sup> O brother, bid the avenging goddesses depart from me, and go in peace to the deep-buried ghosts; to myself leave me and use this hand, brother, which has drawn the sword— [*She slays the first son.*] With this victim I appease thy ghost.—What means that sudden noise? 'Tis arms they are making ready, and they seek me for my slaying. To the lofty roof of our palace will I mount, now the bloody work hath been—begun. [*To her remaining son.*] Do thou come with me. [*To her dead son.*] Thy corpse also will I take hence with me. Now to the task, O soul; not in secrecy must thy great deed be lost; to the people approve thy handiwork.

[*Exit MEDEA, carrying the body of her dead son and leading the living. Enter JASON in the street below shouting to the citizens.*]

### JASON

Ye faithful souls, who mourn your princes' doom, rally to me that we may take the author herself of this dread crime. Here, here, my brave band of warriors, bring weapons, raze this house to the very ground.

### MEDEA

[*Appearing on the house-top.*]

Now, now have I regained my regal state, my brother, my sire; and the Colchians have once more the spoil of the golden fleece; restored is my kingdom, my ravished virginity is restored. Oh, divinities, at last propitious, oh, festal day, oh, nuptial day! On! the crime is accomplished; but vengeance is not yet



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

vindicta nondum ; perage, dum faciunt manus.  
 quid nunc moraris, anime ? quid dubitas potens ?  
 iam cecidit ira. paenitet facti, pudet.  
 quid, misera, feci ? misera ? paeniteat licet, 990  
 feci. voluptas magna me invitam subit,  
 et ecce crescit. derat hoc unum mihi,  
 spectator iste. nil adhuc facti reor ;  
 quidquid sine isto fecimus sceleris perit.

IASON

En ipsa tecti parte praecipiti imminet.  
 huc rapiat ignes aliquis, ut flammis cadat  
 suis perusta.

MEDEA

Congere extremum tuis  
 natis, Iason, funus, ac tumulum strue ;  
 coniunx socerque iusta iam functis habent,  
 a me sepulti ; natus hic fatum tulit, 1000  
 hic te vidente dabitur exitio pari.

IASON

Per numen omne perque communes fugas  
 torosque, quos non nostra violavit fides,  
 iam parce nato. si quod est crimen, meum est ;  
 me dedo morti ; noxium macta caput.

MEDEA

Hac qua recusas, qua doles, ferrum exigam.  
 i nunc, superbe, virginum thalamos pete,  
 relinque matres.

## MEDEA

complete; be done with it while thy hands are still about it. Why dost thou delay now, O soul? Why hesitate, though thou canst do it? Now has my wrath died within me. I am sorry for my act, ashamed. What, wretched woman, have I done?—wretched, say I? Though I repent, yet have I done it! Great joy steals on me 'gainst my will, and lo, it is increasing. [*She catches sight of JASON in the crowd below.*] This one thing I lacked, that yon man should behold. Naught have I done as yet; whatever crime I've done is lost unless he see it.

JASON [*discovering her*]

See, there she is herself, leaning over the sheer battlement! Someone bring fire that she may fall consumed by her own flames.

## MEDEA

Nay, Jason, heap up for thy sons their last funeral pyre; build them a tomb. Thy wife and father have already the services due the dead, buried by me; this son has met his doom, and this shall suffer like fate before thy eyes.

## JASON

By all the gods, by our flight together, by our marriage couch, to which I have not been faithless, spare the boy. If there is any guilt, 'tis mine. I give myself up to death; destroy my guilty head.

## MEDEA

Here<sup>1</sup> where thou dost forbid it, where it will grieve thee, will I plunge the sword. Go now, haughty man, take thee maids for wives, abandon mothers.

<sup>1</sup> In the body of the living son.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

IASON

Vnus est poenae satis

MEDEA

Si posset una caede satiari haec manus,  
nullam petisset. ut duos perimam, tamen 1010  
nimium est dolori numerus angustus meo.  
in matre si quod pignus etiam nunc latet,  
scrutabor ense viscera et ferro extraham.<sup>1</sup>

IASON

Iam perage coeptum facinus—haut ultra precor,  
moramque saltem supplicis dona meis.

MEDEA

Perfruere lento scelere, ne propera, dolor:  
meus dies est; tempore accepto utimur.

IASON

Infesta, memet perime.

MEDEA

Misereri iubes—  
bene est, peractum est. plura non habui, dolor,  
quae tibi litarem. lumina huc tumida alleva, 1020  
ingrate Iason. coniugem agnoscis tuam?  
sic fugere soleo. patuit in caelum via:  
squamosa gemini colla serpentes iugo

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes these two lines.*

## MEDEA

JASON

One is enough for punishment.

MEDEA

If this hand could be satisfied with the death of one, it would have sought no death at all. Though I slay two, still is the count too small to appease my grief. If in my womb there still lurk any pledge of thee, I'll search my very vitals with the sword and hale it forth.

JASON

Now end what thou hast begun—I make no more entreaty—and at least spare<sup>1</sup> my sufferings this suspense.

MEDEA

Enjoy a slow revenge, hasten not, my grief; mine is the day; we are but using the allotted<sup>2</sup> time.

JASON

O heartless one, slay me.

MEDEA

Thou biddst me pity— [*She slays the second son.*] 'Tis well, 'tis done. I had no more atonement to offer thee, O grief. Lift thy tear-swollen eyes hither, ungrateful Jason. Dost recognize thy wife? 'Tis thus<sup>3</sup> I am wont to flee. A way through the air has opened for me; two serpents offer their scaly

<sup>1</sup> Translating *dona* in the sense of *remitte*.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* Creon had granted Medea this whole day for her own in Corinth.

<sup>3</sup> By means of a dragon-drawn car which now appears in the air.



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

summissa praebent. recipe iam natos, parens ;  
ego inter auras aliti curru vehar.

IASON

Per alta vade spatia sublimi aethere ;  
testare nullos esse, qua veheris, deos.

## MEDEA

necks bending to the yoke. Now, father, take back thy sons. [*She throws the bodies down to him.*] I through the air on my winged car shall ride.

[*She mounts the car and is borne away.*]

JASON [*calling after her*]

Go on through the lofty spaces of high heaven and bear witness, where thou ridest, that there are no gods.

CHAPTER I

and having to be done. How many of these  
the man [the man the man the man] is  
through the man the man the man the man.

The man the man the man the man.

the man the man the man the man.

the man the man the man the man the man  
the man the man the man the man the man  
the man the man the man the man the man  
the man the man the man the man the man

HIPPOLYTUS,

OR

PHAEDRA



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HIPPOLYTUS, *son of Theseus and Antiope, an Amazon.*

PHAEDRA, *wife of Theseus and stepmother of Hippolytus.*

THESEUS, *king of Athens.*

NURSE *of Phaedra.*

MESSENGER

SLAVES AND ATTENDANTS.

CHORUS *of Athenian citizens.*

THE SCENE is laid throughout in the court in front of the royal palace at Athens, and the action is confined to the space of one day.

## ARGUMENT

THESEUS had wed Antiope, the Amazon, and of their union had been born Hippolytus. This youth grew up to love the chase, austere and beautiful, shunning the haunts of men and scorning the love of women. Theseus had meanwhile slain Antiope, and married Phaedra, Cretan Minos' child.

And now, for four years past, the king has not been seen upon the earth, for, following the mad adventure of his bosom friend, Pirithoüs, he has descended into Tartarus to help him steal away its queen, and thence, men think, he never will return.

Deserted by her lord, the hapless Phaedra has conceived a hopeless passion for Hippolytus; for Venus, mindful of her old amour with Mars, which Phaedra's ancestor, Apollo, had exposed, has sent this madness on her, even as Pasiphaë, her mother, had been cursed with a most mad and fatal malady.

## HIPPOLYTUS, OR PHAEDRA

### HIPPOLYTUS

ITE, umbrosas cingite silvas  
summaque montis iuga, Cecropii!  
celeri planta lustrate vagi  
quae saxosae loca Parnetho  
subiecta iacent, quae Thriasiis  
vallibus amnis rapida currens  
verberat unda, scandite colles  
semper canos nive Rhipaea;  
hac, hac alii qua nemus alta  
textitur alno, qua prata iacent 10  
quae rorifera mulcens aura  
Zephyrus vernas evocat herbas,  
ubi per graciles levis Ilisos<sup>1</sup> 13  
labitur agros piger et steriles 15  
anne maligno radit harenas.

Vos qua Marathon tramite laevo  
saltus aperit, qua comitatae  
gregibus parvis nocturna petunt  
pabula fetae; vos qua tepidis 20  
subditus austris frigora mollit  
durus Acharneus.

Alius rupem dulcis Hymetti,  
parvas alius calcet Aphidnas;  
pars illa diu vacat immunis,

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes l. 14: ubi Maeander super inaequales.*

# HIPPOLYTUS, OR PHAEDRA

## HIPPOLYTUS

[*In the early morning, in the palace court at Athens. Enter HIPPOLYTUS with a large company of huntsmen armed with the various weapons of the hunt, and leading numerous dogs in leash. HIPPOLYTUS proceeds to assign the various tasks of the day to his followers.*]

Go, girdle the shadowy woods and the topmost ridges of the mount, ye sons of Cecrops! With nimble feet wide wandering, scour the coverts that lie 'neath rocky Parnes and in the vale of Thria, whose swift-flowing stream lashes its banks; climb the hills ever white with Rhiplean snow. Here, here let others hie, where the tall alder-thickets fringe the grove, where meadows lie which Zephyr soothes with his dew-laden breath and calls forth the herbage of the spring, where scant Ilissos flows sluggishly along through meagre fields, and with ungenerous stream creeps o'er unfruitful sands.

<sup>17</sup> Go ye by the left path where Marathon opens out her forest glades, where with their small following the suckling mothers seek nightly forage; and ye, where rugged Acharneus tempers his frosts beneath the warm south-wind.

<sup>23</sup> Let one tread sweet Hymettus' cliff, another, small Aphidnae; too long unharried is that spot



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

qua curvati litora ponti  
 Sunion urget. si quem tangit  
 gloria silvae, vocat hunc Phlye<sup>1</sup>  
 hic versatur, metus agricolis,  
 vulnere multo iam notus aper.

30

At vos laxas canibus tacitis  
 mittite habenas; teneant acres  
 lora Molossos et pugnaces  
 tendant Cretes fortia trito  
 vincula collo.

at Spartanos (genus est audax  
 avidumque ferae) nodo cautus  
 propiore liga. veniet tempus,  
 cum latratu cava saxa sonent;  
 nunc demissi nare sagaci  
 captent auras lustraue presso  
 quaerant rostro, dum lux dubia est,  
 dum signa pedum roscida tellus  
 impressa tenet.

40

Alius raras cervice gravi  
 portare plagas, alius teretes  
 properet laqueos. picta rubenti  
 linea pinna vano cludat  
 terrore feras.

tibi vibretur missile telum,  
 tu grave dextra laevaue simul  
 robur lato dirige ferro,  
 tu praecipites clamore feras  
 subsessor ages; tu iam victor  
 curvo solves viscera cultro.

50

Ades en comiti, diva virago,  
 cuius regno pars terrarum  
 secreta vacat, cuius certis  
 petitur telis fera quae gelidum

<sup>1</sup> *So Leo; Flius MSS.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

where Sunium thrusts out the shores of the curving sea. If any feels the lure of the forest, Phlye calls for him; there is the haunt of the boar, terror of husbandmen, famed by now for many a wound.

<sup>31</sup> But do you cast off the leashes from the dogs that hunt in silence; still let thongs hold the keen Molossians fast, and let the savage Cretans tug on the stout bonds with well-worn necks. But the Spartans (for their breed is bold and eager for the prey) hold in carefully with a tighter knot. The time will come when the hollow rocks will re-echo with their bayings; now, with heads low-hung, let them snuff the air with keen nostrils, and with muzzles to earth quest through the forest haunts, while the light is still dim, while the dewy ground still retains the well-marked trail.

<sup>44</sup> Let some of you make speed to load your necks with the heavy, wide-meshed nets, and others with the smooth-wrought snares. Let a line decked out with crimson feathers hedge the deer with empty terror. Thou shalt brandish the dart, thou with right and left hand together hurl the heavy oak-shaft with broad iron head; do thou lie in hiding and with shouts drive the game on in headlong rush; and thou, when victory is won, shalt free flesh from hide with thy curved hunting-knife.

<sup>54</sup> And do thou be with thy follower, O manlike goddess,<sup>1</sup> for whose sovereignty earth's secret places are reserved, whose darts with unerring aim seek

<sup>1</sup> Diana.

SENECAE TRAGEODIAE

potat Araxen et quae stanti  
 ludit in Histro. tua Gaetulos  
 dextra leones, tua Cretaeas  
 sequitur cervas; nunc veloces  
 figis dammas levioere manu.  
 tibi dant variae pectora tigres,  
 tibi villosi terga bisontes  
 latisque feri cornibus uri.  
 quidquid solis pascitur arvis,  
 sive illud Arabs divite silva  
 sive illud inops novit Garamans  
 vacuisque vagus Sarmata campis,<sup>1</sup>  
 sive ferocis iuga Pyrenes  
 sive Hyrcani celant saltus,  
 arcus metuit, Diana, tuos.  
 tua si gratus numina cultor  
 tulit in saltus, retia vinctas  
 tenere feras, nulli laqueum  
 rupere pedes; fertur plaustro  
 praeda gementi; tum rostra canes  
 sanguine multo rubicunda gerunt  
 repetitque casas rustica longo  
 turba triumpho.  
 En, diva, faves: signum arguti  
 misere canes. vocor in silvas.  
 hac, hac pergam qua via longum  
 compensat iter.

60

68

71

69

70

72

80

PHAEDRA

O magna vasti Creta dominatrix freti,  
 cuius per omne litus innumerae rates  
 tenuere pontum,<sup>2</sup> quidquid Assyria tenus  
 tellure Nereus pervius rostris secat,

<sup>1</sup> *Leo transposes l. 71 to follow l. 68.*

<sup>2</sup> *Leo conjectures portus.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

out the prey which drinks of the cool Araxes or sports on Ister's frozen streams. Thy hand aims at Gaetolian lions, thine at Cretan deer; and now with lighter stroke dost thou pierce swift-fleeing does. The striped tigers face thee, but the shaggy-backed bisons flee, and the wild ox with wide-spreading horns. All things that feed in the lonely fields, whether the Arabian knows them in his rich forests, or the needy Garamantian and the wandering Sarmatian on his desert plains, whatever the heights of the rough Pyrenees or the Hyrcanian glades conceal, all fear thy bow, Diana. If, his offerings paid, thy worshipper takes thy favour with him to the glades, his nets hold the tangled prey, no feet break through his snares; his game is brought in on groaning wains, his hounds have their muzzles red with blood, and all the rustic throng come home in long triumphant line.

<sup>81</sup> Lo, goddess, thou dost hear me: the shrill-tongued hounds have given the sign. I am summoned to the woods. Here, here I'll hasten by the shortest way. [*Exeunt.*

[*Enter PHAEDRA from the palace.*]

PHAEDRA

O mighty Crete, the vast sea's mistress, whose countless vessels along every coast have held the deep, yea, whatever lands, e'en to Assyria, making



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

cur me in penates obsidem invisos datam  
 hostique nuptam degere aetatem in malis 90  
 lacrimisque cogis? profugus en coniunx abest  
 praestatque nuptae quam solet Theseus fidem.  
 fortis per altas invii retro lacus  
 vadit tenebras miles audacis proci,  
 solio ut revulsam regis inferni abstrahat;  
 pergit furoris socius, haud illum timor  
 pudorque tenuit—stupra et illicitos toros  
 Acheronte in imo quaerit Hippolyti pater.

Sed maior alius incubat maestae dolor.  
 non me quies nocturna, non altus sopor 100  
 solvere curis. alitur et crescit malum  
 et ardet intus qualis Aetnaeo vapor  
 exundat antro. Palladis telae vacant  
 et inter ipsas pensa labuntur manus;  
 non colere donis templa votivis libet,  
 non inter aras, Atthidum mixtam choris,  
 iactare tacitis conscias sacris faces,  
 nec adire castis precibus aut ritu pio  
 adiudicatae praesidem terrae deam:  
 iuvat excitatas consequi cursu feras 110  
 et rigida molli gaesa iaculari manu.

Quo tendis, anime? quid furens saltus amas?  
 fatale miserae matris agnosco malum;  
 peccare noster novit in silvis amor.  
 genetrix, tui me miseret; infando malo

## HIPPOLYTUS

a path for the prows of ships, old Nereus cleaves— why dost thou force me here, given o'er to an enemy's house as hostage, wife to my foe, to spend my days in wretchedness and weeping? Behold, fled is my lord afar and keeps his bridal oath as is the wont of Theseus. Through the deep shades of the pool which none recrosses is he faring, this brave recruit of a madcap suitor,<sup>1</sup> that from the very throne of the infernal king he may rob and bear away his wife. He hurries on, a partner in mad folly; him nor fear nor shame held back. And there in the depths of Acheron he seeks adultery and an unlawful bed, this father of Hippolytus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>99</sup> But another, greater smart burdens my woeful breast. No rest by night, no deep slumber frees me from care. A malady feeds and grows within my heart, and it burns there hot as the steam that wells from Aetna's caverns. Pallas' loom stands idle and my task slips from my listless hands; no longer it pleases me to deck the temples with votive offerings, nor at the altars, midst bands of Athenian dames, to wave torches in witness of the silent rites, nor with pure prayers and pious worship to approach the goddess<sup>3</sup> who guards the land once granted to her! My joy is to follow in pursuit of the startled beasts and with soft hand to hurl stiff javelins.

<sup>112</sup> Whither, my soul, art tending? Why this mad love of forest glades? I recognize my wretched mother's fatal curse;<sup>4</sup> her love and mine know how to sin in forest depths. Mother, my heart aches for

<sup>1</sup> Pirithoüs.

<sup>2</sup> From being merely the assistant of another in an unlawful deed, Theseus is here conceived as the principal in it.

<sup>3</sup> Pallas, patroness of Athens by the assignment of the gods.

<sup>4</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Pasiphaë."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

correpta pecoris efferum saevi ducem  
 audax amasti; torvus, impatiens iugi  
 adulter ille, ductor indomiti gregis—  
 sed amabat aliquid. quis meas miserae deus  
 aut quis iuvare Daedalus flammam queat? 120  
 non si ipse remeet, arte Mopsopia potens  
 qui nostra caeca monstra conclusit domo,  
 promittat ullam casibus nostris opem.  
 stirpem perosa Solis invisus Venus  
 per nos catenas vindicat Martis sui  
 suasque, probris omne Phoebeum genus  
 onerat nefandis. nulla Minois levi  
 defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas.

NVTRIX

Thesea coniunx, clara progenies Iovis,  
 nefanda casto pectore exturba ocus, 130  
 extingue flammam neve te dirae spei  
 praebere obsequentem. quisquis in primo obstitit  
 pepulitque amorem, tutus ac victor fuit;  
 qui blandiendo dulce nutrit malum,  
 sero recusat ferre quod subiit iugum.

Nec me fugit, quam durus et veri insolens  
 ad recta flecti regius nolit tumor.  
 quemcumque dederit exitum casus feram;  
 fortem facit vicina libertas senem.

Honesta primum est velle nec labi via, 140  
 pudor est secundus nosse peccandi modum.  
 quo, misera, pergis? quid domum infamem aggravas  
 superasque matrem? maius est monstro nefas;

## HIPPOLYTUS

thee; swept away by ill unspeakable, thou didst boldly love the wild leader of the savage herd. Fierce was he and impatient of the yoke, lawless in love, leader of an untamed herd; yet he did love something. But as for me, what god, what Daedalus could ease my wretched passion? Though he himself<sup>1</sup> should return, mighty in Attic cunning, who shut our monster in the dark labyrinth, he could afford no help to my calamity. Venus, detesting the offspring of the hated Sun, is avenging through us the chains<sup>2</sup> that bound her to her loved Mars, and loads the whole race of Phoebus with shame unspeakable. No daughter of Minos' house hath found love's bondage light; ever 'tis linked with guilt.

### NURSE

O wife of Theseus, illustrious child of Jove, quickly drive guilty thoughts from thy pure breast, put out these fires, nor show thyself obedient to this dread hope of love. Whoever at the outset has resisted and routed love, has been safe and conqueror; but whoso by dalliance has fed the sweet torment, too late refuses to bear the accepted yoke.

<sup>136</sup> I know how the stubborn pride of princes, ill brooking truth, refuses to be bent to righteousness; but whatever outcome fate shall give I am ready to endure; freedom near at hand makes the aged brave.

<sup>140</sup> Best is the upright purpose and the unswerving path; next is the shame, that knows some measure in transgressing. To what end art thou hastening, wretched woman? Why heap fresh infamy upon thy house and outsin thy mother? Impious sin is

<sup>1</sup> Daedalus.

<sup>2</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Mars" and "Venus."



SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nam monstra fato, moribus scelera imputes.  
 si, quod maritus supera non cernit loca,  
 tutum esse facinus credis et vacuum metu,  
 erras; teneri crede Lethaeo abditum  
 Thesea profundo et ferre perpetuam Styga;  
 quid ille, lato maria qui regno premit  
 populisque reddit iura centenis, pater? 150  
 latere tantum facinus occultum sinet?  
 sagax parentum est cura. credamus tamen  
 astu doloque tegere nos tantum nefas;  
 quid ille rebus lumen infundens suum  
 matris parens? quid ille qui mundum quatit  
 vibrans corusca fulmen Aetnaeum manu,  
 sator deorum? credis hoc posse effici,  
 inter videntes omnia ut lateas avos?

Sed ut secundus numinum abscondat favor  
 coitus nefandos utque contingat stupro 160  
 negata magnis sceleribus semper fides;  
 quid poena praesens conscius mentis pavor  
 animusque culpa plenus et semet timens?  
 scelus aliqua tutum, nulla securum tulit.  
 compesce amoris impii flammam, precor,  
 nefasque quod non ulla tellus barbara  
 commisit umquam, non vagi campis Getae  
 nec inhospitalis Taurus aut sparsus Scythes;  
 expelle facinus mente castifica horridum  
 memorque matris metue concubitus novos. 170  
 miscere thalamos patris et nati apparatus  
 uteroque prolem capere confusam impio?



## HIPPOLYTUS

worse than monstrous passion; for monstrous love thou mayst impute to fate, but crime, to character. If, because thy husband sees not the realms of earth, thou dost believe thy guilt safe and devoid of fear, thou errest. Suppose that Theseus is indeed held fast, hidden away in Lethean depths, and must suffer the Styx eternally; what of him, thy father, who holds the seas under his wide dominion and gives laws to a hundred <sup>1</sup> peoples? Will he permit so great a crime to lie concealed? Shrewd is the care of fathers. Yet suppose that by craft and guile we do hide this great wickedness from him; what of him who sheds his light on all things, thy mother's sire?<sup>2</sup> What of him who makes the heavens rock, brandishing Aetnean bolts in his glittering hand, the father of the gods? Dost believe thou canst so sin as to escape the all-seeing eyes of both thy grandsires?

<sup>159</sup> But grant that heaven's kindly grace conceals this impious intercourse; grant that to incest be shown the loyalty which great crimes never find; what of the ever-present penalty, the soul's conscious dread, and the heart filled with crime and fearful of itself? Some women have sinned with safety, but none with peace of soul. Then quench the fires of impious love, I pray, and shun a deed which no barbaric land has ever done, neither the Getae, wandering on their plains, nor the inhospitable Taurians, nor scattered Scythians. Drive this hideous purpose from thy chaste mind, and, remembering thy mother, shun strange matings. Dost purpose to share thy bed with father and with son, and receive in an incestuous womb a blended progeny?

<sup>1</sup> The "hundred cities" of Crete.

<sup>2</sup> The Sun.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

perge et nefandis verte naturam ignibus—  
 cur monstra cessant? aula cur fratris vacat?  
 prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet,  
 natura totiens legibus cedit suis,  
 quotiens amabit Cressa?

PHAEDRA

Quae memoras scio  
 vera esse, nutrix; sed furor cogit sequi  
 peiora. vadit animus in praeceps sciens  
 remeatque frustra sana consilia appetens. 180  
 sic cum gravatam navita adversa ratem  
 propellit unda, cedit in vanum labor  
 et victa prono puppis aufertur vado.  
 quid ratio possit? vicit ac regnat furor  
 potensque tota mente dominatur deus.  
 hic volucer omni pollet in terra impotens  
 laesumque flammis torret indomitis Iovem;  
 Gradivus istas belliger sensit faces,  
 opifex trisulei fulminis sensit deus,  
 et qui furentes semper Aetnaeis iugis 190  
 versat caminos igne tam parvo calet;  
 ipsumque Phoebum, tela qui nervo regit,  
 figit sagitta certior missa puer  
 volitatque caelo pariter et terris gravis.

NVTRIX

Deum esse amorem turpis et vitio furens  
 finxit libido, quoque liberior foret

## HIPPOLYTUS

Then go thou on and overturn all nature with thy unhallowed fires. Why do monsters cease?<sup>1</sup> Why does thy brother's<sup>2</sup> labyrinth stand empty? Shall the world hear of strange prodigies, shall nature's laws give way, whenever a Cretan woman loves?

### PHAEDRA

I know, nurse, that what thou sayest is true; but passion forces me to take the worsè path. With full knowledge my soul moves on to the abyss and vainly seeks the backward way in quest of counsels sane. Even so, when the mariner urges his laden vessel against opposing seas, his toil goes for naught and the ship, vanquished, is swept away by the swift-moving tide. What can reason do? Passion has conquered and now rules supreme, and, a mighty god, lords it o'er all my soul. This winged god rules ruthlessly throughout the earth and inflames Jove himself, wounded with unquenched fires. Gradivus, the warrior god, has felt those flames; that god<sup>3</sup> has felt them who fashions the three-forked thunderbolts, yea, he who tends the hot furnaces ever raging 'neath Aetna's peaks is inflamed by so small a fire as this. Nay, Phoebus himself, who guides with sure aim his arrows from the bow-string, a boy of more sure aim pierces with his flying shaft, and flits about, baneful alike to heaven and to earth.

### NURSE

'Tis base and sin-mad lust that has made love into a god and, to enjoy more liberty, has given to

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Why are no more monsters like the Minotaur produced?

<sup>2</sup> The Minotaur.

<sup>3</sup> Vulcan.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

titulum furori numinis falsi addidit.  
 natum per omnes scilicet terras vagum  
 Erycina mittit, ille per caelum volans  
 proterva tenera tela molitur manu 200  
 regnumque tantum minimus e superis habet!  
 vana ista demens animus ascivit sibi  
 Venerisque numen finxit atque arcus dei.  
 quisquis secundis rebus exultat nimis  
 fluitque luxu, semper insolita appetit.  
 tunc illa magnae dira fortunae comes  
 subit libido; non placent suetae dapes,  
 non tecta sani moris aut vilis scyphus.  
 cur in penates rarius tenues subit  
 haec delicatas eligens pestis domos? 210  
 cur sancta parvis habitat in tectis Venus  
 mediumque sanos vulgus affectus tenet  
 et se coercent modica? contra divites  
 regnoque fulti plura quam fas est petunt?  
 quod non potest vult posse qui nimium potest.  
 quid deceat alto praeditam solio vides;  
 metue ac verere sceptrā remeantis viri.

PHAEDRA

Amoris in me maximum regnum puto  
 reditusque nullos metuo. non umquam amplius 220  
 convexa tetigit supera qui mersus semel  
 adiit silentem nocte perpetua domum.

NVTRIX

Ne crede Diti. clausurit regnum licet  
 canisque diras Stygius observet fores,  
 solus negatas invenit Theseus vias.



## HIPPOLYTUS

passion the title of an unreal divinity. The goddess of Eryx<sup>1</sup> sends her son, forsooth, wandering through all lands, and he, flying through heaven's void, wields wanton weapons in his boyish hands, and, though least of gods, still holds such mighty empire! 'Tis love-mad souls that have adopted these vain conceits and have feigned Venus' divinity and a god's archery. Whoever rejoices in overmuch prosperity and abounds in luxury is ever seeking unaccustomed joys. Then that dire comrade of high estate, inordinate desire, steals in; wonted feasts no longer please, nor houses of simple fashion or modest cups. Why steals this deadly pest more rarely into humble homes, choosing rather the homes of daintiness? Why doth hallowed love dwell 'neath lowly roofs and the general throng have wholesome impulses? Why hath modest fortune self-control? Why, on the other hand, do rich men, propped on empire, ever grasp at more than heaven allows? He who is too powerful seeks power beyond his power. What becomes one endowed with high estate, thou knowest well; then fear and respect the sceptre of thy returning lord.

### PHAEDRA

Love's is, I think, the mightiest sovereignty over me, and I fear no lord's return. Nevermore has he reached sight of the vaulted skies who, once plunged in perpetual night, has gone to the silent home.

### NURSE

Trust not in Dis. Though he bar his realm, and though the Stygian dog keep guard o'er the grim doors, Theseus alone finds out forbidden ways.

<sup>1</sup> Venus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

PHAEDRA

Veniam ille amori forsitan nostro dabit.

NVTRIX

Immitis etiam coniugi castae fuit ;  
experta saevam est barbara Antiope manum.  
sed posse flecti coniugem iratum puta ;  
quis huius animum flectet intractabilem ?  
exosus omne feminae nomen fugit,  
immitis annos caelibus vitae dicat,  
conubia vitat. genus Amazonium scias.

230

PHAEDRA

Hunc in nivosi collis haerentem iugis,  
et aspera agili saxa calcantem pede  
sequi per alta nemora, per montes placet.

NVTRIX

Resistet ille seque mulcendum dabit  
castosque ritus Venere non casta exuet ?  
tibi ponet odium, cuius odio forsitan  
persequitur omnes ? precibus haud vinci potest.

PHAEDRA

Ferus est ; amore didicimus vinci feros.

240

NVTRIX

Fugiet.

PHAEDRA

Per ipsa maria si fugiet, sequar.

## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA

He will give indulgence to my love, perchance.

NURSE

Harsh was he even to a virtuous wife; foreign Antiope found his hand severe. But suppose thou canst bend thy angry husband; who can bend this youth's stubborn soul? Hating the very name of woman, he flees them all, sternly devotes his years to single life and shuns the marriage tie. Thou wouldst know him of Amazonian breed.

PHAEDRA

Though he keep him to the peaks of snowy hills, though he course swiftly 'mongst the ragged rocks, still through the deep forests, over the mountains, 'tis my resolve to follow him.

NURSE

Will he stop for thee and yield himself to thy caresses? Will he lay aside his pure practices for impure love? Will he give up his hate for thee, when 'tis for hate of thee, perchance, he repels all women? By no prayers can he be overcome.

PHAEDRA

Wild is he; but wild things, we have learned, can be o'ercome by love.

NURSE

He will flee away.

PHAEDRA

Though he flee through the very seas, still will I follow.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

NVTRIX

Patris memento.

PHAEDRA

Meminimus matris simul.

NVTRIX

Genus omne profugit.

PHAEDRA

Paelicis careo metu.

NVTRIX

Aderit maritus.

PHAEDRA

Nempe Pirithoi<sup>1</sup> comes?

NVTRIX

Aderitque genitor.

PHAEDRA

Mitis, Ariadnae pater.

NVTRIX

Per has senectae splendidae supplex comas  
fessumque curis pectus et cara ubera  
precor, furorem siste teque ipsa adiuva.  
pars sanitatis velle sanari fuit.

<sup>1</sup> So A: Leo Perithoi.



## HIPPOLYTUS

NURSE

Remember thy father.

PHAEDRA

My mother I remember too.

NURSE

He shuns the whole race of women.

PHAEDRA

Then need I fear no rival.

NURSE

Thy husband will be here.

PHAEDRA

Yes, comrade of Pirithoüs!

NURSE

And thy father will be here.

PHAEDRA

He will be kind, Ariadne's father.

NURSE

By these gleaming locks of age, by this heart,  
worn with care, by these dear breasts, I beg thee  
check this mad love and come to thy own relief. The  
wish for healing has ever been the half of health.

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

## PHAEDRA

Non omnis animo cessit ingenuo pudor. 250  
paremus, altrix. qui regi non vult amor  
vincatur. haud te, fama, maculari sinam.  
haec sola ratio est, unicum effugium mali :  
virum sequamur ; morte praeventam nefas.

## NVTRIX

Moderare, alumna, mentis effrenae impetus,  
animos coerce. dignam ob hoc vita reor  
quod esse temet autumas dignam nece.

## PHAEDRA

Decreta mors est ; quaeritur fati genus.  
laqueone vitam finiam an ferro incubem ?  
an missa praeceps arce Palladia cadam ? 260

## NVTRIX

Sic te senectus nostra praecipiti sinat 262  
perire leto ? siste furibundum impetum.  
haud quisquam ad vitam facile revocari potest.<sup>1</sup>

## PHAEDRA

Prohibere nulla ratio periturum potest  
ubi qui mori constituit et debet mori.  
proin castitatis vindicem armemus manum. 261

## NVTRIX

Solamen annis unicum fessis, era, 267  
si tam protervus incubat menti furor,  
contemne famam : fama vix vero favet,

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA

Not wholly has shame fled from my noble soul. I yield, dear nurse. Let the love which will not be controlled be overcome. Fair fame, I will not suffer thee to be defiled. This is the only way, the one sole escape from evil: let me follow my husband; by death will I forestall my sin.

NURSE

Check, O my child, the rush of thine unbridled spirit; control thy passion. For this cause do I deem thee worthy life, since thou declarest thyself worthy death.

PHAEDRA

I am resolved on death; I seek but the manner of my fate. With the noose shall I end my life, or fall upon the sword? or shall I leap headlong from Pallas' citadel?

NURSE

Can my old age permit thee thus to go headlong to thy death? Resist this mad impulse. No one can easily be recalled to life.

PHAEDRA

No argument can stay from perishing one who has resolved to die and ought to die. Wherefore in protection of my honour let me arm my hand.

NURSE

O mistress, sole comfort of my weary years, if so unruly a passion weighs on thy soul, scorn thou this fame; scarcely doth fame favour truth, being

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

peius merenti melior et peior bono. 270  
 temptemus animum tristem et intractabilem.  
 meus iste labor est aggredi iuvenem ferum  
 mentemque saevam flectere immitis viri.

CHORVS

Diva non miti generata ponto,  
 quam vocat matrem geminus Cupido,  
 impotens flammis simul et sagittis,  
 iste lascivus puer et renidens  
 tela quam certo moderatur arcu!  
 labitur totas furor in medullas  
 igne furtivo populante venas.<sup>1</sup> 280  
 non habet latam data plaga frontem,  
 sed vorat tectas penitus medullas.  
 nulla pax isti puero : per orbem  
 spargit effusas agilis sagittas ;  
 quaeque nascentem videt ora solem,  
 quaeque ad Hesperias iacet ora metas,  
 si qua ferventi subiecta cancro,  
 si qua Parrhasiae glacialis ursae  
 semper errantes patitur colonos,  
 novit hos aestus. iuvenum feroces 290  
 concitat flammis senibusque fessis  
 rursus extinctos revocat calores,  
 virginum ignoto ferit igne pectus  
 et iubet caelo superos relicto  
 vultibus falsis habitare terras.

Thessali Phoebus pecoris magister  
 egit armentum positoque plectro  
 impari tauros calamo vocavit.  
 induit formas quotiens minores  
 ipse qui caelum nebulasque fecit : 300  
 candidas ales modo movit alas,

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes ll. 279, 280.*



## HIPPOLYTUS

better to the worse deserving, worse to the good. Let us test that grim and stubborn soul. Mine is the task to approach the savage youth and bend the cruel man's relentless will.

[*Exeunt into the palace.*]

### CHORUS

Thou goddess, born of the cruel sea, who art called the mother of both Loves,<sup>1</sup> that wanton, smiling boy of thine, reckless alike with torches and with arrows, with how sure bow doth he aim his shafts! His madness steals to the inmost marrow, while with creeping fire he ravages the veins. The wound he deals has no broad front, but it eats its way deep into the hidden marrow. There is no peace with that boy of thine; throughout the world nimbly he scatters his flying shafts. The shore that beholds the new-born sun and the shore that lies at his far western goal, the land lying beneath the burning Crab and the cold region of the Arcadian Bear, which sustains its ever-wandering husbandmen, all know these fires of his. He kindles the fierce flames of youth and in worn-out age he wakes again the extinguished fires; he smites maids' breasts with unknown heat, and bids the very gods leave heaven and dwell on earth in borrowed forms.

<sup>296</sup> Phoebus as keeper of the Thessalian herd<sup>2</sup> drove his cattle along and, laying quill aside, called together his bulls on the unequal reeds. How often did he put on lower forms, even he<sup>3</sup> who made heaven and the clouds: now as a bird he fluttered his white wings

<sup>1</sup> Ἐρως and Ἀντέρως.

<sup>2</sup> Phoebus kept the herds of King Admetus for a year.

<sup>3</sup> Jupiter, who came to Leda in the form of a swan.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

dulcior vocem moriente cygno ; fronte nunc torva petulans iuvenus virginum stravit sua terga ludo, perque fraternos nova regna fluctus ungula lentos imitante remos pectore adverso domuit profundum, pro sua vector timidus rapina. arsit obscuri dea clara mundi nocte deserta nitidosque fratri	310
tradidit currus aliter regendos. ille nocturnas agitare bigas discit et gyro brevior flecti,	313
dum tremunt axes graviore curru ; <sup>1</sup>	316
nec suum tempus tenuere noctes	314
et dies tardo remeavit ortu.	315
natus Alcmena posuit pharetras et minax vasti spoliū leonis, passus aptari digitis zmaragdōs et dari legem rudibus capillis ;	320
crura distincto religavit auro, luteo plantas cohibente socco ; et manu, clavam modo qua gerebat, fila deduxit properante fuso.	
Vidit Persis ditique ferax Lydia regno deiecta feri terga leonis umerisque, quibus sederat alti regia caeli, tenuem Tyrio stamine pallam.	
sacer est ignis (credite laesis) nimiumque potens. qua terra salo cingitur alto quaque per ipsum candida mundum sidera currunt, haec regna tenet puer immitis,	330
<sup>1</sup> Leo has set this line after 313.	

## HIPPOLYTUS

with note sweeter than the dying swan; now with savage front as a wanton bull he lowered his back for the sport of maidens and through the strange kingdom of his brother's waves, using his hoofs in place of pliant oars, he breasted the deep sea and overcame it, a ferryman trembling for the prize<sup>1</sup> he bore. The radiant goddess<sup>2</sup> of the darksome sky burned with love and, forsaking the night, gave her gleaming chariot to her brother to guide in fashion other than his own. He learned to drive the team of night and to wheel in narrower circuit, while the axle groaned beneath the car's heavier weight; nor did the nights keep their accustomed length, and with belated dawning came the day. The son of Alcmena<sup>3</sup> laid by his quiver and the threatening skin of the huge lion, letting emeralds be fitted to his fingers and law be enforced on his rough locks; he bound his legs with cross-garterings of gold and within yellow sandals confined his feet; and in that hand, with which he but now bore the club, he spun out threads with flying spindle.

<sup>325</sup> Persia and the rich, fertile realm of Lydia saw the fierce lion's skin laid aside, and on those shoulders, on which the royal structure of the lofty sky had rested, a gauzy cloak of Tyrian web. 'Tis an accursed fire (believe those who have suffered) and all too powerful. Where the land is encircled by the briny deep, where the bright stars course through heaven itself, over these realms the pitiless boy holds sovereignty, whose shafts are felt in the lowest

<sup>1</sup> Europa, whom the god, in bull-form, carried over the sea to Crete.

<sup>2</sup> Diana, or Luna, the moon-goddess, who was in love with the shepherd, Endymion.

<sup>3</sup> Hercules, smitten with love for Omphale, the Lydian queen.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

spicula cuius sentit in imis  
 caerulus undis grex <sup>1</sup> Nereidum  
 flammamque nequit relevare mari.  
 ignes sentit genus aligerum.  
 Venere instinctus suscipit audax  
 grege pro toto bella iuvenus ; 340  
 si coniugio timuere suo,  
 poscunt timidi proelia cervi. 342  
 tunc virgatas India tigres 344  
 decolor horret ; tunc vulnificos  
 acuit dentes aper et toto est  
 spumeus ore ;  
 Poeni quatiunt colla leones 348  
 et mugitu dant concepti <sup>2</sup> 343  
 signa furoris. cum movit Amor, 343<sup>b</sup> 349  
 tum silva gemit murmure saevo 350  
 amat insani belua ponti  
 Lucaeque boves, vindicat omnem  
 sibi naturam ; nihil immune est,  
 odiumque perit cum iussit Amor.  
 veteres cedunt ignibus irae—  
 quid plura canam ? vincit saevas  
 cura novercas.

Altrix, profare quid feras ; quonam in loco est  
 regina ? saevis ecquis est flammis modus ?

NVTRIX

Spes nulla tantum posse leniri malum, 360  
 finisque flammis nullus insanis erit.  
 torretur aestu tacito et inclusus quoque,  
 quamvis tegatur, proditur vultu furor ;  
 erumpit oculis ignis et lassae genae

<sup>1</sup> So A : *Leo* pervius undis rex.

<sup>2</sup> *Leo* has transposed this line.



## HIPPOLYTUS

depths by the sea-blue throng of Nereids, nor can they ease their heat by ocean's waters. These fires the race of winged creatures feel. Goaded on by love, the bold bull undertakes battle for the whole herd; if they feel that their mates are in danger, timid stags challenge to war. At such a time swart India holds striped tigers in especial fear; at such a time the boar whets his death-dealing tusks and his jaws are covered all with foam; African lions toss their manes and by their roarings give token of their engendered passion. When Love has roused them, then the forest groans with their grim uproar. Love sways the monsters of the raging sea, sways Lucanian bulls,<sup>1</sup> claims as his own all nature; nothing is exempt, and hate perishes at the command of Love. Old grudges yield unto his fires. Why tell of more? Love's cares o'erwhelm harsh stepmothers

[*Enter NURSE from the inner palace.*]

<sup>358</sup> Nurse, tell the news thou bearest. How stands it with the queen? Hath her fierce flame any bound?

### NURSE

No hope is there that such suffering can be relieved, and no end will there be to her mad fires. She is parched by a silent fever, and e'en though 'tis hidden away, shut in her heart, her passion is betrayed in her face; fire darts from her eyes; again, her weary gaze shrinks from the light; nothing

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* elephants, so called because Italy first saw elephants in Lucania, in the war with Pyrrhus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

lucem recusant, nil idem dubiae placet  
 artusque varie iactat incertus dolor.  
 nunc ut soluto labitur moriens gradu  
 et vix labante sustinet collo caput,  
 nunc se quieti reddit et, somni immemor,  
 noctem querelis ducit; attolli iubet  
 iterumque poni corpus et solvi comas  
 rursusque fingi; semper impatiens sui  
 mutatur habitus. nulla iam Cereris subit  
 cura aut salutis; vadit incerto pede,  
 iam viribus defecta, non idem vigor,  
 non ora tinguens nitida purpureus rubor;  
 populatur artus cura, iam gressus tremunt  
 tenerque nitidi corporis cecidit decor.<sup>1</sup>  
 et qui ferebant signa Phoebeae facis  
 oculi nihil gentile nec patrium micant.  
 lacrimae cadunt per ora et assiduo genae  
 rore irrigantur, qualiter Tauri iugis  
 tepido madescunt imbri percussae nives.  
 Sed en, patescunt regiae fastigia.  
 reclinis ipsa sedis auratae toro  
 solitos amictus mente non sana abnuit.

370

380

PHAEDRA

Removete, famulae, purpura atque auro inlitas  
 vestes, procul sit muricis Tyrii rubor,  
 quae fila ramis ultimi Seres legunt.  
 brevis expeditos zona constringat sinus,  
 cervix monili vacua, nec niveus lapis  
 deducat aures, Indici donum maris;  
 odore crinis sparsus Assyrio vacet.  
 sic temere iactae colla perfundant comae

390

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes ll. 377, 378*

## HIPPOLYTUS

long pleases her unbalanced soul, and her limbs by ever-shifting pangs are tossed in changeful wise. Now with failing steps she sinks down as if dying, and can hardly hold up her head on her fainting neck; now she lies down to rest and, heedless of slumber, spends the night in lamentations; she bids them to lift her up and again to lay her down, to loose her hair and again to bind it up; her raiment, with itself dissatisfied, is ever changed. She has now no care for food or health. She walks with aimless feet, wasted now in strength. Her old-time sprightliness is gone, and the ruddy glow of health no longer shines on her bright face; care feeds upon her limbs, her steps totter and the tender grace of her once beautiful form is fallen away; her eyes, which once shone like Phoebus' torch, no longer gleam with their ancestral fire. Tears fall down her face and her cheeks are wet with constant drops, as when on the top of Taurus the snows melt away, pierced by a warm shower.

<sup>384</sup> But see, the palace doors are opening, and she herself, lying on golden couch, all sick of soul, rejects her wonted garments.

### PHAEDRA

Away, ye slaves, with robes bedecked with purple and with gold; away, scarlet of the Tyrian shell, the webs<sup>1</sup> which the far-off Seres gather from the trees. Let a narrow girdle hold in my garments' unencumbering folds, let there be no necklace at my throat, let no snowy pearls, the gift of India's ocean, weigh down my ears, and let my hair hang loose, unscented by Assyrian nard. So, tossed at random,

<sup>1</sup> A reference to silk and the culture of the silkworm by the Seres, supposed to be the Chinese.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

umerosque summos, cursibus motae citis  
 ventos sequantur. laeva se pharetrae dabit,  
 hastile vibret dextra Thessalicum manus.<sup>1</sup> 397  
 qualis relictis frigidi Ponti plagis 399  
 egit catervas Atticum pulsans solum 400  
 Tanaitis aut Maeotis et nodo comas  
 coegit emisitque, lunata latus  
 protecta pelta ; talis in silvas ferar.

### CHORVS

Sepone questus ; non levat miseros dolor ;  
 agreste placa virginis numen deae.

### NVTRIX

Regina nemorum, sola quae montes colis  
 et una solis montibus coleris dea,  
 converte tristes ominum in melius minas.  
 o magna silvas inter et lucos dea  
 clarumque caeli sidus et noctis decus, 410  
 cuius relucet mundus alterna vice,  
 Hecate triformis, en ades coeptis favens.  
 animum rigentem tristis Hippolyti doma ;  
 det facilis aures. mitiga pectus ferum ;  
 amare discat, mutuos ignes ferat.  
 innecte mentem ; torvus aversus ferox  
 in iura Veneris redeat. huc vires tuas  
 intende ; sic te lucidi vultus ferant  
 et nube rupta cornibus puris eas,  
 sic te regentem frena nocturni aetheris 420  
 detrahare numquam Thessali cantus queant

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes* : talis severi mater Hippolyti fuit. 398



## HIPPOLYTUS

let my locks fall down upon my neck and shoulders and, moved by swift running, stream upon the wind. My left hand shall be busied with the quiver and my right wield a Thessalian spear. In such guise as the dweller by Tanaïs or Maeotis,<sup>1</sup> leaving cold Pontus' tract behind, led her hordes, treading Athenian soil, and, binding her locks in a knot, let them flow free, her side protected by a crescent shield; so will I betake me to the woods.

### CHORUS

Cease thy complainings; grieving helps not the wretched. Appease the rustic divinity of our virgin goddess.

### NURSE

O queen of groves, thou who in solitude lovest thy mountain-haunts, and who upon the solitary mountains art alone held holy, change for the better these dark, ill-omened threats. O great goddess of the woods and groves, bright orb of heaven, glory of the night, by whose changing beams the universe shines clear, O three-formed Hecate, lo, thou art at hand, favouring our undertaking. Conquer the unbending soul of stern Hippolytus; may he, compliant, give ear unto our prayer. Soften his fierce heart; may he learn to love, may he feel answering flames. Ensnare his mind; grim, hostile, fierce, may he turn him back unto the fealty of love. To this end direct thy powers; so mayst thou wear a shining face and, the clouds all scattered, fare on with undimmed horns; so, when thou drivest thy car through the nightly skies, may no witcheries of Thessaly prevail

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* any woman of the race of Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nullusque de te gloriam pastor ferat.

ades invocata, iam fave votis, dea.

Ipsum intuor solemne venerantem sacrum  
 nullo latus comitante—quid dubitas? dedit  
 tempus locumque casus; utendum artibus.  
 trepidamus? haud est facile mandatum scelus  
 audere, verum iussa qui regis timet,  
 deponat omne et pellat ex animo decus;  
 malus est minister regii imperii pudor.

430

HIPPOLYTUS

Quid huc seniles fessa moliris gradus,  
 o fida nutrix, turbidam frontem gerens  
 et maesta vultu? sospes est certe parens  
 sospesque Phaedra stirpis et geminae iugum?

NUTRIX

Metus remitte. prospero regnum in statu est  
 domusque florens sorte felici viget.  
 sed tu beatis mitior rebus veni;  
 namque anxiam me cura sollicitat tui,  
 quod te ipse poenis gravibus infestus domas.  
 quem fata cogunt, ille cum venia est miser;  
 at si quis ultro se malis offert volens  
 seque ipse torquet, perdere est dignus bona  
 quis nescit uti. potius annorum memor  
 mentem relaxa; noctibus festis facem  
 attolle, curas Bacchus exoneret graves.

440

## HIPPOLYTUS

to drag thee down and may no shepherd<sup>1</sup> make boast o'er thee. Be near, goddess, in answer to our call; hear now our prayers.

[HIPPOLYTUS is seen approaching.]

<sup>424</sup> The man himself I see, coming to perform thy sacred rites, no comrade at his side. [*To herself.*] Why dost thou hesitate? Chance has given thee both time and place. Thou must employ thy arts. Why do I tremble? 'Tis no easy task to dare a crime bidden by another, but whoso fears a sovereign's behests must lay aside and banish from his heart all thought of honour; shame is but an ill servant of a sovereign's commands.

## HIPPOLYTUS

Why dost hither wend wearily thy aged steps, O faithful nurse, with troubled brow and face dejected? Surely my sire is safe, Phaedra is safe, and their two sons?

## NURSE

Banish thy fear. The realm is in prosperous state, thy house is strong, flourishing under the smile of Heaven. But in this happy lot do thou show thyself less harsh; for distress for thee harasses my anxious heart, seeing that thou in thine own despite dost break thyself with heavy penances. If fate compels, 'tis pardonable to be wretched; but whoso of his own accord surrenders himself to misery and causes his own torment, he deserves to lose the happiness he knows not how to use. Nay, remember thy youth and relax thy spirit; go out o' nights, raising the festal torch; let Bacchus unburden thy weighty cares.

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to Endymion.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Aetate fruere ; mobili cursu fugit.  
 nunc facile pectus, grata nunc iuveni Venus.  
 exultet animus. cur toro viduo iacēs ?  
 tristem iuventam solve ; nunc luxus <sup>1</sup> rape,  
 effunde habenas, optimos vitae dies 450  
 effluere prohibe. propria descripsit deus  
 officia et aevum per suos duxit gradus ;  
 laetitia iuvenem, frons decet tristis senem.  
 quid te coherces et necas rectam indolem ?  
 seges illa magnum fenus agricolae dabit  
 quaecumque laetis tenera luxuriat satis,  
 arborque celso vertice evincet nemus  
 quam non maligna caedit aut resecat manus.  
 ingenia melius recta se in laudes ferunt,  
 si nobilem animum vegeta libertas alit. 460  
 Truculentus et silvester ac vitae inscius  
 tristem iuventam Venere deserta coles ?  
 hoc esse munus credis indictum viris,  
 ut dura tolerant, cursibus domitent equos  
 et saeva bella Marte sanguineo gerant ?  
 quam varia leti genera mortalem trahunt 475  
 carpuntque turbam, pontus et ferrum et doli !  
 sed ista credas desse : sic atram Styga  
 iam petimus ultro. caelibem vitam probet  
 sterilis iuventus ; hoc erit, quidquid vides,  
 unius aevi turba et in semet ruet. 480  
 providit ille maximus mundi parens, 466  
 cum tam rapaces cerneret Fati manus,  
 ut damna semper subole repararet nova.  
 excedat agedum rebus humanis Venus,  
 quae supplet ac restituit exhaustum genus : 470  
 orbis iacebit squalido turpis situ,  
 vacuum sine ullis piscibus stabit mare

<sup>1</sup> *So A : Leo cursus.*



## HIPPOLYTUS

<sup>446</sup> Enjoy thy life ; 'tis speeding swift away. Now hearts are light, now love to youth is pleasing. Let thy heart rejoice. Why dost lie on a lonely couch ? Free thy youth from gloom ; lay hold on pleasures ; loosen the reins ; let not life's best days escape thee. God has portioned out its proper duties to each time of life and led this span of ours through its own stages ; joy befits the young, a serious face the old. Why dost hold thyself in check and strangle thy true nature ? That crop will give to the farmer the best return which in the tender blade runs riot with joyous growth, and that tree with lofty head will overtop the grove which no grudging hand cuts down or prunes away. So will right minds be reared unto a richer fruit of praise, if sprightly freedom nourish the high-born soul.

<sup>461</sup> Wilt thou, as a harsh woods-dweller, ignorant of life, spend thy youth in gloom and let Venus be forgot ? Is it man's allotted task, thinkst thou, to endure hardship, curb horses in their swift course, and wage savage wars in bloody battles ? How various are the forms of death that seize and feed on mortal throngs ! the sea, the steel and treachery ! But suppose these lacking : by thy path we make wantonly for murky death. The unwedded life let barren youth applaud ; then will all that thou beholdest be the throng of one generation only and will fall in ruins on itself. In his providence did yonder almighty father of the universe, when he saw how greedy were the hands of Fate, give heed ever by fresh progeny to make losses good. Come now, let love but be banished from human life, love, which supplies and renews the impoverished race : the whole globe will lie foul in vile neglect ; the sea will stand empty of its fish ; birds will be lacking to the heavens, wild beasts to the woods, and

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

alesque caelo derit et silvis fera,  
 solis et aer pervius ventis erit. 474  
 proinde vitae sequere naturam ducem ; 481  
 urbem frequenta, civium coetum cole.

### HIPPOLYTUS

Non alia magis est libera et vitio carens  
 ritusque melius vita quae priscos colat,  
 quam quae relictis moenibus silvas amat.  
 non illum avarae mentis inflamat furor  
 qui se dicavit montium insontem iugis,  
 non aura populi et vulgus infidum bonis,  
 non pestilens invidia, non fragilis favor ;  
 non ille regno servit aut regno imminens 490  
 vanos honores sequitur aut fluxas opes,  
 spei metusque liber, haud illum niger  
 edaxque livor dente degeneri petit ;  
 nec scelera populos inter atque urbes sata  
 novit nec omnes conscius strepitus pavet  
 aut verba fingit ; mille non quaerit tegi  
 dives columnis nec trabes multo insolens  
 suffigit auro ; non cruor largus pias  
 inundat aras, fruge nec sparsi sacra  
 centena nivei colla summittunt boves ; 500  
 sed rure vacuo potitur et aperto aethere  
 innocuus errat.

Callidas tantum feris  
 struxisse fraudes novit et fessus gravi  
 labore niveo corpus Iliso foveat.  
 nunc ille ripam celeris Alphei legit,  
 nunc nemoris alti densa metatur loca,  
 ubi Lerna puro gelida perlucet vado,  
 sedesque mutas ; hinc aves querulae fremunt  
 ornique ventis lene percussae tremunt

356

## HIPPOLYTUS

the paths of air will be traversed only by the winds. Follow, then, nature as life's guide; frequent the city; seek out the haunts of men.

### HIPPOLYTUS

There is no life so free and innocent, none which better cherishes the ancient ways, than that which, forsaking cities, loves the woods. His heart is inflamed by no mad greed of gain who has devoted himself to harmless ranging on the mountain-tops; here is no shouting populace, no mob, faithless to good men, no poisonous hate, no brittle favour. No slave is he of kings, nor in quest of kingship does he chase empty honours or elusive wealth; him, free alike from hope and fear, venomous spite assails not with the bite of base-born tooth; those crimes that spawn midst the city's teeming throngs he does not know, nor in guilty consciousness does he quake at every sound, or frame lying words. He seeks not in pride of wealth to be sheltered by a roof reared on a thousand pillars, nor in insolence plates he with much gold his rafter-beams. No streams of blood drench his pious altars, no hecatombs of snow-white bullocks, sprinkled with the sacred meal, bend low their necks; but his lordship is over the empty fields, and beneath the open sky he wanders blameless.

<sup>502</sup> His only craft is to set cunning snares for the wild beasts, and, when weary with hard toil, he refreshes his body in Ilissos' stream, chilled by the snows. Now he fares along the bank of swift-flowing Alpheus, now traverses the lofty grove's deep places, where cool Lerna is transparent with its crystal shoals, and the silent forest-depths, wherein the complaining birds make music, and the ash-trees and ancient beeches quiver, moving gently in the breeze.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

veteresque fagi. iuvit aut amnis vagi  
 pressisse ripas, caespite aut nudo leves  
 duxisse somnos, sive fons largus citas  
 defundit undas sive per flores novos  
 fugiente dulcis murmurat rivo sonus. 510

Excussa silvis poma compescunt famem  
 et fraga parvis vulsa dumetis cibos  
 faciles ministrant. regios luxus procul  
 est impetus fugisse. sollicito bibunt  
 auro superbi; quam iuvat nuda manu  
 captasse fontem! certior somnus premit 520  
 securo duro membra versantem toro.  
 non in recessu furta et obscuro improbus  
 quaerit cubili seque multiplici timens  
 domo recondit; aethera ac lucem petit  
 et teste caelo vivit.

Hoc equidem reor  
 vixisse ritu prima quos mixtos deis  
 profudit aetas. nullus his auri fuit  
 caecus cupido, nullus in campo sacer  
 divisit agros arbiter populis lapis;  
 nondum secabant credulae pontum rates; 530  
 sua quisque norat maria. non vasto aggere  
 crebraque turre cinxerant urbes latus;  
 non arma saeva miles aptabat manu  
 nec torta clausas fregerat saxo gravi  
 ballista portas, iussa nec dominum pati  
 iuncto ferebat terra servitium bove;  
 sed arva per se feta poscentes nihil  
 pavere gentes, silva nativas opes  
 et opaca dederant antra nativas domos.

Rupere foedus impius lucri furor 540  
 et ira praeceps quaeque succensas agit  
 libido mentes; venit imperii sitis  
 cruenta, factus praeda maiori minor,  
 358



## HIPPOLYTUS

Sweet it is to lie on the bank of some vagrant stream, or on the bare sward to quaff light-stealing slumbers, be it where some copious spring pours down its hurrying waters, or through budding flowers some brook murmurs sweetly as it glides along.

<sup>515</sup> Fruit shaken from the forest trees stays his hunger, and berries plucked from the low bushes afford an easy meal. It is his passion to flee far from royal luxury. 'Tis from anxious cups of gold that the proud drink! how sweet to catch up with the bare hand the water of the spring! Here slumber more surely soothes as he lays him down, care-free, on his hard bed. He guiltily plots no stealthy deeds in secret chamber and on a hidden couch, nor hides fearfully away in his labyrinthine palace; 'tis the air and light he seeks, and his life has heaven for its witness.

<sup>525</sup> 'Twas in such wise, methinks, they lived whom the primal age produced, in friendly intercourse with gods. They had no blind love of gold; no sacred boundary-stone, judging betwixt peoples, separated fields on the spreading plain; not yet did rash vessels plough the sea; each man knew only his native waters. Then cities were not surrounded with massive walls, set with many towers; no soldier applied his fierce hand to arms, nor did hurling engines burst through closed gates with heavy stones. Not yet did earth, suffering a master's rule, endure the hard toil of the yoked ox; but the fields, fruitful of themselves, fed nations who asked nothing more; the woods gave men their natural wealth, and shady caves afforded natural homes.

<sup>540</sup> Unholy passion for gain broke up this peaceful life, headlong wrath, and lust which sets men's hearts aflame. Next came cruel thirst for power; the weaker was made the stronger's prey, and might

## [SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

pro iure vires esse. tum primum manu  
 bellare nuda<sup>1</sup> saxaque et ramos rudes  
 vertere in arma. non erat gracili levis  
 armata ferro cornus aut longo latus  
 mucrone cingens ensis aut crista procul  
 galeae comantes; tela faciebat dolor.  
 invenit artes bellicus Mavors novas 550  
 et mille formas mortis. hinc terras cruor  
 infecit omnes fusus et rubuit mare.  
 tum scelera dempto fine per cunctas domos  
 iere, nullum caruit exemplo nefas.  
 a fratre frater, dextera nati parens  
 cecidit, maritus coniugis ferro iacet  
 perimuntque fetus impiae matres suos.  
 taceo novercam; mitior nil est feris.  
 sed dux malorum femina; haec scelerum artifex 560  
 obsedit animos, huius incestis stupris  
 fumant tot urbes, bella tot gentes gerunt  
 et versa ab imo regna tot populos premunt.  
 sileantur aliae; sola coniunx Aegei,  
 Medea, reddet feminas dirum genus.

## NVTRIX

Cur omnium fit culpa paucarum scelus?

## HIPPOLYTUS

Detestor omnes, horreo fugio execror.  
 sit ratio, sit natura, sit dirus furor,  
 odisse placuit. ignibus iunges aquas  
 et amica ratibus ante promittet vada  
 incerta Syrtis, ante ab extremo sinu 570  
 Hesperia Tethys lucidum attollet diem

<sup>1</sup> *Leo comments: post nuda hoc fere desideramus: tela tum saeva manu | aptare adorti.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

took the place of right. At first men fought with naked fists, [next they began to lay hand to deadly weapons<sup>1</sup>] and turned stones and rough clubs to the use of arms. As yet there was no light cornel-shaft, tipped with tapering iron; no long, sharp-pointed sword hung at the side; no helmets crested with plumes gleamed from afar; rage furnished arms. War-like Mars invented new modes of strife and a thousand forms of death. From this source streams of blood stained all lands and the sea grew red. Then crime stalked unchecked through every home and no impious deed lacked precedent. Brother was slain by brother, father by the hand of son, husband lay dead by the sword of wife, and unnatural mothers destroyed their own offspring. I say naught of stepmothers; they are no whit more merciful than the beasts. But the leader of all wickedness is woman; 'tis she, cunning mistress of crime, besets our minds; 'tis by her foul adulteries so many cities smoke, so many nations war, so many peoples lie crushed beneath the ruins of their kingdoms, utterly o'erthrown. Let others be unnamed; Aegeus' wife alone, Medea, will prove that women are an accursed race.

### NURSE

Why make the crime of few the blame of all?

### HIPPOLYTUS

I abominate them all, I dread, shun, curse them all. Be it reason, be it instinct, be it wild rage: 'tis my joy to hate them. Sooner shall you mate fire and water, sooner shall the dangerous Syrtes offer to ships a friendly passage, sooner shall Tethys from

<sup>1</sup> Translating Leo's suggested interpolation.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et ora dammis blanda praebebunt lupi,  
quam victus animum feminae mitem geram.

### NVTRIX

Saepe obstinatis induit frenos Amor  
et odia mutat. regna materna aspice ;  
illae feroces sentiunt Veneris iugum.  
testaris istud unicus gentis puer.

### HIPPOLYTUS

Solamen unum matris amissae fero,  
odisse quod iam feminas omnes licet.

### NVTRIX

Vt dura cautes undique intractabilis 580  
resistit undis et lacescentes aquas  
longe remittit, verba sic spernit mea.

Sed Phaedra praeceps graditur, impatiens morae.  
quo se dabit fortuna ? quo verget furor ?  
terrae repente corpus exanimum accidit  
et ora morti similis obduxit color.  
attolle vultus, dimove vocis moras.  
tuus en, alumna, temet Hippolytus tenet.



## HIPPOLYTUS

her far western shore bring in bright dawn, and  
wolves gaze on does with eyes caressing, than I, my  
hate o'ercome, have kindly thought for woman.

### NURSE

Oft-times doth Love put curb on stubborn hearts  
and change their hate. Look at thy mother's king-  
dom; those warlike women feel the yoke of Venus.  
Thou bearest witness to this, of her race the only  
son.<sup>1</sup>

### HIPPOLYTUS

I count it the one solace for my lost mother, that  
now I may hate all womankind.

### NURSE [*aside*]

As some hard crag, on all sides unassailable, resists  
the waves, and flings far back the flood importunate,  
so does he spurn my words.

<sup>583</sup> But Phaedra is hurrying towards us, impatient  
of delay. Whither will fortune go? Whither will  
madness tend?

[*PHAEDRA enters and falls as in a swoon.*]

Her fainting body has fallen suddenly to earth and  
death-like pallor has overspread her face.

[*HIPPOLYTUS hastens to raise her in his arms.*]

Lift thy face, break silence. See, my daughter, thine  
own Hippolytus embraces thee.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the Amazons were accustomed to kill all  
boys born to them. Hippolytus, being the son of Theseus, had  
been spared.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

PHAEDRA

Quis me dolori reddit atque aestus graves  
reponit animo? quam bene excideram mihi! 590

HIPPOLYTUS

Cur dulce munus redditae lucis fugis?

PHAEDRA

Aude, anime, tempta, perage mandatum tuum.  
intrepida constant verba; qui timide rogat  
docet negare. magna pars sceleris mei  
olim peracta est; serus est nobis pudor—  
amavimus nefanda. si coepta exsequor,  
forsan iugali crimen abscondam face.  
honestam quaedam scelera successus facit.  
en incipe, anime!—Commodus paulum, precor,  
secretus aures. si quis est abeat comes. 600

HIPPOLYTUS

En locus ab omni liber arbitrio vacat.

PHAEDRA

Sed ora coeptis transitum verbis negant;  
vis magna vocem mittit et maior tenet.  
vos testor omnes, caelites, hoc quod volo<sup>1</sup>— 604

HIPPOLYTUS

Animusne cupiens aliquid effari nequit? 606

<sup>1</sup> Leo deletes the fragmentary line (605): me nolle.

## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA [*recovering*]

Who gives me back to grief and again sets in my soul this fever dire? How blest was my unconsciousness of self!

HIPPOLYTUS

Why dost thou shun the sweet boon of life restored?

PHAEDRA [*aside*]

Courage! my soul, essay, fulfil thine own behest. Fearless be thy words, and firm; who makes timid request, invites denial. The chief part of my guilt is long since accomplished; too late for me is modesty—I *have* loved basely. If I follow up what I have begun, perchance I may hide my sin behind the marriage torch. Success makes some sins honest. Come now, my soul, begin! [*To HIP- POLYTUS.*] Lend ear to me privately a little while, I pray. If any comrade of thine is here, let him withdraw.

HIPPOLYTUS

Behold, the place is free from all witnesses.

PHAEDRA

But my lips refuse passage to the words I seek to frame; some strong power urges me to speak, and a stronger holds me back. I call you all to witness, you heavenly powers, that what I wish—

HIPPOLYTUS

Thy heart desires somewhat and cannot tell it out?

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

PHAEDRA

Curae leves locuntur, ingentes stupent.

HIPPOLYTUS

Committe curas auribus, mater, meis.

PHAEDRA

Matris superbum est nomen et nimium potens ;  
nostros humiliter nomen affectus decet ; 610  
me vel sororem, Hippolyte, vel famulam voca,  
famulamque potius ; omne servitium feram.  
non me per altas ire si iubeas nives,  
pigeat gelatis ingredi Pindi iugis ;  
non, si per ignes ire et infesta agmina,  
cuncter paratis ensibus pectus dare.  
mandata recipe sceptrum, me famulam accipe ;  
te imperia regere, me decet iussa exsequi <sup>1</sup>  
muliebri non est regna tutari urbium ;  
tu qui iuventae flore primaevae viges 620  
cives paterno fortis imperio rege,  
sinu receptam supplicem ac servam tege.  
miserere viduae—

HIPPOLYTUS

Summus hoc omen deus  
avertat ! aderit sospes actutum parens.

PHAEDRA

Regni tenacis dominus et tacitae Stygis  
nullam relictos fecit ad superos viam ;

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*



## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA

Light troubles speak; the weighty are struck dumb.

HIPPOLYTUS

Entrust thy troubles to my ears, my mother.

PHAEDRA

Mother—that name is too proud and high; a humbler name better suits my feelings. Call me sister, Hippolytus, or slave—yes, slave is better; I will endure all servitude. Shouldst thou bid me walk through deep-drifted snows, I would not shrink from faring along the cold peaks of Pindus; shouldst thou send me through fire and midst deadly battle ranks, I would not hesitate to offer my breast to naked swords. Take thou in my stead the sceptre committed to my care, accept me for thy slave; it becomes thee to bear sway, me, to obey thine orders. It is no woman's task to watch o'er royal cities. Do thou, in the vigour of thy youth's first bloom, rule o'er the citizens, strong in thy father's power; take to thine arms thy suppliant, and protect thy slave. Pity my widowhood—

HIPPOLYTUS

The most high God avert that omen! In safety will my father soon return.

PHAEDRA

The overlord of the fast-holding realm and of the silent Styx has made no way to the upper world

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

thalami remittet ille raptorem sui?—  
nisi forte amor placidus et Pluton sedet.

HIPPOLYTUS

Illum quidem aequi caelites reducem dabunt.  
sed dum tenebit vota in incerto deus, 630  
pietate caros debita fratres colam  
et te merebor esse ne viduam putes  
ac tibi parentis ipse supplebo locum.

PHAEDRA

O spes amantum credula, o fallax Amor!  
satisne dixit? <sup>1</sup> precibus admotis agam.  
Miserere, tacitae mentis exaudi preces—  
libet loqui pigetque.

HIPPOLYTUS

Quodnam istud malum est?

PHAEDRA

Quod in novercam cadere vix credas malum.

HIPPOLYTUS

Ambigua voce verba perplexa iacis;  
effare aperte.

<sup>1</sup> So A: Leo dixi.

## HIPPOLYTUS

once quitted; and will he let the robber<sup>1</sup> of his couch go back? Unless, perchance, even Pluto sits smiling upon love!

### HIPPOLYTUS

Him surely the kindly deities will bring again. But while God still holds our prayers in doubt, with due affection will I care for my dear brothers, and so deserve of thee that thou shalt not deem thee widowed, and myself will fill for thee my father's place.

### PHAEDRA [*aside*]

O credulous hope of lovers, O deceitful love! Has he not said enough? I'll bring my prayers to bear upon him and attack.

### [*To* HIPPOLYTUS.]

<sup>636</sup> Have pity! hearken to the prayers my heart may not express. I long—and am ashamed—to speak.

### HIPPOLYTUS

What, pray, is this thy trouble?

### PHAEDRA

A trouble thou wouldst scarce believe could befall a stepmother.

### HIPPOLYTUS

Words of doubtful meaning thou utterest with riddling lips. Speak out and plainly.

<sup>1</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Pirithoüs," and l. 98, note.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

### PHAEDRA

640

Pectus insanum vapor  
 amorque torret. intimis fervet ferus <sup>1</sup>  
 visceribus ignis mersus et venas latens  
 ut agilis altas flamma percurrit trabes.

643

### HIPPOLYTUS

Amore nempe Thesei casto furis?

### PHAEDRA

Hippolyte, sic est : Thesei vultus amo  
 illos priores quos tulit quondam puer,  
 cum prima puras barba signaret genas  
 monstrique caecam Cnosii vidit domum  
 et longa curva fila collegit via. 650  
 quis tum ille fulsit ! presserant vittae comam  
 et ora flavus tenera tinguebat pudor ;  
 inerant lacertis mollibus fortes tori ;  
 tuaeque Phoebes vultus aut Phoebi mei,  
 tuusque potius—talis, en talis fuit  
 cum placuit hosti, sic tulit celsum caput.  
 in te magis refulget incomptus decor ;  
 est genitor in te totus et torvae tamen  
 pars aliqua matris miscet ex aequo decus ;  
 in ore Graio Scythicus apparet rigor. 660  
 si cum parente Creticum intrasses fretum,  
 tibi fila potius nostra nevisset soror.  
 te, te, soror, quacumque siderei poli  
 in parte fulges, invoco ad causam parem.  
 domus sorores una corripuit duas :  
 te genitor, at me natus.

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes l. 642* : penitus medullas atque per venas  
 meat.



## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA

'Tis burning love scorches my maddened heart. A hot fire glows deep in my inmost vitals and hides darkly in my veins, as when nimble flames dart through deep-set timbers.

HIPPOLYTUS

'Tis with pure love for Theseus thou dost burn?

PHAEDRA

Hippolytus, 'tis thus with me: Theseus' features I love, those former looks of his which once as a youth he had, when his first beard marked his smooth cheeks, when he looked on the dark home of the Cretan monster, and gathered in the long thread o'er the winding way. How glorious was he then! Fillets bound his locks, and his young face glowed with the blush of modesty; strong muscles lay beneath the softness of his arms; and his features were as of thy Phoebe or of my Phoebus—or, rather, were thy own. Such, yes, such was he when he won his foeman's<sup>1</sup> favour; just so he bore his head erect. In thee more brightly shines a beauty unadorned; all of thy sire is in thee, and yet some portion of thy mother's sternness blends with an equal charm; on Grecian face shows Scythian austerity. If with thy father thou hadst come to the shores of Crete, for thee and not for him would my sister have spun the thread. Thee, thee, O sister, wherever amidst the starry heavens thou shinest, I call to aid for a cause like to thine own. One house has ruined two sisters: thee, the father, but me, the son.

[*She kneels to* HIPPOLYTUS.]

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Ariadne, daughter of the foe of Athens.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

En supplex iacet

adlapsa genibus regiae proles domus.  
 respersa nulla labe et intacta, innocens  
 tibi mutor uni. certa descendi ad preces ;  
 finem hic dolori faciet aut vitae dies.  
 miserere amantis—

670

HIPPOLYTUS

Magne regnator deum,  
 tam lentus audis scelera ? tam lentus vides ?  
 et quando saeva fulmen emittes manu,  
 si nunc serenum est ? omnis impulsus ruat  
 aether et atris nubibus condat diem,  
 ac versa retro sidera obliquos agant  
 retorta cursus. tuque, sidereum caput,  
 radiate Titan, tu nefas stirpis tuae  
 speculari ? lucem merge et in tenebras fuge.  
 cur dextra, divum rector atque hominum, vacat 680  
 tua nec trisulca mundus ardescit face ?  
 in me tona, me fige, me velox cremet  
 transactus ignis. sum nocens, merui mori ;  
 placui novercae.

Dignus en stupris ego ?  
 scelerique tanto visus ego solus tibi  
 materia facilis ? hoc meus meruit rigor ?  
 o scelere vincens omne femineum genus,  
 o maius ausa matre monstrifera malum <sup>1</sup>  
 genetrice peior ! illa se tantum stupro  
 contaminavit, et tamen tacitum diu  
 crimen bifirmi partus exhibuit nota  
 scelusque matris arguit vultu truci  
 ambiguus infans—ille te venter tulit.

690

<sup>1</sup> Leo deletes this line.

## HIPPOLYTUS

<sup>666</sup> See, a king's daughter lies fallen at thy knees, a suppliant. Without spot or stain, pure, innocent, I am changed for thee alone. With fixed purpose have I humbled myself to prayer; this day shall bring an end either to my misery or my life. Have pity on her who loves—

### HIPPOLYTUS

Great ruler of the gods, dost thou so calmly hear crimes, so calmly look upon them? And when wilt thou send forth thy thunderbolt with angry hand, if now 'tis cloudless? Let all the sky fall in shattered ruin, and in murky clouds hide the day; let the stars be turned backward and, wrenched aside, go athwart their courses. And thou, star of stars, O radiant Sun, dost thou behold this shame of thy race? Hide thy light and take refuge in darkness. Why is thy right hand empty, O ruler of gods and men? why is not the world in flames by thy forked lightning? Me let thy thunder smite, pierce me, me let thy swift-darting fire consume. I am guilty, I have deserved to die; I have stirred my stepmother to love.

[*To PHAEDRA.*]

<sup>684</sup> Look thou! Am I fitted for adulteries? For such crime did I alone seem to thee an easy instrument? Hath my austerity earned this? O thou, who hast outsin'd the whole race of women, who hast dared a greater evil than thy monster-bearing mother, thou worse than she who bore thee! She did but pollute herself with her shameful lust, and yet her offspring by its two-shaped infamy displayed her crime, though long concealed, and by his fierce visage the hybrid child made clear his mother's guilt. That was the womb that bore thee. Oh,

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

o ter quaterque prospero fato dati  
 quos hausit et peremit et leto dedit  
 odium dolusque. genitor, invideo tibi ;  
 Colchide noverca maius haec, maius malum est.

PHAEDRA

Et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus :  
 fugienda petimus ; sed mei non sum potens.  
 te vel per ignes, per mare insanum sequar  
 rupesque et amnes, unda quos torrens rapit ;  
 quacumque gressus tuleris hac amens agar—  
 iterum, superbe, genibus advolvor tuis.

700

HIPPOLYTUS

Procul impudicos corpore a casto amove  
 tactus. quid hoc est ? etiam in amplexus ruit ?  
 stringatur ensis, merita supplicia exigat.  
 en impudicum crine contorto caput  
 laeva reflexi. iustior numquam focus  
 datus tuis est sanguis, arquitenens dea.

PHAEDRA

Hippolyte, nunc me compotem voti facis ;  
 sanas furentem. maius hoc voto meo est,  
 salvo ut pudore manibus immoriar tuis.

710

HIPPOLYTUS

Abscede, vive ne quid exores, et hic  
 contactus ensis deserat castum latus.



## HIPPOLYTUS

thrice and again blest of fate are they whom hatred and treachery have destroyed, consumed, and given unto death ! O father, I envy thee ; than thy Colchian stepdame <sup>1</sup> this is a curse, greater, greater far !

### PHAEDRA

I, too, recognize the fortune of my house : we seek what we should shun ; but I am not mistress of myself. Thee even through fire, through the mad sea will I pursue, yes, over crags and rivers, swollen by torrent streams ; where'er thou shalt direct thy steps, there will I madly rush. Once more, proud man, I grovel at thy feet.

### HIPPOLYTUS

Away with thy impure touch from my chaste body ! What ? Even rush into my arms ! Out, sword, and mete her just punishment. See, with left hand in her twisted hair have I bent back her shameless head. Never has blood been more justly spilled upon thy altar, O goddess of the bow.

### PHAEDRA

Hippolytus, now dost thou grant me fulfilment of my prayer ; thou healest me of my madness. This is beyond my prayer, that, with my honour saved, 'tis by thy hands I die.

[*She grasps the sword and points it at her breast.*]

### HIPPOLYTUS

Begone, live, lest thou have thy wish ; and let this sword, polluted by thy touch, quit my chaste side.

[*He throws his sword from him.*]

<sup>1</sup> Medea, who had tried to murder Theseus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quis eluet me Tanais aut quae barbaris  
 Maeotis undis Pontico incumbens mari?  
 non ipse toto magnus Oceano pater  
 tantum expiarit sceleris. o silvae, o ferae!

NVTRIX

Deprensa culpa est. anime, quid segnis stupes?  
 regeramus ipsi crimen atque ultro impiam 720.  
 Venerem arguamus. scelere velandum est scelus  
 tutissimum est inferre, cum timeas, gradum.  
 ausae priores simus an passae nefas,  
 secreta cum sit culpa, quis testis sciet?

Adeste, Athenae! fida famulorum manus,  
 fer opem! nefandi raptor Hippolytus stupri  
 instat premitque, mortis intentat metum,  
 ferro pudicam terret—en praeceps abit  
 ensemque trepida liquit attonitus fuga.  
 pignus tenemus sceleris. hanc maestam prius 730  
 recreate. crinis tractus et lacerae comae  
 ut sunt remaneant, facinoris tanti notae.  
 perferte in urbem. recipe iam sensus, era.  
 quid te ipsa lacerans omnium aspectus fugis?  
 mens inpudicam facere, non casus solet

## HIPPOLYTUS

What Tanaïs will cleanse me, what Maeotis, with its barbaric waves rushing into the Pontic sea? Not great Father Neptune's self, with his whole ocean, could wash away so much of guilt. O woods! O beasts!

[*He rushes off into the depths of the forest.*]

### NURSE

Her sin has been found out. O soul, why dost stand inactive and aghast? We must throw the crime back on him himself, and ourselves charge him with incestuous love. Crime must be concealed by crime. 'Tis safest, when in fear, to force the attack. Whether we first dared the sin or suffered it, since it was done in secret, who of his own knowledge is to testify?

[*She raises her voice in loud outcry.*]

<sup>725</sup> Help, Athens, help! Faithful band of slaves, come to our aid! The ravisher, Hippolytus, with vile, lustful intent, is after us; he is upon us and threatens us with death; with the sword he is terrifying our chaste queen—ah! he has rushed headlong forth and, dazed, in panic flight, has left his sword. We hold the proof of guilt. But the stricken queen, revive her first. Let her dishevelled hair, her torn locks, stay even as they are, the marks of that great guilt. Bear her to the city. Now come back to consciousness, my mistress. Why dost tear thyself and shun the glances of us all? 'Tis thinking makes impure, not circumstance.

[*Exeunt.*]

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CHORVS

Fugit insanae similis procellae,  
ocior nubes glomerante Coro,  
ocior cursum rapiente flamma,  
stella cum ventis agitata longos  
porrigit ignes.

740

Conferat tecum decus omne priscum  
fama miratrix senioris aevi ;  
pulchrior tanto tua forma lucet,  
clarior quanto micat orbe pleno  
cum suos ignes coeunte cornu  
iunxit et curru properante pernox  
exerit vultus rubicunda Phoebe  
nec tenent stellae faciem minores.  
talis est, primas referens tenebras,  
nuntius noctis, modo lotus undis  
Hesperus, pulsus iterum tenebris  
Lucifer idem.

750

Et tu, thyrsigera Liber ab India,  
intonsa iuvenis perpetuum coma,  
tigres pampinea cuspide territans  
ac mitra cohibens cornigerum caput,  
non vinces rigidas Hippolyti comas.  
ne vultus nimium suspicias tuos ;  
omnes per populos fabula distulit  
Phaedrae quem Bromio praetulerit soror.

760

Anceps forma bonum mortalibus,  
exigui donum breve temporis,  
ut velox celeri pede laberis !  
Non sic prata novo vere decentia  
aestatis calidae despoliat vapor,  
saevit solstitio cum medius dies  
et noctes brevibus praecipitant rotis ;



## HIPPOLYTUS

### CHORUS

He fled like a raging tempest, swifter than cloud-collecting Corus,<sup>1</sup> swifter than flame which speeds on its way when a star,<sup>2</sup> driven by the winds, extends its long-trailing fire.

<sup>741</sup> Let fame compare with thee<sup>3</sup> all ancient beauty, fame, admirer of the olden time; as much fairer does thy beauty shine as gleams more brightly the full-orbed moon when with meeting horns she has joined her fires, when at the full with speeding chariot blushing Phoebe shows her face and the lesser stars fade out of sight. Such as he is the messenger of night, who brings the first shadows back, Hesperus,<sup>4</sup> fresh bathed in ocean; and when the shadows have been driven away again, Lucifer<sup>5</sup> also.

<sup>753</sup> And thou, Bacchus, from thyrsus-bearing India, with unshorn locks, perpetually young, thou who frightenest tigers with thy vine-clad spear, and with a turban bindest thy hornèd head—thou wilt not surpass Hippolytus' crisp locks. Admire not thou thy beauty overmuch; story has spread through every nation whom<sup>6</sup> the sister of Phaedra preferred to Bromius.

<sup>761</sup> O beauty, doubtful boon to mortals, brief gift for but a little time, how swiftly on quick foot thou dost slip away!

<sup>764</sup> Not so swiftly are the meadows, beauteous with early spring, despoiled by the hot summer's glow, when with solstitial fire midday rages, and the nights sweep headlong in their brief course.

<sup>1</sup> The north-west wind.

<sup>2</sup> A meteor.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus.

<sup>4</sup> The evening star.

<sup>5</sup> The morning star.

<sup>6</sup> *i.e.* Theseus, whom Ariadne would have preferred to Bacchus (Bromius) had not Theseus deserted her.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

languescunt folio ut lilia pallido,  
 et gratae capiti deficiunt comae  
 et fulgor teneris qui radiat genis  
 momento rapitur nullaque non dies  
 formonsi spoliū corporis abstulit.  
 res est forma fugax; quis sapiens bono  
 confidat fragili? dum licet, utere.  
 tempus te tacitum subruit, horaque  
 semper praeterita deterior subit.

770

Quid deserta petis? tutior aviis  
 non est forma locis. te nemore abdito,  
 cum Titan medium constituit diem,  
 cingent turba licens Naides improbae,  
 formonsos solitae claudere fontibus,  
 et somnis facient insidias tuis  
 lascivae nemorum deae<sup>1</sup>

780

Panas quae Dryades montivagos petunt.  
 aut te stellifero despiciens polo  
 sidus post veteres Arcadas editum  
 currus non poterit flectere candidos.  
 et nuper rubuit, nullaque lucidis  
 nubes sordidior vultibus obstitit;  
 at nos solliciti numine turbido,  
 tractam Thessalicis carminibus rati,  
 tinnitus dedimus; tu fueras labor  
 et tu causa morae, te dea noctium  
 dum spectat celeres sustinuit vias.

790

Vexent hanc faciem frigora parcius,  
 haec solem facies rarius appetat;  
 lucebit Pario marmore clarius.  
 quam grata est facies torva viriliter  
 et pondus veteris triste supercili!  
 Phoebō colla licet splendida compares.

800

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

As lilies wither and their leaves grow pale, so do our pleasing locks fall from the head, and the bright glow which shines on youthful cheeks is ravished in a moment and no day takes not spoil of our body's beauty. Beauty is a fleeting thing. Who that is wise would trust so frail a blessing? Enjoy it while thou mayest. Time is silently undermining thee, and an hour, worse than the last, is ever creeping on.

<sup>777</sup> Why seek desert places? Beauty is no safer in pathless regions. Hide thee in the woods when Titan has brought midday, and the saucy Naïds, a wanton throng, will encompass thee, wont in their waters to imprison shapely boys,<sup>1</sup> and for thy slumbers the frolicsome goddesses of the groves will lay their snares, the Dryads, who pursue Pans wandering on the mountains. Or else, looking down on thee from the starry heavens, the orb<sup>2</sup> that was born after the old Arcadians<sup>3</sup> will lose control of her white-shining car. And lately she blushed fiery red, though no staining cloud obscured her bright face; but we, anxious for our troubled goddess, thinking her harried by Thessalian charms, made loud jingling sounds: yet 'twas thou<sup>4</sup> hadst been her trouble, thou the cause of her delaying; while gazing on thee the goddess of the night checked her swift course.

<sup>795</sup> This face of thine let frosts more rarely ravage, let this face more seldom woo the sun; 'twill shine more bright than Parian marble. How pleasing is the manly sternness of thy face and the severe dignity of thine old-seeming brow! With Phoebus mayst thou match that gleaming neck. Him locks

<sup>1</sup> The poet has in mind the case of Hylas.

<sup>2</sup> Luna. The reference is to Luna and Endymion.

<sup>3</sup> The Arcadians were said to be older than the moon.

<sup>4</sup> The chorus concludes that it was Hippolytus, and not Endymion, who of late had caused the moon's perturbations.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

illum caesaries nescia colligi  
 perfundens umeros ornat et integit ;  
 te frons hirta decet, te brevior coma  
 nulla lege iacens. tu licet asperos  
 pugnacesque deos viribus audeas  
 et vasti spatio vincere corporis ;  
 aequas Herculeos nam iuvenis toros,  
 Martis belligeri pectore latior.  
 si dorso libeat cornipedis vehi,  
 frenis Castorea mobilior manu 810  
 Spartanum poteris flectere Cyllaron.  
 amentum digitis tende prioribus  
 et totis iaculum dirige viribus ;  
 tam longe, dociles spicula figere,  
 non mittent gracilem Cretes harundinem.  
 aut si tela modo spargere Parthico  
 in caelum placeat, nulla sine alite  
 descendent, tepido viscere condita  
 praedam de mediis nubibus afferent.

Raris forma viris (saecula prospice) 820  
 impunita fuit. te melior deus  
 tutum praetereat formaque nobilis  
 deformis senii limina transeat.<sup>1</sup>

Quid sinat inausum feminae praeceps furor ?  
 nefanda iuveni crimina insonti apparat.  
 en scelera ! quaerit crine lacerato fidem,  
 decus omne turbat capitis, umectat genas.  
 instruitur omni fraude feminea dolus.

Sed iste quisnam est, regium in vultu decus

<sup>1</sup> *So A* : *Leo* monstret imaginem.



## HIPPOLYTUS

that will not be confined, streaming o'er his shoulders, adorn and robe; but thee a shaggy brow, thee shorter locks, lying in disarray, become. 'Tis thine with manly strength to dare meet the rough and warlike gods and by the spread of thy huge body to overcome them; for even in youth thou dost match the muscles of a Hercules, art broader of chest than war-waging Mars. Shouldst thou be pleased to ride a horn-footed horse, with hand more agile on the rein than Castor's thou couldst guide the Spartan Cyllarus. Stretch thong with thy first fingers<sup>1</sup> and shoot the dart straight with all thy might; still not so far, though skilled to hurl the dart, will Cretans send the slender shaft. Or should it please thee to shoot thy arrows into the sky, in Parthian fashion, none will come down without its bird, but, deep fixed in the warm breast, will bring prey from the very clouds.

<sup>820</sup> To few men hath beauty (scan the ages past) not brought its penalty. May God, more merciful, pass thee by unharmed, and may thy illustrious beauty pass the threshold o'er of shapeless age.

<sup>824</sup> What would the woman's headlong madness leave undared? She is preparing outrageous charges against this guileless youth. Behold her guilty wiles! By her torn hair she seeks to be believed; she disorders all the glory of her locks, bedews her cheeks with tears. She is marshalling her plot by every art that woman knows.

[*A man is seen approaching who proves to be THESEUS.*]

<sup>829</sup> But who is this, wearing a regal dignity on his

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* the thumb and forefinger.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

gerens et alto vertice attollens caput ? 830  
 ut ora iuveni paria Perithoo gerit,  
 ni languido pallore canderent genae  
 staretque recta squalor incultus coma.  
 en ipse Theseus redditus terris adest.

THESEVS

Tandem profugi noctis aeternae plagam  
 vastoque manes carcere umbrantem polum,  
 et vix cupitum sufferunt oculi diem.  
 iam quarta Eleusin dona Triptolemi secat  
 paremque totiens libra composuit diem, 840  
 ambiguus ut me sortis ignotae labor  
 detinuit inter mortis et vitae mala.  
 pars una vitae mansit extincto mihi :  
 sensus malorum. finis Alcides fuit,  
 qui cum revulsum Tartaro abstraheret canem,  
 me quoque supernas pariter ad sedes tulit.  
 sed fessa virtus robore antiquo caret  
 trepidantque gressus. heu, labor, quantus fuit  
 Phlegethonte ab imo petere longinquum aethera  
 pariterque mortem fugere et Alciden sequi.

Quis fremitus aures flebilis pepulit meas ? 850  
 expromat aliquis. luctus et lacrimae et dolor,  
 in limine ipso maesta lamentatio ?  
 auspicia <sup>1</sup> digna prorsus inferno hospite.

NVTRIX

Tenet obstinatum Phaedra consilium necis  
 fletusque nostros spernit ac morti imminet.

<sup>1</sup> *hospitia Grotius.*

## HIPPOLYTUS

face and with head borne high? How like the young Pirithoüs he is in countenance, were his cheeks not so deathly pale and did not unkempt squalor stiffen in his bristling hair. See, it is Theseus himself, restored to the upper world.

### THESEUS

At last have I escaped the realm of eternal night, the dark world which in vast prison-house o'ershades the dead, and scarcely do my eyes endure the longed-for light. Now for the fourth time is Eleusis harvesting the bounty of Triptolemus,<sup>1</sup> as many times has Libra made day equal unto night, since dubious battling with an unknown fate has kept me between the ills of death and life. Though dead to all things else, one part of life remained to me—my sense of ills. Alcides was the end, who, when he dragged the dog by violence out of Tartarus, brought me, too, along with him to the upper world. But my strength is spent, has lost its old-time vigour, and my steps do falter. Alas, how hard a struggle it was from lowest Phlegethon to attain the far realms of air, at once to flee from death and follow Hercules!

<sup>850</sup> But what is this tearful outcry that strikes my ears? Let someone tell me. Grieving and tears and woe, and on my very threshold sad lamentation?—auspices that well befit a guest from hell.

### NURSE

Phaedra holds unbending purpose of self-murder; she scorns our tears and is on the very edge of death.

<sup>1</sup> Wheat: see Index *s.v.* "Triptolemus."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

Quae causa leti? reduce cur moritur viro?

NVTRIX

Haec ipsa letum causa maturum attulit.

THESEVS

Perplexa magnum verba nescio quid tegunt.  
effare aperte quis gravet mentem dolor.

NVTRIX

Haut pandit ulli; maesta secretum occultit 860  
statuitque secum ferre quo moritur malum.  
iam perge, quaeso, perge; properato est opus.

THESEVS

Reserate clausos regii postes laris.  
O socia thalami, sicine adventum viri  
et expetiti coniugis vultum excipis?  
quin ense viduas dexteram atque animum mihi  
restituis et te quidquid e vita fugat  
expromis?

PHAEDRA

Eheu, per tui sceptrum imperi,  
magnanime Theseu, perque natorum indolem  
tuosque reditus perque iam cineres meos, 870  
permittite mortem.



## HIPPOLYTUS

THESEUS

What cause for death? Why die, now that her husband is come back?

NURSE

That very cause has brought with it speedy death.

THESEUS

Thy riddling words some weighty matter hide. Tell me plainly what grief weighs on her mind.

NURSE

She discloses it to none; though sorrowing, she hides her secret grief and is resolved to take with her the woe whereof she dies. But come now, I pray thee, come; there is need of haste.

THESEUS

Unbar the closed portals of the royal house.

[*The doors are thrown open and THESEUS encounters his wife just within.*]

<sup>864</sup> O partner of my couch, is it thus thou welcomest thy lord's return and the face of thy long-sought husband? Come, put away the sword from thy right hand, give me heart again, and whatever is driving thee out of life, declare it.

PHAEDRA

Alas, O Theseus, great of soul, by the sceptre of thy kingdom, by thy children's lives, by thy return, and by my body already doomed to dust, allow my death.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

Causa quae cogit mori?

PHAEDRA

Si causa leti dicitur, fructus perit.

THESEVS

Nemo istud alius, me quidem excepto, audiet.

PHAEDRA

Aures pudica coniugis solas timet.

THESEVS

Effare ; fido pectore arcana occulam.

PHAEDRA

Alium silere quod voles, primus sile.

THESEVS

Leti facultas nulla continget tibi.

PHAEDRA

Mori volenti desse mors numquam potest.

THESEVS

Quod sit luendum morte delictum indica.

PHAEDRA

Quod vivo.

## HIPPOLYTUS

THESEUS

What cause forces thee to die?

PHAEDRA

If the cause of my death is told, its fruit is lost.

THESEUS

No one else shall hear it, save myself.

PHAEDRA

A chaste woman dreads her husband's ears alone.

THESEUS

Speak out; in my true heart will I hide thy secret.

PHAEDRA

Where thou wouldst have another silence keep,  
keep silence first thyself.

THESEUS

No means of death shall be granted unto thee.

PHAEDRA

If one wills to die, death can never fail.

THESEUS

Tell me what sin is to be purged by death.

PHAEDRA

That I still live.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

Lacrimae nonne te nostrae movent? 880

PHAEDRA

Mors optima est perire lacrimandum suis.

THESEVS

Silere pergit. verbera ac vinclis anus  
altrixque prodet quidquid haec fari abnuit.  
vincite ferro. verberum vis extrahat  
secreta mentis.

PHAEDRA

Ipsa iam fabor, mane.

THESEVS

Quidnam ora maesta avertis et lacrimas genis  
subito coortas veste praetenta optegis?

PHAEDRA

Te, te, creator caelitem, testem invoco  
et te, coruscum lucis aetheriae iubar,  
ex cuius ortu<sup>1</sup> nostra dependet domus,  
temptata precibus restiti; ferro ac minis  
non cessit animus; vim tamen corpus tulit.  
labem hanc pudoris eluet noster cruor.

890

THESEVS

Quis, ede, nostri decoris eversor fuit?

<sup>1</sup> *Leo conjectures* ex quibus utrimque.



## HIPPOLYTUS

THESEU

Do not my tears move thee?

PHAEDRA

'Tis best to die a death to be wept by friends.

THESEUS

She persists in silence. Then by scourge and bonds shall her old nurse reveal whatever she will not tell. [*To attendants.*] Bind her with chains. Let the power of the scourge drag forth the secrets of her soul.

PHAEDRA

Hold! I will myself confess.

THESEUS

Why dost turn away thy sorrowing face and hide with veiling robe the tears that suddenly o'erflow thy cheeks?

PHAEDRA

Thee, thee, O sire of the heavenly gods, I call to witness, and thee,<sup>1</sup> bright radiance of celestial light, on whom as founder this house of ours depends—though sorely tempted, I withstood his prayers; to sword and threats my soul yielded not; yet did my body bear his violence. This stain of shame shall my blood wash away.

THESEUS

Who, tell me, was the destroyer of my honour?

<sup>1</sup> Phoebus, the father of Phaedra's mother, Pasiphaë.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

PHAEDRA

Quem rere minime.

THESEVS

Quis sit audire expeto.

PHAEDRA

Hic dicet ensis quem tumultu territus  
liquit stuprator civium accursum timens.

THESEVS

Quod facinus, heu me, cerno? quod monstrum  
intuor?  
regale parvis asperum signis ebur  
capulo refulget, generis Actaei decus. 900  
sed ipse quonam evasit?

PHAEDRA

Hi trepidum fuga  
videre famuli concitum celeri pede.

THESEVS

Pro sancta Pietas, pro gubernator poli  
et qui secundum fluctibus regnum moves,  
unde ista venit generis infandi lues?  
hunc Graia tellus aluit an Taurus Scythes  
Colchusque Phasis? redit ad auctores genus  
stirpemque primam degener sanguis refert.  
est prorsus iste gentis armiferae furor,

## HIPPOLYTUS

PHAEDRA

Whom thou least thinkest.

THESEUS

Who is he? I demand to hear.

PHAEDRA

This sword will tell, which, in his panic terror, the ravisher left behind, fearing the gathering of the citizens.

THESEUS

Ah me! What villainy do I behold? What monstrous thing do I see? The royal hilt of ivory, embossed with tiny figures, gleams before me, the glory of the Athenian race. But he, whither has he escaped?

PHAEDRA

The slaves, here, saw him speeding swift away in headlong flight.

THESEUS

O holy Piety, O ruler of the heavens, and thou<sup>1</sup> who with thy billows dost sway the second realm, whence came this infection of infamy in our stock? Was that man nurtured by the land of Greece or by the Scythian Taurus and Colchian Phasis? The breed reverts to its progenitors and debased blood reproduces the primal stock. This, truly, is the madness of that warlike race,<sup>2</sup> to contemn Venus'

<sup>1</sup> Neptune. For the "second realm" see Index s.v. "Neptune."

<sup>2</sup> The Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

odisse Veneris foedera et castum diu 910  
 vulgare populis corpus. o tetrum genus  
 nullaque victum lege melioris soli!  
 ferae quoque ipsae Veneris evitant nefas  
 generisque leges inscius servat pudor.  
 ubi vultus ille et ficta maiestas viri  
 atque habitus horrens, prisca et antiqua appetens  
 morumque senium triste et affectus graves?  
 o vita fallax, abditos sensus geris  
 animisque pulchram turpibus faciem induis:  
 pudor impudentem celat, audacem quies, 920  
 pietas nefandum; vera fallaces probant  
 simulantque molles dura.

Silvarum incola

ille efferatus castus intactus rudis,  
 mihi te reservas? a meo primum toro  
 et scelere tanto placuit ordiri virum?  
 iam iam superno numini grates ago,  
 quod icta nostra cecidit Antiope manu,  
 quod non ad antra Stygia descendens tibi  
 matrem reliqui. profugus ignotas procul  
 percurre gentes; te licet terra ultimo 930  
 summota mundo dirimat Oceani plagis  
 orbemque nostris pedibus obversum colas,  
 jacet in recessu penitus extremo abditus  
 horrifera celsi regna transieris poli  
 hiemesque supra positus et canas nives  
 gelidi frementes liqueris Boreae minas  
 post te furentes, sceleribus poenas dabis.



## HIPPOLYTUS

laws and to prostitute the long-chaste body to the crowd. O abominable race, yielding to no laws of a better land! Even the very beasts do shun incestuous love, and instinctive chastity guards Nature's laws. Where are those features, that feigned austerity of the man, that rough garb, aping old-fashioned and archaic ways? Where thy stern manners and the sour severity of age? O two-faced life, thou keepest thy true thoughts hidden and dost clothe foul purpose with an aspect fair—chaste bearing hides unchastity; meekness, effrontery; piety, sin unspeakable; false men approve truth and the soft affect hardihood.

<sup>922</sup> O thou lover of the woods, the boasted wild man, continent, rough, unstained, is it for me thou keepest thyself in check? With my couch, by such crime as this, was it thy pleasure to make first test of manhood? Now, now I give thanks to the heavenly powers that Antiope fell stricken by my hand, and that, descending to the Stygian pit, I did not leave to thee thy mother. Fugitive, traverse nations remote, unknown; though a land on the remotest confines of the world hold thee separated by Ocean's tracts, though thou take up thy dwelling in the world opposite our feet, though thou escape to the shuddering realms of the high north and hide deep in its farthest corner, and though, placed beyond the reach of winter<sup>1</sup> and his hoar snows, thou leave behind thee the threatening rage of cold Boreas,

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* in the Hyperborean regions.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

profugum per omnes pertinax latebras premam ;  
 longinqua clausa abstrusa diversa inuia  
 emetiemur, nullus obstabit locus— 940  
 scis unde redeam. tela quo mitti haud queunt,  
 huc vota mittam. genitor aequoreus dedit  
 ut vota pronò terna concipiam deo,  
 et invocata munus hoc sanxit Styge.

En perage donum triste, regnator freti !  
 non cernat ultra lucidum Hippolytus diem  
 adeatque manes iuvenis iratos patri.  
 fer abominandam nunc opem nato, parens ;  
 numquam supremum numinis munus tui  
 consumeremus, magna ni premerent mala ; 950  
 inter profunda Tartara et Ditem horridum  
 et imminentes regis inferni minas,  
 voto peperci. redde nunc pactam fidem.  
 genitor, moraris ? cur adhuc undae silent ?  
 nunc atra ventis nubila impellentibus  
 subtexe noctem, sidera et caelum eripe,  
 effunde pontum, vulgus aequoreum cie  
 fluctusque ab ipso tumidos<sup>1</sup> Oceano voca.

CHORVS

O magna parens, Natura, deum  
 tuque igniferi rector Olympi, 960  
 qui sparsa cito sidera mundo  
 cursusque vagos rapis astrorum  
 celerique polos cardine versas,

<sup>1</sup> So *E* : *Leo* tumidus.

## HIPPOLYTUS

still shalt thou pay penalty for thy crime. Fugitive, through all thy hiding-places untiringly will I pursue thee; regions remote, blocked, hidden away, far separate, trackless, will I traverse, and no place shall stop me—thou knowest whence I am returned. Whither weapons cannot be hurled, thither will I hurl my prayers. My father of the sea granted me thrice to fashion prayers whereto the god would bow, and, calling upon Styx, confirmed the boon.

[*To NEPTUNE.*]

<sup>945</sup> Now fulfil the sad<sup>1</sup> boon, O ruler of the sea! Let Hippolytus see the bright day no more, and in youth pass to the ghosts that are wrathful with his sire. Now bring aid, which my soul abhors, O father, to thy son; never should I squander this last boon<sup>2</sup> of thine, did not great ills o'erwhelm; in depths of Tartarus, in presence of dread Dis, and imminent menace of hell's lord, I was sparing of this prayer. Keep now thy promised faith. Father, dost thou delay? Why are thy waves yet silent? Now veil the night with dark clouds driven by the winds; snatch stars and sky from sight; pour forth the deep; rouse up the watery herd and call from Ocean's self his swollen floods.<sup>3</sup>

### CHORUS

O Nature, mighty mother of the gods, and thou, fire-bearing Olympus' lord, who through the swift firmament whirlest the scattered stars, and the wandering courses of the planets, who makest the heavens on swift axis turn, why dost thou take such

<sup>1</sup> Because a father is asking the death of his son.

<sup>2</sup> Theseus has already used two of his wishes, the first when he set out from Troezen to Athens, and the second when he was in the labyrinth.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

cur tanta tibi cura perennes  
 agitare vias aetheris alti,  
 ut nunc canae frigora brumae  
 nudent silvas, nunc arbustis  
 redeant umbrae, nunc aestivi  
 colla leonis Cererem magno  
 fervore coquant viresque suas 970  
 temperet annus ?

sed cur idem qui tanta regis,  
 sub quo vasti pondera mundi  
 librata suos ducunt orbis,  
 hominum nimium securus abes,  
 non sollicitus prodesse bonis,  
 nocuisse malis ?

Res humanas ordine nullo  
 Fortuna regit sparsitque manu  
 munera caeca, peiora fovens ; 980  
 vincit sanctos dira libido,  
 fraus sublimi regnat in aula.  
 tradere turpi fasces populus  
 gaudet, eosdem colit atque odit.  
 tristis virtus perversa tulit  
 praemia recti ; castos sequitur  
 mala paupertas vitioque potens  
 regnat adulter.  
 o vane pudor falsumque decus !

Sed quid citato nuntius properat gradu  
 rigatque maestis lugubrem vultum genis ? 990

NUNTIVS

O sors acerba et dura, famulatus gravis,  
 cur me ad nefandum nuntium casus vocat ?



## HIPPOLYTUS

care to keep perpetual the pathways of the lofty sky, that now the hoar frosts of winter may strip the woods, now to the plantations their umbrage come again, that now in summer the Lion's fervent heat may ripen the grain and the year regulate its powers? But why, again, art thou, who holdest so wide sway, and by whose hands the ponderous masses of the vast universe are poised and wheel their appointed courses—why dost thou dwell afar, all too indifferent to men, not anxious to bring blessing to the good, and to the evil, bane?

<sup>978</sup> Fate without order rules the affairs of men, scatters her gifts with unseeing hand, fostering the worse; dire lust prevails against pure men, and crime sits regnant in the lofty palace. The rabble rejoice to give government to the vile, paying high honours even where they hate. Warped are the rewards of uprightness sad virtue gains; wretched poverty dogs the pure, and the adulterer, strong in wickedness, reigns supreme. O decency, honour, how empty and how false!

<sup>989</sup> But why does yon messenger haste hither with rapid pace, his sad countenance wet with grieving tears?

[*Enter* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER

O lot bitter and hard, O cruel servitude, why calls fate upon me to bear unutterable tidings?

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

Ne metue clades fortiter fari asperas ;  
non imparatum pectus aerumnis fero.

NVNTIVS

Vocem dolori lingua luctifico negat.

THESEVS

Proloquere quae sors aggravet quassam domum.

NVNTIVS

Hippolytus, heu me, flebili leto occubat.

THESEVS

Natum parens obisse iam pridem scio ;  
nunc raptor obiit. mortis effare ordinem.

NVNTIVS

Vt profugus urbem liquit infesto gradu 1000  
celerem citatis passibus cursum explicans,  
celso sonipedes ocius subigit iugo  
et ora frenis domita substrictis ligat.  
tum multa secum effatus et patrium solum  
abominatus saepe genitorem ciet  
acerque habenis lora permissis quatit ;  
cum subito vastum tonuit ex alto mare  
crevitque in astra. nullus inspirat salo  
ventus, quieti nulla pars caeli strepit  
placidumque pelagus propria tempestas agit. 1010  
400

# HIPPOLYTUS

THESEUS

Fear not to speak out boldly the disaster, cruel though it be; I bear a heart not unprepared for suffering.

MESSENGER

My tongue refuses utterance to the grief-bringing woe.

THESEUS

Tell what mischance weighs down this shattered house.

MESSENGER

Hippolytus, woe is me, lies in lamentable death.

THESEUS

That his son was dead the sire has long since known; now is the ravisher dead. But tell the manner of his end.

MESSENGER

When with troubled steps he left the city, a fugitive, unfolding his swift way with flying feet, he quickly brought his prancing steeds 'neath the high yoke and curbed their mouths with tight-drawn reins. Then much did he utter, communing with himself, and, cursing his native land, called oft upon his sire, and with loose reins fiercely shook the lash; when suddenly from out the deep the vast sea thundered and starward heaved itself. No wind was blowing on the briny sea, from no quarter of the calm sky came the noise, but a self-born<sup>1</sup> tempest stirred the peaceful deep. Not so violently does the

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* the commotion came from within the sea.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

non tantus Auster Sicula disturbat freta  
 nec tam furens Ionius exsurgit sinus  
 regnante Coro, saxa cum fluctu tremunt  
 et cana summum spuma Leucaten ferit.  
 consurgit ingens pontus in vastum aggerem;  
 tumidumque monstro pelagus in terras ruit.<sup>1</sup>

Nec ista ratibus tanta construitur lues;  
 terris minatur. fluctus haud cursu levi  
 provolvitur; nescio quid onerato sinu  
 gravis unda portat. quae novum tellus caput 1020  
 ostendit astris? Cyclas exoritur nova?  
 latuere rupes numen<sup>2</sup> Epidauri dei  
 et scelere petrae nobiles Scironides  
 et quae duobus terra comprimitur fretis.<sup>3</sup>

Haec dum stupentes quaerimus,<sup>4</sup> totum en mare  
 immugit, omnes undique scopuli astrepunt;  
 summum cacumen rorat expulso sale,  
 spumat vomitque vicibus alternis aquas  
 qualis per alta vehitur Oceani freta  
 fluctum refundens ore physeter capax. 1030  
 inhorrui concussus undarum globus  
 solvitque sese et litori invexit malum  
 maius timore, pontus in terras ruit  
 suumque monstrum sequitur—os quassat tremor.  
 quis habitus ille corporis vasti fuit!  
 caerulea taurus colla sublimis gerens  
 erexit altam fronte viridanti iubam;  
 stant hispidae aures, orbibus varius color,  
 et quem feri dominator habuisset gregis  
 et quem sub undis natus—hinc flammam vomunt 1040  
 oculi, hinc relucent caerulea insignes nota;

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

<sup>2</sup> *So A: Leo numine.*

<sup>3</sup> *Leo deletes ll. 1022-1024.*

<sup>4</sup> *querimur A.*



## HIPPOLYTUS

south wind distress Sicilia's straits, nor so madly does the Ionian sea swell beneath the north-west's tyranny, when the cliffs tremble under the shock of waves and the white spray smites Leucate's summit. The mighty deep heaves up into a huge mound, and the sea, swollen with a monstrous birth, rushes to land.

<sup>1017</sup> Nor is that vast destruction piled up for ships; 'tis the land it threatens. With no light sweep the flood rolls forward; some strange thing in its burdened womb the heavy wave is carrying. What new land shows its head to the stars? Is a new Cyclad rising? The rocks, the sacred seat of the Epidaurian god,<sup>1</sup> were hid, and the cliffs famous for the crime of Sciron, and the land<sup>2</sup> which is hemmed in by two seas.

<sup>1025</sup> While we in dumb amaze are wondering what this means, behold, the whole sea bellows, and the cliffs on every hand echo back the sound; the highest peak is wet with dashed-up spray; it foams, and then in turn spews back the flood, as when a cavernous whale swims through the deep ways of ocean, spouting back streams of water from his mouth. Then the great globe of waters shivered, shook and broke, and brought to the shore a thing more terrible than our fear; the sea rushed landward, following its monster. My lips tremble in the telling. How the thing looked! how huge! A bull it was, towering high with a dark blue neck, and he reared a high mane upon his verdant crest; his shaggy ears stood up; his eyes flashed with changing colour, now such as the lord of a wild herd might have, now such as one born beneath the sea—now his eyes dart flame, now they flash wondrous with cerulean gleam. His

<sup>1</sup> These altar-like rocks were sacred to Aesculapius.

<sup>2</sup> Isthmus.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

opima cervix arduos tollit toros  
 naresque hiulcis haustibus patulae fremunt ;  
 musco tenaci pectus ac palear viret,  
 longum rubente spargitur fuco latus.  
 tum pone tergo ultima in monstrum coit  
 facies et ingens belua immensam trahit  
 squamosa partem. talis extremo mari  
 pistrix citatas sorbet aut frangit rates.  
 tremuere terrae, fugit attonitum pecus  
 passim per agros nec suos pastor sequi  
 meminit iuvenco; omnis e saltu fera  
 diffugit, omnis frigido exsanguis metu  
 venator horret. solus immunis metu  
 Hippolytus artis continet frenis equos  
 pavidosque notae vocis hortatu ciet.

1050

Est alta ad agros collibus ruptis via,  
 vicina tangens spatia suppositi maris ;  
 hic se illa moles acuit atque iras parat.  
 ut cepit animos seque praetemptans satis  
 prolusit irae, praepeti cursu evolat,  
 summam citato vix gradu tangens humum,  
 et torva currus ante trepidantes stetit.  
 contra feroci natus insurgens minax  
 vultu nec ora mutat et magnum intonat :  
 "haud frangit animum vanus hic terror meum ;  
 nam mihi paternus vincere est tauros labor."  
 inobsequentes protinus frenis equi  
 rapuere currum iamque derrantes via,  
 quacumque rabidos pavidus evexit furor,  
 hac ire pergunt seque per scopulos agunt.

1060

1070

At ille, qualis turbido rector mari  
 ratem retentat, ne det obliquum latus,

## HIPPOLYTUS

brawny neck with great muscles bulges and his wide nostrils roar with his gaping draughts of air. His breast and dewlap are green with clinging moss, and his long flanks with red seaweed are spotted. His hinder parts are joined into monstrous shape, and, all scaly, the huge beast drags his measureless length along. Such is that sea-monster of the outer ocean which swallows or crushes swift-flying ships. The lands quaked with fear; herds fled in frenzy in all directions through the fields, and the herdsman forgot to follow his cattle. All beasts fled from their wooded haunts; all hunters stood trembling, pale with chilling fear. Hippolytus alone, quite unafraid, with tight reins holds fast his horses and, terror-stricken though they are, urges them on with the encouragement of his familiar voice.

<sup>1057</sup> There is a deep passage towards the fields through the broken hills, hard by the neighbouring stretches of the sea below. Here that huge creature sharpens his anger and prepares his wrath. When he has gained his spirit, and with full trial rehearsed his wrath, he darts forth, running swiftly, scarce touching the surface of the ground with flying feet, and stands, in grim menace, before the trembling steeds. Thy son, rising up, confronts him with fierce, threatening look, nor does he change countenance, but loudly thunders: "This empty terror cannot break my spirit, for 'twas my father's task to conquer bulls." But straightway his horses, disobedient to the reins, seized the chariot and, roaming from the road, wherever frenzied terror carried them in their mad flight, there they plunged along and dashed amid the rocks.

<sup>1072</sup> But he, as a helmsman holds his ship steady on the boisterous sea, lest it give its side to the waves,

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et arte fluctum fallit, haud aliter citos  
 currus gubernat. ora nunc pressis trahit  
 constricta frenis, terga nunc torto frequens  
 verbere coercet. sequitur adsiduus comes,  
 nunc aequa carpens spatia, nunc contra obuius  
 oberrat, omni parte terrorem movens.

Non licuit ultra fugere, nam toto obuius 1080

incurrit ore corniger ponti horridus.

tum vero pavida sonipedes mente exciti

imperia solvunt seque luctantur iugo

eripere rectique in pedes iactant onus.

praeceps in ora fusus implicuit cadens

laqueo tenaci corpus et quanto magis

pugnat, sequaces hoc magis nodos ligat.

sensere pecudes facinus—et curru levi,

dominante nullo, qua timor iussit ruunt.

talis per auras non suum agnoscens onus 1090

Solique falso creditum indignans diem

Phaethonta currus devio excussit polo.

late cruentat arva et inlisum caput

scopulis resultat; auferunt dumi comas,

et ora durus pulchra populatur lapis

peritque multo vulnere infelix decor.

moribunda celeres membra provolvunt rotae;

tandemque raptum truncus ambusta sude

medium per inguen stipite erecto tenet,

paulumque domino currus affixo stetit. 1100

haesere biuges vulnere—et pariter moram

dominumque rumpunt. inde semanimem secant



## HIPPOLYTUS

and skilfully cheats the floods, in like manner guides his swift-moving steeds. Now he drags on their mouths checked by the tight-drawn reins, and now, oft plying the twisted lash, he forces them to his will. His companion<sup>1</sup> holds doggedly in pursuit, now racing alongside the horses, now making detour to face them, from every side filling them with fear.

<sup>1080</sup> But now they could flee no further; for he charged full front upon them, that bristling, horned monster of the deep. Then, truly, the plunging horses, driven by mad fear, broke from control, struggled to wrench their necks from the yoke, and, rearing up, hurled their burden to the ground. Headlong on his face he plunged and, as he fell, entangled his body in the clinging reins; and the more he struggled, the tighter he drew those firm-holding coils. The horses felt their deed, and now, with the light chariot, since none controlled, wherever fear bade on they dashed. Just so, not recognizing their wonted burden, and indignant that the day had been entrusted to a pretended Sun, the horses<sup>2</sup> flung Phaëthon far from his heavenly track. Far and wide the fields are stained with blood, and his head, dashed on the rocks, bounds back from them. The brambles pluck away his hair; the hard stones ravage that lovely face, and his ill-fated beauty is ruined by many a wound. The swift wheels drag his dying limbs; and at last, as he is whirled along, a tree, its trunk charred into a stake, stays him with its stock driven right through the groin and holds him fast, and for a little while the car stands still, held by its impaled master. Awhile that wound stays the team—then equally delay and their master, too, they break.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter the thickets slash his

<sup>1</sup> The monster.    <sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of the Sun.    <sup>3</sup> A bold case of zeugma.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

virgulta, acutis asperi vepres rubis  
 omnisque truncus corporis partem tulit.  
 errant per agros funebris famuli manus,  
 per illa qua distractus Hippolytus loca  
 longum cruenta tramitem signat nota,  
 maestaeque domini membra vestigant canes.  
 necdum dolentum sedulus potuit labor  
 explere corpus. hocine est formae decus? 1110  
 qui modo paterni clarus imperii comes  
 et certus heres siderum fulsit modo,  
 passim ad supremos ille colligitur rogos  
 et funeri confertur.

THESEVS

O nimium potens,  
 quanto parentes sanguinis vinclo tenes,  
 natura, quam te colimus inviti quoque.  
 occidere volui noxium, amissum fleo.

NVNTIVS

Haud flere honeste quisquam quod voluit potest.<sup>1</sup>

THESEVS

Equidem malorum maximum hunc cumulum reor,  
 si abominanda casus optanda efficit. 1120

NVNTIVS

Et si odia servas, cur madent fletu genae?

THESEVS

Quod interemi, non quod amisi fleo.

<sup>1</sup> So A : Haud odere non est quisque quod voluit potens E:  
 Leo corrects, followed by Richter, Gaudere non est ipse quod  
 voluit potens.

## HIPPOLYTUS

half-dead body, the rough brambles with their sharp thorns tear him, and every tree-trunk has taken its toll of him. Now bands of his mourning servants are scouring the fields through the places where Hippolytus was dragged, marked in a long trail by bloody traces, and his whimpering dogs are tracking their master's limbs. But not yet has the pains-taking toil of his grieving friends availed to fill out his body. Has his glorious beauty come to this? He who but now was the illustrious partner of his father's throne, who but now, his acknowledged heir, shone like the stars, he is being gathered from every hand for his last burning, and collected for his funeral pyre.

THESEUS [*weeping*]

O nature, all too potent, with how strong ties of blood dost thou hold parents! how we cherish thee, even against our wills! Guilty, I wished him dead; lost, I lament him.

MESSENGER

Not rightfully may any weep what he has willed.

THESEUS

Truly I deem this the crowning woe of woes, if fortune makes what we must loathe that we must long for.

MESSENGER

If thou still keepst thy hate, why are thy cheeks wet with tears?

THESEUS

Not that I lost, but that I slew, I weep.

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

## CHORVS

Quanti casus humana rotant!  
 minor in parvis Fortuna furit  
 leviusque ferit leviora deus;  
 servat placidos obscura quies  
 praebetque senes casa securos.

Admota aetheriis culmina sedibus  
 Euros excipiunt, excipiunt Notos,  
 insani Boreae minas, 1130  
 imbriferumque Corum.

raros patitur fulminis ictus  
 umida vallis;  
 tremuit telo Iovis altisoni  
 Caucasus ingens Phrygiumque nemus  
 matris Cybeles. metuens caelo  
 Iuppiter alto vicina petit;  
 non capit umquam magnos motus  
 humilis tecti plebeia domus.  
 circa regna tonat.<sup>1</sup> 1140

Volat ambiguus mobilis alis  
 hora, nec ulli praestat velox  
 Fortuna fidem.

hic qui clari laetus vidit<sup>2</sup>  
 sidera mundi nitidumque diem  
 nocte relictâ, luget maestos  
 tristis reditus ipsoque magis  
 flebile Averno sedis patriae  
 videt hospitium.

Pallas Actaeae veneranda genti,  
 quod tuus caelum superosque Theseus 1150  
 spectat et fugit Stygias paludes,  
 casta, nil debes patruo rapaci;  
 constat inferno numerus tyranno.

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

<sup>2</sup> *Leo supplies laetus vidit.*



# HIPPOLYTUS

## CHORUS

How chance whirls round the affairs of men!  
Less does fortune rage midst humble folk, and  
more lightly God smites the more lightly blessed.  
Unnoticed ease keeps men in peace and a cottage  
bestows age untroubled.

<sup>1128</sup> The mountain-peaks, lifted to airy heights,  
catch east, catch south winds, mad Boreas' threats,  
and the rain-fraught north-west gale. Seldom does  
the moist valley suffer the lightning's blast; but  
Caucasus the huge, and the Phrygian grove of  
mother Cybele, quake beneath the bolt of high-  
thundering Jove. For in jealous fear Jove aims at  
that which neighbours on high heaven; but the low-  
roofed, common home ne'er feels his mighty blasts.  
Around thrones he thunders.

<sup>1141</sup> On doubtful wings flies the inconstant hour,  
nor does swift Fortune pledge loyalty to any. He<sup>1</sup>  
who with joy beheld the clear, starry skies and  
bright day, the night<sup>2</sup> now left behind, in grief is  
lamenting his sorrowful return, and finds his wel-  
come to his father's dwelling more doleful than  
Avernus' self.

<sup>1149</sup> O Pallas, ever to be revered by the Athenian  
race, for that thy Theseus looks on sky and upper  
world and has escaped from the pools of Styx,  
chaste one, thou owest naught to thine uncle, the  
all-devouring; unchanged the tale<sup>3</sup> remains for the  
infernal king.

<sup>1</sup> Theseus, who has but now returned from Hades.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* the darkness of the lower world.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* if Theseus has escaped Pluto, Hippolytus has gone to  
fill his place.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Quae vox ab altis flebilis tectis sonat  
 strictoque vaecors Phaedra quid ferro parat?

THESEVS

Quis te dolore percitam instigat furor?  
 quid ensis iste quidve vociferatio  
 planctusque supra corpus invisum volunt?

PHAEDRA

Me, me, profundi saeve dominator freti,  
 invade et in me monstra caerulei maris 1160  
 emitte, quidquid intimo Tethys sinu  
 extrema gestat, quidquid Oceanus vagis  
 complexus undis ultimo fluctu tegit.  
 o dure Theseu semper, o numquam ad tuos  
 tuto reverse, natus et genitor nece  
 reditus tuos luere; pervertis domum  
 amore semper coniugum aut odio nocens.

Hippolyte, tales intuor vultus tuos  
 talesque feci? membra quis saevus Sinis  
 aut quis Procrustes sparsit aut quis Cresius, 1170  
 Daedalea vasto claustra mugitu replens,  
 taurus biformis ore cornigero ferox  
 divulsit? heu me, quo tuus fugit decor  
 oculique nostrum sidus? exanimis iaces?

## HIPPOLYTUS

1154 What voice of wailing sounds from the high palace? And what would maddened Phaedra with the naked sword?

[*Enter PHAEDRA with a drawn sword in her hand.*]

### THESEUS

What fury pricks thee on, wild with grief? Why that sword? What mean thine outcries and lamentations over the hated corpse?

### PHAEDRA

Me, me, assault, O savage ruler of ocean's depths; against me send forth the blue sea's monsters, whate'er in her inmost womb farthest Tethys bears, whate'er in his restless waves' embrace Ocean hides in his remotest flood. O Theseus, always harsh, who never without harm unto thy loved ones dost come back, son and father<sup>1</sup> have paid for thy home-comings by their death. Thou art the destroyer of thy home, hurtful ever, whether through love or hatred of thy wives.<sup>2</sup>

[*Turning to the mangled corpse.*]

1168 O Hippolytus, is it such I see thy face? such have I made it? What savage Sinis, what Procrustes, has scattered thy members so, or what Cretan bull, fierce, two-formed monster, filling the labyrinth of Daedalus with his huge bellowings, has torn thee asunder with his horns? Ah, woe is me! whither is thy glorious beauty fled, and thine eyes, my stars? Dost lie low in death? Come back for

See Index *s.v.* "Theseus."

<sup>2</sup> Theseus had slain Antiope in a fit of anger, and now has destroyed Hippolytus through jealous love for Phaedra.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ades parumper verbaque exaudi mea—  
 nil turpe loquimur—hac manu poenas tibi  
 solvam et nefando pectori ferrum inseram  
 animaque Phaedram pariter ac scelere exuam,  
 et te per undas perque Tartareos lacus,  
 per Styga, per amnes igneos amens sequar. 1180  
 placemus umbras; capitis exuvias cape  
 laceraeque frontis accipe abscissam<sup>1</sup> comam.  
 non licuit animos iungere, et certe licet  
 iunxisse fata.

Morere, si casta es, viro;  
 si incesta, amor. coniugis thalamos petam  
 tanto impiatos facinore? hoc derat nefas,  
 ut vindicato sancta fruereris toro.  
 o mors amoris una sedamen mali,  
 o mors pudoris maximum laesi decus,  
 confugimus ad te; pande placatos sinus. 1190

Audite, Athenae, tuque, funesta pater  
 peior noverca: falsa memoravi et nefas,  
 quod ipsa demens pectore insano hauseram,  
 mentita finxi. vana punisti pater,  
 iuvenisque castus crimine incesto iacet,  
 pudicus, insons.

Recipe iam mores tuos.  
 mucrone pectus impium iusto patet  
 cruorque sancto solvit inferias viro.  
 Quid facere rapto debeas nato parens,  
 discite a noverca: condere Acherontis plagis.<sup>2</sup> 1200

<sup>1</sup> So S: Leo abscissam.

<sup>2</sup> Leo gives ll. 1199, 1200 to Theseus; but they seem more naturally to belong to Phaedra. So A.



## HIPPOLYTUS

a little and hearken to my words—no shameful thing I speak—with this hand will I make amends to thee, in my wicked heart will I thrust the sword and set Phaedra free equally from life and crime. Then through waters, through Tartarean pools, through Styx, through rivers of fire will I madly follow thee. Let me appease thy shade; take the spoils of my head, and accept this lock torn from my wounded forehead. It was not ours to be joined in life, but surely 'tis ours to be joined in death.

[*To herself.*]

<sup>1184</sup> Now die, if thou art pure, for thy husband's sake; if impure, for thy love. Shall I seek again my husband's couch by so great crime defiled? The one horror lacking was that, as if pure, thou shouldst enjoy his couch claimed as thy right. O death, thou only solace of evil love, O death, thou chiefest grace to damaged honour, I fly to thee; spread wide thy forgiving arms.

<sup>1191</sup> Hear me, O Athens, and thou, his father, worse than baleful stepdame: I have lied to you, and the crime which, crazed with passion, I had conceived in my own mad breast, I falsely charged to him. Thou, father, hast punished to no purpose; and the chaste youth, through charge of the unchaste, lies there, all pure and innocent.

[*To HIPPOLYTUS.*]

<sup>1196</sup> Recover now thine honour. My impious breast is bare to the sword of justice, and my blood makes atonement to thy guiltless shade.

[*To THESEUS.*]

<sup>1199</sup> What thou, his father, shouldst do, now that thy son is murdered, learn from his stepdame: hide thee in Acheron.

[*She falls upon her sword and dies.*]

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

## THESEVS

Pallidi fauces Averni vosque, Taenarei specus,  
 unda miseris grata Lethes vosque, torpentes lacus,  
 impium abdite atque mersum premite perpetuis  
 malis.

nunc adeste, saeva ponti monstra, nunc vastum mare,  
 ultimo quodcumque Proteus aequorum abscondit  
 sinu,

meque ovantem scelere tanto rapite in altos gurgites.  
 tuque semper, genitor, irae facilis assensor meae,  
 morte facili dignus haud sum qui nova natum nece  
 segregem sparsi per agros quique, dum falsum  
 nefas

exsequor vindex severus, incidi in verum scelus. 1210  
 sidera et manes et undas scelere complevi meo ;  
 amplius sors nulla restat ; regna me norunt tria.

In hoc redimus? patuit ad caelum via,  
 bina ut viderem funera et geminam necem,  
 caelebs et orbis funebres una face  
 ut concremarem prolis ac thalami rogos?  
 donator atrae lucis, Alcide, tuum  
 Diti remitte munus; ereptos mihi  
 restitue manes. impius frustra invoco  
 mortem relictam. crudus et leti artifex, 1220  
 exitia machinatus insolita efferat,  
 nunc ipse tibimet iusta supplicia irroga.  
 pinus coacto vertice attingens humum  
 caelo remissum findat in geminas trabes,  
 416

# HIPPOLYTUS

## THESEUS

Ye jaws of wan Avernus, ye Taenarean caves,  
ye waves of Lethe, welcome to the wretched, ye  
sluggish pools, hide ye my impious self, plunge deep  
and bury me in unending woes. Come now, savage  
monsters of the deep, now, vast sea, and whatever  
Proteus has hidden away in the furthest hollow of  
his waters, and hurry me off, me who felt triumph  
in crime so great, to your deep pools. And thou,  
father, who didst e'er give too quick assent to my  
angry prayer, I am not worthy of an easy death who  
have brought unheard-of destruction on my son and  
scattered his mangled limbs throughout the fields;  
who, while, as stern avenger, I was punishing an unreal  
crime, have myself fallen into true guilt. Heaven,  
hell, and ocean have I filled up by my sin; there  
remains no further lot; <sup>1</sup> three kingdoms know me.

<sup>1213</sup> For this have I returned? Was the way opened  
to the light of heaven that I might look on two  
funerals and a double murder, that, wifeless and  
childless, I might with one torch light the funeral  
pyres of son and wife? O giver of light that is  
but darkness, Alcides, give back his boon <sup>2</sup> to Dis;  
give me up again to the ghosts whom I escaped.  
Impiously, I make vain prayers for the death I left  
behind. Thou bloody man, skilful in deadly arts,  
who didst contrive unheard-of, barbarous ways of  
death, now upon thyself inflict fitting punishment.  
Shall a pine-tree, its top bent down to earth, split  
me in two, shot back into the air? <sup>3</sup> Shall I be

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the three lots by which the sons of Saturn divided the universe among themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Hercules had asked the boon of Dis that he might take Theseus with him out of Hades.

<sup>3</sup> See Index *s.v.* "Sinis."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

mittarve praeceps saxa per Scironia ?  
 graviora vidi, quae pati clausos iubet  
 Phlegethon nocentes igneo cingens vado ;  
 quae poena memet maneat et sedes, scio.

Umbrae nocentes, cedite et cervicibus  
 his, his repositum degravet fessas manus 1230  
 saxum, seni perennis Aeolio labor ;  
 me ludat amnis ora vicina alluens ;  
 vultur relicto transvolet Tityo ferus  
 meumque poenae semper accrescat iecur ;  
 et tu mei requiesce Perithoi pater :  
 haec incitatis membra turbinibus ferat  
 numquam resistens orbe revoluta rota.  
 dehisce tellus, recipe me dirum chaos,  
 recipe, haec ad umbras iustior nobis via est—  
 natum sequor. ne metue qui manes regis ; 1240  
 casti venimus ; recipe me aeterna domo  
 non exiturum. non movent divos preces ;  
 at si rogarem scelera, quam proni forent !

CHORVS

Theseu, querelis tempus aeternum manet.  
 nunc iusta nato solve et absconde ocuis  
 dispersa foede membra laniatu effero.

THESEVS

Huc, huc reliquias vehite cari corporis  
 pondusque et artus temere congestos date.  
 Hippolytus hic est ? crimen agnosco meum ;



## HIPPOLYTUS

hurled headlong over the Scironian cliffs? More dreadful things have I seen which Phlegethon bids imprisoned sinners suffer, compassing them about with his stream of fire; what punishment waits for me, and what place, I know.

<sup>1229</sup> Ye guilty shades, make room, and on these shoulders, these, let the rock rest, the endless task of the aged son<sup>1</sup> of Aeolus, and weigh down my weary hands; let water, lapping my very lips, mock my thirst;<sup>2</sup> let the fell vulture leave Tityus and fly hither, let my liver constantly grow afresh for punishment; and do thou rest awhile, father<sup>3</sup> of my Pirithoüs—let the wheel that never stops its whirling bear these limbs of mine on its swift-turning rim. Yawn, earth; take me, dire Chaos, take me; this way to the shades is more fitting<sup>4</sup> for me—my son I follow. And fear not, thou who rulest the shades; I come clean-handed;<sup>5</sup> receive me into thy everlasting home, to go forth no more. My prayers move not the gods; but if I asked impious things, how would they bend to answer!

### CHORUS

Theseus, time without end awaits thy lamentations. Now pay the rites due to thy son and bury with speed the scattered limbs mangled so shamefully.

### THESEUS

Hither, hither bring the remains of his dear body and heap together, as they come, the burden of his limbs. Is this Hippolytus? Mine is the sin, I do

<sup>1</sup> Sisyphus.      <sup>2</sup> Referring to the torture of Tantalus.

<sup>3</sup> Ixion.      <sup>4</sup> *i.e.* than his former journey to the lower world.

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.* with no evil designs on Proserpina, as before.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ego te peremi, neu nocens tantum semel 1250  
 solusve fierem, facinus ausurus parens  
 patrem advocavi. munere en patrio fruor.  
 o triste fractis orbitas annis malum !  
 complectere artus, quodque de nato est super,  
 miserande, maesto pectore incumbens fove.

CHORVS

Disiecta, genitor, membra laceri corporis  
 in ordinem dispone et errantes loco  
 restitue partes. fortis hic dextrae locus,  
 hic laeva frenis docta moderandis manus  
 ponenda; laevi lateris agnosco notas. 1260  
 quam magna lacrimis pars adhuc nostris abest !

THESEVS

Durate trepidae lugubri officio manus,  
 fletusque largos sistite, arentes genae,  
 dum membra nato genitor adnumerat suo  
 corpusque fingit. hoc quid est forma carens  
 et turpe, multo vulnere abruptum undique ?  
 quae pars tui sit dubito; sed pars est tui.  
 hic, hic repone, non suo, at vacuo loco.  
 haecne illa facies igne sidereo nitens,  
 inimica flectens lumina ? huc cecidit decor ? 1270  
 o dira fata, numinum o saevus favor !  
 sic ad parentem natus ex voto redit ?

En haec suprema dona genitoris cape,  
 saepe efferendus; interim haec ignes ferant.

## HIPPOLYTUS

acknowledge it; 'tis I who have murdered thee, and, lest once only or alone I might be guilty, when I his father would dare crime, my own sire I summoned to my aid. Behold, I enjoy my father's boon. O childlessness, bitter misfortune for broken years! Come, clasp his limbs and all that is left thee of thy son, thou wretched man, and, in thy sad breast fondling, cherish them.

### CHORUS

The scattered parts of his torn body set thou, his sire, in order, and put back in place the random pieces. Here should be his strong right hand, here we must put his left, skilled in managing the reins; traces of his left side I recognize. But how large a part is still lacking to our tears!

### THESEUS

Be firm, my trembling hands, for your sad duty; be dry, my cheeks, stay your flowing tears, while a father is portioning out members to his son and fashioning his body. What is this shapeless, ugly piece, with many a wound torn on every side? What part it is of thee, I know not; but it is a part of thee. Here, here lay it down, not in its own but in an empty place. Is this that face which once gleamed with fire as of the stars, which turned his enemy's eyes aside? Has his beauty fallen to this? O dire fate, O cruel favour of the gods! Thus comes back son to father in answer to his prayer?

[*Placing some ornaments on the torn body.*]

<sup>1273</sup> Lo, these are thy sire's last gifts. Take them, O thou who must oft be borne to burial. Now let the fires consume these limbs.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Patefacite acerbam caede funesta domum ;  
Mopsopia claris tota lamentis sonet.  
vos apparate regii flammam rogi ;  
at vos per agros corporis partes vagas  
inquirete.

Istam terra defossam premat,  
gravisque tellus impio capiti incubet !

1280



## HIPPOLYTUS

[*To attendants.*]

<sup>1275</sup> Open wide my palace, gloomy and foul with slaughter, and let all Athens with loud laments resound. Do you make ready the flames of the royal pyre; do you seek through the fields for his body's parts still wandering.

[*Pointing to PHAEDRA's corpse.*]

<sup>1279</sup> As for her, let her be buried deep in earth, and may the soil lie heavy on her unholy head!

THE HISTORY OF

THE

REIGN OF

THE

LORDS

AND

BISHOPS

OF

ENGLAND

FROM

THE

CONQUEST

TO

THE

REFORMATION

DR. JAMES FRISVOLD

# OEDIPUS

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OEDIPUS, *king of Thebes; the son, as he supposed, of Polybus, king of Corinth, and Merope, his wife, but found to be the son of Laius and Jocasta.*

JOCASTA, *wife of Oedipus, found to be also his mother.*

CREON, *a Theban prince, brother of Jocasta.*

TIRESIAS, *the prophet of Thebes, now old and blind.*

MANTO, *daughter of Tiresias.*

OLD MAN, *sent from Corinth to announce to Oedipus the death of Polybus.*

PHORBAS, *shepherd in charge of the royal flocks of Thebes.*

MESSENGER, *who announces the self-inflicted blindness of Oedipus and the suicide of Jocasta.*

CHORUS *of Theban elders.*

THE SCENE is laid before the royal palace of Thebes; the play opens in the early morning of the day within which the tragedy is consummated.



## ARGUMENT

*AN oracle once came to Læius, king of Thebes, that he should perish by his own son's hands. When, therefore, a son was born to him, he gave the infant to his chief shepherd to expose on Mount Cithæron. But the tender-hearted rustic gave the babe instead to a wandering herdsman of Polybus, the king of Corinth.*

*Years later a reputed son of Polybus, Oedipus by name, fearing an oracle which doomed him to slay his father and wed his mother, fled from Corinth, that so he might escape this dreadful fate. As he fared northward he met and slew an old man who imperiously disputed the narrow way with him. Upon arriving at the Theban land he read the riddle of the Sphinx, and so destroyed that monster which Juno had sent to harass the land which she hated; and for this service Oedipus was made the husband of Jocasta, the widowed queen of Læius (who had recently been slain upon the road), and set upon the vacant throne.*

*Now other years have passed, and sons and daughters have been born to the royal pair. But now a dreadful pestilence afflicts the State. Oedipus has sent Creon to consult the oracle, to learn the cause and seek the means of deliverance from the scourge. And while he waits his messenger's return the murky dawn still finds him grieving for his kingdom's wretched plight.*

# OEDIPVS

## OEDIPVS

IAM nocte Titan dubius expulsa redit  
et nube maestus<sup>1</sup> squalida exoritur iubar,  
lumenque flamma triste luctifica gerens  
prospiciet avida peste solatas domos,  
stragemque quam nox fecit ostendet dies.

Quisquamne regno gaudet? O fallax bonum,  
quantum malorum fronte quam blanda tegis!  
ut alta ventos semper excipiunt iuga  
rupemque saxis vasta dirimentem freta  
quamvis quieti verberat fluctus maris, 10  
imperia sic excelsa Fortunae obiacent.  
quam bene parentis scepra Polybi fugeram!  
curis solutus exul, intrepidus, vagans<sup>2</sup>  
(caelum deosque testor) in regnum incidi.  
infanda timeo—ne mea genitor manu  
perimatur. hoc me Delphicae laurus monent,  
aliudque nobis maius indicunt scelus.  
est maius aliquod patre mactato nefas?  
pro misera pietas (eloqui fatum pudet),  
thalamos parentis Phoebus et diros toros 20  
nato minatur impia incestos face;  
hic me paternis expulit regnis timor.

<sup>1</sup> So *Leo and Richter*: Bentley maestum squalida extollit iubar.

<sup>2</sup> So *Richter*, with *A*: Leo vacans, with *E*.

# OEDIPUS

## OEDIPUS

Now night is driven away ; the hesitant sun returns, and rises, sadly veiling his beams in murky cloud ; with woeful flame he brings a light of sadness and will look forth upon our homes stricken with ravaging plague, and day will reveal the havoc which night has wrought.

<sup>6</sup> Does any man rejoice in royalty? O deceitful good, how many ills dost hide beneath thy smiling face! As lofty peaks do ever catch the blasts, and as the cliff, which with its jutting rocks cleaves the vast deep, is beaten by the waves of even a quiet sea, so does exalted empire lie exposed to fate. How happily had I escaped the sceptre of my father, Polybus! An exile freed from cares,<sup>1</sup> fearless, wandering, upon a kingdom (be heaven and the gods my witness) I came by chance. Things unspeakable I fear—that by my hand my father shall be slain. Of this the Delphic laurels warn me, and another, still greater crime they assign to me. Is any wickedness greater than a murdered sire? O hapless filial love!—I am ashamed to tell my doom—Phoebus threatens the son with his father's chamber, with bed made infamous, defiled by unhallowed passion. 'Twas the fear of this that drove me from my father's realm.

*i. e.* regarding the oracle, whose fulfilment he thought he had escaped.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

non ego penates profugus excessi meos ;  
 parum ipse fidens mihimet in tuto tua,  
 Natura, posui iura. cum magna horreas,  
 quod posse fieri non putes metuas tamen.  
 cuncta expavesco meque non credo mihi.

Iam iam aliquid in nos fata moliri parant ;  
 nam quid rear quod ista Cadmeae lues  
 infesta genti, strage tam late edita,  
 mihi parcit uni ? cui reservamur malo ?  
 inter ruinas urbis et semper novis  
 deflenda lacrimis funera ac populi struem  
 incolumis asto—scilicet Phoebi reus.  
 sperare poteris sceleribus tantis dari  
 regnum salubre ? fecimus caelum nocens.

30

Non aura gelido lenis afflatu fovet  
 anhela flammis corda, non Zephyri leves  
 spirant, sed ignes auget aestiferi canis  
 Titan, leonis terga Nemeaei premens.  
 deseruit amnes umor atque herbas color  
 aretque Dirce, tenuis Ismenos fluit  
 et tinguit inopi nuda vix unda vada.  
 obscura caelo labitur Phoebi soror,  
 tristisque mundus nubilo pallet die.  
 nullum serenis noctibus sidus micat,  
 sed gravis et ater incubat terris vapor.  
 obtexit arces caelitem ac summas domos  
 inferna facies. denegat fructum Ceres

40



## OEDIPUS

Not as a fugitive<sup>1</sup> did I leave my home ; of my own will, distrustful of myself, O Nature, I made thy laws secure. When thou drestest some great calamity, though thou thinkst it cannot befall, still do thou fear. I dread all things exceedingly, and I do not trust myself unto myself.

<sup>28</sup> Now, even now the fates are aiming some blow at me ; for what am I to think when this pestilence, so deadly to Cadmus' race, so widespread in its destruction, spares me alone ? For what evil am I reserved ? Midst the ruins of my city, midst funerals to be lamented with tears ever fresh, midst the slaughter of a nation, I stand unscathed—aye ! prisoner at Phoebus' bar. Couldst thou hope that to crimes like thine a wholesome kingdom would be granted ? I have made heaven pestilent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>37</sup> No soft breeze with its cool breath relieves our breasts that pant with heat, no gentle Zephyrs blow ; but Titan augments the scorching dog-star's fires, close-pressing upon the Nemean Lion's<sup>3</sup> back. Water has fled the streams, and from the herbage verdure. Dirce is dry, scant flows Ismenus' stream, and with its meagre wave scarce wets the naked sands. With paling light glides Phoebus' sister athwart the sky, and the gloomy heavens are wan in the lowering day. No star in clear nights glitters, but a heavy, black fog broods o'er the lands. The citadels of the heavenly gods and their homes on high are veiled in hellish aspect. The ripened corn withholds its fruitful

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* to avoid the consequences of some crime already committed.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* "I have caused the gods on my account to work this great destruction" ; or, as Farnabius interprets : "I have infected the very air." This latter interpretation is favoured by l. 79.

<sup>3</sup> The sun is in the constellation of Leo in July.

adulta, et altis flava cum spicis tremat, 50  
 arente culmo sterilis emoritur seges.  
 nec ulla pars immunis exitio vacat,  
 sed omnis aetas pariter et sexus ruit,  
 iuvenesque senibus iungit et natis patres  
 funesta pestis, una fax thalamos cremat  
 fletuque acerbo funera et questu carent.  
 quin ipsa tanti pervicax clades mali  
 siccavit oculos, quodque in extremis solet  
 periere lacrimae. portat hunc aeger parens 60  
 supremum ad ignem, mater hunc amens gerit  
 properatque ut alium repetat in eundem rogam.  
 quin luctu in ipso luctus exoritur novus  
 suaeque circa funus exequiae cadunt.  
 tum propria flammis corpora alienis cremant ;  
 diripitur ignis ; nullus est miseris pudor.  
 non ossa tumuli sancta discreti tegunt.  
 arsisse satis est ; pars quota in cineres abit !  
 dest terra tumulis, iam rogos silvae negant.  
 non vota, non ars ulla correptos levant.  
 cadunt medentes, morbus auxilium trahit. 70

Adfusus aris supplices tendo manus  
 matura poscens fata, praecurram ut prior  
 patriam ruentem neve post omnes cadam  
 fiamque regni funus extremum mei.  
 o saeva nimium numina, o fatum grave !  
 negatur uni nempe in hoc populo mihi  
 mors tam parata ? sperne letali manu  
 contacta regna, linque lacrimas, funera,

## OEDIPUS

harvest, and though the golden crop waves high its wheaten ears, the grain dies shrivelled on its parched stalk. No class is free from death; but every age and sex is smitten alike. Young men with old, fathers with sons, are joined by the deadly plague; husband and wife by a single fire are burned, and funerals lack bitter tears and lamentations. Nay, the persistent bane of our so great a woe hath of itself dried our eyes and, as oft in utmost misery, our tears have perished. Here to the final flames a stricken father bears his son; there a crazed mother carries her child and hastens back to bring another to the selfsame pyre. Nay more, in their very grief new grief arises and midst funeral rites their own rites befall. Anon, with others' fires they burn the bodies of their own; yes, fire is stolen, for the wretched have no shame. No separate mounds cover the hallowed bones. Mere burning is enough; how small a part is turned to ashes! No ground is left for tombs; now woods refuse more pyres. Neither prayers nor any skill avails the stricken. Healers fall victims; the disease drags down those who seek to aid.

<sup>71</sup> Prostrate at the altars, I stretch suppliant hands, begging my fates to hasten, that I may anticipate my country's ruin and not fall after all the rest, and mine become the last funeral of my realm. Oh, divinities too harsh, Oh, heavy fate! To me alone in all this people is death denied, so ready for all others? Come, fly the land thy baleful hand has tainted, leave the tears, the deaths, the pest-laden air which

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tabifica caeli vitia quae tecum invehis  
 infaustus hospes, profuge iamdudum ocius—  
 vel ad parentes!

80

IOCASTA

Quid iuvat, coniunx, mala  
 gravare questu? regium hoc ipsum reor—  
 adversa capere, quoque sit dubius magis  
 status et cadentis imperi moles labet,  
 hoc stare certo pressius fortem gradu.  
 haud est virile terga Fortunae dare.

OEDIPVS

Abest pavoris crimen ac probrum procul,  
 virtusque nostra nescit ignavos metus.  
 si tela contra stricta, si vis horrida  
 Mavortis in me rueret, adversus feros  
 audax Gigantas obvias ferrem manus.  
 nec Sphinga caecis verba nectentem modis  
 fugi; cruentos vatis infandae tuli  
 tricis et albens ossibus sparsis solum;  
 cumque e superna rupe iam praedae imminens  
 aptaret alas verbera et caudae movens  
 saevi leonis more conciperet minas,  
 carmen poposci. sonuit horrendum insuper,  
 crepuere malae, saxaque impatiens morae  
 revulsit unguis viscera expectans mea;  
 nodosa sortis verba et implexos dolos  
 ac triste carmen alitis solvi ferae.

90

100



## OEDIPUS

thou bringst with thee, ill-omened guest; fly quickly!  
(long since 'twere well)—even to thy parents!<sup>1</sup>

### JOCASTA

[*Who has entered in time to hear her husband's last words.*]

What boots it, husband, to make woe heavier by lamentation? This very thing, methinks, is regal—to face adversity and, the more dubious thy station and the more the greatness of empire totters to its fall, the more firm to stand, brave with unflinching foot. 'Tis not man's part to turn the back to Fortune.

### OEDIPUS

Far from me is the crime and shame of cowardice, and my valour knows not dastard fears. Should swords be drawn against me, should the bristling power of Mars rush on me, against even the fierce Giants would I boldly bear opposing hands. The Sphinx, weaving her words in darkling measures, I fled not; I faced the bloody jaws of the fell prophetess and the ground white with scattered bones. And when from a lofty cliff, already hovering over her prey, she prepared her pinions and, lashing her tail like a savage lion, stirred up her threatening wrath, I asked her riddle. Thereupon came a sound of dread; her jaws crashed, and her talons, brooking no delay, eager for my vitals, tore at the rocks. The lot's intricate, guile-entangled words, the grim riddle of the winged beast, I solved.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Polybus, king of Corinth, and Merope, his wife, who, he supposed, were his parents and from whom he had fled to Thebes.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Quid sera mortis vota nunc demens facis?  
 licuit perire. laudis hoc pretium tibi  
 sceptrum et peremptae Sphingis haec merces datur.<sup>1</sup>  
 ille, ille dirus callidi monstri cinis  
 in nos rebellat, illa nunc Thebas lues  
 perempta perdit. una iam superest salus,  
 si quam salutis Phoebus ostendit viam.

### CHORVS

Occidis, Cadmi generosa proles, 110  
 urbe cum tota; viduas colonis  
 respicis terras, miseranda Thebe.  
 carpitur leto tuus ille, Bacche,  
 miles, extremos comes usque ad Indos,  
 ausus Eois equitare campis  
 figere et mundo tua signa primo.  
 cinnami silvis Arabas beatos  
 vidit et versos equites, sagittis  
 terga fallacis metuenda Parthi;  
 litus intravit pelagi rubentis; 120  
 promit hinc ortus aperitque lucem  
 Phoebus et flamma propiore nudos  
 inficit Indos.

Stirpis invictae genus interimus,  
 labimur saevo rapiente fato;  
 ducitur semper nova pompa Morti;  
 longus ad manes properatur ordo  
 agminis maesti, seriesque tristis  
 haeret et turbae tumulos petenti  
 non satis septem patuere portae. 130  
 stat gravis strages premiturque iuncto  
 funere funus.

<sup>1</sup> Richter assigns ll. 103-105 to Jocasta.

## OEDIPUS

<sup>103</sup> [*To himself.*] Why too late dost thou now in madness pray for death? Thou hadst thy chance to die. This sceptre is thy meed of praise, this thy reward for the Sphinx destroyed. That dust, that cursed dust of the artful monster is warring against me still; that pest which I destroyed is now destroying Thebes. One only salvation is left us now, if any way of salvation Phoebus shows.

### CHORUS

Thou art falling, O noble race of Cadmus, with all thy city. Reft of its tillers thou seest thy land, O pitiab!e Thebes. Destruction feeds, O Bacchus, on that soldiery of thine, thy comrades to farthest Ind, who dared to ride on the Eastern plains and plant thy banners on the world's first edge. The Arabs, blest with their cinnamon groves, they saw, and fleeing horsemen, the backs of the treacherous Parthians,<sup>1</sup> to be feared for their flying shafts; they pierced to the shores of the ruddy sea,<sup>2</sup> whence Phoebus [discloses his rising beams, opens the gates of day, and with nearer torch darkens the naked Indians.

<sup>124</sup> We, the offspring of an unconquered stock, are perishing, are falling 'neath the fierce onslaught of fate. Each hour a new train moves on to Death; the long array of a mournful band hastes to the shades; the gloomy procession jams, and for the throng that seeks burial the seven gates spread not wide enough. The grievous wrack of carnage halts and funeral crowds funeral in unbroken line.

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the proverbial "Parthian shot," delivered while in flight or seeming flight.

<sup>2</sup> Referring not to our "Red Sea," but to the Indian Ocean. See *Herc. Fur.*, 903; *Thy.*, 371.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Prima vis tardas tetigit bidentes ;  
 laniger pingues male carpsit herbas.  
 colla tacturus steterat sacerdos ;  
 dum manus certum parat alta vulnus,  
 aureo taurus rutilante cornu  
 labitur segnis. patuit sub ictu  
 ponderis vasti resoluta cervix ;  
 nec cruor, ferrum maculavit atra  
 turpis e plaga sanies profusa.  
 segnior cursu sonipes in ipso  
 concidit gyro dominumque prono  
 prodidit armo. 140

Incubant agris pecudes relictæ ;  
 taurus armento pereunte marcet ;  
 deficit pastor grege deminuto  
 tabidos inter moriens iuvenços.  
 non lupos cervi metuunt rapaces,  
 cessat irati fremitus leonis,  
 nulla villosis feritas in ursis ;  
 perdidit pestem latebrosa serpens ;  
 aret et sicco moritur veneno. 150

Non silva sua decorata coma  
 fundit opacis montibus umbras,  
 non rura virent ubere glebae,  
 non plena suo vitis Baccho  
 bracchia curvat ;  
 omnia nostrum sensere malum.  
 Rupere Erebi claustra profundi  
 turba sororum face Tartarea  
 Phlegethonque suam mutat ripam ;  
 miscuit undis Styga Sidoniis. 160



## OEDIPUS

<sup>133</sup> First the plague struck the slow-moving sheep ; to their bane did the woolly flock crop the rich herbage. Ready to smite his victim's neck, the priest had taken his stand ; while his upraised hand aimed the unerring blow, the bull, his horn glimmering with gold, sank dully down. Shattered by the blow of a heavy axe, the neck yawned open ;<sup>1</sup> but no blood, only foul gore, oozing from the dark wound, stained the steel. The prancing steed, slowing in mid-course, fell down and flung his rider over his sinking shoulder.

<sup>145</sup> The abandoned cattle lie stricken in the fields ; the bull pines away amidst his dying kine. The herdsman deserts his dwindling herd, midst his wasting bullocks dying. No more do stags fear ravenous wolves ; subsides the mad lion's roar ; no fierceness now among the shaggy bears. The lurking serpent has lost its bane ; parched and dying he lies, his venom dried.

<sup>154</sup> No more do the woods, crowned with their own foliage, shed dusky shadows on the mountain-sides ; the fields no more grow green with fertile glebe, no more do the vine's full branches bend 'neath the load of its own deity ; all things have felt our plague.

<sup>160</sup> They have burst the bars of abysmal Erebus, the throng of sisters with Tartarean torch,<sup>2</sup> and Phlegethon,<sup>2</sup> changing his own course, has mingled Styx with our Sidonian<sup>3</sup> streams. Dark Death opens

<sup>1</sup> The experience with two victims is described. The first bull fell before he was struck ; the second was struck with the axe, but no blood flowed.

<sup>2</sup> In reference to the hot fever of the plague-smit victims. Phlegethon was the burning stream of Hades.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* Phoenician. Cadmus, son of Agenor, king of Phoenicia had founded Thebes.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Mors atra avidos oris hiatus  
 pandit et omnes explicat alas ;  
 quique capaci turbida cumba  
 flumina servat durus senio  
 navita crudo, vix assiduo  
 bracchia conto lassata refert,  
 fessus turbam vectare novam. 170  
 quin Taenarii vincula ferri  
 rupisse canem fama et nostris  
 errare locis, mugisse solum,  
 vaga per lucos simulacra ferunt  
 maiora viris, bis Cadmeum  
 nive discussa tremuisse nemus,  
 bis turbatam sanguine Dircen,  
 nocte silenti  
 Amphionios ululasse canes.

O dira novi facies leti, 180  
 gravior leto ! piger ignavos  
 alligat artus languor, et aegro  
 rubor in vultu, maculaeque caput  
 sparsere leves ; tum vapor ipsam  
 corporis arcem flammeus urit  
 multoque genas sanguine tendit,  
 oculique rigent et sacer ignis  
 pascitur artus ; resonant aures  
 stillatque niger naris aduncae  
 cruor et venas rumpit hiantes ; 190  
 intima creber viscera quassat  
 gemitus stridens. iamque amplexu  
 frigida presso saxa fatigant ;  
 quos liberior domus elato  
 custode sinit, petitis fontes  
 aliturque sitis latice ingesto.  
 prostrata iacet turba per aras  
 oratque mori—solum hoc faciles

## OEDIPUS

wide his greedy, gaping jaws and unfolds all his wings, and the boatman<sup>1</sup> who plies the troubled stream with roomy skiff, though hardy in his vigorous old age, can scarce draw back his arms wearied with constant poling, worn out with ferrying the fresh throng o'er. Nay more, they say that the dog<sup>2</sup> has burst his chains of Taenarian<sup>3</sup> iron, and is wandering through our fields; that the earth has rumbled; that ghosts go stealing through the groves, larger than mortal forms; that twice have Cadmean forests trembled and shed their snows; twice has Dirce welled up with blood; in the silent night Amphion's hounds have bayed.

<sup>180</sup> O dire appearance and new form of death, far heavier than death! Benumbing languor fetters the listless limbs; the sickly cheeks burn red; small spots overspread the face. Then hot vapours scorch the body's very citadel<sup>4</sup> and distend the cheeks with blood; the eyes stand staring, and accursèd fire<sup>5</sup> feeds upon the limbs. There is a ringing in the ears; black blood drips from the strained nostrils and bursts the swelling veins. Full oft does a grating cough rack the inmost frame. Now they strain cold stones close to their breasts; or where new freedom in the house permits, since the watcher has been borne forth, ye<sup>6</sup> hasten to the springs, and with full draughts feed your fevered thirst. Prostrate the crowds lie at the altars and pray for death—this alone

<sup>1</sup> Charon.

<sup>2</sup> Cerberus.

<sup>3</sup> See Index s.v. "Taenarus."

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* the head.

<sup>5</sup> *Sacer ignis* is usually supposed to be erysipelas, "St. Anthony's fire."

<sup>6</sup> He addresses the sick folk who, when the watcher is dead, rush to the water, which only inflames their thirst.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tribuere dei ; delubra petunt,  
haut ut voto numina placent,  
sed iuvat ipsos satiare deos.

200

OEDIPVS

Quisnam ille propero regiam gressu petit ?  
adestne clarus sanguine ac factis Creο  
an aeger animus falsa pro veris videt ?

CHORVS

Adest petitus omnibus votis Creο.

OEDIPVS

Horrore quatior, fata quo vergant timens,  
trepidumque gemino pectus affectu labat ;  
ubi laeta duris mixta in ambiguo iacent,  
incertus animus scire cum cupiat timet.

Germane nostrae coniugis, fessis opem  
si quam reportas, voce properata edoce.

210

CREO

Responsa dubia sorte perplexa iacent.

OEDIPVS

Dubiam salutem qui dat adffictis negat.



## OEDIPUS

the compliant gods bestow. They seek the shrines,  
not that they may appease the divinities with gifts,  
but joying to glut the very gods.

[CREON *is seen returning from his mission.*<sup>1</sup>]

### OEDIPUS

Who, pray, is he who seeks the palace with hasty  
steps? Is Creon at hand, noble in blood and deed,  
or does my sick fancy see false for true?

### CHORUS

He is at hand, Creon, by all our prayers desired.

[*Enter* CREON.]

### OEDIPUS

With dread am I shaken, fearing the trend of fate,<sup>2</sup>  
and my fluttering heart wavers betwixt two moods;  
where joy with grief commingled lies in doubt, the  
uncertain soul fears though it longs to know.

<sup>210</sup> O brother of my consort, if to weary hearts  
thou bringest any aid, quickly declare thy news.

### CREON

Doubtful lies the answer and involved the doom.

### OEDIPUS

Who grants a doubtful help to sufferers, grants  
none.

<sup>1</sup> See Argument.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of the oracle which Creon had been sent to consult.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CREO

Ambage flexa Delphico mos est deo  
arcana tegere.

OEDIPVS

Fare, sit dubium licet.  
ambigua soli noscere Oedipodae datur.

CREO

Caedem expiari regiam exilio deus,  
et interemptum Laium ulcisci iubet.  
non ante caelo lucidus curret dies  
haustusque tutos aetheris puri dabit.

220

OEDIPVS

Et quis peremptor incluti regis fuit?  
quem memoret ede Phoebus, ut poenas luat.

CREO

Sit, precor, dixisse tutum visu et auditu horrida;  
torpor insedit per artus, frigidus sanguis coit.  
ut sacrata templa Phoebi supplici intravi pede  
et pias numen precatus rite summissi manus,  
gemina Parnasi nivalis arx trucem fremitum dedit;  
imminens Phoebea laurus tremuit et movit comam  
ac repente sancta fontis lympha Castalii stetit.  
incipit Letoa vates spargere horrentes comas

230

## OEDIPUS

CREON

In mazy riddles is the Delphic god wont to hide his secrets.

OEDIPUS

Speak out, though it be doubtful ; to read riddles to Oedipus alone is given.

CREON

The god bids the king's murder be atoned by banishment and the murdered Laius be avenged. Not sooner shall the bright sun course the heavens, and give wholesome draughts of unpolluted air.

OEDIPUS

And who was the murderer of the illustrious king ? Tell whom Phoebus names, that he may pay the penalty.

CREON

May it be safe, I pray, to have told of things to sight and hearing dreadful. Numbness has settled through my limbs ; my chill blood freezes. When Phoebus' hallowed shrine I entered with reverent feet and raised pious hands in due supplication to the god, the double peaks of snow-clad Parnassus gave an angry roar ; the overhanging laurel of Phoebus trembled and shook its foliage, and suddenly the holy waters of the Castalian spring stood still. The priestess of Leto's son began to fling loose her

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et pati commota Phoebum. contigit nondum specum  
emicat vasto fragore maior humano sonus :

Mitia Cadmeis remeabunt sidera Thebis,  
si profugus Dircen Ismenida liquerit hospes  
regis caede nocens, Phoebo iam notus et infans.  
nec tibi longa manent sceleratae gaudia caedis :  
tecum bella geres natis quoque bella relinquens,  
turpis maternos iterum revolutus in ortus.

OEDIPVS

Quod facere monitu caelitem iussus paro,  
functi cineribus regis hoc decuit dari, 240  
ne sancta quisquam sceptrum violaret dolo.  
regi tuenda maxime regum est salus ;  
curat peremptum nemo quem incolumem timet.

CREO

Curam perempti maior excussit timor.

OEDIPVS

Pium prohibuit ullus officium metus ?

CREO

Sphinx et nefandi carminis tristes minae.



## OEDIPUS

bristling locks and, deep stirred, to suffer Phoebus. She had not yet reached the cave, when, with a mighty roar, words louder than voice of man leaped forth :<sup>1</sup>

“ Kind shall the stars return to the Theban city of Cadmus,

If, O fugitive guest, Ismenian Dirce thou leavest, Stained with the blood of a king, from infancy known to Apollo.

Brief shall be to thee the joys of thy impious slaughter :

With thee war shalt thou bring, and war to thy sons leave behind thee,

Fouly returned once more to the impious womb of thy mother.”

### OEDIPUS

That which, at Heaven's warning, I am now prepared to do should fittingly have been done in honour of the dead king's dust, that none might treacherously profane the sacred sceptre. Kings have most need to guard the life of kings ; none hath care for him when dead whom alive he fears.

### CREON

Our care for the dead a greater fear dispelled.

### OEDIPUS

Did any fear prevent a pious duty ?

### CREON

Aye, the Sphinx and the dire threats of her accursed chant.

<sup>1</sup> The oracles were commonly given out in dactylic hexameters.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Nunc expietur numinum imperio scelus.  
 Quisquis deorum regna placatus vides ;  
 tu, tu penes quem iura praecipitis poli  
 tuque, o sereni maximum mundi decus, 250  
 bis sena cursu signa qui vario regis,  
 qui tarda celeri saecula evolvis rota,  
 sororque fratri semper occurrens tuo,  
 noctivaga Phoebe, quique ventorum potens  
 aequor per altum caerulos currus agis,  
 et qui carentes luce disponis domos,  
 adeste : cuius Laius dextra occidit,  
 hunc non quieta tecta, non fidi lares,  
 non hospitalis exulem tellus ferat ;  
 thalamis pudendis doleat et prole impia ; 260  
 hic et parentem dextera perimat sua,  
 faciatque (num quid gravius optari potest?)  
 quidquid ego fugi. non erit veniae locus.  
 per regna iuro quaeque nunc hospes gero  
 et quae reliqui perque penetrales deos,  
 per te, pater Neptune, qui fluctu brevi  
 utrimque nostro geminus alludis solo ;  
 et ipse nostris vocibus testis veni,  
 fatidica vatis ora Cirrhaeae movens :  
 ita molle senium ducat et summum diem 270  
 securus alto reddat in solio parens  
 solasque Merope noverit Polybi faces,  
 ut nulla sontem gratia eripiet mihi.

# OEDIPUS

## OEDIPUS

Now at Heaven's command let the crime be expiated.

<sup>248</sup> Whoever of the gods dost look with favour upon kingdoms—thou,<sup>1</sup> thou whose are the laws of the swift-revolving heavens; and thou,<sup>2</sup> greatest glory of the unclouded sky, who presidest over the twelve signs<sup>3</sup> in thy changing course, who dost unroll the slow centuries with swift wheel; and thou, his sister,<sup>4</sup> ever faring opposite to thy brother, Phoebe, night-wanderer; thou<sup>5</sup> whom the winds obey, who over the level deep dost speed thy azure car; and thou<sup>6</sup> who dost allot homes devoid of light—do ye all attend: Him by whose hand Læius fell may no peaceful dwelling, no friendly household gods, no hospitable land in exile entertain; over shameful nuptials may he lament and impious progeny; may he, too, slay his own father with his own hand and do—can aught heavier be entreated?—whatever I have fled from. There shall be no place for pardon. I swear by the sway which I now, a stranger, bear, and by that which I abandoned; by my household gods; by thee, O father Neptune, who in double stream dost play against my shores on either side<sup>7</sup> with scanty waves. And do thou<sup>8</sup> thyself come as witness to my words, thou who dost inspire the fate-speaking lips of Cirrha's priestess: So may my father spend peaceful age and end his days secure on his lofty throne; so may Merope know the nuptial torches of her Polybus alone, as by no grace shall the guilty one escape my hand.

<sup>1</sup> Jupiter.    <sup>2</sup> Phoebus, the sun.    <sup>3</sup> *i.e.* of the Zodiac.

<sup>4</sup> Phoebe, the moon.    <sup>5</sup> Neptune.    <sup>6</sup> Pluto.

<sup>7</sup> He believes that the Isthmus of Corinth is his native land.    <sup>8</sup> Apollo.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Sed quo nefandum facinus admissum loco est,  
memorate : aperto Marte an insidiis iacet ?

### CREO

Frondifera sanctae nemora Castaliae petens  
calcavit artis obsitum dumis iter,  
trigemina qua se spargit in campos via.  
secat una gratum Phocidos Baccho solum,  
unde altus arva deserit, caelum petens, 280  
clementer acto colle Parnasos biceps ;  
at una bimares Sisyphi terras adit ;  
Olenia in arva tertius trames cava  
convalle serpens tangit errantes aquas  
gelidumque dirimit amnis Elei<sup>1</sup> vadum.  
hic pace fretum subita praedonum manus  
aggressa ferro facinus occultum tulit.

In tempore ipso sorte Phoebea excitus  
Tiresia tremulo tardus accelerat genu  
comesque Manto luce viduatum trahens. 290

### OEDIPVS

Sacrate divis, proximum Phoebo caput,  
responsa solve ; fare, quem poenae petant.

### TIRESIA

Quod tarda fatu est lingua, quod quaerit moras  
haut te quidem, magnanime, mirari addecet ;

<sup>1</sup> *So E: A Elidis: Leo conjectures Aetoli.*



## OEDIPUS

274 But tell me, where was the impious crime committed? Did he die in open battle or by treachery?

CREON

Seeking holy Castalia's leafy groves, he trod a way hedged in by close-pressing thickets, where the road, three-forking, branches out upon the plains. One road cuts through Phocis, the land that Bacchus loves, whence lofty Parnassus, leaving the lowlands, by a gentle slope lifts heavenward his two peaks; but one leads off to the land<sup>1</sup> of Sisyphus bathed by two seas; a third into the Olenian fields, through a low valley winding, reaches the vagrant waters and crosses the cool shallows of Elis' stream. Here as he fared, relying on peaceful times, a band of robbers suddenly attacked him with the sword and wrought the crime unwitnessed.

[TIRESIAS is seen approaching.]

288 But in the nick of time, stirred by Phoebus' oracle, Tiresias, though slow with trembling limbs, comes hurrying, and with him Manto, leading her sightless father.

[Enter TIRESIAS, old and blind, led by his daughter,  
MANTO.]

OEDIPUS

O thou to the gods consecrate, thou next to Phoebus' self, explain the oracle; tell whom the fates demand.

TIRESIAS

That my tongue is slow to speak, that it craves delay, it behooves thee not, O great-souled Oedipus,

<sup>1</sup> The Isthmus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

visu carenti magna pars veri latet.  
 sed quo vocat me patria, quo Phoebus, sequar.  
 fata eruantur; si foret viridis mihi  
 calidusque sanguis, pectore exciperem deum.  
 appellite aris candidum tergo bovem  
 curvoque numquam colla depressam iugo. 300  
 tu lucis inopem, nata, genitorem regens  
 manifesta sacri signa fatidici refer.

MANTO

Opima sanctas victima ante aras stetit.

TIRESIA

In vota superos voce sollemni voca  
 arasque dono turis Eoi extrue.

MANTO

Iam tura sacris caelitum ingessi focis.

TIRESIA

Quid flamma? largas iamne comprehendit dapes?

MANTO

Subito refulsit lumine et subito occidit.

TIRESIA

Vtrumne clarus ignis et nitidus stetit  
 rectusque purum verticem caelo tulit 310  
 452

## OEDIPUS

to wonder; from the blind much of the truth is hidden. But whither my country, whither Phoebus calls me, I will follow. Let us search out the fates; if my blood were fresh and warm, I would receive the god in my own breast.<sup>1</sup> Drive to the altars a pure white bull and a heifer whose neck has never borne the curved yoke. Do thou, my child, who guidest thy blind father, report the clear tokens of the prophetic sacrifice.

[*The victims are stationed at the altars as directed.*]

MANTO

A perfect victim stands before the sacred altars.

TIRESIAS

To our vows invoke Heaven's presence with the accustomed prayer, and heap the altars with the Orient's gift of frankincense.

MANTO

Now have I heaped incense on the gods' sacred hearth.

TIRESIAS

What of the flame? Doth it already seize upon the generous feast?

MANTO

It flashed up with sudden light, and suddenly died down.

TIRESIAS

Did the fire stand clear and bright? Did it lift a pure, pointed flame straight skyward and, spreading,

<sup>1</sup> i.e. he would speak directly by inspiration instead of proceeding by the different methods of divination.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et summam in auras fusus explicuit comam ?  
 an latera circa serpit incertus viae  
 et fluctuante turbidus fumo labat ?

### MANTO

Non una facies mobilis flammae fuit.  
 imbrifera qualis implicat varios sibi  
 Iris colores, parte quae magna poli  
 curvata picto nuntiat nimbos sinu,  
 quis desit illi quive sit dubites color,  
 caerulea fulvis mixta oberravit notis,  
 sanguinea rursus ; ultima in tenebras abit. 320

Sed ecce pugnax ignis in partes duas  
 discedit et se scindit unius sacri  
 discors favilla—genitor, horresco intuens :  
 libata Bacchi dona permutat cruor  
 ambitque densus regium fumus caput  
 ipsosque circa spissior vultus sedet  
 et nube densa sordidam lucem abdidit.  
 quid sit, parens, effare.

### TIRESIA

Quid fari queam  
 inter tumultus mentis attonitae vagus ?  
 quidnam loquar ? sunt dira, sed in alto mala ; 330  
 solet ira certis numinum ostendi notis.  
 quid istud est quod esse prolatum volunt  
 iterumque nolunt et truces iras tegunt ?  
 pudet deos nescio quid. huc propere admove  
 et sparge salsa colla taurorum mola.  
 placidone vultu sacra et admotas manus  
 patiuntur ?



## OEDIPUS

unfold its topmost crest upon the air, or sidewise does it creep uncertain of its course, and with wavering smoke fall murkily?

### MANTO

Not one appearance only had the changeful flame. As when rain-bringing Iris entwines her various colours, who, over a great space of heaven sweeping, by her painted bow proclaims the storm, so wouldst thou be in doubt what colour is lacking, what is present in the flame; dark blue, mingled with yellow spots, it hovered, then was blood-red, and at last trailed off in blackness.

<sup>321</sup> But see, the combative flame is separating into two parts and the discordant embers of one sacred pile are rent in twain—O father, I tremble as I gaze: Bacchus' gift poured out changes to blood, and dense smoke wreathes the king's head; denser still it settles about his very face and with its thick cloud has hidden light in gloom. O father, tell us what it means.

### TIRESIAS

What can I tell, halting mid conflicting voices of a soul amazed? What shall I say? Dire ills they are, but hidden in mystery. 'Tis the gods' wont with clear signs to manifest their wrath. What is it which they would, and again would not, reveal? What grim menace are they concealing? Something which shames the gods. Quick, bring the victims hither, and with salted meal sprinkle the bullocks' necks. With placid mien do they suffer the rites and the outstretched hands?

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MANTO

Altum taurus attollens caput  
primos ad ortus positus expavit diem  
trepidusque vultum solis et radios fugit.

TIRESIA

Vnone terram vulnere afflicti petunt? 340

MANTO

Invenca ferro semet imposito<sup>1</sup> induit  
et vulnere uno cecidit, at taurus duos  
perpessus ictus huc et huc dubius ruit  
animamque fessus vix reluctantem exprimit.

TIRESIA

Vtrum citatus vulnere angusto micat  
an lentus altas irrigat plagas cruor?

MANTO

Huius per ipsam qua patet pectus viam  
effusus amnis, huius exiguo graves  
maculantur ictus imbre; sed versus retro  
per ora multus sanguis atque oculos redit. 350

TIRESIA

Infausta magnos sacra terrores cient.  
sed ede certas viscerum nobis notas.

<sup>1</sup> *So Leo, with E: A opposito: Bentley apposito vel impulso*  
456

## OEDIPUS

MANTO

Facing the east, the bull, lifting high his head,  
shrank from the day and turned in terror from the  
sun's bright face.

TIRESIAS

With one blow smitten do they fall to earth?

MANTO

The heifer threw herself upon the ready steel  
and with one blow fell; but the bull, twice smitten,  
hither and yon wanders uncertain and feebly drives  
forth his scarce-resisting life.

TIRESIAS

Does the blood spurt quick from out a narrow  
thrust, or does it but slowly o'erflood a deep-driven  
blow?

MANTO

The blood of one through the proper path, where  
the breast gapes wide, pours in a stream; the other's  
grievous wounds are stained with but scanty drops;  
nay, backward turning, the blood flows copiously  
through mouth and eyes.

TIRESIAS

These ill-omened sacrifices rouse dread forebod-  
ings. But describe to me the sure marks of the  
entrails.

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

## MANTO

Genitor, quid hoc est? non levi motu, ut solent,  
 agitata trepidant exta, sed totas manus  
 quatiunt novusque prosilit venis cruor.  
 cor marcet aegrum penitus ac mersum latet  
 liventque venae; magna pars fibris abest  
 et felle nigro tabidum spumat iecur,  
 ac (semper omen unico imperio grave)  
 en capita paribus bina consurgunt toris; 360  
 sed utrumque caesum tenuis abscondit caput  
 membrana, latebram rebus occultis negans.<sup>1</sup>  
 hostile valido robore insurgit latus  
 septemque venas tendit; has omnes retro  
 prohibens reverti limes oblicus secat.  
 mutatus ordo est, sede nil propria iacet,  
 sed acta retro cuncta: non animae capax  
 in parte dextra pulmo sanguineus iacet,  
 non laeva cordis regio, non molli ambitu  
 omenta pingues visceri obtendunt sinus. 370  
 natura versa est, nulla lex utero manet.  
 scrutemur, unde tantus hic extis rigor.  
 quod hoc nefas? conceptus innuptae bovis,  
 nec more solito positus, alieno in loco  
 implet parentem; membra cum gemitu movet,  
 rigore tremulo debiles artus micant.  
 infecit atras lividus fibras cruor,

<sup>1</sup> *The punctuation of Farnabius: Leo membrana: latebram . . . negans | hostile valido, etc.*



## OEDIPUS

### MANTO

Father, what is this? With no gentle motion, as is their wont, do the entrails shake and quiver, but my whole hand do they cause to tremble and blood spurts afresh from the veins. The heart, diseased through and through, is withered and lies deep hidden, and the veins are of livid hue. A great part of the entrails is wanting, and from the rotting liver black gall oozes forth, and see—ever fatal omen for sole sovereignty—two heads rise side by side with equal bulge; yet each cloven head is hidden in but thin membrane, refusing a lurking place to secret things. The hostile<sup>1</sup> side rises with sturdy strength and shows seven swelling veins; but all these an intercepting line cuts straight across, preventing their return. The positions have been changed; no organ lies in its own place, but all things are reversed: on the right side lie the lungs all clogged with blood, and with no room for breath; the left is not the region of the heart; no caul with soft covering stretches its rich folds over the entrails. Nature is subverted; even the womb follows not its law. Let us look close and see whence comes this stiffness in the entrails. What monstrosity is this? A foetus in an unmated heifer! nor does it lie in accustomed fashion, but fills its mother in an unnatural place. Moaning it moves its limbs, and its weak members twitch with convulsive rigors. Livid gore has stained the entrails black. [*She ceases her inspection as the bodies of the victims suddenly begin to move.*] The sadly

<sup>1</sup> Farnabius, commenting on the passage, says that the haruspices made an imaginary division of the *exta* into two parts; the one, called *familiaris*, they assigned to friendly influences, the other, *hostilis*, to hostile. According to the appearance of both these parts, they foretold coming events.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

temptantque turpes mobilem trunci gradum,  
 et inane surgit corpus ac sacros petit  
 cornu ministros; viscera effugiunt manum. 380  
 neque ista, quae te pepulit, armenti gravis  
 vox est nec usquam territi resonant greges;  
 immugit aris ignis et trepidant foci.

OEDIPVS

Quid ista sacri signa terrifici ferant  
 exprome; voces aure non timida hauriam.  
 solent suprema facere securos mala.<sup>1</sup>

TIRESIA

His inuidebis quibus opem quaeris malis.

OEDIPVS

Memora quod unum scire caelicolae volunt,  
 contaminarit rege quis caeso manus.

TIRESIA

Nec alta caeli quae levi pinna secant 390  
 nec fibra vivis rapta pectoribus potest  
 ciere nomen; alia temptanda est via;  
 ipse evocandus noctis aeternae plagis,  
 emissus Erebo ut caedis auctorem indicet.  
 reseranda tellus, Ditis inplacabile  
 numen precandum, populus infernae Stygis  
 huc extrahendus. ede cui mandes sacrum;  
 nam te, penes quem summa regnorum, nefas  
 invisere umbras.

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

## OEDIPUS

mangled forms essay to move, and one disembowelled body strives to rise and menaces the priests with its horns ; the entrails flee from my hand. Nor is that sound which strikes thy ears the deep lowing of the herd, nor are frightened cattle bellowing anywhere ; it is the lowing of the altar-fires, the affrighted murmurings of the hearth.

### OEDIPUS

What do these signs of the terrifying rites portend ? Declare ; with no timid ear will I drink in thy words. Extremest ills are wont to make men calm.

### TIRESIAS

Thou wilt look with envy upon these ills for which thou seekest aid.

### OEDIPUS

Tell me the one thing the gods would have me know : who has defiled his hands with the murder of the king ?

### TIRESIAS

Neither the birds which on light pinion cut the depths of heaven, nor vitals plucked from still living breasts, can summon up the name. We must essay some other path : the king himself must be recalled from the regions of perpetual night, that, released from Erebus, he may point out his murderer. We must unseal the earth, must implore the implacable divinity of Dis, must draw forth hither the people of infernal Styx. Say to whom thou wilt assign the awful mission ; for 'tis not right for thee, whose are the highest powers of state, to look upon the shades.

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Te, Creo, hic poscit labor,  
ad quem secundum regna respiciunt mea. 400

TIRESIA

Dum nos profundae claustra laxamus Stygis,  
populare Bacchi laudibus carmen sonet.

CHORVS

Effusam redimite comam nutante corymbo,  
mollia Nysaeis armati bracchia thyrsis !

Lucidum caeli decus, huc ades  
votis quae tibi nobiles  
Thebae, Bacche, tuae  
palmis supplicibus ferunt ;  
huc adverte favens virgineum caput,  
vultu sidereo discute nubila 410  
et tristes Erebi minas  
avidumque fatum.  
te decet cingi comam floribus vernis,  
te caput Tyria cohibere mitra  
hederave mollem  
bacifera religare frontem,  
spargere effusos sine lege crines,  
rursus adducto revocare nodo ;  
qualis iratam metuens novercam  
creveras falsos imitatus artus,  
crine flamenti simulata virgo, 420



# OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Thee, Creon, this task demands, to whom as next  
in succession my kingdom looks.

TIRESIAS

While we are loosing the bars of abysmal Styx  
let the people's hymn sound with the praise of  
Bacchus.

[*Exeunt* CREON, TIRESIAS, and MANTO.]

CHORUS<sup>1</sup>

Bind your streaming locks with the nodding ivy,  
and in your soft hands grasp the Nysaeon thyrsus!

<sup>405</sup> Bright glory of the sky, come hither to the  
prayers which thine own illustrious Thebes, O  
Bacchus, offers to thee with suppliant hands. Hither  
turn with favour thy virginal face; with thy star-  
bright countenance drive away the clouds, the grim  
threats of Erebus, and greedy fate. Thee it becomes  
to circle thy locks with flowers of the springtime,  
thee to cover thy head with Tyrian turban, or thy  
smooth brow to wreath with the ivy's clustering  
berries; now to fling loose thy lawless-streaming  
locks, again to bind them in a knot close-drawn; in  
such guise as when, fearing thy stepdame's<sup>2</sup> wrath,  
thou didst grow to manhood with false-seeming limbs,

<sup>1</sup> While the choruses in Seneca's tragedies are often more  
or less dithyrambic in character, this is his best illustration of  
the dithyramb. For the explanation of references to various  
stories connected with the life of Bacchus see Index s.v.  
"Bacchus" and his other names mentioned by the chorus.  
That the address of these opening lines is to the Bacchant  
women is clear from the terms employed: *Effusam comam,*  
*mollia bracchia.*

<sup>2</sup> Juno's.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

lutea vestem retinente zona.  
 inde tam molles placuere cultus  
 et sinus laxi fluidumque syrma.  
 vidit aurato residere curru,  
 veste cum longa tegeres leones,  
 omnis Eoae plaga vasta terrae,  
 qui bibit Gangen niveumque quisquis  
 frangit Araxen.

Te senior turpi sequitur Silenus asello,  
 turgida pampineis redimitus tempora sertis ; 430  
 condita lascivi deducunt orgia mystae.

te Bassaridum comitata cohors  
 nunc Edono pede pulsavit  
 sola Pangaeo, nunc Threicio  
 vertice Pindi ; nunc Cadmeas  
 inter matres impia maenas  
 comes Ogygio venit Iaccho, 438  
 nebride sacra praecineta latus 441  
 thyrsumque levem vibrante manu.  
 tibi commotae pectora matres fudere  
 comam <sup>1</sup> 440

iam post laceros Pentheos artus  
 thyades, oestro membra remissae,  
 velut ignotum videre nefas.

Ponti regna tenet nitidi matertera Bacchi  
 Nereidumque choris Cadmeia cingitur Ino ;  
 ius habet in fluctus magni puer advena ponti,  
 cognatus Bacchi, numen non vile Palaemon.

Te Tyrrhena, puer, rapuit manus,  
 et tumidum Nereus posuit mare ; 450  
 caerula cum pratis mutat freta.

<sup>1</sup> Richter thus transposes ll. 439-441 : Leo deletes l. 439.  
 464

## OEDIPUS

a pretended maiden with golden ringlets, with saffron girdle binding thy garments. So thereafter this soft vesture has pleased thee, folds loose hanging and the long-trailing mantle. Seated in thy golden chariot, thy lions with long trappings covered, all the vast coast of the Orient saw thee, both he who drinks of the Ganges and whoever breaks the ice of snowy Araxes.

<sup>429</sup> On an unseemly ass old Silenus attends thee, his swollen temples bound with ivy garlands; while thy wanton initiates lead the mystic revels. Along with thee a troop of Bassarids in Edonian dance beat the ground, now on Mount Pangaeus' peak, now on the top of Thracian Pindus; now midst Cadmean dames has come a maenad, the impious comrade of Ogygian Bacchus, with sacred fawn-skins girt about her loins, her hand a light thyrsus brandishing. Their hearts maddened by thee, the matrons have set their hair a-flowing; and at length, after the rending of Pentheus' limbs, the Bacchanals, their bodies now freed from the frenzy, looked on their infamous deed as though they knew it not.

<sup>444</sup> Cadmean Ino, foster-mother of shining Bacchus, holds the realms of the deep, encircled by bands of Nereids dancing; over the waves of the mighty deep a boy holds sway, new come, the kinsman of Bacchus, no common god, Palaemon.

<sup>449</sup> Thee, O boy, a Tyrrhenian band once captured and Nereus allayed the swollen sea; the dark blue waters he changes to meadows. Thence flourish the

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hinc verno platanus folio viret  
 et Phoebus laurus carum nemus;  
 garrula per ramos avis obstrepit.  
 vivaces hederas remus tenet,  
 summa ligat vitis carchesia.  
 Idaeus prora fremuit leo,  
 tigris puppe sedet Gangetica.  
 tum pirata freto pavidus natat,  
 et nova demersos facies habet:  
 brachia prima cadunt praedonibus  
 inlisumque utero pectus coit,  
 parvula dependet lateri manus  
 et dorso fluctum curvo subit,  
 lunata scindit cauda mare;

460

et sequitur curvus fugientia carbasa delphin.

Divite Pactolos vexit te Lydius unda,  
 aurea torrenti deducens flumina ripa;  
 laxavit victos arcus Geticasque sagittas  
 lactea Massagetes qui pocula sanguine miscet;  
 regna securigeri Bacchum sensere Lycurgi;  
 sensere terrae Zalacum<sup>1</sup> feroces  
 et quos vicinus Boreas ferit  
 arva mutantem  
 quasque Maeotis alluit gentes  
 frigidus fluctus  
 quasque despectat vertice e summo  
 sidus Arcadium geminumque plastrum.  
 ille dispersos domuit Gelonos,  
 arma detraxit trucibus puellis;  
 ore deiecto petiere terram  
 Thermodontiacae catervae,  
 positisque tandem levibus sagittis  
 maenades factae.  
 sacer Cithaeron sanguine undavit

470

480

<sup>1</sup> A zedacum: *Rapheling* te Dacum.



## OEDIPUS

plane-tree with vernal foliage and the laurel-grove dear to Phoebus; the chatter of birds sounds loud through the branches. Fast-growing ivy clings to the oars, and grape-vines twine at the mast-head. On the prow an Idaeian lion roars; at the stern crouches a tiger of Ganges. Then the frightened pirates swim in the sea, and plunged in the water their bodies assume new forms: the robbers' arms first fall away; their breasts smite their bellies and are joined in one; a tiny hand comes down at the side; with curving back they dive into the waves, and with crescent-shaped tail they cleave the sea; and now as curved dolphins they follow the fleeing sails.

<sup>467</sup> On its rich stream has Lydian Pactolus borne thee, leading along its burning banks the golden waters; the Massgaete who mingles blood with milk in his goblets has unstrung his vanquished bow and given up his Getan arrows; the realms of axe-wielding Lycurgus have felt the dominion of Bacchus; the fierce lands of the Zalaces have felt it, and those wandering tribes whom neighbouring Boreas smites, and the nations which Maeotis' cold water washes, and they on whom the Arcadian<sup>1</sup> constellation looks down from the zenith and the wagons twain.<sup>1</sup> He has subdued the scattered Gelonians; he has wrested their arms from the warrior maidens;<sup>2</sup> with downcast face they fell to earth, those Thermodontian hordes, gave up at length their light arrows, and became maenads. Sacred Cithaeron has flowed with the

<sup>1</sup> The two phrases refer to the same constellation, conceived first as bears (see Index *s.v.* "Arctos"), and second as wagons or wains.

<sup>2</sup> The Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Ophioniaque caede;  
 Proetides silvas petiere, et Argos  
 praesente Bacchum coluit noverca.

Naxos Aegaeo redimita ponto  
 tradidit thalamis relictam  
 virginem, meliore pensans  
 damnum marito.

490

pumice ex sicco  
 fluxit Nyctelius latex;  
 garruli gramen secuere rivi,  
 conbibit dulces humus alta sucos  
 niveique lactis candidos fontes  
 et mixta odoro Lesbia cum thymo.  
 ducitur magno nova nupta caelo;  
 solemne Phoebus carmen  
 infusis humero capillis  
 cantat et geminus Cupido  
 concutit taedas;  
 telum deposuit Iuppiter igneum  
 oditque Baccho veniente fulmen.

500

Lucida dum current annosi sidera mundi,  
 Oceanus clausum dum fluctibus ambiet orbem  
 Lunaque dimissos dum plena recolliget ignes,  
 dum matutinos praedicet Lucifer ortus  
 altaque caeruleum dum Nerea nesciet Arctos,  
 candida formonsi venerabimur ora Lyaei.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Pentheus' death. See Index *s.v.* "Ophion."

<sup>2</sup> Ariadne, deserted by Theseus.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* wine. See Index *s.v.* "Nyctelius." The following

## OEDIPUS

blood of Ophionian<sup>1</sup> slaughter; the Proetides fled to the woods, and Argos, in his stepdame's very presence, paid homage to Bacchus.

<sup>487</sup> Naxos, girt by the Aegean sea, gave him in marriage a deserted maiden,<sup>2</sup> compensating her loss with a better husband. Out of the dry rock there gushed Nyctelian liquor;<sup>3</sup> babbling rivulets divided the grassy meadows; deep the earth drank in the sweet juices, white fountains of snowy milk and Lesbian wine mingled with fragrant thyme. The new-made bride is led to the lofty heavens; Phoebus a stately anthem sings, with his locks flowing down his shoulders, and twin Cupids brandish their torches. Jupiter lays aside his fiery weapons and, when Bacchus comes, abhors his thunderbolt.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>504</sup> While the bright stars of the ancient heavens shall run in their courses; while the ocean shall encircle the imprisoned earth with its waters; while the full moon shall gather again her lost radiance; while the Day Star shall herald the dawn of the morning and while the lofty Bears shall know naught of caerulean<sup>5</sup> Nereus; so long shall we worship the shining face of beauteous Lyaeus.<sup>6</sup>

[*Enter CREON, returned from the rites of necromancy.*]

lines describe the wonders of nature's bounty in honour of Bacchus' nuptials.

<sup>4</sup> See Index *s. v.* "Bacchus."

<sup>5</sup> Nereus, a sea-god, is here used for the sea itself, and the description "sea-blue" is literally applied.

<sup>6</sup> Bacchus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Etsi ipse vultus flebiles praefert notas,  
exprope cuius capite placemus deos.

510

CREO

Fari iubes tacere quae suadet metus.

OEDIPVS

Si te ruentes non satis Thebae movent,  
at sceptrā moveant lapsa cognatae domus.

CREO

Nescisse cupies nosse quae nimium expetis.

OEDIPVS

Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est.  
itane et salutis publicae indicium obrues?

CREO

Vbi turpis est medicina, sanari piget.

OEDIPVS

Audita fare, vel malo domitus gravi  
quid arma possint regis irati scies.

CREO

Odere reges dicta quae dici iubent.

520



## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Although thy very face displays signs of woe,  
declare by whose life we are to appease the gods.

CREON

Thou bidst me speak what fear would leave  
unsaid.

OEDIPUS

If falling Thebes is not enough to move thee,  
at least be moved by the tottering sceptre of a  
kindred house.

CREON

Thou wilt long not to have known what thou  
desirest o'ermuch to know.

OEDIPUS

An idle remedy for ills is ignorance. What! wilt  
e'en bury revelations of the public weal?

CREON

Where foul the medicine, 'tis loathsome to be  
healed.

OEDIPUS

Speak out thy tidings, or, by severe suffering  
broken, thou shalt know what the power of an  
angered king can do.

CREON

Kings hate the words whose speaking they compel.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Mitteris Erebo vile pro cunctis caput,  
arcana sacri voce ni retegis tua.

CREO

Tacere liceat. ulla libertas minor  
a rege petitur?

OEDIPVS

Saepe vel lingua magis  
regi atque regno muta libertas obest.

CREO

Vbi non licet tacere, quid cuiquam licet?

OEDIPVS

Imperia solvit qui tacet iussus loqui.

CREO

Coacta verba placidus accipias precor.

OEDIPVS

Vlline poena vocis expressae fuit?

CREO

Est procul ab urbe lucus ilicibus niger,  
Dircaea circa vallis inriguae loca.  
cupressus altis exerens silvis caput  
virente semper alligat trunco nemus,  
curvosque tendit quercus et putres situ

530

## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

To Erebus shalt thou be sent, a cheap sacrifice for all, unless by thy speech thou disclose the secrets which the rites reveal.

CREON

Let me be silent. Can any less liberty be sought from kings?

OEDIPUS

Often, e'en more than speech, to king and kingdom dumb liberty brings bane.

CREON

When silence is not allowed, what is allowed?

OEDIPUS

He weakens power who is silent when bidden to speak.

CREON

Words forced from me I pray thee hear with calm.

OEDIPUS

Was any ever punished for speech compelled?

CREON

Far from the city is a grove dusky with ilex-trees near the well-watered vale of Dirce's fount. A cypress, lifting its head above the lofty wood, with mighty stem holds the whole grove in its ever-green embrace; and an ancient oak spreads its

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

annosa ramos. huius abruptus latus  
 edax vetustas; illa, iam scissa cadens  
 radice, fulta pendet aliena trabe.  
 amara bacas laurus et tiliae leves  
 et Paphia myrtus et per immensum mare  
 motura remos alnus, et Phoebus obvia, 540  
 enode Zephyris pinus opponens latus.  
 medio stat ingens arbor atque umbra gravi  
 silvas minores urguet et magno ambitu  
 diffusa ramos una defendit nemus.  
 tristis sub illa, lucis et Phoebi inscius,  
 restagnat umor frigore aeterno rigens;  
 limosa pigrum circumit fontem palus.

Huc ut sacerdos intulit senior gradum,  
 haut est moratus; praestitit noctem locus.  
 tum effossa tellus, et super rapti rogis 550  
 iaciuntur ignes. ipse funesto integit  
 vates amictu corpus et frondem quatit.  
 lugubris imos palla perfundit pedes,  
 squalente cultu maestus ingreditur senex,  
 mortifera canam taxus adstringit comam.  
 nigro bidentes vellere atque atrae boves  
 retro<sup>1</sup> trahuntur. flamma praedatur dapes,  
 vivumque trepidat igne ferali pecus.  
 vocat inde manes teque qui manes regis  
 et obsidentem claustra Lethaei lacus, 560  
 carmenque magicum volvit et rabido minax  
 decantat ore quidquid aut placat leves

<sup>1</sup> So A: *Leo* antro, with E: *Richter* intro.



## OEDIPUS

gnarled branches crumbling in decay. The side of one devouring time has torn away; the other, falling, its roots rent in twain, hangs propped against a neighbouring trunk. Here are the laurel with bitter berries, slender linden-trees, Paphian myrtle, and the alder, destined to sweep its oarage over the boundless sea; and here, mounting to meet the sun, a pine-tree lifts its knotless bole to front the winds. Midmost stands a tree of mighty girth, and with its heavy shade overwhelms the lesser trees and, spreading its branches with a mighty reach, it stands, the solitary guardian of the wood. Beneath this tree a gloomy spring o'erflows, that knows nor light nor sun, numb with perpetual chill; an oozy swamp surrounds the sluggish pool.

<sup>548</sup> Hither when the aged priest came, there was no delay; the place furnished night.<sup>1</sup> Then a ditch is dug and into it are thrown brands plucked from funeral pyres. The priest shrouds his body in a mournful pall and waves a branch.<sup>2</sup> His gloomy robe sweeps o'er his feet; in the squalid garb of mourning the old man advances, his hoary hair bound with a wreath of death-dealing yew. Black-fleeced<sup>2</sup> sheep and oxen of sable hue are backward<sup>3</sup> dragged. The flame devours the feast, and the living victims writhe in the deathly fire. Then he summons the spirits of the dead, and thee who rulest the spirits, and him<sup>4</sup> who blocks the entrance to the Lethæan stream; o'er and o'er he repeats a magic rune, and fiercely, with frenzied lips, he chants

<sup>1</sup> The proposed rites were ordinarily performed only at night.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of some funereal tree, as the yew or cypress.

<sup>3</sup> These features are characteristic of the rites of necromancy which are here described.

<sup>4</sup> Cerberus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

aut cogit umbras ; sanguinem libat focus  
 solidasque pecudes urit et multo specum  
 saturat cruore ; libat et niveum insuper  
 lactis liquorem, fundit et Bacchum manu  
 laeva canitque rursus ac terram intuens  
 graviore manes voce et attonita citat.

Latravit Hecates turba ; ter valles cavae  
 sonuere maestum, tota succusso solo  
 pulsata tellus. “ audior ” vates ait,  
 “ rata verba fudi ; rumpitur caecum chaos  
 iterque populis Ditis ad superos datur.”  
 subsidit omnis silva et erexit comas,  
 duxere rimas robora et totum nemus  
 concussit horror, terra se retro dedit  
 gemuitque penitus—sive temptari abditum  
 Acheron profundum mente non aequa tulit,  
 sive ipsa Tellus, ut daret functis viam,  
 compage rupta sonuit ; aut ira furens  
 triceps catenas Cerberus movit graves.

Subito dehiscit terra et immenso sinu  
 laxata patuit. ipse torpentes lacus  
 vidi inter umbras, ipse pallentes deos  
 noctemque veram ; gelidus in venis stetit  
 haesitque sanguis. saeva prosiluit cohors  
 et stetit in armis omne vipereum genus,  
 fratrum catervae dente Dircaeo satae.

tum torva Erinys sonuit et caecus Furor

Horrorque et una quidquid aeternae creant

570

580

588

590

## OEDIPUS

a charm which either appeases or compels the flitting  
ghosts. He makes libation of blood upon the altars,  
burns the victims whole, and soaks the trench with  
plenteous blood. Of snowy milk likewise he makes  
libation, pours wine with his left<sup>1</sup> hand, repeats his  
chants, and, with gaze on ground, summons the ghosts  
with deeper tone and wild.

<sup>569</sup> Loud bayed the pack of Hecate; thrice the  
deep valley gave out a mournful noise; the whole  
place was shaken and the ground was stricken from  
below. "My prayers are heard," says the priest;  
"prevailing words I uttered; blind Chaos is burst  
open, and for the tribes of Dis a way is given to  
the upper world." All the wood shrank down, its  
foliage bristling; the stout oaks were split and the  
whole grove shook with horror; the earth also shrank  
back, and from her depths gave forth a groan—whether  
Hell brooked it ill that its deep abyss was assailed,  
or Earth of herself, that she might give passage to the  
dead, with crashing noise burst her close barriers; or  
else in mad rage three-headed Cerberus shook his  
heavy chains.

<sup>582</sup> Suddenly the earth yawned and opened wide  
with gulf immeasurable. Myself, I saw the numb  
pools amidst the shadows; myself, the wan gods and  
night in very truth. My frozen blood stood still and  
clogged my veins. Forth leaped a savage cohort  
and stood full-armed, the whole viper brood, the troop  
of brothers sprung from Dircean<sup>2</sup> teeth. Then grim  
Erinyes shrieked, and blind Fury and Horror, and all  
the forms which spawn and lurk midst the deathless

<sup>1</sup> Because offered to the malignant infernal powers.

<sup>2</sup> A far-fetched epithet from the fact that it was in Dirce's  
cave that the dragon was found which Cadmus slew and from  
whose teeth the warriors sprang.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

celantque tenebrae : Luctus avellens comam  
 aegreque lassum sustinens Morbus caput,  
 gravis Senectus sibimet et pendens Metus 594  
 avidumque populi Pestis Ogygii malum. 589  
 nos liquit animus. ipsa quae ritus senis 595  
 artesque norat stupuit. intrepidus parens  
 audaxque damno convocat Ditis feri  
 exsanguis vulgus.

Ilico ut nebulae leves  
 volitant et auras libero caelo trahunt.  
 non tot caducas educat frondes Eryx 600  
 nec vere flores Hybla tot medio creat,  
 cum examen arto nectitur densum globo,  
 fluctusque non tot frangit Ionium mare,  
 nec tanta gelidi Strymonis fugiens minas  
 permutat hiemes ales et caelum secans  
 tepente Nilo pensat Arctos nives  
 quot ille populos vatis eduxit sonus.  
 avidae latebras nemoris umbrosi petunt  
 animae trementes ; primus emergit solo,  
 dextra ferocem cornibus taurum premens, 610  
 Zethus, manumque sustinens laeva chelyn  
 qui saxa dulci traxit Amphion sono ;  
 interque natos Tantalus tandem suos  
 tuto superba fert caput fastu grave  
 et numerat umbras. peior hac genetrix adest  
 furibunda Agaue, tota quam sequitur manus  
 partita regem, sequitur et Bacchas lacer  
 Pentheus tenetque saevus etiam nunc minas.



## OEDIPUS

shades : Grief, tearing her hair ; Disease, scarce holding up her wearied head ; Age, burdened with herself ; impending Fear, and greedy Pestilence, the Ogygian people's curse. Our spirits died within us. Even she <sup>1</sup> who knew the rites and the arts of her aged sire stood amazed. But he, undaunted and bold from his lost sight, summons the bloodless throng of cruel Dis.

<sup>598</sup> Straightway, like clouds, the shadowy forms flit forth and snuff the air of open heaven. Not as many falling leaves does Eryx show ; nor does Hybla in mid-spring as many flowers produce, when in close masses cling the swarming bees ; as many waves break not on the Ionian sea ; as many birds, fleeing cold Strymon's threats, leave not the wintry lands and, cleaving the sky, change Arctic snows for the warm valley of the Nile ; as were the throngs which the priest's call summoned forth. Eagerly the shivering ghosts seek the shelter of the shady grove. First from the ground, his right hand grasping a wild bull by the horns, Zethus emerges, and Amphion, in his left holding the shell which by its sweet music drew the rocks. And midst her children Tantalus, <sup>2</sup> at last safe in her pride, holds up her head with insolent arrogance, and numbers o'er her shades. A mother worse than she, Agave comes, still raging ; her the whole band follows who rent their king in pieces, and after the Bacchanals mangled Pentheus comes, even now savage and holding to his threats.

<sup>1</sup> Manto

<sup>2</sup> Niobe.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Tandem vocatus saepe pudibundum extulit  
 caput atque ab omni dissidet turba procul  
 celatque semet (instat et Stygias preces  
 geminat sacerdos, donec in apertum efferat  
 vultus opertos)—Laius! fari horreo.  
 stetit per artus sanguine effuso horridus,  
 paedore foedo squalidam obtectus comam,  
 et ore rabido fatur: "O Cadmi effera,  
 cruore semper laeta cognato domus,  
 vibrare thyrsos, enthea natos manu  
 lacerate potius; maximum Thebis scelus—  
 maternus amor est. patria, non ira deum,  
 sed scelere raperis. non gravi flatu tibi  
 luctificus Auster nec parum pluvio aethere  
 satiata tellus halitu sicco nocet,  
 sed rex cruentus, pretia qui saevae necis  
 sceptrum et nefandos occupat thalamos patris,  
 invisam prolem—sed tamen peior parens  
 quam natus, utero rursus infausto gravis;  
 egitque in ortus semet et matri impios  
 fetus regessit, quique vix mos est feris  
 fratres sibi ipse genuit—implicitum malum  
 magisque monstrum Sphinge perplexum sua.  
 te, te cruenta sceptrum qui dextra geris,  
 te pater inultus urbe cum tota petam  
 et mecum Erinyn pronubam thalami traham,  
 traham sonantem<sup>1</sup> verbera, incestam domum  
 vertam et penates impio Marte obteram.

Proinde pulsum finibus regem ocuis  
 agite exulem quocumque funesto gradu;  
 solum relinquat; vere florifero virens

<sup>1</sup> So Gronovius: *Leo* sonantes, with *A*: *Richter* sonantis, with *E*: de Wilamowitz trahans silentes, verbera.

## OEDIPUS

<sup>619</sup> At length, when often called, one lifts his shame-stricken head and, shrinking afar from all the throng, seeks to hide himself. The seer presses hard after him and redoubles his Stygian prayers, until he bring out to open view the features that fain would hide—Laïus! I shudder as I tell it. There he stood, a sight of horror, his limbs streaming o'er with blood, his ragged locks matted with foul filth; and with raving lips he spoke: "O savage house of Cadmus, rejoicing ever in kindred blood, brandish the thyrsus, with frenzied hands rend thy sons—'twere better so; for Thebes' crowning crime is—mother love. O fatherland, not by the wrath of Heaven, but by sin art thou despoiled. 'Tis not the plague-fraught south wind with its destructive blast, nor yet the earth, too little watered by the rain from heaven, that with its dry breath is harming thee; but thy blood-stained king, who as the price of cruel murder has seized the sceptre and the incestuous chamber of his sire, detested son!—but worse the mother than the son, again pregnant in her unhallowed womb; and to his own origin he returned and brought his mother impious progeny, and (a thing the beasts scarce do) himself begot brothers to himself—entanglement of evil, a monster more confused than his own Sphinx. Thee, thee, who in thy blood-stained hand dost hold the sceptre, thee and thy whole city will thy father, still unavenged, pursue; and with me Erinyes as bridesmaid of thy nuptials will I bring, yea, I will bring her sounding with her lash; thine incestuous house will I overturn and thy household with unnatural strife will I destroy.

<sup>647</sup> "Wherefore speedily expel ye the king from out your borders, in exile drive him to any place soever with his baleful step. Let him leave the land;

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

reparabit herbas, spiritus puros dabit  
 vitalis aura, veniet et silvis decor ;  
 Letum Luesque, Mors Labor Tabes Dolor,  
 comitatus illo dignus, excedent simul.  
 et ipse rapidis gressibus sedes volet  
 effugere nostras, sed graves pedibus moras  
 addam et tenebo ; repet incertus viae,  
 baculo senili triste praetemptans iter.  
 eripite terras, auferam caelum pater.”

OEDIPVS

Et ossa et artus gelidus inuasit tremor ;  
 quidquid timebam facere fecisse arguor— 660  
 tori iugalis abnuit Merope nefas,  
 sociata Polybo ; sospes absoluit manus  
 Polybus meas. uterque defendit parens  
 caedem stuprumque ; quis locus culpae est super ?  
 multo ante Thebae Laium amissum gemunt,  
 Boeota gressu quam meo tetigi loca.  
 falsusne senior an deus Thebis gravis ?—  
 iam iam tenemus callidi socios doli :  
 mentitur ista praeferens fraudi deos  
 vates, tibi que sceptras despondet mea. 670

CREO

Egone ut sororem regia expelli velim ?  
 si me fides sacrata cognati laris  
 non contineret in meo certum statu,  
 tamen ipsa me fortuna terreret nimis  
 482



## OEDIPUS

then, blooming with flowers of spring, shall it renew its verdure, the life-giving air shall give pure breath again, and their beauty shall come back to the woods; Ruin and Pestilence, Death, Suffering, Corruption and Distress, fit company for him, shall all depart together. And he himself with hastening steps shall long to flee our kingdom, but I will set wearisome delays before his feet and hold him back. He shall creep, uncertain of his way, with the staff of age groping out his gloomy way.<sup>1</sup> Rob ye him of the earth; his father will take from him the sky.”<sup>1</sup>

## OEDIPUS

An icy chill has crept through my bones and limbs; all that I feared to do I am accused of having done. But Merope, still wed to Polybus, refutes the charge of incest; and Polybus, alive and well, cleanses my hands. Each parent clears me from the charge of blood and incest: what room is left for crime? As for Laïus, Thebes mourned his loss long ere I set foot on Boeotian soil. Is the old priest lying, or is some god oppressing Thebes?<sup>2</sup>—Now, now I hold the confederates of a crafty plot; the priest invents these charges, using the gods as a screen for trickery and to thee he promises my sceptre.

## CREON

I, should I wish my sister driven from the throne? If sacred fealty to the kindred of my blood held me not fixed in my present station, yet that high estate itself, ever o'erfraught with care, would frighten me. Let it be thine in safety to lay off this burden,

<sup>1</sup> Both passages point to Oedipus' self-inflicted blindness.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* bringing sedition as well as pestilence.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sollicita semper. liceat hoc tuto tibi  
exuere pondus nec recedentem opprimat ;  
iam te minore tutior pones loco.

OEDIPVS

Hortaris etiam, sponte deponam ut mea  
tam gravia regna ?

CREO

Suadeam hoc illis ego,  
in utrumque quis est liber etiamnum status ; 680  
tibi iam necesse est ferre fortunam tuam.

OEDIPVS

Certissima est regnare cupienti via  
laudare modica et otium ac somnum loqui.  
ab inquieto saepe simulatur quies.

CREO

Parumne me tam longa defendit fides ?

OEDIPVS

Aditum nocendi perfido praestat fides.

CREO

Solutus onere regio regni bonis  
fruor domusque civium coetu viget,  
nec ulla vicibus surgit alternis dies  
qua non propinqui munera ad nostros lares 690  
sceptri redundant ; cultus, opulentae dapes,  
donata multis gratia nostra salus.  
quid tam beatæ desse fortunæ rear ?

## OEDIPUS

nor let it o'erwhelm thee when thou wouldst withdraw. Now more safely wilt thou set thyself in humbler place.

OEDIPUS

Dost even urge me of free will to lay down the heavy cares of state?

CREON

Thus would I counsel those to whom the way e'en yet is open to either choice; but as for thee 'tis necessary now to bear thy lot.

OEDIPUS

Whoso longs to reign, his surest way is to praise humble life and prate of ease and sleep. Calm is oft counterfeited by a restless soul.

CREON

Does not my long loyalty plead enough for me?

OEDIPUS

To traitors loyalty gives opening for treason.

CREON

Free from a king's burdens, I enjoy a king's advantages; my home is honoured by throngs of citizens, and no day rises to dawning from the night on which my royal kinsman's bounty does not overflow my house; apparel, rich food, deliverance, all are granted to many through my favour. What should I think still lacking to a lot so blest?

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Quod dest ; secunda non habent umquam modum.

CREO

Incognita igitur ut nocens causa cadam ?

OEDIPVS

Num ratio vobis reddita est vitae meae ?  
num audita causa est nostra Tiresiae ? tamen  
sontes videmur. facitis exemplum ; sequor.

CREO

Quid si innocens sum ?

OEDIPVS

Dubia pro certis solent  
timere reges.

CREO

Qui pavet vanos metus, 700  
veros meretur.

OEDIPVS

Quisquis in culpa fuit,  
dimissus odit ; omne quod dubium est cadat.

CREO

Sic odia fiunt

OEDIPVS

Odia qui nimium timet  
regnare nescit ; regna custodit metus.



## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

What still is lacking ;<sup>1</sup> prosperity has no bounds.

CREON

Shall I then, my cause unheard, fall like a criminal ?

OEDIPUS

Did ye show due regard unto my life ? Did Tiresias hear my cause ? And yet ye hold me guilty. Ye set the example ; I but follow it.

CREON

What if I am innocent ?

OEDIPUS

Doubts as if certainties kings are wont to fear.

CREON

Who trembles with vain fear, true fear deserves.

OEDIPUS

Set free the guilty, and he hates ; let all that's doubtful perish.

CREON

Thus is hatred bred.

OEDIPUS

He who fears hatred overmuch, knows not to rule ; fear is the guard of kingdoms.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* royal power.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CREO

Qui sceptra duro saevus imperio regit,  
timet timentes; metus in auctorem redit.

OEDIPVS

Servate sontem saxeo inclusum specu.  
ipse ad penates regio referam gradum.

CHORVS

Non tu tantis causa periclis,  
non hinc Labdacidas petunt 710  
fata, sed veteres deum  
irae secuntur. Castalium nemus  
umbram Sidonio praebuit hospiti  
lavitque Dirce Tyrios colonos,  
ut primum magni natus Agenoris,  
fessus per orbem furta sequi Iovis,  
sub nostra pavidus constitit arbore  
praedonem venerans suum,  
monituque Phoebi  
iussus erranti comes ire vaccae, 720  
quam non flexerat  
vomer aut tardi iuga curva plaustris,  
deseruit fugas nomenque genti  
inauspicata de bove tradidit.

Tempore ex illo nova monstra semper  
protulit tellus:  
aut anguis imis vallibus editus  
annosa supra robora sibilat,  
superatque <sup>1</sup> pinus;

<sup>1</sup> *So Richter, with E: Leo supraque, with A.*

# OEDIPUS

CREON

Who harshly wields the sceptre with tyrannic sway, fears those who fear; terror recoils upon its author's head.

OEDIPUS [*to attendants*]

Shut up the guilty man in a rocky dungeon and guard him well. I to the royal palace will return.

[CREON is led away by attendants. Exit OEDIPUS.]

CHORUS

Not thou<sup>1</sup> the cause of our great perils, not on thy account do the fates assail the house of Labdacus; nay, 'tis the ancient wrath of the gods that follows us. Castalia's grove lent its shade to the Sidonian wanderer<sup>2</sup> and Dirce bathed the colonists from Tyre, what time great Agenor's son,<sup>2</sup> weary with tracking Jove's thefts<sup>3</sup> over all the world, in fear halted beneath our trees, worshipping his sister's ravisher; and, by the advice of Phoebus, bidden to follow a straying heifer which had never bent beneath the plough or the slow wain's curving yoke, he gave over his quest<sup>4</sup> and named a nation<sup>5</sup> from that ill-omened heifer.

<sup>725</sup> From that time on, our land has e'er produced strange monsters: either a serpent, rising from the valley's depths, hisses on high above the ancient oaks and overtops the pines; ever higher, above the

<sup>1</sup> Oedipus.

<sup>2</sup> Cadmus.

<sup>3</sup> Europa, whom Jove, in bull form, had stolen away. Agenor had sent Cadmus to find her, with instructions not to return unless successful.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* the quest enjoined upon him by his father.

<sup>5</sup> Boeotia, from βοῦς.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

supra Chaonias celsior arbores<sup>1</sup>  
 erexit caeruleum caput,  
 cum maiore sui parte recumberet; 730  
 aut feta tellus impio partu  
 effudit arma: sonuit reflexo  
 classicum cornu lituusque adunco  
 stridulos cantus elisit aere;<sup>2</sup>  
 non ante linguas agiles et ora  
 vocis ignotae clamore primum  
 hostico experti.

Agmina campos cognata tenent,  
 dignaque iacto semine proles,  
 uno aetatem permensa die, 740  
 post Luciferi nata meatus  
 ante Hesperios occidit ortus.  
 horret tantis advena monstris  
 populique timet bella recentis,  
 donec cecidit saeva iuventus  
 genetrixque suo reddi gremio  
 modo productos vidit alumnos.  
 hae transierit civile nefas!  
 illa Herculeae norint Thebae  
 proelia fratrum! 750

Quid Cadmei fata nepotis,  
 cum vivacis cornua cervi  
 frontem ramis texere novis  
 dominumque canes egere suum?  
 praeceps silvas montesque fugit  
 citus Actaeon agilique magis  
 pede per saltus ac saxa vagus  
 metuit motas zephyris plumas  
 et quae posuit retia vitat;

<sup>1</sup> *Leo deletes this line.*

<sup>2</sup> *Leo comments: post 734 dictum oportuit spartos pugnam invisisse.*



## OEDIPUS

Chaonian trees he lifts his dark-blue head, although his greater part still lies upon the ground; or else the earth, teeming with impious birth, brings forth armed men: loud resounded the battle-call from the curving horn, and the brazen trumpet sent forth its piercing notes. Their tongues and lips, ne'er nimble before, were first employed in the battle-cry of their unfamiliar voice.

<sup>738</sup> The kindred bands filled the plains, and this offspring, worthy the seed that had been sown, measured their life by a single day; born after the passing of the Morning Star, they perished ere Hesperus arose. The wanderer<sup>1</sup> quaked at prodigies so strange, and fearfully awaited the assault of the new-born folk; until the savage youth<sup>2</sup> fell in death, and their mother<sup>3</sup> beheld the children she had but now brought forth returned to her own bosom. With this may the horror of civil strife have passed! May the Thebes of Hercules<sup>4</sup> know those fratricidal struggles only!

<sup>751</sup> What of the doom of Cadmus' grandson, when the antlers of a long-lived stag covered his brow with their strange branches, and his own hounds pursued their master? Headlong from the woods and mountains the swift Actaeon fled, and with feet more nimble, scorning glades and rocky places, shuddered at the feathers<sup>5</sup> fluttering in the breeze, and avoided the snares he himself had set; at length he gazed into the still

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Cadmus, exiled by his father.

<sup>2</sup> The monsters sprung from the dragon's teeth.

<sup>3</sup> The earth.

<sup>4</sup> Hercules was born at Thebes.

<sup>5</sup> Tied to bushes along deer-runs in order to frighten the animals in the desired direction.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

donec placidi fontis in unda  
cornua vidit vultusque feros.  
ibi virgineos foverat artus  
nimium saevi diva pudoris !

760

OEDIPVS

Curas revolvit animus et repetit metus.  
obisse nostro Laium scelere autumant  
superi inferique, sed animus contra innocens  
sibique melius quam deis notus negat.  
redit memoria tenue per vestigium,  
cecidisse nostri stipitis pulsu obvium  
datumque Diti, cum prior iuvenem senex  
curru superbus pelleret, Thebis procul  
Phocaea trifidas regio qua scindit vias.

770

Unanima coniunx, explica errores precor ;  
quae spatia moriens Laius vitae tulit ?  
primone in aevo viridis an fracto occidit ?

IOCASTA

Inter senem iuvenemque, sed propior seni.

OEDIPVS

Frequensne turba regium cinxit latus ?

IOCASTA

Plures fefellit error ancipitis viae,  
paucos fidelis curribus iunxit labor.

OEDIPVS

Aliquisne cecidit regio fato comes ?

780

## OEDIPUS

pool's water and saw his horns and his beast-like countenance. 'Twas in that same pool the goddess<sup>1</sup> of too stern chastity had bathed her virgin limbs!

OEDIPUS

My soul broods o'er its cares and renews its fears. That by my crime Laïus fell, gods both of heaven and hell affirm; and yet my soul, conscious of innocence and known to itself better than to the gods, makes denial. Retracing the dim path of memory, I see one met on the way fallen 'neath the blow of my stout staff and given o'er to Dis; but first the old man arrogantly from his car thrust the younger from the way. Yet that was far from Thebes, where Phocis' land parts the three-forked roads.

[*Enter* JOCASTA.]

<sup>773</sup> O thou, my soul's own mate, resolve my doubts, I pray thee, what span of life had Laïus at his death? In the fresh prime of life died he, or in broken age?

JOCASTA

Midway between age and youth, but nearer age.

OEDIPUS

Did a great throng gird the king about?

JOCASTA

The most mistook the uncertain path and strayed; a few by faithful toil kept near his car.

OEDIPUS

Did any companion share the royal fate?

<sup>1</sup> Diana.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

IOCASTA

Vnum fides virtusque consortem addidit.

OEDIPVS

Teneo nocentem; convenit numerus, locus;  
sed tempus adde.

IOCASTA

Decima iam metitur seges.

SENEX CORINTHIVS

Corinthius te populus in regnum vocat  
patrium. quietem Polybus aeternam obtinet.

OEDIPVS

Vt undique in me saeva Fortuna irruit!  
edissere agedum, quo cadat fato parens.

SENEX

Animam senilem mollis exsolvit sopor.

OEDIPVS

Genitor sine ulla caede defunctus iacet.  
testor, licet iam tollere ad caelum pie  
puras nec ulla scelera metuentes manus.  
sed pars magis metuenda factorum manet.

790

SENEX

Omnem paterna regna discutient metum.



## OEDIPUS

JOCASTA

One did faith and valour cause to share his fate.

OEDIPUS [*aside*]

I have the guilty man; the number tallies, and the place. [*To JOCASTA.*] But add the time.

JOCASTA

Now is the tenth harvest being reaped.

[*Enter an old Corinthian messenger.*]

OLD MAN [*to OEDIPUS*]

The Corinthians summon thee to thy father's throne. Polybus has gained his everlasting rest.

OEDIPUS

How heartless Fortune assails me on every hand! But tell me by what fate my sire is fallen.

OLD MAN

Soft slumber set his aged spirit free.

OEDIPUS

My father lies dead, and by no violence. I call to witness that now I may lift clean hands to heaven, hands that need fear no charge of crime. But the more fearful part of my fates remains.

OLD MAN

All fears thy father's kingdom will dispel.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Repetam paterna regna ; sed matrem horreo.

SENEX

Metuis parentem, quae tuum reditum expetens  
sollicita pendet ?

OEDIPVS

Ipsa me pietas fugat.

SENEX

Viduam relinques ?

OEDIPVS

Tangis en ipsos metus !

SENEX

Effare mersus quis premat mentem timor ;  
praestare tacitam regibus soleo fidem.

OEDIPVS

Conubia matris Delphico admonitu tremo. 800

SENEX

Timere vana desine et turpes metus  
depone ; Merope vera non fuerat parens.

OEDIPVS

Quod subditivi praemium nati petit ?

## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

I would seek my father's kingdom, but from my mother do I shrink.

OLD MAN

Dost fear thy mother, who, in anxious suspense, longs for thy coming?

OEDIPUS

'Tis love itself bids me flee.

OLD MAN

Wilt leave her widowed?

OEDIPUS

There dost thou touch on the very thing I fear!

OLD MAN

Speak out; what hidden fear weighs on thy soul?  
'Tis my wont to offer kings a loyal silence.

OEDIPUS

Warned by the Delphic oracle, I dread my mother's bed.

OLD MAN

Then cease thy empty fears, thy horrible forebodings; Merope was not in truth thy mother.

OEDIPUS

What did she hope to gain by a changeling son?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

SENEX

Regum<sup>1</sup> superbam liberi astringunt fidem.

OEDIPVS

Secreta thalami fare quo excipias modo.

SENEX

Hae te parenti parvulum tradunt manus.

OEDIPVS

Tu me parenti tradis; at quis me tibi?

SENEX

Pastor nivoso sub Cithaeronis iugo.

OEDIPVS

In illa temet nemora quis casus tulit?

SENEX

Illo sequebar monte cornigeros greges.

810

OEDIPVS

Nunc adice certas corporis nostri notas.

SENEX

Forata ferro gesseras vestigia,  
tumore nactus nomen ac vitio pedum.

<sup>1</sup> *So Leo with the best MSS. : Regnum superbam, etc., A.*

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this *sententia*, especially in its application as Merope's reason for secretly adopting a son, is not altogether clear. Various suggestions have been offered by commentators



## OEDIPUS

OLD MAN

Kings' children hold rude loyalty in check.<sup>1</sup>

OEDIPUS

The secrets of the chamber—tell how thou knowest them.

OLD MAN

'Twas these hands gave thee, a tiny babe, unto thy mother.

OEDIPUS

Thou gav'st me to my mother; but who gave me to thee?

OLD MAN

A shepherd, 'neath Cithaeron's snowy peak.

OEDIPUS

What chance brought thee within that wood?

OLD MAN

On that mountain-side was I tending my horned flocks.

OEDIPUS

Now name also the sure marks upon my body.

OLD MAN

Thy soles had been pierced with iron, and thou hast thy name<sup>2</sup> from thy swollen and crippled feet.

as to the interpretation. Perhaps the simplest interpretation is the best, that royal offspring (and hence the insurance of succession) is the strongest hold upon lagging loyalty which threatens (*superbam*) to fall away.

<sup>2</sup> *Oidίτρος*, "swollen-footed."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Quis fuerit ille qui meum dono dedit  
corpus requiro.

SENEX

Regios pavit greges ;  
minor sub illo turba pastorum fuit.

OEDIPVS

Eloquere nomen.

SENEX

Prima languescit senum  
memoria longo lassa sublabens situ.

OEDIPVS

Potesne facie noscere ac vultu virum ?

SENEX

Fortasse noscam ; saepe iam spatio obrutam 820  
levis exoletam memoriam revocat nota.

OEDIPVS

Ad sacra et aras omne compulsum pecus  
duces sequantur ; ite, propere accersite,  
famuli, penes quos summa consistit gregum.

SENEX

Sive ista ratio sive fortuna occulit,  
latere semper patere quod latuit diu ;  
saepe cruentis veritas patuit malo.

## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Who was he who gave thee my body as a gift? I seek to know.

OLD MAN

He fed the royal flocks; there was a humbler band of shepherds under him.

OEDIPUS

Tell me his name.

OLD MAN

An old man's early memory grows faint, failing through weakness and long disuse.

OEDIPUS

Couldst recognize the man by face and feature?

OLD MAN

Perchance I might; some trifling mark oft-times calls back the memory of things that time hath buried and made dim.

OEDIPUS

Let all the flocks be driven hither to the sacred altars, their guides with them; go, slaves, and quickly summon those with whom is the herds' chief control.

[*The slaves depart on the errand.*]

OLD MAN

Whether design or chance conceals these things, suffer to lie hid for ever what has lain hid so long; truth often is made clear to the discoverer's bane.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Malum timeri maius his aliquod potest?

SENEX

Magnum esse magna mole quod petitur scias.  
 concurrat illinc publica, hinc regis salus, 830  
 utrimque paria; contine medias manus,  
 nihil lacessas, ipsa se fata explicent.

OEDIPVS

Non expedit concutere felicem statum; <sup>1</sup>  
 tuto movetur quidquid extremo in loco est.

SENEX

Nobilius aliquid genere regali appetis?  
 ne te parentis pigeat inventi vide.

OEDIPVS

Vel paenitendi sanguinis quaeram fidem;  
 sic nosse certum est.

Ecce grandaevus senex,  
 arbitria sub quo regii fuerant gregis,  
 Phorbas. refersne nomen aut vultum senis? 840

SENEX

Adridet animo forma; nec notus satis,  
 nec rursus iste vultus ignotus mihi.

<sup>1</sup> *Modern editors have rightly assigned l. 833 to Oedipus, whereas old editors, with A, gave the line to the Old Man.*



## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Can any bane greater than all this be feared?

OLD MAN

Great, be thou sure, is that bane which thou seekst with toil so great. Here meet, from that side and from this, the public weal and the king's, and both are in equal balance. Keep thy hand from both; challenge thou nothing; let the fates unfold themselves.<sup>1</sup>

OEDIPUS

'Tis not expedient to disturb a happy state; that is with safety changed which is at its worst.

OLD MAN

Dost seek for a nobler thing than royal lineage? Beware lest thou rue the finding of thy parentage.

OEDIPUS

I will seek certainty even of rueful birth; so resolved am I to know.

[*Enter PHORBAS. OEDIPUS to himself.*]

<sup>838</sup> Behold the ancient, heavy with years, once keeper of the royal flocks, Phorbas. [*To OLD MAN.*] Dost recall the old man's name or features?

OLD MAN

His form comes easily to my memory; but that face, while not well known, again is not unknown to me.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* let well enough alone. The condition of the state is critical, and Oedipus' personal problem is acute; but wisdom bids keep hands off and let the fates unfold themselves.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Regnum optinente Laio famulus greges  
agitasti opimos sub Cithaeronis plaga?

PHORBAS

Laetus Cithaeron pabulo semper novo  
aestiva nostro prata summittit gregi.

SENEX

Noscisne memet?

PHORBAS

Dubitat anceps memoria.

OEDIPVS

Huic aliquis a te traditur quondam puer?  
effare. dubitas? cur genas mutat color?  
quid verba quaeris? veritas odit moras.

850

PHORBAS

Obducta longo temporum tractu moves.

OEDIPVS

Fatere, ne te cogat ad verum dolor.

PHORBAS

Inutile isti munus infantis dedi;  
non potuit ille luce, non caelo frui.

SENEX

Procul sit omen! vivit et vivat preco r.

## OEDIPUS

[*To PHORBAS.*]

<sup>843</sup> While Laïus held the throne, didst ever drive  
rich flocks on Cithaeron's tracts?

PHORBAS

Cithaeron, abounding ever in fresh pasturage, in  
summer-time gave feeding-ground for my flocks.

OLD MAN

Dost thou know me?

PHORBAS

My memory falters and is in doubt.

OEDIPUS

Didst thou once give a boy to this man here?  
Speak out. Thou falterest? Why do thy cheeks  
change colour? Why seekst for words? Truth  
scorns delay.

PHORBAS

Thou stirrest matters o'erclouded by long lapse of  
time.

OEDIPUS

Speak, lest pain force thee to the truth.

PHORBAS

I did give him an infant, a worthless gift; never  
could he have enjoyed the light or sky.

OLD MAN

Far be the omen! He lives and I pray may live.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Superesse quare traditum infantem negas ?

PHORBAS

Ferrum per ambos tenue transactum pedes  
ligabat artus, vulneri innatus tumor  
puerile foeda corpus urebat lues.

OEDIPVS

Quid quaeris ultra ? fata iam accedunt prope. 860  
quis fuerit infans edoce.

PHORBAS

Prohibet fides.

OEDIPVS

Huc aliquis ignem ! flamma iam excutiet fidem.

PHORBAS

Per tam cruentas vera quaerentur vias ?  
ignosce quaeso.

OEDIPVS

Si ferus videor tibi  
et impotens, parata vindicta in manu est :  
dic vera. quisnam ? quove generatus patre ?  
oua matre genitus ?

PHORBAS

Coniuge est genitus tua.



## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Why dost thou say that the child thou gavest did not survive?

PHORBAS

Through both his feet a slender iron rod was driven, binding his legs together. A swelling<sup>1</sup> engendered in the wound, galled the child's body, a loathsome plague.

OEDIPUS [*to himself*]

Why seekest further? Now doth fate draw near. [*To PHORBAS.*] Who was the babe? Speak out.

PHORBAS

My loyalty forbids.

OEDIPUS

Hither with fire, someone! Now shall flames banish loyalty.

PHORBAS

Is truth to be sought along such cruel ways? Pardon I beg.

OEDIPUS

If I seem harsh to thee, and headstrong, vengeance is in thy hands; speak thou the truth. Who was he? Of what sire begot? Of what mother born?

PHORBAS

*Born of thy—wife.*

See l. 813, note.

# SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

## OEDIPVS

Dehisce, tellus, tuque tenebrarum potens,  
 in Tartara ima, rector umbrarum, rape  
 retro reversas generis ac stirpis vices. 870  
 congerite, cives, saxa in infandum caput,  
 mactate telis. me petat ferro parens,  
 me natus, in me coniuges arment manus  
 fratresque, et aeger populus ereptos rogis  
 iaculetur ignes. saeculi crimen vagor,  
 odium deorum, iuris exitium sacri,  
 qua luce primum spiritus hausit rudes  
 iam morte dignus. redde nunc animos acres,<sup>1</sup>  
 nunc aliquid aude sceleribus dignum tuis.  
 i, perge, propero regiam gressu pete; 880  
 gratare matri liberis auctam domum.

## CHORUS

Fata si liceat mihi  
 fingere arbitrio meo,  
 temperem zephyro levi  
 vela, ne pressae gravi  
 spiritu antennae tremant.  
 lenis et modice fluens  
 aura nec vergens latus  
 ducat intrepidam ratem;  
 tuta me media vehat 890  
 vita decurrens via.

Cnosium regem timens  
 astra dum demens petit  
 artibus fisus novis,  
 certat et veras aves  
 vincere ac falsis nimis  
 imperat pinnis puer,

<sup>1</sup> Animos parens *A*; *Heinsius* suggests pares, *Bücheler* feras or traxis.

# OEDIPUS

## OEDIPUS

Yawn, earth ! And do thou, king of the dark world, ruler of shades, to lowest Tartarus hurl this unnatural interchange 'twixt brood and stock. Citizens, heap stones upon my accursed head ; slay me with weapons. Let father, let son assail me with the sword ; let husbands and brothers arm hands against me, and let the sick populace snatch brands from the pyres and hurl them at me. The crime of the age I wander, hate of the gods, destruction of holy law, the very day I drew the untried air already worthy death. [*To himself.*] Now be stout of soul, now dare some deed worthy of thy crimes. Go, get thee to the palace with hurrying feet ; congratulate thy mother on her house enriched by children. [*Exit.*]

## CHORUS

Were it mine to shape fate at my will, I would trim my sails to gentle winds, lest my yards tremble, bent 'neath a heavy blast. May soft breezes, gently blowing, unvarying, carry my untroubled barque along ; may life bear me on safely, running in middle course.

<sup>892</sup> While, in fear of the Cretan king, madly the lad<sup>1</sup> sought the stars, in strange devices trusting, and strove to vanquish true birds in flight, and laid his commands on pinions all too false, his name he

<sup>1</sup> Icarus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nomen eripuit freto.  
 callidus medium senex  
 Daedalus librans iter 900  
 nube sub media stetit,  
 alitem expectans suam  
 (qualis accipitris minas  
 fugit et sparsos metu  
 conligit fetus avis),  
 donec in ponto manus  
 movit implicitas puer  
 compede audacis viae.  
 quidquid excessit modum  
 pendet instabili loco. 910

Sed quid hoc? postes sonant;  
 maestus en famulus manu  
 regius quassat caput.  
 ede quid portes novi.

NVNTIVS

Praedicta postquam fata et infandum genus  
 deprendit ac se scelere convictum Oedipus  
 damnavit ipse, regiam infestus petens  
 invisam prope tecta penetravit gradu.  
 qualis per arva Libycus insanit leo,  
 fulvum minaci fronte concutiens iubam; 920  
 vultus furore torvus atque oculi truces,  
 gemitus et altum murmur, et gelidus fluit  
 sudor per artus, spumat et volvit minas  
 ac mersus alte magnus exundat dolor.  
 secum ipse saevus grande nescio quid parat  
 suisque fati simile.

“Quid poenas moror?”

ait “hoc scelestum pectus aut ferro petat,  
 aut fervido aliquis igne vel saxo domet.  
 quae tigris aut quae saeva visceribus meis



## OEDIPUS

rescued from the sea.<sup>1</sup> But shrewd old Daedalus, balancing a middle path, stopped midway of the clouds, awaiting his winged son (as a bird flees the threatening hawk and gathers her scattered and frightened brood), until the boy in the sea plied hands enmeshed in the shackles of his daring flight. Whatsoever exceeds the allotted bounds, hangs in a place unsure.

[*Enter a messenger from within the palace.*]

<sup>911</sup> But what is this? The doors creak open; behold, a servant of the king, stricken with woe, beats with his hand upon his head. Tell us what news thou bringst.

### MESSENGER

When Oedipus grasped his foretold fate, and his breed unspeakable, he condemned himself as convicted of the crime and, seeking the palace with deadly purpose, he entered within that hateful roof with hurried step. As over the fields a Libyan lion rages, with threatening front and shaking his tawny mane; so he, his face fierce with passion, with eyes wild staring, with groans and deep mutterings, limbs with cold sweat streaming, froths and threatens, and his mighty, deep-buried anguish overflows. He, raging in soul, plans some monstrous deed to match his destiny.

<sup>926</sup> "Why do I delay punishment?" he cries; "let someone with the sword assail this guilty breast, or overwhelm me with burning fire or stones. What tigress, what ravening bird will pounce upon

<sup>1</sup> A remarkably bold statement. Icarus lost his life and his very body in the sea, but his name he rescued, since this survived as the sea's own name, the Icarian sea.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

incurret ales? ipse tu scelerum capax, 930  
 sacer Cithaeron, vel feras in me tuas  
 emitte silvis, mitte vel rabidos canes—  
 nunc redde Agauen. anime, quid mortem times?  
 mors innocentem sola fortunae eripit.”

Haec fatus aptat impiam capulo manum  
 ensemque ducit. “ itane? tam magnis breves  
 poenas sceleribus solvis atque uno omnia  
 pensabis ictu? moreris—hoc patri sat est;  
 quid deinde matri, quid male in lucem editis  
 natis, quid ipsi, quae tuum magna luit 940  
 scelus ruina, flebili patriae dabis?  
 solvendo non es! illa quae leges ratas  
 Natura in uno vertit Oedipoda, novos  
 commenta partus, supplicis eadem meis  
 novetur. iterum vivere atque iterum mori  
 liceat, renasci semper ut totiens nova  
 supplicia pendas. utere ingenio, miser;  
 quod saepe fieri non potest fiat diu—  
 mors eligatur longa. quaeratur via  
 qua nec sepultis mixtus et vivis tamen 950  
 exemptus erres; morere, sed citra patrem.  
 cunctaris, anime?”

Subitus en vultus gravat  
 profusus imber ac rigat fletu genas.  
 “ et flere satis est? hactenus fundent levem  
 oculi liquorem? sedibus pulsi suis  
 lacrimas sequantur. di maritales, satin?  
 fodiantur oculi!” dixit atque ira furit;  
 512

## OEDIPUS

my vitals? Do thou thyself, thou all-holding haunt of crime, O curst Cithaeron, send thy wild beasts against me from thy forests, send thy maddened dogs—once more send Agave.<sup>1</sup> O soul, why shrinkst from death? Tis death alone saves innocence from fortune."

<sup>935</sup> With this he lays impious hand on hilt and draws his sword. "So then? With brief suffering like this canst atone for so great crimes, and with one blow wilt pay all debts? Thy death—for thy father 'tis enough; what then to thy mother, what to thy children shamefully begot, what to her who with utter ruin is atoning for thy crime, thy mourning country, wilt thou give? Thou canst not pay!<sup>2</sup> Let that same Nature who in Oedipus alone reverses established laws, devising strange births, be changed anew for my punishment. Be it thine to live again, to die again, ever to be reborn, that at each birth thou mayst pay new penalties. Now use thy wit, poor wretch; let that which may not oft befall, befall thee long—choose thou a lasting death. Search out a way whereon to wander, not mingling with the dead and yet removed from the living; die thou, but reaching not thy sire. Dost hesitate, O soul?"

<sup>952</sup> Lo, with sudden shower a flood o'erwhelms his face and waters his cheeks with weeping. "And is it enough to weep? Only thus far shall mine eyes o'erflow with some few drops? Nay, driven from their sockets, let them follow the tears they shed. Ye gods of wedlock, is it enough? These eyes must be dug out!" He speaks and raves with wrath; his

<sup>1</sup> Agave in her madness had helped tear Pentheus in pieces.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* by mere death. The Latin is the regular phrase for bankruptcy.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

primusque dies dedit extremum.  
 non illa deo vertisse licet  
 quae nexa suis currunt causis. 990  
 it cuique ratus prece non ulla  
 mobilis ordo. multis ipsum  
 metuisse nocet, multi ad fatum  
 venere suum dum fata timent.

Sonuere fores atque ipse suum  
 duce non ullo luminis orbus  
 molitur iter.

### OEDIPVS

Bene habet, peractum est ; iusta persolvi patri.  
 iuvant tenebrae. quis deus tandem mihi  
 placatus atra nube perfundit caput ? 1000  
 quis scelera donat ? conscium evasi diem.  
 nil, parricida, dexteræ debes tuæ ;  
 lux te refugit. vultus Oedipodam hic decet.

### CHORVS

En ecce, rapido saeva prosiluit gradu  
 Iocasta vaecors, qualis attonita et furens  
 Cadmea mater abstulit nato caput  
 sensitque<sup>1</sup> raptum. dubitat afflictum alloqui,  
 cupit pavetque. iam malis cessit pudor.  
 set haeret ore prima vox.

### IOCASTA

Quid te vocem ?

natumne ? dubitas ? natus es ; natum pudet ? 1010  
 invite loquere, nate—quo avertis caput  
 vacuosque vultus ?

<sup>1</sup> *So Leo and Richter : censitque E, corr. Σ : sensimve raptum  
 traxit afflictum A.*



## OEDIPUS

and our first day fixed our last. Those things God may not change which speed on their way, close woven with their causes. To each his established life goes on, unmovable by any prayer. To many their very fear is bane; for many have come upon their doom while shunning doom.

<sup>995</sup> The gates have sounded, and he himself, with none to guide and sightless, gropes his way.

[*Enter OEDIPUS.*]

### OEDIPUS

All's well, 'tis finished; to my father have I paid my debt. How sweet the darkness! What god, at length appeased, has shrouded my head in this dark veil? Who has forgiven my crimes? I have escaped the conscious eye of day. Nothing, thou parricide, dost owe to thy right hand; the light hath fled from thee. This is the face becometh Oedipus.

[*Enter JOCASTA.*]

### CHORUS

See, there, with hurried step, frantic, beside herself, Jocasta rushes forth, just as, in frenzied rage, the Cadmean mother <sup>1</sup> tore her son's head away and realized her deed. She hesitates, longs and yet fears to speak to the afflicted one. Now shame has given way to grief; but her first words falter on her lips.

### JOCASTA

What shall I call thee? Son? Dost question it? Thou art my son; does "son" shame thee? Though thou wouldst not, speak, my son—why dost thou turn away thy head, thy sightless face?

<sup>1</sup> Agave.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

OEDIPVS

Quis frui tenebris vetat ?  
quis reddit oculos ? matris, en matris sonus !  
perdidimus operam. congregi fas amplius  
haut est. nefandos dividat vastum mare  
dirimatque tellus abdita et quisquis sub hoc  
in alia versus sidera ac solem avium  
dependet orbis alterum ex nobis ferat.

IOCASTA

Fati ista culpa est ; nemo fit fato nocens.

OEDIPVS

Iam parce verbis, mater, et parce auribus, 1020  
per has reliquias corporis trunci peto,  
per inauspicatum sanguinis pignus mei,  
per omne nostri nominis fas ac nefas.

IOCASTA

Quid, anime, torpes ? socia cur scelerum dare  
poenas recusas ? omne confusum perit,  
incesta, per te iuris humani decus.  
morere et nefastum spiritum ferro exige.  
non si ipse mundum concitans divum sator  
corusca saeva tela iaculetur manu,  
umquam rependam sceleribus poenas pares, 1030  
mater nefanda. mors placet ; mortis via  
quaeratur.

## OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

Who wills not that I enjoy my darkness? Who restores my eyes? My mother's, lo, my mother's voice! I have worked in vain. 'Tis unlawful that we meet again. Let the vast sea roll between our impious selves, let remote lands separate, and if beneath this world there hangs another, facing other stars and a straying sun, let it take one of us.

JOCASTA

Fate's is that fault of thine: by fate no one is made guilty.

OEDIPUS

Now spare thy words, mother, spare my ears, by these remnants of my mangled body, I beseech thee, by the unhallowed offspring of my blood, by all that in our names is right and wrong.<sup>1</sup>

JOCASTA [*aside*]

Why art benumbed, my soul? Since thou hast shared his guilt, why dost refuse to share his punishment? Through thee, incestuous one, all grace of human law has been confused and lost. Die then, and let out thy impious spirit with the sword. Not if the father of the gods himself, shaking the universe, with deadly hand should hurl his glittering bolts at me, could I ever pay penalty equal to my crimes—I, a mother accurst. Death is my darling wish; let the way of death be sought.

<sup>1</sup> He prays her in the name both of their proper (mother and son) and improper (husband and wife) relations.

## SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Agedum, commoda matri manum,  
si parricida es; restat hoc operae ultimum.

Rapiatur ensis; hoc iacet ferro meus  
coniunx—quid illum nomine haud vero vocas?—  
socer est. utrumne pectori infigam meo  
telum an patenti conditum iugulo inprimam?  
eligere nescis vulnus? hunc, dextra, hunc pete  
uterum capacem, qui virum et natos tulit.

### CHORVS

Iacet perempta. vulneri immoritur manus 1040  
ferrumque secum nimius eiecit cruor.

### OEDIPVS

Fatidice te, te praesidem et veri deum  
compello. solum debui fatis patrem;  
bis parricida plusque quam timui nocens  
matrem peremi; scelere confecta est meo.  
o Phoebe mendax, fata superavi impia.

Pavitante gressu sequere pallentes vias;  
suspensa plantis efferens vestigia  
caecam tremente dextera noctem rege.  
ingredere praeceps, lubricos ponens gradus, 1050  
i profuge vade—siste, ne in matrem incidas.

Quicumque fessi corpore et morbo graves  
semanima trahitis pectora, en fugio exeo;  
relevate colla. mitior caeli status  
post terga sequitur. quisquis exilem iacens  
animam retentat, vividos haustus levis



## OEDIPUS

<sup>1032</sup> [*To OEDIPUS.*] Come, lend thy hand against thy mother, if thou art parricide; this lacks to crown thy work.

<sup>1034</sup> [*To herself.*] Nay, let me seize his sword; by this blade lies slain my husband—nay, why not call him by his true name?—my husband's father. Shall I pierce my breast with this, or thrust it deep into my bared throat? Thou knowest not to choose a place? Strike here, my hand, through this capacious womb, which bore my husband and my sons!

[*She stabs herself and falls dead.*]

### CHORUS

There lies she slain. Her hand dies on the wound, and the sword is driven out by strong streams of blood.

### OEDIPUS

Thee, O fate-revealer, thee, guardian and god of truth, do I upbraid. My father only did I owe the fates; twice parricide and more guilty than I feared, I have slain my mother; for 'tis by my sin that she is done to death. O lying Phoebus, I have out-done the impious fates.

<sup>1047</sup> With quaking step pursue thy darkling ways; with faltering feet grope through blind night with apprehensive hand. Make haste, planting uncertain steps, go, speed thee, fly!—but stop, lest thou stumble and fall upon thy mother.

<sup>1052</sup> All ye who are weary in body and burdened with disease, whose hearts are faint within you, see, I fly, I leave you; lift your heads. Milder skies come when I am gone. He who, though near to death, still keeps some feeble life, may freely now draw

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

concipiat. ite, ferte depositis opem ;  
 mortifera mecum vitia terrarum extraho.  
 violenta Fata et horridus Morbi tremor,  
 Maciesque et atra Pestis et rabidus Dolor,  
 mecum ite, mecum. ducibus his uti libet !

1060

## OEDIPUS

deep, life-giving draughts of air. Go, bear ye aid to those given up to death ; all pestilential humours of the land I take with me. Ye blasting Fates, thou quaking terror of Disease, Wasting, and black Pestilence, and mad Despair, come ye with me, with me. 'Tis sweet to have such guides.

[*Exit.*

THE HISTORY OF THE  
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COMPARATIVE ANALYSES  
OF THE TRAGEDIES IN THIS VOLUME AND  
THE CORRESPONDING GREEK DRAMAS

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

## THE GREEK DRAMAS

### THE *HERCULES FURENS* OF EURIPIDES

*Prologue.*—The old Amphitryon, before the altar of Jupiter, at the entrance of the house of Hercules in Thebes, relates how Hercules has gone to the lower world to bring thence to the realms of day the triple-headed Cerberus. Meanwhile, Lycus, taking advantage of the hero's absence, has slain king Creon and usurped his throne. The father, wife, and children of Hercules he has reduced to poverty, and holds them in durance here in Thebes, threatening to slay the sons,

“Lest, when the boys attain maturer age,  
They should avenge their grandsire, Creon's, death.”

Amphitryon condoles with Megara, and counsels with her how they may escape the dangers of their present lot.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus of Theban elders, feeble, tottering old men, enters and bemoans the wretched fate that has befallen their city and the household of their prince.

*First episode.*—Now enters Lycus, the usurper. He insolently taunts his victims on their helplessness, tells them

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

## SENECA'S TRAGEDIES

### THE *HERCULES FURENS* OF SENECA

*Prologue.*—Juno complains that she is fairly driven out of heaven by her numerous rivals, mortal women who have been deified and set in the sky, either they or their offspring, by Jupiter. Especially is her wrath hot against Hercules, against whom she has waged fruitless war from his infancy until now. But he thrives on hardship, and scorns her opposition. She passes in review the hard tasks which she has set him, and all of which he has triumphantly performed. Already is he claiming a place in heaven. He can be conquered only by his own hand. Yes, this shall be turned against him, for a fury shall be summoned up from hell who shall fill his heart with madness; and in this madness shall he do deeds which shall make him long for death.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—A vivid picture of the dawning day, when the stars and waning moon fade out before the rising sun; when Toil wakes up and resumes its daily cares; when through the fields the animals and birds are all astir with glad, new life.

But in the cities men awaken to repeat the sordid round of toil, the greedy quest for gold and power. But, whether happily or unhappily, all are speeding down to the world of shades. Even before his time has Hercules gone down to Pluto's realm, and has not yet returned.

*First episode.*—Megara enters and bewails the fresh woes that are ever ready to meet her husband's home-coming.

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

that Hercules will never return, belittles and scorns the hero's mighty deeds, and announces his intention of killing the sons.

Amphitryon answers the slanders of Lycus against Hercules, and protests against the proposed barbarous treatment of the children, who are innocent of any harm. He reproaches Thebes and all the land of Greece, because they have so ill repaid the services of their deliverer in not coming to the rescue of his wife and children. Lycus gives orders to burn the hated race of Hercules, even where they kneel for refuge at the altar-side; and threatens the elders who would thwart his will, bidding them remember that they are but as slaves in his sight. Yet the old men valiantly defy him, and warn him that they will withstand his attacks upon the children.

But Megara shows them how foolish it is to contend against the king's unbounded power. Let them rather entreat his mercy. Could not exile be substituted for death? But no, for this is worse than death. Rather, let them all die together. Perhaps Lycus will allow her to go into the palace and deck her children in funeral garments? This prayer is granted, though Lycus warns them that they are to die at once. Left alone, Amphitryon chides Jupiter because he does not care for the children of his son :

"Thou know'st not how  
To save thy friends. Thou surely art a god,  
Either devoid of wisdom, or unjust."

*First choral interlude.*—The chorus sings in praise of the mighty works of Hercules, describing these in picturesque detail, from the destruction of the Nemean lion to his last adventure, which has taken him to the world of shades, whence, alas, he will nevermore return. And meanwhile, lacking his protection, his friends and family are plunged in hopeless misery.

*Second episode.*—Forth from the palace, all dressed in the garb of death, come Megara and her children. She is ready for the doom which has been pronounced upon them. She sadly recalls the fond hopes that she and her husband had

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

She recounts the incidents of his long and difficult career, his heroic suffering at Juno's bidding.

And now base Lycus has taken advantage of her husband's absence in the lower world to kill her father, Creon, king of Thebes, and all his sons, and to usurp the throne—

“And Lycus rules the Thebes of Hercules!”

She prays her husband soon to come and right these wrongs, though in her heart she fears that he will never come again.

Old Amphytrion tries to reassure her by recalling the superhuman valour and strength of Hercules, but without success.

Now Lycus appears, boasting of the power which he has gained, not by long descent from a noble line, but by his own valour. But his house cannot stand by valour alone. He must strengthen his power by union with some princely house—he will marry Megara! Should she refuse, he will give to utter ruin all the house of Hercules.

Meeting her at the moment, he attempts with specious arguments to persuade her to his plan. But Megara repulses his monstrous proposition with indignant scorn. Lycus attempts to defend his slaughter of her father and brother as done through the exigency of war, and pleads with her to put away her wrath; but all in vain, and in the end he bids his attendants heap high a funeral pyre on which to burn the woman and all her brood.

When Lycus has retired, Amphytrion in his extremity prays to heaven for aid; but suddenly checks himself with incredulous joy, for he hears approaching the well-known step of Hercules!

*First choral interlude.*—Verily fortune is unjust, for while Eurystheus sits at ease, the nobler Hercules must suffer unending hardships. His labours are briefly recapitulated. Now has he gone to hell to bring back Cerberus. Oh, that he may conquer death as all things else, and come back again, as did Orpheus by the charm of his lyre.

*Second episode.*—Hercules enters, fresh from the lower world, rejoicing that he again beholds the light of day, and exulting in the accomplishment of his latest and most difficult task; when suddenly he notices soldiers on guard,



## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

cherished for these sons. But these bright prospects have vanished now, for death is waiting to claim them all, herself as well. She will fold them in a last motherly embrace, and pour out her grief :

“How, like the bee with variegated wings,  
Shall I collect the sorrows of you all,  
And blend the whole together in a flood  
Of tears exhaustless !”

But perhaps even yet her absent lord has power to intervene in her behalf, though he be but a ghost. She prays despairingly that he will come to aid. Amphitryon would try the favour of Jove once more in this extremity :

“I call on thee, O Jove, that, if thou mean  
To be a friend to these deserted children,  
Thou interpose without delay and save them ;  
For soon 'twill be no longer in thy power.”

But at this juncture, when no help seems possible from heaven or hell, to their amazed joy Hercules himself appears, and in the flesh. He perceives the mourning garments of his family and the grief-stricken faces of the chorus, and quickly learns the cause of all this woe. He at once plans vengeance upon the wretch who has wrought it all. He has, himself, forewarned by a “bird of evil omen perched aloft,” entered Thebes in secret ; and now he will hide within his own palace and wait until Lycus comes to fetch the victims whom he has doomed to death. But first he briefly replies to Amphitryon's questions as to the success of his errand to the lower world.

*Second choral interlude.*—The old men sing in envy of youth and complaint of old age :

“But now a burden on my head  
Heavier than Aetna's rock, old age, I bear.”

They hold that had the gods been wiser they would have given renewed youth as a reward to the virtuous, leaving the degenerate to fall asleep and wake no more. And yet, though oppressed by age, they still may “breathe the strain Mnemosyne inspires,” and sing unceasingly the deeds of Hercules :

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

and his wife and children dressed in mourning garments. He asks what these things mean. Amphitryon answers briefly that Lycus has killed Creon and his sons, usurped the throne, and now has doomed Megara and her children to death.

Hercules leaves his home at once to find, and take vengeance on, his enemy, though Theseus, whom he has rescued from the world of shades, begs for the privilege himself of slaying Lycus. Left with Amphitryon, in reply to the latter's questions Theseus gives in great detail an account of the lower world, its way of approach, its topography, and the various creatures who dwell within its bounds. After describing in particular the operations of justice and the punishment of the condemned, he tells how Hercules overcame Cerberus and brought him to the upper world.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus, with Theseus' words in mind, dwell in fancy still upon the lower world. They follow Hercules along "that dark way, which to the distant Manes leads," and picture the thronging shades, the "repulsive glooms," and the "weary inactivity of that still, empty universe." They pray that it may be long ere they must go to that dread world, to which all the wandering tribes of earth must surely come. But away with gloomy thoughts! Now is the time for joy, for Hercules is come again. Let animals and men make holiday, and fitly celebrate their

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

“Alcides, the resistless son of Jove,  
Those trophies which to noble birth belong  
By him are all surpassed; his forceful hand,  
Restoring peace, hath cleansed this monster-teeming land.”

*Third episode.*—Lycus enters and encounters Amphitryon without the palace. Him he bids to go within and bring out the victims to their death. To this Amphitryon objects on the ground that it would make him an accomplice in their murder. Whereupon Lycus enters the palace to do his own errand. The old man, looking after him, exclaims:

“Depart; for to that place the fates ordain  
You now are on the road”;

while the chorus rejoices that now the oppressor is so soon to meet his just punishment. Now the despairing cries of Lycus are heard within and then—silence.

*Third choral interlude.*—All is now joy and exultation. Fear has departed, hope has come back again, and faith in the protecting care of the gods is restored. Therefore, let all Thebes give herself up to the rapture and triumph of this hour.

But now two spectres are seen hovering over the palace, one of whom introduces herself to the chorus as Iris, the ambassadress of Juno, and announces that her companion is a fiend, daughter of the night. Their mission hither is, at the command of Juno, to drive Hercules into a madness, in which he shall slay his children. The fiend, indeed, makes a weak protest against such a mission, but speedily yields and goes darting into the palace, where we know that she begins at once her deadly work within the breast of Hercules.

The chorus bemoans the city's short-lived joy, and the new and terrible disaster that has fallen upon their hero's house. Soon they hear the mad shouts of Hercules, and know by these that the fiend has already done her fatal work.

*Exode.*—A messenger hurries out of the palace, and describes the dreadful scenes that have just been enacted

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

prince's world-wide victories, and their own deliverance from their recent woes.

*Third episode.*—Hercules returns to his house, fresh from the slaying of Lycus, and proceeds to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to Jupiter. But in the midst of the sacrifice the madness planned by Juno begins to come upon him. His sight is darkened, and his reason changed to delirium. Now he catches sight of his children, cowering in fright; he thinks they are the children of Lycus, immediately lets fly an arrow at one of them, and seizes a second, whom he drags from the scene. Amphitryon, standing where he can see all that takes place, describes the wretched death of the second, and then the third, though Megara tries to save her last remaining child. She also falls before the blow of her husband, who thinks in his madness that she is his cruel stepmother, Juno. Hercules, re-entering, exults in his supposed victory over his enemies, and then sinks down in a deep faint.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus calls upon heaven, earth, and sea to mourn for Hercules in this new disaster that has befallen him. They pray that he may be restored to sanity. In a long apostrophe to Sleep they pray that the soothing influences of this god may hold and subdue him until his former mind returns to its accustomed course. They watch his feverish tossings, and suffer with him in the grief which he so soon must realize. They close with a pathetic lament over the dead children.

*Exode.*—Hercules wakes up in his right mind, bewildered and uncertain where he is. His eyes fall on the murdered



## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

there. Hercules was offering sacrifices of purification before Jove's altar, with his three sons and Megara beside him. All was propitious, when suddenly a madness seized on Hercules. He ceased his present sacrifice, declaring that he must first go to Mycenae and kill Eurystheus and his sons, and so make an end of all his enemies at once. In fancy he mounted a chariot and speedily arrived at Mycenae. His own sons seemed to his disordered vision to be Eurystheus' sons; and rushing savagely upon them, he soon had slain them all, and Megara herself. Then did he fall into a deep, swoonlike slumber, prostrate beside a mighty column, to which the attendants tied him securely with cords, lest he should awake and do further mischief.

The palace doors are now thrown open, and the prostrate, sleeping Hercules is seen. Amphitryon warns the chorus not to wake him lest they restore him to his miseries. Soon Hercules awakes, and in his right mind. He seems to himself to have had a dreadful dream. He looks in wonder at the cords which bind his arms, at the fresh-slain corpses lying near, at his own arrows scattered on the floor. He calls aloud for someone to explain these things to him. Amphitryon advances and informs him that in his madness, sent by Juno's hate, he has destroyed his wife and all his sons.

And now Theseus, having heard that Lycus has usurped the throne of Thebes, and grateful for his own deliverance from the world of shades by Hercules, has come with an army of Athenian youth to aid his friend. He is shocked to find the hero sitting in deepest dejection, with head bowed low, and covered with a mourning veil. Quickly he inquires and learns the truth from Amphitryon. With noble and unselfish friendship, he offers his sympathy and help to Hercules, although the latter warns him to avoid the contagion which his own guilty presence engenders. He bids Hercules be a man, and give over his threats of self-destruction.

Hercules gives the reasons why it is impossible for him to live. First, Juno's inveterate hate, which attacked him in his very cradle, pursues him still, relentlessly; but most and worst of all, he has incurred such odium because of the murder of his wife and children that he will be henceforth an outcast on the earth. No land will give him refuge now.



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

children, though he does not as yet recognize them as his own. He misses his familiar club and bow, and wonders who has been bold enough to remove these and not to fear even a sleeping Hercules. Now he recognizes in the corpses his own wife and children :

“ Oh, what sight is this ?

My sons lie murdered, weltering in their blood ;

My wife is slain. What Lycus rules the land ?

Who could have dared to do such things in Thebes,

And Hercules returned ? ”

He notices that Theseus and Amphitryon turn away and will not meet his gaze. He asks them who has slain his family. At last, partly through their half-admissions, and partly through his own surmise, it comes to him that this dreadful deed is his own. His soul reels with the shock, and he prays wildly for death. No attempts of his two friends to palliate his deed can soothe his grief and shame. At last the threat of old Amphitryon instantly to anticipate the death of Hercules by his own leads the hero to give over his deadly purpose.

He consents to live—but where? What land will receive a polluted wretch like him? He appeals to Theseus :

“ O Theseus, faithful friend, seek out a place  
Far off from here where I may hide myself.”

Theseus offers his own Athens as a place of refuge, where his friend may find at once asylum and cleansing from his sin :

“ My land awaits thy coming ; there will Mars  
Wash clean thy hands and give thee back thy arms.  
That land, O Hercules, now calls to thee,  
Which even gods from sin is wont to free.”

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Why should he live? Let him die; and let Juno's cup of happiness be full.

Theseus reminds him that no man escapes unscathed by fate. Nay, even the gods themselves have done unlawful things, and yet live on and do not feel the obloquy their deeds should cause. As for a place of refuge, Athens shall be his home. There shall he obtain full cleansing for his crimes, a place of honour, and ample provision for his wants. All that a generous and grateful friend can give shall be his own.

Hercules accepts this offer of Theseus, reflecting also that he might be charged with cowardice should he give in to his troubles and seek refuge in death. He accordingly takes a mournful farewell of his dead wife and children, commends their bodies to Amphitryon for burial, which it is not lawful for him to give, and so commits himself to the hands of his faithful friend:

“ I will follow Theseus,  
Towed like a battered skiff. Whoe'er prefers  
Wealth or dominion to a steadfast friend,  
Judges amiss.”

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## THE *TROADES* OF EURIPIDES

*Prologue.*—Neptune, appearing from the depths of the sea, briefly recounts the story of the overthrow of Troy, which he laments, states the present situation of the Trojan women, dwells upon the especial grief of Hecuba, and places the blame for all this ruin upon Minerva:

“ But, oh my town, once flourishing, once crowned  
With beauteous-structured battlements, farewell!  
Had not Minerva sunk thee in the dust,  
On thy firm base e'en now thou mightst have stood.”

To him appears Minerva, who, though she had indeed helped the Greeks to their final triumph over Troy, had been turned against them by the outrage of Cassandra on the night of Troy's overthrow. She now makes common cause with Neptune, and plans for the harassing of the Greek fleet

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

### THE *TROADES* OF SENECA

*Prologue.*—Hecuba bewails the fall of Troy, and draws from it a warning to all who are high in power :

“ For of a truth did fortune never show  
In plainer wise the frailty of the prop  
That doth support a king.”

She graphically describes the mighty power and mighty fall of her husband's kingdom, and portrays the awe with which the Greeks behold even their fallen foe. She asserts that the fire by which her city has been consumed sprang from her, the brand that she had dreamed of in her dream before the birth of Paris. She dwells horribly upon the death of Priam, which she had herself witnessed.

“ But still the heavenly powers are not appeased.”

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

by storm and flood on the homeward voyage. The Greeks are to be taught a lesson of reverence :

“ Unwise is he who'er of mortals storms  
Beleaguered towns, and crushed in ruins wastes  
The temples of the gods, the hallowed tombs  
Where sleep the dead ; for he shall perish soon.”

[The two gods disappear.]

Hecuba, lying prone upon the ground before Agamemnon's tent, gives voice to her sufferings of body and of spirit ; laments her accumulated losses of home, friends, station, liberty ; blames Helen for all, and calls upon the chorus of captive women to join her in lamentation.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus with Hecuba indulges in speculation as to the place of their future home, speaking with hope of some Greek lands, and deprecating others.

*First episode.*—Talthybius, the herald, enters and announces that the lots have been drawn, and reveals to each captive her destined lord : that Cassandra has fallen to Agamemnon, Andromache to Pyrrhus, Hecuba to Ulysses. At news of this her fate Hecuba is filled with fresh lamentations, counting it an especial hardship that she should fall to the arch-enemy of her race. The herald also darkly alludes to the already accomplished fate of Polyxena,

“ At the tomb raised to Achilles doomed to serve.”

Hecuba does not as yet catch the import of these words.

Cassandra now enters, waving a torch, and celebrates in a mad refrain her approaching union with Agamemnon. Hecuba remonstrates with her for her unseemly joy ; whereupon Cassandra declares that she rejoices in the prospect of the vengeance upon Agamemnon which is to be wrought out through this union. She contrasts the lot of the Greeks and Trojans during the past ten years, and finds that the latter have been far happier ; and even in her fall, the woes of Troy are far less than those that await the Greek chieftains. She then prophesies in detail the trials that await Ulysses, and the dire result of her union with Agamemnon :

“ Thou shalt bear me  
A fury, an Erinys from this land.”



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The captives are to be allotted to the Greek chiefs, and even now the urn stands ready for the lots.

Hecuba next calls upon the chorus of Trojan women to join her in lamenting their fallen heroes, Hector and Priam.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus, under the direction of Hecuba as chorus leader, in true oriental fashion bewails the downfall of Troy, and in particular the death of Priam and Hector.

*First episode.*—Talthybius announces that the shade of Achilles has appeared with the demand that Polyxena be sacrificed upon the hero's tomb.

Enter Pyrrhus and Agamemnon, the former demanding that his father's request be carried out, the latter resisting the demand as too barbarous to be entertained. It is finally agreed to leave the decision to Calchas. He is accordingly summoned, and at once declares that only by the death of the maiden can the Greeks be allowed to set sail for home. And not this alone, but Astyanax also must be sacrificed—hurled from the lofty Scaean tower of Troy.

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

Hecuba here falls in a faint and, upon being revived, again recounts her former high estate, sadly contrasts with that her present condition, and shudders at the lot of the slave which awaits her :

“Then deem not of the great  
Now flourishing as happy, ere they die.”

*First choral interlude.*—The chorus graphically describes the wooden horse, its joyful reception by the Trojans into the city, their sense of relief from danger, and their holiday spirit ; and at last their horrible awakening to death at the hands of the Greeks within the walls.

*Second episode.*—The appearance of Andromache with Astyanax in her arms, borne captive on a Grecian car, is a signal for general mourning. She announces her own chief cause of woe :

“I, with my child, am led away, the spoil  
Of war ; th’ illustrious progeny of kings,  
Oh, fatal change, is sunk to slavery.”

Her next announcement comes as a still heavier blow to Hecuba :

“Polyxena, thy daughter, is no more ;  
Devoted to Achilles, on his tomb,  
An offering to the lifeless dead, she fell.”

Andromache insists that Polyxena’s fate is happier than her own ; argues that in death there is no sense of misery :

“Polyxena is dead and of her ills  
Knows nothing” ;

while Andromache still lives to feel the keen contrast between her former and her present lot.

Hecuba is so sunk in woe that she can make no protest, but advises Andromache to forget the past and

“honour thy present lord,  
And with thy gentle manners win his soul” ;

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*First choral interlude.*—The chorus maintains that all perishes with the body ; the soul goes out into nothingness :

“ For when within the tomb we're laid,  
No soul remains, no hov'ring shade.  
Like curling smoke, like clouds before the blast,  
This animating spirit soon has passed.”

The evident purpose of these considerations is to discount the story that Achilles' shade could have appeared with its demand for the death of Polyxena.

*Second episode* —Andromache appears with Astyanax and recounts a vision of Hector which she has had, in which her dead husband has warned her to hide the boy away beyond the reach of threatening danger. After discussion with an old man as to the best place of concealment, she hides Astyanax in Hector's tomb, which is in the near background.

Enter Ulysses, who reluctantly announces that Calchas has warned the Greeks that they must not allow the son of Hector to grow to manhood ; for if they do so, the reopening of the Trojan war will be only a matter of time, and the work will have to be done all over again. He therefore asks Andromache to give up the boy to him. Then ensues a war of wits between the desperate mother and the crafty Greek. She affects not to know where the boy is—he is lost. But if she knew, no power on earth should take him from her. Ulysses threatens death, which she welcomes ; he threatens torture, which she scorns. She at last states that her son is “among the dead.” Ulysses, taking these words at their face meaning, starts off gladly to tell the news to the Greeks, but suddenly reflects that he has no proof but the mother's word. He therefore begins to watch Andromache more narrowly, and discovers that her bearing is not that of one who has put her grief behind her, but of one who is still in suspense and fear. To test her, he suddenly calls to his attendants to hunt out the boy. Looking beyond her, he

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

this with the hope that she may be the better able to rear up Astyanax to establish once more some day the walls and power of Troy.

But the heaviest stroke is yet to fall. Talthybius now enters and announces with much reluctance that Ulysses has prevailed upon the Greeks to demand the death of Astyanax for the very reason that he may grow up to renew the Trojan war. The lad is to be hurled from a still standing tower of Troy. The herald warns Andromache that if she resist this mandate she may be endangering the boy's funeral rites. She yields to fate, passionately caressing the boy, who clings fearfully to her, partly realizing his terrible situation. The emotional climax of the play is reached, as she says to the clinging, frightened lad :

“ Why dost thou clasp me with thy hands, why hold  
My robes, and shelter thee beneath my wings  
Like a young bird ? ”

She bitterly upbraids the Greeks for their cruelty, and curses Helen as the cause of all her woe, and then gives the boy up in an abandonment of defiant grief :

“ Here, take him, bear him, hurl him from the height,  
If ye must hurl him ; feast upon his flesh :  
For from the gods hath ruin fall'n on us. ”

And now what more can happen ? Surely the depth of misfortune has been sounded. In the voice of Hecuba :

“ Is there an ill  
We have not ? What is wanting to the woes  
Which all the dreadful band of ruin brings ? ”

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus first tells of the former fall of Troy under Hercules and Telamon ; and then refers to the high honours that had come to the city through the translation of Ganymede to be the cupbearer of Jove, and through the special grace of Venus. But these have not availed to save the city from its present destruction.

*Third episode.*—Menelaüs appears, announcing that the Greeks have allotted to him Helen, his former wife, the cause of all this strife, to do with as he will. He declares his intention to take her to Greece, and there destroy her as a warning to faithless wives.



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

cries: "Good! he's found! bring him to me." Whereat Andromache's agitation proves that the boy is indeed not dead, but in hiding. Where is he hid? Ulysses forces her to choose between the living boy and the dead husband; for, unless her son is forthcoming, Hector's tomb will be invaded and his ashes scattered upon the sea. To her frantic prayer for mercy he says:

"Bring forth the boy—and pray."

Follows a *canticum*, in which Andromache brings Astyanax out of the tomb and sets him in Ulysses' sight:

"Here, here's the terror of a thousand ships!"

and prays him to spare the child. Ulysses refuses, and, after allowing the mother time for a passionate and pathetic farewell to her son, he leads the boy away to his death.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus discusses the various places to which it may be its misfortune to be carried into captivity. It professes a willingness to go anywhere but to the homes of Helen, Agamemnon, and Ulysses.

*Third episode.*—Helen approaches the Trojan women, saying that she has been sent by the Greeks to deck Polyxena for marriage with Pyrrhus, this being a ruse to trick the girl into an unresisting preparation for her death. This news Polyxena, though mute, receives with horror.

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Hecuba applauds this decision, and thinks that at last heaven has sent justice to the earth :

"Dark thy ways  
And silent are thy steps to mortal man ;  
Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain."

Helen, dragged forth from the tent at the command of Menelaüs, pleads her cause. She lays the blame for all upon Hecuba and Priam :

"She first, then, to the ills  
Gave birth, when she gave Paris birth ; and next  
The aged Priam ruined Troy and thee,  
The infant not destroying, at his birth  
Denounced a baleful firebrand."

Blame should also fall upon Venus, since through her influence Helen came into the power of Paris.

Hecuba refutes the excuses of Helen. She scorns the idea that Venus brought Paris to Sparta. The only Venus that had influenced Helen was her own passion inflamed by the beauty of Paris :

"My son was with surpassing beauty graced ;  
And thy fond passion, when he struck thy sight,  
Became a Venus."

As for the excuse that she was borne away by force, no Spartan was aware of that, no cries were heard. Hecuba ends by urging Menelaüs to carry out his threat. This, he repeats, it is his purpose to do.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus sadly recalls the sacred rites in Troy and within the forests of Mount Ida, and grieves that these shall be no more. They lament the untimely death of their warrior husbands, whose bodies have not received proper burial rites, and whose souls are wandering in the spirit-world, while they, the hapless wives, must wander over sea to foreign homes. They pray that storms may come and overwhelm the ships, and especially that Helen may not live to reach the land again.

*Exode.*—Enter Talthybius, with the dead body of Astyanax borne upon the shield of Hector. He explains that Pyrrhus has hastened home, summoned by news of

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Andromache bitterly cries out upon Helen and her marriages as the cause of all their woe. But Helen puts the whole matter to this test :

“Count this true,  
If 'twas a Spartan vessel brought me here.”

Under the pointed questions of Andromache she gives up deception, and frankly states the impending doom of Polyxena to be slaughtered on Achilles' tomb, and so to be that hero's spirit bride. At this the girl shows signs of joy, and eagerly submits herself to Helen's hands to be decked for the sacrificial rite.

Hecuba cries out at this, and laments her almost utter childlessness; but Andromache envies the doomed girl her fate.

Helen then informs the women that the lots have been drawn and their future lords determined; Andromache is to be given to Pyrrhus, Cassandra to Agamemnon, Hecuba to Ulysses.

Pyrrhus now appears to conduct Polyxena to her death, and is bitterly scorned and cursed by Hecuba.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus enlarges upon the comfort of company to those in grief. Hitherto they have had this comfort; but now they are to be scattered, and each must suffer alone. And soon, as they sail away, they must take their last, sad view of Troy, now but a smouldering heap; and mother to child will say, as she points back to the shore :

“See, there's our Troy, where smoke curls high in air,  
And thick, dark clouds obscure the distant sky.”

*Exode.*—The messenger relates with much detail to Hecuba, Andromache, and the rest the circumstances of the death of Astyanax and Polyxena: how crowds of

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insurrection in his own kingdom, and has taken Andromache with him. He delivers Andromache's request to Hecuba that she give the boy proper burial, and use the hollow shield as a casket for the dead.

Hecuba and the chorus together weep over the shield, which recalls Hector in his days of might, and over the poor, bruised body of the dead boy, sadly contrasting his former beauty with this mangled form. They then wrap it in such costly wrappings as their state allows, place him upon the shield, and consign him to the tomb.

Talthybius then orders bands of men with torches to burn the remaining buildings of Troy; and in the light of its glaring flames and with the crashing sound of its falling walls in their ears, Hecuba and her companions make their way to the waiting ships, while the messenger urges on their lagging steps.

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## THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

*Prologue.*—The old nurse of Medea, alone upon the stage, laments that the Argo was ever framed, and that Medea had ever fled from Colchis. Then had she never been here in Corinth an exile and now deserted even by her husband, Jason. In describing Medea's distracted condition, the nurse first voices the fear of that violence which forms the catastrophe of the play. Enter an old attendant with the two sons of Medea, who announces a new woe—that Creon, the king, has decreed the banishment of Medea and her children. The nurse repeats her warning note, and urges the attendant to keep the children out of the sight of their mother, who even now can be heard raving within, and vowing the destruction of her children and her husband. The attendant retires with the children.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus of Corinthian women comes to the front of the palace to inquire the cause of Medea's cries, which they have heard, and to profess their attachment to her. From time to time Medea's voice can be heard from within as she prays for death and calls down curses upon Jason. The nurse, at the suggestion of the chorus, undertakes to induce her mistress to come forth, that converse with her



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Greeks and Trojans witnessed both tragedies, how both sides were moved to tears at the sad sight, and how both victims met their death as became their noble birth.

Andromache bewails and denounces the cruel death of her son, and sadly asks that his body be given her for burial; but she is told that this is mangled past recognition.

But Hecuba, having now drained her cup of sorrow to the dregs, has no more wild cries to utter; she almost calmly bids the Grecians now set sail, since nothing bars their way. She longs for death, complaining that it ever flees from her, though she has often been so near its grasp.

The messenger interrupts, and bids them hasten to the shore and board the ships, which wait only their coming to set sail.

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### THE *MEDEA* OF SENECA

*Prologue.*—Medea, finding herself deserted by Jason, calls upon gods and furies to grant her vengeance. She prays for destruction to light upon her rival, and calls down curses upon Jason. She thinks it monstrous that the sun can still hold on his way, and prays for power to subvert the whole course of nature. She finally realises that she is impotent save as she has recourse to her old sorceries, which she has long since laid aside, and resolves upon them as a means of revenge.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—A chorus of Corinthians chants an epithalamium for the nuptials of Jason and Creüsa. First, in Asclepiadean strains, they invoke the gods to be present and bless the nuptials. The strain then changes to quick, joyful Glyconics in praise of the surpassing beauty of the married pair. Changing back to Asclepiads, the chorus continues in extravagant praise of Jason and his bride,

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friends may soothe her grief. The nurse goes within, leaving the chorus alone upon the stage.

*First episode.*—Medea comes forth from the palace to explain to the chorus her position and unhappy condition. She deplores the lot of women in general, and especially in relation to marriage, and enlists the sympathy of the chorus in her attempt to secure some revenge for her wrongs. They confess the justice of her cause and promise to keep her secret.

Creon announces to Medea that she must leave his realm at once, for much he fears that she will take her revenge upon him and upon his house. She pleads for grace, and bewails her reputation for magic power; she assures the king that he has nothing to fear from her, and affects compliance with all that has taken place. Creon, while still protesting that she cannot be trusted, yields in so far that he grants her a single day's delay.

Medea tells the chorus that her recent compliance was only feigned, and openly announces her intention before the day is done of slaying Creon, his daughter, and Jason. She debates the various methods by which this may be accomplished, and decides, for her own greater safety, upon the help of magic.

*First choral interlude.*—The course of nature is subverted. No longer let woman alone have the reputation for falsehood; man's insincerity equals hers. In poetry the fickleness of both should be sung, just as in history it is seen. Though Medea, for her love of Jason, left her native land and braved all the terrors of the deep, she is now left all forsaken and alone. Verily truth and honour have departed from the earth.

*Second episode.*—Jason reproaches Medea for her intemperate speech against the king, which has resulted in her banishment, and shows her that he is still concerned for her interests. She retorts with reproaches because of his ingratitude, and proceeds to recount all that she had done for him and given up in his behalf. Jason replies that it was not through her help, but that of Venus, that he had escaped all the perils of the past, and reminds her of the advantages which she herself had gained by leaving her barbarous land

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congratulates him on his exchange from Medea to Creüsa, and finally, in six lines of hexameter, exults in the licence of the hour.

*First episode.*—Hearing the epithalamium, Medea goes into a passion of rage. She recounts all that she has done for Jason, and exclaims against his ingratitude. Again, with shifting feelings she pleads Jason's cause to herself and strives to excuse him, putting all the blame upon Creon. Upon him she vows the direst vengeance. Meanwhile the nurse in vain urges prudence.

Creon now enters, manifesting in his words a fear of Medea, and bent upon her immediate banishment. Medea pleads her innocence, and begs to know the reason for her exile. She reviews at length her former regal estate and contrasts with this her present forlorn condition. She claims the credit for the preservation of all the Argonautic heroes. Upon this ground she claims that Jason is hers. She begs of Creon some small corner in his kingdom for her dwelling, but the king remains obdurate. She then prays for a single day's delay in which to say farewell to her children, who are to remain the wards of the king. This prayer Creon reluctantly grants.

*First choral interlude.*—Apropos of Medea's reference to the Argonautic heroes the chorus sings of the dangers which those first voyagers upon the sea endured; how the natural bounds which the gods set to separate the lands have now been removed—and all this for gold and this barbarian woman. (The chorus is nowhere friendly to Medea, as in Euripides.) The ode ends with a prophecy of the time when all the earth shall be revealed, and there shall be no "Ultima Thule."

*Second episode.*—Medea is rushing out to seek vengeance, while the nurse tries in vain to restrain her. The nurse soliloquizes, describing the wild frenzy of her mistress, and expressing grave fears for the result. Medea, not noticing the nurse's presence, reflects upon the day that has been granted her by Creon, and vows that her terrible vengeance shall be commensurate with her sufferings. She rushes off the stage, while the nurse calls after her a last warning.

Jason now enters, lamenting the difficult position in which

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for Greece. He even holds that his marriage into the royal family of Corinth is in her interest and that of her children, since by this means their common fortunes will be mended. He offers her from his new resources assistance for her exile, which she indignantly refuses, and Jason retires from her bitter taunts.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus prays to be delivered from the pangs of immoderate love and jealousy, from exile, and the ingratitude of friends.

*Third episode.*—Aegeus, in Corinth by accident, recognizes Medea, and learns from her her present grievous condition and imminent exile. She begs him to receive her into his kingdom as a friend under his protection. This he promises with a mighty oath to do.

Medea, left alone with the chorus, explains to it still more in detail her plans. She will send her sons with gifts to the new bride, which, by their magic power, will destroy her and all who touch her. She adds that she will also slay her two sons, the more to injure Jason. The chorus, while protesting against this last proposal, offers no resistance,



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he finds himself. He asserts that it is for his children's sake that he has done all, and hopes to be able to persuade Medea herself to take this view. Medea comes back, and at sight of Jason her fury is still further inflamed. She announces her intended flight. But whither shall she flee? For his sake she has closed all lands against herself. In bitter sarcasm she accepts all these sufferings as her just punishment. Then in a flash of fury she recalls all her services to him and contrasts his ingratitude. She shifts suddenly to passionate entreaty, and prays him to pity her, to give back all that she gave up for him, if she must needs flee; she begs him to brave the wrath of Creon and flee with her, and promises him her protection as of old. In a long series of quick, short passages they shift from phase to phase of feeling, and finally Medea prays that in her flight she may have her children as her comrades. Jason's refusal shows how deeply he loves his sons, and here is suggested to Medea for the first time the method of her direst revenge. Jason now yields to her assumed penitence and grants her the custody of the children for this day alone. When Jason has withdrawn, she bids the nurse prepare the fatal robe which she proposes to send to her rival by the hands of her children.

*Second, choral interlude.*—The chorus opens on the text, "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," and continues with a prayer for Jason's safety. It then recounts the subsequent history of the individual Argonauts, showing how almost all came to some untimely end. They might indeed be said to deserve this fate, for they volunteered to assist in that first impious voyage in quest of the golden fleece; but Jason should be spared the general doom, for the task had been imposed upon him by his usurping uncle, Pelias.

*Third episode.*—The nurse in a long monologue recites Medea's magic wonders of the past, and all her present preparations. Then Medea's voice is heard, and presently she comes upon the stage chanting her incantations. She summons up the gods of Tartara to aid her task; recounts all the wonders which her charms can work; describes her store of magic fires and other potent objects. Then breaking into quicker measure, as if filled with a fuller frenzy, she continues her incantations, accompanied by wild cries and gestures. She finally dispatches her sons to Jason's bride with the robe she has anointed with her magic drugs

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus, dwelling upon Medea's proposed place of refuge, sings the praises of Athens, sacred to the Muses. It contrasts with this holy city the dreadful deed which Medea intends, and again vainly strives to dissuade her.

*Fourth episode.*—Medea, sending for Jason, with feigned humility reproaches herself for her former intemperate words to him, and begs only that he use his influence for the reprieve of their children from exile. To assist him in this, she proposes to send the children themselves, bearing a gorgeous robe of golden tissue (which she has anointed with magic poison) as a wedding present to the bride. Upon this errand Jason retires, attended by his little sons.

*Fourth choral interlude.*—The chorus, with full knowledge of the fatal robe, pictures the delight of the bride at its reception, and laments her fearful doom.

*Fifth episode.*—This episode is in four parts.

The attendant returns with the children and announces to Medea that her gifts have prevailed for their reprieve. (The attendant retires.)

Medea contrasts the assured career of her children with her own hapless condition; then remembers her resolve and with softening heart laments their dreadful fate. She hastily sends them within the palace. Left alone, she again struggles between her mother-love and her resolve not to leave her children subject to the scorn of her foes. (She here leaves the stage to wait for tidings from the royal house.)

Then follows a monologue by the chorus leader discussing the advantages of childlessness. No reference is made to the passing events.

Medea returns just in time to meet a messenger who breathlessly announces the death of Creon and his daughter. At the request of Medea he gives a detailed account of the reception of the magic robe and crown, the bride's delight, and her sudden and awful death, in which her father also was involved. He urges Medea to fly at once. She announces her intention to do so as soon as she has slain her children; and then rushes into the house.

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and charged with her curses. She hastens out in the opposite direction.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus notes and describes Medea's wild bearing, and prays for her speedy departure from their city.

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*Fifth choral interlude.*—This consists of a single strophe and antistrophe in which the chorus calls upon the gods to restrain Medea's mad act. Then are heard within the house the shrieks first of the two children, then of one, then silence, the chorus meanwhile wildly shouting to Medea to desist from her deadly work.

*The exode.*—Jason appears in search of Medea that he may avenge on her the death of the royal pair ; but most he fears for his children. The chorus informs him that they are already slain within the palace by their mother's hand. He prepares to force an entrance into the house.

But now Medea appears in a chariot drawn by dragons. She defies Jason's power to harm her. Jason replies by reproaching her with all the murderous deeds of her life, which have culminated in this crowning deed of blood. She in turn reproaches him and his ingratitude as the cause of all. A storm of mutual imprecations follows, and Medea disappears with the bodies of her two sons, denying to Jason even the comfort of weeping over their remains.

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## THE HIPPOLYTUS OF EURIPIDES

*Prologue.*—Venus complains that Hippolytus alone of all men sets her power at naught and owns allegiance to her rival, Diana. She announces her plan of revenge: that Phaedra shall become enamoured of her stepson, that Theseus shall be made aware of this and in his rage be led to slay his son. If Phaedra perish too, it will but add to the triumph of the goddess' slighted power.

Hippolytus comes in from the chase and renders marked homage to Diana. He is warned by an aged officer of the palace "to loathe that pride which studies not to please." Inquiring the meaning of this warning, he is told to recognize the presence of Venus, too, and to include her in his devotions ; but from this advice he turns away in scorn.



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*The exode.*—A messenger comes running in from the direction of the palace, and announces that the king and his daughter are dead. The eager questions of the chorus bring out the strange circumstances attending this catastrophe. Medea enters in time to hear that her magic has been successful, and ignoring the nurse's entreaties to flee at once, she becomes absorbed in her own reflections. And now in her words may be seen the inward struggle between maternal love and jealous hate as she nerves herself for the final act of vengeance. The purpose to kill her children grows upon her, resist it as she may, until in an ecstasy of madness, urged on by a vision of her murdered brother, she slays her first son; and then, bearing the corpse of one and leading the other by the hand, she mounts to the turret of her house. Here with a refinement of cruelty she slays the second son in Jason's sight, disregarding his abject prayers for the boy's life. Now a chariot drawn by dragons appears in the air. This Medea mounts and is borne away, while Jason shouts his impotent curses after her.

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### THE HIPPOLYTUS OF SENECA

*Prologue.*—Hippolytus, in hunting costume, appears in the court of the palace, which is filled with huntsmen bearing nets and all sorts of hunting weapons, and leading dogs in leash. The young prince, in a long rambling speech, assigns places for the hunt, and their duties to his various servants and companions. He ends with an elaborate ascription of praise to his patroness Diana, as goddess of the chase, and with a prayer to her for success in his own present undertaking. The whole speech is in lyric strain, the anapaestic measure, most commonly employed by Seneca.

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*Parade, or chorus entry.*—The chorus of Troezenian women deploras the strange malady that has befallen the young queen. They relate how

“This is the third revolving day  
Since, o'erpowered by lingering pains,  
She from all nourishment abstains,  
Wasting that lovely frame with slow decay.”

At the conclusion of the lyric part of the chorus, the queen, closely veiled, in company with her aged nurse, is seen coming from the palace gates.

*First episode.*—Full of anxiety, the nurse strives to indulge her mistress' every whim. Phaedra answers feebly at first, but suddenly, to the amazement of her companion, her speech is filled with the language of the chase, and she again relapses into her mute lethargy. At last, under the insistence of the nurse to probe her mystery, Phaedra confesses that the wretched fate of her house pursues her, too, and that she now feels the torments of love; and though she does not speak his name, the truth at last is clear that Hippolytus is the object of her passion. The nurse recoils in horror and shame from this confession.

Phaedra describes how she has struggled against her unhappy love, but in vain, and is now resolved on death in order to save her honour. At this the nurse throws all her influence in the opposite scale, arguing that, after all, the sway of Venus is universal, that it is only human to love, and that this is no reason for casting away one's life. She even proposes to acquaint Hippolytus with her mistress' feelings, and strive to win his love in return. This proposal Phaedra indignantly rejects. The nurse then offers to fetch from the house certain philtres which will cure the queen of her malady. The queen reluctantly consents to this, and the nurse retires into the palace.

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*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The technical chorus entry is entirely lacking in this play. While the chorus may be assumed to have entered and to have been present during the long interview between Phaedra and her nurse, which forms the first episode, still its presence is in no way manifested until the end of this interview.

*First episode.*—Phaedra bewails her present lot, in that she has been forced to leave her native Crete, and live in wedlock with her father's enemy. And even he has now deserted her, gone to the very realms of Dis, in company with a madcap friend, to seduce and bear away the gloomy monarch's queen. But a worse grief than this is preying on her soul. She feels in her own heart the devastating power of unlawful love, which has already destroyed all the natural interests of her life. She recalls her mother's unhappy passion; but this was bearable compared with her own. For Venus has, from deadly hatred of her family, filled her with a far more hopeless love. She does not name the object of her passion, but from her guarded references it is clear that Hippolytus, her stepson, is meant.

The nurse urges her mistress to drive this passion from her breast, moralizing upon the danger of delay. Has not her house already known sinful love enough? Such love is dangerous, for it cannot long be hid. Granting that Theseus may never return to earth, can her sin be concealed from her father? from her grandsires, both gods of heaven? And what of her own conscience? Can she ever be happy or at peace with such a sin upon her soul? She pictures her mistress' passion in all its hideousness. Besides, it is most hopeless, since Hippolytus, woman-hater that he is, can never be brought to respond to it. Phaedra yields to these arguments and entreaties of the nurse, and says that now she is resolved upon death as her only refuge. Here-upon the nurse (the usual rôle) begs her not to take this desperate course, and undertakes to bend Hippolytus to their will.

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

*First choral interlude.*—The chorus prays that love may never come upon its breast with immoderate power, and relates instances of the resistless sway of Venus and her son.

*Second episode.*—Phaedra, standing near the doors of the palace, suddenly becomes agitated, and utters despairing cries. The chorus, inquiring the cause of these, is told to listen. At first there is only a confused murmur from within; but this soon resolves itself into the angry denunciations of Hippolytus and the pleading tones of the nurse. By these Phaedra learns that the nurse has indeed revealed the fatal secret to Hippolytus under an oath that he will not betray the truth to anyone, and that the youth has received the announcement with horror and scorn. He breaks forth into bitter reproaches against all womankind. He regrets that his lips are sealed by his oath, else would he straightway reveal to Theseus all his wife's unfaithfulness.

Phaedra, on her side, reproaches the nurse for betraying her secret. She angrily dismisses her, and, after exacting an oath of silence from the chorus, goes out, reiterating her resolve to die, and suggests that she has one expedient left by which her name may be preserved from infamy and her sons from dishonour.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus prays to be wafted far away from these scenes of woe; and laments that the hapless queen had ever come from Crete, for then she would not now be doomed by hopeless love to self-inflicted death.



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

*First choral interlude.*—The chorus sings at length upon the universal and irresistible sway of love.

*Second episode.*—On the inquiry of the chorus as to how the queen is faring, the nurse describes the dreadful effect which this malady of love has already produced upon her. Then the palace doors open, and Phaedra is seen, reclining upon a couch, attended by her tiring women. She rejects all the beautiful robes and jewels which they offer, and desires to be dressed as a huntress, ready for the chase.

The nurse prays to Diana to conquer the stubborn soul of Hippolytus and bend his heart toward her mistress. At this moment the youth himself enters and inquires the cause of the nurse's distress.

Thereupon ensues a long debate, in which the nurse chides Hippolytus for his austere life and argues that the pleasures of life were meant to be enjoyed, and that no life comes to its full fruition unless youth is given free rein. The young man replies by a rhapsody on the life of the woods, so full of simple, wholesome joys, and so free from all the cares of life at court and among men. He compares this with the Golden Age, and traces the gradual fall from the innocence of that time to the abandoned sin of the present. He concludes with laying all the blame for this upon woman.

Phaedra now comes forth, and, seeing Hippolytus, falls fainting, but is caught in the young man's arms. He attempts to reassure her and inquires the cause of her evident grief. After much hesitation, she at last confesses her love for him and begs him to pity her. With scorn and horror he repulses her and starts to kill her with his sword; but, deciding not so to stain his sword, he throws the weapon away and makes off toward the forest.

The nurse now plans to save her mistress by inculpating Hippolytus. She accordingly calls loudly for help, and tells the attendants who come rushing in that the youth has attempted an assault upon the queen, and shows his sword in evidence.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus dwells upon and praises the beauty of Hippolytus, and discourses upon the theme that beauty has always been a dangerous possession, citing various mythological instances in proof of this.

## THE TRAGEDIES OF SENECA

*Third episode.*—A messenger hurriedly enters with the announcement that the queen has destroyed herself by the noose. The chorus, though grieved, manifests no surprise at this, and is divided as to a plan of action. And now enters Theseus, who demands the cause of the lamentations of the servants, which may be heard from within the palace. He learns from the chorus the fact and manner, but not the cause, of Phaedra's death.

The palace doors are now thrown open and the shrouded body of the queen is discovered within. Theseus, in an agony of lamentations, seeks to know the cause of his queen's death. He at length discovers a letter clasped in her dead hand, by which he is informed that Phaedra has slain herself in grief and shame because her honour has been violated by the king's own son, Hippolytus. Thereupon Theseus curses his son, and calls on Neptune to destroy him, offering this as one of the three requests which, in accordance with the promise of the god, should not be denied.

Here enters Hippolytus, hearing the sound of his father's voice. He looks in amazement upon the corpse of Phaedra, and begs his father to explain her death. Theseus, supposing that his son conceals a guilty conscience, makes no direct answer, but inveighs against the specious arts of man. This strange speech, and still more the manner of his father, now show Hippolytus that he himself is connected in his father's mind with Phaedra's death; and he seeks to know who has thus calumniated him. The wrath of Theseus now breaks over all bounds. He charges his son with the dishonour and murder of his wife, and with withering scorn taunts him with his former professions of purity. Hippolytus protests his innocence, but Theseus continues obdurate, and produces the fatal letter in proof of his statements. Then the youth realizes the terrible mesh of circumstances in which he is taken; but, bound by his oath of secrecy, he endures in silence. After Theseus has pronounced the doom of exile upon him, and retired within the gates, he himself goes forth to seek his comrades and acquaint them with his fate.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus reflects upon the precarious life of man, lauds the golden mean, and prays for the blessings of life without conspicuous fame. No man can hope for continued security in life, when such a youth as Hippolytus is driven off by Theseus' ire. It laments that no

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*Third episode.*—Theseus, just returned to earth from Hades, and with all the horrors of the lower world still upon him, briefly refers to his dreadful experiences and his escape by the aid of Hercules. Then, hearing the sounds of lamentation, he asks the cause. He is told by the nurse that Phaedra, for some reason which she will not disclose, has resolved on immediate self-destruction. Rushing into the palace, he encounters Phaedra just within. After urgent entreaties and threats from Theseus, she confesses that she is determined to die in order to remove the stain upon her honour; and without mentioning the name of him who has ruined her, she shows the sword which Hippolytus has left behind in his flight. This is at once recognized by Theseus, who flies into a wild passion of horror, rage, and bitter scorn. He vows dire vengeance upon his son, which shall reach him wherever he may flee; and ends by claiming from Neptune, as the third of the boons once granted him, that the god will destroy Hippolytus.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus complains that while nature is so careful to maintain the order of the heavenly bodies, the atmospheric phenomena, the seasons, and the productiveness of wealth, for the affairs of men alone she has no care. These go all awry. Sin prospers and righteousness is

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longer will his steeds, his lyre, his wonted woodland haunts know the well-loved youth; and reproaches the gods that they did not better screen their guiltless votary.

*Exode.*—The last words of the chorus are interrupted by the approach of a messenger, who hastily inquires for the king. As the latter comes forth from the palace the messenger announces the death of his son. At the king's request he gives a detailed account of the disaster: how Hippolytus was driving his fiery coursers along the shore, when Neptune sent a monstrous bull from out the sea, which drove the horses to a panic of fear; how the car was at length dashed against a ragged cliff, and Hippolytus dragged, bruised and bleeding, by the maddened horses; how, though yet living, he could not long survive. Theseus expresses pleasure at his son's sufferings, and bids that he be brought into his presence that he may behold his punishment.

The chorus interjects a single strophe, acknowledging Venus as the unrivalled queen of heaven and earth.

Diana now appears to Theseus and reveals to him the whole truth, explaining the infatuation of the queen, the fatal letter, and the wiles of Venus. The father is filled with horror and remorse. Diana tells him that he may yet hope for pardon for his sin, since through the wiles of Venus, which she herself could not frustrate, the deed was done.

Here the dying Hippolytus is borne in by his friends. In his agony he prays for death; but by the voice of his loved goddess he is soothed and comforted. After a touching scene of reconciliation between the dying prince and his father, the youth perishes, leaving Theseus overcome with grief.



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in distress. Verily, it does not at all profit a man to strive to live uprightly, since all the rewards of life go to the vain and profligate. While the case of Hippolytus is not mentioned, it is clearly in mind throughout.

*Exode.*—A messenger, hurrying in, announces to Theseus the death of his son. Theseus receives the news calmly and asks for a detailed account. The messenger relates how Hippolytus had yoked his horses to his car and was driving madly along the highway by the sea, when suddenly the waves swelled up and launched a strange monster in the form of a bull upon the land. This monster charged upon Hippolytus, who fronted the beast with unshaken courage. But in the end the horses became unmanageable through fright, and dragged their master to his death among the rocks. The body of the hapless Hippolytus has been torn in pieces and scattered far and wide through the fields; and even now attendants are bringing these in for burning on the pyre. Theseus laments, not because his son is dead, but because it is through his, the father's, act.

The chorus expatiates upon the fact that the blows of fate fall heavily upon men of exalted condition, but spare the humble. The great Theseus, once a mighty monarch, but now so full of woe, is an example of this truth. It has not profited him to escape from Hades, since now his son has hastened thither.

But now their attention is turned to Phaedra, who appears, wailing aloud, and with a drawn sword in hand. She rails at Theseus as the destroyer of his house, weeps over the mangled remains of Hippolytus, confesses to Theseus that her charge against his son was false, and ends by falling upon the sword.

Theseus, utterly crushed by the weight of woe that has fallen upon him, prays only that he may return to the dark world from which he has just escaped.

The chorus reminds him that he will find ample time for mourning, and that he should now pay due funeral honours to his son. Whereat Theseus bids all the fragments be hunted out and brought before him. These he fits together as best he can, lamenting bitterly as each new gory part is brought to him.

He ends by giving curt command for the burial of Phaedra, with a prayer that the earth may rest heavily upon her.

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### THE *OEDIPUS* OF SOPHOCLES

*Prologue.*—Dialogue between Oedipus and the priest of Zeus, who discloses the present plague-smitten condition of the people, and prays the king for aid since he is so wise. The fatherly regard of Oedipus for his people, in that he has already sent a messenger to ask the aid of the oracle, is portrayed.

The answer of the oracle: first reference to an unexpiated sin. Short question and answer between Oedipus and Creon, the messenger, bringing out the facts of Laius' death.

The irony of fate: Oedipus proposes, partly in his own interest, to seek out the murderer. As yet there is no foreshadowing of evil in the king's mind. At the end of the prologue Oedipus remains alone upon the stage.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus enlarges upon the distresses of the city, and appeals to the gods for aid.

*First episode.*—The curse of Oedipus upon the unknown murderer is pronounced, and the charge is made by Tiresias (who long refuses to speak, but is forced to do so by Oedipus), "Thou art the man." Oedipus' explanation of Tiresias' charge: it is a plot between the latter and Creon. The facts of Oedipus' birth are hinted at. Tiresias prophesies the after-life of the king, with the name but thinly veiled.

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### THE *OEDIPUS* OF SENECA

*Prologue.*—In the early morning Oedipus is seen lamenting the plague-smitten condition of his people. He narrates how he had fled from Corinth to avoid the fulfilment of a dreadful oracle, that he should kill his father and wed his mother. Even here he cannot feel safe, but still fears some dreadful fate that seems threatening. He describes with minute detail the terrors of the pestilence which has smitten man and beast and even the vegetable world. He prays for death that he may not survive his stricken people. Jocasta remonstrates with him for his despair and reminds him that it is a king's duty to bear reverses with cheerfulness.

*Parode, or chorus entry.*—The chorus appeals to Bacchus, relating how the descendants of his old Theban comrades are perishing. It enlarges upon the distresses of the city, and deploras the violence of the plague. The sufferings of the people are described in minute detail.

*First episode.*—Creon, returned from the consultation of the oracle at Delphi, announces that the plague is caused by the unatoned murder of Laius, former king of Thebes. Oedipus anxiously inquires who the murderer is, but is told that this is still a mystery. Creon describes the scene at Delphi in the giving of the oracle. Oedipus declares himself eager to hunt out the murderer and inquires why the matter has been left so long uninvestigated. He is told that the terrors of the Sphinx had driven all other thoughts out of the people's mind.

The irony of fate: Oedipus pronounces a dreadful curse upon the murderer of Laius and vows not to rest until he finds him. He inquires where the murder took place and how. At this moment the blind old Tiresias enters, led by his daughter, Manto. Tiresias tries by the arts of divination (which are described with the greatest elaboration) to ascertain the name of the murderer, but without avail; and says that recourse must be had to necromancy, or the raising of the dead.

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*First choral interlude.*—The chorus reflects upon the oracle and the certain discovery of the guilty one. Ideal picture of the flight of the murderer. While troubled by the charge of Tiresias, the chorus still refuses to give it credence. After all, the seer is only a man and liable to be mistaken. Oedipus has shown himself a wiser man by solving the riddle of the Sphinx.

*Second episode.*—Quarrel of Oedipus and Creon based upon the charges of the former. Oedipus' argument: The deed was done long ago, and Tiresias, though then also a seer, made no charge. Now, when forced by the recent oracle, the seer comes forward with Creon. This looks like a conspiracy. Creon pleads for a fair and complete investigation. Jocasta tries to reconcile the two, but in vain, and Creon is driven out. Jocasta relates the circumstances of Laius' death, which tally in all details but one with the death of one slain by Oedipus. A terrible conclusion begins to dawn upon the king. He tells his queen the story of his life and the dreadful oracle, the fear of the fulfilment of which drove him from Corinth. At the end of this episode the death of Laius at the hands of Oedipus is all but proved, but the relation between the two is not yet hinted at.

*Second choral interlude.*—Prayer for a life in accordance with the will of heaven. Under the shadow of impending ill, the chorus seeks the aid of God, meditates upon the doom of the unrighteous, and considers the seeming fallibility of the oracle.

*Third episode.*—A messenger from Corinth brings the news of Polybus' death, the supposed father of Oedipus. The irony of fate: the king is lifted up with joy that now the oracle cannot be fulfilled that he should kill his own father. Step by step the details of the king's infancy come out, which reveal the awful truth to Jocasta. To Oedipus the only result of the present revelation is that he is probably base-born. Jocasta tries to deter Oedipus from further investigation.

*Strophe and antistrophe.*—A partial interlude, while they wait for the shepherd who is to furnish the last link in the chain of evidence. The chorus conjectures as to the wonderful birth of Oedipus; possibly his father is Pan, or Apollo, or Mercury, or Bacchus.



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*First choral interlude.*—The chorus sings a dithyrambic strain in praise of the wonderful works of Bacchus. No reference is made to the tragedy which is in progress.

*Second episode.*—Creon returns from the rites of necromancy in which he had accompanied Tiresias, and strives to avoid telling the result of the investigation to the king. Being at last forced to reveal all that he knows, he describes with great vividness of detail how Tiresias has summoned up the spirits of the dead, and among them Laïus. The latter declares that Oedipus himself is the murderer, having slain his father and married his mother. Oedipus, strong in the belief that Polybus and Merope of Corinth are his parents, denies the charge, and after a hot dispute orders Creon to be cast into prison, on suspicion of a conspiracy with Tiresias to deprive Oedipus of the sceptre.

*Second choral interlude.*—The chorus refuses to believe the charge against Oedipus, but lays the blame of all these ills upon the evil fate of Thebes which has pursued the Thebans from the first.

*Third episode.*—Oedipus, remembering that he had slain a man on his way to Thebes, questions Jocasta more closely as to the circumstances of Laïus' death, and, finding these circumstances to tally with his own experience, is convinced that he was indeed the slayer of Laïus.

At this point a messenger from Corinth, an old man, announces to Oedipus the death of Polybus, the king of Corinth, and the supposed father of Oedipus. The latter is summoned to the empty throne of Corinth. A quick succession of questions and answers brings to light the fact that Oedipus is not the child of Polybus and Merope, but that the messenger himself had given him when an infant to the Corinthian pair. This announcement removes the chief support of Oedipus against the charges of Tiresias, and now

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The shepherd, arriving, also seeks to keep the dreadful truth from the king, but a second time the passion of Oedipus forces the truth from an unwilling witness. At last the whole story comes out, and Oedipus realizes that he has slain his father and wed his mother.

*Third choral interlude.*—The utter nothingness of human life, judged by the fate of Oedipus, who above all men was successful, wise, and good. It is unscrutable; why should such a fate come to him? The chorus laments the doom of the king as its own.

*Exode.*—The catastrophe in its final manifestations. A messenger describes the lamentations and suicide of Jocasta, the despair of Oedipus, and the wild mood in which he inflicts blindness upon himself. He comes upon the stage piteously wailing and groping his way. He prays for death or banishment at the hands of Creon, who is now king. He takes a tender farewell of his daughters and consigns them to Creon's care.

The play ends with the solemn warning of the chorus "to reckon no man happy till ye witness the closing day; until he pass the border which severs life from death, unscathed by sorrow."

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he rushes blindly on to know the rest of the fatal truth. The shepherd is summoned who had given the baby to the old Corinthian. He strives to avoid answering, but, driven on by the threats of Oedipus, he at last states that he had received the child from the royal household of Thebes, and that it was in fact the son of Jocasta. At this last and awful disclosure Oedipus goes off the stage in a fit of raving madness.

*Third choral interlude.*—The chorus reflects upon the dangerous position of the man who is unduly exalted, and illustrates this principle by the case of Icarus.

*Exode.*—Although there is a short chorus interjected here (lines 980-997) on the inevitableness of fate, all the remainder of the play is really the exode, showing the catastrophe in its final manifestation. A messenger describes with horrible minuteness how Oedipus in his ravings has dug out his eyes. At this point Oedipus himself comes upon the stage, rejoicing in his blindness, since now he can never look upon his shame. And now Jocasta appears, having heard strange rumours. On learning the whole truth, she slays herself on the stage with Oedipus' sword. The play ends as the blind old king goes groping his way out into darkness and exile.

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