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EURIPIDES

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EURIPIDES
CYCLOPS • ALCESTIS
MEDEA

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
DAVID KOVACS



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NOTE ON SECOND PRINTING

When the first printing of this volume was nearly exhausted, I was invited to make corrections. It seemed a good opportunity to rethink a few textual and translation decisions in the light of the reviews this volume and its companion *Euripidea* have received. I here express gratitude to all my reviewers but especially to Donald Mastronarde and David Bain, whose learned and courteously phrased skepticism has led me to retract some of the textual novelties the first printing contained. In other cases I have tried to carry the discussion further in my forthcoming *Euripidea Tertia*.

University of Virginia

D. K.

For Frank and Irene Kovacs

PREFACE

I have incurred a number of debts of gratitude in writing this volume, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge here. My thanks for financial assistance go to the Marguerite Eyer Wilbur Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, and the Perseus Project of Harvard University for grants allowing me to spend the 1990 spring semester in Oxford, and to the University of Virginia for a semester's leave the previous semester and two summer research grants. I am grateful to the governing body of Christ Church, Oxford, for making me an honorary member during my stay there. In addition, this book benefitted immensely from discussions or correspondence with Angus Bowie, Godfrey Bond, Malcolm Heath, Richard Kannicht, Mary Lefkowitz, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, David Lewis, Jon D. Mikalson, and Oliver Taplin, but especially from the generosity of James Diggle and Charles Willink and the stylistic criticisms of George Goold.

Further work was made possible in two subsequent years by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency. I am grateful for its support.

This volume is dedicated to my parents in profound gratitude.

University of Virginia

David Kovacs

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Euripides

For the biography of Euripides, as for those of ancient writers in general, reliable evidence is in short supply.¹ During his lifetime no one saw fit to write about him as a person, and by the time curiosity about him developed, the means to satisfy it had nearly all vanished. There were, to be sure, the public records, inscribed on stone, of his entries in the tragic competitions giving year, plays, and the order in the final awarding of prizes, and perhaps one or two records on stone of his participation in non-dramatic events, such as the festival of Apollo Delios he participated in when he was a boy in his home deme of Phlya. But there was little beyond this: no one who wrote about him could quote letters from or to him, and few genuine reminiscences from Euripides' family or contem-

¹ I refer throughout by author's name to the following: Dieterich, "Euripides," *RE* VI (1907), 1242–81; Jacoby, *FGrH*, vol. 3 b (Supp.); Wilamowitz, *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin, 1907) [= *Euripides: Herakles*, vol. I (Berlin, 1895, reprinted Darmstadt, 1959)]. Numerals preceded by T refer to the section *Testimonia Vitae et Artis Selecta*, the principal ancient notices of Euripides' life, published separately in my *Euripidea*, Supplement to *Mnemosyne* 132 (Leiden, 1994).

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poraries survived into the fourth century to be passed on by Aristotle or Philochorus. Practically the only evidence dating from Euripides' lifetime was the work of Aristophanes and other poets of Old Comedy, much of which is available to us as well. The poets of Old Comedy certainly did not write with the intention of providing information about their comic targets, and their evidence is difficult to assess, though, as we will see, this did not stop biographers from using Old Comedy as a source for the life of Euripides, with sometimes ludicrous results. It is important for the assessment of Euripides' work to be clear about the limitations of our knowledge of his life. There is a demonstrable tendency in Euripidean criticism to bring to the interpretation of the plays information about the poet's intellectual and artistic affinities derived from the biographical tradition. It will emerge from the present discussion that this tradition is highly unreliable, and that on such questions the only defensible stance is agnosticism: we simply do not know anything about Euripides' life that can furnish an interpretive key to his works.

The main biographical tradition is represented in four brief, summary Lives (the *Genos Euripidou kai bios* found in many manuscripts of the plays, an article in the *Suda*, a sketch by Thomas Magister, and one in Aulus Gellius²) and fragments of a longer *Life of Euripides* by Satyrus.³ Much

² The *Genos* [=T 1] is to be found on pp. 1–6 of Schwartz's edition of the scholia, Thomas Magister [=T 3] on pp. 11–13 of Dindorf's edition. The *Suda* article [=T 2] is E 3695 (ii 468 in Adler's edition), and the Aulus Gellius sketch [=T 5] is at 15.20.

³ The papyrus fragments of Satyrus' *Life of Euripides* [=T 4] are P. Oxy. 1176, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 9 (1912), 124–82, most

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of what these sources claim to know is obviously not factual at all and can be categorized under four heads.⁴ Often these lives report as fact the jokes or even the plots of Old Comedy, as when we are told that Euripides' mother sold vegetables, an Aristophanic joke we have good reason to doubt is based on fact, or when Satyrus tells us that the women conspired at the Thesmophoria to kill Euripides, which is the plot of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*.⁵ A second category of pseudo-evidence is material about the poet's life derived from his plays. The story about the infidelity of his wife, for example, "explains" why he wrote his first *Hippolytus*,⁶ and the anecdote about this wife's second husband ends with a slightly altered quotation from his *Electra*. A common procedure is to cite a "fact" about Euripides (e.g. "He wrote his plays in a cave looking out to sea") and then to cite as a consequence of this "fact" something which may in reality be its sole warrant (e.g. "and that is why he takes the majority of his metaphors from the sea").⁷ A third category is stories of a mythological character, such as the oracle allegedly given to Euripides' father.⁸ A fourth is material that can be shown

recently published, with commentary, by G. Arrighetti, *Studi Classici e Orientali* 13 (1964).

⁴ On the prevalence of the non-factual in ancient biography see J. Fairweather, "Fiction in the Biographies of Ancient Writers," *Ancient Society* 5 (1974), 231-75 and M. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981).

⁵ Fr. 39 X [=T 4.13].

⁶ *Genos* [=T 1.24].

⁷ *Genos* [=T 1.22].

⁸ See the *Genos* [=T 1.3], Aulus Gellius [=T 5.2], and Oenomaus quoted in Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* 5.33, 227C [=T 13].

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on independent grounds to be fabrication, such as the statement, irreconcilable with the chronology of Anaxagoras' career, that Euripides turned to the writing of tragedy after he saw the philosopher get into trouble for his teaching.⁹ Such evidence can be easily discarded. Not much in the Lives survives this process.

Another stream of tradition comes from sources that are concerned with history or with the lives of others and that mention Euripides in passing. A number of notices that one cannot always dismiss out of hand are transmitted in Aristotle, Plutarch, and others in connection with events and persons of a more public and political nature. This material will all be assessed separately as it bears on the various phases and aspects of Euripides' life.

Of the dates of his life, the death date is the easiest to determine. Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs* was put on at the Lenaea in the archonship of Callias (406/5), i.e. in January of 405. The plot begins with Dionysus in the Underworld, where he has gone because he has been suddenly seized by a longing for the tragic poetry of Euripides, recently dead. It culminates in the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides for the throne of tragedy. Before that contest, we are told that Euripides came down to Hades and challenged Aeschylus. It is subsequently related that Sophocles came down and did not challenge him but plans to challenge Euripides if he should prove the winner. In view of this not quite explicit chronology, it is reasonable to suppose that Sophocles died in the first half of Callias' year, the latter half of 406, as in fact the Marmor Parium and other sources tell us. It is also reasonable to infer that Euripides

⁹ See the *Suda* [=T 2.5].

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died not much earlier, in the archonship of Antigenes (407/6). We are told in the *Genos* that when the news of Euripides' death was brought to Athens Sophocles, himself dressed in mourning, brought on his chorus in the *proagon*, or opening ceremonies, without their customary garlands. This notice sounds genuine. If it is, this would be the Dionysia of 407/6, i.e. March of 406. This death date is confirmed by the entry on the Marmor Parium,¹⁰ which dates Euripides' death to 407/6. The rest of the biographical tradition puts his death a year later, for reasons we shall see.

Euripides was born, we are told by all but one source,¹¹ in the year of Salamis, the archonship of Calliades (480/79), and in most sources he was born on the very day of the battle and on the island of Salamis itself. The date is very probably one of antiquity's fictitious "synchronisms," by which exact dates that are hard to remember are replaced by nearby dates that are easier. Such synchronisms are characteristic of a whole school of biographical and chronological writing associated with the names of Apollodorus and Eratosthenes. This particular synchronism has several advantages. First, the three great tragic poets are all brought into relation with Salamis, since Aeschylus fought in it and Sophocles (we are told) was a young lad and danced a paean in honor of the victory. Second, such a synchronism puts his birth in the archonship of Calliades, his first tragic competition in that of Callias (456/5), and his death (by a further synchronism) in the archonship of an-

¹⁰ *FGrH* 239 A 63 [=T 67].

¹¹ See the *Genos* [=T 1.2], the *Suda* [=T 2.3], Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* 717C [=T 7], and Diogenes Laertius 2.45 [=T 8].

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other Callias (406/5) at the easily remembered age of seventy-five.¹² Coincidences of this kind do happen, and it is no scholastic synchronism but a well-documented fact that Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on July 4th, 1826, exactly fifty years after the signing of the Declaration of American Independence. But it would be mistaken to place too much reliance on the date of Euripides' birth. Some of this skepticism inevitably infects the notice about his place of birth as well.

The one dissenting voice is the Marmor Parium,¹³ which gives a date of 485/4 for Euripides' birth. This too is suspicious as it is the date of Aeschylus' first victory in the tragic competitions. Since, however, the Marmor Parium is the only source to give 407/6 for Euripides' death, a date corroborated by other evidence, in contrast to the synchronistic 406/5 of the other sources, it may be telling the truth about his birth as well. The most we can say with certainty is that he was born at a date not too far from 480 and that he was in his seventies at the time of his death.

Euripides belonged to the deme of Phlya, north of Mount Hymettus, part of the Athenian "tribe" of Cecropis.¹⁴ With only one dissenting voice the tradition makes him the son of a merchant or huckster father, Mnesarchus or Mnesarchides, and a vegetable-seller mother, Cleito. The lone dissenter is Philochorus, the fourth-century historian, who "demonstrates" that Cleito came "of very

¹² Cf. Eratosthenes, *FGrH* 241 F 12, quoted in the *Genos* [=T 1.17].

¹³ *FGrH* 239 A 50 [=T 6].

¹⁴ Harpocration, s.v. Φλυέα (i 302 Dindorf) [=T 11] and Theophrastus, quoted in Athenaeus 10.24, 424EF [=T 12].

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noble family.”¹⁵ Just what his demonstration relied on we cannot tell. Nor can we tell whether he said anything about Euripides’ father or whether he did not need to because the parallel tradition about him had not yet developed. We find vegetables mentioned in connection with Euripides’ mother numerous times in the comedies of Aristophanes, and it is clearly a familiar joke. There is no reason in theory why she could not have sold vegetables (though just why Aristophanes thought his audience would find the joke funny after so many repetitions is hard to see). Yet even apart from the evidence of Philochorus, there are other things in the record, as we shall see, that make the story of Euripides’ humble origins seem unlikely.¹⁶

The *Suda*, which quotes the valuable notice of Philochorus about Euripides’ mother, also tells us that his parents were exiled, settled as resident aliens in Boeotia and then in Attica.¹⁷ Although the phrasing is consistent with their being Athenians to start with, this is more likely to be a somewhat confusingly abridged version of the story told by Nicolaus of Damascus,¹⁸ in which the father, a Boeotian, is unable to pay his debts in Boeotia (colorful details about the Boeotian punishment for insolvency are the

¹⁵ *FGrH* 328 F 218, quoted in the *Suda* [=T 2.2].

¹⁶ F. Schachermeyr, “Zur Familie des Euripides,” *Antidosis. Festschrift für Walther Kraus* (Wien-Köln-Graz, 1972), pp. 306–26, points out that Comedy seems to confine allegations of menial occupation to *arrivistes* and suggests that Euripides’ parents, while well-off, derived their income from trade.

¹⁷ See the beginning of the *Suda* article [=T 2.1].

¹⁸ *FGrH* 90 F 103(v), quoted in Stobaeus iv 159 Wachsmuth-Hense [=T 10].

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occasion for the story) and then comes to Athens. In spite of the local color, this report seems lacking in foundation.¹⁹

We are told that Euripides as a boy was torch bearer in a procession in honor of Apollo Zosterios and served as wine pourer for the young men of prominent families who danced in honor of Delian Apollo.²⁰ These seem reliable reports. No one would make up such notices, and at least the second of them cites an inscription on stone in Euripides' home deme of Phlya. Services such as these suggest a family well established in the community and provide evidence against the Boeotian-immigrant story. Ancient Greek *poleis* granted citizenship to people from other *poleis* only very rarely, and there is no good reason to think that a bankrupt settler from Boeotia could have been accepted as an Athenian citizen in good standing, much less that his son could have been chosen to participate in a religious ritual with "the sons of the chief men of Athens." The origin of this story, as Wilamowitz saw,²¹ is not far to seek. Someone wished to explain why Euripides was called Euripides, after the Euripus, which runs between the Boeotian coast and the island of Euboea, rather than, say, Cephisiades, after the river that runs through Attica. He came up with the idea that his father must originally have been a Boeotian. It remained only to think of a reason he might have left his native land.

¹⁹ For a different view see Schachermeyr, above, n. 16.

²⁰ See the *Genos* [=T 1.7] and Theophrastus, quoted in Athenaeus 10.24, 424E [=T 12].

²¹ Wilamowitz, p. 8.

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Somewhat less easily dismissed are two *separate* connections with the island of Salamis. He is said to have been born on Salamis on the very day of the battle and also to have fitted out a cave on the island, where he retired to be alone and write.²² Our authority for the second of these is Philochorus; and later travellers, such as Aulus Gellius, were shown an unattractive grotto on the island as the cave of Euripides. Either his birth on Salamis or his possession of land there is possible in itself. The population of Athens voted in 480 to leave the city, except for a few defenders left on the Acropolis, and were settled in Trozen, Aegina, and Salamis (Hdt. 8.41), so that if Euripides' mother gave birth to him during the Persian invasion, he might plausibly have been born on the island. Alternatively, if his date of birth was moved to coincide with that of the battle of Salamis, there is good reason for anyone telling the story to give Salamis as the place of birth.

We also cannot disprove the idea that Euripides or his father may have *possessed* land on the island, though the difficulties are greater than Wilamowitz was prepared to admit.²³ When Euripides was a boy, his parents were prominent members of their deme of Phlya, which suggests that they lived there. If Euripides' family was as prominent as the Philochorus and Theophrastus testimonia suggest, they would scarcely have qualified for a cleruchy on Salamis, and while they might have acquired

²² See the *Genos* [=T 1.22], Thomas Magister [=T 3.2], Satyrus, fr. 39 IX [=T 4.12], Aulus Gellius 15.20.5 [=T 5.5].

²³ See Jacoby, p. 584, n. 7 on fr. 218, and n. 5 on fr. 219; Wilamowitz, p. 6.

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property there by other means, the supposition has little to recommend it.

Various sources list the philosophers with whom Euripides is supposed to have studied. The *Genos* in one place gives Anaxagoras, Prodicus, Protagoras, and Socrates, in another Archelaus the natural philosopher and Anaxagoras; the *Suda* "Prodicus in rhetoric, Socrates in ethics and philosophy, and also Anaxagoras"; Thomas Magister "Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and certain others." Satyrus' fragments emphasize connections with Anaxagoras. Finally a series of anecdotes and comic quotations put him on friendly or even collaborative terms with Socrates.

That Euripides is said to have studied with almost every one of the leading intellectuals of the fifth century is remarkable. Suspicion is deepened by chronological inconsistencies: our sources all place his education before the beginning of his dramatic career in 455,²⁴ while some, at least, of the thinkers mentioned as his teachers were not active until a good while after 455. (Socrates, for example, was a lad of fourteen in 455, while Prodicus came to Athens in the late 430s at the earliest.) The story that Euripides decided to write plays instead of philosophy because he saw Anaxagoras run into danger presupposes an impossibly early chronology for Anaxagoras' trial, and there is no evidence that he visited Athens early enough to be Euripides' teacher in this sense. It is unlikely that these notices are factual.

We are also told that Protagoras gave his first public

²⁴ See the *Genos* [=T 1.4, 1.33], the *Suda* [=T 2.4-5], Thomas Magister [=T 3.4-5], and Aulus Gellius [=T 5.4-5].

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reading, his agnostic treatise *On the Gods*, in Euripides' house, a fact that would suggest personal connection and sympathy between the poet and the philosopher.²⁵ The anecdote is not in itself incredible, but our source goes on to say "Others say it was at the house of Megacleides, others in the Lyceum." While it is possible that he gave a public reading of the work in more than one place, it seems likely that the famous name of Euripides has simply replaced the obscure name of Megacleides.²⁶

The connection with Socrates appears insistently in several forms,²⁷ and it is the one that impressed Nietzsche, who regarded Euripides and Socrates as accomplices in the murder of tragedy. In fact, however, none of the pieces of evidence on which Nietzsche relied to connect the two men emerges from scrutiny with its credit intact.²⁸ The allegation of a connection between these two men probably arises from the jokes of Old Comedy, which "explains" Euripides' intellectualist manner as the influence of Socrates, a subject to which we shall return below.

²⁵ Diogenes Laertius 9.54 [=T 15].

²⁶ We cannot now identify Megacleides.

²⁷ Satyrus, fr. 38 IV + 39 I [=T 4.6] and 39 II [=T 4.7], Diogenes Laertius 2.18 [=T 17], Aelian *Varia Historia* 2.13 [=T 18], Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.63 [=T 19], and Diogenes Laertius 2.22 [=T 21].

²⁸ See Albert Henrichs, "The Last of the Detractors: Friedrich Nietzsche's Condemnation of Euripides," *GRBS* 27 (1986), 385-90. Note in addition that Aelian's story of Socrates attending the theater when Euripides' plays were being performed "in the new tragedy section" is fourth-century in origin: before 386 there were no regular presentations of "old" tragedies, so that "the new tragedy section" is anachronistic.

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Allegations of atheism seem likewise to be derived from Old Comedy. Euripides, like Socrates in the *Clouds*, is represented as having his own gods (*Frogs* 889–94) or none (*Thesmophoriazusae* 449–56). Most of the tradition ignores or contradicts this allegation, presumably because the plays themselves lend so little support to it.²⁹ But one late notice, Aëtius quoted in pseudo-Plutarch *de plac. phil.* 880DE [=T 23], shows that this obstacle was not insurmountable. According to this report, Euripides was forced by fear of the Areopagus to present his atheistic views indirectly by making Sisyphus his mouthpiece.³⁰ The fragment of *Sisyphus* he quotes (*TrGF* 43 F 19) explains the gods as the invention of a clever man who wanted to prevent lawlessness. The play is probably by Critias rather than Euripides, and the views of the play's leading character are in any case not necessarily those the author is espousing.

Euripides was clearly influenced by the fifth century's prominent intellectuals, as were also, to a lesser degree, Sophocles and Herodotus. But we have no reliable evidence of personal contact or that he was in any special sense a student or associate of philosophers. Whether

²⁹ See Satyrus, fr. 39 II [=T 4.7], Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 4, 19E [=T 45]; and Seneca, *Epistula* 115.15 [=T 46]. See also M. Lefkowitz, "Was Euripides an Atheist?" *SIFC* 5 (1987), 149–66.

³⁰ It is to be noted that during the dramatic career of Euripides the Areopagus did not exercise the kind of authority in cases of impiety presupposed by this notice: see R. W. Wallace, *The Areopagus Council to 307 B.C.* (Baltimore and London, 1989), pp. 106–112, who shows that from 462/1 to 355 the Areopagus had no general oversight or jurisdiction in religious matters, and that the story about Euripides reflects later practice.

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Aristophanes regarded him as such and whether his contemporary Athenians shared such a view is a question to be treated below.

As far as we know, Euripides held no office in the Athenian state and took no part, aside from duties expected of everyone, in public life. (A notice in Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.6.20, 1384 b 13–17 [=T 94], that seems to make him ambassador to the Syracusans is likely to refer to someone else.³¹) It is almost exclusively as tragic poet that he was known to his contemporaries. Here we have sources that can be relied on, for Aristotle drew up lists of all the plays produced each year at the Dionysiac festivals in Athens, using the records kept by archons. He probably listed authors' names, with the names of their plays, in the order of their success, plus the names of the principal actors (*protagonistai*) and the winner of the acting prize when there was such a contest. This compilation, called *Didaskaliai*, is the ultimate source for the information preserved in the manuscripts of the tragic poets and elsewhere about the circumstances of the plays' first performances. The work of the Peripatetic school was continued by the researches of the Alexandrian scholars such as Aristophanes of Byzantium, who gathered copies of as many plays as they could find and produced a *Collected Works* that is the basis for the medieval manuscript tradition.

Information about Euripides' total dramatic output in the biographical tradition³² goes back to the Alexandrians.

³¹ See Wilamowitz, *Hermes* 34 (1899), 617–18, D. M. Lewis, *BSA* 50 (1955), 17–19, and J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 202–3.

³² See the *Genos* [=T I.16, 1.38] and the *Suda* [=T 2.11–12].

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The Alexandrians collected plays and also drew up lists of titles for the three dramatic poets, including the names of works that did not happen to survive. They knew the titles of ninety-two plays under the name of Euripides and seemed to have possessed copies of seventy-eight plays.³³ Seventy of these were tragedies and only eight were satyr plays.³⁴ Out of the total number of titles, three tragedies (*Tennes*, *Rhadamanthys*, *Peirithous*) and one satyr play (possibly a *Sisyphus*, the Euripidean *Sisyphus* of 415 not surviving) were regarded as dubious or certainly spurious.

Euripides was awarded the first prize only four times during his life and once posthumously. (The one posthumous victory means the first performance by his literary executor, Euripides the Younger, of the three plays he had written but not performed at the time of his death. Not included in the total are the many first prizes won by revivals of Euripidean plays in the centuries after his death.) This seems a surprisingly low figure—four first prizes in approximately twenty-two contests, less than one in five—especially in light of the enormous popularity of his plays

³³ For a discussion of the various figures transmitted in the Lives and an attempt to reconcile them, see Dieterich, p. 1247.

³⁴ This is far short of the one play in four we might expect. Although there is one recorded case, *Alcestis* of 438, where a tragedy was produced in the fourth place, it seems more likely that the disproportion was caused by the lower survival rate of Euripides' satyr plays. Euripides may simply not have excelled in this genre (the surviving *Cyclops*, at any rate, is not among his strongest performances) and therefore his satyr plays, not being in great demand, were not much copied. We know the name of one, *The Reapers* of 431, that did not survive to Alexandria. (See the Hypothesis to *Medea*.)

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with later generations. It has been taken to imply a pronounced suspicion or hostility of the Athenian public toward Euripides. A number of studies, however, have shown that this is not the inevitable reading of the evidence.³⁵ It is clear that Euripides must have been "granted a chorus" (allowed to compete) almost every time he requested one, which would not have been the case if Euripides and his audience had been living on terms of mutual hostility. We cannot say why he received the first prize only four times. Sometimes, of course, he was bested by the phenomenally successful Sophocles. But there was a great profusion of tragic talent in the fifth century, and we should not let our prejudice in favor of works that happen to survive blind us to the fact that much that perished may have been of high quality. In 431, for example, Euphorion, Aeschylus' son, defeated not only Euripides but also Sophocles. It would be unwise in such circumstances to assume that the third prize represents hostility.

One instructive example in this regard is the notice we have in Aelian about the contest of 415, in which Euripides' *Alexandros*, *Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*, and *Sisypheus* were defeated by a certain Xenocles.³⁶ Aelian, writing in the second century A.D., expresses amazement that Xenocles, "whoever *that* may be," should have defeated Euripi-

³⁵ See P. T. Stevens, "Euripides and the Athenians," *JHS* 76 (1956), 87-94; V. Martin, "Euripide et Ménandre face à leur public," in *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* VI, 243-83; C. Franco, "Euripide e gli Ateniesi" in *La polis e il suo teatro*, ed. E. Corsino, Saggi & materiali univ. VII, Serie di antichità e tradizione class. VI (Padova, 1986), pp. 111-25.

³⁶ Aelian, *Varia Historia* 2.8 [=T 31].

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des, "and that too when Euripides was competing with such good plays." He goes on to say that either the judges were deficient in taste or they were bribed, neither of which is a supposition worthy of the Athenians. It does not occur to him to think, as do many modern critics of the play, that the *Trojan Women* represented an indictment of Athenian policy at Melos, and that the Athenians were annoyed at Euripides for criticizing their policy.³⁷ In this he is not unusual: no ancient testimonium connects Euripides' lack of success, either on particular occasions or in general, with the Athenian perception of him as a critic, an outsider, or an artistic or moral revolutionary.

We are told that his dramatic career began in 455, and that among the plays produced on this occasion was a play that probably treated the Medea myth, *The Daughters of Pelias*. The date is presumably taken from the *Didascaliai* and therefore reliable. (Note that actual events have produced the sort of synchronism we might otherwise be tempted to ascribe to the school of Apollodorus, for that same year saw the death of Aeschylus.) Euripides came in third. We are also told that a first prize was awarded to Euripides for the first time in 441.

The dates of some of the plays that have survived are preserved, mostly in the *hypotheseis* or plot summaries, condensed from Alexandrian scholarship, that are prefixed to the plays in our medieval manuscripts. The rest of the surviving plays can be approximately dated on the basis of

³⁷ For difficulties with the view that *Trojan Women* reflects the slaughter of the Melians a few months earlier, see A. M. van Erp Taalman Kip, "Euripides and Melos," *Mnemosyne* 40 (1987), 414-19.

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style. In particular, on the evidence of the securely dated plays we can establish that Euripides made increasing use throughout his career of the license of substituting two short syllables for a long syllable in iambic trimeter, which allows us an approximate relative chronology. The surviving plays with their known or conjectured dates are given below.

438	<i>Alcestis</i>	second prize
431	<i>Medea</i>	third prize
c. 430	<i>Children of Heracles</i>	
428	<i>Hippolytus</i>	first prize
c. 425	<i>Andromache</i>	not produced in Athens
c. 424	<i>Hecuba</i>	
c. 423	<i>Suppliant Women</i>	
c. 420	<i>Electra</i>	
c. 416	<i>Heracles</i>	
415	<i>Trojan Women</i>	second prize
c. 414	<i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	
c. 413	<i>Ion</i>	
412	<i>Helen</i>	
c. 410	<i>Phoenician Women</i>	second prize
408	<i>Orestes</i>	
posthumous	<i>Bacchae and Iphigenia at Aulis</i>	first prize
unknown	<i>Cyclops</i>	

Rhesus is probably not by Euripides. For a discussion of the dating of lost plays, see M. Cropp and G. Fick, *Resolu-*

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tions and Chronology in Euripides, BICS Supplement 43 (1985).

Two nondramatic poems are plausibly ascribed to Euripides. We have fragments³⁸ of a victory ode in honor of Alcibiades, who in 416 entered seven chariots in the Olympic Games and won three prizes. Plutarch expresses doubt about the ode's authorship, and it may well be by someone else. Attested without any doubts or alternative authorship is an epitaph in honor of the Athenians who died in Sicily probably composed a very short time after the disaster in Syracuse. It mentions the eight victories the Athenians won before the gods withdrew their impartiality and turned against them.³⁹ The only substantial argument against the attribution to Euripides is the belief that the poet, being a critic of Athenian policy, could not have been invited to write it or accepted if asked. But the biographical tradition says nothing to substantiate this assumption, and there is very little in the plays that is even *prima facie* evidence for it. There seems no good reason to doubt Plutarch.

We learn from a brief notice in Aristotle that Euripides was involved in a lawsuit arising out of the Athenian tax

³⁸ *Vita Alcibiadis* 11.1 [=T 49, PMG 755] and *Vita Demosthenis* 1 [=T 50, PMG 756]. For a discussion of authorship and style see C. M. Bowra, "Euripides' Epinicion for Alcibiades," *Historia* 9 (1961), 67-79, reprinted in *On Greek Margins* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 134-48.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Vita Niciae* 7 [=T 51]. For a discussion of these eight victories and their relation to official counting of "trophies" raised, see C. O. Zuretti, "Un epicedio di Euripide," *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo*, serie II, 55 (1922), 527-32.

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system.⁴⁰ Wealthy citizens were called on to perform "liturgies," expensive public duties such as serving as *choregus* (financial sponsor) in the production of tragedies or comedies. If a citizen felt that he was being asked to do more such liturgies than someone else better able to pay, he could challenge this person in a suit called an *antidosis*.⁴¹ The other party in Euripides' case, Hygiainon, alleged that Euripides' sworn statements were suspect, and he cited *Hippolytus* 612, "My tongue is sworn, my mind remains unsworn," to show that in his plays Euripides had championed perjury. Euripides' reply does not take this charge at all seriously and merely points to the first-prize verdict the Athenian public had already rendered on the play, suggesting that if Hygiainon persisted, this same theater-public, in their capacity as jurors, would make their opinion known once more. It should be noted that Euripides is here reliably shown to be a man of financial means, as one would expect someone to be who had the leisure to write plays for uncertain financial rewards.

Various anecdotes are told about Euripides' marital troubles.⁴² We are told that he married twice (in some sources first Melito, then Choirile, in others the order is reversed), that he found his first wife unfaithful and was moved to write his first (and unsuccessful) *Hippolytus* in order to expose the moral failings of the female sex; that he

⁴⁰ *Rhet.* 3.15, 1416 a 28–35 [=T 59].

⁴¹ For a description of the workings of this system, see M. Christ, "Liturgy Avoidance and *Antidosis* in Classical Athens," *TAPA* 120 (1990), 147–69.

⁴² See the *Genos* [=T 1.13, 1.24], the *Suda* [=T 2.7–8], and Thomas Magister [=T 3.10].

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then married a second time and found his second wife equally unfaithful. Wilamowitz was clearly right to conclude that the two wives are doublets, and that there is nothing to distinguish Melito from Choirile. Moreover, Choirile's name looks very much like something from Old Comedy (it suggests the slang term for the female sexual organ, though the name was actually borne by at least one Athenian woman), and there is reason to believe that her name and her adultery are comic invention.

The comic poets gave the name of one of the men who allegedly cuckolded Euripides, Cephisophon, and said also that he helped Euripides write his plays.⁴³ I have given reasons elsewhere for thinking that the description of him as a slave is mistaken and that Thomas Magister may be right in calling him Euripides' actor.⁴⁴ Other men named as Euripides' artistic collaborators are Socrates, his father-in-law Mnesilochus (if the text is correct), and Timocrates of Argos, who with Cephisophon is credited with Euripides' lyrics.⁴⁵ These allegations of collaboration are literary judgments in biographical form. Euripides' dialogue is argumentative and rhetorical: therefore Socrates, the embodiment of loquacity, must have helped him write it.⁴⁶ Euripides' lyrics, by contrast, are written in a style much

⁴³ See the *Genos* [=T 1.5, 1.29], Thomas Magister [=T 3.12], Satyrus fr. 39 XII–XIII [=T 4.14–15], and Aristophanes *Frogs* 944 and 1407–9 with scholia [=T 58].

⁴⁴ *ZPE* 84 (1990), 15–18.

⁴⁵ See the *Genos* [=T 1.5] and the comic poets Teleclides, Callias, and Aristophanes quoted in Diogenes Laertius 2.18 [=T 17].

⁴⁶ See, for example, *Frogs* 1491–99 [=T 77].

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more removed from ordinary speech than his generally clear and lucid trimeters: they are therefore the work of Cephisophon or Timocrates.

Some time after 408, the year of *Orestes*, Euripides went to Macedon to the court of Archelaus. The motives are variously given. He is said to have been unwilling to endure mockery, either because of his wife's infidelity⁴⁷ or because of the ill will of his fellow citizens and his annoyance at competing with inferior poets.⁴⁸ Alternatively he is said to have gone in a spirit of lofty disdain for his lack of success in the competitions.⁴⁹ None of these motives is anything but a guess, and we should notice that other artists, among them Timotheus the lyric poet, Zeuxis the sculptor, and Agathon the tragic dramatist, accepted invitations from Archelaus at about this time. It is usually assumed that Euripides intended never to return to Athens and that, disenchanted with his city or its policies or its prospects, he had said farewell. This is more than we know. We certainly cannot rule out the possibility that, just as Aeschylus went to Sicily to enjoy the hospitality of Hieron with no thought of remaining permanently, so Euripides and his fellow artists intended to make a temporary visit.⁵⁰ Euripides' departure may have been self-imposed exile, but we have no reliable evidence that it was.

The funerary inscription on his cenotaph in Athens, possibly of contemporary date, says that he was buried in Macedon, and we are justified in concluding that he died

⁴⁷ See the *Suda* [=T 2.8].

⁴⁸ See Satyrus, fr. 39 XV [=T 4.17].

⁴⁹ See the *Genos* [=T 1.35].

⁵⁰ This comparison is made in Pausanias 1.2.2.

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there. According to a tradition already current around the end of the fourth century, he met a violent end. Some said that he was killed by dogs, either accidentally let loose on him or deliberately set on him by enemies or rivals when he was either coming home late from a party or sitting quietly in a grove. Alternatively, he was torn apart by women while off to a tryst either with Archelaus' own boy-beloved or with another man's wife. The likelihood that one or another of these stories is the truth does not seem very high.

Euripides in Old Comedy

When the biographical tradition alleges that Euripides was devoted to a philosophical outlook that cast tragedy's religious foundations into question and was an anti-traditionalist in his art, it is likely that it is relying on Old Comedy. The witness of the biographers therefore has no independent value, and we must turn instead to Old Comedy itself, whose evidence we must examine with some care. What does Old Comedy tell us about how the poet was perceived by his contemporaries?

This evidence is more difficult to assess than is generally recognized. First, the amount of truth in a comic portrait can be extremely low.⁵¹ For a joke to be worth making in Old Comedy, there need be only a slight resemblance

⁵¹ One cannot even conclude that either the comic poet or his victim regarded a comic attack as an act of hostility or that a first prize for the play implies that the audience too hold an unfavorable view of the target in real life. See M. Heath, *Political Comedy in Aristophanes* (Göttingen, 1987) for examples.

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between the actual person and his comic representation.⁵² There are elements in Old Comedy's portrait of Euripides, such as misogyny, which scholars rightly discount, and there are other elements about which we can feel no confidence. Second, the picture of the poet varies a great deal from play to play and is sometimes more respectful than disrespectful.

In *Acharnians* of 425, Aristophanes makes fun of certain palpable features of Euripidean tragedy, such as its use of ragged heroes, its homely and less elevated atmosphere, and its style, rich in pointed antithesis and paradox.⁵³ The audience of 425 would certainly have regarded some of these traits as comic exaggeration of the style of the real Euripides. The only pre-425 Greek tragedy we possess whose script calls for rags is Aeschylus' *Persians*, but Euripides' frequent use of this motif may have seemed remarkable. It should be noted that the treatment of Euripides here is without any overtones of philosophical or religious idiosyncrasy, and though his style is held up to (comparatively gentle) ridicule, there is no suggestion that he is other than a respected tragic poet.

In *Clouds* (first version 423, our text an incomplete revision of unknown date) Euripides is a questioner of received morality. Young Pheidippides is sent by his debt-ridden father to study with Socrates, who is to teach the lad

⁵² K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 144–45, discusses the case of Cleisthenes, who, because he had a skimpy beard, was pilloried for twenty years, first as a eunuch and then as an effeminate.

⁵³ For verbal antithesis comparable with *Acharnians* 396, cf. *Alcestis* 141.

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the dishonest rhetoric necessary to free his father from his debts. After Pheidippides has imbibed the Socratic mix of quack science, atheism, and pettifoggery, he gets into an argument with his father about poetry and finally assaults him physically. The young man has no more use for Aeschylus and is all agog for Euripides, one of whose speeches he recites at dinner, a tale of incest between a brother and sister (presumably the prologue to *Aeolus*). By implication here, a taste for Euripides goes with sophistry and immoralism. Whether the Athenian audience actually thought of Euripides, at least at times, in these terms is unclear. If so, it will have been because in his plays more scope is given to immoral characters to justify their actions, and in the popular mind this may have created an impression of licentiousness, which a series of anecdotes reflects and attempts to refute.⁵⁴ But it is equally possible that the audience did not regard the charge as actually justified but found it funny because there was just enough in the plays to make it comically plausible. Just as we should not infer from this play that Socrates in the 420s was or was thought to be a quack scientist and a teacher of dishonest rhetoric, so it would be rash to conclude that Euripides at this period was or was thought to be a questioner of conventional morality. It is worth noting that non-comic writers on Euripides, however much influenced by comedy in other respects, attribute to Euripides a high moral purpose, quite the reverse of the slippery relativism comedy

⁵⁴ See Plutarch, *De audiendis poetis* 33C and 19E [=T 44, 45], Seneca, *Ep.* 115.14–15 [=T 46], and Plutarch, *Amatorius* 756BC [=T 47].

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taxes him with.⁵⁵ The evidence is insufficient to show that Euripides questioned, or was thought to question, fundamental moral notions such as the tabu on incest.

The prologue to *Wasps* of 422 gives the audience a list of subjects and tricks it must not expect from Aristophanes: low comedy from Megara, slaves scattering nuts among the audience, Heracles being duped out of his dinner, or "Euripides being wantonly maltreated." The reference cannot be to Aristophanes' own treatment of the poet—the verb implies behavior that is shocking or indecent and would not be used of one's own actions—and must refer to comedies by other poets. Two things can be reasonably inferred: first, other comic poets besides Aristophanes launched comic attacks on Euripides, and second, such attacks could be described (in comic terms) as wanton outrage.

In *Thesmophoriazusae* (411), the women of Athens, meeting at the women's festival of the Thesmophoria, plan to punish the poet for maligning their sex in his plays. Euripides, having got wind of the plot, persuades a kinsman to disguise himself as a woman, infiltrate the meeting, and plead his cause. Two speeches are made in condemnation of Euripides. The first woman complains that Euripides has created deep suspicion against women in the minds of men by his general abuse of the sex and by his portrayal of their artful and devious ways. Men are on the lookout for lovers and ready to suspect the worst when their wives

⁵⁵ For example, Satyrus gives no indication that he took Comedy's charge of immoralism seriously but on the contrary represents Euripides as urging a high moral standard: see fr. 39 II-IV [= T 4.7-9].

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wreath a garland or a pot is broken. It is impossible to smuggle false heirs into the house, and men are too nosy about the running of the household. Thanks to Euripides, women's life is a misery, for all their usual tricks have been foiled. The second speaker makes a different charge. She, a poor widow who supports herself by making garlands, complains that her business has been cut to less than half since Euripides in his tragedies persuaded the men of Athens that the gods did not exist.

It is reasonable to ask whether Euripides was widely viewed in the fifth century as a misogynist.⁵⁶ It is not impossible that the combination of women in dubious situations or of uncertain principle (Creusa in the *Ion*, or the Phaedra of the lost *Hippolytus*, for example) with certain generalizations about women (e.g. *Med.* 407–9, *Andr.* 269–72) created in the Athenian audience a belief that Euripides hated the entire sex. But it is equally possible that the audience laughed because there was just enough in the plays to make the idea comically plausible. So too with atheism: the Athenians did not necessarily think that lines such as *Heracles* 339–47 or *Trojan Women* 469–71 proved Euripides an atheist: they might well have laughed precisely because the charge was false though (in comic terms) colorable.

The most extensive comic treatment of Euripides is *Frogs* of 405. Here the god Dionysus, in whose honor the

⁵⁶ *Lys.* 283–84 and 368–69 [=T 75] might be evidence that this perception was more widely shared if we could be sure that they are not merely a reference to *Thesmophoriazusae*: both plays were presented in 411, one at the Lenaea, the other at the Dionysia, but there is no clear evidence which preceded which.

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dramatic festivals were held, decides to go to the Underworld to fetch Euripides, who has recently died. As he explains to his half-brother Heracles, he needs a tragic poet and is not satisfied with the current crop. Arriving in Hades he finds a quarrel in progress between Aeschylus, who holds the throne of tragedy in the Underworld, and Euripides, who is the recently arrived challenger. Euripides, he is told, gave demonstrations of his art to the footpads, cutpurses, parricides, and burglars, who are in plentiful supply in the Underworld, and they were so taken with his dodgy and clever art that they thought him the rightful occupant of the throne. (Euripides, as in *Clouds*, is the poet most admired by the morally reprobate.) The rest of the play is the contest between the two poets, allowing for extended comic characterization of each.

Frogs incidentally allows us to see clearly how slight the resemblance between comic portrait and reality can be. Aeschylus is portrayed as the Grand Old Man of tragedy, the embodiment of everything old-fashioned and good, solemn and improving. This makes comic sense, for Aeschylus belonged to an earlier generation of poets, and his style sounded grand and old-fashioned. It is comically congruent with these traits that he should also be a moralist, a praiser of bygone days, a prig, and the advocate of an exaggerated sense of tragic decorum. Aristophanes' Aeschylus regards poetry principally as a means of moral improvement, implies that he never put any immoral characters on the stage, and claims that plays such as *Seven Against Thebes* were written to produce martial valor. All this makes comic sense, but most of it is far from the truth. He taxes Euripides with putting slaves on the stage with speaking parts and with introducing into tragedy the com-

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mon, humble, and everyday. But in fact speaking slaves are not unknown to Aeschylean tragedy, and his plays do not shy away from topics, such as Cilissa's discussion of toilet-training at *Libation Bearers* 753–60, that even Euripides does not touch.⁵⁷ Aeschylean tragedy was never as grand and elevated, nor Aeschylus as priggish and moralizing, as Aristophanes for comic purposes pretends they were. It is unsafe to assume that the portrait of Euripides is any closer to reality.

The Aristophanic Euripides is as new-fangled as his Aeschylus is old-fashioned. The real Euripides, of course, had made innovations in the tragic art, and on many points of style he stands at the opposite pole to the practice of Aeschylus. It makes comic sense, however, that as the representative of the new manner he should also be given other traits that may not correspond to the real Euripides any more than priggish moralism or exaggerated decorum belonged to the real Aeschylus. Where Aeschylus was a moralist, Euripides is portrayed as an immoralist admired by the criminal classes. Where Aeschylus is pious, he is an atheist. Where Aeschylus champions the heroic and believes in tragic decorum, Euripides is the spokesman for *verismo* and dwells with artistic satisfaction on the ordinary and everyday. It is quite possible that the comic poet

⁵⁷ A lost play of Aeschylus (fr. 180 Radt) mentions that necessary but lowly item, the chamber pot. The Herald in *Agamemnon* is not above mentioning bed bugs among the hardships at Troy (560–62). The Queen in *Persians* fears that Xerxes, returning home in disgrace, will suffer shame because of his ragged clothing (845–51). According to Athenaeus [Aeschylus T 117a Radt], it was Aeschylus who first put drunkenness on the tragic stage.

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has here given himself a great deal of latitude to portray both the tragic poets in ways that do not necessarily correspond to the way they are or are perceived.

Aristophanes' Euripides prays to his own private divinities, "Upper Air, my nourishment, and the Tongue's Pivot, and Sensibility, and Keen-smelling Nostrils" (892-93), a charge, in effect, of atheism. He claims to have eschewed the deceitful grandeur of Aeschylus, putting tragedy on a reducing diet and making it speak plainly (937-47). This certainly touches on an important aspect of Euripides' style, the comparative absence, in its dialogue portions, of the poetic ornament characteristic, in their separate ways, of Aeschylus and Sophocles. He claims that he gave women, slaves, girls, and crones speaking parts, this being more democratic, and taught them all to babble (948-52). Part of this corresponds with the plays we have: Euripidean tragedy "babbles" in that it is more discursive and argumentative than Aeschylean or Sophoclean tragedy. Women or slaves with speaking roles, however, were certainly not his invention. Euripides also claims to have introduced the things of ordinary daily life into his plays in preference to the imaginary and heroic, with the result that the Athenians became much sharper and more alert about their household affairs (959-63, 971-79). This is reminiscent of the First Woman's complaint in *Thesm.* 395ff that thanks to Euripides men are now too nosy about the household, but Euripidean tragedy, as far as our evidence goes, is not homelier than that of Aeschylus.⁵⁸

Aeschylus criticizes him for putting bad women, "whores like Phaedra and Sthenoboea," on the stage in vio-

⁵⁸ See above, n. 57.

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lation of the principle that "the poet ought to conceal what is wicked and not bring it on or produce (lit. teach) it" (1053-54). Adulterous women, of course, had been brought on by Aeschylus and, at least in the case of Clytaemestra, given scope to defend themselves. Euripides is not allowed to point out the inconsistency between Aeschylus' principles and his practice. Instead, the discussion is made to shift to the topic of Aeschylus' elevated tragic language. Aeschylus says this is appropriate for heroes, since they also wear more august clothing. He proceeds to tax Euripides with putting his heroes on in rags. When Euripides asks him what is wrong with characters in rags, he replies that now the rich adopt the ploy of wearing rags to get out of performing trierarchies, one of the expensive "liturgies" imposed on the wealthy. Euripides' talkativeness is responsible, he says, for emptying the gymnasium and for causing a rash of insubordination among the ranks in the navy.

The rest of the contest consists of captious or silly criticisms of each other's prologues, parodies of each other's lyric style (Aeschylus' turgid and unintelligible, Euripides' flighty and prettified), and other such comic business. Then Dionysus announces that he will take back with him to the Upper World the poet who gives the best advice, and the two take turns assessing Alcibiades and the Athenian situation in general. (Neither is clearly the winner here.) When Euripides reminds Dionysus that he had sworn to take him back with him (the oath is here invented for the sake of the comic line to follow), Dionysus replies that it was his tongue alone that swore and pronounces in favor of Aeschylus.

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It is often alleged that Aristophanes saw in Euripides a threat to the tragic art and to the moral tone of society in general, and that he saw Aeschylus and other poets of his generation as the only effective antidote. But it is by no means certain that the *Frogs* is to be read in so earnest a fashion, and much suggests that the audience would have known that in portraying this contest of opposites Aristophanes was not bound, even in the most general way, by the truth.

To sum up, the Euripides of Aristophanes is a man with the following characteristics: (1) prosaic, talky, and arid in his dialogue, his style being that either of the courtroom pleader or of the philosopher;⁵⁹ (2) fond of putting on the stage characters who are lame and dressed in rags; (3) determined to make tragedy less elevated by introducing common and ordinary people and things, humble objects usually banished from tragedy, and slaves with speaking parts; (4) decadent and modernist in his lyrics, with a pronounced tendency toward metrical innovation and the predominance of musical over verbal considerations;⁶⁰ (5) a hater of women, who enjoys portraying heroines of dubious principle in order to discredit their sex; (6) an underminer of received morality, who portrays shocking or immoral actions (incest, adultery, perjury) in a favorable light and whose natural admirers are the

⁵⁹ For the courtroom pleader, see *Peace* 528–34 [=T 74]. For Euripides as Socratic, see also *Frogs* 1491–95 [=T 77] and Diogenes Laertius 2.18 [=T 17, Teleclides fr. 41–42, Callias fr. 15, Aristophanes fr. 392 K.-A.].

⁶⁰ See *Frogs* 1309–63.

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immoralist Sophists and the criminal classes; and (7) unorthodox in his religious views, believing in new-fangled divinities and not the traditional gods of the city.

On certain points, principally stylistic, this characterization, allowances being made for comic exaggeration, is an accurate one, and it is likely that Euripides' contemporaries perceived truth in it. Thus verbal dexterity and argumentativeness, tending toward dry and intellectual rhetoric, is arguably a feature of Euripidean tragedy, and we may be sure that this characteristic was not lost on his first audience. Euripides' lyrics—especially those of the last decade of his life—may well have struck contemporaries, like the lyrics of Timotheus, as disagreeably novel in their musical and metrical treatment. The common and everyday make their appearance in *Electra* and may well have appeared elsewhere. Here, however, a strong contrast with other tragic poets can be made only by pretending that Aeschylus and Sophocles are grander and more sublime, further removed from ordinary life, than they in fact are.

When we come to the other traits, however, there is room for serious doubt about how Euripides was perceived. Immoralism, atheism, and misogyny are charges several times repeated yet ones that cannot be substantiated—and are often convincingly contradicted—from non-comic sources or the plays themselves, while the plays contain just enough to make these charges comically colorable. On the question whether anyone in the audience really viewed Euripides in those terms agnosticism is the best verdict our evidence allows.

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Fourth-Century Judgments of Euripides' Art

The fourth century, the age of the orator, supplies prose evidence of a kind entirely lacking for the fifth century, evidence strongly suggesting that Old Comedy's presentation of Euripides as morally and artistically shocking was not accepted as truth by the populace at large. The orators provide the most valuable evidence of acceptable sentiment, for an Athenian orator, addressing a large popular jury or assembly, takes pains to avoid saying things that his fellow citizens would regard as unorthodox or idiosyncratic.⁶¹ In light of this, it is significant that three different orators, Aeschines, Demosthenes, and Lycurgus, quote him with approval, together with other poets, for moral principles on which they expect their audience to act.⁶² Lycurgus even goes out of his way to praise Euripides' poetry in *general* as a moral exemplar. These orators quote Euripides in the same contexts and for the same purposes as they cite Homer, Solon, or Sophocles. It is noteworthy that no orator cites wisdom from anyone tainted with philosophy: no utterance of Socrates, Anaxagoras, or Protagoras is ever held up for approval. It was this same Lycurgus who arranged for a public copy to be made of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, further indication that Euripides' presence in this company was not regarded as anomalous.⁶³

⁶¹ On this point, see K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 5–14.

⁶² Aeschines 1.128 and 151–52 (quoting *Phoenix* and *Stenoboea*), Demosthenes 19.246, and Lycurgus 100–101.

⁶³ See pseudo-Plutarch, *Vitae Decem Oratorum* 841F [=T 83].

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A similar story is suggested by the two references in Plato. The *Republic* shows Plato to be hostile to traditional poetry, both epic and tragedy, but one might have expected him to make an exception in the case of a poet of Socratic sympathies, as Old Comedy alleges Euripides to be. Instead, one reference (*Phaedrus* 268 C) couples him with Sophocles while the second (*Republic* 568 A) makes him the particularly egregious representative of errors common to the tragic poets in general.

Fragments of fourth-century comedy attest admiration for Euripides, though they are too general to show the reason for the admiration.⁶⁴ Much more interesting than the explicit praise is Menander, *Aspis* 399–428, where Daos, soliloquizing for Smicrines' benefit on his master's supposed death, quotes one tragedian after another on the instability of human life, citing in swift succession lines from Euripides, Chaeremon, Aeschylus, anonymous, Carcinus, Euripides, and Chaeremon. This same common tragic theme is regarded, apparently, as characteristic of Euripides by Nicostratus (fr. 28 K.-A.) and Philippides (fr. 18 K.-A.).

Aristotle is also an important witness. As every reader of the *Poetics* knows, his favorite tragic poet was Sophocles. What is equally apparent is who his second-favorite was. Although he criticizes Euripides for bad management of his plot, irrelevant choruses, inept use of irrational events, and ending his plays by external contrivance,⁶⁵ he

⁶⁴ See Philemon, fr. 118 K.-A. [=T 1.31] and Axionicus, quoted in Athenaeus 4.76, 175B [=T 81].

⁶⁵ 1453 a 22–30, 1456 a 25–30, 1461 b 19–21, 1454 a 37–b 2 [=T 82].

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cites him again and again as a model for dramatists to follow.⁶⁶ Aeschylus is rarely cited for this purpose,⁶⁷ and the conclusion emerges that the *Poetics* is founded largely upon the dramatic practice of Sophocles and Euripides, supplemented by a handful of later figures.⁶⁸ In a contest between the two, Sophocles would be the winner, but Euripides would not be far behind. To judge from his recommendations, Aristotle did not share the view of Aristophanes' Aeschylus, who charges that Euripides denatured the tragic art by talky rhetoric, by low realism inconsistent with tragic decorum, and by making the gods and moral standards into a constant problem. We must conclude either that his recommendation of Euripides was a concession to the taste of the fourth century, a taste that seemed to enjoy the pathetic and the exciting in Euripidean tragedy; or that he really thought that Euripides and Sophocles had a great deal more in common than many modern scholars, taking their cue from Aristophanic comedy, have allowed. Our evidence does not permit us to eliminate either possibility.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ 1452 b 3–8, 1453 b 28, 1454 a 5, 1454 a 8, 1454 b 31, 1455 a 18, 1455 b 14, 1456 a 17, 1458 b 20.

⁶⁷ 1455 a 4, 1456 a 2, 1456 a 17.

⁶⁸ Theodectes (1452 a 27, 1455 a 9, 1455 b 29), Astydamos (1453 b 33), Agathon (1451 b 21, 1454 b 14), Dicaeogenes (1455 a 1), Polyidus (1455 a 6).

⁶⁹ The history of the reception of Euripides in later antiquity would require a book to itself. For particular points see W. Elspenger, "Reste und Spuren antiker Kritik gegen Euripides," *Philologus Suppl.* 11 (1907–10), 1–176; L. E. Lord, *The Literary Criticism of Euripides in the Earlier Scholia and the Relation of*

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Euripidean criticism has in general relied heavily on the biographical tradition and on Aristophanes to find a fixed point from which to work. A recent and by no means atypical book on Euripides, for example, begins its discussion with the assumption that Euripidean drama is to be understood as the deliberate affronting of Sophoclean norms and proceeds to talk about "the tactics of shock."⁷⁰ The assumption is that Euripides shocked his contemporaries and that it was his intention to do so. In sharp contrast is the judgment of another scholar, that Euripides "remains, in most of his work, a poet of the traditional tragic genre, a genre which carries on the pessimistic emphasis on man's limits and frailties which characterizes much of archaic Greek literature and myth."⁷¹ The assessment of these views and the spectrum of views between them can best be carried out on the basis of the plays themselves, considered against the background of Greek literature and society from Homer to Euripides' day.

This Criticism to Aristotle's Poetics and to Aristophanes, diss. Yale (Göttingen, 1908); H. Funke, "Euripides," *Jahrbücher für Antike und Christentum* 8/9 (1965/6), 233-79; H. Kuch, "Zur Euripides-Rezeption im Hellenismus," *Klio* 60 (1978), 191-202. See also Crantor, quoted in Diogenes Laertius 4.26 [=T 84], Plutarch, *De recta ratione audiendi* 45B [=T 85], pseudo-Longinus, *De sublimitate* 15.3 and 40.2-3 [=T 86], Quintilian 10.1.67-69 [=T 87], Dio of Prusa 35.15 [=T 88(b)], Archimedes, *Anthol. Pal.* 7.50 [=T 89], and Lucian 59.1 [=T 93].

⁷⁰ A. N. Michelini, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison, 1987).

⁷¹ D. J. Mastronarde, "The Optimistic Rationalist in Euripides: Theseus, Jocasta, Teiresias," in M. Cropp et al., edd., *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy* (Calgary, 1986), p. 207.

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Editorial Principles

All the medieval manuscripts and ancient papyrus fragments of the plays of Euripides are ultimately descended from the *Collected Works of Euripides* edited by the scholars of Alexandria ca. 200 B.C. These scholars searched out copies of all of Euripides' plays they could find (some plays did not survive to the age of Alexandrian scholarship) and prepared a critical edition, noting variant readings and the absence of certain verses from some copies. They also wrote commentaries on at least a few of the plays. The edition contained seventy-eight of the ninety-two plays ascribed to Euripides.

The Alexandrian edition was in wide circulation for several centuries, and writers up to the middle of the third century A.D. are able to quote numerous plays now lost to us. From around A.D. 250, however, quotation is chiefly from ten plays, *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenician Women*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, *Andromache*, *Alcestis*, *Rhesus*, *Trojan Women*, and *Bacchae*. These ten plays, which may represent a selection, for school purposes, of plays provided with commentary, form the main tradition and are referred to as the "select" plays. These are transmitted in a number of medieval manuscripts and have scholia, or explanatory notes, in the margins. The remaining nine plays, *Helen*, *Electra*, *Children of Heracles*, *Heracles*, *Suppliant Women*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Ion*, and *Cyclops*, survive in a single manuscript, now in the Laurentian library in Florence, which preserves plays beginning with the Greek letters epsilon, eta, iota, and kappa once forming one or two codex volumes of the *Collected Works* that somehow survived to the

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Middle Ages. These are called the "alphabetical" plays. Apart from the occasional explanatory gloss, they have no scholia.

The present text is my own. I have not thought it necessary to collate the manuscripts again but have relied on the collations of earlier editors. My text owes a great deal to the Oxford text of James Diggle. Diggle has made substantial improvements, sometimes by adopting neglected emendations, sometimes by proposing his own, and sometimes by defending the reading of the manuscripts against attack. If I have sometimes adopted different solutions to the problems he has raised, I record my gratitude to his edition for raising them.

The editor of a Loeb text may reasonably set different goals from those of the editor of an Oxford Classical Text. I have striven to produce a text that is continuously readable, even in places where we cannot be absolutely certain of the precise wording. This means, for example, that where the context supplied enough clues to grasp the meaning of a line accidentally omitted, I have printed a supplement and translated it. (Unattributed supplements are my own.) Like other words supplied by editors, these are printed in angle brackets, but readers should note that these are to be regarded as purely illustrative. I have also made much less frequent use of the obelus, the dagger editors use to signal that, while something is clearly wrong, the author's original wording cannot be recovered with certainty. Where something plausible in sense and style was available, I have not hesitated to print it. I have discussed in a separate volume, entitled *Euripidea*, those places in *Cyclops*, *Alcestis*, and *Medea* where I felt the text

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I adopted was in need of explanation.⁷² This need is particularly acute in the handful of cases where I have printed conjectures of my own not hitherto discussed in print. This I have done only when I was certain that the text was corrupt and that none of the earlier conjectures known to me was satisfactory.

The notes to the Greek pages are not intended to be an apparatus criticus. To cite all the variants and the manuscripts in which they occur would have taken far too much space, and for this information the reader is referred to Diggle's edition. Where the text rests upon the reading of one or more manuscripts, I do not usually mention other variants. In other words, these notes primarily list conjectures adopted. I have not included all of these, and where a change is very slight I have passed it over in silence. But I include quite a few of those universally accepted by editors as a reminder that a robust faith in the reliability of manuscripts and a corresponding horror of conjecture are irrational attitudes. If conjecture were eliminated, these plays over long stretches would hover tantalizingly on the edge of intelligibility or be simply unreadable.

In order to present the essentials, I have simplified. Except for the alphabetic plays, where I cite the Laurentianus (L) and Demetrius Triclinius' corrections of it (Tr), I rarely cite individual manuscripts by their sigla. (Diggle's list of sigla at the head of each play should be consulted for these exceptional cases.) Instead, if there are variants for a word or phrase, I label the source of the first a, of the second b, etc., whether the source is one or more than one

⁷² See above, n. 1.

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manuscript. For the united witness of all codices I use the siglum C. For citations by other authors I use t or tt (for *testimonium*, -a). For papyrus fragments and scholia I use Π and Σ respectively. (Readers should consult Diggle for further information on the papyri and the manuscript sources of the scholia.) Square brackets enclose words or lines thought to be later additions. Angle brackets mark places where letters, words, or whole lines seem to have been accidentally omitted.

The Fifth-Century Stage

It is important when reading a play to visualize its staging, as even such obvious and commonplace things as entrances and exits and their timing make an important contribution to the meaning and the effect the author intended his audience to receive.⁷³ We possess virtually no ancient stage directions, but scholars are in agreement that the Greek tragic poets, particularly after Aeschylus, “doubled” all the important visual cues by references or allusions to them in the words spoken by actors and Chorus. The following description, in conjunction with some photographs of ancient theaters, should help the reader to imagine the setting for the action of the text.

The action is played out before a *skene*, or stage building, usually representing the front of a house or palace. In

⁷³ On “visual meaning” in tragedy, see W. Steidle, *Studien zum antiken Drama* (Munich, 1968) and two books of O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977) and *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978).

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front of this is a low stage,⁷⁴ and in front of this a circular area, tangential to the stage, called the *orchestra*, where the Chorus sing and dance. The acting area, comprising stage and orchestra, allowed three points of entry, from the *skene*, and by two entrance ramps, or *eisodoi*,⁷⁵ leading from right and left into the orchestra. In later dramatic practice, the right *eisodos* represented by convention the entrance from the country or harbor and the left *eisodos* the entrance from the city.⁷⁶ We have no evidence for the fifth century of such a convention. Rather, each play establishes its own imagined destinations for the two *eisodoi* and uses them in a schematically consistent way, so that if a character leaves by an *eisodos*, his subsequent return will be by this same *eisodos*. In the stage directions, I call the ramps Eisodos A and Eisodos B since we cannot be sure whether the right or the left one is being used. I have marked stage directions where these are a reasonable inference from the text. The most important, of course, are entrances and exits. In cases where the choice between the *eisodoi* involves some guesswork, I have indicated doubts.

Two other features of the tragic stage, the *eccyclema* and the *mechane*, must be mentioned among the resources of the tragic poet. The *eccyclema* was a wheeled platform on which a tableau of actors could be grouped and wheeled

⁷⁴ It is not certain that the stage was elevated over the level of the *orchestra*, though scholarly opinion seems at present more inclined in that direction.

⁷⁵ I follow Taplin, *Stagecraft*, pp. 449–51, in adopting the fifth-century term *eisodos* (*Clouds* 326, *Birds* 296) for these ramps in preference to the later term *parodos*.

⁷⁶ See Pollux 4.126–7.

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out of the central doors of the *skene*. This seems to have been used to provide the possibility of an indoor scene in a theater which normally allowed action to take place only before the palace door. By convention the actors on the *eccyclema* are indoors (Clytaemestra, wheeled out with the corpse of Agamemnon in the bath, says "I stand where I struck him"), but the Chorus and other actors are conceived of as still outdoors, a double perspective. The *mechane* was a crane on which a god (or occasionally a mortal) could make a flying entrance or exit. The *deus ex machina*, the god or goddess who characteristically brings the action of Euripides' plays to an end, enters on this crane. Sometimes the arriving figure is winged, at others the mechane is made to represent a flying chariot. Both the roof of the *skene* and the stage could serve as the place where winged entrants could alight. The roof could also be entered from below by a stairway behind the *skene*. The roof is sometimes called the *theologeion*.⁷⁷

The Translation

Euripides is the most argumentative of the tragic poets. His language in the dialogue passages, while recognizably different in its vocabulary and expression from prose, is comparatively bare of ornament. The lyric passages too are often rhetorical. This translation aims to bring out as clearly as possible the argument, the reasoning, of Euripidean speeches and songs, the case or brief they try to present. I have translated into prose, as literally as respect for

⁷⁷ See. D. Mastronarde, "Actors on High," *CA* 9 (1990), 247-94.

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English idiom allowed. In a few passages of *stichomythia* (line-for-line interchange), where tautness in the thrust and parry seemed particularly desirable, I have allowed myself a few lines of blank verse.

Greek tragedy had a large musical element, now lost to us. The choral odes were sung to music, accompanied by an instrumentalist playing the *auloi*, a pair of pipes with a reed mouthpiece. When the Chorus sings, their words are in lyric meter, and the language acquires a tinge of the Doric dialect. The same features, lyric meter and Doricism, mark solo song, passages sung by actors. The actors—in contrast to the Chorus—normally speak, and sung delivery almost always indicates some extraordinary state of mind, such as madness, intense grief or joy, or awareness of imminent death. All passages delivered by named characters are spoken unless specified as sung. Passages assigned to the Chorus are always sung, those assigned to the Chorus Leader always spoken.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, London</i>
BSA	<i>British School at Athens</i>
CA	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
FGrH	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , ed. F. Jacoby
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
PMG	<i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> , ed. D. L. Page
RE	<i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll
SIFC	<i>Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

CYCLOPS

INTRODUCTION

The date of *Cyclops* is unknown. Metrical considerations and other arguments of varying weight, discussed by R. Seaford in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982), 161–72, make it likely that the play belongs near the end of Euripides' career. Since Murray's edition, however, it has been traditional to put it before the tragedies.

Cyclops is the only complete surviving example of the genre satyr play. Like a comedy, the satyr play is funny, and it admits some of the indecency characteristic of Old Comedy. But like a tragedy, the satyr play has a plot based on myth, sometimes divine, sometimes heroic. The poet contrives for the presence of satyrs, often in captivity, at the place where his mythic characters perform their actions. The satyrs, divine creatures of hedonistic and cowardly nature, supply much of the humor. A play of this mythical but burlesque sort was the normal fourth play of a tragic tetralogy. (A good discussion of the genre may be found in the Introduction to Seaford's edition of *Cyclops*, Oxford, 1984.)

Cyclops is based closely on one of the most famous episodes of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' encounter with the one-eyed giant Polyphemus. (Euripides was not the first to write a satyr play on this theme: a *Cyclops* is attributed to the early fifth-century poet Aristias.) It will come as a

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surprise to those who think of Homer as (comparatively) simple and Euripides as complex and sophisticated that Euripides has simplified the complex themes and characterization of Homer to make his play. Some of his alterations in the story can be traced to the exigencies of putting it on the stage. Other changes bring out parallels with fifth-century intellectual currents. It is arresting that this much simplified story, with its clear lines of right and wrong and its transparent application to the immoralist philosophy of certain Sophists of the poet's own day, seemed interesting enough to Euripides to present at the City Dionysia.

In Homer, the main action of the play, from Odysseus' first encounter with the Cyclops until the escape of his men under the bellies of the sheep, takes place in Polyphemus' cave. In ancient drama all action (with the partial exception of scenes on the *eccyclema*) takes place out-of-doors. Odysseus' conversations with Polyphemus must take place for the most part in front of the cave, he must be able to come out to report the Cyclops' feasting on his companions, and therefore there can be no great stone blocking the entrance to the cave, a prop that would have been awkward to contrive in any case. This entails one further change: in Homer, the blinding of Polyphemus was forced on Odysseus by the situation, for if he killed the monster in his sleep, he and his men would be unable to move the stone and escape. In Euripides, there is nothing to prevent Odysseus and his men from leaving once they have made Polyphemus drunk. Helping the satyrs and Silenus to escape is one reason Odysseus gives for his plan when he comes out and involves the Chorus in it, but he mentions as his first consideration "punishment for the

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knaveish beast" (441-2). Likewise there is in theory no reason they could not kill him. It may be a part of Euripides' strategy to suggest intermittently (231, 321—but cf. contra 444, 448) that the Cyclops is immortal and can only be maimed, not killed. A further change is that the cave is imagined to have a back entrance (707), so that the Cyclops can hurl his boulders at the ships from an imagined offstage place.

Other changes are unrelated to the new medium. In Homer Odysseus' motive for seeking out the Cyclopes is curiosity and a desire for guest-gifts, and no one reading the epic can help feeling that there was something culpably rash in the whole adventure. In Euripides, Odysseus and his men approach the cave of Polyphemus because they are in need of food and water, they engage in good-faith barter with Silenus, and then are accused unfairly of stealing what they have offered to pay for. Sympathy for Odysseus is therefore strengthened, and there is no admixture of blame. The treatment of the villain is also different. Homer's Polyphemus is ogre-ish and nasty, but he is so clearly of a different world from the Greeks, so clearly a primitive creature, that it is difficult to view him consistently as one would a bad *man*, one to whom the same standards apply as to ourselves. And Homer gives him a moment of pathos when in his blindness he speaks tenderly to his favorite ram. By contrast, Euripides' Polyphemus, while primitive in some respects, is fastidious about his food, an owner of slaves, a careful manager of his household, and a sophisticated arguer who can articulately *justify* his immoral behavior. Where Homer's Polyphemus neither knows nor cares about the Trojan War, in Euripides he has heard all about it and has an opinion about it. He

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clearly inhabits the same moral world as the Greeks but has chosen to reject a morality he knows perfectly well. When he is finally blinded, no pathos is allowed to obscure the perfect justice of the punishment.

The intellectual position Polyphemus stakes out for himself is obviously meant to call to mind analogues in the fifth century. Like certain of the Sophists, represented most fully in the Calicles of Plato's *Gorgias*, the Cyclops has "seen through" traditional morality, and he regards law as an invention of man that needlessly complicates life. (Calicles argues that the laws are the way the majority of weak men control the few whom nature has made strong. But the few ought not to heed these restraints, for nature is superior to law.) In Polyphemus' view, "the wise" make wealth their god and pay no attention to Zeus. Zeus's functions in the ordering of the world are replaced by Necessity. Polyphemus is thus portrayed as one of the aristocratic nurslings of the Sophists, contemptuous of religion and determined to throw off the yoke of conventional morality, convinced that his own view of the world is correct and that no superhuman power stands in his way. By a curious paradox appropriate to a satyr play, the one god he recognizes, Dionysus, proves to be his undoing. Zeus is implicitly involved as well.

In Homer, Odysseus' companions raise their hands in prayer to Zeus in their hour of danger, and Odysseus ponders "in the hope that I might take vengeance on him and Athena might grant me that boast." Odysseus also says that in the attack "a divinity breathed upon them great courage." And at the end he says to Polyphemus, "Therefore Zeus and the other gods have punished you." Euripides has emphasized even further the role of the gods in the

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punishment of the Cyclops. Polyphemus and his deeds are called "godless" throughout (26, 31, 289, 311, 348, 396, 438, 602, 693). Odysseus' appeal to the Cyclops lays stress upon the claims of piety and custom, and he alludes to the punishment of those who follow after base gain. Polyphemus' reply rejects piety explicitly. Odysseus prays repeatedly to Zeus, Athena, and other gods (350-2, 353-5, 599-600, 601-6) for vengeance on the Cyclops. In 411 the plan of making the Cyclops drunk is explicitly called an idea "divinely inspired." Finally, at the end of the play Odysseus says, "You were destined, it seems, to pay the penalty for your ungodly feast," and Polyphemus recounts an oracle showing that his punishment was predestined.

This simplicity of theme and characterization is perhaps one of the reasons the play has found few admirers. But in its general outlook it has points of contact with one of Euripides' undoubted masterpieces, *Bacchae*, which is—at least ostensibly—about the punishment of a disbeliever and the vindication of the piety and wisdom practiced by "the multitude of the ordinary" (*Bacchae* 430). (Other parallels with *Bacchae* are noted in Seaford's edition, pp. 57-9.) *Cyclops* is only intermittently funny, and it may be, as Seaford thinks, that it is untypical of the genre in its formal closeness to tragedy. The surviving fragments of other satyr plays suggest that they were both more boisterous and funnier. Perhaps the genre was exhausted by the late fifth century. Or perhaps Euripides' emphasis on more serious philosophical and religious themes obscured the levity inherent in the genre.

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Dramatis Personae

ΣΙΛΗΝΟΣ	SILENUS, the father of the satyrs who make up the Chorus
ΧΟΡΟΣ	CHORUS of satyrs captured by the Cyclops
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ	ODYSSEUS
ΚΥΚΛΩΨ	The CYCLOPS, Polyphemus

A Note on Staging

The *skene* represents the cave of Polyphemus. Eisosdos A is the entrance that is imagined to lead to the mountains, Eisosdos B that leading to the sea. At the end of the play the cave is imagined to have a back entrance overlooking the sea.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ΣΙΑΛΗΝΟΣ

ὦ Βρόμιε, διὰ σὲ μυρίους ἔχω πόνους
 νῦν χῶτ' ἐν ἤβῃ τοῦμόν ἠϋσθένει δέμας·
 πρῶτον μὲν ἠνίκ' ἐμμανῆς Ἥρας ὑπο
 Νύμφας ὀρείας ἐκλιπὼν ὄχου τροφούς·
 5 ἔπειθ' ὅτ' ἀμφὶ γηγενῆ μάχην δορὸς
 ἐνδέξιός σῶ ποδὶ παρασπιστῆς βεβῶς
 Ἐγκέλαδον ἰτέαν ἐς μέσσην θενῶν δορὶ
 ἔκτεινα—φέρ' ἴδω, τοῦτ' ἰδὼν ὄναρ λέγω;
 οὐ μὰ Δί', ἐπεὶ καὶ σκῦλ' ἔδειξα Βακχίῳ.
 10 καὶ νῦν ἐκείνων μείζον' ἐξαντλῶ πόνου.
 ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἥρα σοι γένος Τυρσηνικὸν
 ληστῶν ἐπῶρσεν, ὡς ὀδηθείης μακράν,
 <ἐγὼ> πυθόμενος σὺν τέκνοισι ναυστολῶ
 σέθεν κατὰ ζήτησιν. ἐν πρύμνῃ δ' ἄκρα

5 ἔπειθ' ὅτ' Hermann: ἔπειτά γ' L

6 βεβῶς Kassel: γεγῶς L 13 <ἐγὼ> Tr

1 Dionysus was driven mad by Hera (Apollodorus 3.5.1), doubtless out of resentment of his father Zeus's love for Semele, Dionysus' mother.

CYCLOPS

Enter from Polyphemus' cave SILENUS with a rake in his hand.

SILENUS

(apostrophizing the absent Dionysus) O Bromius, labors numberless have I had because of you, now and when I was young and able-bodied! First, when Hera drove you mad and you went off leaving behind your nurses, the mountain nymphs;¹ next, when in the battle with the Earthborn Giants² I took my stand protecting your right flank with my shield and, striking Enceladus with my spear in the center of his targe, killed him. (Come, let me see, did I dream all this? No, by Zeus, for I also displayed the spoils to Dionysus.)

But now I am enduring a labor greater than those. For when Hera raised the Tuscan pirates³ against you to have you sold as a slave to a far country, I learned of it and took ship with my sons to find you. Taking my stand right at the

² The Giants were the mighty sons of Ge (Earth), who was impregnated by the blood of Ouranos (Heaven). They rose against the Olympian gods and were defeated.

³ Dionysus held captive on shipboard and astounding his captors by wreathing their ship with vines and ivy is a theme of vase painting and of the seventh Homeric Hymn.

EURIPIDES

- 15 αὐτὸς βεβῶς ἠϋθνον ἀμφήρες δόρυ,
 παῖδες δ' <ἐπ'> ἔρετμοῖς ἡμενοὶ γλαυκὴν ἄλα
 ῥοθίοισι λευκαίνοντες ἐζήτουν σ', ἄναξ.
 ἦδη δὲ Μαλέας πλησίον πεπλευκότας
 ἀπηλιώτης ἄνεμος ἐμπνεύσας δορὶ
- 20 ἐξέβαλεν ἡμᾶς τήνδ' ἐς Αἰτναίαν πέτραν,
 ἴν' οἱ μονῶπες ποντίου παῖδες θεοῦ
 Κύκλωπες οἰκοῦσ' ἄντρ' ἔρημ' ἀνδροκτόνοι.
 τούτων ἐνὸς ληφθέντες ἐσμὲν ἐν δόμοις
 δοῦλοι· καλοῦσι δ' αὐτὸν ᾧ λατρεύομεν
- 25 Πολύφημον· ἀντὶ δ' εὐίων βακχευμάτων
 ποίμνας Κύκλωπος ἀνοσίου ποιμαίνομεν.
 παῖδες μὲν οὖν μοι κλειτύων ἐν ἔσχάτοις
 νέμουσι μῆλα νέα νέοι πεφυκότες,
 ἐγὼ δὲ πληροῦν πίστρα καὶ σαίρειν στέγας
- 30 μένων τέταγμαί τάσδε, τῷδε δυσσεβεῖ
 Κύκλωπι δείπνων ἀνοσίων διάκονος.
 καὶ νῦν, τὰ προσταχθέντ', ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
 σαίρειν σιδηρᾷ τῆδέ μ' ἀρπάγῃ δόμους,
 ὡς τὸν τ' ἀπόντα δεσπότην Κύκλωπ' ἐμὸν
- 35 καθαροῖσιν ἄντροις μῆλά τ' ἐσδεχόμεθα.
 ἦδη δὲ παῖδας προσνέμοντας εἰσορῶ
 ποίμνας. τί ταῦτα; μῶν κρότος σικινίδων
 ὁμοῖος ὑμῖν νῦν τε χῶτε Βακχίῳ
 κῶμος συνασπίζοντες Ἀλθαίας δόμους
- 40 προσῆτ' αἰοδαῖς βαρβίτων σαυλούμενοι;

15 βεβῶς Diggle: λαβῶν L

16 <ἐπ'> Seidler

CYCLOPS

stern, I myself steered the oared ship, and my sons, sitting at the oars, made the gray sea whiten with their rowing as they searched for you, lord. But as we were rounding Cape Malea, an east wind blew down on the ship and cast us to land near this crag of Aetna, where Poseidon's one-eyed sons, the man-slaying Cyclopes, dwell in their remote caves. One of these has caught us and keeps us as slaves in his house: the master we serve is called Polyphemus. And instead of our bacchic revels we now herd the flocks of this godless Cyclops.

And so my sons, being young, are shepherding the young sheep on the distant slopes, while my orders are to remain behind, fill the watering troughs, and sweep this house, assisting this godless Cyclops at his unholy meals. And now—duty is duty—I must sweep the house with this iron rake so that I may receive my absent master, the Cyclops, and his sheep in a clean cave.

Enter by Eisodos A the CHORUS of satyrs, with attendants, driving sheep before them.

But now I see my sons driving the flocks this way. What is this, lads? Can it be that you have the same rhythm to your lively dance⁴ as when you went revelling at Bacchus' side to the house of Althaea,⁵ swaggering in to the music of the lyre?

⁴ The *sikinnis* is a fast-paced dance characteristic of satyrs and the satyr play. ⁵ According to one version of her story, Dionysus was the father by her of Deianeira, wife of Heracles. This may have been treated in an earlier satyr play.

³⁹ κῶμος Diggle: κῶμοι L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

παῖ γενναίων μὲν πατέρων
γενναίων δ' ἐκ τοκάδων,
πᾶ δὴ μοι νίσση σκοπέλους;
οὐ τᾶδ' ὑπήμενος αὔ-

45 ρα καὶ ποιηρὰ βοτάνα;
δινᾶέν δ' ὕδωρ ποταμῶν
ἐν πίστραις κείται πέλας ἄν-
τρων, οὐ σοι βλαχαὶ τεκέων.

μεσφδ.

ψύττ' οὐ τᾶδ', οὔ;

50 οὐ τᾶδε νεμῆ κλειτὴν δροσεράν;
ὦή, ῥίψω πέτρον τάχα σου·
ὑπαγ' ὦ ὑπαγ' ὦ κεράστα
μηλοβότα στασιωρέ,
Κύκλωπος ἀγροβάτα.

ἀντ.

55 σπαργῶντας μαστοὺς χάλασον·
δέξαι θηλαῖσι τροφὰς
ἄς λείπεις ἀρνῶν θαλάμοις.
ποθοῦσί σ' ἀμερόκοι-
τοι βλαχαὶ σμικρῶν τεκέων.

60 εἰς αὐλὰν πότ' ἀμφιλαφῆ
ποιηροὺς λιποῦσα νομοὺς
Αἰτναίων εἴσει σκοπέλων;

ἐπφδ.

οὐ τάδε Βρόμιος, οὐ τάδε χοροὶ

CYCLOPS

CHORUS

(*addressing an errant ram*) Son of a noble sire and a noble dam, by what road, tell me, are you heading for the crags? Is not *this* the way to gentle breezes and green grass? The water of eddying rivers stands in the drinking troughs near the cave where your bleating young are sheltered.

Shoo! This way, this way! Feed along the dewy slope here! You there, I shall soon throw a stone at you. On with you, on with you, hornèd one, guardian of the sheepfold that belongs to the herdsman, the Cyclops who treads the wild.

(*addressing a ewe*) Unloose your swollen udders. Take to your teats the young lambs you left behind inside the cave. The little bleating ones, who have slept all day, are missing you. When will you leave the grassy haunts of Aetna's crags behind and enter your vast pen?

No Dionysus is here, no dances, no wand-bearing

41 παῖ Dindorf: πᾶ δῆ μοι L (cf. 43)

42 δ' L. Dindorf: τ' L

44 αὐτὰ Musgrave

46 δ' Wecklein: θ' L

48 οὔ Casaubon: οὔ Tr¹: rasuram L

53 στασιωρὲ Wilamowitz: -ὄν L

56 τροφὰς Wieseler: σπορὰς L

60 ἀμφιλαφῆ Hartung: ἀμφιβαλεῖς Tr: ἀμφιβαίνεις L

62 εἴσει Seidler: εἴσω L

EURIPIDES

- βακχεΐαί τε θυρσοφόροι,
 65 οὐ τυμπάνων ἀλαλαγ-
 μοὶ κρήναις παρ' ὑδροχύτοις,
 οὐκ οἴνου χλωραὶ σταγόνες·
 οὐδ' ἐν Νύσα μετὰ Νυμ-
 φᾶν ἱακχον ἱακχον ᾠ-
 70 δὴν μέλω πρὸς τὰν Ἀφροδί-
 ταν, ἅν θηρεύων πετόμαν
 βάκχαις σὺν λευκόποσιν.
 ᾧ φίλος ᾧναξ Βακχεΐε, ποῖ οἰ-
 75 οπολῶν ξανθὰν χαίταν σείεις;
 ἐγὼ δ' ὁ σὸς πρόπολος
 Κύκλωπι θητεύω
 τῷ μονοδέρκτῃ δοῦλος ἀλαίνων
 80 σὺν τᾷδε τράγου χλαίνα μελέα
 σᾶς χωρὶς φιλίας.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

σιγήσατ', ᾧ τέκν', ἄντρα δ' ἐς πετρηρεφῆ
 ποίμνας ἀθροῖσαι προσπόλους κελεύσατε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖτ'· ἀτὰρ δὴ τίνα, πάτερ, σπουδὴν ἔχεις;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

- 85 ὁρῶ πρὸς ἀκταῖς ναὸς Ἑλλάδος σκάφος
 κώπης τ' ἄνακτας σὺν στρατηλάτῃ τινὶ
 στείχοντας ἐς τόδ' ἄντρον· ἀμφὶ δ' αὐχέσιν
 τεύχη φέρονται κενά, βορᾶς κεχρημένοι,
 κρωσσούς θ' ὑδρηλούς. ᾧ ταλαίπωροι ξένοι·

CYCLOPS

Bacchic worship, no ecstatic noise of drums by the gushing springs of water, no fresh drops of wine. Nor can I join the Nymphs on Mount Nysa in singing the song "Iacchos Iacchos" to Aphrodite, whom I swiftly pursued in the company of white-footed Bacchantes. Ah me, lord Dionysus, where are you going without your companions, shaking your golden hair? I, your attendant, serve this one-eyed Cyclops, a slave in exile, dressed in this wretched goat-skin cloak and deprived of your friendship.

SILENUS

Silence, my sons! Order your attendants to drive the flocks into the rocky cave!

CHORUS LEADER

(to the attendants) Do as he says.

They go into the cave with the animals.

But what is your concern, father?

SILENUS

I see a Greek ship on the beach, and sailors who ply the oar coming to this cave with someone who must be their commander. On their heads they carry empty vessels, since it is food they need, and pails for water. O unlucky

64 βακχεΐαι Wilamowitz: βάκχαι L

73 ὦ φίλος ὠναξ post Kovacs Willink: ὦ φίλος ὦ φίλε L

74 οἰοπολῶν Nauck: -πολεῖς L

77 Κύκλωπι θητεύω Fritzsche: θ- K- L

EURIPIDES

- 90 *τίνες ποτ' εἰσίν; οὐκ ἴσασι δεσπότην
Πολύφημον οἶός ἐστιν ἄξενόν τε γῆν
τῆνδ' ἐμβεβῶτες καὶ Κυκλωπίαν γνάθου
τὴν ἀνδροβρώτα δυστυχῶς ἀφιγμένοι.
ἀλλ' ἥσυχοι γίγνεσθ', ἵν' ἐκπυθώμεθα*
95 *πόθεν πάρεισι Σικελὸν Αἰτναῖον πάγον.*

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

*ξένοι, φράσαιτ' ἂν νᾶμα ποτάμιον πόθεν
δύψης ἄκος λάβοιμεν εἴ τέ τις θέλει
βορὰν ὁδηῖσαι ναυτίλοις κεχρημένοις;*

<ἔα.>

- τί χρῆμα; Βρομίον πόλιν ἔοιγμεν ἐσβαλεῖν·*
100 *Σατύρων πρὸς ἄντροις τόνδ' ὄμιλον εἰσορῶ.
χαίρειν προσεῖπον πρῶτα τὸν γεραίτατον.*

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ ξέν'. ὅστις δ' εἶ φράσον πάτραν τε σῆν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

Ἴθακος Ὀδυσσεύς, γῆς Κεφαλλήνων ἀναξ.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οἶδ' ἄνδρα, κρόταλον δριμύ, Σισύφου γένος.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- 105 *ἐκεῖνος αὐτός εἰμι· λοιδόρει δὲ μῆ.*

91 ἄξενόν τε γῆν Jacobs: ἄξενον στέγην L

99 <ἔα.> Wecklein

101 προσεῖπον Fix: προσεῖπα L

105 αὐτός L. Dindorf: οὗτός L

CYCLOPS

strangers! Who can they be? They know not what our master Polyphemus is like, nor that this ground they stand on is no friend to guests, and that they have arrived with wretched bad luck at the man-eating jaws of the Cyclops. But hold your peace so that we may learn where they have come from to Sicilian Aetna's crag.

Enter by Eisodos B ODYSSEUS with his men.

ODYSSEUS

Strangers, could you tell me where we might find a stream of water to slake our thirst, and whether anyone is willing to sell provisions to needy sailors?

Why, what is this? We seem to have marched into Dionysus' town. For here's a throng of satyrs near the cave. My first words to the eldest: Greeting!

SILENUS

Greeting, stranger! But tell me your name and country.

ODYSSEUS

Odysseus, of Ithaca, lord of Cephallene.

SILENUS

I know of the man, the clever chatterer, Sisyphus' son.⁶

ODYSSEUS

The very same. But spare me these aspersions.

⁶ One version of Odysseus' ancestry, alluded to several times in tragedy, makes Anticleia, Odysseus' mother, marry Laertes when she is already pregnant by Sisyphus.

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

πόθεν Σικελίαν τήνδε ναυστολῶν πάρει;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἔξ Ἰλίου γε κάπο Τρωικῶν πόνων.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

πῶς; πορθμὸν οὐκ ἤδησθα πατρώας χθονός;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἀνέμων θύελλαι δευρό μ' ἤρπασαν βία.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

110 παπαί· τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον' ἔξαντλεῖς ἐμοί.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἦ καὶ σὺ δευρο πρὸς βίαν ἀπεστάλης;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ληστὰς διώκων <γ'> οἱ Βρόμιον ἀνῆρπασαν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τίς δ' ἦδε χώρα καὶ τίνες ναίουσί νιν;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

Αἰτναῖος ὄχθος Σικελίας ὑπέρτατος.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

115 τείχη δὲ ποῦ ἔστι καὶ πόλεως πυργώματα;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔρημοι πρῶνες ἀνθρώπων, ξένε.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τίνες δ' ἔχουσι γαῖαν; ἦ θηρῶν γένος;

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

From what land have you sailed here to Sicily?

ODYSSEUS

From Ilium and from the fighting at Troy.

SILENUS

What? Did you not know your way home?

ODYSSEUS

I was driven here by windstorms against my will.

SILENUS

O dear! The fate you suffer is the same as mine.

ODYSSEUS

Did you also come here against your will?

SILENUS

Yes, chasing the pirates who had carried off Dionysus.

ODYSSEUS

What is this country, and who are its inhabitants?

SILENUS

This is Mount Aetna, highest in Sicily.

ODYSSEUS

But where are the walls and city battlements?

SILENUS

There are none. No men dwell in these headlands, stranger.

ODYSSEUS

Who then are the land's inhabitants? Wild beasts?

112 <γ'> Wecklein

116 ε'σ'τ' Schenk: ε'λ'σ' L

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

Κύκλωπες, ἄντρ' ἔχοντες, οὐ στέγας δόμων.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τίνος κλύουτες; ἢ δεδήμενται κράτος;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

120 μονάδες· ἀκούει δ' οὐδὲν οὐδεὶς οὐδενός.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

σπείρουσι δ'—ἢ τῷ ζῶσι;—Δήμητρος στάχυν;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

γάλακτι καὶ τυροῖσι καὶ μήλων βορᾶ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

Βρομίου δὲ πῶμ' ἔχουσιν, ἀμπέλου ροάς;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἦκιστα· τοιγὰρ ἄχορον οἰκοῦσι χθόνα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

125 φιλόξενοι δὲ χῶσιοι περὶ ξένους;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

γλυκύτατά φασι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ξένους φορεῖν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τί φῆς; βορᾶ χαίρουσιν ἀνθρωποκτόνῳ;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐδεὶς μολῶν δεῦρ' ὅστις οὐ κατεσφάγη.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

αὐτὸς δὲ Κύκλωψ ποῦ ἴστιν; ἢ δόμων ἔσω;

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

Cyclopes, who live in caves, not houses.

ODYSSEUS

Who is their ruler? Or do the people govern?

SILENUS

They are solitaries: no one is anyone's subject.

ODYSSEUS

Do they sow Demeter's grain? Or how do they live?

SILENUS

On milk and cheese and the flesh of sheep.

ODYSSEUS

Do they possess Dionysus' drink, that flows from the vine?

SILENUS

Not at all! Hence the land they dwell in knows no dancing.

ODYSSEUS

Are they god-fearing and hospitable toward strangers?

SILENUS

Most delicious, they maintain, is the flesh of strangers.

ODYSSEUS

What? Do they enjoy feasting on men?

SILENUS

Everyone who has come here has been slaughtered.

ODYSSEUS

The Cyclops himself, where is he? In his house?

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

130 φρούδος, πρὸς Αἴτνη θήρας ἰχνεύων κυσίν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

οἴσθ' οὖν ὃ δράσον, ὡς ἀπαίρωμεν χθονός;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ', Ὀδυσσεύ· πᾶν δέ σοι δρώημεν ἄν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ᾧδησον ἡμῖν σίτον, οὗ σπανίζομεν.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ἄλλο πλὴν κρέας.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

135 ἀλλ' ἠδὺ λιμοῦ καὶ τόδε σχετήριον.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

καὶ τυρὸς ὁπίας ἔστι καὶ βοὸς γάλα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἐκφέρετε· φῶς γὰρ ἐμπολήμασιν πρέπει.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

σὺ δ' ἀντιδώσεις, εἰπέ μοι, χρυσὸν πόσον;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

οὐ χρυσὸν ἀλλὰ πῶμα Διονύσου φέρω.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

140 ὦ φίλτατ' εἰπών, οὗ σπανίζομεν πάλαι.

131 δράσον. Canter: δράσεις L

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

He has gone off hunting wild beasts on Mount Aetna with his dogs.

ODYSSEUS

Do you know what you must do so that we can leave this land?

SILENUS

No, Odysseus. But I will do everything I can for you.

ODYSSEUS

Sell us some bread, the thing we lack.

SILENUS

As I told you, we have nothing but meat.

ODYSSEUS

That too is a pleasant way to put an end to hunger.

SILENUS

And there is curdled cheese and also cows' milk.

ODYSSEUS

Bring them out: daylight befits merchandise.

SILENUS

But you, tell me, how much gold will you give in exchange?

ODYSSEUS

It is not gold I carry but rather Dionysus' drink.

SILENUS

What good news you bring! The very thing we have lacked so long!

EURIPIDES

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ μὴν Μάρων μοι πῶμ' ἔδωκε, παῖς θεοῦ.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ὄν ἐξέθρεψα ταῖσδ' ἐγώ ποτ' ἀγκάλαις;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ὁ Βακχίου παῖς, ὡς σαφέστερον μάθης.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἐν σέλμασιν νεῶς ἐστὶν ἢ φέρεις σύ νιν;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

145 ὄδ' ἀσκὸς ὃς κεύθει νιν, ὡς ὀρᾶς, γέρον.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὔτος μὲν οὐδ' ἂν τὴν γνάθον πλήσειέ μου.

<ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τοῦτον μὲν οὖν τὸν ἀσκὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐκπίοις.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

φύει γὰρ ἀσκὸς οἶνον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάλιν;>

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ναί, δις τόσον πῶμ' ὅσον ἂν ἐξ ἀσκοῦ ῥυῆῃ.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

καλήν γε κρήνην εἶπας ἠδέϊάν τ' ἐμοί.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

βούλη σε γεύσω πρῶτον ἄκρατον μέθην;

¹⁴⁶ post h. v. lac. indic. Nauck, Kirchhoff

¹⁴⁸ τ' Reiske: γ' L

CYCLOPS

ODYSSEUS

Yes, Maron, the god's own son, gave me the drink.

SILENUS

The lad I once raised in these very arms?

ODYSSEUS

Dionysus' son, to make my meaning plainer.

SILENUS

Is it on board ship, or do you have it with you?

Odysseus produces a wineskin.

ODYSSEUS

This is the wineskin that holds it, as you can see, old sir.

SILENUS

This would not even be a mouthful for me.

< ODYSSEUS

You would not be able to drink this wineskin dry.

SILENUS

What? Does the skin produce new wine of itself?⁷

ODYSSEUS

Yes, twice as much as has flowed out of the skin.

SILENUS

What a lovely spring you speak of! What pleasure it gives me!

ODYSSEUS

Would you like me to give you a taste of it neat first?

⁷ The supplements are, of course, mere guesses. A miraculous wineskin is perfectly in keeping with the spirit of a satyr play: compare the wine miracle ascribed to Dionysus at *Ba.* 705.

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

150 δίκαιον ἦ γὰρ γεῦμα τὴν ὠνὴν καλεῖ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐφέλω καὶ ποτῆρ' ἄσκού μέτα.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

φέρ' ἐγκάναξον, ὡς ἀναμνησθῶ πιών.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἰδού.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

παπαιάξ, ὡς καλὴν ὄσμὴν ἔχει.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

εἶδες γὰρ αὐτήν;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐ μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὀσφραίνομαι.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

155 γεῦσαί νυν, ὡς ἂν μὴ λόγῳ 'παινήσῃς μόνον.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

βαβαί· χορεῦσαι παρακαλεῖ μ' ὁ Βάκχιος.
 ᾶ ᾶ ᾶ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

μῶν τὸν λάρυγγα διεκάναξέ σου καλῶς;

152 ἐγκάναξον Valckenaer, Pierson: ἐκπάταξον L

153 ὄσμὴν] χροιάν Kovacs: φνὴν Willink

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

That's fair enough: a taste invites a purchase.

Odysseus produces a drinking vessel.

ODYSSEUS

See, along with the wineskin I've lugged a cup.

SILENUS

Splash some in so that I can remember what it's like to drink.

ODYSSEUS

Done.

SILENUS

Oh my, oh my! What a fine bouquet it has!

ODYSSEUS

What? Have you caught it?

SILENUS

No, by Zeus, I smell it!

Odysseus hands him the cup.

ODYSSEUS

Taste it, then, so that your praise of it may not be mere words.

SILENUS

Oo la la! Bacchus invites me to the dance! Tra la, tra la, tra la!

ODYSSEUS

Didn't it gurgle nicely down your throat?

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ὥστ' εἰς ἄκρους γε τοὺς ὄνυχας ἀφίκετο.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

160 πρὸς τῷδε μέντοι καὶ νόμισμα δώσομεν.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

χάλα τὸν ἄσκον μόνον· ἕα τὸ χρυσίον.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἐκφέρετέ νυν τυρέυματ' ἢ μήλων τόκον.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

δράσω τάδ', ὀλίγον φροντίσας γε δεσποτῶν.
 ὡς ἐκπιεῖν κἄν κύλικα βουλοίμην μίαν,
 165 πάντων Κυκλώπων ἀντιδοὺς βοσκήματα,
 ῥῖψαι τ' ἐς ἄλμην Λευκάδος πέτρας ἀπο
 ἅπαξ μεθυσθεὶς καταβαλὼν τε τὰς ὀφρῦς.
 ὡς ὅς γε πίνων μὴ γέγηθε μαίνεται
 ἵν' ἔστι τουτί τ' ὀρθὸν ἐξανιστάναι

170 μαστοῦ τε δραγμὸς καὶ παρεσκευασμένον
 ψαῦσαι χεροῖν λειμῶνος ὀρχηστὺς θ' ἅμα
 κακῶν τε λῆστις. εἶτ' ἐγὼ <οὐ> κυνήσομαι
 τοιόνδε πῶμα, τὴν Κύκλωπος ἀμαθίαν
 κλαίειν κελεύων καὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν μέσον;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

175 ἄκου', Ὀδυσσεῦ· διαλαλήσωμέν τί σοι.

164 κἄν Paley: γ' ἂν L βουλοίμην editio Aldina: μαινοίμην
 L 167 κατὰχαλῶν anonymus apud append. Weckl.

170 παρεσκευασμένον Blaydes: -μένου L

172 <οὐ> Matthiae

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

Yes, all the way down to the ends of my toes!

ODYSSEUS

But we will give you some money in addition.

SILENUS

Just keep pouring the wine. Never mind the gold!

ODYSSEUS

Then bring out cheese or lamb.

SILENUS

I will do just that and pay little heed to my master. I would like to drink down a single cup of this wine, giving all the Cyclopes' flocks in exchange for it, and then to leap from the Leucadian cliff⁸ into the brine, good and drunk with my my brows utterly relaxed. The man who does not enjoy drinking is mad: in drink one can raise *this* to a stand, catch a handful of breast and look forward to stroking her bosom, and there's dancing and forgetfulness of cares. Shall I not kiss such a drink and tell the bonehead Cyclops—and the eye in the middle of his head, too—to go hang?

Exit SILENUS into the cave.

CHORUS LEADER

Listen, Odysseus. We would like a little chat with you.

⁸ Leucas, a small island in the Ionian sea off the west coast of Greece, has chalk cliffs rising sharply from the sea. The leap from this cliff into the sea is used in Anacreon, fr. 376 *PMG*, as an image of the loss of self-control encountered when one is "drunk with love." Sappho is said to have leapt from the cliff for the love of Phaon.

EURIPIDES

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ μὴν φίλοι γε προσφέρεσθε πρὸς φίλον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐλάβετε Τροίαν τὴν Ἑλένην τε χειρίαν;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ πάντα γ' οἶκον Πριαμιδῶν ἐπέρσαμεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- οὔκουν, ἐπειδὴ τὴν νεᾶνιν εἴλετε,
 180 ἅπαντες αὐτὴν διεκροτήσατ' ἐν μέρει,
 ἐπεὶ γε πολλοῖς ἤδεται γαμουμένη,
 τὴν προδότιν; ἢ τοὺς θυλάκους τοὺς ποικίλους
 περὶ τοῖν σκελοῖν ἰδοῦσα καὶ τὸν χρύσειον
 κλῶν φοροῦντα περὶ μέσον τὸν αὐχένα
 185 ἐξεπτοήθη, Μενέλεων ἀνθρώπιον
 λῶστον λιποῦσα. μηδαμοῦ γένος ποτὲ
 φῦναι γυναικῶν ὄφελ', εἰ μὴ ἴμοι μόνω.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

- ἰδού· τάδ' ὑμῖν ποιμνίων βοσκήματα,
 ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, μηκάδων ἀρνῶν τροφαί,
 190 πηκτοῦ γάλακτός τ' οὐ σπάνια τυρεύματα.
 φέρεσθε· χωρεῖθ' ὡς τάχιστ' ἄντρων ἄπο,
 βότρνος ἐμοὶ πῶμ' ἀντιδόντες εὐίου.
 οἴμοι· Κύκλωψ ὄδ' ἔρχεται· τί δράσομεν;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἀπολώλαμέν τᾶρ', ὦ γέρον· ποῖ χρὴ φυγεῖν;

CYCLOPS

ODYSSEUS

Of course, since you are my friends and I am yours.

CHORUS LEADER

Did you capture Troy and take Helen prisoner?

ODYSSEUS

Yes, and we sacked the whole house of the sons of Priam.

CHORUS LEADER

Once you had caught the girl, didn't you all then take turns banging her, since she takes pleasure in having more than one mate? The traitor! She saw the parti-colored breeches on the man's legs and the gold necklace around his neck and went all aflutter after them, leaving behind that fine little man Menelaus. O would that the female sex were nowhere to be found—but in my lap!

Enter SILENUS from the cave.

SILENUS

Here, my lord Odysseus, are your flocks, the brood of bleating lambs, and a goodly number of cheeses made of curdled milk. Take them. Go away quickly from the cave, giving me in exchange the drink of the Bacchic vine.

Oh no! Here comes the Cyclops. What are we to do?

ODYSSEUS

Then we are done for, old man. Where should we flee to?

188 ποιμνίων Scaliger: ποιμένων L

193n Sileno continuat L. Dindorf: Ὀδ. L

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

195 ἔσω πέτρας τήσδ', οὔπερ ἂν λάθοιτέ γε.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

δεινὸν τόδ' εἶπας, ἀρκύων μολεῖν ἔσω.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐ δεινόν· εἰσὶ καταφυγαὶ πολλαὶ πέτρας.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

οὐ δῆτ'· ἐπεὶ τὰν μεγάλα γ' ἡ Τροία στένοι,
εἰ φευξόμεσθ' ἔν' ἄνδρα, μυρίον δ' ὄχλον
200 Φρυγῶν ὑπέστην πολλακίς σὺν ἀσπίδι.
ἀλλ', εἰ θανεῖν δεῖ, καθθανούμεθ' εὐγενῶς
ἢ ζῶντες αἶνον τὸν πάρος συσσωσομεν.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἄνεχε πάρεχε· τί τάδε; τίς ἡ ῥαθυμία;
τί βακχιάζει; οὐχὶ Διόνυσος τάδε,
205 οὐ κρόταλα χαλκοῦ τυμπάνων τ' ἀράγματα.
πῶς μοι κατ' ἄντρα νεόγονα βλαστήματα;
ἦ πρὸς τε μαστοῖς εἰσι χυτὸ μητέρων
πλευρὰς τρέχουσι, σχοινοῖς τ' ἐν τεύχεσιν
πλήρωμα τυρῶν ἔστιν ἐξημελγμένον;
210 τί φατε; τί λέγετε; τάχα τις ὑμῶν τῷ ξύλῳ
δάκρυα μεθήσει. βλέπετ' ἄνω καὶ μὴ κάτω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰδού· πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν Δί' ἀνακεκύφαμεν
τὰ τ' ἄστρα, καὶ τὸν Ὀρίωνα δέρκομαι.

203n Κν. Tyrwhitt: Σι. L

207 τε L. Dindorf: γε L

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

Inside this cave, where you could avoid being seen.

ODYSSEUS

A dangerous suggestion, this, going into the net.

SILENUS

No danger: there are many hiding places in the cave.

ODYSSEUS

I shall not do it. Troy would groan loudly if I were to run from a single man when I stood my ground so often, shield in hand, against a throng of Trojans without number. Rather, if I must die, I will die nobly—or live on and also retain my old reputation.

Enter the CYCLOPS with retinue by Eisosdos A.

CYCLOPS

Give way, make way! What is going on here? What means this slackness? Why this Bacchic holiday? Here is no Dionysus, no bronze castanets, no rattle of drums. How fare my newborn lambs in the cave? Are they at the teat and running to their mothers' sides? The milk for cheeses—has it been put in rush buckets? What say you? This club will soon make someone cry. Look up, not down!

CHORUS LEADER

(looking up at Polyphemus) There! My head is turned up toward Zeus himself and the stars, and I see Orion!⁹

⁹ Orion was a giant hunter, killed by Artemis and turned into a constellation. Like Polyphemus he was a son of Poseidon.

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἄριστόν ἐστιν εὖ παρεσκευασμένον;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

215 πάρεστιν. ὁ φάρυγξ εὐτρεπῆς ἔστω μόνον.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἦ καὶ γάλακτός εἰσι κρατῆρες πλέω;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥστ' ἐκπιεῖν γέ σ', ἦν θέλῃς, ὄλον πίθου.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

μήλειον ἢ βόειον ἢ μεμειγμένον;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄν ἂν θέλῃς σύ· μὴ 'μὲ καταπίης μόνον.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

220 ἦκιστ' ἐπεὶ μ' ἂν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ γαστέρι
πηδῶντες ἀπολέσαιτ' ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν σχημάτων.

ἔα· τίν' ὄχλον τόνδ' ὀρώ πρὸς αὐλίοις;
λησταί τινες κατέσχον ἢ κλῶπες χθόνα;
ὀρώ γέ τοι τούσδ' ἄρνας ἐξ ἄντρων ἐμῶν
225 στρεπταῖς λύγοισι σῶμα συμπεπλεγμένους
τεύχη τε τυρῶν συμμιγῆ γέροντά τε
πληγαῖς μέτωπον φαλακρὸν ἐξωδηκότα.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ᾧμοι, πυρέσσω συγκεκομμένος τάλας.

227 μέτωπον Tyrwhitt: πρόσωπον L

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

Is my dinner well prepared?

CHORUS LEADER

It is: just be sure your gullet is ready.

CYCLOPS

Are the mixing bowls filled with milk as well?

CHORUS LEADER

So much that you can drink an entire storage jar if you like.

CYCLOPS

Cows' milk or sheep's or a mixture of both?

CHORUS LEADER

Whatever you like. Just don't swallow *me* down.

CYCLOPS

I wouldn't think of it: you would be the death of me with your dance steps, leaping around inside my belly.

Hey! What is this crowd I see near my cave? Have some pirates or robbers landed here? I *do* see lambs here from my cave, their bodies bound with twisted willow-withes, and my cheese buckets all in disarray, and an old man with his bald head swollen with blows.¹⁰

SILENUS

Oh! Oh! Wretched me! What a fever I have got from being beaten up!

¹⁰ We must suppose that the Cyclops here misdiagnoses the effect of the wine on Silenus, who then improvises his story to agree with the Polyphemus' mistake.

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ὑπὸ τοῦ; τίς ἐς σὸν κρᾶτ' ἐπύκτευσεν, γέρον;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

230 ὑπὸ τῶνδε, Κύκλωψ, ὅτι τὰ σ' οὐκ εἶων φέρειν.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οὐκ ἦσαν ὄντα θεόν με καὶ θεῶν ἄπο;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἔλεγον ἐγὼ τάδ'· οἱ δ' ἐφόρουν τὰ χρήματα,
καὶ τόν γε τυρὸν οὐκ ἐῶντος ἦσθιον

235 κλωῶ τριπήχει, κατὰ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν μέσον
τὰ σπλάγχν' ἔφασκον ἐξαμήσεσθαι βία,
μάστιγί τ' εὖ τὸ νῶτον ἀπολέψειν σέθεν,
κάπειτα συνδήσαντες ἐς θάδῶλια
τῆς ναὸς ἐμβαλόντες ἀποδώσειν τινὶ
240 πέτρους μοχλεύειν, ἧ 'ς μυλῶνα καταβαλεῖν.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἄληθες; οὐκουν κοπίδας ὡς τάχιστ' ἰὼν
θήξεις μαχαίρας καὶ μέγαν φάκελον ξύλων
ἐπιθεῖς ἀνάψεις; ὡς σφαγέντες αὐτίκα
πλήσουσι νηδὺν τὴν ἐμὴν ἀπ' ἀνθρακος

245 θερμὴν διδόντες δαῖτα τῶ κρεανόμῳ,
τὰ δ' ἐκ λέβητος ἐφθὰ καὶ τετηκότα.
ὡς ἐκπλεῶς γε δαιτός εἰμ' ὄρεσκόου

233 γε] τε Kaibel

235 κατὰ Canter: κάτα L

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

By whom? Who has been pummeling your head, old man?

SILENUS

These men, because I would not let them take your property.

CYCLOPS

Did they not know that I am a god and descended from gods?

SILENUS

I told them so, but they went on plundering your possessions, and, what is more, they started in on the cheese, though I tried to stop them, and began to carry off the sheep. And they said that they would collar you like a dangerous dog and right under your very eye violently pull out your guts, flay your back nicely with a whip, then bind you hand and foot and throw you onto the rowing benches of their ship and sell you to someone who needs to move heavy rocks or throw you into a mill.

CYCLOPS

Is that so? (*to a servant*) You there, go on the double and sharpen my carving knives and start a big bundle of wood blazing on the hearth. (*The servant goes into the cave.*) They shall be slaughtered at once and fill my belly, giving the server a feast hot from the coals and the rest boiled and tender from the cauldron. I have had my fill of mountain

236 ἐξαμήσεσθαι Duport: -σασθαι L

237 ἀπολέψειν Ruhnken: ἀποθλίψειν L

240 ἧ ᾽ς μυλῶνα Ruhnken: ἧ πυλῶνα L

245 διδόντες Heath: ἔδοντες L

247 εἰμ' ὄρεσκόου Stephanus: ἰμεροσκόου L

EURIPIDES

ἄλις λεόντων ἐστί μοι θοινωμένῳ
ἐλάφῳ τε, χρόνιος δ' εἴμ' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων βορᾶς.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

250 τὰ καινά γ' ἐκ τῶν ἠθάδων, ᾧ δέσποτα,
ἠδίων' ἐστίν. οὐ γὰρ οὖν νεωστί γε
ἄλλοι πρὸς οἴκους σου ἀφίκοντο ξένοι.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

Κύκλωψ, ἄκουσον ἐν μέρει καὶ τῶν ξένων.
ἡμεῖς βορᾶς χρήζοντες ἐμπολὴν λαβεῖν
255 σῶν ἄσσον ἄντρων ἠλθομεν νεὼς ἄπο.
τοὺς δ' ἄρνας ἡμῖν οὗτος ἀντ' οἴνου σκύφου
ἀπημπόλα τε κἀδίδου πιεῖν λαβῶν
ἐκὼν ἐκοῦσι, κούδεν ἦν τούτων βία.
ἀλλ' οὗτος ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ᾧ φησιν λέγει,
260 ἐπεὶ γ' ἐλήφθη σου λάθρα πωλῶν τὰ σά.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἐγώ; κακῶς γ' ἄρ' ἐξόλοι'.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

εἰ ψεύδομαι.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τὸν τεκόντα σ', ᾧ Κύκλωψ,
μὰ τὸν μέγαν Τρίτωνα καὶ τὸν Νηρέα,
μὰ τὴν Καλυψῶ τὰς τε Νηρέως κόρας,
265 μὰ θαῖερά κύματ' ἰχθύων τε πᾶν γένος,
ἀπόμοσ', ᾧ κάλλιστον ᾧ Κυκλώπιον,
ᾧ δεσποτίσκε, μὴ τὰ σ' ἐξοδᾶν ἐγὼ
ξένοισι χρήματ'. ἢ κακῶς οὔτοι κακοὶ

CYCLOPS

fare: I have dined enough on lions and deer and have gone far too long without a meal of man's flesh.

SILENUS

After ordinary fare, good master, something new is all the pleasanter. It has been some time since strangers arrived at your house.

ODYSSEUS

Cyclops, listen in turn to us strangers as well. We came from our ship to your cave wishing to buy food. And this fellow, since he had got something to drink, sold and tendered us these sheep for a cup of wine, willing seller to willing buyers: there was no violence in this business. But now every word this fellow says is a lie since he has been caught selling your goods behind your back.

SILENUS

What, me? Damnation take you!

ODYSSEUS

Yes, if I'm lying.

SILENUS

By your father Poseidon, Cyclops, by great Triton and Nereus, by Calypso and Nereus' daughters, by the holy sea swell and the whole tribe of fishes, I swear—O my handsome, O my dear Cyclops, O sweet master—that I was not trying to sell your property to the strangers. If I am lying,

251 οὖν Reiske: αὖ L

252 οἴκους σοὺς Heimsoeth: ἄντρα τὰ σ' L

260 γ' ἐλήφθη Heath: κατελήφθη L

261 γ' ἄρ' Kirchhoff: γὰρ L

265 θαιερά Franke: θ' ἰερά L

EURIPIDES

οἱ παῖδες ἀπόλουνθ', οὓς μάλιστ' ἐγὼ φιλω̄.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 270 αὐτὸς ἔχ'. ἔγωγε τοῖς ξένοις τὰ χρήματα
περνάντα σ' εἶδον· εἰ δ' ἐγὼ ψευδῆ λέγω,
ἀπόλοιθ' ὁ πατήρ μου· τοὺς ξένους δὲ μὴ ἀδίκει.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

- ψεύδεσθ'. ἔγωγε τῷδε τοῦ Ῥαδαμάνθυνος
μᾶλλον πέποιθα καὶ δικαιοτέρον λέγω.
275 θέλω δ' ἐρέσθαι· πόθεν ἐπλεύσατ', ὦ ξένοι;
ποδαποί; τίς ὑμᾶς ἐξεπαίδευσεν πόλις;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

Ἴθακήσιοι μὲν τὸ γένος, Ἴλίου δ' ἄπο,
πέρσαντες ἄστν, πνεύμασιν θαλασσίοις
σὴν γαῖαν ἐξωσθέντες ἤκομεν, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

- 280 ἦ τῆς κακίστης οἰ μετήλθεθ' ἀρπαγὰς
Ἑλένης Σκαμάνδρου γείτον' Ἴλίου πόλιν;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

οὔτοι, πόνον τὸν δεινὸν ἐξηντληκότες.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

αἰσχρὸν στράτευμά γ', οἷτινες μῖα χάριν
γυναικὸς ἐξεπλεύσατ' ἐς γαῖαν Φρυγῶν.

273 τῷδε Canter: τοῦδε L

274 μᾶλλον Kirchhoff: πολλὰ L

CYCLOPS

may utter damnation take these sons of mine, the apple of my eye!

CHORUS LEADER

On your head, rather! I saw you selling the goods to these strangers. If I am lying, then damnation take my father! But do no wrong to the strangers.

CYCLOPS

(to the Chorus leader) You lie. For my part, I put more trust in this man and think he is more honest than Rhadamanthys.¹¹ But I want to ask you a question. Where have you sailed from, strangers? What is your country? What city was it that brought you up?

ODYSSEUS

We are men of Ithaca by birth, and it is from Ilium, after sacking the city, that we have come to your land, Cyclops, blown off course by sea storms.

CYCLOPS

Are you the ones who went to punish Ilium on the Scamander for the theft of the worthless Helen?

ODYSSEUS

Yes, we are the ones who endured that terrible toil.

CYCLOPS

Disgraceful expedition, sailing to Phrygia for the sake of one woman!

¹¹ Legendary ruler of Crete and judge in the Underworld famous for his justice.

EURIPIDES

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- 285 θεοῦ τὸ πρᾶγμα· μηδέν' αἰτιῶ βροτῶν.
 ἡμεῖς δέ σ', ὦ θεοῦ ποντίου γενναῖε παῖ,
 ἰκετεύομέν τε καὶ ψέγομεν ἐλευθέρως·
 μὴ τλήῃς πρὸς οἴκους σουὺς ἀφιγμένους φίλους
 κτανεῖν βοράν τε δυσσεβῆ θέσθαι γνάθοις·
- 290 οἱ τὸν σόν, ὦναξ, πατέρ' ἔχειν ναῶν ἔδρας
 ἔρρυσάμεσθα γῆς ἐν Ἑλλάδος μυχοῖς·
 ἱερᾶς τ' ἄθραστος Ταυνάρου μένει λιμῆν
 Μαλέας τ' ἄκρας κευθμῶνες ἢ τε Σουνίου
 δίας Ἀθάνας σῶς ὑπάργυρος πέτρα
- 295 Γεραίστιοί τε καταφυγαί· τά θ' Ἑλλάδος
 †δύσφρον' ὀνειδή† Φρυξῖν οὐκ ἐδώκαμεν.
 ὦν καὶ σὺ κοινοί· γῆς γὰρ Ἑλλάδος μυχοῦς
 οἰκείς ὑπ' Αἴττη, τῇ πυριστάκτῳ πέτρα.
 νόμος δὲ θνητοῖς, εἰ λόγους ἀποστρέφῃ,
- 300 ἰκέτας δέχεσθαι ποντίους ἐφθαρμένους
 ξενιά τε δοῦναι καὶ πέπλους ἐπαρκέσαι·
 <τούτων δίκαιόν σου τυχεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἄναξ,>
 οὐκ ἀμφὶ βουπόροισι πηχθέντας μέλη
 ὀβελοῖσι νηδὺν καὶ γνάθον πλήσαι σέθεν.
 ἄλις δὲ Πριάμου γαῖ' ἐχῆρωσ' Ἑλλάδα,
- 305 πολλῶν νεκρῶν πιούσα δοριπετῆ φόνον,
 ἀλόχους τ' ἀνάνδρους γραῦς τ' ἄπαιδας ὤλεσεν

287 ψέγομεν Kovacs cl. Andr. 419, Su. 565, Aesch. Cho. 989,
 Soph. O.T. 338: λέγομεν L

288 οἴκους Heimsoeth: ἄντρα L

290 ναῶν Canter: νεῶν L

CYCLOPS

ODYSSEUS

It was the doing of a god: blame no mortal for it.

But, O noble son of the seagod, we at once entreat you and give you our frank censure: do not have the hardness to kill your friends who have come to your house and to make of them a godless meal for your jaws. It was we who kept your father safe in the possession of his temple seats in every corner of Greece: the harbor of sacred Taenarum and the recesses of Cape Malea remain inviolate, safe is the rock of Sunium rich in silver, sacred to the goddess Athena, safe are Geraestus' refuges. We did not suffer the great disgrace of surrendering Greek possessions to the Trojans.¹² In these events you also have a share, dwelling as you do in the far reaches of Hellas, under Aetna, the rock that drips with fire.

But if you are deaf to these considerations, there is a law among mortals that one must receive shipwrecked suppliants, give them the gifts hospitality requires, and provide them with clothing. <It is this treatment we ought to receive from you,> rather than to have our limbs pierced with spits for roasting beef and to fill your maw and belly. Priam's land has wrought enough bereavement on Greece, drinking down the spear-shed blood of many corpses. She has widowed wives and brought old women and grey-

¹² I translate Diggle's conjecture.

²⁹² *ιερᾶς* Kassel: *ιέρεις* L

²⁹³ *ἄκρας* Seaford: *ἄκροι* L

²⁹⁶ *δύσφορά γ'* apogr. Par.:

δύσφορον ὄνειδος per *parenthesim* Diggle

³⁰¹ *πέπλους* Blaydes: *πέπλοις* L

³⁰² ante h. v. lac. indic. et suppl. Kassel

EURIPIDES

πολιούς τε πατέρας. εἰ δὲ τοὺς λελειμμένους
 σὺ συμπτρώσας δαῖτ' ἀναλώσεις πικράν,
 ποῖ τρέφεται τις; ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ, Κύκλωψ·
 310 πάρες τὸ μάργον σῆς γνάθου, τὸ δ' εὖσεβὲς
 τῆς δυσσεβείας ἀνθελού· πολλοῖσι γὰρ
 κέρδη πονηρὰ ζημίαν ἡμεύφατο.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

παραινέσαι σοι βούλομαι· τῶν γὰρ κρεῶν
 μηδὲν λίπης τοῦδ', ἦν τε τὴν γλώσσαν δάκης,
 315 κομψὸς γενήσῃ καὶ λαλίστατος, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

ὁ πλοῦτος, ἀνθρωπίσκε, τοῖς σοφοῖς θεός,
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα κόμπαι καὶ λόγων εὐμορφία.
 ἄκρας δ' ἐναλίας αἷς καθίδρυται πατῆρ
 χαίρειν κελεύω· τί τάδε προστήσω λόγῳ;
 320 Ζηνὸς δ' ἐγὼ κεραυνὸν οὐ φρίσσω, ξένε,
 οὐδ' οἶδ' ὅ τι Ζεὺς ἐστ' ἐμοῦ κρείστων θεός.
 <ἀλλ' εἴ τι τοῦδε καὶ πάροιθ' ἐφρόντισα,>
 οὐ μοι μέλει τὸ λοιπόν· ὡς δ' οὐ μοι μέλει
 ἄκουσον· ὅταν ἄνωθεν ὄμβρον ἐκχέῃ,
 ἐν τῇδε πέτρᾳ στέγν' ἔχων σκηνώματα,
 325 ἢ μόσχον ὀπτὸν ἢ τι θήρειον δάκος
 δαινύμενος ἐστιῶ τι γαστέρ' ὑπτίαν,
 εἴτ' ἐκπιῶν γάλακτος ἀμφορέα πλέων
 κρούω, Διὸς βρονταῖσιν εἰς ἔριν κτυπῶν.
 ὅταν δὲ βορέας χιόνα Θρήκιος χέῃ,
 330 δοραῖσι θηρῶν σῶμα περιβαλὼν ἐμὸν

CYCLOPS

beards childless to the grave. If you mean to cook and consume those left, making a grim feast, where shall anyone turn for refuge? Listen to me, Cyclops: give up this gluttony and choose to be godly instead of impious: for many have found that base gain brings punishment in its train.

SILENUS

I want to give you some advice: don't leave untouched a single bit of this man's flesh. And if you chew on his tongue, you will become clever and glib, Cyclops.

CYCLOPS

Little man, the wise regard wealth as the god to worship; all else is just prating and fine-sounding sentiments. As for the headlands where my father's temples are built, I pay them no heed. Why did you bother to put them in your speech? As for Zeus's thunderbolt, I do not shudder at that, stranger, nor do I know any respect in which he is my superior as a god. <If I ever thought about him before,> I am not concerned about him for the future. How it is that I am not concerned you may hear. When Zeus sends his rain from above, taking my water-tight shelter in this cave and dining on roasted calf or some wild animal, I put on a feast for my upturned belly, then drinking dry a whole storage vat of milk, I drum on it, making a din to rival Zeus's thunder. And when the north wind out of Thrace pours snow on us, I wrap my body in the skins of beasts, pile up a great

317 εὐμορφία Nauck: -ίαι L

318 αἷς Paley: ἄς L

322 ante h. v. lac. indic. Kovacs

324 ἔχων Reiske: ἔχω L

326 ἐστιῶ τι Kovacs: ἐν στέγοντι L: εὖ τέγγων τε Reiske

327 εἶτ' ἐκπιῶν Musgrave: ἐπεκπιῶν L πλέων W. Gilbert:

πέπλον L: πίθον Hartung: πέδον Musgrave

EURIPIDES

- καὶ πῦρ ἀναίθων, χιόνος οὐδέν μοι μέλει.
 ἢ γῆ δ' ἀνάγκη, κὰν θέλη κὰν μὴ θέλη,
 τίκτουσα ποίαν τὰμὰ πιαίνει βοτά.
 ἀγὼ οὔτινι θύω πλὴν ἐμοί, θεοῖσι δ' οὔ,
 335 καὶ τῇ μεγίστῃ, γαστρὶ τῆδε, δαιμόνων.
 ὡς τοῦμπιεῖν γε καὶ φαγεῖν τοῦφ' ἡμέραν,
 Ζεὺς οὔτος ἀνθρώποισι τοῖσι σῶφροσιν,
 λυπεῖν δὲ μηδὲν αὐτόν. οἱ δὲ τοὺς νόμους
 ἔθεντο ποικίλλοντες ἀνθρώπων βίον,
 340 κλαίειν ἄνωγα· τὴν <δ'> ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐγὼ
 οὐ παύσομαι δρῶν εἶ, κατεσθίων γε σέ.
 ξένια δὲ λήψη τοιάδ', ὡς ἄμεμπτος ᾧ,
 πῦρ καὶ πατρῶον ἄλλα λέβητά θ', ὅς ζέσας
 σὴν σάρκα δυσφάρωτον ἀμφέξει καλῶς.
 345 ἀλλ' ἔρπετ' εἴσω, τοῦ κατ' αὐλίον θεοῦ
 ἴν' ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στάντες εὐωχῆτέ με.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- αἰαί, πόνους μὲν Τρωικοὺς ὑπεξέδν
 θαλασσίους τε, νῦν δ' ἐς ἀνδρὸς ἀνοσίου
 ὤμην κατέσχον ἀλίμενόν τε καρδίαν.
 350 ᾧ Παλλάς, ᾧ δέσποινα Διογενὲς θεά,
 νῦν νῦν ἄρηξον· κρείσσονας γὰρ Ἴλιον
 πόνους ἀφῆγμαι καπὶ κινδύνου βάθη.
 σύ τ', ᾧ φαεννὰς ἀστέρων οἰκῶν ἔδρας

336 τοῦμπιεῖν Reiske: τοῦ πιεῖν L 340 <δ'> Barnes

341 γε Hermann: τε L

343 ἄλλα post Nauck (λίβα)

Kovacs: τόνδε L: τόδε Hermann

θ' Nauck: γ' L

CYCLOPS

blazing fire, and pay no heed to the snow. The Earth brings forth grass willy-nilly to feed my flock. These I sacrifice to no one but myself—never to the gods—and to my belly, the greatest of divinities. To guzzle and eat day by day and to give oneself no pain—this is Zeus in the eyes of men of sense. As for those who have passed laws and complicated men's lives, they can go hang. For my part, I shall not forgo giving pleasure to my heart—by eating you. Guest-presents you shall have—you shall not blame me there—guest-presents of this kind: fire to warm you, salt¹³ inherited from my father, and a bronze pot, which when it has reached a boil will clothe your ill-clad body nicely. Now go inside in order that you may stand around the altar of the god who dwells within and give me sumptuous entertainment.

ODYSSEUS

Oh, alas, I have escaped hardships at Troy and on the sea only to put in now at the fierce and harborless heart of this godless man!

O Pallas Athena, Zeus's divine daughter, now, now is the time to help me! For I have come into trouble greater than at Troy and to the very uttermost of danger. And you, Zeus, Protector of Guests, who dwell in the bright realm of

¹³ Conjecturally restored. The giving of salt was the proverbial emblem of hospitality, and Polyphemus has plenty from his father Poseidon. He will use it, however, to season his guest for eating.

344 *δυσφάρωτον* Barnes: *δυσφόρητον* L 345 *τοῦ* . . .
θεοῦ Blaydes: *τῷ* . . . *θεῷ* L 346 *βωμὸν* Stephanus: *κῶμον*
L 349 *ὠμὴν* Reiske: *γνώμην* L 352 *βάθη* Musgrave:
βάθηρα L 353 *φαεννὰς* Kassel: *-ῶν* L

EURIPIDES

355 Ζεὺ ξένι', ὄρα τάδ'· εἰ γὰρ αὐτὰ μὴ βλέπεις,
ἄλλως νομίζῃ Ζεὺς τὸ μηδὲν ὦν θεός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

Εὐρείας λάρυγγος, ὦ Κύκλωψ,
ἀναστόμον τὸ χεῖλος· ὡς ἔτοιμά σοι
ἐφθὰ καὶ ὄπτα καὶ ἀνθρακιᾶς ἄπο <θερμὰ>
χναύειν βρύκειν
κρεοκοπεῖν μέλη ξένων
360 δασυμάλλῳ ἐν αἰγίδι κλινομένῳ.

μεσῶδ.

μὴ ἴμοι μὴ προσδίδου
μόνος μόνῳ γέμιζε πορθμίδος σκάφος.
χαιρέτω μὲν αὖλις ἄδε,
χαιρέτω δὲ θυμάτων
365 ἀποβώμιος ἂν ἀνέχει θυσίαν
Κύκλωψ Αἰτναῖος ξενικῶν
κρεῶν κεχαρμένος βορᾶ.

ἀντ.

370 νηλής, τλάμων, ὅς γε δωμάτων
371 ἐφεστίους ἰκτῆρας ἐκθύει ξένους,
373 ἐφθὰ τε δαινύμενος, μνσαροῖσί τ' ὀδοῦσιν
372 κόπτων βρύκων
374 θέρμ' ἀπ' ἀνθράκων κρέα
< >

356 λάρυγγος Seaford cl. 158, Eubul. fr. 139.2: φάρυγγος L

358 <θερμὰ> Hermann βρύκειν Casaubon: βρύχ- L

CYCLOPS

the stars, look on these things! For if you take no note of them, men mistakenly worship you as Zeus when you are in fact a worthless god.

The CYCLOPS herds ODYSSEUS and his men into the cave. SILENUS follows.

CHORUS

Open the gate, O Cyclops, of your yawning throat: the limbs of your guests, boiled, roasted, or hot from the coals, are ready for you to gnaw, rend, and devour as you recline dressed in a soft-fleeced goatskin.

Do not, do not, I say, give me any share of them! You yourself alone freight your vessel's hold! Away with this house! Away with the godless sacrifice of victims which Aetna's Cyclops celebrates, taking his pleasure in the flesh of his guests!

Hard-hearted one, pitiless is the man who sacrifices strangers who have taken refuge at his hearth, and who feasts on them boiled and with teeth defiled tears and devours their flesh warm from the coals < >!

Enter ODYSSEUS from the cave.

360 κλινομένῳ Reiske: καινόμενα L

362 γέμιζε Wecklein: κόμιζε L

365 ἀνέχει Spengel: ἔχει L

370 τλάμων Wecklein: ὦ τλάμων L: ὅς γε Kovacs ὅστις L

371 ἰκτῆρας Bothe: ξενικὸς ἰκτῆρας L ξένους Kirchhoff:

δόμων L

373 ante 372 trai. Hermann μυσσαροῖσί τ' Kirchhoff: -οῖσιν L

374 θέρμ' Hermann: ἀνθρώπων θέρμ' L post h.v. lac.

indic. Haupt

EURIPIDES

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

375 ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω, δεῖν' ἰδὼν ἄντρων ἔσω
 κοῦ πιστά, μύθοις εἰκότ' οὐδ' ἔργοις βροτῶν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστ', Ὀδυσσεῦ; μῶν τεθοίναται σέθεν
 φίλους ἐταίρους ἀνοσιώτατος Κύκλωψ;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

380 δισοῦς γ' ἀθρήσας κάπιβαστάσας χεροῖν,
 οἱ σαρκὸς εἶχον εὐτραφέστατον πάχος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς, ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἦτε πάσχοντες τάδε;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἐπεὶ πετραίαν τήνδ' ἐσήλθομεν στέγην,
 ἀνέκαυσε μὲν πῦρ πρῶτον, ὑψηλῆς δρυὸς
 κορμοὺς πλατείας ἐσχάρας βαλὼν ἔπι,
 385 τρισσῶν ἀμαξῶν ὡς ἀγώγιμον βάρος,
 392 καὶ χάλκεον λέβητ' ἐπέζεσεν πυρί,
 ἔπειτα φύλλων ἐλατίνων χαμαιπετῆ
 ἔστρωσεν εὐνήν πλησίον πυρὸς φλογί.
 κρατήρα δ' ἐξέπλησεν ὡς δεκάμφορον,
 μόςχους ἀμέλξας, λευκὸν ἐσχέας γάλα,
 390 σκύφος τε κισσοῦ παρέθητ' εἰς εὖρος τριῶν
 391 πήχεων, βάθος δὲ τεσσάρων ἐφαίνετο,
 393 ὀβελούς τ', ἄκρους μὲν ἐγκεκαυμένους πυρί,

377 τεθοίναται Reiske: γε θοινᾶται L

382 στέγην Musgrave: χθόνα L

CYCLOPS

ODYSSEUS

O Zeus, what am I to say when I have seen in the cave terrible things, incredible things such as one meets only in stories, not in the deeds of mortals?

CHORUS LEADER

What is it, Odysseus? Can it really be that the godless Cyclops has feasted on your dear companions?

ODYSSEUS

Yes. He spotted and weighed in his hands the two who had the fattest flesh.

CHORUS LEADER

Poor man, How could you endure such a fate?

ODYSSEUS

When we entered this rocky hall, he first made the fire blaze up, heaping onto the broad hearth logs from a mighty oak, enough to load three wagons, and he set the bronze kettle to boil on the fire. Then near the blaze he spread out a bed of fir branches upon the ground. After he had milked the heifers, he filled to the brim a great mixing bowl, holding about ninety gallons, with white milk, and he set next to it a cup of ivy wood four-and-a-half feet from rim to rim and what looked like a good six feet to the bottom; then spits made of buckthorn wood, their ends burnt in the fire

392 huc trai. Paley (post 395 Hartung)

387 ἔστρωσεν Pierson: ἔστησεν L

EURIPIDES

- 395 ξεστοὺς δὲ δρεπάνῳ τᾶλλα, παλιούρου κλάδων,
 †Αἰτναῖά τε σφαγεῖα πελέκεων γνάθοις†.
 ὡς δ' ἦν ἔτοιμα πάντα τῷ θεοστυγεῖ
 Ἄιδου μαγείρῳ, φῶτε συμμαρῖσας δύο
 399 τὸν μὲν λέβητος ἐς κύτος χαλκήλατον
 398 ἔσφαζ' ἑταίρων τῶν ἐμῶν ῥυθμῶ τινι,
 400 τὸν δ' αὖ, τένοντος ἀρπάσας ἄκρου ποδός,
 παίων πρὸς ὄξυν στόνυχα πετραίου λίθου
 ἐγκέφαλον ἐξέρρανε· καὶ διαρταμῶν
 λάβρῳ μαχαίρᾳ σάρκας ἐξώπτα πυρί,
 τὰ δ' ἐς λέβητ' ἐφήκεν ἔψεσθαι μέλη.
 405 ἐγὼ δ' ὁ τλήμων δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν χέων
 ἐχρῖμπτόμην Κύκλωπι κἀδιακόνουν·
 ἄλλοι δ' ὅπως ὄρνιθες ἐν μυχοῖς πέτρας
 πτήξαντες εἶχον, αἶμα δ' οὐκ ἐνήν χροῖ.
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἑταίρων τῶν ἐμῶν πλησθεῖς βορᾶς
 410 ἀνέπεσε, φάρυγος αἰθέρ' ἐξανεῖς βαρύν,
 ἐσηλθέ μοί τι θεῖον· ἐμπλήσας σκύφος
 Μάρωνος αὐτῷ τοῦδε προσφέρω πιεῖν,
 λέγων τάδ'· ὦ τοῦ ποντίου θεοῦ Κύκλωψ,
 σκέψαι τόδ' οἶον Ἑλλάς ἀμπέλων ἄπο
 415 θεῖον κομίζει πῶμα, Διονύσου γάνος.
 ὁ δ' ἐκπλεως ὦν τῆς ἀναισχύντου βορᾶς
 ἐδέξατ' ἔσπασέν <τ' > ἄμυστιν ἐλκύσας
 κἀπήνεσ' ἄρας χεῖρα· Φίλτατε ξένων,

394 κλάδων Scaliger: κλάδω L: κλάδους Kirchhoff

395 ante h. v. lac. indic. Boissonade, post h. v. Fix

CYCLOPS

but the rest of them scraped with a scythe, < >. ¹⁴
 When that vile and murderous cook had everything ready, he snatched up two of my companions. He cut the throat of the first over the cauldron with a sweep of the arm and drained him of blood, the second he seized by the tendon at the end of his foot, struck him against the sharp edge of a rock, and dashed out his brains. Then butchering them with a fierce blade he roasted their fleshy parts in the fire and put their arms and legs in the cauldron to boil. I stood near the Cyclops in my wretchedness, tears streaming from my eyes, and attended him at his work. The others cowered like birds in the recesses of the cave, their faces pale and bloodless.

But when, sated with the meal he had made of my companions, he fell on his back and belched a foul stench from his maw, I was struck with a heaven-sent thought. I filled a cup with this Maron wine and offered it to him to drink with these words: "O Cyclops, son of the sea god, come see what kind of divine drink this is that Greece provides from its vines, the gleaming cup of Dionysus." And he, his belly full to bursting with that execrable meal, took it and downed it in one long draught, then raising his hand in admiration he said, "Dearest friend, you give me fine drink

¹⁴ In addition to the unintelligible 395, there is probably also a lacuna here.

397 ἄιδου Stephanus: δίδου L 399 ante 398 trai. Seaford
 401 στόνυχα Scaliger: γ' ὄνυχα L
 402 διαρταμών Paley: καθαρπάσας L: καταρτάσας Shackle
 410 ἐξάνεις Porson: ἐξίεις L
 417 <τ'> Barnes

- καλὸν τὸ πῶμα δαιτὶ πρὸς καλῇ δίδωσ.
 420 ἦσθέντα δ' αὐτὸν ὡς ἐπησθόμην ἐγώ,
 ἄλλην ἔδωκα κύλικα, γινώσκων ὅτι
 τρώσει νιν οἶνος καὶ δίκην δώσει τάχα.
 καὶ δὴ πρὸς ῥῥὰς εἶρπ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεγχείων
 ἄλλην ἐπ' ἄλλη σπλάγχχ' ἐθέρμαινον ποτῶ.
 425 ἄδει δὲ παρὰ κλαίουσι συνναύταις ἐμοῖς
 ἄμουσ', ἐπηχεῖ δ' ἄντρον. ἐξελθὼν δ' ἐγὼ
 σιγῇ σὲ σῶσαι κᾶμ', εἴαν βούλη, θέλω.
 ἀλλ' εἶπατ' εἶτε χρήζετε' εἶτ' οὐ χρήζετε
 φεύγειν ἄμεικτον ἄνδρα καὶ τὰ Βακχίου
 430 ναίειν μέλαθρα Ναϊδῶν νυμφῶν μέτα.
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἔνδον σὸς πατήρ τάδ' ἤνεσεν·
 ἀλλ' ἀσθενῆς γὰρ κάποκερδαίνων ποτοῦ
 ὥσπερ πρὸς ἰξῶ τῇ κύλικι λελημμένος
 πτέρυγας ἀλύει· σὺ δέ (νεανίας γὰρ εἶ)
 435 σῶθητι μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ τὸν ἀρχαῖον φίλον
 Διόνυσον ἀνάλαβ', οὐ Κύκλωπι προσφερῆ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ὦ φίλτατ', εἰ γὰρ τήνδ' ἴδοιμεν ἡμέραν
 Κύκλωπος ἐκφυγόντες ἀνόσιον κάρα.
 ὡς διὰ μακροῦ γε †τὸν σίφωνα τὸν φίλον
 440 χηρεῦομεν τόνδ' οὐκ ἔχομεν καταφαγεῖν.†

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἄκουε δὴ νυν ἦν ἔχω τιμωρίαν
 θηρὸς πανούργου σῆς τε δουλείας φυγῆν.

⁴³⁰ Ναϊδῶν Casaubon: Δαναίδων L

CYCLOPS

on top of a fine meal." Seeing it had given him pleasure, I gave him another cup, knowing that wine would be his undoing and he would soon pay the penalty. In due course he proceeded to sing, and I plied him with one cup after another and heated his heart with drink. Now hard by my weeping crew he sings his tuneless songs while the cavern echoes with it. I have crept out with the intention of saving you and me, if you agree. So tell me whether or not you want to be quit of this savage and live in the halls of Dionysus together with the Naiads. Your father assented to this in the cave, but since he is weak and has been enjoying the wine too much, he sticks fast to the cup like a bird caught in bird lime, flapping his wings in vain. But since you are young, escape with me and get back your old friend Dionysus, quite a different sort from the Cyclops.

CHORUS LEADER

Dearest of friends, if only we might see that day and escape from the impious Cyclops! For a long time now my poor siphon here has been widowed, with no place to lay its head.¹⁵

ODYSSEUS

Then listen to the punishment I have contrived for the knavish beast and how you may escape from slavery.

¹⁵ I give what many think is the approximate sense. Also possible is "For a long time now I have been in quest of that dear wine spigot but could not escape."

⁴³⁹⁻⁴⁰ τὸν φίλον χηρεύομεν / σίφωνα τόνδε Diggle: fort τὸν φίλον θηρεύομεν (Scaliger) σίφωνα τόνδε κάκφυγείν οὐκ εἴχομεν (-φυγείν iam apogr. Par.)

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λέγ', ὡς Ἀσιάδος οὐκ ἂν ἦδιον ψόφον
κιθάρας κλύοιμεν ἢ Κύκλωπ' ὀλωλότα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

445 ἐπὶ κῶμον ἔρπειν πρὸς κασιγνήτους θέλει
Κύκλωπας ἦσθεις τῷδε Βακχίου ποτῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξυνηκ' ἔρημον ξυλλαβῶν δρυμοῖσί νιν
σφάζαι μενοινᾶς ἢ πετρῶν ὄσαι κάτα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον· δόλιος ἢ προθυμία.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

450 πῶς δαί; σοφόν τοί σ' ὄντ' ἀκούομεν πάλαι.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

κῶμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ' ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων
ὡς οὐ Κύκλωψι πῶμα χρῆ δοῦναι τόδε,
μόνον δ' ἔχοντα βίοτον ἠδέως ἄγειν.
ὅταν δ' ὑπνώσση Βακχίου νικῶμενος,
455 ἀκρεμῶν ἐλαίας ἔστιν ἐν δόμοισί τις,
ὃν φασγάνῳ τῷδ' ἐξαποξύνας ἄκρον
ἐς πῦρ καθήσω· κᾶθ' ὅταν κεκαυμένον
ἴδω νιν, ἄρας θερμὸν ἐς μέσσην βαλῶ
Κύκλωπος ὄψιν ὄμμα τ' ἐκτῆξω πυρί.
460 ναυπηγίαν δ' ὡσεὶ τις ἀρμόζων ἀνήρ
διπλοῖν χαλινοῖν τρύπανον κωπηλατεῖ,
οὔτω κυκλώσω δαλὸν ἐν φαεσφόρῳ
Κύκλωπος ὄψει καὶ συνανανῶ κόρας.

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

Say on! I would not enjoy hearing the sound of the Asian lyre more than the news of the Cyclops' death!

ODYSSEUS

He wants to go to his brother Cyclopes for a revel since he is delighted with this drink of Dionysus.

CHORUS LEADER

I take your drift. You are eager to catch him by himself in the woods and cut his throat or push him off a cliff.

ODYSSEUS

No, nothing like that. My desire is for something cunning.

CHORUS LEADER

What is it then? We have long heard about your cleverness.

ODYSSEUS

To begin with, I want to keep him from going on this revel by telling him he shouldn't give the other Cyclopes this drink but keep it to himself and live a life of pleasure. But when he falls asleep, overcome by Dionysus, there is an olive stake in his hall, whose tip, when I have sharpened it with this sword of mine, I shall put into the fire. Then when I see it burnt, I shall lift it hot and poke it into the Cyclops' face and melt his eye with the fire. And just as a ship's joiner whirls his auger with a pair of thongs, so I shall drill the brand into the Cyclops' orb of vision and burn out his eyeball.

447 *δρυμοῖσι* Tyrwhitt: *ῥυθμοῖσι* L

449 *προθυμία* Musgrave: *πιθυμία* L

458-9 *βαλῶ . . . ὄμμα τ'* Pierson: *βαλὼν . . . ὄμματ' L*

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ιοὺ ἰού·
465 γέγηθα μαινόμεσθα τοῖς εὐρήμασιν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

κᾶπειτα καὶ σὲ καὶ φίλους γέροντά τε
νεὼς μελαίνης κοῖλον ἐμβήσας σκάφος
διπλαῖσι κώπαις τῆσδ' ἀποστελῶ χθονός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔστ' οὖν ὅπως ἂν ὡσπερὶ σπονδῆς θεοῦ
470 κἀγὼ λαβοίμην τοῦ τυφλοῦντος ὄμματα
δαλοῦ; φόνου γὰρ τοῦδε κοινωνεῖν θέλω.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

δεῖ γοῦν· μέγας γὰρ δαλός, οὗ ξυλληπτεύου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς κἂν ἀμαξῶν ἑκατὸν ἀραίμην βάρως,
εἰ τοῦ Κύκλωπος τοῦ κακῶς ὀλουμένου
475 ὀφθαλμὸν ὡσπερ σφηκιὰν ἐκθύψομεν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

σιγᾶτέ νυν· δόλον γὰρ ἐξεπίστασαι·
χῶταν κελεύω, τοῖσιν ἀρχιτέκτοσιν
πέιθεσθ'. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄνδρας ἀπολιπῶν φίλους
τοὺς ἔνδον ὄντας οὐ μόνος σωθήσομαι.
480 [καίτοι φύγοιμ' ἂν κἀκβέβηκ' ἄντρον μυχῶν·
ἀλλ' οὐ δίκαιον ἀπολιπόντ' ἐμοὺς φίλους
ξὺν οἷσπερ ἦλθον δεῦρο σωθῆναι μόνον.]

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

Hurrah! I am driven frantic with joy by your inventions!

ODYSSEUS

Then I shall put you and my friends and your old father on board my black ship, and with paired oars I shall set off from this land.

CHORUS LEADER

Is there any way that I too could put my hand, as men do with a libation to the gods, to the brand that will blind the Cyclops? I want to have a part in this bloodletting.

ODYSSEUS

You must, for the brand is big and you must help to hold it.

CHORUS LEADER

I could lift the weight of a hundred wagons if we are going to smoke out that cursed Cyclops' eye like a wasps' nest!

ODYSSEUS

Then hold your tongue—you now know my plan—and when I give the word, do what the master builder tells you. I shall not leave behind my friends in the cave and save myself alone. [And yet I could flee, and I have come out of the cave, but it is not right to leave behind my friends with whom I came here and save myself alone.]

475 ἐκθύσομεν Hertlein: ἐκθρύψ- L

480-82 del. anonymus (1872), tum Conradt

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγε, τίς πρῶτος, τίς δ' ἐπὶ πρῶτῳ
 ταχθεὶς δαλοῦ κώπην ὀχμάσαι
 485 Κύκλωπος ἔσω βλεφάρων ὄσας
 λαμπρὰν ὄψιν διακναίσει;
 ὠδῆ ἔνδοθεν

σίγα σίγα. καὶ δὴ μεθύων
 ἄχαριν κέλαδον μουσιζόμενος
 490 σκαιὸς ἀπῶδὸς καὶ κλαυσόμενος
 χωρεῖ πετρίνων ἔξω μελάθρων.
 φέρε νυν κώμοις παιδεύσωμεν
 τὸν ἀπαίδευτον·
 πάντως μέλλει τυφλὸς εἶναι.

στρ. α

495 μάκαρ ὅστις εὐιάζει
 βοτρυῶν φίλαισι πηγαῖς
 ἐπὶ κῶμον ἐκπετασθεὶς
 φίλον ἄνδρ' ὑπαγκαλίζων
 ἐπὶ δεμνίοισι τ' ἄνθος
 500 χλιδανᾶς ἔχων ἑταίρας,
 μυρόχριστον λιπαρὸς βό-
 στρυχον, αὐδᾶ δέ· Θύραν τίς οἴξει μοι;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

στρ. β

παπαπαῖ· πλέως μὲν οἴνου,
 γάνυμαι <δὲ> δαιτὸς ἤβα,
 505 σκάφος ὀλκὰς ὡς γεμισθεὶς

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

Who shall be stationed first, who next to first, to hold fast the grip of the firebrand, thrust it beneath the Cyclops' brow, and grind to powder his bright eye?

*Singing within.*¹⁶

Hush! Hush! For now the Cyclops, drunk and making graceless melody, comes forth from the rocky cave, a singer who is inept and who shall pay dearly. Come, let us with our revelling songs impart some culture to this lout. In any case he shall be blind.

Enter the CYCLOPS from the cave, leaning on SILENUS.

CHORUS

Happy the man who shouts the Bacchic cry, off to the revel, the well-beloved juice of the vine putting the wind in his sails. His arm is around his trusty friend, and he has waiting for him the fresh, young body of his voluptuous mistress upon her bed, and with his locks gleaming with myrrh he says, "Who will open the door for me?"

CYCLOPS

(sung) Ooh la la! I'm loaded up with wine, my heart skips with the cheer of the feast. Like a ship I'm loaded right up

¹⁶ An ancient stage direction preserved in the text.

484 ὀχμάσαι Musgrave: ὀχμάσας L

492 νιν Diggle: νιν L 495 μάκαρ Hermann: μακάριος L

499 δεινίσι τ' ἄνθος Meineke: δεινίσι τε ξανθόν L

501 μνρόχριστον Musgrave: μνρόχριστος L

504 <δὲ> Tr ἦβα post Lobeck Diggle: -ης L

EURIPIDES

ποτὶ σέλμα γαστρὸς ἄκρας.
 ὑπάγει μ' ὁ φόρτος εὐφρων
 ἐπὶ κῶμον ἦρος ὥραις
 ἐπὶ Κύκλωπας ἀδελφούς.

510 φέρε μοι, ξείνε, φέρ', ἀσκὸν ἔνδος μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. γ

καλὸν ὄμμασιν δεδορκῶς
 καλὸς ἐκπερᾶ μελάθρων
 <κελαδῶν> Φιλεῖ τις ἡμᾶς.

515 λύχνα δ' ἀμμένειν ἔασον
 †χρόα χῶσ† τέρεινα νύμφα
 δροσερῶν ἔσωθεν ἄντρων.
 στεφάνων δ' οὐ μία χροιά
 περὶ σὸν κρᾶτα τάχ' ἐξομιλήσει.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

520 Κύκλωψ, ἄκουσον ὡς ἐγὼ τοῦ Βακχίου
 τούτου τρίβων εἴμ', ὄν πιεῖν ἔδωκά σοι.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ὁ Βάκχιος δὲ τίς; θεὸς νομίζεται;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

μέγιστος ἀνθρώποισιν ἐς τέρψιν βίου.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἐρυγγάνω γοῦν αὐτὸν ἠδέως ἐγώ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τοιόσδ' ὁ δαίμων· οὐδένα βλάπτει βροτῶν.

CYCLOPS

to the top deck of my belly. This cheerful cargo brings me out to revel, in the springtime, to the houses of my brother Cyclopes. Come now, my friend, come now, give me the wineskin.

CHORUS

With a lovely glance he steps forth in beauty from the halls < crying, > "Someone loves me." Don't wait for the hour of lamplighting: < > and a slender nymph are within a dewy cave. But it is crowns of more than one hue that will soon hold converse with your brow.

ODYSSEUS

Hear me, Cyclops, since I am acquainted with this Dionysus whom I gave you to drink.

CYCLOPS

Who is Dionysus? Is he worshipped as a god?

ODYSSEUS

Yes, the best source of joy in life for mortals.

CYCLOPS

At any rate, I belch him out with pleasure.

ODYSSEUS

Such is this god. No mortal will he harm.

507 φόρτος Seymour: χόρτος L

512 καλὸς Scaliger: -ὸν L

513 <κελαδῶν> Diggle, e.g.

514 ἀμμένειν ἕασον Diggle: ἀμμένει δαῖτα σὸν L

515 ῥόδα φῶς Diggle

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

525 θεὸς δ' ἐν ἀσκῶ πῶς γέγηθ' οἴκους ἔχων;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ὅπου τιθῆ τις, ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶν εὐπετής.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οὐ τοὺς θεοὺς χρῆν σῶμ' ἔχειν ἐν δέρμασιν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τί δ', εἴ σε τέρπει γ'; ἢ τὸ δέρμα σοι πικρόν;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

μισῶ τὸν ἀσκόν· τὸ δὲ ποτὸν φιλῶ τόδε.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

530 μένων νυν αὐτοῦ πῖνε κευθύμει, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οὐ χρῆ μ' ἀδελφοῖς τοῦδε προσδοῦναι ποτοῦ;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἔχων γὰρ αὐτὸς τιμιώτερος φανῆ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

διδούς δὲ τοῖς φίλοισι χρησιμώτερος.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

πυγμαὶς ὁ κῶμος λοῖδορόν τ' ἔριν φιλεῖ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

535 μεθύω μέν, ἔμπας δ' οὔτις ἂν ψαύσειέ μου.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ὦ τᾶν, πεπωκότ' ἐν δόμοισι χρῆ μένειν.

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

But how can a god love to dwell in a wineskin?

ODYSSEUS

Wherever you put him, there he is at ease.

CYCLOPS

The gods ought not to clothe themselves in skins.

ODYSSEUS

Why, if he gives delight? Do you mind the skin?

CYCLOPS

I hate the wineskin. But this drink I love.

ODYSSEUS

Stay here and drink then, Cyclops. Take your cheer.

CYCLOPS

Shall I not give my brothers some to drink?

ODYSSEUS

Keep it yourself and you will be more honored.

CYCLOPS

By giving it I'm more helpful to my kin.

ODYSSEUS

Revelling often ends in fists and quarrelling.

CYCLOPS

Besotted though I am, no man shall touch me!

ODYSSEUS

Good friend, it's best when drunk to stay at home.

⁵²⁵ οἴκουσ Canter: οἴνουσ L

⁵²⁷ χρῆν Nauck: χρῆ L

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἡλίθιος ὅστις μὴ πίων κῶμον φιλεῖ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ὅς δ' ἂν μεθυσθεῖς γ' ἐν δόμοις μείνη σοφός.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

τί δρῶμεν, ὦ Σιληνέ; σοὶ μένειν δοκεῖ;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

540 δοκεῖ· τί γὰρ δεῖ συμποτῶν ἄλλων, Κύκλωψ;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ μὴν λαχνῶδές γ' οὔδας ἀνθηρᾶς χλόης.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

καὶ πρὸς γε θάλπος ἡλίου πίνειν καλόν.
κλίθητί νῦν μοι πλευρὰ θεῖς ἐπὶ χθονός.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἰδού.

545 τί δῆτα τὸν κρατῆρ' ὄπισθ' ἐμοῦ τίθης;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ὥς μὴ παριών τις καταβάλη.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

πίνειν μὲν οὔν
κλέπτων σὺ βούλη· κάτθες αὐτὸν ἐς μέσον.
σὺ δ', ὦ ξέν', εἰπέ τοῦνομ' ὅ τι σε χρὴ καλεῖν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

Οὔτιν' χάριω δὲ τίνα λαβών σ' ἐπαινέσω;

541n Od. Mancini: Kv. L

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

Foolish the man who drinks and does not revel.

ODYSSEUS

But he who's drunk and stays at home is wise.

CYCLOPS

What shall we do, Silenus? Shall we stay?

SILENUS

Yes, stay: what need of other banqueters?

ODYSSEUS

What's more, the ground is soft with flowery bosage.

SILENUS

What's more, it's nice to drink when the sun's so hot. Please lie down, then, recline upon the ground.

The Cyclops lies down. Silenus puts the mixing bowl behind him.

CYCLOPS

Done! Why are you putting the bowl behind me?

SILENUS

So no one passing by may knock it over.

CYCLOPS

No, you mean to steal some and drink it. Put it down between us. But you, stranger, tell me what name I must call you.

ODYSSEUS

Noman. What favor shall I get and thank you for?

⁵⁴¹ γ' οὐδας Porson: τοῦδας L

⁵⁴⁶ παριών Reiske: παρών L

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

550 πάντων σ' ἐταίρων ὕστερον θοινάσομαι.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

καλόν γε τὸ γέρας τῷ ξένῳ δίδως, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οὔτος, τί δρᾶς; τὸν οἶνον ἐκπίνεις λάθρα;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἔμ' οὔτος ἔκυσεν ὅτι καλὸν βλέπω.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

κλαύση, φιλῶν τὸν οἶνον οὐ φιλοῦντα σέ.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

555 οὐ μὰ Δί', ἐπεὶ μού φησ' ἐρᾶν ὄντος καλοῦ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἔγχει, πλέων δὲ τὸν σκύφον δίδου μόνον.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

πῶς οὖν κέκραται; φέρε διασκευώμεθα.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἀπολείς· δὸς οὔτως.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οὐ μὰ Δί', οὐ πρὶν ἂν γέ σε
στέφανον ἴδω λαβόντα γεύσωμαί τέ τι.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

560 οἰνοχόος ἄδικος.

⁵⁵¹ⁿ Σι. Lenting: Ὀδ. L

⁵⁵⁵ οὐ Diggle: ναὶ L

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

Of all your company I shall eat you last.

SILENUS

Fine present, Cyclops, you have given your guest!

Silenus helps himself quietly to some wine.

CYCLOPS

You! What are you doing? Drinking on the sly?

SILENUS

No, the wine kissed me for my handsome looks.

CYCLOPS

You'll regret you loved the wine which loves not you.

SILENUS

No, by Zeus, for it says it has fallen for my beauty.

CYCLOPS

Just pour, give me the cup when you have filled it!

SILENUS

How is the mixture? Let me have a look.

CYCLOPS

You'll be the death of me! Just hand it over!

SILENUS

Not until I see you crowned (*gives him a garland to put on*)
and have had a little taste.

CYCLOPS

This wine pourer's a crook.

558 οὐ (prius) Wecklein: *vaì* L 560 οἶνοχόος Canter: ὦ
οἶνοχόος L <*vaì*> editio Aldina: *rasura* in L

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

<ναί> μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' οἶνος γλυκός.
ἀπομακτέον δέ σουστίην ὡς λήψῃ πιεῖν.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ιδού, καθαρὸν τὸ χεῖλος αἰ τρίχες τέ μου.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

θές νυν τὸν ἀγκῶν' εὐρύθμως κὸτ' ἔκπιε,
ὥσπερ μ' ὄρῳς πίνοντα—χῶσπερ οὐκέτι.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

565 ᾶ ᾶ, τί δράσεις;

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἠδέως ἠμύστισα.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

λάβ', ᾧ ξέν', αὐτὸς οἰνοχόος τέ μοι γενοῦ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

γιγνώσκειται γοῦν ἄμπελος τῆμῃ χερὶ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

φέρ' ἔγχεόν νυν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἐγχέω, σίγα μόνον.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

χαλεπὸν τόδ' εἶπας, ὅστις ἂν πίνη πολύν.

561 ἀπομακτέον Cobet: -μυκτέον L σουστίην Wilamowitz:
σοι L 564 οὐκέτι Nauck: οὐκ ἐμέ L

566 λάβ' ᾧ . . . τέ μοι Dobree: λαβὼν . . . γέ μου L

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

Yes, but the wine is sweet. But time to wipe your mouth:
here comes a drink.

CYCLOPS

I've wiped it off: my lips and beard are clean.

SILENUS

Lie gracefully on your elbow and drink it off, just as you
see me drink—or see me not!

*He drinks, tipping the wine cup up so as to be invisible
behind it.*

CYCLOPS

Hey, what are you up to?

SILENUS

Nicely down the hatch!

CYCLOPS

Stranger, take charge of the wine and be my wine pourer.

ODYSSEUS

At least my hand has some acquaintance with the vine.

CYCLOPS

Come, pour then.

ODYSSEUS

See, I'm pouring. Just be quiet.

CYCLOPS

That's hard advice for a man who's downed a lot.

EURIPIDES

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

570 ἰδού· λαβὼν ἔκπιθι καὶ μηδὲν λίπης·
 συνεκθανεῖν δὲ σπῶντα χρῆ τῷ πώματι.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

παπαῖ, σοφόν γε τὸ ξύλον τῆς ἀμπέλου.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

κὰν μὲν σπάσης γε δαιτὶ πρὸς πολλῇ πολύν,
 τέγξας ἄδιψον νηδύν, εἰς ὕπνον βαλεῖ,
 575 ἦν δ' ἑλλίπης τι, ξηρανεῖ σ' ὁ Βάκχιος.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ιοῦ ἰού·

ὡς ἐξένευσα μόγισ· ἄκρατος ἢ χάρις.

ὁ δ' οὐρανός μοι συμμαμειγμένος δοκεῖ
 τῇ γῇ φέρεσθαι, τοῦ Διός τε τὸν θρόνον
 580 λεύσσω τὸ πᾶν τε δαιμόνων ἀγνὸν σέβας.
 οὐκ ἂν φιλήσαιμ'; αἱ Χάριτες πειρώσιν με.
 ἄλις· Γανυμήδη τόνδ' ἔχων ἀναπαύσομαι
 κάλλιον ἢ τὰς Χάριτας. ἦδομαι δέ πως
 τοῖς παιδικοῖσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς θήλεσιν.

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

585 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὁ Διός εἰμι Γανυμήδης, Κύκλωψ;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ναὶ μὰ Δί', ὃν ἀρπάζω γ' ἐγὼ 'κ τῆς Δαρδάνου.

571 σπῶντα Casaubon: σιγῶντα L

573 σπάσης Dobree: -ση L

574 βαλεῖ Musgrave: -εῖς L

CYCLOPS

ODYSSEUS

(*handing him the cup*) There: take it and drain it off now.
No heel taps. The toper and his wine must end together.

CYCLOPS

Oh my, how clever is the grapevine's wood!

ODYSSEUS

And if you swig deep after a full meal and drink till your belly loses its thirst, it will put you to sleep. But if you leave some, Dionysus will give you a parching thirst.

The Cyclops has a long drink.

CYCLOPS

Calloo, callay! How close I was to drowning in it! This is pleasure unalloyed. I think I see the heaven and the earth swimming around together, I see Zeus's throne and the whole revered company of the gods. Shall I not kiss them? The Graces are trying to seduce me. No more! With this Ganymede here I shall go off to bed with greater glory than with the Graces. And somehow I take more pleasure in boys than in women.

SILENUS

What, am I Zeus's boy Ganymede, Cyclops?

CYCLOPS

Yes, by Zeus, and I am abducting him from Dardanus' house!

583 κάλλιον ἢ Spengel: κάλλιστα νῆ L

586 τῆς Hermann: τοῦ L

EURIPIDES

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

ἀπόλωλα, παῖδες· σχέτλια πείσομαι κακά.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

μέμφη τὸν ἐραστήν· κἀντρυφᾶς πεπωκότι·

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

οἴμοι· πικρότατον οἶνον ὄψομαι τάχα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- 590 ἄγε δῆ, Διονύσου παῖδες, εὐγενῆ τέκνα,
 ἔνδον μὲν ἀνὴρ· τῷ δ' ὕπνω παρειμένος
 τάχ' ἐξ ἀναιδοῦς φάρυγος ὠθήσει κρέα.
 δαλὸς δ' ἔσωθεν αὐλίων πνέων καπνὸν
 παρηντρέπισται, κούδεν ἄλλο πλὴν πυροῦν
 595 Κύκλωπος ὄψιν· ἀλλ' ὅπως ἀνὴρ ἔση.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέτρας τὸ λῆμα κἀδάμαντος ἔξομεν.
 χῶρει δ' ἐς οἴκους πρὶν τι τὸν πατέρα παθεῖν
 ἀπάλαμνον· ὡς σοι τὰνθάδ' ἐστὶν εὐτρεπή.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- Ἥφαιστ', ἀναξ Αἰτναίε, γείτονος κακοῦ
 600 λαμπρὸν πυρώσας ὄμμ' ἀπαλλάχθηθ' ἄπαξ,
 σύ τ', ὦ μελαίνης Νυκτὸς ἐκπαίδευσ', Ὕπνε,
 ἄκρατος ἐλθὲ θηρὶ τῷ θεοστρυγεῖ,
 καὶ μῆ' ἐπὶ καλλίστοισι Τρωικοῖς πόνοις

588 πεπωκότι Scaliger: -ότα L

593 πνέων Diggle: ὠθεῖ L

594 κούδεν Kirchhoff: δ' οὐδέν L

CYCLOPS

SILENUS

Oh, I am done for, my sons! A terrible fate is in store for me!

CYCLOPS

Do you not like your lover and turn up your nose at one who's drunk?

SILENUS

Oh me! My glimpse of the wine will soon prove all too bitter!

Exit the CYCLOPS, with the reluctant SILENUS, into the cave.

ODYSSEUS

Come, Dionysus' children, noble offspring, the man's within and soon, relaxed in sleep, he'll belch his meat out from his shameless maw. Inside the hall the firebrand is ready, sending forth smoke, and there is nothing left to do but to burn out the Cyclops' eye. But now you must show your manhood.

CHORUS LEADER

Our hearts shall be like rock or adamant! But go into the house before my father suffers some awful disaster. From this quarter all is ready for you.

ODYSSEUS

Hephaestus, lord of Aetna, burn out the bright eye of this pest, your neighbor, and be quit of him for good! And you, Sleep, child of black Night, come with undiluted force against this god-detested beast! After his glorious deeds at

EURIPIDES

- αὐτόν τε ναύτας τ' ἀπολέσῃτ' Ὀδυσσέα
 605 ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ᾧ θεῶν οὐδέν ἢ βροτῶν μέλει.
 ἢ τὴν τύχην μὲν δαίμον' ἠγείσθαι χρεῶν,
 τὰ δαιμόνων δὲ τῆς τύχης ἐλάσσονα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- λήψεται τὸν τράχηλον
 ἐντόνως ὁ καρκίνος
 610 τοῦ ξενοδαιτυμόνος· πυρὶ γὰρ τάχα
 φωσφόρους ὀλεῖ κόρας.
 ἦδη δαλὸς ἠνθρακωμένος
 615 κρύπτεται ἐς σποδιάν, δρυὸς ἄσπετον
 ἔρνος. ἀλλ' ἴτω Μάρων,
 πρασσέτω,
 μαινομένου ἔξελέτω βλέφαρον
 Κύκλωπος, ὡς πῖη κακῶς.
 620 κᾶτ' ἐγὼ
 τὸν φιλοκισσοφόρον Βρόμιον
 ποθεινὸν εἰσιδεῖν θέλω,
 Κύκλωπος λιπὼν ἐρημίαν
 ἄρ' ἐς τοσόνδ' ἀφίξομαι;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

- 625 σιγᾶτε πρὸς θεῶν, θῆρες, ἡσυχάζετε,
 συνθέντες ἄρθρα στόματος· οὐδὲ πνεῖν ἐῶ,
 οὐ σκαρδαμύσσειν οὐδὲ χρέμπτεσθαί τινα,
 ὡς μὴ ἔγερθῆ τὸ κακόν, ἔστ' ἂν ὄμματος
 ὄψις Κύκλωπος ἐξαμιλληθῆ πυρὶ.

CYCLOPS

Troy do not let Odysseus, himself and his men, die at the hands of a man who heeds not gods or men. Otherwise, we will have to regard Chance as God and the gods as weaker than Chance.

Exit ODYSSEUS into the cave.

CHORUS

The tongs will eagerly grasp the neck of the guest-eater: for by fire he will soon lose his shining eye. Already the firebrand, burnt to charcoal, is hid in the ashes, huge offshoot of its tree. But let the Maron wine come, let it act, let it extract the eye of the mad Cyclops so that he may prove to have drunk to his cost! After that I want to see ivy-garlanded Dionysus, my heart's desire, and to leave behind the Cyclops' lonely dwelling. Shall I ever attain such joy?

Enter ODYSSEUS from the cave.

ODYSSEUS

Silence, you savages, for heaven's sake quiet! Let your lips be shut fast! I forbid anyone even to breathe or to blink or to clear his throat lest the monster wake up before the Cyclops' eye can have its contest with the fire.

604 ναύτας Tr: ναῦς L

618 μαινομένου 'ξελέτω Hermann: μαινόμενος ἐξελέτω L

620 κᾶτ' ἐγὼ Willink: κἀγὼ L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σιγῶμεν ἐγκάψαντες αἰθέρα γνάθους.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

630 ἄγε νυν ὅπως ἄψεσθε τοῦ δαλοῦ χεροῖν
ἔσω μολόντες· διάπυρος δ' ἐστὶν καλῶς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔκουν σὺ τάξεις οὔστινας πρώτους χρεῶν
καυτὸν μοχλὸν λαβόντας ἐκκάειν τὸ φῶς
Κύκλωπος, ὡς ἂν τῆς τύχης κοινώμεθα;

ΧΟΡΟΣ Α

635 ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐσμεν μακροτέρω πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν
ἐστῶτες ὠθεῖν ἐς τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τὸ πῦρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ Β

ἡμεῖς δὲ χωλοί γ' ἀρτίως γεγενήμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ Α

ταυτὸν πεπόνθατ' ἄρ' ἐμοί· τοὺς γὰρ πόδας
ἐστῶτες ἐσπάσθημεν οὐκ οἶδ' ἐξ ὄτου.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

640 ἐστῶτες ἐσπάσθητε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ Α

καὶ τά γ' ὄμματα
μέστ' ἐστὶν ἡμῖν κόνεος ἢ τέφρας ποθέν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἄνδρες πονηροὶ κοῦδὲν οἶδε σύμμαχοι.

⁶³³ καυτὸν Hermann: καὶ τὸν L

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

We hold our peace, gulping down the air with our mouths.

ODYSSEUS

Come then, you must go inside and put your hands to the firebrand. It is now glowing nicely.

CHORUS LEADER

Won't you say who are to be the first to grasp the charred stake and burn out the Cyclops' eye, so that we may share in whatever fate chance holds?

LEADER OF CHORUS A

We stand too far from the door to push the fire into the Cyclops' eye.

LEADER OF CHORUS B

And we have just now become lame.

LEADER OF CHORUS A

The same thing has happened to me. As I was standing here I sprained my feet, I can't think how.

ODYSSEUS

You got a sprain while standing?

LEADER OF CHORUS A

Yes, and somehow my eyes have become full of dust and ash.

ODYSSEUS

These allies of mine are cowardly and worthless.

641 μέστ' ἐστὶν Scaliger: μέτεστιν L ἡμῖν Barnes: ἡμῶν L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀτιῆ τὸ νῶτον τὴν ῥάχιν τ' οἰκτίρομεν
 καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐκβαλεῖν οὐ βούλομαι
 645 τυπτόμενος, αὐτῆ γίγνεται ποιηρία;
 ἀλλ' οἶδ' ἐπωδὴν Ὀρφέως ἀγαθὴν πάνυ,
 ὥστ' αὐτόματον τὸν δαλὸν ἐς τὸ κρανίον
 στείχονθ' ὑφάπτειν τὸν μονῶπα παῖδα γῆς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

650 πάλαι μὲν ἤδη σ' ὄντα τοιοῦτον φύσει,
 νῦν δ' οἶδ' ἄμεινον. τοῖσι δ' οἰκείους φίλους
 χρῆσθαί μ' ἀνάγκη. χειρὶ δ' εἰ μηδὲν σθένεις,
 ἀλλ' οὖν ἐπεγκέλευέ γ', ὡς εὐψυχίαν
 φίλων κελευσμοῖς τοῖσι σοῖς κτησώμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

655 δράσω τάδ'. ἐν τῷ Καρὶ κινδυνεύσομεν.
 κελευσμάτων δ' ἕκατι τυφέσθω Κύκλωψ.
 ἰὼ ἰὼ
 ὠθεῖτε γενναιότατα,
 σπενύδεται, ἐκκαίεται ὄφρον
 θηρὸς τοῦ ξενοδοαίτα.
 τύφεται ὦ, καίεται ὦ
 660 τὸν Αἴτνας μηλονόμον.
 τὸρνευ' ἔλκε, μὴ ἔξοδυνη-
 θεῖς δράσῃ τι μάταιον.

647 ὥστ' Blaydes; ὡς L

649 ἤδη Heath; ἤδειν L

656 ὠθεῖτε γενναιότατα Diggle: γ- ὦ- L

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

Just because I take pity on my back and my spine and have no desire to have my teeth knocked out, is that cowardice? But I know an incantation of Orpheus so wonderful that the firebrand all on its own will march up to his skull and set the one-eyed son of earth on fire.

ODYSSEUS

For a long time I have known that your nature was like this, but now I know it better. I must make use of my own friends. But if you have no strength in your arm, at least cheer us on so that with your encouragement we may find our friends brave.

Exit ODYSSEUS into the cave.

CHORUS LEADER

I shall do so and let a mercenary run my risk. If encouragements can do it, let the Cyclops be burned!

CHORUS

Hurrah, hurrah! Thrust bravely, hurry, burn out the eyebrow of the guest-eating monster! Burn, incinerate the herdsman of Aetna! Whirl and pull, whirl and pull, lest in pain he do you some desperate harm!

Enter the CYCLOPS from the cave with bloodied mask.

⁶⁵⁷ ὀφρὸν Hermann: τὰν ὀφρὸν L

⁶⁶¹ μὴ ἕξοδυνη- apogr. Par.: μὴ σ' ἕξοδυνη- L

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ᾧμοι, κατηνθρακώμεθ' ὀφθαλμοῦ σέλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καλός γ' ὁ παιάν· μέλπε μοι τόνδ' αὖ, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

665 ᾧμοι μάλ', ὡς ὑβρίσμεθ', ὡς ὀλώλαμεν.
 ἀλλ' οὔτι μὴ φύγητε τῆσδ' ἔξω πέτρας
 χαίροντες, οὐδὲν ὄντες· ἐν πύλαισι γὰρ
 σταθεῖς φάραγγος τῆσδ' ἐναρμόσω χέρας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί χρῆμ' ἀντεῖς, ᾧ Κύκλωψ;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ἀπωλόμην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

670 αἰσχρὸς γε φαίνη.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

κάπὶ τοῖσδέ γ' ἄθλιος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μεθύων κατέπεσες ἐς μέσους τοὺς ἀνθρακας;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

Οὐτίς μ' ἀπώλεσ'.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' οὐδεῖς <σ' > ἠδίκει.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

Οὐτίς με τυφλοῖ βλέφαρον.

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS

Alas! My bright eye is all turned to cinder!

CHORUS LEADER

A lovely song: please sing it for me again, Cyclops!

CYCLOPS

Alas, alack! How I have been maltreated, how undone! But you will never escape this cave unpunished, you worthless wretches! For I shall take my stand in the entrance and fit my hands to it.

CHORUS LEADER

Why do you shout so, Cyclops?

CYCLOPS

I am ruined!

CHORUS LEADER

You *do* look ugly.

CYCLOPS

And miserable as well!

CHORUS LEADER

Did you fall in a drunken stupor into the coals?

CYCLOPS

Noman destroyed me.

CHORUS LEADER

No one, then, has wronged you.

CYCLOPS

Noman has blinded my eye.

664 $\alpha\tilde{\nu}$ Markland: $\tilde{\omega}$ L

668 $\tau\eta\sigma\delta'$ Nauck: $\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\delta'$ L

672 < σ' > Battierius

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' εἶ τυφλός.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

τῶς δὴ σύτ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ πῶς σ' οὔτις ἂν θείη τυφλόν;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

675 σκώπτεις. ὁ δ' Οὔτις ποῦ 'στιν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδαμοῦ, Κύκλωψ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ὁ ξένος ἴν' ὀρθῶς ἐκμάθησ' μ' ἀπώλεσεν,
ὁ μαρός, ὅς μοι δοῦς τὸ πῶμα κατέκλυσεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δεινὸς γὰρ οἶνος καὶ παλαίεσθαι βαρύς.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

πρὸς θεῶν, πεφεύγασ' ἢ μένουσ' ἔσω δόμων;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

680 οὔτοι σιωπῇ τὴν πέτραν ἐπήλυγα
λαβόντες ἐστήκασι.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ποτέρας τῆς χερός;

⁶⁷⁴ fort. ὡς δριμύ vel ὡς εἰλύ (εἰλύ· μέλαν Hesychius) σ'
οὔτις Canter: σύ· τίς σ' L

⁶⁷⁷ κατέκλυσεν Canter: κατέκαυσε L

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

So you are *not* blind.

CYCLOPS

<How sharp the pain!>¹⁷

CHORUS LEADER

And how could nobody make you blind?

CYCLOPS

You mock me. But this Noman, where is he?

CHORUS LEADER

Nowhere, Cyclops.

CYCLOPS

Know well, it was my guest who destroyed me, the abominable guest, who drowned me with the drink he gave me.

CHORUS LEADER

Yes, wine is a dangerous thing and hard to wrestle against.

CYCLOPS

Tell me, for heaven's sake, have they fled or are they still in the house?

CHORUS LEADER

They are standing here quietly under the overhang of the cliff.

CYCLOPS

To my left or my right?

¹⁷ The transmitted words are unintelligible and none of the conjectures is wholly satisfactory. This translation gives one possible sense.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐν δεξιᾷ σου.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

πού;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς αὐτῇ τῇ πέτρα.

ἔχεις;

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

κακόν γε πρὸς κακῷ· τὸ κρανίον
παίσας κατέαγα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καί σε διαφεύγουσί γε.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

685 οὐ τῆδέ πη, τῆδ' εἶπας;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ· ταύτη λέγω.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

πῆ γάρ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

περιάγου κείσε, πρὸς τὰριστερά.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οἴμοι γελῶμαι· κερτομεῖτέ μ' ἐν κακοῖς.

685 τῆδέ πη Blaydes: τῆδ' ἐπεὶ L

686 περιάγου κείσε Nauck: περιάγουσί σε L

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

To your right.

The Cyclops moves from the entrance. ODYSSEUS and his men accompanied by SILENUS slip silently out.

CYCLOPS

Where?

CHORUS LEADER

Right next to the cliff. Have you got them?

The Cyclops collides with the rock cliff.

CYCLOPS

Yes, got pain on top of pain! I've hit my head and broken it.

CHORUS LEADER

And what's more, they've given you the slip.

CYCLOPS

Didn't you say somewhere over here?

CHORUS LEADER

No. I mean over here.

CYCLOPS

And where is that?

CHORUS LEADER

Turn round this way, to your left.

CYCLOPS

Oh, you are mocking me, deceiving me in my troubles!

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὗτός ἐστι σοῦ.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

ὦ παγκάκιστε, ποῦ ποτ' εἶ;

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τηλοῦ σέθεν

690 φυλακαῖσι φρουρῶ σῶμ' Ὀδυσσέως τόδε.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

πῶς εἶπας; ὄνομα μεταβαλὼν καινὸν λέγεις.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ὄπερ μ' ὁ φύσας ὠνόμαζ' Ὀδυσσέα,
δώσειν δ' ἔμελλες ἀνοσίῳν δαιτὸς δίκας·
κακῶς γὰρ ἂν Τροίαν γε διεπυρώσαμεν
695 εἰ μὴ σ' ἐταίρων φόνον ἐτιμωρησάμην.

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

αἰαῖ· παλαιὸς χρησμὸς ἐκπεραίνεται·
τυφλήν γὰρ ὄψιν ἐκ σέθεν σχήσειν μ' ἔφη
Τροίας ἀφορμηθέντος. ἀλλὰ καὶ σέ τοι
δίκας ὑφέξειν ἀντὶ τῶνδ' ἐθέσπισεν,

700 πολὺν θαλάσση χρόνον ἐναιωρούμενον.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

κλαίειν σ' ἄνωγα· καὶ δέδραχ' ὄπερ λέγω.
ἐγὼ δ' ἐπ' ἀκτὰς εἶμι καὶ νεὼς σκάφος
ἦσω ἔπι πόντον Σικελὸν ἔς τ' ἐμὴν πάτραν.

690 σῶμ' Canter: δῶμ' L 692 μ' Nauck: γ' L Ὀδυσ-
σέα] fort. ὀργῆς χάριν 694 διεπυρώσαμεν Fix: -σάμην L

CYCLOPS

CHORUS LEADER

I shall no more. He's right in front of you.

CYCLOPS

Knave, where in the world are you?

ODYSSEUS

At some distance, where I can keep the person of Odysseus here safe from harm.

CYCLOPS

What? This is a new name you use.

ODYSSEUS

The very one my father gave me, Odysseus,¹⁸ and you were destined, it seems, to pay the penalty for your ungodly feast. For my burning Troy to the ground would have been a sorry deed if I had not punished you for the murder of my companions.

CYCLOPS

Oh, oh, an ancient prophecy is now being fulfilled! It said that I would be blinded at your hands when you had set out from Troy. But it also prophesied that you would pay the penalty for this by drifting about on the sea for a long time.

ODYSSEUS

You can go howl, say I! And that is just what I have made you do! I, however, shall go to the beach and launch my ship homeward over the Sicilian Sea.

¹⁸ The repeated name looks suspicious. It may have ousted an expression like "(a name) derived from anger," an allusion to the derivation of Odysseus' name from *ὀδύσσοσθαι*, to be angry at or to hate.

EURIPIDES

ΚΤΚΛΩΨ

οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ σε τῆσδ' ἀπορρήξας πέτρας
705 αὐτοῖσι συνναύταισι συντρίψω βαλῶν.
ἄνω δ' ἐπ' ὄχθον εἶμι, καίπερ ὢν τυφλός,
δι' ἀμφιτρήτος τῆσδε προσβαίνων ποδί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἡμεῖς δὲ συνναῦταί γε τοῦδ' Ὀδυσσέως
ὄντες τὸ λοιπὸν Βακχίῳ δουλεύσομεν.

707 ποδί] πέτρας Kirchhoff

CYCLOPS

Exit ODYSSEUS and his men by Eisodos B.

CYCLOPS

Oh no you won't: I shall break off a piece of this crag, hurl it, and crush you, companions and all, to bits. I'm going up to the hilltop, blind though I am, by climbing through my tunnel.¹⁹

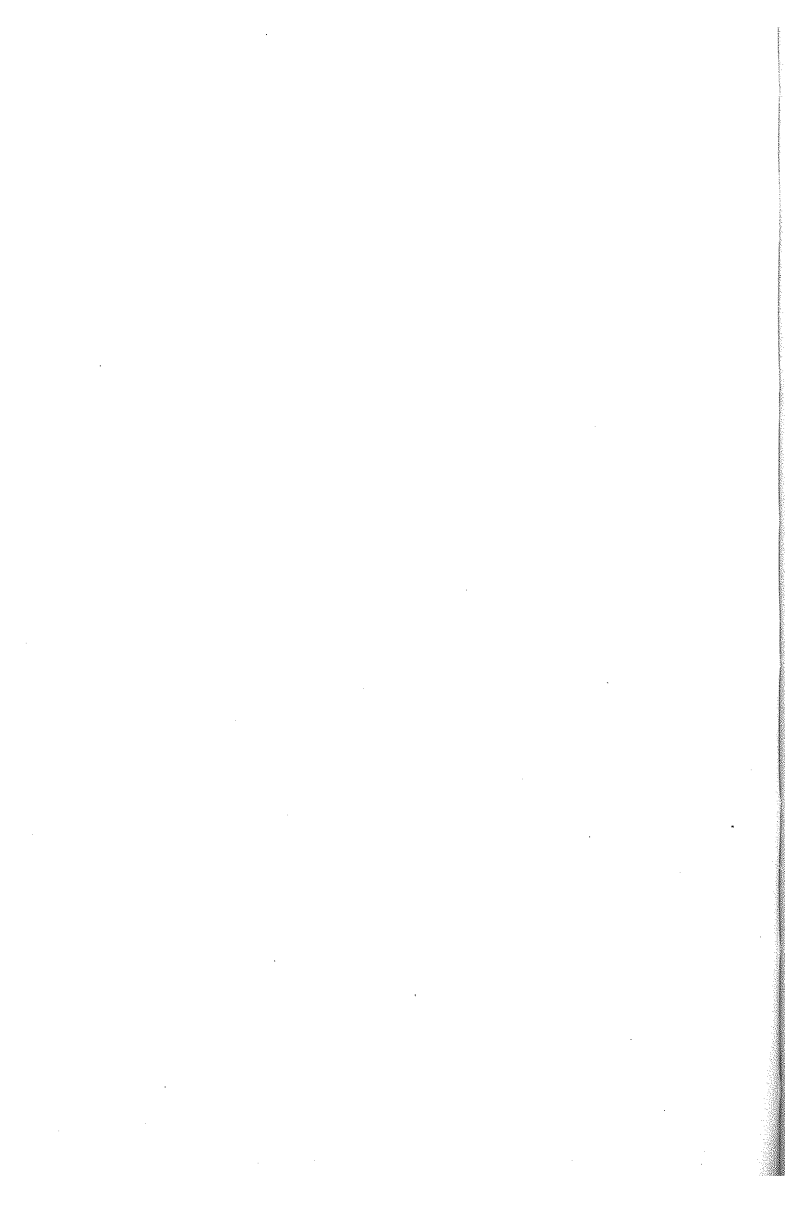
Exit CYCLOPS into the cave.

CHORUS LEADER

As for us, we shall be shipmates with Odysseus and ever after serve in Dionysus' train.

Exit CHORUS and SILENUS by Eisodos B

¹⁹ The cave is imagined to have a back entrance looking over the sea.



ALCESTIS

INTRODUCTION

The story of Admetus—how Apollo, in gratitude for his kindness, tricked the Fates into granting him a reprieve from his fated day of death provided he could find a substitute, how his wife Alcestis agreed to die in his place, and how Heracles brought her back from Hades—had been the subject of an *Alcestis* by the early tragic poet Phrynichus, and the story is alluded to in Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 723ff. We have only one line, corrupt at that, from Phrynichus' play, but one of the themes inherent in the story, whether or not given prominence by Phrynichus, is visible in the Aeschylus passage, where the Erinyes complain to Apollo that he once erased the distinction between mortals and immortals by his favor to Admetus. Although this is a rhetorical exaggeration—Admetus gets postponement of death, not immortality—it indicates clearly what the story of Admetus is about. It is about suspension of the ordinary conditions of mortal existence.

Euripides developed this aspect of the myth to the full in the earliest of his extant tragedies and one of the most beautiful and satisfying plays he wrote. Whatever had been made of it before, in his hands it became one of those myths—like the stories in Grimm of three miraculous wishes or the myths of Midas or Tithonus—that console us for the disappointments of ordinary life and the fact

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of mortality by showing the disasters that would happen if these conditions of mortal existence were suspended. Admetus is particularly favored in that he gets to postpone the day of his death. Yet the fact that he must lose his wife to enjoy this favor means, as he learns, that he would have been better off dying. The paradox of the story is that, while a woman who would die in her husband's stead would be the best of wives, the loss of so good a woman would render desolate and unlivable the remaining life she made possible for her husband. When his wife is restored to him at the end by the intervention of Heracles, Admetus has recovered not only her but also a juster appreciation of ordinary mortal existence.

Apollo's prologue sets forth both situation and theme. Apollo had been condemned to a period of servitude to a mere mortal, Admetus of Pherae, because both the god and his son Asclepius rebelled against the order of things established by Zeus. (Asclepius used his skill in medicine to raise the dead, a clear violation of the distinction between mortals and immortals. And when Zeus killed him with the thunderbolt, Apollo retaliated on the Cyclopes, who forged these weapons for Zeus.) To repay Admetus' kindness Apollo has won for his mortal master a reprieve from his fated early death provided he can find someone to die in his place. The god Death enters to claim Alcestis as Admetus' substitute. Apollo tells Death that he will be robbed of her by Heracles, who is on his way to fetch the horses of Diomedes. Apollo, god of prophecy, has the facts correct, but since he has never been a mortal, he cannot gauge the human realities of the situation he has created. These are played out in the sequel.

Alcestis is presented to us first in a messenger speech

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delivered by a maidservant, and then in person in her death scene before the palace. She loves her husband, but her decision to die for him is motivated, as her final speech to him suggests, by more practical considerations. She does not want to live apart from him with his orphaned children, she says. This would be her lot if she allowed him to die. If she dies, however, and Admetus does not remarry, the family, minus the mother, is intact. (The situation is quite different if Alcestis lives and Admetus dies. She presumably would have to remarry, and then her children by Admetus would take second place to the children her new husband gave her.) Her decision is not wildly quixotic but based on a calculus she and Admetus both accept.

For his part, Admetus is not content merely to accept the condition that he not remarry. To show that he loves Alcestis and realizes the value of her sacrifice, he promises her several other things she had not asked for: he vows perpetual mourning for her and forswears all music; and although her demand to him was only that he not remarry, Admetus swears perpetual celibacy and promises that his only sexual pleasure will be to embrace a statue of his dead wife. Alcestis says farewell to her children and her husband and dies. Their young son sings an affecting lament, and the picture before us is of a family united in grief.

After they go in and the Chorus sing an ode in praise of Alcestis, promising her immortality in song, Heracles arrives. Since the audience know from Apollo's prophecy that he will bring Alcestis back from the dead, they are in a position to see the significance of his arrival immediately after Alcestis' death, namely that the final dramatic movement of the play, from unhappiness to joy, has already been

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set in train, even though subjectively Admetus' fortunes have not yet reached their lowest ebb.

Heracles is reluctant to enter a house of mourning, and Admetus deceives him into thinking that Alcestis is still alive and it is some other woman who has died. This deception is necessary to the plot in three ways: first, Heracles must accept Admetus' hospitality if he is to figure in the sequel; second, Admetus' action in entertaining Heracles even when he is in mourning is regarded by Heracles as a piece of extraordinary generosity, and its repayment becomes the motive for his rescue of Alcestis; third, the deception (which he regards as well-meant and only *pretends* to take offense at) motivates his kindly deception of Admetus at the end of the play. Whether the concealing of Alcestis' death from Heracles was a traditional feature of the story or an invention of our poet, Euripides manages it in such a way that, after the audience's immediate shock at Admetus' deceptiveness, they are led by the Chorus's shocked question, Admetus' reply, and the Chorus's admiring ode on Admetus' hospitality to regard it not as evidence of moral obtuseness but as of a piece with his admirable treatment of Apollo.

Although the happy ending is already in train, Admetus must sink to further depths of grief. Just as the funeral procession is about to start off, Admetus' father Pheres comes to pay his respects. A hideous quarrel ensues, in which Admetus reproaches Pheres for not dying in his place and sparing Alcestis the necessity of doing so, and Pheres calls him a coward for not dying himself. Then returning from the funeral Admetus confronts his empty house, the misery of his longing for his dead wife, and the handle he has

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given (as his quarrel with his father showed) to anyone who wishes to call him a coward. Apollo's favor to him is no favor at all, for his wife's lot, he now sees, is more fortunate than his own.

The re-entrance of Heracles with the veiled Alcestis brings Admetus' fortunes, subjectively, to their very lowest ebb before transporting him, in the twinkling of an eye, from abject misery to inexpressible joy, a perfect Aristotelian *peripeteia* from bad fortune to good. Heracles pretends he has won a woman in a wrestling match and insists on entrusting her to Admetus' safekeeping; Admetus can see that the woman resembles his dead wife, he repeatedly refuses to take her in and reacts with shock to the hints of Heracles that he might find solace in her arms. When Heracles insists that he take her in by the hand, the point of Admetus' greatest misery is reached. That is the moment when Heracles removes the veil, and in an instant Admetus' misery turns to happiness. Heracles' deception of Admetus is a kindly return for Admetus' deception of him, for he proves his devotion to his dead wife while she is standing by unbeknownst to him.

The return of Alcestis means that ordinary life, lived under the usual conditions of mortality, is restored once more for Admetus and Alcestis, and significantly it is a son of Zeus who is the author of the restoration. Apollo's boon, by itself was no boon. Heracles, son of Zeus, had spoken in his drunken discourse to the Manservant (773-802) of the nature of mortal life, that no one knows whether he will be alive tomorrow and so we must make good use of today. At the play's end he restores the order of Zeus, and Admetus declares "the new life we have now taken on is better than the old" (1157-8). The five anapestic lines at the very end

ALCESTIS

express not only the unexpectedness of the events of this play but also the essential character of mortal life, in which confident expectation is often defeated and it is wise to expect the unexpected.

Once the thematic of the play is grasped, the question of the characterization of Admetus, to which much attention is often devoted, becomes of secondary importance. Some critics judge Admetus' acceptance of his wife's sacrifice much more harshly than others. Some find in his hospitality something weighty to set down in his favor, while others regard it as superficial. Admetus is demonstrably neither a hero nor a knave, but the story requires only that he be neither. Just how bad a figure he cuts during the course of the play will be variously judged by various temperaments, with the indulgent applying fairy-tale and the censorious real-life standards of judgment. It is clear that for the working of this story his conduct must not be utterly clear of reproach, but clear also that we must not regard his happiness at the end as a monstrously unjust rewarding of the utterly unworthy. The important thing about Admetus is not his character in itself but his remarkable situation. When the ordinary rules of mortality are suspended, no one except Alcestis cuts a very noble figure.

Alcestis was the fourth play of four, a place occupied in all other known instances by a satyr play such as *Cyclops*. The play is, however, a tragedy in the ancient sense: Greek tragedies with happy endings, while not as common as the other sort, were written by all three of the fifth century's great tragic poets. The occasional comic elements, such as Heracles drunk, do not detract from the seriousness of the play or its tragic focus on the limits of human life.

EURIPIDES

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Dramatis Personae

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ	APOLLO
ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ	DEATH
ΧΟΡΟΣ	CHORUS of men of Pherae
ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ	MAIDSERVANT
ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ	ALCESTIS, wife of Admetus
ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ	ADMETUS, king of Pherae
ΠΑΙΣ	CHILD, son of Admetus and Alcestis
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ	HERACLES
ΦΕΡΗΣ	PHERES, father of Admetus
ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ	MANSERVANT

A Note on Staging

The *skene* represents the palace of Admetus at Pherae in Thessaly. Eisodos A is the entrance-way imagined to lead from the countryside, Eisodos B that from the town.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

- ᾠ δώματ' Ἀδμήτει', ἐν οἷς ἔτλην ἐγὼ
θῆσαν τράπεζαν αἰνέσαι θεός περ ὦν.
Ζεὺς γὰρ κατακτὰς παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν αἴτιος
Ἄσκληπιόν, στέρνοισιν ἐμβαλὼν φλόγα·
5 οὐ δὴ χολωθεὶς τέκτονας Δίου πυρὸς
κτείνω Κύκλωπας· καὶ με θητεύειν πατῆρ
θνητῶ παρ' ἀνδρὶ τῶνδ' ἄποιν' ἠνάγκασεν.
ἐλθὼν δὲ γαίαν τήνδ' ἐβουφόρβουν ξένω,
καὶ τόνδ' ἔσωζον οἶκον ἐς τόδ' ἡμέρας.
10 ὄσιον γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ὄσιος ὦν ἐτύγχανον
παιδὸς Φέρητος, ὃν θανεῖν ἐρρυσάμην,
Μοίρας δολώσας· ἤνεσαν δέ μοι θεαὶ
Ἄδμητον Ἄιδην τὸν παραντίκ' ἐκφυγεῖν,
ἄλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρόν.
15 πάντας δ' ἐλέγξας καὶ διεξελθὼν φίλους,
[πατέρα γεραιάν θ' ἢ σφ' ἔτικτε μητέρα,]
οὐχ ἠὔρε πλὴν γυναικὸς ὅστις ἤθελεν
θανῶν πρὸ κείνου μηκέτ' εἰσορᾶν φάος·
ἢ νῦν κατ' οἴκους ἐν χεροῖν βαστάζεται

ALCESTIS

Enter APOLLO from the palace of Admetus. He is wearing a quiver and carrying a bow.

APOLLO

House of Admetus! In you I brought myself to taste the bread of menial servitude, god though I am. Zeus was the cause: he killed my son Asclepius, striking him in the chest with the lightning bolt, and in anger at this I slew the Cyclopes who forged Zeus's fire. As my punishment for this Zeus compelled me to be a serf in the house of a mortal. I came to this land and served as herdsman to my host, and I have kept this house safe from harm to this hour. I am myself godly, and in Admetus, son of Pheres, I found a godly man. And so I rescued him from death by tricking the Fates. These goddesses promised me that Admetus could escape an immediate death by giving in exchange another corpse to the powers below. But when he had sounded all his near and dear in turn, [his father and the aged mother who bore him,] he found no one but his wife who was willing to die for him and look no more on the sun's light. She is now on the point of death, held up by the

16 del. Dindorf 17 ὅστις Reiske: ἤτις C

18 θανῶν Reiske: θανέιν C 19-20 ἦν . . . ψυχορρα-
γούσαν Usener cl. 201: post 19 lac. indic. Kirchhoff

EURIPIDES

- 20 ψυχorraγούσα· τῆδε γάρ σφ' ἐν ἡμέρα
 θανεῖν πέπρωται καὶ μεταστῆναι βίου.
 ἐγὼ δέ, μὴ μίασμά μ' ἐν δόμοις κίχη,
 λείπω μελάθρων τῶνδε φιλτάτην στέγην.
 ἤδη δὲ τόνδε Θάνατον εἰσορῶ πέλας,
 25 ἱερέα θανόντων, ὅς νιν εἰς Ἄιδου δόμους
 μέλλει κατάξειν· συμμέτρως δ' ἀφίκετο,
 φρουρῶν τόδ' ἡμαρ ᾧ θανεῖν αὐτὴν χρεῶν.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

ᾶ ᾶ.

- τί σὺ πρὸς μελάθροις; τί σὺ τῆδε πολεῖς,
 30 Φοῖβ'; ἀδικεῖς αὖ τιμὰς ἐνέρων
 ἀφοριζόμενος καὶ καταπαύων;
 οὐκ ἤρκεσέ σοι μόρον Ἀδμήτου
 διακωλύσαι, Μοίρας δολίῳ
 σφήλαντι τέχνῃ; νῦν δ' ἐπὶ τῆδ' αὖ
 35 χέρα τοξήρη φρουρεῖς ὀπλίσας,
 ἣ τόδ' ὑπέστη, πόσιν ἐκλύσασ'
 αὐτὴ προθανεῖν Πελίου παῖς;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

θάρσει· δίκην τοι καὶ λόγους κεδνοὺς ἔχω.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

τί δῆτα τόξων ἔργον, εἰ δίκην ἔχεις;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

- 40 σύννηθες αἰεὶ ταῦτα βαστάζειν ἐμοί.

ALCESTIS

arms of her family within the house, for it is on this day that she is fated to die. And I, to avoid the pollution of death in the house, am departing from this palace I love so well.

Enter DEATH by an Eisodos (A?).

Ah, I see that Death, the sacrificer of the dead, is already drawing near. He is about to take her down to the house of Hades. He has arrived punctually, watching for today when she must die.

DEATH

Ah! What are you doing at the palace? Why do you loiter about here, Phoebus? Are you engaged in more injustice, curtailing and annulling the prerogatives of the gods below? Was it not enough that you prevented the death of Admetus, tripping up the Fates by cunning trickery? Are you now standing guard, bow in hand, over *her*, Pelias' daughter, who promised to free her husband by dying in his stead?

APOLLO

Fear not: I have nothing, I assure you, but justice and reasonable words.

DEATH

If justice, then what need for your bow and arrows?

APOLLO

It is my custom always to carry them.

EURIPIDES

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

καὶ τοῖσδέ γ' οἴκοις ἐκδίκως προσωφελεῖν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

φίλου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς συμφοραῖς βαρύνομαι.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

καὶ νοσφιεῖς με τοῦδε δευτέρου νεκροῦ;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐκείνον πρὸς βίαν σ' ἀφειλόμην.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

45 πῶς οὖν ὑπὲρ γῆς ἐστὶ κοῦ κάτω χθονός;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

δάμαρτ' ἀμείψας, ἦν σὺ νῦν ἦκεις μέτα.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

κάπάξομαί γε νερτέραν ὑπὸ χθόνα.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

λαβὼν ἴθ'· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἂν εἰ πείσαιμί σε.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

κτείνειν γ' ὄν ἂν χρῆ; τοῦτο γὰρ τετάγμεθα.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

50 οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μέλλουσι θάνατον ἀμβαλεῖν.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

ἔχω λόγον δὴ καὶ προθυμίαν σέθεν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

ἔστ' οὖν ὅπως Ἄλκηστις ἐς γῆρας μόλοι;

ALCESTIS

DEATH

Yes, and also to give unjust assistance to this house.

APOLLO

Certainly, since I am grieved by the misfortunes of my dear friend.

DEATH

Will you then rob me of a second corpse?

APOLLO

But not even the first did I take from you by force.

DEATH

Then how is he still on earth and not beneath the ground?

APOLLO

By giving in exchange the wife you have now come to fetch.

DEATH

Yes, and I will take her down below.

APOLLO

Take her and go: I doubt if I can persuade you.

DEATH

To kill my fated victims? Yes, for those are my orders.

APOLLO

No, to postpone death for the doomed.

DEATH

I now understand your purpose and your desire.

APOLLO

Well, is there any way Alcestis might reach old age?

⁵⁰ ἀμβαλεῖν Bursian: ἐμβ- C

EURIPIDES

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστι τιμαῖς καμὲ τέρπεσθαι δόκει.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

οὔτοι πλέον γ' ἂν ἤ μίαν ψυχὴν λάβοις.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

55 νέων φθινόντων μείζον ἄρνημαι γέρας.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

κἂν γραῦς ὄληται, πλουσίως ταφήσεται.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

πρὸς τῶν ἐχόντων, Φοῖβε, τὸν νόμον τίθης.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ' ἦ καὶ σοφὸς λέληθας ὦν;

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

ὠνοῦντ' ἂν οἷς πάρεστι γηραιοὶ θανεῖν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

60 οὔκουν δοκεῖ σοι τήνδε μοι δοῦναι χάριν.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἐπίστασαι δὲ τοὺς ἐμοὺς τρόπους.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

ἐχθροὺς γε θνητοῖς καὶ θεοῖς στυγουμενοὺς.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν δύναιο πάντ' ἔχειν ἅ μῆ σε δεῖ.

⁵⁹ γηραιοὶ Hermann: -οὺς C

ALCESTIS

DEATH

There is none. I too, you must know, get pleasure from my office.

APOLLO

You will not, of course, get more than one life in any case.

DEATH

I win greater honor when the victims are young.

APOLLO

And yet if she dies old, she will receive a rich burial.

DEATH

The law you are trying to establish, Phoebus, is to the advantage of the rich.

APOLLO

What do you mean? Can I have failed to appreciate what a thinker you are?

DEATH

Those with means could buy death at an advanced age.

APOLLO

You are not inclined, I take it, to grant me this favor.

DEATH

No, indeed. You know my character.

APOLLO

Yes, hateful to mortals and rejected by the gods.

DEATH

You may not have all that you should not have.

EURIPIDES

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

- ἦ μὴν σὺ παύσῃ καίπερ ὤμους ὦν ἄγαν·
 65 τοίους Φέρητος εἴσι πρὸς δόμους ἀνήρ
 Εὐρυσθέως πέμφαντος ἵππειον μετὰ
 ὄχημα Θρήκης ἐκ τόπων δυσχειμέρων,
 ὃς δὴ ξενωθείς τοῖσδ' ἐν Ἀδμήτου δόμοις
 βία γυναῖκα τήνδε σ' ἐξαιρήσεται.
 70 κοῦθ' ἢ παρ' ἡμῶν σοι γενήσεται χάρις
 δράσεις θ' ὁμοίως ταῦτ' ἀπεχθήσῃ τ' ἐμοί.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

- πόλλ' ἂν σὺ λέξας οὐδὲν ἂν πλέον λάβοις·
 ἦ δ' οὖν γυνή κάτεισιν εἰς Ἄιδου δόμους.
 στείχω δ' ἐπ' αὐτήν ὡς κατάρξωμαι ξίφει·
 75 ἱερὸς γὰρ οὗτος τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς θεῶν
 ὅτου τόδ' ἔγχος κρατὸς ἀγνίσῃ τρίχα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- τί ποθ' ἠσυχία πρόσθεν μελάθρων;
 τί σεσίγηται δόμος Ἀδμήτου;
 —ἀλλ' οὐδὲ φίλων πέλας <ἔστ' > οὐδεῖς,
 80 ὅστις ἂν εἴποι πότερον φθιμένην
 χρῆ βασιλείαν πενθεῖν ἢ ζῶσ'
 ἔτι φῶς λεύσσει Πελίου τόδε παῖς
 Ἄλκηστις, ἐμοὶ πᾶσι τ' ἀρίστη
 δόξασα γυνή
 85 πόσιν εἰς αὐτῆς γεγενῆσθαι.

64 πείσῃ F. W. Schmidt.

79 <ἔστ' > Monk

ALCESTIS

APOLLO

I swear to you that, ruthless as you are, you will yet cease from your hateful ways. The man to make you do so is coming to the house of Pheres sent by Eurystheus to fetch the horses and chariot from the wintry land of Thrace. He, entertained as a guest in this house of Admetus, shall take the woman from you by force. You shall do precisely as I have asked and yet get no gratitude from me but hatred instead.

Exit by an Eisodos (A[?]).

DEATH

Your plentiful talk will gain you nothing. The woman is going down in any case to the house of Hades. I go to her to take the first sacrificial cutting of her hair. For when this sword has consecrated the hair of someone's head, he is the sacred property of the gods below.

Exit DEATH into the palace. Enter the CHORUS by Eisodos B. They divide into two semi-choruses.

LEADER OF CHORUS A

What means this stillness before the palace? Why is the house of Admetus wrapped in silence?

LEADER OF CHORUS B

What is more, there are not even any of his kin about who might say whether the queen has died and one should mourn her or whether Pelias' daughter still lives and looks on the light, Alcestis, the best of wives to her husband, as I and everyone regard her.

⁸¹ χρῆ βασιλείαν πενθεῖν Blomfield: β- π- χ- C

⁸² λείσσει Πελίου τόδε Bothe: τ- λ- Π- C

—κλύει τις ἢ στεναγμὸν ἢ
χειρῶν κτύπον κατὰ στέγας
ἢ γόον ὡς πεπραγμένων;

—οὐ μὰν οὐδέ τις ἀμφιπόλων

90 στατίζεται ἀμφὶ πύλας.
εἰ γὰρ μετακοίμιος ἄτας,
ὦ Παιάν, φανείης.

—οὐ τὰν φθιμένας γ' ἐσιώπων.
οὐ γὰρ δήπου
φρουδός γε δόμων νέκυσ ἤδη.

95—πόθεν; οὐκ ἀνχῶ. τί σε θαρσύνει;

—πῶς ἂν ἔρημον τάφον Ἄδμητος
κεδιῆς ἂν ἔπραξε γυναικός;

ἀντ. α

—πυλῶν πάροιθε δ' οὐχ ὀρῶ
πηγαῖον ὡς νομίζεται

100 χέρνιβ' ἐπὶ φθιτῶν πύλαις.
χαίτα τ' οὔτις ἐπὶ προθύροις
τομαῖος, ὃ δὴ νεκύων
πένθει πρέπει, †οὐδὲ νεολαία†
δουπεῖ χεῖρ γυναικῶν.

105—καὶ μὴν τόδε κύριον ἡμαρ

—τί τόδ' αὐδάσεις;

⁹¹ μετακοίμιος Zacher: -κύμιος C (cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 1076)

⁹⁴ δήπου φρουδός γε δόμων Willink: δὴ φρουδός γ' ἐξ
οἴκων fere C

⁹⁶ post h. v. lac. indic. Hartung, <μετά θ' ἡσυχίας> e.g. suppl.
Oldfather cl. Σ

ALCESTIS

CHORUS A

Does anyone hear a groan or a cry or the thud of hands striking the breast within the house, as if all were over?

CHORUS B

No, nor is there even a slave stationed at the gates. O God of Healing, may you come bringing respite from disaster!

CHORUS A

If she had died, there would not be silence. For of course the body has not been carried from the house already.

LEADER OF CHORUS B

How do you know? I am not sure. What makes you so confident?

LEADER OF CHORUS A

How would Admetus have held the funeral of his good wife without mourners?

CHORUS A

I do not see before the gates the lustral basin which custom places at the doors of those who have died. On the porch there is no cut lock of hair, which befits mourning for the dead, nor do the hands of women beat resoundingly.

CHORUS B

And yet this is the fated day . . .

CHORUS A

What is this you mean to say?

102 ὁ Diggle: ἄ C

103 πρέπει Blaydes: πινει C οὐ νέω "Αἰδα Willink: fort.
οὐδὲ συναίμων

106 ἀδάσεις Hermann: ἀδάς C

- ὦ χρῆ σφε μολεῖν κατὰ γαίας.
 —ἔθιγες ψυχῆς, ἔθιγες δὲ φρενῶν.
 —χρῆ τῶν ἀγαθῶν διακναιομένων

110 πενθεῖν ὅστις
 χρηστὸς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς νενόμισται.

στρ. β

- ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ναυκληρίαν
 ἔσθ' ὅποι τις αἴας
 στείλας, ἧ Λυκίαν
 115 εἴτ' ἐφ' ἔδρας ἀνύδρους Ἀμμωνιάδας,
 δυστάνου παραλύσαι
 ψυχάν· μόρος γὰρ ἀπότομος
 πλάθει. θεῶν δ' ἐπ' ἐσχάραν
 120 οὐκέτ' ἔχω τίνα μηλοθύταν πορευθῶ.

ἀντ. β

- μόνος δ' ἄν, εἰ φῶς τόδ' ἦν
 ὄμμασιν δεδορκῶς
 Φοίβου παῖς, προλιπεῖν
 125 ἦνεν ἔδρας σκοτίους Ἄιδα τε πύλας·
 δμαθέντας γὰρ ἀνίστη,
 πρὶν αὐτὸν εἶλε διόβολον
 πλήκτρον πυρὸς κεραυνίου.
 130 νῦν δὲ βίου τίν' ἔτ' ἐλπίδα προσδέχομαι;

- [πάντα γὰρ ἤδη ἱτετέλεσται βασιλευσιν†,
 πάντων δὲ θεῶν ἐπὶ βωμοῖς
 αἰμόρραντοι θυσίαι πλήρεις,
 135 οὐδ' ἔστι κακῶν ἄκος οὐδέν.]

ALCESTIS

CHORUS B

... when she must go beneath the earth.

LEADER OF CHORUS A

You have touched my heart, you have touched my soul.

LEADER OF CHORUS B

When the noble are afflicted, those who all their lives have been deemed loyal must mourn.

The semi-choruses unite.

CHORUS

There is no shrine on earth where one might send even by ship, either Lycia or the waterless seat of Ammon, to save the life of the ill-starred queen. Death inexorable draws nigh. And I know not to what sacrificial hearth of the gods I am to go.

Only Phoebus' son, if he still looked upon the light of the sun, would cause her to leave behind the gloomy realm and the portals of Hades. For he used to raise the dead, until the Zeus-hurled goad of the lightning-fire killed him. But now what hope can I still cherish that she will live?

[For all is over for the royal family. At the altars of all the gods are sacrifices dripping profusely with blood, and there is no cure for disaster.]

114 Δυκίαν Monk: -ίας C 115-16 ἐφ' ἔδρας ἀνύδρους /

Ἄμμ- Nauck: ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνύδρους Ἀμμωνιάδας ἔδρας C

120 οὐκέτ' ἔχω Hartung; οὐκ ἔχω C

124 προλιπεῖν Kovacs: προλιπῶν a: προλιπούσ' b

125 ἦνεν Willink (ἦνυσ' iam ego, cl. Soph. O.T. 720): ἦλθεν C

130 βίου τίν' ἔτ' Hartung: τίν' ἔτι βίου C

132-5 del. Wheeler

EURIPIDES

- ἀλλ' ἦδ' ὀπαδῶν ἐκ δόμων τις ἔρχεται
 δακρυρροῦσα· τίνα τύχην ἀκούσομαι;
 πενθεῖν μὲν, εἴ τι δεσπότησι τυγχάνει,
 συγγνωστόν· εἰ δ' ἔτ' ἐστὶν ἔμφυχος γυνή
 140 εἴτ' οὖν ὄλωλεν εἰδέναι βουλοίμεθ' ἄν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

καὶ ζῶσαν εἰπεῖν καὶ θανούσαν ἔστι σοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ πῶς ἂν αὐτὸς καθάνοι τε καὶ βλέποι;

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- 143 ἤδη προνωπῆς ἐστὶ καὶ ψυχorroαγεί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 146 ἐλπίς μὲν οὐκέτ' ἐστὶ σῶζεσθαι βίον;

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- 147 πεπρωμένη γὰρ ἡμέρα βιάζεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 148 οὐκουν ἐπ' αὐτῇ πράσσεται τὰ πρόσφορα;

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- 149 κόσμος γ' ἔτοιμος, ᾧ σφε συνθάψει πόσις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 144 ᾧ τλήμον, οἷας οἶος ὦν ἀμαρτάνεις.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- 145 οὐπω τόδ' οἶδε δεσπότης, πρὶν ἂν πάθῃ.

146-9 ante 144 trai. Lueders

ALCESTIS

Enter a MAIDSERVANT from the palace.

CHORUS LEADER

But here comes one of the servants out of the house weeping. What turn of events will I hear from her? (*Addressing her*) If anything has befallen your master, it would be pardonable for you to grieve, but I would like to know whether the queen yet lives or has died.

MAIDSERVANT

You might call her both living and dead.

CHORUS LEADER

And how could the same person be both dead and alive?

MAIDSERVANT

She is already sinking and on the point of death.

CHORUS LEADER

Is there then no hope that her life may be saved?

MAIDSERVANT

No: her fated day presses on.

CHORUS LEADER

Are the necessary preparations then being made?

MAIDSERVANT

The finery in which her husband will bury her is ready.

CHORUS LEADER

Unhappy man, being so good a husband to lose so good a wife!

MAIDSERVANT

My master will not know his loss until it happens.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 150 ἴστω νυν εὐκλεῆς γε καθανουμένη
γυνή τ' ἀρίστη τῶν ὑφ' ἡλίῳ μακρῷ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΝΑ

- πῶς δ' οὐκ ἀρίστη; τίς δ' ἐναντιώσεται;
τί χρῆ λέγεσθαι τὴν ὑπερβεβλημένην
γυναῖκα; πῶς δ' ἂν μάλλον ἐνδείξαιτό τις
- 155 πόσιν προτιμῶσ' ἢ θέλουσ' ὑπερθανεῖν;
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πᾶσ' ἐπίσταται πόλις·
ἂ δ' ἐν δόμοις ἔδρασε θαυμάση κλύων.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦσθεθ' ἡμέραν τὴν κυρίαν
ἤκουσαν, ὕδασι ποταμίοις λευκὸν χροᾶ
- 160 ἐλούσατ', ἐκ δ' ἐλούσα κεδρίνων δόμων
ἐσθήτα κόσμον τ' εὐπρεπῶς ἠσκήσατο,
καὶ στᾶσα πρόσθεν Ἑστίας κατηύξατο·
Δέσποινα, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔρχομαι κατὰ χθονός,
πανύστατόν σε προσπίτνουσ' αἰτήσομαι,
- 165 τέκν' ὀρφανεῦσαι τὰμά· καὶ τῷ μὲν φίλην
σύζευξον ἄλοχον, τῇ δὲ γενναῖον πόσιν·
μηδ' ὥσπερ αὐτῶν ἢ τεκοῦσ' ἀπόλλυμαι
θανεῖν ἰώρους παῖδας, ἀλλ' εὐδαίμονας
ἐν γῆ πατρώᾳ τερπνὸν ἐκπλήσαι βίον.
- 170 πάντα δὲ βωμούς, οἳ κατ' Ἀδμήτου δόμους,
προσηλθε καξέστεψε καὶ προσηύξατο,
πτόρθων ἀποσχίζουσα μυρσίνης φόβην,
ἄκλαντος ἀστενάκτος, οὐδὲ τοῦπιόν
κακὸν μεθίστη χρωτὸς εὐειδῆ φύσιν.

ALCESTIS

CHORUS LEADER

Let her know then that she will die glorious and the noblest woman by far under the sun.

MAIDSERVANT

Most assuredly the noblest! Who will say she is not? What should we call a woman so preeminent? How could any woman give greater proof that she gives her husband the place of honor than by being willing to die for him? This, of course, the whole city knows, but what she did within the house you will be amazed to hear. When she learned that the fated day had come, she bathed her fair skin in fresh water, and taking her finery from its chambers of cedar she dressed herself becomingly. And standing in front of the hearth goddess' altar she made her prayer: "Lady, since I am going now beneath the earth, as my last entreaty I ask you to care for my orphaned children: marry my son to a loving wife and give my daughter a noble husband. And may they not, like their mother, perish untimely but live out their lives in happiness in their ancestral land!"

She went to all the altars in Admetus' house and garlanded them, breaking off a spray of myrtle for each, and prayed. There was no tear in her eye or groan in her voice, nor was the lovely color of her skin changed by her looming

153 λέγεσθαι Broadhead: γενέσθαι C

EURIPIDES

- 175 κάπειτα θάλαμον ἐσπεσοῦσα καὶ λέχος
 ἐνταῦθα δὴ ἴδ' ἀκρυσσε καὶ λέγει τάδε·
 ὦ λέκτρον, ἔνθα παρθένει' ἔλυσ' ἐγὼ
 κορεύματ' ἐκ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, οὗ θνήσκω πάρος,
 χαίρ'· οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ'· ἀπόλεσας δέ με
 180 μόνον· προδοῦναι γάρ σ' ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν
 θνήσκω. σέ δ' ἄλλη τις γυνὴ κεκτήσεται,
 σώφρων μὲν οὐκ ἂν μᾶλλον, εὐτυχῆς δ' ἴσως.
 κυνεῖ δὲ προσπίτνουσα, πᾶν δὲ δέμνιον
 ὀφθαλμοτέκτω δεύεται πλημμυρίδι.
- 185 ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλῶν δακρύων εἶχεν κόρον,
 στείχει προνωπῆς ἐκπεσοῦσα δεμνίων,
 καὶ πολλὰ θαλάμων ἐξιοῦσ' ἐπεστράφη
 κᾶρρυβεν αὐτὴν αὔθις ἐς κοίτην πάλιν.
 παῖδες δὲ πέπλων μητρὸς ἐξηρητημένοι
 190 ἔκλαιον· ἢ δὲ λαμβάνουσ' ἐς ἀγκάλας
 ἡσπάζετ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ὡς θανουμένη.
 πάντες δ' ἔκλαιον οἰκέται κατὰ στέγας
 δέσποιναν οἰκτίροντες, ἢ δὲ δεξιᾶν
 προὔτειν' ἐκάστω, κοῦτις ἦν οὕτω κακὸς
 195 ὃν οὐ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν.
 τοιαῦτ' ἐν οἴκοις ἐστὶν Ἀδμήτου κακά.
 καὶ κατθανῶν τᾶν ὥχετ', ἐκφυγῶν δ' ἔχει
 τοσοῦτον ἄλγος, οὐποθ' οὐ λελήσεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἦ που στενάζει τοισίδ' Ἀδμητος κακοῖς,
 200 ἐσθλῆς γυναικὸς εἰ στερηθῆναί σφε χρή;

ALCESTIS

misfortune. Then she entered the bedchamber. Here at last she wept and said, "O marriage bed, where I yielded up my virginity to my husband, the man for whose sake I am now dying, farewell! I do not hate you, although it is you alone that cause my death: it is because I shrank from abandoning you and my husband that I now die. Some other woman will possess you, luckier, perhaps, than I but not more virtuous."

She fell on the bed and kissed it and moistened all the bedclothes with a flood of tears. When she had had enough of weeping, she tore herself from the bed and walked bent with weakness, and again and again, as she was going out of the chamber, she turned back and threw herself upon the bed once more. Now the children were hanging onto their mother's gown and weeping, and she, taking them into her arms, kissed now one, now the other, knowing she was doomed. All the servants in the house were weeping and bewailing their mistress. She reached out her hand to each of them, and none was so lowly that she did not address him and receive his blessing in return. Such are the troubles in Admetus' house. And if he had died he would be gone, but since he has escaped death, he lives with such grief as he shall never forget.

CHORUS LEADER

Admetus, I suppose, is groaning at this misfortune, that he must lose so noble a wife?

178 *πάρος* Wilamowitz; *πέρι* C: cf. *Hcl.* 536

180 *μόνον* Markland: *μόνην* C

187 *θαλάμων* Nauck: *θάλαμον* C

197 *ᾠχετ'* F. W. Schmidt: *ᾠλετ'* C

198 *οὔποθ' οὔ* Nauck: *οὔποτ' οὐ* a: *οὔ ποτ' οὐ* b

EURIPIDES

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- κλαίει γ' ἄκοιτιν ἐν χεροῖν φίλην ἔχων
καὶ μὴ προδοῦναι λίσσεται, τὰμήχανα
ζητῶν· φθίνει γὰρ καὶ μαραίνεται νόσφ.
παρειμένη δέ, χειρὸς ἄθλιον βάρος,
<κείται, τὸ σῶμα δ' οὐκέτ' ὀρθῶσαι σθένει.>
- 205 ὅμως δέ, καίπερ σμικρὸν ἐμπνέουσ' ἔτι,
βλέψαι πρὸς ἀνγὰς βούλεται τὰς ἡλίου
ὡς οὔποτ' αὔθις, ἀλλὰ νῦν πανύστατον
[ἀκτῖνα κύκλον θ' ἡλίου προσόψεται].
ἀλλ' εἶμι καὶ σὴν ἀγγελῶ παρουσίαν·
- 210 οὐ γάρ τι πάντες εὖ φρονούσι κοιράνοις,
ὥστ' ἐν κακοῖσιν εὐμενεῖς παρεστάναι·
σὺ δ' εἰ παλαιὸς δεσπότηαις ἐμοῖς φίλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

- ἰὸ Ζεῦ, τίς ἂν πᾶ πόρος κακῶν
γένοιτο καὶ λύσις τύχας
ἂ πάρεστι κοιράνοις;
- 215—<αἰαῖ> εἰσί τις; ἦ τέμω
τρίχα, καὶ μέλανα στολμὸν πέπλων
ἀμφιβαλώμεθ' ἦδη;
- δηλα μὲν, φίλοι, δηλά γ', ἀλλ' ὅμως
θεοῖσιν εὐχόμεσθα· θεῶν δύναμις μεγίστα.

204 post h.v. lac. indic. Elmsley

208 del. Lachmann (207–8 [=Hec. 411–12] iam Valckenaer)

215 <αἰαῖ> εἰσί τις; Wilamowitz: ἔξεισί τις C

ALCESTIS

MAIDSERVANT

Yes, he weeps, holding his beloved wife in his arms, and he begs her not to abandon him, asking for the impossible. For she is waning and wasting with her malady. And now, her body limp, a pitiful burden in his arms, <she lies unable to raise herself up>. Still, although she has scarcely any breath within her, she wishes once more to look on the light of the sun since it is now for the last time and never again that she does so [she will look upon the ray and orb of the sun]. But I will go and announce your arrival: for by no means does everyone wish their rulers well and stand by to show goodwill to them in their misfortune. But you are a friend of long standing to my masters.

Exit MAIDSERVANT into the palace.

CHORUS A

O Zeus, what way out of disaster could there be, what release from the fate that visits our royal family?

CHORUS B

Alas! Will someone come forth from the palace? Shall I cut my hair in mourning now and put on black apparel?

CHORUS A

Her fate is plain, my friends, all too plain, but still let us pray to the gods: the gods' power is supreme.

219 θεῶν Hermann: θεῶν γὰρ C

EURIPIDES

- 220—ὦναξ Παιάν,
 ἔξενρε μηχανάν τιν' Ἀδμήτῳ κακῶν.
 —πόριζε δὴ πόριζε· καὶ
 πάρος γάρ <τι> τῷδ' ἐφηῦρες καὶ νῦν
 λυτήριος ἐκ θανάτου
- 225 γενοῦ, φόνιον δ' ἀπόπανσον Ἴαιδαν.
 ἀντ.
 —παπαῖ <φεῦ, παπαῖ φεῦ· ἰὼ ἰώ,>
 ὦ παῖ Φέρητος, οἷ' ἔπρα-
 ξας δάμαρτος σᾶς στερεῖς.
 —αἰαῖ· ἄξια καὶ σφαγᾶς
 τάδε, καὶ πλέον ἢ βρόχῳ δέραν
 οὐρανίῳ πελάσσαι.
- 230—τὰν γὰρ οὐ φίλαν ἀλλὰ φιλτάταν
 γυναῖκα κατθανοῦσαν ἐν ἄματι τῷδ' ἐπόψῃ.
 —ἰδοῦ ἰδοῦ,
 ἄδ' ἐκ δόμων δὴ καὶ πόσις πορεύεται.
 —βόασον ὦ στέναξον ὦ
- 235 Φεραία χθών, τὰν ἀρίστην <πασᾶν>
 γυναῖκα μαραιομένην
 νόσῳ κατὰ γᾶς χθόνιον παρ' Ἴαιδαν.
- οὔποτε φήσω γάμον εὐφραίνειν
 πλέον ἢ λυπεῖν, τοῖς τε πάροιθεν
- 240 τεκμαιρόμενος καὶ τάσδε τύχας

222 <τι> Willink τῷδ' Heath: τοῦδ' C

226 lac. suppl. Gaisford 235 <πασᾶν> Willink

ALCESTIS

CHORUS B

Lord of Healing,¹ contrive for Admetus some escape from disaster!

CHORUS A

Yes, devise a way! For you found one for him before. Now too be his rescuer from death, check deadly Hades!

CHORUS B

Alas! <Ah, alas!> O son of Pheres, what has your fortune become now that you are bereft of your wife!

CHORUS A

Oh, this calls for death by the sword and is more than enough to put one's neck in a noose hung high.

CHORUS B

Yes, for your wife, not dear but dearest, you will this day see dead.

Enter ALCESTIS from the palace, supported by servants, and ADMETUS with their two children.

CHORUS A

Look, look! Here she comes out of the house, and her husband with her.

CHORUS B

Cry aloud, O land of Pherae, weep for the noblest of all wives wasting away to Hades with fatal sickness!

CHORUS LEADER

I shall never henceforth say that marriage causes more joy than pain. So I conclude from what has gone before and

¹ Apollo is addressed by the cult title Paian.

EURIPIDES

λεύσσω βασιλέως, ὅστις ἀρίστης
ἀπλακῶν ἀλόχου τῆσδ' ἀβίωτον
τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον βιοτεύσει.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

στρ. α

Ἄλιε καὶ φάος ἀμέρας
245 οὐράνιαί τε δῖναι νεφέλας δρομαίου.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὄρᾳ σὲ κάμει, δύο κακῶς πεπραγότας,
οὐδὲν θεοὺς δράσαντας ἀνθ' ὅτου θανῆ.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ἀντ. α

γαῖά τε καὶ μελάθρων στέγαι
νυμφίδιοί τε κοῖται πατρίας Ἴωλκοῦ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἔπαιρε σαυτήν, ὦ τάλαινα, μὴ προδῶς·
250 λίσσου δὲ τοὺς κρατοῦντας οἰκτῆραι θεοὺς.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

στρ. β

ὄρῳ δίκωπον ὄρῳ σκάφος ἐν
λίμνῃ· νεκύων δὲ πορθμεὺς
ἔχων χέρ' ἐπὶ κοντῷ Χάρων
255 μ' ἤδη καλεῖ· Τί μέλλεις;
ἐπείγουν σὺ κατείργεις· τάδε τοί
με σπερχόμενος ταχύνει.

ALCESTIS

from looking on the fate of my king, who will lose this noble wife and live henceforth a life that is no life at all.

ALCESTIS

(sung) O sun god, light of day, eddies of whirling clouds in the sky!

ADMETUS

The sun god sees you and me, two unfortunates, who have done nothing to the gods to deserve your death.

ALCESTIS

(sung) O land and palace and maiden bed of my ancestral Iolcus!

ADMETUS

Rouse yourself up, poor woman, do not abandon me! Pray for pity to the gods who have you in their grasp!

ALCESTIS

(sung) I see the two-oared boat in the lake. Charon, the ferryman of the dead, his hand on the boat pole, calls me now: "Why are you tarrying? Make haste, you hinder my going!" He speaks impatiently, urging me on with these words.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀντ. β

οἴμοι· πικράν γε τήνδε μοι ναυκληρίαν
ἔλεξας. ὦ δύσδαιμον, οἶα πάσχομεν.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

260 ἄγει μ' ἄγει τις· ἄγει μέ τις (οὐχ
ὄρᾱς;) νεκύων ἐς αὐλάν,
ὑπ' ὄφρῦσι κυαναγάσει
βλέπων πτερωτὸς Ἴαιδας.
τί ῥέξεις; ἄφες. οἶαν ὁδὸν ἅ
δειλαιοτάτα προβαίνω.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

265 οἰκτρὰν φίλοισιν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν μάλιστ' ἔμοι
καὶ παισίν, οἷς δὴ πένθος ἐν κοινῷ τόδε.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ἐπωδ.

μέθετε μέθετέ μ' ἤδη·
κλίνατ', οὐ σθένω ποσίν.
πλησίον Ἴαιδας,
σκότια δ' ἐπ' ὄσσοισι νύξ ἐφέρπει.
270 τέκνα τέκν', οὐκέτ' ἔστι δὴ σφῶν μάτηρ.
χαίροντες, ὦ τέκνα, τόδε φάος ὀρφῶτον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

οἴμοι· τόδ' ἔπος λυπρὸν ἀκούειν
καὶ παντὸς ἔμοι θανάτου μείζον.
275 μὴ πρὸς <σε> θεῶν τλῆς με προδοῦναι,
μὴ πρὸς παίδων οὖς ὀρφανιεῖς,

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

Oh, it is a bitter ferrying you speak of! O my luckless wife, what suffering is ours!

ALCESTIS

(*sung*) Someone is taking, is taking me (don't you see him?) away to the court of the dead. It is winged Hades, glowering from beneath his dark brows. What do you want? Let me go! Ah, what a journey it is that I, unhappiest of women, am making!

ADMETUS

A journey to make your loved ones weep, especially the children and me, who feel this as their common grief.

ALCESTIS

(*to the servants*) (*sung*) Let me go, let me go now! Lay me back, I have no strength in my legs! Hades is near and night creeps darkly over my eyes. Children, children, your mother is no more, no more! Farewell, my children, joy be yours as you look on the light of the sun!

ADMETUS

Alas! That is a painful thing to hear and a greater woe than any death for me. I beg you by the gods, by the children you will orphan, do not have the hardness to desert me!

262 Ἄιδαν Wilamowitz

268 Ἄιδας Willink: Ἄιδας C

269 σκότια Elmsley: -ία C

270 οὐκέτ' Kovacs: οὐκέτ' οὐκέτ' vel ο. δὴ ο. C

271 ἔστι δὴ σφῶν μάτηρ Willink: μ. σ. ἔ. C

273 ἀκούειν Monk: ἀκούω C

275 <σε> Porson

EURIPIDES

ἀλλ' ἄνα, τόλμα.
 σοῦ γὰρ φθιμένης οὐκέτ' ἂν εἶην·
 ἐν σοὶ δ' ἔσμεν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μῆ·
 σὴν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

- 280 Ἄδμηθ', ὄρας γὰρ τὰ μὰ πράγμαθ' ὡς ἔχει,
 λέξαι θέλω σοι πρὶν θανεῖν ἂ βούλομαι.
 ἐγὼ σε πρεσβεύουσα κἀντὶ τῆς ἐμῆς
 ψυχῆς καταστήσασα φῶς τόδ' εἰσορᾶν
 θνήσκω, παρόν μοι μῆ θανεῖν ὑπὲρ σέθεν,
 285 ἀλλ' ἄνδρα τε σχεῖν Θεσσαλῶν ὃν ἠθέλον
 καὶ δῶμα ναίειν ὄλβιον τυραννίδι.
 κοῦκ ἠθέλησα ζῆν ἀποσπασθείσα σοῦ
 σὺν παισὶν ὀρφανοῖσιν, οὐδ' ἐφεισάμην
 ἦβης, ἔχουσ' ἐν οἷς ἕτερπόμην ἐγώ.
 290 καίτοι σ' ὁ φύσας χῆ τεκοῦσα προὔδοσαν,
 καλῶς μὲν αὐτοῖς †κατθανεῖν ἦκου† βίου,
 καλῶς δὲ σῶσαι παῖδα κεῦκλεῶς θανεῖν.
 μόνος γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἦσθα, κοῦτις ἐλπίς ἦν
 σοῦ κατθανόντος ἄλλα φητύσειν τέκνα.
 295 κἀγὼ τ' ἂν ἔζων καὶ σὺ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον,
 κοῦκ ἂν μονωθεὶς σῆς δάμαρτος ἔστενες
 καὶ παῖδας ὠρφάνευες. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
 θεῶν τις ἐξέπραξεν ὥσθ' οὕτως ἔχειν.
 εἶέν· σὺ νῦν μοι τῶνδ' ἀπόμνησαι χάριν·
 300 αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ' ἀξίαν μὲν οὔποτε
 (ψυχῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι τιμιώτερον),

ALCESTIS

Up, endure! For if you are gone I live no more. Whether we live or not is in your power, for it is your love we hold in reverence.

ALCESTIS

Admetus, since you see how things stand with me, I want to tell you before I die what I wish. Because I give you the place of honor and have caused you to look on the light instead of me, I am dying. I need not have died in your place but could have married the Thessalian of my choice and lived in wealth in a royal house. But I refused to live torn from your side with orphaned children and did not spare my young life, though I had much in which I took delight. Yet your father and mother abandoned you, though it well befitted them to feel they had lived enough,² well befitted them to save their son and die a noble death. For you were their only son, and there was no hope, with you dead, that they would have other children. Had they agreed to die, you and I would now be living the remainder of our lives together, and you would not be grieving at the loss of your wife or raising your children as orphans. But some god has brought these things to pass.

Well, then. Remember to show your gratitude for this. I shall not ask you for the return my act deserves (for nothing is more precious than a life), but for what is right, as

² I translate the first of my tentative conjectures. The text is almost certainly corrupt.

277 fort. εἶμεν

287 κούκ Lenting: οὐκ C

291 ἦγον ἐκοτῆναι Hayley: fort. κόρον ἔχειν ἦγον vel καταμελεῖν ἦγον

EURIPIDES

- δίκαια δ', ὡς φήσεις σὺν τούσδε γὰρ φιλεῖς
 οὐχ ἦσσον ἢ ἄγὼ παῖδας, εἶπερ εἶ φρονεῖς·
 τούτους ἀνάσχου δεσπότας ἐμῶν δόμων
 305 καὶ μὴ ἄπιγήςμης τοῖσδε μητριαν τέκνοις,
 ἦτις κακίων οὖσ' ἐμοῦ γυνὴ φθόνῳ
 τοῖς σοῖσι κάμοις παισὶ χεῖρα προσβαλεῖ.
 μὴ δῆτα δράσης ταῦτά γ', αἰτοῦμαί σ' ἐγώ.
 ἐχθρὰ γὰρ ἢ ἄπιούσα μητριὰ τέκνοις
 310 τοῖς πρόσθ', ἐχίδνης οὐδὲν ἠπιωτέρα.
 καὶ παῖς μὲν ἄρσῃ πατέρ' ἔχει πύργον μέγαν
 [ὄν καὶ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν]:
 σὺ δ', ὦ τέκνον μοι, πῶς κορευθήσῃ καλῶς;
 ποίας τυχοῦσα συζύγου τῷ σῷ πατρί;
 315 μὴ σοὶ τιν' αἰσχρὰν προσβαλοῦσα κληδόνα
 ἦβης ἐν ἀκμῇ σοὺς διαφθείρῃ γάμους.
 οὐ γὰρ σε μήτηρ οὔτε νυμφεύσει ποτὲ
 οὔτ' ἐν τόκοισι σοῖσι θαρσυνεῖ, τέκνον,
 παροῦσ', ἴν' οὐδὲν μητρὸς εὐμενέστερον.
 320 δεῖ γὰρ θανεῖν με· καὶ τόδ' οὐκ ἐς αὔριον
 οὐδ' ἐς τρίτην μοι †μηνὸς† ἔρχεται κακόν,
 ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ἐν τοῖς οὐκέτ' οὔσι λέξομαι.
 χαίροντες εὐφραίνοισθε· καὶ σοὶ μὲν, πόσι,
 γυναικ' ἀρίστην ἔστι κομπάσαι λαβεῖν,
 325 ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, μητρὸς ἐκπεφυκέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· πρὸ τούτου γὰρ λέγειν οὐχ ἄζομαι
 δράσει τάδ', εἶπερ μὴ φρενῶν ἀμαρτάνει.

ALCESTIS

you will agree. For you love these children as much as I do, if you are in your senses. Keep them as lords of my house and do not marry again, putting over them a stepmother, who will be less noble than I and out of envy will lay a hostile hand to your children and mine. No, do not do it, I beg you. For a stepmother comes in as a foe to the former children, no kinder to them than a viper. And though a son has in his father a bulwark of defense, how will you, my daughter, grow to an honored womanhood? What sort of stepmother will you get? May she not cast some disgraceful slur on your reputation and in the prime of your youth destroy your chances of marriage! Your mother will never see you married, never stand by to encourage you in childbirth, my daughter, where nothing is better than a mother's kindness. For I must die: this calamity does not come upon me tomorrow or the day after, but this very hour I will be numbered among the dead. Farewell! I wish you joy! You, my husband, have the right to boast the best of wives, and you, my children, the best of mothers.

CHORUS LEADER

Fear not (I do not hesitate to speak for him): he will do this if he has any sense.

312 del. Pierson: cf. 195

314 *τοίας* Reiske, tum fort. *τυχούσης*

321 *τρίτον μου φέγγος* Herwerden: v. del. Mekler

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- ἔσται τάδ', ἔσται, μὴ τρέσης· ἐπεὶ σ' ἐγὼ
 καὶ ζῶσαν εἶχον καὶ θανούσ' ἐμὴ γυνή
 330 μόνῃ κεκλήσῃ, κοῦτις ἀντὶ σοῦ ποτε
 τόνδ' ἄνδρα νύμφῃ Θεσσαλὶς προσφθέγγεται.
 οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτως οὔτε πατρὸς εὐγενοῦς
 οὔτ' εἶδος ἄλλως ἐκπρεπεστάτῃ γυνή.
 ἄλις δὲ παίδων· τῶνδ' ὄνησιν εὐχομαι
 335 θεοῖς γενέσθαι· σοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ὠνήμεθα.
 οἴσω δὲ πένθος οὐκ ἐτήσιον τὸ σὸν
 ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἂν αἰὼν οὐμὸς ἀντέχῃ, γύναι,
 στυγῶν μὲν ἢ μ' ἔτικτεν, ἐχθαίρων δ' ἐμὸν
 πατέρα· λόγῳ γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργῳ φίλοι.
 340 σὺ δ' ἀντιδοῦσα τῆς ἐμῆς τὰ φίλτατα
 ψυχῆς ἔσωσας. ἄρά μοι στένειν πάρα
 τοιαῖσδ' ἀμαρτάνοντι συζύγου σέθεν;
 παύσω δὲ κώμους συμποτῶν θ' ὀμιλίας
 στεφάνους τε μουσάν θ' ἢ κατεῖχ' ἐμοὺς δόμους.
 345 οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἂν βαρβίτου θίγοιμ' ἔτι
 οὔτ' ἂν φρέν' ἐξάροιμι πρὸς Δίβυν λακεῖν
 αὐλόν· σὺ γάρ μου τέρψιν ἐξείλου βίου.
 σοφῇ δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν
 εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται,
 350 ᾧ προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας
 ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
 δόξω γυναιῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν·
 ψυχρὰν μὲν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως βάρος
 ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἂν. ἐν δ' ὀνείρασιν

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

It shall be so, fear not, it shall be so. While you lived you were my wife, and in death you alone will bear that title. No Thessalian bride will ever speak to me in place of you: none is of so noble parentage or so beautiful as that. And of children I have enough. I pray to the gods that I may reap the benefit of them, as I have not of you. I shall mourn you not a year only but as long as my life shall last, hating her who bore me and loathing my father. For their love was in word, not deed. But you sacrificed what is most precious so that I might live. Do I not have cause to mourn when I have lost such a wife as you?

I shall put an end to revels and the company of banqueters and to the garlands and music which once filled my halls. I shall never touch the lyre, or lift my heart in song to the Libyan pipe. For your death takes all the joy from my life. An image of you shaped by the hand of skilled craftsmen shall be laid out in my bed. I shall fall into its arms, and as I embrace it and call your name I shall imagine, though I have her not, that I hold my dear wife in my arms, a cold pleasure, to be sure, but thus I shall lighten my soul's

333 ἄλλων ἐκπρεπῆς οὕτω vel ἄλλως τ' ἐκπρεπῆς ἄλλη

Wecklein

353 οἶδα Elmsley

EURIPIDES

- 355 φοιτῶσά μ' εὐφραίνοις ἄν· ἦδὺν γὰρ φίλους
 κὰν νυκτὶ λεύσσειν, ὄντιν' ἄν παρῆ χρόνον.
 εἰ δ' Ὀρφέως μοι γλῶσσα καὶ μέλος παρῆν,
 ὥστ' ἢ κόρην Δήμητρος ἢ κείνης πόσιν
 ὕμνοισι κηλήσαντά σ' ἐξ Ἄιδου λαβεῖν,
 360 κατῆλθον ἄν, καί μ' οὔθ' ὁ Πλούτωνος κύων
 οὔθ' οὐπὶ κώπη ψυχοπομπὸς ἄν Χάρων
 ἔσχ' ἄν, πρὶν ἐς φῶς σὸν καταστήσασθαι βίον.
 ἀλλ' οὖν ἐκείσε προσδόκα μ', ὅταν θάνω,
 καὶ δῶμ' ἐτοίμαζ', ὡς συνοικήσουσά μοι.
 365 ἐν ταῖσιν αὐταῖς γάρ μ' ἐπισκῆψω κέδροις
 σοὶ τούσδε θείναι πλευρά τ' ἐκτείνειν πέλας
 πλευροῖσι τοῖς σοῖς· μηδὲ γὰρ θανῶν ποτε
 σοῦ χωρὶς εἶην τῆς μόνης πιστῆς ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σοι πένθος ὡς φίλος φίλω
 370 λυπρὸν συνοίσω τῆσδε· καὶ γὰρ ἀξία.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ὦ παῖδες, αὐτοὶ δὴ τάδ' εἰσηκούσατε
 πατρὸς λέγοντος μὴ γαμῆν ἄλλην ποτὲ
 γυναικ' ἐφ' ὑμῖν μηδ' ἀτιμάσειν ἐμέ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

καὶ νῦν γέ φημι καὶ τελευτήσω τάδε.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

- 375 ἐπὶ τοῖσδε παῖδας χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς δέχου.

362 ἔσχ' ἄν Lenting: ἔσχον C

ALCESTIS

heaviness. And perhaps you will cheer me by visiting me in dreams. For even in sleep it is pleasant to see loved ones for however long we are permitted.

If I had the voice and music of Orpheus so that I could charm Demeter's daughter or her husband with song and fetch you from Hades, I would have gone down to the Underworld, and neither Pluto's hound nor Charon the ferryman of souls standing at the oar would have kept me from bringing you back to the light alive. But now wait for me to arrive there when I die and prepare a home where you may dwell with me. For I shall command my children here to bury me in the same coffin with you and to lay out my body next to yours. Never, even in death, may I be parted from you, the woman who alone has been faithful to me!

CHORUS LEADER

Be sure that I will share in this bitter grief with you as friend with friend. She deserves no less.

ALCESTIS

Children, you yourselves have heard your father promise never to put another woman over you, never to dishonor me.

ADMETUS

I promise and will make it good hereafter.

ALCESTIS

On those terms, then, receive the children from my hand.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

δέχομαι, φίλον γε δῶρον ἐκ φίλης χερός.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

σύ νυν γενοῦ τοῖσδ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ μῆτηρ τέκνοις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

πολλή μ' ἀνάγκη, σοῦ γ' ἀπεστερημένοις.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ὦ τέκν', ὅτε ζῆν χρῆν μ', ἀπέρχομαι κάτω.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

380 οἴμοι, τί δράσω δῆτα σοῦ μονούμενος

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

χρόνος μαλάξει σ'. οὐδέν ἐσθ' ὁ καταθωνών.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἄγου με σὺν σοί, πρὸς θεῶν, ἄγου κάτω.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ἀρκοῦμεν ἡμεῖς οἱ προθνήσκοντες σέθεν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὦ δαῖμον, οἷας συζύγου μ' ἀποστερεῖς.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

385 καὶ μὴν σκοτεινὸν ὄμμα μου βαρύνεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀπωλόμην ἄρ', εἴ με δὴ λείψεις, γύναι.

380-1 del. Wheeler

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

I receive them, a precious gift from a precious hand.

ALCESTIS

Be therefore mother to these children in my place.

ADMETUS

So I clearly must since they are bereft of you.

ALCESTIS

Children, at a time when I ought to be alive I go below.

ADMETUS

Ah, what then shall I do separated from you?

ALCESTIS

Time will heal you. One who is dead is nothing.

ADMETUS

Take me with you, by the gods, take me below.

ALCESTIS

My death in your place is enough.

ADMETUS

O fate,³ what a wife you take from me!

ALCESTIS

Already now my vision is growing dark and dim.

ADMETUS

I am lost, then, if you are going to leave me.

³ The meaning of *δαίμων* here could be either the "guardian spirit" of a man, identified as the force that assigns him his lot, or "god, divinity," with possible reference to Hades.

EURIPIDES

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

ὡς οὐκέτ' οὔσαν οὐδὲν ἂν λέγοις ἐμέ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὄρθου πρόσωπον, μὴ λίπης παῖδας σέθεν.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

οὐ δῆθ' ἐκούσά γ'· ἀλλὰ χαίρειτ', ὦ τέκνα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

390 βλέψον πρὸς αὐτούς, βλέψον.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

οὐδέν εἰμ' ἔτι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

τί δρᾶς; προλείπεις;

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

χαῖρ'.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀπωλόμην τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βέβηκεν, οὐκέτ' ἔστιν Ἄδμητου γυνή.

ΠΑΙΣ

395 ἰὼ μοι τύχας. μαῖα δὴ κάτω
βέβακεν, οὐκέτ' ἔστιν, ὦ πάτερ, ὑφ' ἀλίῳ,
προλιποῦσα δ' ἐμὸν βίον ὠρφάνισεν τλάμων.
ἴδε γὰρ ἴδε βλέφαρον καὶ
παρατόνους χέρας.
ὑπάκουσον ἄκουσον, ὦ

ALCESTIS

ALCESTIS

No more existing: such you may call me now.

ADMETUS

Raise up your head! Do not leave your children!

ALCESTIS

I leave them all unwilling. Farewell, children!

ADMETUS

Look at them, look!

ALCESTIS

I am gone.

ADMETUS

What are you doing? Are you leaving me?

ALCESTIS

Husband, farewell!

ADMETUS

I am utterly undone.

CHORUS LEADER

She is gone. Admetus' wife is no more.

CHILD

(sung) Alas for my fate! My mother has gone below: no more, Father, is she in the light of the sun, and she has left me an orphan. Look at her eyes and slackened arms. Listen

396 ἐμὸν Monk: ἀμὸν C

EURIPIDES

400 *μᾶτερ, ἀντιάζω.
 ἐγὼ σ' ἐγώ,
 μᾶτερ, <μᾶτερ,> ὁ σὸς
 ποτὶ σοῖσι πίτνων καλοῦ-
 μαι στόμασιν νεοσσός.*

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

*τὴν οὐ κλύουσαν οὐδ' ὀρώσαν· ὥστ' ἐγὼ
 405 καὶ σφὼ βαρεῖα συμφορᾷ πεπλήγμεθα.*

ΠΑΙΣ

*νέος ἐγὼ, πάτερ, λείπομαι φίλας
 μονόστολός τε ματρός· ὦ σχέτλια δὴ παθῶν
 410 ἐγὼ ἔργ' ἅ σὺ σύγκασί μοι συνέτλας κούρα.
 <
 > ὦ πάτερ,
 ἀνόνατ' ἀνόνατ' ἐνύμ-
 φευσας οὐδὲ γήρωσ
 ἔβας τέλος
 σὺν τᾷδ'· ἔφθιτο γὰρ
 πάρος· οἰχομένας δὲ σοῦ,
 415 μᾶτερ, ὄλωλεν οἶκος.*

ΧΟΡΟΣ

*Ἄδμητ', ἀνάγκη τάσδε συμφορὰς φέρειν·
 οὐ γάρ τι πρῶτος οὐδὲ λοίσθιος βροτῶν
 γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς ἤμπλακες· γίγνωσκε δὲ
 ὡς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται.*

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

420 *ἐπίσταμαί τοι, κοῦκ ἄφνω κακὸν τόδε*

ALCESTIS

to me, Mother, listen, I implore you, it is I, Mother, I, your little one falling upon your lips, who call your name!

ADMETUS

She does not hear or see. You two and I are stricken with a heavy misfortune.

CHILD

(*sung*) I am left young and cut adrift from my dear mother. Oh, I have suffered terrible grief, and you, dear sister, have suffered it too. < > O father, it was all in vain, all in vain that you wedded since you did not come to the end of your life with her. For she died first. And since you have gone, Mother, the house is utterly destroyed.

CHORUS LEADER

Admetus, you must endure this misfortune. For you are not the first or last of mortals to lose a noble wife. Know that death is a debt we all must pay.

ADMETUS

I understand that, and this sorrow did not fall upon me un-

402-3 <μάτηρ,> ὁ σὸς / ποτὶ σοῖσι πίτνων καλοῦ- / μαι

Willink: καλοῦμαι ὁ σὸς ποτὶ σοῖσι πίτνων C

409-10 ἔργ', ἃ σὺ σύγκασί μοι συνέτλας κούρα Willink:
ἔργα σύ τε μοι σύγκασι κ- συν- fere C post h.v. lac. indic.
Hermann

420 τοι Nauck: τε a: γε b

EURIPIDES

προσέπτατ'· εἰδὼς δ' αὖτ' ἔτειρόμην πάλαι.
 ἀλλ', ἐκφορὰν γὰρ τοῦδε θήσομαι νεκροῦ,
 πάρεστε καὶ μένοντες ἀντηχήσατε
 παιᾶνα τῷ κάτωθεν ἄσπονδον θεῶ.

- 425 πᾶσιν δὲ Θεσσαλοῖσιν ὧν ἐγὼ κρατῶ
 πένθους γυναικὸς τῆσδε κοινοῦσθαι λέγω
 κουρᾷ ξυρήκει καὶ μελαμπέπλω στολῇ·
 τέθριππά θ' οἷ ζεύγνυσθε καὶ μονάμπυκας
 πώλους, σιδήρῳ τέμνετ' αὐχένων φόβην.
- 430 αὐλῶν δὲ μὴ κατ' ἄστν, μὴ λύρας κτύπος
 ἔστω σελήνας δώδεκ' ἐκπληρουμένας.
 οὐ γάρ τιν' ἄλλον φίλτερον θάψω νεκρὸν
 τοῦδ' οὐδ' ἀμείνον' εἰς ἔμ'. ἀξία δέ μοι
 τιμῆς, ἐπεὶ τέθνηκεν ἀντ' ἐμοῦ μόνη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

- 435 ὦ Πελίου θυγάτερ,
 χαίρουσά μοι εἶν' Ἀΐδα δόμοισιν
 τὸν ἀνάλιον οἶκον οἰκετεύοις.
 ἴστω δ' Ἀΐδας ὁ μελαγχαί-
 τας θεὸς ὅς τ' ἐπὶ κώπα
- 440 πηδαλίῳ τε γέρων
 νεκροπομπὸς ἵζει
 πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ γυναικ' ἀρίσταν
 λίμναν Ἀχεροντίαν πορεύ-
 σασ ἐλάτα δικώπῳ.

424 ἄσπονδον Σ: ἀσπόνδῳ C

ALCESTIS

expected. I have long been worn down with the knowledge of it. But since I shall conduct the funeral, attend me here, and while you wait sing a hymn to the god below, a hymn unaccompanied by libations.

I command all the Thesalians in my realm to join in the mourning for my wife: let them cut their hair and wear black apparel. All you who yoke teams and all single riders, cut your horses' manes with a blade. And let there be no sound of pipe or lyre in the city for twelve full months. For I shall never bury one I love more or who has been kinder to me. She deserves my honor since she died for me as would no one else.

Exit ADMETUS with children and retinue carrying ALCESTIS' body into the palace.

CHORUS

O daughter of Pelias, farewell, and may you have joy even as you dwell in the sunless house of Hades! Let Hades, black-haired god, and the old man who sits at oar and tiller, ferryman of souls, be in no doubt that it is by far the best of women that he has ferried in his skiff across the lake of Acheron.

ἀντ. α

- 445 πολλά σε μουσοπόλοι
 μέλψουσι καθ' ἐπτάτονον τ' ὀρείαν
 χέλυν ἔν τ' ἀλύροις κλέοντες ὕμνοις,
 Σπάρτα κυκλὰς ἀνίκα Καρνεί-
 ου περινίσεται ὦρα
- 450 μηνός, ἀειρομένας
 παννύχου σελάνας,
 λιπαραῖσί τ' ἐν ὀλβίαις Ἀθάναις,
 τοίαν ἔλιπες θανούσα μολ-
 πὰν μελέων ἀοιδοῖς.

στρ. β

- 455 εἴθ' ἐπ' ἐμοὶ μὲν εἴη,
 δυναίμαν δέ σε πέμ-
 ψαι φάος ἐξ Ἄϊδα τεράμνων
 Κωκυτοῖο ῥεέθρων
 ποταμία νερτέρῃ τε κώπῃ.
- 460 σὺ γάρ, ὦ μόνα ὦ φίλα γυναικῶν,
 σὺ τὸν αὐτᾶς ἔτλας <ἔτλας>
 πόσιν ἀντὶ σᾶς ἀμεῖψαι
 ψυχᾶς ἐξ Ἄϊδα. κούφα σοι
 χθὼν ἐπάνωθε πέσοι, γύναι. εἰ δέ τι
 καινὸν ἔλοιτο πόσις λέχος, ἧ μάλ' ἂν
- 465 ἔμοιγ' ἂν εἴη στυγη-
 θεὶς τέκνοις τε τοῖς σοῖς.

ἀντ. β

ματέρος οὐ θελούσας
 πρὸ παιδὸς χθονὶ κρύ-

ALCESTIS

Poets shall sing often in your praise both on the seven-stringed mountain tortoise shell⁴ and in songs unaccompanied by the lyre when at Sparta the month Karneios⁵ comes circling round and the moon is aloft the whole night long, and also in rich, gleaming Athens. Such is the theme for song that you have left for poets by your death.

Would that it lay in my power and I could escort you to the light from the halls of Hades by an oar plied on the nether stream of Cocytus! For you, you alone, dear among women, had the courage, <the courage,> to redeem your husband from Hades at the price of your life. May the earth lie light upon you, lady! And if your husband should take a new bride, he will be hateful in my eyes as in those of your children.

His mother was not willing to be buried in earth for her

⁴ Hermes is said to have made the first lyre out of a tortoise shell.

⁵ The Spartan month Karneios was the time of a festival called Karneia. For musical contests there see Athen. *Deipn.* 14.635e.

448 *κυκλᾶς* Scaliger: *κύκλος* C

458 *Κωκυτοῖο* Willink: *καὶ Κωκυτοῖο* a: *καὶ Κωκυτοῦ τε* b

461 *αὐτᾶς* Erfurdt: *ἑαυτ-* a *σαντ-* b <ἔτλας> Murray

EURIPIDES

ψαι δέμας, οὐδὲ πατρὸς γεραιού,
 <τοῦδ' ἐγγὺς ἦν Ἄϊδας,>
 ὃν ἔτεκον δ', οὐκ ἔτλαν ῥύεσθαι,
 470 σχετλίω, πολιὰν ἔχοντε χαίταν.
 σὺ δ' ἐν ἡβᾷ νέα νέου
 προθανούσα φωτὸς οἴχῃ.
 τοιαύτας εἶη μοι κῦρσαι
 συνδυάδος φιλίας ἀλόχου, τὸ γὰρ
 ἐν βίῳ σπάνιον μέρος· ἦ γὰρ ἂν
 475 ἔμοιγ' ἄλυπος δι' αἰ-
 ῶνος ἂν ξυνείη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ξένοι, Φεραίας τῆσδε κωμῆται χθονός,
 Ἄδμητον ἐν δόμοισιν ἄρα κιγχάνω;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔστ' ἐν δόμοισι παῖς Φέρητος, Ἡράκλεις.
 ἀλλ' εἶπὲ χρεία τίς σε Θεσσαλῶν χθόνα
 480 πέμπει, Φεραῖον ἄστν προσβῆναι τόδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τιρυνθίῳ πράσσω τιν' Εὐρυσθεῖ πόνον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ ποῖ πορεύῃ; τῷ συνέζευξαι πλάνῳ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θρηγκὸς τέτρωρον ἄρμα Διομήδους μέτα.

469 ante h.v. lac. indic. Canter, suppl. Willink

ALCESTIS

child nor was his aged father. <Death was at his door,> yet unfeeling, they could not bring themselves to rescue the child they bore, although their hair was white with age. But you died in your prime, a young bride saving a young husband. Be it my fate to find such a dear wife, for this lot in life is rare! Truly, such a woman, living with me my whole life, would bring me no grief.⁶

Enter by Eisodos A HERACLES with his characteristic lion skin and club. A servant goes in to tell Admetus of the arrival.

HERACLES

Strangers, citizens of this land of Pherae, is Admetus at home?

CHORUS LEADER

Yes, Pheres' son is at home, Heracles. But tell us what brings you to Thessaly and to this city of Pherae.

HERACLES

I am performing a task for Eurystheus, king of Tiryns.

CHORUS LEADER

Where are you bound? What is this journey you are forced to make?

HERACLES

I go in quest of the four-horse chariot of Thracian Diomedes.

⁶ The unspoken background to this statement is the belief that women are normally a bane to men: see Hesiod, *Theogony* 561-612, for the idea that women are men's punishment, sent by Zeus to afflict them.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς οὖν δυνήσῃ; μῶν ἄπειρος εἶ ξένου;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

485 ἄπειρος· οὐπω Βιστόνων ἦλθον χθόνα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἵππων δεσπόσαι σ' ἄνευ μάχης.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἀπειπεῖν μὴν πόρους οἶόν τ' ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κτανὼν ἄρ' ἤξεισ ἢ θανὼν αὐτοῦ μενεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ τόνδ' ἀγῶνα πρῶτον ἂν δράμοιμ' ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

490 τί δ' ἂν κρατήσας δεσπότην πλέον λάβοις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πώλους ἀπάξω κοιράνω Τιρυνθίῳ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ εὐμαρὲς χαλινὸν ἐμβαλεῖν γνάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ μή γε πῦρ πνέουσι μυκτήρων ἄπο.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἄνδρας ἀρταμοῦσι λαυσηραῖς γνάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

495 θηρῶν ὀρέϊων χόρτον, οὐχ ἵππων, λέγεις.

ALCESTIS

CHORUS LEADER

How can you do that? Do you not know what kind of host he is?

HERACLES

I do not. I have never yet been to Bistonia.

CHORUS LEADER

You cannot possess those horses without a fight.

HERACLES

But all the same, I cannot decline these labors.

CHORUS LEADER

Then you will either kill him and return or end your days there.

HERACLES

This is not the first such race I shall have run.

CHORUS LEADER

If you defeat their master, what will it profit you?

HERACLES

I will bring the horses back to the lord of Tiryns.

CHORUS LEADER

You will not find it easy to put a bit in their mouths.

HERACLES

Surely so, unless they breathe fire from their nostrils.

CHORUS LEADER

No, but they tear men apart with their nimble jaws.

HERACLES

This is fodder for mountain beasts, not horses.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φάτνας ἴδοις ἂν αἵμασιν πεφυρμένας.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τίνος δ' ὁ θρέψας παῖς πατρός κομπάζεται;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἄρεος, ζαχρύσου Θρηκίας πέλτης ἀναξ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τόνδε τοῦμοῦ δαίμονος πόνον λέγεις
 500 (σκληρὸς γὰρ αἰεὶ καὶ πρὸς αἶπος ἔρχεται),
 εἰ χρῆ με πᾶσιν οἷς Ἄρης ἐγείνατο
 μάχην συνάψαι, πρῶτα μὲν Λυκάουι,
 αὖθις δὲ Κύκνω, τόνδε δ' ἔρχομαι τρίτον
 ἀγῶνα πώλοις δεσπότη τε συμβαλῶν.
 505 ἀλλ' οὐτίς ἔστιν ὅς τὸν Ἄλκμῆνης γόνον
 τρέσαντα χεῖρα πολεμίαν ποτ' ὄψεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὄδ' αὐτὸς τῆσδε κοίρανος χθονὸς
 Ἄδμητος ἔξω δωμαίων πορεύεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ Διὸς παῖ Περσέως τ' ἀφ' αἵματος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

510 Ἄδμητε, καὶ σὺ χαῖρε, Θεσσαλῶν ἀναξ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

θέλοιμ' ἄν. εὖνουν δ' ὄντα σ' ἐξέπίσταμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί χρῆμα κουρᾷ τῆδε πένθιμῳ πρέπεις;

ALCESTIS

CHORUS LEADER

You will see their feeding troughs drenched with blood.

HERACLES

Whose son does their master claim to be?

CHORUS LEADER

Ares' son, and shield-bearing lord of Thrace rich in gold.

HERACLES

Like the others this labor you have described befits my destiny (which is always hard and steep) since I am fated to do battle with all the sons of Ares: first Lycaon, then Cycnus, and now this is the third contest I enter, going off to fight horses and master alike. But no one shall ever see Alcmena's son quake at the hand of an enemy.

Enter ADMETUS from the palace, dressed in black and hair cut in mourning.

CHORUS LEADER

But here, Admetus, the king of this land, is himself coming out of doors.

ADMETUS

I wish you joy, son of Zeus and child of Perseus' blood.

HERACLES

Admetus, king of Thessaly, I wish you joy as well.

ADMETUS

If only I could have it! I know you wish me well.

HERACLES

Why are you wearing the shorn hair of mourning?

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

θάπτειν τιν' ἐν τῇδ' ἡμέρα μέλλω νεκρόν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀπ' οὖν τέκνων σῶν πημονὴν εἶργοι θεός.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

515 ζῶσιν κατ' οἴκους παῖδες οὓς ἔφυσ' ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πατήρ γε μὴν ὠραῖος, εἶπερ οἴχεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

κἀκέινος ἔστι χῆ τεκοῦσά μ', Ἡράκλεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ μὴν γυνή γ' ὄλωλεν Ἄλκηστις σέθεν;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

διπλοῦς ἐπ' αὐτῇ μῦθος ἔστι μοι λέγειν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

520 πότερα θανούσης εἶπας ἢ ζώσης ἔτι;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἔστιν τε κούκέτ' ἔστιν, ἀλγύνει δέ με.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον οἶδ'. ἄσημα γὰρ λέγεις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

οὐκ οἶσθα μοίρας ἧς τυχεῖν αὐτὴν χρεών;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶδ', ἀντὶ σοῦ γε κατθανεῖν ὑφειμένην.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

I am about to conduct a funeral today.

HERACLES

God keep misfortune from your children!

ADMETUS

The children I begot are alive in the house.

HERACLES

Your father was of a ripe old age, if it is he that has departed.

ADMETUS

My father lives, Heracles, and my mother too.

HERACLES

Surely your wife Alcestis has not died?

ADMETUS

There is a double tale to tell of her.

HERACLES

Do you mean that she has died or is still alive?

ADMETUS

She is and is no more. It is a grief to me.

HERACLES

I'm still no wiser: you speak in riddles.

ADMETUS

Do you not know what doom she is fated to suffer?

HERACLES

I know: she promised to die for you.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

525 πῶς οὖν ἔτ' ἔστιν, εἴπερ ἤνεσεν τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ᾶ, μὴ πρόκλαι' ἀκοιτιν, ἐς τότ' ἀμβαλοῦ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

τέθνηχ' ὁ μέλλων καὶ θανῶν οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χωρὶς τό τ' εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ νομίζεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

σὺ τῆδε κρίνεις, Ἡράκλεις, κείνη δ' ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

530 τί δῆτα κλαίεις; τίς φίλων ὁ κατθανών;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

γυνή· γυναικὸς ἀρτίως μεμνήμεθα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὀθνεῖος ἢ σοὶ συγγενῆς γεγῶσά τις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὀθνεῖος, ἄλλως δ' ἦν ἀναγκαία δόμοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἐν οἴκοις σοῖσιν ὄλεσεν βίον;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

535 πατρὸς θανόντος ἐνθάδ' ὠρφανεύετο.

⁵²⁷ καὶ θανῶν οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτι Schwartz: χά θανῶν οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτι
a: κοῦκέτ' ἔστ' ὁ κατθανών b

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

How can she be still truly alive once she had promised that?

HERACLES

Oh, do not mourn your wife beforehand! Put it off till the day!

ADMETUS

Someone who is doomed to die is dead, has died and is no more.

HERACLES

Existence and non-existence are deemed to be separate things.

ADMETUS

You have your view on this, Heracles, and I have mine.

HERACLES

Why then are you in mourning? Who of your kin has died?

ADMETUS

A woman: it was a woman I spoke of just now.

HERACLES

Was it someone related to you by blood or not?

ADMETUS

Not by blood, but she was in other ways closely connected to the family.

HERACLES

How did she come to die in your house?

ADMETUS

After her father died, she spent her orphan years here.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

φεῦ.

εἴθ' ἠϋρομέν σ', Ἄδμητε, μὴ λυπούμενον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὡς δὴ τί δράσων τόνδ' ὑπορράπτεις λόγον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ξένων πρὸς ἄλλων ἐστίαν πορεύσομαι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦναξ· μὴ τοσόνδ' ἔλθοι κακόν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

540 λυπουμένοις ὀχληρὸς, εἰ μόλοι, ξένος.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

τεθνώσιν οἱ θανόντες· ἀλλ' ἴθ' ἐς δόμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

αἰσχυρὸν <δὲ> παρὰ κλαίουσι θοινᾶσθαι ξένους.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

χωρὶς ξενῶνές εἰσιν οἱ σ' ἐσάξομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μέθες με καί σοι μυρίαν ἔξω χάριν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

545 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλου σ' ἀνδρὸς ἐστίαν μολεῖν.

ἠγού σὺ τῷδε δωμάτων ἐξωπίους
ξενῶνας οἷξας τοῖς τ' ἐφεστῶσιν φράσον
σίτων παρῆναι πλήθος, εὖ δὲ κλήσατε

542 <δὲ> Erfurdt

ALCESTIS

HERACLES

Oh dear! I wish I had not found you in mourning, Admetus!

ADMETUS

With what intent do you utter these words?

HERACLES

I shall go to the house of some other guest-friend.

ADMETUS

No no, my lord! Heaven avert such a misfortune!

HERACLES

To mourners the arrival of a guest is vexing.

ADMETUS

Those who have died are dead: go into the house.

HERACLES

But it is disgraceful for guests to be feasted in a house of mourning.

ADMETUS

The guest rooms where we will bring you are in a separate place.

HERACLES

Let me go and I will be enormously grateful to you.

ADMETUS

You must not go to any other man's house.

(to a servant) Go before this man and open up the guest quarters away from the main palace; tell those responsible to provide an abundance of food. And be sure to close fast

EURIPIDES

θύρας μεταύλους· οὐ πρέπει θινωμένους
550 κλύειν στεναγμῶν οὐδὲ λυπέισθαι ξένους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δρᾶς; τοσαύτης συμφορᾶς προκειμένης,
Ἄδμητε, τολμᾶς ξενοδοκεῖν; τί μῶρος εἶ;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δόμων σφε καὶ πόλεως ἀπήλασα
ξένον μολόντα, μᾶλλον ἂν μ' ἐπήνεσας;
555 οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ μοι συμφορὰ μὲν οὐδὲν ἂν
μείων ἐγίγνετ', ἀξενώτερος δ' ἐγώ.
καὶ πρὸς κακοῖσιν ἄλλο τοῦτ' ἂν ἦν κακόν,
δόμους καλεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροξένους.
αὐτὸς δ' ἀρίστου τοῦδε τυγχάνω ξένου,
560 ὅταν ποτ' Ἄργους διψίαν ἔλθω χθόνα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔκρυπτες τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα,
φίλου μολόντος ἀνδρὸς ὡς αὐτὸς λέγεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν ποτ' ἠθέλησεν εἰσελθεῖν δόμους,
εἰ τῶν ἐμῶν τι πημάτων ἐγνώρισεν.
565 καὶ τῷ μὲν, οἶμαι, δρῶν τάδ' οὐ φρονεῖν δοκῶ
οὐδ' αἰνέσει με· τὰμὰ δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται
μέλαθρ' ἀπωθεῖν οὐδ' ἀτιμάζειν ξένους.

549 μεταύλους Brunck: μεσαύλους C

ALCESTIS

the doors of the courtyard: it is not right for guests to hear the sounds of mourning or to feel distress as they dine.

The servant goes into the palace, followed by HERACLES.

CHORUS LEADER

What are you doing? Faced with so great a misfortune, Admetus, do you have the stomach to entertain guests? Why are you so foolish?

ADMETUS

Yet if I had driven from my house and city a friend who had just arrived, would you have praised me more? No, indeed, since my misfortune would have been in no way lessened, and I would have been less hospitable. And in addition to my ills we would have the further ill that my house would be called a spurner of guests. I myself find in this man the best of hosts whenever I go to thirsty Argos.

CHORUS LEADER

Why then did you conceal your present plight when, as you say yourself, he has come as a friend?

ADMETUS

He would never have consented to enter the house if he had known anything of my sorrow. And no doubt someone will think that in doing this I am being foolish and will not approve of me. But my house does not know how to reject or dishonor guests.

Exit ADMETUS into the palace.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ὦ πολύξεινος καὶ ἑλευθέρου ἀνδρὸς αἰεὶ ποτ' οἶκος,
 570 σέ τοι καὶ ὁ Πύθιος εὐλύρας Ἀπόλλων
 ἠξίωσε ναίειν,
 ἔτλα δὲ σοῖσι μηλονόμας
 ἐν νομοῖς γενέσθαι,
 575 δοχμῶν διὰ κλειτύων
 βοσκήμασι σοῖσι συρίζων
 ποιμνίτας ὑμεναίους.

ἀντ. α

σὺν δ' ἐποιμαίνοντο χαρᾷ μελέων βαλῖαι τε λύγκες,
 580 ἔβα δὲ λιποῦσ' Ὀθρνος νάπαν λεόντων
 ἅ δαφεινὸς ἴλα·
 χόρευσε δ' ἀμφὶ σὰν κιθάραν,
 Φοῖβε, ποικιλόθριξ
 585 νεβρὸς ὑψικόμων πέραν
 βαίνουσ' ἑλατᾶν σφυρῶ κούφῳ,
 χαίρουσ' εὐφροني μολπᾷ.

στρ. β

τοιγὰρ πολυμηλοτάταν
 ἐστίαν οἰκεῖ παρὰ καλλίναον
 590 Βοιβίαν λίμναν. ἀρότοις δὲ γυνᾶν
 καὶ πεδίων δαπέδοις
 ὄρον ἀμφὶ μὲν ἀελίου κνεφαίαν
 ἰππόστασιν ἐς τὸ πέραν Μολοσ-
 σῶν <ὀρέων> τίθεται,

ALCESTIS

CHORUS

O hospitable house, house of an ever generous man, even Pythian Apollo of the lovely lyre deigned to dwell in you and submitted to become a shepherd in your pastures, playing on his pipe mating songs for your herds on the slanting hillsides.

Under his shepherd care, in joy at his songs, were also spotted lynxes, and there came, leaving the vale of Othrys, a pride of tawny lions, and the dappled fawn stepping beyond the tall fir trees with its light foot danced to your lyre-playing, Apollo, rejoicing in its joyful melody.

Therefore he dwells in a house rich in flocks beside fair-flowing Lake Boebias, and for the tillage of his fields and for his grazing lands he sets the boundary where the sun stables his horses in the dark west beyond the Molossian

568 ἐλευθέρου Purgold: ἐλεύθερος C

574 νομοῖς Pierson: δόμοις C

589 οἰκεῖ Markland: οἰκεῖς C

593 ἐς τὸ πέραν Pohlenz: αἰθέρα τὰν C

594 <ὀρέων> Bauer

EURIPIDES

595 πόντιον δ' Αἰγαῖον ἐπ' ἀκτὰν
ἀλίμενον Πηλίου κρατύνει.

ἀντ. β

καὶ νῦν δόμον ἀμπετάσας
δέξατο ξεῖνον νοτερῶ βλεφάρῳ,
τᾶς φίλας κλαίων ἀλόχου νέκυν ἐν
600 δώμασιν ἀρτιθανῆ·
τὸ γὰρ εὐγενὲς ἐκφέρεται πρὸς αἰδῶ.
ἐν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσι δὲ πάντ' ἔνε-
στιν σοφίας ἄγαμαι.
πρὸς δ' ἐμᾶ ψυχᾶ θράσος ἦσται
605 θεοσεβῆ φῶτα κεδνὰ πράξειν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀνδρῶν Φεραίων εὐμενῆς παρουσία,
νέκυν μὲν ἤδη πάντ' ἔχοντα πρόσπολοι
φέρουσιν ἄρδην πρὸς τάφον τε καὶ πυράν·
ὑμεῖς δὲ τὴν θανούσαν, ὡς νομίζεται,
610 προσείπατ' ἐξιούσαν ὑστάτην ὁδόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὀρώ σὸν πατέρα γηραιῶ ποδὶ
στείχοντ', ὀπαδούς τ' ἐν χεροῖν δάμαρτι σῆ
κόσμον φέροντας, νερτέρων ἀγάλματα.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

ἦκω κακοῖσι σοῖσι συγκάμνων, τέκνον·
615 ἐσθλῆς γάρ, οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖ, καὶ σῶφρονος

599 φίλας editio Aldina: φιλίας C

ALCESTIS

mountains, and he rules as far as the rocky Aegean promontory of Pelion.

And now, throwing open the gates of his house, he has received a guest though his own eyes were wet, weeping for the loss of his dear wife so recently perished in his house. For his noble nature runs unbridled toward pity and respect. All that is good lives in the hearts of those who are nobly born. I marvel at his wisdom. And sure confidence sits in my heart that the god-fearing man will prosper.

Enter ADMETUS from the palace with servants carrying Alcestis on her bier.

ADMETUS

Men of Pherae who stand by in goodwill, the body has been prepared for burial, and my servants are carrying it on their shoulders to its resting place. Do you, then, as custom ordains, bid the dead woman farewell as she goes out on her last journey.

Enter PHERES with retinue by Eisosdos B.

CHORUS LEADER

But look! I see your father approaching with aged step and his servants carrying finery for your wife, adornment for the dead.

PHERES

I have come to share in your trouble, my son. For you have lost, as no one will deny, a noble and virtuous wife. Yet you

⁶⁰³ ante σοφίας dist. Dale: post σοφίας C

⁶⁰⁴ θράσος Barnes: θάρσος C

EURIPIDES

- γυναικὸς ἡμάρτηκας. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
 φέρειν ἀνάγκη καίπερ ὄντα δύσφορα.
 δέχου δὲ κόσμον τόνδε καὶ κατὰ χθονὸς
 ἴτω. τὸ ταύτης σῶμα τιμᾶσθαι χρεῶν,
 620 ἥτις γε τῆς σῆς προύθανε ψυχῆς, τέκνον,
 καὶ μ' οὐκ ἄπαιδ' ἔθηκεν οὐδ' εἶασε σοῦ
 στερέντα γήρα πευθίμῳ καταφθίνειν,
 πάσαις δ' ἔθηκεν εὐκλεέστερον βίον
 γυναιξίν, ἔργον τλάσα γενναῖον τόδε.
 625 ὦ τόνδε μὲν σώσασ', ἀναστήσασα δὲ
 ἡμᾶς πίτνοντας, χαίρε, κὰν Ἴαιδου δόμοις
 εὖ σοι γένοιτο. φημὶ τοιούτους γάμους
 λύειν βροτοῖσιν, ἢ γαμῆν οὐκ ἄξιον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- οὗτ' ἦλθες ἐς τόνδ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ κληθεὶς τάφον
 630 οὗτ' ἐν φίλοισι σὴν παρουσίαν λέγω.
 κόσμον δὲ τὸν σὸν οὐποθ' ἦδ' ἐνδύσεται·
 οὐ γάρ τι τῶν σῶν ἐνδεῆς ταφήσεται.
 τότε ξυναλγεῖν χρῆν σ' ὅτ' ὠλλύμην ἐγώ·
 σὺ δ' ἐκποδῶν στας καὶ παρῆς ἄλλῳ θανεῖν
 635 νέῳ γέρον ὦν τόνδ' ἀποιμῶξη νεκρόν;
 οὐκ ἦσθ' ἄρ' ὀρθῶς τοῦδε σώματος πατήρ,
 οὐδ' ἢ τεκεῖν φάσκουσα καὶ κεκλημένη
 μήτηρ μ' ἔτικτε, δουλίου δ' ἀφ' αἵματος
 μαστῶ γυναικὸς σῆς ὑπεβλήθην λάθρα.
 640 ἔδειξας εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξεληθὼν ὃς εἶ,

ALCESTIS

must bear this stroke, though it is hard to bear. Now take this finery, and let it be buried with her. We must show honor to her corpse seeing that she died to save your life, my son, and did not leave me childless or let me waste away in a stricken old age bereft of you. She has given the lives of all women a fairer repute by daring to do this noble deed. (*to Alcestis*) You that both saved this man's life and raised me up when I was falling: farewell! In the house of Hades may it go well with you! Marriages like this, I maintain, are a benefit to mortals: otherwise, it is not worthwhile marrying.⁷

ADMETUS

I did not invite you to this funeral, nor do I count your presence here as that of a friend. As for your finery, she shall never wear it, for she needs nothing of yours for her burial. You should have shared my trouble when I was dying. You stood aside and, though you are old, allowed a young person to die: will you now come to mourn her? You were not, as it now seems clear, truly my father, nor did she who claims to have borne me and is called my mother really give me birth, but I was born of some slave and secretly put to your wife's breast. When you were put to the test you showed your true nature, and I do not count myself as your

⁷ See note above on 476.

EURIPIDES

- καί μ' οὐ νομίζω παῖδα σὸν πεφυκέναι.
 ἦ τάρᾳ πάντων διαπρέπεις ἀψυχία,
 ὅς τηλικόσδ' ὦν κἀπὶ τέρμ' ἤκων βίου
 οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδ' ἐτόλμησας θανεῖν
 645 τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδός, ἀλλὰ τήνδ' εἰάσατε
 γυναῖκ' ὀθνεῖαν, ἣν ἐγὼ καὶ μητέρα
 καὶ πατέρ' ἂν ἐνδίκως ἂν ἠγοίμην μόνην.
 καίτοι καλόν γ' ἂν τόνδ' ἀγῶν' ἠγωνίσω,
 τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδὸς κατθανών, βραχὺς δέ σοι
 650 πάντως ὁ λοιπὸς ἦν βιώσιμος χρόνος.
 [κἀγὼ τ' ἂν ἔζων χῆδε τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον,
 κούκ ἂν μονωθεὶς ἔστενον κακοῖς ἐμοῖς.]
 καὶ μὴν ὅσ' ἄνδρα χρῆ παθεῖν εὐδαίμονα
 πέπουθας· ἠβησας μὲν ἐν τυραννίδι,
 655 παῖς δ' ἦν ἐγὼ σοι τῶνδε διάδοχος δόμων,
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἄτεκνος κατθανὼν ἄλλοις δόμον
 λείψειν ἔμελλες ὀρφανὸν διαρπάσαι.
 οὐ μὴν ἐρεῖς γέ μ' ὡς ἀτιμάζοντα σὸν
 γῆρας θανεῖν προὔδωκας, ὅστις αἰδόφρων
 660 πρὸς σ' ἦ μάλιστα· κἀντὶ τῶνδέ μοι χάριν
 τοιάνδε καὶ σὺ χῆ τεκοῦσ' ἠλλαξάτην.
 τοιγὰρ φυτεύων παῖδας οὐκέτ' ἂν φθάνοις,
 οἱ γηροβοσκήσουσι καὶ θανόντα σε
 περιστελοῦσι καὶ προθήσονται νεκρόν.
 665 οὐ γάρ σ' ἔγωγε τῆδ' ἐμῆ θάψω χερί·
 τέθνηκα γὰρ δὴ τοῦπὶ σ'. εἰ δ' ἄλλου τυχὼν
 σωτήηρος αὐγὰς εἰσορῶ, κείνου λέγω

ALCESTIS

son. You are, you know, truly superlative in cowardice; for though you are so old and have come to the end of your life, yet you refused and had not the courage to die for your own son, but you and your wife let this woman, who was no blood relative, do so. I shall consider her with perfect justice to be both mother and father to me. And yet it would have been a noble contest to enter, dying for your son, and in any case the time you had left to live was short. [And she and I would have lived for the rest of our time, and I would not be grieving for my trouble, bereft of her.]

What is more, all that is required for a man to be happy has already befallen you: you spent the prime of your life as a king, and you had me as son and successor to your house, so that you were not going to die childless and leave your house behind without heirs for others to plunder. Surely you cannot say that you abandoned me to death because I dishonored you in your old age, for I have always shown you every respect. And now this is the repayment you and my mother have made to me. You had better hurry, therefore, and beget other children to take care of you in old age and to dress you, when you have died, and lay you out for burial. I for my part shall never bury you myself. For as far as you are concerned I am dead. And if I have found another savior and still look upon the sun, I am that savior's

647 καὶ πατέρ' ἄν Weil: πατέρα τέ γ' fere C: πατέρα τ' ἄν
Elmsley

651-52 del. Lenting: cf. 295-6

655 ἦ γεγώς Nauck

660 ἦ Elmsley: ἦν C

665 τῆδε μὴ Weil

EURIPIDES

- καὶ παῖδά μ' εἶναι καὶ φίλον γηροτρόφον.
 μάτην ἄρ' οἱ γέροντες εὖχονται θανεῖν,
 670 γῆρας ψέγοντες καὶ μακρὸν χρόνον βίου
 ἦν δ' ἐγγὺς ἔλθῃ θάνατος, οὐδεὶς βούλεται
 θνήσκειν, τὸ γῆρας δ' οὐκέτ' ἔστ' αὐτοῖς βαρύ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἄδμηθ'—ἄλις γὰρ ἡ παροῦσα συμφορά—
 παῦσαι, πατρὸς δὲ μὴ παροξύνῃς φρένας.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

- 675 ὦ παῖ, τί ν' αὐχεῖς, πότερα Λυδὸν ἢ Φρύγα,
 κακοῖς ἐλαύνειν ἀργυρώνητον σέθεν;
 οὐκ οἶσθα Θεσσαλὸν με κατὰ Θεσσαλοῦ
 πατρὸς γεγῶτα γνησίως ἐλεύθερον;
 ἄγαν ὑβρίζεις καὶ νεανίας λόγους
 680 ρίπτων ἐς ἡμᾶς οὐ βαλὼν οὕτως ἄπει.
 ἐγὼ δέ σ' οἴκων δεσπότην ἐγεινάμην
 κάθρεψ', ὀφείλω δ' οὐχ ὑπερθνήσκειν σέθεν·
 οὐ γὰρ πατρῶον τόνδ' ἐδεξάμην νόμον,
 παίδων προθνήσκειν πατέρα, οὐδ' Ἑλληνικόν.
 685 σαυτῷ γὰρ εἴτε δυστυχῆς εἴτ' εὐτυχῆς
 ἔφυς· ἂ δ' ἡμῶν χρῆν σε τυγχάνειν ἔχεις.
 πολλῶν μὲν ἄρχεις, πολυπλέθρους δέ σοι γύας
 λείψω· πατρὸς γὰρ ταῦτ' ἐδεξάμην πάρα.
 τί δῆτά σ' ἠδίκηκα; τοῦ σ' ἀποστερῶ;
 690 μὴ θνήσχ' ὑπὲρ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, οὐδ' ἐγὼ πρὸ σοῦ.
 χαίρεις ὀρών φῶς· πατέρα δ' οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς;
 ἦ μὴν πολὺν γε τόν κάτω λογίζομαι

ALCESTIS

child and fond support in old age. It seems that old men, who find fault with age and length of years, pray for death insincerely. For once death comes near, none of them wishes to die, and age is no longer burdensome to them.

CHORUS LEADER

Stop, Admetus, the present grief is enough! Do not provoke your father!

PHERES

Son, whom do you imagine you are berating with insults, some Lydian or Phrygian slave of yours, bought with money? Do you not know that I am a freeborn Thessalian, legitimately begotten of a Thessalian father? You go too far in insult, and since you hurl brash words at me, you will not get off with impunity.

I begot you and raised you to be the master of this house, but I am not obliged to die for you. I did not inherit this as a family custom, fathers dying for sons, nor as a Greek custom either. You are fortunate or unfortunate for yourself alone. What you should in justice have received from me you have: you rule over many subjects, and I shall leave to you many acres of land, for I received the same from *my* father. What injustice have I done you? Of what am I robbing you? Do not die on my behalf, and I shall not die on yours. You enjoy looking on the light. Do you think your father does not? Truly I regard the time below as long

673 Ἄδμηθ' Hayley: παύσασθ' C

674 παύσαι Hayley: ὦ παί C

EURIPIDES

- χρόνον, τὸ δὲ ζῆν σμικρὸν ἄλλ' ὅμως γλυκύ.
 σὺ γοῦν ἀναιδῶς διεμάχου τὸ μὴ θανεῖν
 695 καὶ ζῆς παρελθὼν τὴν πεπρωμένην τύχην,
 ταύτην κατακτάς· εἴτ' ἐμὴν ἀψυχίαν
 λέγεις, γυναικός, ὦ κάκισθ', ἠσσημένος,
 ἢ τοῦ καλοῦ σοῦ προύθανεν νεαίου;
 σοφῶς δ' ἐφηῦρες ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν ποτε,
 700 εἰ τὴν παροῦσαν κατθανεῖν πείσεις ἀεὶ
 γυναιχ' ὑπὲρ σοῦ· κὸτ' ὄνειδίσεις φίλοις
 τοῖς μὴ θέλουσι δρᾶν τάδ', αὐτὸς ὦν κακός;
 σίγα· νόμιζε δ', εἰ σὺ τὴν σαυτοῦ φιλεῖς
 ψυχὴν, φιλεῖν ἅπαντας· εἰ δ' ἡμᾶς κακῶς
 705 ἐρεῖς, ἀκούσῃ πολλὰ κοῦ ψευδῆ κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πλείω λέλεκται νῦν τε καὶ τὸ πρὶν κακά·
 παῦσαι δέ, πρέσβυ, παῖδα σὸν κακορροθῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

λέγ', ὡς ἐμοῦ λέγοντος· εἰ δ' ἀλγείς κλύων
 τάληθές, οὐ χρῆν σ' εἰς ἔμ' ἐξαμαρτάνειν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

- 710 σοῦ δ' ἂν προθνήσκων μάλλον ἐξημάρτανον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ταῦτὸν γὰρ ἠβῶντ' ἄνδρα καὶ πρέσβυν θανεῖν;

ΦΕΡΗΣ

ψυχῇ μιᾷ ζῆν, οὐ δυοῖν, ὀφείλομεν.

⁶⁹⁷ ψέγεις editio Hervag.

⁷⁰⁶ τὸ Wakefield: τὰ C

ALCESTIS

and life as short but sweet for all that. At all events you have shamelessly striven to avoid death, and you live beyond your fated day by killing *her*. Can you then reproach *me* with cowardice when you, consummate coward, have been bested by a woman, who died to save you, her fine young husband? You have cleverly found out a way never to die by persuading each wife in turn to die on your behalf. Can you then cast in the teeth of your kin that they do not wish to do this when you yourself are so craven? Hold your tongue! Consider that if you love life, so do all men. If you continue to insult me, you shall hear reproaches many and true.

CHORUS LEADER

Too many reproaches have been uttered, now and previously. Old sir, stop reviling your son.

ADMETUS

Speak on, and so shall I! But if it pains you to hear the truth, you should not be wronging me.

PHERES

If I were dying on your behalf, I would be acting far more wrongly.

ADMETUS

What? Is death the same thing for a man in his prime as for an old man?

PHERES

We must live with a single life, not with two.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

καὶ μὴν Διός γε μείζονα ζώης χρόνον.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

ἀρᾶ γονεῦσιν οὐδὲν ἔκδικον παθῶν;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

715 μακροῦ βίου γὰρ ἡσθόμην ἐρῶντά σε.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ σὺ νεκρὸν ἀντὶ σοῦ τόνδ' ἐκφέρεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

σημεῖα τῆς σῆς γ', ὦ κάκιστ', ἀψυχίας.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

οὔτοι πρὸς ἡμῶν γ' ὄλετ'· οὐκ ἐρεῖς τόδε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

φεῦ·

εἴθ' ἀνδρὸς ἔλθοις τοῦδέ γ' ἐς χρείαν ποτέ.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

720 μνήστενε πολλάς, ὡς θάνωσι πλείονες.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

σοὶ τοῦτ' ὄνειδος· οὐ γὰρ ἤθελες θανεῖν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

φίλον τὸ φέγγος τοῦτο τοῦ θεοῦ, φίλον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

κακὸν τὸ λῆμα κοῦκ ἐν ἀνδράσιν τὸ σόν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

οὐκ ἐγγελᾶς γέροντα βαστάζων νεκρὸν.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

And may yours be longer than Zeus's!

PHERES

Do you curse your father, though he has done you no wrong?

ADMETUS

Yes, for I see you lusting for length of days.

PHERES

But is it not you who are burying this corpse in your stead?

ADMETUS

Yes, the sign of your cravenness, you coward.

PHERES

She did not die at my hands. You cannot say that.

ADMETUS

Oh! If only you might come to need my help some day!

PHERES

Woo many wives so that more may die!

ADMETUS

That is a reproach to you, for you refused to.

PHERES

Sweet is the sun god's light, sweet.

ADMETUS

Your heart is cowardly, not a man's at all.

PHERES

At least you cannot mock me as you carry my aged body out for burial.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

725 θανῆ γε μέντοι δυσκλεῆς, ὅταν θάνῃς.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

κακῶς ἀκούειν οὐ μέλει θανόντι μοι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ γῆρας ὡς ἀναιδείας πλέων.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

ἦδ' οὐκ ἀναιδής· τήνδ' ἐφηῦρες ἄφρονα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἄπελθε καμὲ τόνδ' ἕα θάψαι νεκρόν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

730 ἄπειμι· θάψεις δ' αὐτὸς ὢν αὐτῆς φονεύς,
δίκας δὲ δώσεις σοῖσι κηδεσταῖς ἔτι·
ἦ τὰρ Ἄκαστος οὐκέτ' ἔστ' ἐν ἀνδράσιν,
εἰ μὴ σ' ἀδελφῆς αἷμα τιμωρήσεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

735 ἔρρων νυν αὐτὸς χῆ ξυνοικήσασά σοι,
ἄπαιδε παιδὸς ὄντος, ὥσπερ ἄξιοι,
γηράσκει· οὐ γὰρ τῷδ' ἔτ' ἐς ταῦτὸν στέγος
νεῖσθ'· εἰ δ' ἀπειπεῖν χρῆν με κηρύκων ὑπο
τὴν σὴν πατρώαν ἐστίαν, ἀπείπον ἄν.740 ἡμεῖς δέ—τόν ποσὶν γὰρ οἰστέον κακόν—
στείχωμεν, ὡς ἂν ἐν πυρᾷ θῶμεν νεκρόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰώ· σχετλία τόλμης,
ὦ γενναία καὶ μέγ' ἀρίστη,

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

But die you shall, and die with no good name.

PHERES

When I am gone, I care not what men say.

ADMETUS

Oh my, how full of shamelessness is age!

PHERES

She was not shameless. What she lacked was sense.

ADMETUS

Go, and let me bury this body.

PHERES

I go. But you will bury her being yourself her murderer, and one day you will pay the penalty to your kin by marriage. Acastus is no man if he fails to punish you for his sister's death.

ADMETUS

Off with you! You and your wife, spend, as you deserve, a childless old age, though with a child alive. For you shall never come under the same roof with me. If I had to renounce your paternal hearth by public herald, I would have renounced it.

Exit PHERES and retinue by Eisodos B.

(to the Chorus) But since we must now endure the sorrow at hand, let us go to bury our dead.

CHORUS LEADER

(obeying Admetus' earlier command to bid their farewell to Alcestis) Alas, alas! O resolute in courage, heart noble and

EURIPIDES

- χαίρε· πρόφρων σε χθονίός θ' Ἐρμῆς
 Ἄιδης τε δέχουτ'. εἰ δέ τι κάκεῖ
 745 πλέον ἔστ' ἀγαθοῖς, τούτων μετέχουσ'
 Ἄιδου νύμφη παρεδρεύοις.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΩΝ

- πολλοὺς μὲν ἤδη κάπὸ παντοίας χθονὸς
 ξένους μολόντας οἶδ' ἐς Ἀδμήτου δόμους,
 οἷς δέλπνα προύθηκ'. ἀλλὰ τοῦδ' οὐπω ξένον
 750 κακίον' ἐς τήνδ' ἐστίαν ἐδεξάμην.
 ὃς πρῶτα μὲν πευθούντα δεσπότην ὄρων
 ἐσηλθε κατόλμησ' ἀμείψασθαι πύλας.
 ἔπειτα δ' οὔτι σωφρόνως ἐδέξατο
 τὰ προστυχόντα ξένια, συμφορὰν μαθῶν,
 755 ἀλλ', εἴ τι μὴ φέροισιν, ὥτρυνεν φέρειν.
 ποτήριον δ' ἐν χερσὶ κίσσινον λαβὼν
 πίνει μελαίνης μητρὸς εὐζωρον μέθυ,
 ἕως ἐθέρμην' αὐτὸν ἀμφιβάσα φλόξ
 οἴνου. στέφει δὲ κρᾶτα μυρσίνης κλάδοις,
 760 ἄμουσ' ὑλακτῶν· δισσὰ δ' ἦν μέλη κλύειν·
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἦδε, τῶν ἐν Ἀδμήτου κακῶν
 οὐδὲν προτιμῶν, οἰκέται δ' ἐκλαίομεν
 δέσποιναν, ὄμμα δ' οὐκ ἐδείκνυμεν ξένῳ
 τέγγοντες· Ἀδμητος γὰρ ᾧδ' ἐφίετο.
 765 καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν ἐστιῶ
 ξένον, πανούργον κλώπα καὶ ληστήν τινα,

749 ξένον Dobree: ξένου C 756 ποτήριον δ' ἐν χερσὶ
 Musgrave: ποτήρα δ' ἐν χείρεσσι C

ALCESTIS

generous, farewell! May Hermes of the Underworld and Hades receive you kindly! And if in that place the good have any advantage, may you have a share in it and sit as attendant beside Hades' bride!⁸

Exit ADMETUS, CHORUS, and funeral procession by Eisodos A. To the empty stage enter a MANSERVANT from the palace.

MANSERVANT

I have known many men from all manner of lands to come as guests to Admetus' house, and I have served them dinner. But never yet have I welcomed a worse guest to our hearth than this one. In the first place, though he saw that our master was in mourning, he was shameless enough to enter our doors. Then he did not soberly accept the fare that was set before him, as he might in view of our misfortunes, but if we failed to bring anything, he ordered it brought. Then taking an ivy-wood drinking bowl in his hands and drinking unmixed wine, offspring of the dark grape, until the fire in it enveloped and warmed his heart, he garlanded his head with sprays of myrtle and howled songs out of tune. You could hear two sorts of melody. He was singing, paying no attention to the trouble in Admetus' house, while we servants were bewailing our mistress. But we did not show our faces in tears to the stranger, for those were Admetus' orders. And now I must feast the stranger in our house, some knavish thief or brigand, while my mis-

⁸ Persephone.

EURIPIDES

ἦ δ' ἐκ δόμων βέβηκεν, οὐδ' ἐφεισπόμην
 οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἀποιμώζων ἐμῆν
 δέσποιναν, ἣ 'μοὶ πᾶσί τ' οἰκέταισιν ἦν
 770 μῆτηρ· κακῶν γὰρ μυρίων ἐρρύετο,
 ὄργας μαλάσσοις ἀνδρός. ἄρα τὸν ξένου
 στυγῶ δικαίως, ἐν κακοῖς ἀφιγμένον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὔτος, τί σεμνὸν καὶ πεφροντικὸς βλέπεις;
 οὐ χρὴ σκυθρωπὸν τοῖς ξένοις τὸν πρόσπολον
 775 εἶναι, δέχεσθαι δ' εὐπροσηγόρῳ φρενί.
 σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἐταῖρον δεσπότην παρόνθ' ὄρων
 στυγνῶ προσώπῳ καὶ συνωφρωμένῳ
 δέχῃ, θυραίου πῆματος σπουδῆν ἔχων.

δεῦρ' ἔλθ', ὅπως ἂν καὶ σοφώτερος γένη.
 780 τὰ θνητὰ πράγμαθ' ἦντιν' οἶσθ' ἔχει φύσιν;
 οἶμαι μὲν οὐ· πόθεν γάρ; ἀλλ' ἄκουέ μου.
 βροτοῖς ἅπασι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται,
 κοῦκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξεπίσταται
 τὴν αὔριον μέλλουσαν εἰ βιώσεται
 785 τὸ τῆς τύχης γὰρ ἀφανὲς οἷ προβήσεται,
 κᾶστ' οὐ διδακτὸν οὐδ' ἀλίσκεται τέχνη.
 ταῦτ' οὖν ἀκούσας καὶ μαθὼν ἐμοῦ πάρα
 εὐφραϊνε σαυτόν, πῖνε, τὸν καθ' ἡμέραν
 βίον λογίζου σόν, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τῆς τύχης.
 790 τίμα δὲ καὶ τὴν πλείστον ἠδίστην θεῶν
 Κύπριν βροτοῖσιν· εὐμενῆς γὰρ ἡ θεός.
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔασον πάντα καὶ πιθοῦ λόγους

ALCESTIS

trass has left the house without my following or holding out my hand in mourning for her. She was like a mother to me and to the other servants, rescuing us from countless troubles and softening her husband's temper. Do I not have reason to hate the guest, who has arrived in our hour of misfortune?

Enter HERACLES from the palace.

HERACLES

You there, why do you look so grave and careworn? A servant ought not to scowl at the guest but welcome him with an affable air. But you, though you see an old friend of your master arrive, receive him with an unfriendly face and with your brows knit together, worrying about a grief that does not concern your house.

Come here so that you may be made wiser! Do you know the nature of our mortal life? I think not. How could you? But listen to me. Death is a debt all mortals must pay, and no man knows for certain whether he will still be living on the morrow. The outcome of our fortune is hid from our eyes, and it lies beyond the scope of any teaching or craft. So now that you have learned this from me, cheer your heart, drink, regard this day's life as yours but all else as Fortune's! Honor Aphrodite, too, sweetest of the gods to mortals, for she is a kindly goddess. Forget all else and take

780 *πράγμαθ' ἦντιν' οἶσθ'* Blaydes; *πράγματ' οἶδας ἦν* C

792 *πάντα* Markland: *ταῦτα* C

EURIPIDES

- ἐμοῖσιν, εἴπερ ὀρθά σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.
 οἶμαι μὲν. οὐκ οὖν τὴν ἄγαν λύπην ἀφεῖς
 795 πῆχθ' ἡμῶν [τάσδ' ὑπερβαλὼν τύχας,
 στεφάνοις πυκασθείς]; καὶ σάφ' οἶδ' ὀθούνεκα
 τοῦ νῦν σκυθρωποῦ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος φρενῶν
 μεθορμιεῖ σε πύτυλος ἐμπεσὼν σκύφου.
 ὄντας δὲ θνητοὺς θνητὰ καὶ φρονεῖν χρεῶν·
 800 ὡς τοῖς γε σεμνοῖς καὶ συνωφρυωμένοις
 ἅπασιν ἔστιν, ὡς γ' ἐμοὶ χρῆσθαι κριτῆ,
 οὐ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος ἀλλὰ συμφορά.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἐπιστάμεσθα ταῦτα· νῦν δὲ πράσσομεν
 οὐχ οἶα κώμου καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- 805 γυνὴ θυραῖος ἢ θανοῦσα· μὴ λίαν
 πένθει· δόμων γὰρ ζῶσι τῶνδε δεσπότες.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

τί ζῶσιν; οὐ κάτοισθα τὰν δόμοις κακά;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ μὴ τι σός με δεσπότης ἐψεύσατο.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἄγαν ἐκεῖνός ἐστ' ἄγαν φιλόξενος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- 810 οὐ χρῆν μ' ὀθνεῖον γ' οὐνεκ' εὖ πάσχειν νεκροῦ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἦ κάρτα μέντοι καὶ λίαν οἰκέϊός ἦν.

ALCESTIS

my advice, if you think what I say is correct, as I suppose you do. Lay aside your excessive grief and have some wine with me [overcoming these misfortunes, head crowned with garlands]! I am quite sure that when the fit of drinking is upon you, it will bring you round from your clotted and gloomy state of mind. Being mortal we ought to think mortal thoughts. As for those who are solemn and knit their brows together, their life, in my judgment, is no life worthy of the name but merely a disaster.

MANSERVANT

We understand this. But our present circumstances do not call for carousing and laughter.

HERACLES

The woman who died is no relation. Do not grieve so excessively. The lord and lady of this house are living.

MANSERVANT

How do you mean living? Do you not know of the grief in our house?

HERACLES

Yes, unless your master has deceived me.

MANSERVANT

My master is too, too hospitable!

HERACLES

Should I not enjoy myself just because someone not your own has died?

MANSERVANT

But she was very much our own, too much so.

795-6 τὰσδ' . . . πυκασθείς del. Herwerden: cf. 829, 832

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μῶν ξυμφοράν τιν' οὔσαν οὐκ ἔφραζέ μοι;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

χαίρων ἴθ'. ἡμῖν δεσποτῶν μέλει κακά.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶδ' οὐ θυραίων πημάτων ἄρχει λόγος.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

815 οὐ γάρ τι κωμάζοντ' ἂν ἠχθόμην σ' ὄρων.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἦ πέπονθα δεῖν' ὑπὸ ξένων ἐμῶν;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

οὐκ ἠλθες ἐν δέοντι δέξασθαι δόμοις.

[πένθος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἔστι· καὶ κουρὰν βλέπεις
μελαμπέπλους στολμούς τε.]

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

[τίς δ' ὁ κατθανών;]

820 μῶν ἢ τέκνων τι φρουῶδον ἢ γέρων πατήρ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

γυνὴ μὲν οὖν ὄλωλεν Ἀδμήτου, ξένη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί φῆς; ἔπειτα δῆτά μ' ἐξενίζετε;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἠδέϊτο γὰρ σε τῶνδ' ἀπώσασθαι δόμων.

818-19 del. Kvíčala cl. Σ ad 820

ALCESTIS

HERACLES

Did he conceal from me some misfortune?

MANSERVANT

Pay it no heed. The master's troubles are our concern.

HERACLES

It is no foreign grief these words prelude.

MANSERVANT

No, for otherwise I would not have been vexed at seeing you carousing.

HERACLES

But has my host done a terrible thing to me?

MANSERVANT

You have not come at the proper time for the house to receive you. [For we are in mourning, and you see our shorn hair and our black garb.]

HERACLES

[Who is it that has died?] Is one of his children or his aged father gone?

MANSERVANT

No, stranger, it is Admetus' wife who has died.

HERACLES

What are you saying? And yet you still entertained me?

MANSERVANT

Yes, for his sense of honor kept him from thrusting you from his house.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ σχέτλι', οἷας ἤμπλακες ξυναόρου.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

825 ἀπωλόμεσθα πάντες, οὐ κείνη μόνη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἤσθόμην μὲν ὄμμ' ἰδὼν δακρυρροοῦν
 κουράν τε καὶ πρόσωπον· ἀλλ' ἔπειθέ με
 λέγων θυραῖον κῆδος ἐς τάφον φέρειν.
 βία δὲ θυμοῦ τάσδ' ὑπερβαλὼν πύλας
 830 ἔπινον ἀνδρὸς ἐν φιλοξένου δόμοις
 πράσσοντος οὔτω. κᾶτα κωμάζω κάρα
 στεφάνοις πυκασθείς; ἀλλὰ σοῦ τὸ νῦν φράσαι,
 κακοῦ τοσοῦτου δώμασιν προσκειμένου,
 ποῦ καὶ σφε θάπτει, ποῖ νιν εὐρήσω μολῶν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

835 ὀρθὴν παρ' οἶμον ἢ 'πὶ Λάρισαν φέρει
 τύμβον κατόψῃ ξεστὸν ἐκ προαστίου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ πολλὰ τλᾶσα καρδία καὶ χεὶρ ἐμή,
 νῦν δείξον οἶον παῖδά σ' ἢ Τιρυνθία
 ἐγείνατ' Ἡλεκτρύωνος Ἀλκμήνη Δί.
 840 δεῖ γάρ με σῶσαι τὴν θανούσαν ἀρτίως
 γυναικα κὰς τόνδ' αὐθις ἰδρῦσαι δόμον
 Ἄλκηστιν Ἀδμήτῳ θ' ὑπουργῆσαι χάριν.
 ἐλθὼν δ' ἀνακτα τὸν μελάμπεπλον νεκρῶν
 845 πίνοντα τύμβον πλησίον προσφαγμάτων.

ALCESTIS

HERACLES

O poor man, what a helpmeet you have lost!

MANSERVANT

We have all perished, not she alone.

HERACLES

I noticed his brimming eyes, his shorn hair, and his expression of grief, but he convinced me that he was burying someone unrelated. And against my better judgment I passed through these gates and caroused in the house of this hospitable man in his hour of grief. And can I now go on revelling, my head garlanded? But it is your task now, with such a great misfortune brought on the house, to tell me where he is burying her, where I must go to find her.

MANSERVANT

You will see from the outskirts of the city, next to the straight road that leads to Larisa, a sculpted tomb.

HERACLES

O heart and hand that have endured so much, now show what kind of son Tirynthian Alcmene, daughter of Electryon, bore to Zeus! I must save the woman who has just died and show my gratitude to Admetus by restoring Alcestis once more to this house. I shall go and look out for the black-robed lord of the dead, Death himself, and I think I shall find him drinking from the offerings near the tomb. And if once I rush from ambush and catch him in my

832 *νῦν φράσαι* (possis etiam *μὴ στέγειν*) Kovacs: *μὴ φράσαι* C

833 *προσκειμένου* Scaliger: *προκ-* C

834 *ποῖ* Monte: *ποῦ* C

839 *ἐγείνατ' Ἠλεκτρύωνος* Gaisford: *ἠλεκτρ. γείνατ'* C

EURIPIDES

- κᾶνπερ λοχαίας αὐτὸν ἐξ ἔδρας συθεῖς
 μάρψω, κύκλον γε περιβαλὼν χεροῖν ἑμαῖν,
 οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις αὐτὸν ἐξαίρησεται
 μογοῦντα πλευρά, πρὶν γυναῖκ' ἑμοὶ μεθῆ.
 850 ἦν δ' οὖν ἀμάρτω τῆσδ' ἄγρας καὶ μὴ μόλη
 πρὸς αἵματηρὸν πελανόν, εἴμι τῶν κάτω
 Κόρης Ἄνακτός τ' εἰς ἀνηλίους δόμους,
 αἰτήσομαί τε καὶ πέποιθ' ἄξειν ἄνω
 Ἄλκηστιν, ὥστε χερσὶν ἐνθεῖναι ξένου,
 855 ὅς μ' ἐς δόμους ἐδέξατ' οὐδ' ἀπήλασεν,
 καίπερ βαρεία συμφορᾷ πεπληγμένος,
 ἔκρυντε δ' ὦν γενναῖος, αἰδεσθεῖς ἑμέ.
 τίς τοῦδε μᾶλλον Θεσσαλῶν φιλόξενος,
 τίς Ἑλλάδ' οἰκῶν; τοιγὰρ οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακὸν
 860 εὐεργετῆσαι φῶτα γενναῖος γεγώς.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- ἰώ,
 στρυγαὶ πρόσοδοι, στρυγαὶ δ' ὄψεις
 χήρων μελάθρων.
 ἰώ μοί μοι, αἰαῖ <αἰαῖ>.
 ποῖ βῶ; ποῖ στῶ; τί λέγω; τί δὲ μή;
 πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην;
 865 ἦ βαρυδαίμονα μήτηρ μ' ἔτεκεν.
 ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι,
 κείν' ἐπιθυμῶ δώματα ναίειν.
 οὔτε γὰρ αὐγὰς χαίρω προσορῶν
 οὔτ' ἐπὶ γαίας πόδα πεζεύων.

ALCESTIS

side-crushing grip, no one shall take him from me until he releases the woman to me. But if I fail to catch this quarry and he does not come to the blood offering, I shall go down to the sunless house of Persephone and her lord in the world below and shall ask for Alcestis, and I think I shall bring her up and put her in the hands of my friend. He welcomed me into his house and did not drive me away, though he had suffered grievous misfortune. In his nobility he concealed it, out of respect for me. What Thessalian is more hospitable than he, what Greek? Therefore he must never be able to say that in his nobility he has done a kindness to a man who is ungrateful.

Exit HERACLES by Eisodos A and the MANSERVANT into the palace. Re-enter ADMETUS, CHORUS, and funeral procession.

ADMETUS

Oh, how hateful the approach, how hateful the sight of this bereaved house! Ah, woe is me! Where shall I go, where stay? What shall I say, what conceal? I wish I could die! It was to an ill fate that my mother bore me. I envy the dead, I long for their state, I yearn to dwell in those halls below. For I take no joy in looking on the light or in walking about

847 γε Diggle: δε C

862 <αίαϊ> Hermann

EURIPIDES

870 τοῖον ὄμηρόν μ' ἀποσυλήσας
Ἄϊδη Θάνατος παρέδωκεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

πρόβα, πρόβα· βᾶθι κεύθος οἴκων.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

αἰαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέπονθας ἄξι' αἰαγμάτων.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἔ ἔ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δι' ὀδύνας
ἔβας, σάφ' οἶδα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

875 τὰν νέρθε δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελείς.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὸ μήποτ' εἰσιδεῖν φιλίας ἀλόχου
πρόσωπόν σ' ἔσαντα λυπρόν.

ALCESTIS

on the earth. Such is the hostage Death took from me and handed over to Hades.

CHORUS

Go on, go on, enter the recesses of the house.

ADMETUS

Alas!

CHORUS

Your sufferings well deserve that "alas."

ADMETUS

O pain!

CHORUS

You have been in pain, I know it.

ADMETUS

O grief!

CHORUS

But you do her who is dead no good.

ADMETUS

Alas!

CHORUS

No more to see your dead wife face to face is painful.

877 σ' ἔσαντα Wilamowitz: ἄντα C

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- ἔμνησας ὃ μου φρένας ἤλκωσεν·
 τί γὰρ ἀνδρὶ κακὸν μείζον ἀμαρτεῖν
 880 πιστῆς ἀλόχου; μήποτε γήμας
 ὄφελον οἰκεῖν μετὰ τῆσδε δόμους.
 ζηλῶ δ' ἀγάμους ἀτέκνους τε βροτῶν·
 μία γὰρ ψυχὴ, τῆς ὑπεραλγεῖν
 μέτριον ἄχθος·
 885 παίδων δὲ νόσους καὶ νυμφιδίους
 εὐνὰς θανάτοις κεραῖζομένας
 οὐ τλητὸν ὄραν, ἐξὸν ἀτέκνοις
 ἀγάμοις τ' εἶναι διὰ παντός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ. α

τύχα τύχα δυσπάλαιστος ἦκει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

890 αἰαῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέρας δέ γ' οὐδὲν ἀλγέων τίθης.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἐ ἔ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βαρέα μὲν
 φέρειν, ὅμως δὲ . . .

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

You have stirred in my memory the wound on my heart. What greater sorrow can a man have than the loss of his faithful wife? Would I had never married and lived with her in this house! I envy the unmarried and childless among mortals. For they have but a single soul, and to feel its pains is only a moderate burden. But diseases of children and wives snatched by death from their marriage beds are unendurable to see when one can live unwed and childless all one's days.

CHORUS

Fate inexorable is come.

ADMETUS

Alas!

CHORUS

But you set no limit upon grief.

ADMETUS

The pain!

CHORUS

It is grievous to bear, but still . . .

ADMETUS

O grief!

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τλάθ'· οὐ σὺ πρῶτος ὤλεσας . . .

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

γυναῖκα· συμφορὰ δ' ἐτέρους ἐτέρα
πιέζει φανείσα θνατῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

895 ᾧ μακρὰ πένθη λῦπαί τε φίλων
τῶν ὑπὸ γαίας.

τί μ' ἐκώλυσας ρῖψαι τύμβου
τάφρον ἐς κοίλην καὶ μετ' ἐκείνης
τῆς μέγ' ἀρίστης κείσθαι φθίμενον;

900 δύο δ' ἀντὶ μιᾶς Ἰδίδης ψυχὰς
τὰς πιστοτάτας σὺν ἂν ἔσχευ, ὁμοῦ
χθονίαν λίμνην διαβάντε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. β

ἐμοί τις ἦν
ἐν γένει, ᾧ κόρος ἀξιόθρη-

905 νος ὤλετ' ἐν δόμοισιν
μονόπαις· ἀλλ' ἔμπας
ἔφερε κακὸν ἄλις, ἄτεκνος ὢν,
πολιὰς ἐπὶ χαίτας ἦδη

910 προπετῆς ὢν βιότου τε πόρσω.

ALCESTIS

CHORUS

bear it: you are not the first to lose . . .

ADMETUS

Alas!

CHORUS

. . . a wife. Different misfortunes arise to press on different mortals.

ADMETUS

Oh, how great is the pain and grief for loved ones who lie beneath the earth! Why did you keep me from throwing myself into the open grave and lying there dead with her, the best of women? Hades would have had two most faithful souls instead of one, crossing the Underworld's lake together.

CHORUS

I had a kinsman whose son, full worthy to lament, perished at home, an only child. But still, he bore his sorrow in measure, though he was without an heir and already sunk down toward gray old age and far on in years.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- ὦ σχῆμα δόμων, πῶς εἰσέλθω,
 πῶς δ' οἰκήσω, μεταπίπτοντος
 δαίμονος; οἴμοι. πολὺ γὰρ τὸ μέσον·
 915 τότε μὲν πεύκαις σὺν Πηλιάσιν
 σὺν θ' ὑμεναίοις ἔστειχον ἔσω
 φιλίας ἀλόχου χέρα βαστάζων,
 πολυάχητος δ' εἶπετο κῶμος
 τήν τε θανούσαν καμ' ὀλβίζων
 920 ὡς εὐπατρίδαι καπ' ἀμφοτέρων
 ὄντες ἀριστέων σύζυγες εἶμεν·
 νῦν δ' ὑμεναίων γόος ἀντίπαλος
 λευκῶν τε πέπλων μέλανες στολμοὶ
 πέμπουσί μ' ἔσω
 925 λέκτρων κοίτας ἐς ἐρήμους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ. β

- παρ' εὐτυχῆ
 σοι πότμον ἦλθεν ἀπειροκάκῳ
 τόδ' ἄλγος· ἀλλ' ἔσωσας
 βίοτον καὶ ψυχάν.
 930 ἔθανε δάμαρ, ἔλιπε φιλίαν·
 τί νέον τόδε; πολλοῖς ἤδη
 παρέλυσεν θάνατος δάμαρτας.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- 935 φίλοι, γυναικὸς δαίμον' εὐτυχέστερον
 τοῦμοῦ νομίζω, καίπερ οὐ δοκοῦνθ' ὄμως.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

O sad image of my house, how am I to enter, how live in you with my fortune so changed? Alas! How great the difference! Once I entered with pine torches from Mount Pelion and bridal songs, holding the hand of my dear wife, and a clamorous throng followed, praising the blessedness of my dead wife and me, because she and I, both nobly born, had become man and wife. Now groans of grief in answer to those songs and black robes in place of white escort me in to a desolate bed chamber.

CHORUS

In the midst of good fortune this grief has come to you while you were unschooled in trouble. But you are still alive. Your wife has died, she has left your love behind. This is not something new. Many men ere now have been parted from wives by death.

ADMETUS

My friends, I think my wife's lot is happier than my own, though it may not appear so. For she will never be touched

921 ἀριστέων Dobree: ἀρίστων C

932 δάμαρτας a: -ος b: -α Dale

EURIPIDES

- τῆς μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἄμεταί ποτε,
 πολλῶν δὲ μόχθων εὐκλεῆς ἐπαύσατο.
 ἐγὼ δ', ὄν οὐ χρεῖν ζῆν, παρεῖς τὸ μόρσιμον
 940 λυπρὸν διάξω βίον· ἄρτι μανθάνω.
 πῶς γὰρ δόμων τῶνδ' εἰσόδους ἀνέξομαι;
 τίς ἂν προσειπῶν, τοῦ δὲ προσρηθῆεις ὑπο
 τερπνῆς τύχοιμ' ἂν εἰσόδου; ποῖ τρέφομαι;
 ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἔνδον ἐξελαῖ μ' ἐρημία,
 945 γυναικὸς εὐνάς εἴτ' ἂν εἰσίδω κενὰς
 θρόνους τ' ἐν οἴσιν ἴξε καὶ κατὰ στέγας
 αὐχμηρὸν οὐδας, τέκνα δ' ἀμφὶ γούνασιν
 πίπτοντα κλαίῃ μητέρ', οἱ δὲ δεσπότην
 στένωσιν οἶαν ἐκ δόμων ἀπώλεσαν.
 950 τὰ μὲν κατ' οἴκους τοιάδ'· ἔξωθεν δέ με
 γάμοι τ' ἐλώσι Θεσσαλῶν καὶ ξύλλογοι
 γυναικοπληθεῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἐξανέξομαι
 λεύσσω δάμαρτος τῆς ἐμῆς ὁμήλικας.
 ἐρεῖ δέ μ' ὅστις ἐχθρὸς ὦν κυρεῖ τάδε·
 955 Ἴδοῦ τὸν αἰσchrῶς ζῶνθ', ὃς οὐκ ἔτλη θανεῖν
 ἀλλ' ἦν ἔγημεν ἀντιδοὺς ἀψυχία
 πέφευγεν Ἄιδην· κᾶτ' ἀνὴρ εἶναι δοκεῖ;
 στρυγεῖ δὲ τοὺς τεκόντας, αὐτὸς οὐ θέλων
 θανεῖν. τοιάνδε πρὸς κακοῖσι κληδόνα
 960 ἔξω. τί μοι ζῆν δῆτα κέρδιον, φίλοι,
 κακῶς κλύοντι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας

ALCESTIS

by any grief and has ended her many troubles with glory. But I, who ought not to be alive and have escaped my fate, shall now live out my life in pain. Now I understand. For how shall I endure entering this house? Whom will I greet, by whom be greeted, that my homecoming may give me pleasure? Which way shall I turn? For the desolation within will drive me out of doors when I see my wife's bed and the chairs in which she sat now empty, the floor unswept throughout the house and the children falling about my knees weeping for their mother, while the slaves lament that they have lost so good a mistress from the house. That is how things stand within the palace. But outside it, weddings of Thessalians and gatherings full of women will drive me back indoors. I shall not be able to endure the sight of women my wife's age. And anyone who is my enemy will say, "Look at this man who lives on in disgrace! He did not have the courage to die but in cowardice escaped death by giving his wife in his place. And after that can we think him a man? He hates his parents though he himself is unwilling to die." Besides my sorrows I will have to endure this kind of talk. What profit, then, my friends, for me in living since both my reputation and my fortunes are so ill?

CHORUS

I have soared aloft with poetry and with high thought, and

941 *εἰσόδους*] fort. *ἀμβάσεις*, cl. 943

960 *κέρδιον* Purgold: *κύδιον* C

- καὶ μετάρσιος ἦξα, καὶ
 πλείστων ἀψάμενος λόγων
 965 κρείσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας
 ἡῦρον οὐδέ τι φάρμακον
 Θρήσσαις ἐν σανίσιν, τὰς
 Ὀρφεία κατέγραψεν
 γήρως, οὐδ' ὅσα Φοῖβος Ἀ-
 970 σκληπιάδαις ἔδωκε
 φάρμακα πολυπόνοις
 ἀντιτεμῶν βροτοῖσιν.

ἀντ. α

- μόνας δ' οὐτ' ἐπὶ βωμοῦς
 ἐλθεῖν οὔτε βρέτας θεᾶς
 975 ἔστιν, οὐ σφαγίων κλύει.
 μή μοι, πότνια, μείζων
 ἔλθοις ἢ τὸ πρὶν ἐν βίῳ.
 καὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὅ τι νεύσῃ
 σὺν σοὶ τοῦτο τελευτᾷ.
 980 καὶ τὸν ἐν Χαλύβοις δαμά-
 ζεις σὺ βία σίδαρον,
 οὐδέ τις ἀποτόμου
 λήματός ἐστιν αἰδώς.

στρ. β

- καὶ σ' ἐν ἀφύκτοισι χερῶν εἶλε θεὰ δεσμοῖς.
 985 τόλμα δ' οὐ γὰρ ἀνάξεις ποτ' ἔνερθεν
 κλαίων τοὺς φθιμένους ἄνω.
 καὶ θεῶν σκότιοι φθίνουσι
 990 παῖδες ἐν θανάτῳ.

ALCESTIS

though I have laid my hand to many a reflection, I have found nothing stronger than Necessity, nor is there any cure for it in the Thracian tablets set down by the voice of Orpheus nor in all the simples which Phoebus harvested in aid of trouble-ridden mortals and gave to the sons of Asclepius.

Of that goddess alone there are no altars, no statue to approach, and to sacrifice she pays no heed. Do not, I pray you, Lady, come with greater force than heretofore in my life. For whatever Zeus ordains, with your help he brings it to fulfillment. Even the iron of the Chalybes⁹ you overcome with your violence, and there is no pity in your unrelenting heart.

You also, Admetus, have been caught in the goddess's ineluctable chains. But endure! For you cannot bring up the dead from below by weeping. Even the sons of the gods perish in the darkness of death. She was loved when she

⁹ A people living on the Black Sea, said to have invented the working of iron.

EURIPIDES

φίλα μὲν ὄτ' ἦν μεθ' ἡμῶν,
 φίλα δὲ θανούσ' ἔτ' ἔσται,
 γενναιοτάταν δὲ πασᾶν

ἀντ. β

- ἐζεύξω κλισίαις ἄκοιτιν.
 995 μηδὲ νεκρῶν ὡς φθιμένων χῶμα νομιζέσθω
 τύμβος σᾶς ἀλόχου, θεοῖσι δ' ὁμοίως
 τιμάσθω, σέβας ἐμπόρων.
 1000 καί τις δοχμίαν κέλευθον
 ἐμβαίνων τόδ' ἐρεῖ·
 Αὐτα ποτὲ προύθαν' ἀνδρός,
 νῦν δ' ἔστι μάκαιρα δαίμων·
 χαῖρ', ὦ πότνι', εὐ δὲ δοίης.
 1005 τοῖα νιν προσερούσι φήμα.

—καὶ μὴν ὄδ', ὡς ἔοικεν, Ἄλκμήνης γόνος,
 Ἄδμητε, πρὸς σὴν ἐστίαν πορεύεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- φίλον πρὸς ἄνδρα χρὴ λέγειν ἐλευθέρως,
 Ἄδμητε, μομφὰς δ' οὐχ ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις ἔχειν
 1010 σιγῶντ'. ἐγὼ δὲ σοῖς κακοῖσιν ἠξίουν
 ἐγγὺς παρεστῶς ἐξετάζεσθαι φίλος·
 σὺ δ' οὐκ ἔφραζες σῆς προκείμενον νέκνυ
 γυναικός, ἀλλὰ μ' ἐξένιζες ἐν δόμοις,
 ὡς δὴ θυραίου πῆματος σπουδὴν ἔχων.
 1015 κᾶστυφα κράτα καὶ θεοῖς ἐλευσάμην
 σπονδὰς ἐν οἴκοις δυστυχοῦσι τοῖσι σοῖς.
 καὶ μέμφομαι μὲν, μέμφομαι, παθῶν τάδε·

ALCESTIS

was with us, she will be loved still in death, and the noblest of all women was she that you brought to your bridal bed.

Let not the grave of your wife be regarded as the funeral mound of the dead departed but let her be honored as are the gods, an object of reverence to the wayfarer. Someone walking a winding path past her tomb shall say, "This woman died in the stead of her husband, and now she is a blessed divinity. Hail, Lady, and grant us your blessing!" With such words will they address her.

Enter HERACLES by Eisodes A with a veiled woman.

CHORUS LEADER

But look: it seems Alcmena's son is coming to your hearth, Admetus.

HERACLES

One should speak frankly to a friend, Admetus, and not silently store up reproaches in the heart. I thought it right that I should stand by you in your misfortune and give proof that I was your friend. Yet you did not tell me your wife was laid out for burial but feasted me in the house, saying that you were busy with a grief not your own. So I garlanded my head and poured libations to the gods in your house in its hour of misfortune. I do object to this

⁹⁹² θανούσ' ἔτ' ἔσται Prinz: καὶ θανούσ' ἔσται C: καὶ ἐν θανούσι Marzullo

¹⁰⁰⁵ τοία . . . φήμα Broadhead: τοίαι . . . φήμαι C

EURIPIDES

- οὐ μὴν σε λυπεῖν <γ> ἐν κακοῖσι βούλομαι.
 ὦν δ' οὐνεχ' ἤκω δεῦρ' ὑποστρέψας πάλιν
 1020 λέξω· γυναῖκα τήνδε μοι σῶσον λαβών,
 ἕως ἂν ἵππους δεῦρο Θρηκίας ἄγων
 ἔλθω, τύραννον Βιστόνων κατακτανών.
 πράξας δ' ὃ μὴ τύχοιμι (νοστήσαιμι γάρ)
 δίδωμι τήνδε σοῖσι προσπολεῖν δόμοις.
 1025 πολλῶ δὲ μόχθῳ χεῖρας ἦλθεν εἰς ἐμάς·
 ἀγῶνα γὰρ πάνδημον εὐρίσκω τινὰς
 τιθέντας, ἀθληταῖσιν ἄξιον πόνον,
 ὅθεν κομίζω τήνδε νικητήρια
 λαβών. τὰ μὲν γὰρ κοῦφα τοῖς νικῶσιν ἦν
 1030 ἵππους ἄγεσθαι, τοῖσι δ' αὖ τὰ μείζονα
 νικῶσι, πυγμὴν καὶ πάλην, βουφόρβια·
 γυνὴ δ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς εἶπετ'· ἐντυχόντι δὲ
 αἰσχρὸν παρεῖναι κέρδος ἦν τόδ' εὐκλεές.
 ἀλλ', ὥσπερ εἶπον, σοὶ μέλειν γυναῖκα χρῆ·
 1035 οὐ γὰρ κλοπαίαν ἀλλὰ σὺν πόνῳ λαβὼν
 ἤκω· χρόνῳ δὲ καὶ σὺ μ' αἰνέσεις ἴσως.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- οὔτοι σ' ἀτίζων οὐδ' ἐν ἐχθροῖσιν τιθεὶς
 ἔκρυψ' ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ἀθλίους τύχας.
 ἀλλ' ἄλγος ἄλγει τοῦτ' ἂν ἦν προσκείμενον,
 1040 εἴ του πρὸς ἄλλον δώμαθ' ὠρμήθης ξένου·
 ἄλις δὲ κλαίειν τοῦμόν ἦν ἐμοὶ κακόν.
 γυναῖκα δ', εἴ πως ἔστιν, αἰτοῦμαί σ', ἄναξ,
 ἄλλον τιν' ὅστις μὴ πέπονθεν οἷ' ἐγὼ
 σφάζειν ἄνωχθι Θεσσαλῶν· πολλοὶ δέ σοι

ALCESTIS

treatment, indeed I do. Yet I do not want to cause you pain in the midst of your trouble.

But I will tell you why I have returned here. Take and keep this woman for me until I have killed the king of the Bistones and come back with the Thracian mares. But if I should suffer the fate I pray heaven may avert (for I pray I may return), I give her to you to be a servant in your house. It was with great labor that she came into my hands. I found some people holding a public contest, an occasion worthy of an athlete's toil. It is from there that I took this woman as a prize. Those victorious in the light events won horses as their prize, while those in the greater events, boxing and wrestling, won cattle, with a woman in addition. Since I happened to be there, it seemed a shame to let slip this chance for profit combined with glory. But as I said, you must care for the woman. For I did not steal her but won her with labor. Perhaps in time you will praise me for this.

ADMETUS

I was not slighting you or regarding you as an enemy when I concealed from you my wife's unhappy fate. Rather, it would have been pain added to pain if you had departed for some other friend's house; and it was already enough for me to lament my loss.

As for the woman, if it is possible, my lord, I beg you to ask some other Thessalian, who has not suffered as I have, to keep her. You have many guest-friends in Pherae. Do

EURIPIDES

- 1045 ξένοι Φεραίων· μή μ' ἀναμνήσης κακῶν.
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην τήνδ' ὀρῶν ἐν δώμασιν
ἄδακρυς εἶναι· μὴ νοσοῦντί μοι νόσον
προσθῆς· ἄλις γὰρ συμφορᾷ βαρύνομαι.
ποῦ καὶ τρέφοιτ' ἂν δωμάτων νέα γυνή;
- 1050 νέα γάρ, ὡς ἐσθήτι καὶ κόσμῳ πρόπει.
πότῃ κατ' ἀνδρῶν δῆτ' ἐνοικήσει στέγην;
καὶ πῶς ἀκραιφνῆς ἐν νέοις στρωφωμένη
ἔσται; τὸν ἠβῶνθ', Ἡράκλεις, οὐ ῥάδιον
εἶργειν· ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ προμηθίαν ἔχω.
- 1055 ἢ τῆς θανούσης θάλαμον ἐσβήσας τρέφω;
καὶ πῶς ἐπεσφρῶ τήνδε τῷ κείνης λέχει;
διπλῆν φοβοῦμαι μέμψιν, ἔκ τε δημοτῶν,
μή τίς μ' ἐλέγξῃ τὴν ἐμὴν εὐεργέτιν
προδόντ' ἐν ἄλλῃς δεμνίοις πίτνειν νέας,
- 1060 καὶ τῆς θανούσης (ἄξια δέ μοι σέβειν)
πολλὴν πρόνοιαν δεῖ μ' ἔχειν. σὺ δ', ὦ γύναι,
ἦτις ποτ' εἶ σύ, ταῦτ' ἔχουσ' Ἀλκήστιδι
μορφῆς μέτρ' ἴσθι, καὶ προσῆξι δέμας.
οἴμοι· κόμιζε πρὸς θεῶν ἐξ ὀμμάτων
- 1065 γυναιῖκα τήνδε, μή μ' ἔλῃς ἥρημένον.
δοκῶ γὰρ αὐτὴν εἰσορῶν γυναιῖχ' ὀρᾶν
ἐμὴν· θολοὶ δὲ καρδίαν, ἐκ δ' ὀμμάτων
πηγαὶ κατερρώγασιν· ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ,
ὡς ἄρτι πένθους τοῦδε γεύομαι πικροῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1070 ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔχοιμ' ἂν εὖ λέγειν τύχην·
χρῆ δ', ἦτις ἐστί, καρτερεῖν θεοῦ δόσιν.

ALCESTIS

not remind me of my troubles. For if I were to see this woman in my house, I could not hold back my tears. Do not put affliction on the already afflicted. I am weighed down enough with disaster. Where in the house could a young woman be kept? For she is young, as is evident from her clothing and adornment. Shall she stay in the men's quarters? And how, moving among young men, shall she remain untouched? It is not easy, Heracles, to rein in a young man in his prime. In this I am looking out for your interests. Or shall I keep her in my dead wife's room? How shall I put this woman in her bed? I fear a double reproach: from my people, lest someone should cast in my teeth that betraying the memory of her who saved my life, I fall into the bed of another woman; and I must show all care for my dead wife (she deserves my honor). Woman, whoever you are, know that in shape you are like Alcestis and resemble her in appearance. What agony! Take this woman out of my sight, by the gods, do not slay again one who is dead! For when I see her I think I see my wife. She makes my heart pound, and tears stream from my eyes. Oh luckless me! It is but now that I taste the full bitterness of this grief!

CHORUS LEADER

I cannot call Fate kind. But one must endure what the god gives, whatever it is.

1071 ἦτις ἐστὶ Earle: ὅστις εἶ σὺν C

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ γὰρ τοσαύτην δύναμιν εἶχον ὥστε σὴν
 ἐς φῶς πορεύσαι νερτέρων ἐκ δωμαίων
 γυναῖκα καὶ σοι τήνδε πορσῦναι χάριν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

1075 σάφ' οἶδα βούλεσθαί σ' ἄν. ἀλλὰ ποῦ τόδε;
 οὐκ ἔστι τοὺς θανόντας ἐς φάος μολεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μή νυν ὑπέρβαλλ' ἀλλ' ἐναισίμως φέρε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ῥᾶον παραινεῖν ἢ παθόντα καρτερεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δ' ἂν προκόπτοις, εἰ θέλεις ἀεὶ στένειν;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

1080 ἔγνωκα καὐτός, ἀλλ' ἔρωσ τις ἐξάγει.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὸ γὰρ φιλήσαι τὸν θανόντ' ἄγει δάκρυ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀπώλεσέν με κάτι μᾶλλον ἢ λέγω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς ἤμπλακες· τίς ἀντερεῖ;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὥστ' ἄνδρα τόνδε μηκέθ' ἦδεσθαι βίῳ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1085 χρόνος μαλάξει, νῦν δ' ἔθ' ἠβάσκει, κακόν.

ALCESTIS

HERACLES

I wish I had the power to convey your wife to the light from the halls below and could do you this service.

ADMETUS

I know that you would wish to. But what is the good of such a wish? It is not possible for the dead to come back to the light.

HERACLES

Do not then be excessive in grief but bear your sorrow moderately.

ADMETUS

It is easier to give advice than to endure suffering.

HERACLES

But what good will you accomplish if you lament forever?

ADMETUS

No good, I know, but longing for my wife extracts these groans from me.

HERACLES

Yes, your love for the departed stirs up your tears.

ADMETUS

Her death has destroyed me, even more than I can say.

HERACLES

You have lost a noble wife. Who will deny it?

ADMETUS

And so I shall have no more joy in life.

HERACLES

Time will soften the pain. Now it is still intense.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

χρόνον λέγοις ἄν, εἰ χρόνος τὸ κατθανεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

γυνή σε παύσει καὶ νέοι γάμοι πόθου.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

σίγησον· οἶον εἶπας. οὐκ ἂν ὠόμην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δ'; οὐ γαμéis γὰρ ἀλλὰ χηρεύση λέχος;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

1090 οὐκ ἔστιν ἥτις τῷδε συγκλιθήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μῶν τὴν θανούσαν ὠφελεῖν τι προσδοκᾷς;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

κείνην ὅπουπερ ἔστι τιμᾶσθαι χρεῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

αἰνῶ μὲν αἰνῶ· μωρίαν δ' ὀφλισκάνεις.

[ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὡς μήποτ' ἄνδρα τόνδε νυμφίον καλῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1095 ἐπήνεσ' ἀλόχῳ πιστὸς οὔνεκ' εἶ φίλος.]

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

θάνοιμ' ἐκείνην καίπερ οὐκ οὔσαν προδούς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

δέχου νυν εἴσω τήνδε γενναίων δόμων.

1087 νέοι γάμοι πόθου F. W. Schmidt: νέου γάμου πόθος C

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

Time, yes, if by time you mean death.

HERACLES

A woman and a new union will put an end to your longing.

ADMETUS

Hush! What a shocking thing you have said! I should never have thought it of you.

HERACLES

What? Will you never marry but keep a widower's bed?

ADMETUS

No woman shall ever lie beside me.

HERACLES

Do you suppose you are doing your dead wife any good that way?

ADMETUS

Wherever she is, she must be held in honor.

HERACLES

I commend you, truly. But you deserve the name of fool.

[ADMETUS

You will never call this man a bridegroom.

HERACLES

I commend you for being faithful to your wife.]

ADMETUS

May I die if ever I betray her, even though she is gone!

HERACLES

Take this woman, then, into your generous house.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

μή, πρὸς σε τοῦ σπείραντος ἄντομαι Διός.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἀμαρτήση γε μὴ δράσας τάδε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

1100 καὶ δρῶν γε λύπη καρδίαν δηχθήσομαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πιθοῦ· τάχ' ἂν γὰρ ἐς δέον πέσοι χάρις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

φεῦ.

εἴθ' ἐξ ἀγῶνος τήνδε μὴ ἴλαβές ποτε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

νικῶντι μέντοι καὶ σὺ συννικᾶς ἐμοί.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἢ γυνή δ' ἀπελθέτω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1105 ἄπεισιν, εἰ χρῆ· πρῶτα δ' εἰ χρεῶν ἄθρει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

χρῆ, σοῦ γε μὴ μέλλοντος ὀργαίνειν ἐμοί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰδῶς τι καγὼ τήνδ' ἔχω προθυμίαν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

νίκα νυν· οὐ μὴν ἀνδάνοντά μοι ποιεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔσθ' ὅθ' ἡμᾶς αἰνέσεις· πιθοῦ μόνον.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

I beg you by Zeus who begot you, do not ask this!

HERACLES

And yet you will be making a mistake if you do not.

ADMETUS

And if I do, my heart will be stung with sorrow.

HERACLES

Consent, for perhaps this may prove a timely favor.

ADMETUS

Oh, how I wish you had never won her at the games!

HERACLES

But when I win, you are a sharer in my victory.

ADMETUS

Excellent sentiments, but the woman must go away.

HERACLES

She will if she must. First see if she must.

ADMETUS

She must unless you mean to get angry with me.¹⁰

HERACLES

I too have reasons for insisting.

ADMETUS

Be the winner, then! But you do not act to my liking.

HERACLES

Yet some day you will praise me. Just do as I say.

¹⁰ Or, with Monk's conjecture, "unless you intend to make me angry."

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

1110 κομίζετ', εἰ χρῆ τήνδε δέξασθαι δόμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν μεθείην τὴν γυναῖκα προσπόλοις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

σὺ δ' αὐτὸς αὐτὴν εἷσαγ', εἰ δοκεῖ, δόμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐς σὰς μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε θήσομαι χέρας.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν θίγοιμι δῶμα δ' εἰσελθεῖν πάρα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1115 τῇ σῆ πέποιθα χειρὶ δεξιᾷ μόνη.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἄναξ, βιάζῃ μ' οὐ θέλοντα δρᾶν τάδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τόλμα προτείνει χεῖρα καὶ θιγεῖν ξένης.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

καὶ δὴ προτείνω, Γοργόν' ὡς κατατομῶν.

1115 μόνου Nauck

1118 κατατομῶν Lobeck: -τόμῳ C

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

(*to his servants*) Take her in, since I must receive her into my house.

HERACLES

I will not release the woman into the hands of servants.¹¹

ADMETUS

Take her into the house yourself, if you like.

HERACLES

No, I shall put her into your hands.

ADMETUS

I will not touch her. She may go into the house.

HERACLES

I trust only your right hand.

ADMETUS

My lord, you compel me to do this against my will.

HERACLES

Have the courage to stretch out your hand and touch the stranger.

He turns away as he reaches out his hand behind him and grasps her hand.

ADMETUS

There, I stretch it out, as if I were cutting off a Gorgon's head.¹²

¹¹ Proper form, when entrusting valuable property to a friend, was to put it into his very hands. ¹² In order to avoid being turned to stone by the Gorgon's appearance, Perseus reached behind him with his sword as he cut off her head.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔχεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἔχω, ναί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- σῶζέ *ινν*, καὶ τὸν Διδῶ
 1120 φήσεις ποτ' εἶναι παῖδα γενναῖον ξένον.
 βλέπον πρὸς αὐτήν, εἴ τι σῆ δοκεῖ πρέπει
 γυναικί· λύπης δ' εὐτυχῶν μεθίστασο.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

- ὦ θεοί, τί λέξω; θαῦμ' ἀνέλπιστον τόδε·
 γυναιῖκα λεύσσω τήνδ' ἐμὴν ἐτητύμως,
 1125 ἢ κέρτομός μ' ἐκ θεοῦ τις ἐκπλήσσει χαρά;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ τήνδ' ὄρα's δάμαρτα σήν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὄρα δὲ μή τι φάσμα νερτέρων τόδ' ἦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ ψυχαγωγὸν τόνδ' ἐποιήσω ξένον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἦν ἔθαπτον εἰσορῶ δάμαρτ' ἐμὴν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- 1130 σάφ' ἴσθ'· ἀπιστεῖν δ' οὐ σε θαυμάζω τύχη.

1125 μ' ἐκ Buecheler: με C

1127 δὲ Diggle: γε C

1130 τύχη Reiske: -ην C

ALCESTIS

HERACLES

Do you have her?

ADMETUS

Yes, I have her.

HERACLES

Then keep her safe, and one day you will say that Zeus's son is a noble guest-friend.

Heracles throws back the veil to reveal Alcestis.

Look at her! See whether she bears any resemblance to your wife. Now that you are fortunate, cease your grieving!

ADMETUS

O gods, what shall I say? Here is a wonder past all hoping. Is this truly my wife I see here, or does some delusive joy sent by a god steal my wits?

HERACLES

Not so: the woman you see here is your wife.

ADMETUS

Perhaps it is some ghost from the Underworld.

HERACLES

No raiser of spirits is the man you made your guest-friend.

ADMETUS

But do I see my wife, whom I buried?

HERACLES

Certainly, though I am not surprised that you disbelieve your luck.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

θίγω, προσείπω ζώσαν ὡς δάμαρτ' ἐμήν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πρόσειπ'· ἔχεις γὰρ πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἤθελες.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὦ φιλτάτης γυναικὸς ὄμμα καὶ δέμας,
ἔχω σ' ἀέλπτως, οὔποτ' ὄψεσθαι δοκῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1135 ἔχεις· φθόνος δὲ μὴ γένοιτό τις θεῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ὦ τοῦ μεγίστου Ζηνὸς εὐγενὲς τέκνον,
εὐδαιμονοίης καὶ σ' ὁ φιτύσας πατήρ
σώζοι· σὺ γὰρ δὴ τᾶμ' ἀνώρθωσας μόνος.
πῶς τήνδ' ἔπεμψας νέρθεν ἐς φάος τόδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1140 μάχην συνάψας δαιμόνων τῷ κυρίῳ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ποῦ τόνδε Θανάτῳ φῆς ἀγῶνα συμβαλεῖν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τύμβον παρ' αὐτόν, ἐκ λόχου μάρψας χεροῖν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

τί γὰρ ποθ' ἦδ' ἀναυδος ἔστηκεν γυνή;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1145 οὔπω θέμις σοι τῆσδε προσφωνημάτων
κλύειν, πρὶν ἂν θεοῖσι τοῖσι νερτέροις
ἀφαγνίσηται καὶ τρίτον μόλη φάος.

ALCESTIS

ADMETUS

Shall I embrace and greet her as my living wife?

HERACLES

Greet her. You have all your heart's desire.

ADMETUS

O face and form of the wife I love, I have you back against all expectation, never thinking to see you again!

HERACLES

You have her. May no ill-will come from the gods!

ADMETUS

O noble son of mighty Zeus, may good fortune attend you, and may the father who begot you preserve your life! For you alone have raised up my fortunes. How did you bring her up from below to the light of day?

HERACLES

I fought with the divinity who controlled her.

ADMETUS

Where did you fight this battle with Death?

HERACLES

Lying in ambush hard by the tomb, I caught him in my grip.

ADMETUS

But why on earth does she stand silent?

HERACLES

You are not yet allowed to hear her speak to you, not until she becomes purified in the sight of the nether gods when

EURIPIDES

ἀλλ' εἴσαγ' εἴσω τήνδε· καὶ δίκαιος ὦν
 τὸ λοιπόν, Ἄδμητ', εὐσέβει περὶ ξένους.
 καὶ χαῖρ'· ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν προκείμενον πόνον
 1150 Σθενέλου τυράννῳ παιδὶ πορσυνῶ μολῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

μείνον παρ' ἡμῖν καὶ ξυνέστιος γενοῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

αὔθις τόδ' ἔσται, νῦν δ' ἐπείγεσθαί με δεῖ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὐτυχοίης, νόστιμον δ' ἔλθοις δρόμον.
 ἀστοῖς δὲ πάσῃ τ' ἐννέπω τετραρχίᾳ
 1155 χοροὺς ἐπ' ἐσθλαῖς συμφοραῖσιν ἰστάναι
 βωμούς τε κνισᾶν βουθύτοισι προστροπαῖς.
 νῦν γὰρ μεθηρμόσμεσθα βελτίῳ βίῳ
 τοῦ πρόσθεν· οὐ γὰρ εὐτυχῶν ἀρήσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
 1160 πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
 καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
 τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἠῦρε θεός.
 τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

ALCESTIS

the third day comes. But take her in. Continue, Admetus, to show your guests the piety of a righteous man. And now farewell. I shall go and perform for King Eurystheus the labor that lies at hand.

ADMETUS

Stay with us and share our hearth.

HERACLES

There will be another day for that, but now I must hurry.

Exit HERACLES by Eisodos A.

ADMETUS

May you have good fortune and run your homeward course!

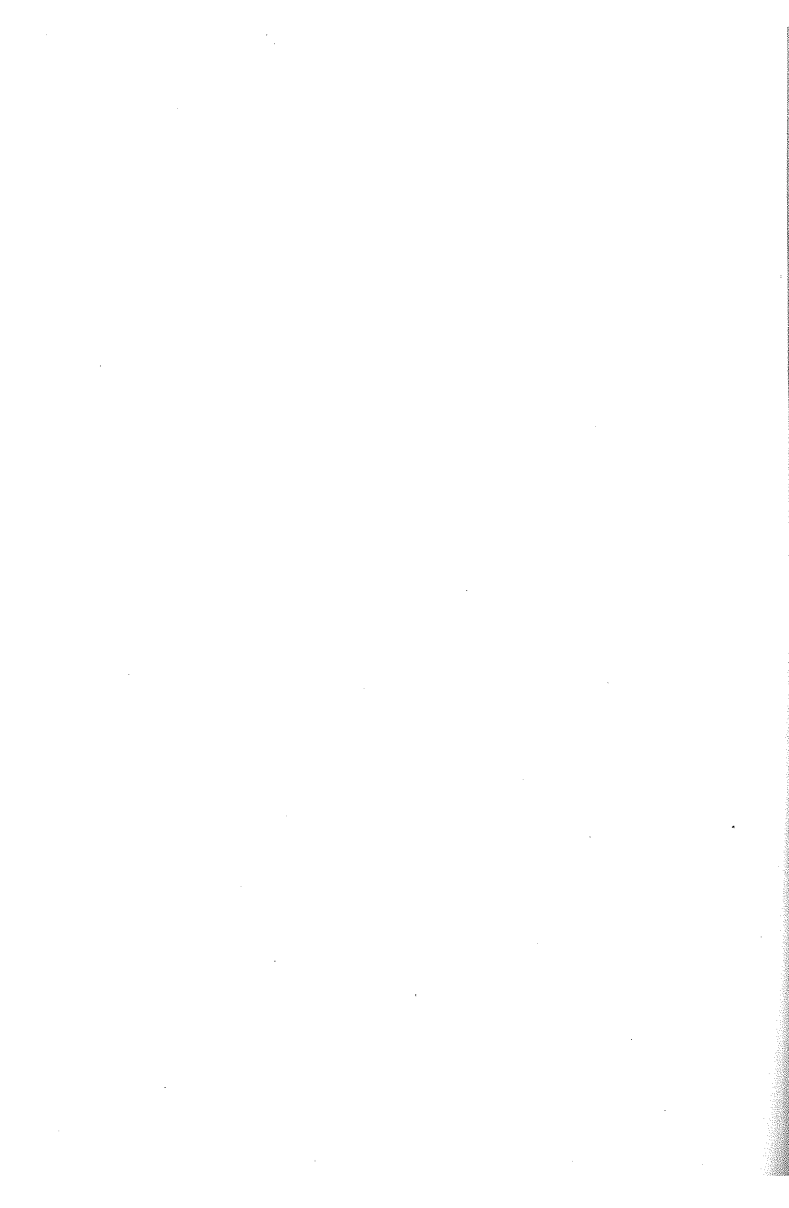
But to the citizens and to the whole region of my four cities I now say: let there be dance and song in honor of these happy events and let the altars of the gods be fattened with the sacrifice of bulls! For the new life we have now taken on is better than the old. I will not deny that I am blessed by fortune.

Exit ADMETUS and ALCESTIS into the palace.

CHORUS LEADER

There are many shapes of divinity, and many things the gods accomplish against our expectation. What men look for is not brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected. Such was the outcome of this story.

Exit CHORUS by Eisodos B.



MEDEA

INTRODUCTION

Medea's story is as old as Jason's, which already in Homer's *Odyssey* (12.70) was "in everyone's thoughts." As the daughter of King Aetes of Aia, who possessed the Golden Fleece, she figured in the Argo adventure as the friendly daughter who with her knowledge of magic helps the hero to carry out his quest in a far land. At least a generation before Euripides she acquired less attractive traits. Pherecydes (mid-fifth century) knows the story that she murdered her brother Apsyrtus, and Pindar alludes to her planning of the grisly death of Jason's wicked uncle Pelias at the hands of his own daughters. (She kills and cuts up an old ram, boils the limbs with magic herbs, and then produces the ram alive and young again. The daughters are persuaded to kill Pelias and cut him up, but this time Medea withholds the magic ingredient.) For the murder of Pelias, Medea and Jason are banished from Iolcus and go to Corinth. There, according to stories certainly current before Euripides' day, Jason and Medea have two children and live in happiness until Jason, seizing the chance to improve his position, marries the daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth. Medea sends a poisoned crown to the princess, who is engulfed in flames and dies together with her father and, in one version, Jason as well. She escapes by magic

MEDEA

chariot to Athens, where she lives with King Aegeus and tries unsuccessfully to kill his son Theseus.

Various stories are told about the death of Medea's and Jason's children. In one version Medea causes their death involuntarily while trying to make them immortal. In another, the Corinthians kill them in revenge for the death of their king and put the story about that Medea killed them. From the allusion at the end of our play (1381-3) we may conclude that there was in Euripides' day a cult connected with the burial place of the children in the sanctuary of Hera Akraia, a cult understood as expiation for their murder. The evidence does not permit us to say with certainty whether the death of the children by Medea's deliberate act was an innovation of Euripides. (See A. Lesky, *Greek Tragic Poetry*, New Haven, 1983, p. 457, n. 20.)

Euripides' play, put on in 431 along with his *Philoctetes*, *Dictys*, and *The Reapers*, was awarded third prize. This is frequently taken as an indication the Athenians were shocked by *Medea*. But the competition that year was extraordinarily keen. Sophocles, who never was third and who won eighteen first prizes in the City Dionysia, came in second. The first prize went to Aeschylus' son Euphorion, who may have been competing with his father's plays. (For speculation on Euphorion's offerings, see M. L. West, *Studies in Aeschylus*, Stuttgart, 1990, p. 71.) It would be rash to assume that strong antipathy to Euripides' plays was involved here (and that the reason for it was our surviving play rather than one of the other three) or that *Medea* was necessarily judged a failure.

Euripides' plot consists in the working out of Medea's revenge on Jason, who has deserted her, and on Creon,

EURIPIDES

who has banished her. But unlike other tragedies of revenge, in which the avenging figure wins safety and happiness by destroying a usurper, *Medea* portrays a revenge which, if carried out to its logical conclusion, will mean Medea's ruin as well. For midway through the play, after the scene with Aegeus has established that she will have a place of refuge in Athens, Medea revises her plan: instead of killing Creon, Creon's daughter, and Jason, she now means to kill Creon's daughter (and "whoever touches her") so that Jason shall never have children by his new bride, and then Jason's two boys by Medea. Jason will then die childless, a fate whose painfulness seems to have been suggested to Medea by her encounter with Aegeus. This, in Medea's view, is a better revenge than killing Jason himself.

Yet his children are also her children, and we see at two crucial points (1021-80 and 1236-50) that the will to revenge means violating maternal feelings that are real, that can be suppressed for a time but will return to make Medea wretched later. At the end of the play Jason has been brought low and Medea is triumphant, borne aloft toward Athens on her flying chariot. But while there is no reason to feel pity for Jason, who is portrayed throughout as callous and vain, it is not easy to know what attitude Euripides wants us to take toward Medea.

The play is divided into two halves by the Aegeus scene. The prologue and parodos make it plain that Medea has been abandoned by Jason in spite of his oaths to her. The first episode contains her long speech to the Corinthian women appealing for their sympathy on the grounds that women are helpless victims and because her helplessness is much greater than theirs since she has left home and

MEDEA

blood relations and has no one to take her part. The arrival of Creon makes this apparent helplessness still more acute, for Creon issues a decree of banishment. The episode ends with Medea's initial plans for revenge. All hinges on whether she will have a place to live after the deed: if one appears, she will kill Jason, Creon, and Creon's daughter by stealth; if not, she will take a sword to her enemies even if it means her own death immediately thereafter.

In the second episode, Jason comes to upbraid Medea for speaking ill of the royal family and getting herself banished. In the ensuing wrangle, he shows clearly that he rates his own advantage above his sense of obligation to the woman who saved his life or the sanctity of his oaths to her.

The scenes before the Aegeus episode are thus in a certain sense exposition. They show the nature of Jason's treachery and the huge disadvantages Medea labors under, having abandoned her own country and kin and being under the imminent threat of exile from her adoptive home.

Without preamble and almost as if in answer to Medea's question whether there is a place of refuge for her, Aegeus appears. Learning of Medea's desertion by Jason and her imminent exile, he promises her the refuge she needs.

As soon as Aegeus goes off, Medea sets forth her revised plan: death for the princess and then for her own children. There follows a scene of pretended reconciliation with Jason leading up to her plea that he should intercede to allow his sons to stay in Corinth. The children are sent with the poisoned robe and crown as gifts to the princess so that she too will take their part. After a choral ode the Tutor brings them back with the good news that they have been spared exile. Medea takes her farewell of the

EURIPIDES

children, a farewell interrupted by the flaring up of the maternal feelings her plan of revenge must outrage. After the death of the princess and her father has been reported, the murder can be delayed no longer: if she waits, the Corinthians themselves will do the deed. She steels herself and goes in. Jason arrives and learns from the Chorus that she has killed the children. Then Medea appears aloft for the last confrontation with Jason, the mirror image of their first confrontation. The final scene hints that punishment may be in store for Medea as well.

The unexpected appearance of Aegeus was criticized by Aristotle, but it may be best to see it in connection with a divine background to the action that is never overt but is hinted at throughout the play. Jason's perjury is fundamental and often alluded to: Zeus and Themis, the enforcers of oaths, are repeatedly mentioned in the early part of the play. The commonest form of oath called down *ἐξώλεια*, root-and-branch destruction with loss of all progeny, on the swearer if he should fail to keep his oath. This is what happens to Jason. Before the event Medea swears that "a god being my helper" she will punish Jason (802). After Aegeus has miraculously appeared and has left, Medea cries out "O Zeus and Zeus's justice!" (764). After the messenger's report, the Chorus say that apparently "the divinity" or "fate" has visited justice on Jason (1231-2). When Medea has gone in to kill the children, the Chorus refer to her as an Erinyes, one of Zeus's agents (1260). The play ends with five anapestic lines, whose genuineness can be established (see *TAPA* 117 [1987], 268-70), calling Zeus "the steward of many things" (cf. the phrase *ὄρκων ταμίης*, lit. "steward of oaths," in 169-70) and remarking on the gods' capacity to bring about the unexpected. In the light of all

MEDEA

this, Aegeus' appearance can be plausibly regarded as a coincidence only from the human point of view. The final speeches of Jason suggest that Zeus had his own score to settle with Medea, and Medea suggests (1013-4) that she is not in her right mind owing to divine intervention.

The divine justice of Jason's punishment does nothing to diminish, and may well increase, the horror of Medea's revenge. Aristotle (*Poetics* 1453 b 27-29) cites the child-murder in *Medea*, done in full knowledge of the tie of blood, as characteristic of the way the "old" dramatists, those of the fifth century, managed the deed of bloodshed. The play was enormously popular in the fourth century and repeatedly revived, a testimony to its searing emotional power.

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Dramatis Personae

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ	NURSE of Medea
ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ	TUTOR to Medea's children
ΜΗΔΕΙΑ	MEDEA
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ	CHORUS of Corinthian women
ΚΡΕΩΝ	CREON, King of Corinth
ΙΑΣΩΝ	JASON
ΑΙΓΕΤΣ	ÆGEUS, King of Athens
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ	MESSENGER
ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΑΣ	CHILDREN OF MEDEA

A Note on Staging

Eisodos A leads to the countryside and roads away from Corinth, Eisodos B to the royal palace. The *skene* represents Medea's house. At the end of the play the *mechane* or stage crane is used to transport Medea and her children upon a winged chariot from an imagined spot in the courtyard of her house to the roof above the central door and from there away to her imagined destination in Athens.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

Εἶθ' ὄφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος
Κόλχων ἐς αἶαν κυανέας Συμπληγάδας,
μηδ' ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου πεσεῖν ποτε
τμηθείσα πεύκη, μηδ' ἐρετμῶσαι χέρας
5 ἀνδρῶν ἀριστέων οἷ τὸ πάγχρυσον δέρος
Πελίᾳ μετῆλθον. οὐ γὰρ ἂν δέσποιν' ἐμῇ
Μήδεια πύργους γῆς ἔπλευσ' Ἴωλκίας
ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγείσ' Ἰάσονος·
οὐδ' ἂν κτανεῖν πείσασα Πελιάδας κόρας
10 πατέρα κατώκει τήνδε γῆν Κορινθίαν
<φίλων τε τῶν πρὶν ἀμπλακοῦσα καὶ πάτρας.
καὶ πρὶν μὲν εἶχε κἀνθάδ' οὐ μεμπτὸν βίον>
ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν, ἀνδάνουσα μὲν
φυγὰς πολίταις ὧν ἀφίκετο χθόνα
αὐτῷ τε πάντα ξυμφέρουσ' Ἰάσωνι.

⁵ ἀριστέων Wakefield: ἀρίστων C

¹¹ ante h. v. lac. indic. Kovacs, 10b suppl. Willink: vide CQ 41 (1991), 30–5

¹² φυγὰς πολίταις S. Harrison, praeceunte Pierson: φυγῇ πολιτῶν (πολίταις V³) C

¹³ αὐτῷ Sakorraphos: αὐτή C

MEDEA

Enter NURSE from the house.

NURSE

Would that the Argo had never winged its way to the land of Colchis through the dark blue Symplegades!¹ Would that pine trees had never been felled in the glens of Mount Pelion and furnished oars for the hands of the heroes who at Pelias' command set forth in quest of the Golden Fleece! For then my lady Medea would not have sailed to the towers of Iolcus, her heart smitten with love for Jason, or persuaded the daughters of Pelias to kill their father and hence now be inhabiting this land of Corinth, <separated from her loved ones and country. At first, to be sure, she had, even in Corinth, a good life,² with her husband and children, an exile loved by the citizens to whose land she had come, and lending to Jason himself all her support.

¹ The Symplegades, mobile rocks that clashed together to crush any ships running between them, guarded the entrance to the Black Sea and prevented passage between East and West until the Argo managed by a clever ruse to get through.

² This gives the probable sense of the lacuna.

- ἤπερ μεγίστη γίνεται σωτηρία,
 15 ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῇ.
 νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα.
 προδοὺς γὰρ αὐτοῦ τέκνα δεσπότιν τ' ἐμὴν
 γάμοις Ἰάσων βασιλικοῖς εὐνάζεται,
 γήμας Κρέοντος παιδ', ὃς αἰσυμνᾶ χθονός.
- 20 Μήδεια δ' ἡ δύστηνος ἠτιμασμένη
 βοᾷ μὲν ὄρκους, ἀνακαλεῖ δὲ δεξιᾶς
 πίστιν μεγίστην, καὶ θεοὺς μαρτύρεται
 οἴας ἀμοιβῆς ἐξ Ἰάσονος κυρεῖ.
 κείται δ' ἄσιτος, σῶμ' ὑφέϊσ' ἀλγηδόσιν,
- 25 τὸν πάντα συντήκουσα δακρύοις χρόνου
 ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἦσθητ' ἠδικημένη,
 οὔτ' ὄμμ' ἐπαίρουσ' οὔτ' ἀπαλλάσσουσα γῆς
 πρόσωπον· ὡς δὲ πέτρος ἢ θαλάσσιος
 κλύδων ἀκούει νουθετουμένη φίλων,
- 30 ἦν μὴ ποτε στρέψασα πάλλευκον δέρην
 αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτὴν πατέρ' ἀποιμῶξῃ φίλον
 καὶ γαῖαν οἴκους θ', οὓς προδοῦσ' ἀφίκετο
 μετ' ἀνδρὸς ὃς σφε νῦν ἀτιμάσας ἔχει.
 ἔγνωκε δ' ἡ τάλαινα συμφορᾶς ὑπο
- 35 οἶον πατρώας μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι χθονός.
 στυγεί δὲ παῖδας οὐδ' ὀρώσ' εὐφραίνεται.
 δέδοικα δ' αὐτὴν μὴ τι βουλευσῆ νεόν
 βαρεῖα γὰρ φρήν, οὐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς
 πάσχουσ' (ἐγῶδα τήνδε), δειμαίνω τέ νιν
 40 μὴ θηκτὸν ὥσῃ φάσγανον δι' ἥπατος,
 [σιγῇ δόμους εἰσβάσ', ἵν' ἔστρωται λέχος,]

MEDEA

This it is that most keeps a life free of trouble, when a woman is not at variance with her husband.

But now all is enmity, and closest ties are diseased. For Jason, abandoning his own children and my mistress, is bedding down in a royal match, having married the daughter of Creon, ruler of this land. Poor Medea, finding herself thus dishonored, calls loudly on his oaths, invokes the mighty assurance of his sworn right hand, and calls the gods to witness the unjust return she is getting from Jason. She lies fasting, giving her body up to pain, spending in ceaseless weeping all the hours since she learned that she was wronged by her husband, neither raising her face nor taking her eyes from the ground. She is as deaf to the advice of her friends as a stone or a wave of the sea, saying nothing unless perchance to turn her snow-white neck and weep to herself for her dear father, her country, and her ancestral house. All these she abandoned when she came here with a man who has now dishonored her. The poor woman has learned at misfortune's hand what a good thing it is not to be cut off from one's native land.

She loathes the children and takes no joy in looking at them. I am afraid that she will hatch some sinister plan. Her temper is violent, and she will not put up with bad treatment (I know her), and I fear she may thrust a whetted sword through her vitals, [slipping quietly into the house where the bed is laid out,] or kill the royal family and

⁴¹ del. Musgrave, 38–40 et 42–3 defendit Willink CQ 38 (1988), 313–23

EURIPIDES

- ἢ καὶ τυράννους τόν τε γήμαντα κτάνη
 κάπειτα μείζω συμφορὰν λάβη τινά.
 δεινὴ γάρ· οὔτοι ῥαδίως γε συμβαλὼν
 45 ἔχθραν τις αὐτῇ καλλίνικος ἄσεται.
 ἀλλ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐκ τρόχων πεπαυμένοι
 στείχουσι, μητρὸς οὐδὲν ἐννοοῦμενοι
 κακῶν· νέα γὰρ φροντὶς οὐκ ἀλγεῖν φιλεῖ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

- παλαιὸν οἴκων κτῆμα δεσποίνης ἐμῆς,
 50 τί πρὸς πύλαισι τήνδ' ἄγουσ' ἐρημίαν
 ἔστηκας, αὐτὴ θρεομένη σανατῇ κακά;
 πῶς σοῦ μόνη Μήδεια λείπεσθαι θέλει;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

- τέκνων ὀπαδὲ πρέσβυ τῶν Ἰάσονος,
 χρηστοῖσι δούλοις ξυμφορὰ τὰ δεσποτῶν
 55 κακῶς πίτνοντα καὶ φρενῶν ἀνθάπτεται.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐς τοῦτ' ἐκβέβηκ' ἀλγηδόνας
 ὥσθ' ἡμερός μ' ὑπήλθε γῆ τε κούρανῶ
 λέξαι μολούση δεῦρο δεσποίνης τύχας.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὔπω γὰρ ἢ τάλαινα παύεται γόων;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

- 60 ζηλῶ σ'· ἐν ἀρχῇ πῆμα κούδέπω μεσοῖ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ᾧ μῶρος, εἰ χρὴ δεσπότης εἰπεῖν τόδε·
 ὡς οὐδὲν οἶδε τῶν νεωτέρων κακῶν.

MEDEA

the bridegroom and then win some greater calamity. For she is dangerous. I tell you, no one who clashes with her will find it easy to crow in victory.

Enter TUTOR by Eisodos A, escorting the two sons of Jason and Medea.

But see, her boys are coming home after their games. They have no thought of their mother's troubles: it is not usual for young minds to dwell on grief.

TUTOR

Aged slave of my mistress' household, why do you stand alone like this outside the gate, complaining of your troubles to your own ears? How can Medea spare your service?

NURSE

Old attendant to the children of Jason, to trusty servants it is a disaster when the dice of their masters' fortunes fall badly: it touches their hearts. So great is the grief I feel that the desire stole over me to come out here and speak my mistress' troubles to the earth and the sky.

TUTOR

What? Does the poor woman not yet cease from moaning?

NURSE

Your ignorance is enviable. This is but the beginning of her pain: it has not yet reached its midpoint.

TUTOR

Poor fool (if I may speak thus of my masters), how ignorant she is of her latest trouble!

⁴² τυράννους Hermann: τύραννον C ⁴⁵ καλλίνικος
Willink: καλλίνικον C ἄσεται Muretus: οἴσεται C

EURIPIDES

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ γεραιέ; μὴ φθόνοι φράσαι.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὐδέν· μετέγνων καὶ τὰ πρόσθ' εἰρημένα.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

65 μῆ, πρὸς γενείου, κρύπτε σύνδουλον σέθεν·
σιγῆν γάρ, εἰ χρῆ, τῶνδε θήσομαι πέρι.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἤκουσά του λέγοντος, οὐ δοκῶν κλύειν,
πεσσοὺς προσελθῶν, ἔνθα δὴ παλαιότεροι
θάσσοσι, σεμνὸν ἀμφὶ Πειρήνης ὕδωρ,
70 ὡς τούσδε παῖδας γῆς ἑλᾶν Κορινθίας
σὺν μητρὶ μέλλοι τῆσδε κοίρανος χθονὸς
Κρέων. ὁ μέντοι μῦθος εἰ σαφῆς ὄδε
οὐκ οἶδα· βουλοίμην δ' ἂν οὐκ εἶναι τόδε.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' Ἰάσων παῖδας ἐξανέξεται
75 πᾶσχοντας, εἰ καὶ μητρὶ διαφορὰν ἔχει;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

παλαιὰ καινῶν λείπεται κηδευμάτων,
κοῦκ ἔστ' ἐκείνος τοῖσδε δώμασιν φίλος.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἀπωλόμεσθ' ἄρ', εἰ κακὸν προσοίσομεν
νέον παλαιῶ, πρὶν τόδ' ἐξηντληκῆναι.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

80 ἀτὰρ σύ γ', οὐ γὰρ καιρὸς εἰδέναι τόδε

MEDEA

NURSE

What is it, old man? Do not begrudge me the news.

TUTOR

Nothing. I am sorry I said as much as I have.

NURSE

I beg you by your beard, do not conceal this from your fellow slave! I will keep it a secret if I must.

TUTOR

As I approached the gaming tables where the old men sit, near the holy spring of Peirene, I heard someone say (I was pretending not to listen) that Creon, this country's king, was going to exile these children and their mother from the land of Corinth. Whether the story is true I do not know. I could wish it were not so.

NURSE

But will Jason allow this to happen to his sons even if he is at odds with their mother?

TUTOR

Old marriage ties give way to new; he is no friend to this house.

NURSE

We are done for, then, if we add this new trouble to our old ones before we've weathered those.

TUTOR

But you, hold your peace (since it is not the right time for

⁶⁸ *παλαιέτεροι* Pierson ex t: -τατοι C

EURIPIDES

δέσποιναν, ἡσύχαζε καὶ σίγα λόγον.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ὦ τέκν', ἀκούεθ' οἶος εἰς ὑμᾶς πατήρ;
ὄλοιτο μὲν μή· δεσπότης γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός·
ἀτὰρ κακός γ' ὢν ἐς φίλους ἀλίσκεται.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

85 τίς δ' οὐχὶ θνητῶν; ἄρτι γιγνώσκεις τόδε,
ὡς πᾶς τις αὐτὸν τοῦ πέλας μᾶλλον φιλεῖ,
[οἱ μὲν δικαίως, οἱ δὲ καὶ κέρδους χάριν,]
εἰ τούσδε γ' εὐνής οὐνεκ' οὐ στέργει πατήρ;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἴτ', εὖ γὰρ ἔσται, δωμάτων ἔσω, τέκνα.
90 σὺ δ' ὡς μάλιστα τούσδ' ἐρημόσας ἔχε
καὶ μὴ πέλαζε μητρὶ δυσθυμουμένη.
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ὄμμα νιν ταυρουμένην
τοῖσδ', ὡς τι δρασείουσαν· οὐδὲ παύσεται
χόλον, σάφ' οἶδα, πρὶν κατασκήψαι τι.
95 ἐχθρούς γε μέντοι, μὴ φίλους, δράσειέ τι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

(ἔσωθεν)

ἰώ,

δύστανος ἐγὼ μελέα τε πόνων,
ἰώ μοί μοι, πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμαν;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

τόδ' ἐκείνο, φίλοι παῖδες· μήτηρ
κινεῖ κραδίαν, κινεῖ δὲ χόλον.
100 σπεύσατε θᾶσσον δώματος εἴσω

MEDEA

your mistress to know this) and say nothing of this tale.

NURSE

O children, do you hear what kind of man your father is toward you? I don't go so far as to curse him, for he is my master. Yet he is certainly guilty of disloyalty toward his loved ones.

TUTOR

As what mortal is not? Because of his new bride, the father does not love these boys: are you only now learning that each man loves himself more than others [, some justly, others for the sake of gain]?

NURSE

Go into the house, children, all will be well! And you, keep them as far away as you can and do not bring them near their mother in her distress. I have seen her turn a savage glance at them, as if she meant to do something to them. She will not let go of her anger, I am sure, before she brings it down on someone's head. But may it be enemies, not loved ones, that feel her wrath!

MEDEA

(*within, sung*) Oh, what a wretch am I, how miserable in my sorrows! Ah ah, how I wish I could die!

NURSE

Just as I said, dear children. Your mother is stirring up her feelings, stirring up her anger. Go quickly into the house,

⁸⁷ del. Brunck cl. Σ

⁹⁴ τιυι Blomfield: τιυα C

EURIPIDES

καὶ μὴ πελάσῃτ' ὄμματος ἐγγὺς
 μηδὲ προσέλθῃτ', ἀλλὰ φυλάσσεσθ'
 ἄγριον ἦθος στυγεράν τε φύσιν
 φρενὸς αὐθάδους.

- 105 ἴτε νυν, χωρεῖθ' ὡς τάχος εἴσω·
 δῆλον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐξαιρόμενον
 νέφος οἰμωγῆς ὡς τάχ' ἀνάψει
 μείζονι θυμῷ· τί ποτ' ἐργάσεται
 μεγαλόσπλαγχνος δυσκατάπαυστος
- 110 ψυχὴ δηχθεῖσα κακοῖσιν;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

αἰαῖ,
 ἔπαθον τλάμων ἔπαθον μεγάλων
 ἄξι' ὀδυρμῶν. ὦ κατάρατοι
 παῖδες ὄλοισθε στυγεράς ματρὸς
 σὺν πατρί, καὶ πᾶς δόμος ἔρροι.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

- 115 ἰὼ μοί μοι, ἰὼ τλήμων.
 τί δέ σοι παῖδες πατρὸς ἀμπλακίας
 μετέχουσι; τί τούσδ' ἔχθεις; οἴμοι,
 τέκνα, μὴ τι πάθῃθ' ὡς ὑπεραλγῶ.
 δεινὰ τυράννων λήματα καὶ πως
- 120 ὀλίγ' ἀρχόμενοι, πολλὰ κρατοῦντες
 χαλεπῶς ὀργὰς μεταβάλλουσιν.
 τὸ γὰρ εἰθίσθαι ζῆν ἐπ' ἴσοισιν
 κρεῖσσον· ἐμοὶ γοῦν ἐπὶ μὴ μέγαλοις
 ὄχυρῶς τ' εἶη καταγηράσκειν.

MEDEA

and do not come into her sight or approach her, but beware of her fierce nature and the hatefulness of her wilful temper! Go inside as quickly as you can!

Exit TUTOR and children into the house.

It is plain that flashes of still greater passion will soon set alight the cloud of lament now rising from its source: what will her proud soul, so hard to check, do when stung by this injury?

MEDEA

(*sung*) Oh, what sufferings are mine, sufferings that call for loud lamentation! O accursèd children of a hateful mother, may you perish with your father and the whole house collapse in ruin!

NURSE

Oh, woe is me! Why do you make the children sharers in their father's sin? Why do you hate *them*? O children, how terrified I am that you may come to harm. The minds of royalty are dangerous: since they often command and seldom obey, they lay aside their angry moods with difficulty. It is better to be accustomed to live on terms of equality. At any rate, may I be able to grow old in modest state and with

123 ἐπὶ μὴ μεγάλοις Barthold: εἰ μὴ μέγᾶλως fere C

EURIPIDES

- 125 τῶν γὰρ μετρίων πρῶτα μὲν εἰπέιν
 τοῦνομα νικᾶ, χρῆσθαί τε μακρῶ
 λῶστα βροτοῖσιν· τὰ δ' ὑπερβάλλοντ'
 οὐδένα καιρὸν δύναται θνητοῖς,
 μείζους δ' ἄτας, ὅταν ὀργισθῆ
 130 δαίμων οἴκοις, ἀπέδωκεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἔκλυον φωνάν, ἔκλυον δὲ βοᾶν
 τᾶς δυστάνου
 Κολχίδος· οὐδέπω ἦπιος;
 ἀλλ', ὦ γεραία, λέξον· ἔτ' ἀμφιπύλου
 135 γὰρ ἔσω μελάθροιο βοᾶν ἔκλυον,
 οὐδὲ συνήδομαι, ὦ γύναι, ἄλγεσι
 δώματος, ἐπεὶ μοι φιλία κέκραται.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

- οὐκ εἰσὶ δόμοι· φροῦδα τὰδ' ἤδη.
 140 τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἔχει λέκτρα τυράννων,
 ἣ δ' ἐν θαλάμοις τήκει βιοτῆν
 δέσποινα, φίλων οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν
 παραθαλπομένη φρένα μύθοις.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- αἰαί,
 διά μου κεφαλᾶς φλόξ οὐρανία
 145 βαίῃ· τί δέ μοι ζῆν ἔτι κέρδος;
 φεῦ φεῦ· θανάτῳ καταλυσάιμαν
 βιοτὰν στυγερὰν προλιπούσα.

MEDEA

security. For moderate fortune has a name that is fairest on the tongue, and in practice it is by far the most beneficial thing for mortals. But excessive riches mean no advantage for mortals, and when a god is angry at a house, they make the ruin greater.

Enter by Eisodos B a group of Corinthian women as CHORUS.

CHORUS

I have heard the voice, I have heard the cry, of the unhappy woman of Colchis: is she not yet soothed? Tell me, old woman, for still within my double-gated house I heard her lamentation. It is no joy I feel at this house's misfortunes since I have shared the cup of friendship with it.

NURSE

The house is no more: it has perished. For the husband is possessed by a royal marriage, while the wife, my mistress, wastes away her life in her chamber, her heart in no way soothed by the words of any of her friends.

MEDEA

(sung) Oh! May a flash of lightning pierce my head! What profit any longer for me in life? Ah, ah! may I find my rest in death and leave behind my hateful life!

134 ἔτ' Badham: ἐπ' C

135 μελάθροιο Wilamowitz: -ου C

138 φιλία Porson: φίλον a: φίλα b

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- αἶες, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ γὰ καὶ φῶς,
 ἀχὰν οἶαν ἄ δύστανος
 150 μέλπει νύμφα;
 τίς σοί ποτε τᾶς ἀπλά-
 του κοίτας ἔρος, ὦ ματαία;
 σπεύσεις θανάτου τελευ-
 τάν; μηδὲν τόδε λίσσου.
 155 εἰ δὲ σὸς πόσις καινὰ λέχη σεβί-
 ζει, κείνῳ τόδε μὴ χαράσσουν·
 Ζεὺς σοι τάδε συνδικήσει.
 μὴ λῖαν
 τάκου δυρομένα σὸν εὐνάταν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 160 ὦ μεγάλη Θέμι καὶ πότνι Ἄρτεμι,
 λεύσσεθ' ἄ πάσχω, μεγάλοις ὄρκοις
 ἐνδησαμένα τὸν κατάρατον
 πόσιν; ὄν ποτ' ἐγὼ νύμφαν τ' ἐσίδοιμ'
 αὐτοῖς μελάθροις διακναιομένους,
 165 οἷ' ἐμὲ πρόσθεν τολμῶσ' ἀδικεῖν.
 ὦ πάτερ, ὦ πόλις, ὦν κάσιν αἰσχρῶς
 τὸν ἐμὸν κτεῖνασ' ἀπενάσθην.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

- κλύεθ' οἷα λέγει κἀπιβοᾶται
 Θέμιν εὐκταίαν Ζηγός, ὃς ὄρκων
 170 θνητοῖς ταμίας νενόμισται;
 οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἐν τινι μικρῶ

MEDEA

CHORUS

Did you hear, O Zeus and earth and light of the sun, what a wail the miserable woman utters? What is this desire you feel for the bed of death, the bed we should not approach, foolish woman? Will you hasten death's end? Do not pray for that! But if your husband holds another marriage bed in honor, do not vex yourself on his account: Zeus will be your advocate in this. Do not grieve excessively or weep over your husband.

MEDEA

(*sung*) O mighty Themis and my lady Artemis, do you see what I suffer, I who have bound my accursèd husband with mighty oaths? May I one day see him and his new bride ground to destruction, and their whole house with them, so terrible are the unprovoked wrongs they dare to commit against me! O father, O my native city, from you I was parted in shame, having killed my brother!

NURSE

Do you hear what she says, how she calls on Themis invoked in prayer, daughter of Zeus, who is deemed guardian of men's oaths? It is not possible that my mistress will

153 σπεύσεις Blaydes: -σει vel -δει C

165 οἶ' ἐμὲ Kaibel: οἶ γέ με fere C

166-7 ὦν . . . ἀπενάσθην Heimsoeth: ὦν ἀπ. αἶ. τ. ἐ. κτ.

κα. C

169 Ζηρός Nauck: Ζῆνά θ' C

EURIPIDES

δέσποινα χόλον καταπαύσει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ.

πῶς ἂν ἐς ὄψιν τὰν ἀμετέραν
ἔλθοι μύθων τ' αὐδαθέντων
δέξαιτ' ὀμφάν,

175 εἴ πως βαρύθυμον ὄρ-
γὰν καὶ λῆμα φρενῶν μεθείη;
μήτοι τό γ' ἐμὸν πρόθυ-
μον φίλοισιν ἀπέστω.

180 ἀλλὰ βᾶσά νιν δεῦρο πόρευσον οἴ-
κων ἕξω· φίλα καὶ τὰδ' αὔδα,
σπεύσασά τι πρὶν κακῶσαι
τοὺς ἕσω·

πένθος γὰρ μεγάλως τόδ' ὀρμᾶται.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δράσω τὰδ'· ἀτὰρ φόβος εἰ πείσω
185 δέσποιναν ἐμήν·
μόχθου δὲ χάριν τήνδ' ἐπιδώσω.
καίτοι τοκάδος δέργμα λεαίνης
ἀποταυροῦται δμωσίν, ὅταν τις
μῦθον προφέρων πέλας ὀρμηθῆ.
190 σκαιοὺς δὲ λέγων κοῦδέεν τι σοφοῦς
τοὺς πρόσθε βροτοὺς οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοις,
οἵτινες ὕμνους ἐπὶ μὲν θαλίαις
ἐπὶ τ' εἰλαπίναις καὶ παρὰ δείπνοις
ἠῦροντο βίῳ τερπνὰς ἀκοάς·

MEDEA

bring her wrath to an end in some trifling deed.

CHORUS

Oh, how I wish she could come face to face with us and listen to our words, on the chance that somehow she might give up her angry temper! May my good will never desert my friends! But go now and bring her out of the house. Tell her that here are friends, and hurry before she harms those inside. For this grief of hers is charging powerfully forward.

NURSE

I will do so. But there is doubt whether I shall persuade my mistress. Still, I will make you a further present of my labor, though she glowers at the servants with the look of a lioness with cubs when any of them approaches her with something to say. You would be right to call men of old foolish, not at all wise: for while they invented songs for festivities, banquets, and dinners to lend our life delight for the ears, no one has discovered how to put an end to

182 σπέυσασά Schöne: σπεύσαι a: σπεύσον b: σπεύδε c

194 βίω Page: βίου C

EURIPIDES

- 195 στυγίους δὲ βροτῶν οὐδεὶς λύπας
 ἤϋρετο μούσῃ καὶ πολυχόρδοις
 ᾧδαῖς παύειν, ἐξ ὧν θάνατοι
 δειναί τε τύχαι σφάλλουσι δόμους.
 καίτοι τάδε μὲν κέρδος ἀκείσθαι
- 200 μολπαῖσι βροτούς· ἴνα δ' εὐδειπνοὶ
 δαῖτες, τί μάτην τείνουσι βοήν;
 τὸ παρὸν γὰρ ἔχει τέρψιν ἀφ' αὐτοῦ
 δαιτὸς πλήρωμα βροτοῖσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 205 ἰαχὰν αἶον πολύστονον
 γόων, λιγυρὰ δ' ἄχεα μογερὰ
 βοᾷ τὸν ἐν λέχει προδόταν κακόνυμφον·
 θεοκλυτεῖ δ' ἄδικα <πάθη>
 παθοῦσα τὰν Ζηγνὸς ὀρ-
 κίαν Θέμιν, ἃ νιν ἔβασεν
- 210 Ἑλλάδ' ἐς ἀντίπορον
 δι' ἄλα νύχιον ἐφ' ἄλμυρὰν
 Πόντου κλῆδ' ἀπέρατον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες, ἐξῆλθον δόμων
- 215 μή μοί τι μέμψησθ'· οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς βροτῶν
 σεμνοὺς γεγῶτας, τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο,
 τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις· οἱ δ' ἀφ' ἡσύχου ποδὸς
 δύσκλειαν ἐκτήσαντο καὶ ῥαθυμίαν.
 δίκη γὰρ οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς βροτῶν,

MEDEA

mortals' bitter griefs with music and song sung to the lyre. It is because of these griefs that deaths and terrible disasters overthrow houses. It would have been a gain for mortals to cure these ills by song. Where there are banquets of plenty, why do they raise the loud song to no purpose? The abundance of the feast at hand provides mortals with its own pleasure.

Exit NURSE into the house.

CHORUS

I have heard her loud groans, the shrill accusations she utters against the husband who betrayed her bed. Having suffered wrong she raises her cry to Zeus's daughter, Themis, goddess of oaths, the goddess who brought her³ to Hellas across the sea through the dark saltwater over the briny gateway of the Black Sea, a gateway few traverse.⁴

Enter MEDEA with the Nurse from the house.

MEDEA

Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house lest you find fault with me. For I know that though many mortals are haughty both in private and in public, others get a *reputation* for indifference to their neighbors from their retiring manner of life. There is no justice in the eyes of

³ Themis "brought her to Hellas" in that she came to Greece relying on Jason's oath. ⁴ "The briny gateway" (lit. "key") of the Black Sea is probably the Bosphorus.

208 <πάθη> Willink

212 ἀπέρατον Blaydes: ἀπέραντον C

218 δύσνοιαν Prinz

- 220 ὅστις πρὶν ἀνδρὸς σπλάγχνον ἐκμαθεῖν σαφῶς
 στυγεί δεδορκῶς, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος.
 χρῆ δὲ ξένον μὲν κάρτα προσχωρεῖν πόλει,
 οὐδ' ἀστὸν ἦνεσ' ὅστις αὐθάδης γεγὼς
 πικρὸς πολίταις ἐστὶν ἀμαθίας ὕπο.
- 225 ἐμοὶ δ' ἄελπτον πρᾶγμα προσπεσὸν τόδε
 ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ'. οἴχομαι δὲ καὶ βίον
 χάριν μεθείσα κατθανεῖν χρήζω, φίλαι.
 ἐν ᾧ γὰρ ἦν μοι πάντα, γινώσκω καλῶς,
 κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν ἐκβέβηχ' οὐμὸς πόσις.
- 230 πάντων δ' ὅσ' ἔστ' ἔμφυχα καὶ γνώμην ἔχει
 γυναικῆς ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν·
 ἄς πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ χρημάτων ὑπερβολῇ
 πόσιν πρίασθαι δεσπότην τε σώματος
 λαβεῖν· κακοῦ γὰρ †τουδ' ἔτ'† ἄλγιον κακόν.
- 235 κὰν τῶδ' ἀγὼν μέγιστος, ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν
 ἢ χρηστόν· οὐ γὰρ εὐκλεεῖς ἀπαλλαγαι
 γυναιξίν οὐδ' οἶόν τ' ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν.
 ἐς καινὰ δ' ἦθη καὶ νόμους ἀφιγμένην
 δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, μὴ μαθοῦσαν οἰκοθεν,
- 240 ὅπως ἄριστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτη.
 κὰν μὲν τάδ' ἡμῖν ἐκπονουμέναισιν εὖ
 πόσις ξυνοικῆ μὴ βία φέρων ζυγόν,
 ζηλωτὸς αἰών· εἰ δὲ μὴ, θανεῖν χρεῶν.
 ἀνὴρ δ', ὅταν τοῖς ἔνδον ἄχθηται ξυνών,

²²⁸ γινώσκω Canter: γινώσκειν C

MEDEA

mortals: before they get sure knowledge of a man's true character, they hate him on sight, although he has done them no harm. Now a foreigner must be quite compliant with the city, nor do I have any words of praise for the citizen who is self-willed and causes his fellow citizens pain by his lack of breeding. In my case, however, this sudden blow that has struck me has destroyed my life. I am undone, I have resigned all joy in life, and I want to die. For the man in whom all I had was bound up, as I well know—my husband—has proved the basest of men.

Of all creatures that have breath and sensation, we women are the most unfortunate. First at an exorbitant price we must buy a husband and take a master for our bodies. For this is what makes one misfortune even more galling than another, <to suffer loss and be insulted to boot>.⁵ The outcome of our life's striving hangs on this, whether we take a bad or a good husband. For divorce is discreditable for woman and it is not possible to refuse wedlock. When a woman comes into the new customs and practices of her husband's house, she must somehow divine, since she has not learned it at home, how she shall best deal with her husband. If after we have spent great efforts on these tasks our husbands live with us without resenting the marriage yoke, our life is enviable. Otherwise, death is preferable. A man, whenever he is annoyed with the company of those in the house, goes elsewhere and

⁵ I translate my conjectural restoration.

²³⁴ fort. κακοῦ γὰρ τῶδ' ἔτ' ἄλγιον κακὸν / <ἦν ζημίαν φέρη τις ὑβρισθῆ θ' ἄμα>

²⁴⁰ ὅπως Meineke: ὄτω C ἄριστα Barthold: μάλιστα C

EURIPIDES

- 245 ἔξω μολῶν ἔπανσε καρδίαν ἄσης
 [ἢ πρὸς φίλον τιν' ἢ πρὸς ἡλικα τραπεῖς].
 ἡμῖν δ' ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βλέπειν.
 λέγουσι δ' ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίον
 ζῶμεν κατ' οἴκους, οἱ δὲ μάρνανται δορί,
 250 κακῶς φρονούντες· ὡς τρὶς ἂν παρ' ἀσπίδα
 στῆναι θέλοιμ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἄπαξ.
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς σέ κ' ἄμ' ἦκει λόγος·
 σοὶ μὲν πόλις θ' ἦδ' ἐστὶ καὶ πατὴρ δόμοι
 βίου τ' ὄνησις καὶ φίλων συνουσία,
 255 ἐγὼ δ' ἔρημος ἀπολις οὖσ' ὑβρίζομαι
 πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐκ γῆς βαρβάρου λελησμένη,
 οὐ μητέρ', οὐκ ἀδελφόν, οὐχὶ συγγενῇ
 μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ' ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς.
 τοσοῦτον οὖν σου τυγχάνειν βουλήσομαι,
 260 ἦν μοι πόρος τις μηχανῆ τ' ἐξευρεθῆ
 πόσιν δίκην τῶνδ' ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν
 [τὸν δόντα τ' αὐτῷ θυγατέρ' ἦν τ' ἐγήματο],
 σιγᾶν. γυνὴ γὰρ τᾶλλα μὲν φόβου πλέα
 κακῆ τ' ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν·
 265 ὅταν δ' ἐς εὐνὴν ἠδίκημένη κυρῆ,
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρῆν μαιφονωτέρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- δράσω τάδ'· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτίσῃ πόσιν,
 Μήδεια. πευθεῖν δ' οὐ σε θαυμάζω τύχας.
 ὀρῶ δὲ καὶ Κρέοντα, τῆσδ' ἀνακτα γῆς,
 270 στείχοντα, καινῶν ἄγγελον βουλευμάτων.

MEDEA

thus rids his soul of its boredom [turning to some male friend or agemate]. But we must fix our gaze on one person only. Men say that we live a life free from danger at home while *they* fight with the spear. How wrong they are! I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.

But your story and mine are not the same: you have a city and a father's house, the enjoyment of life and the company of friends, while I, without relatives or city, am suffering outrage from my husband. I was carried off as booty from a foreign land and have no mother, no brother, no kinsman to shelter me from this calamity. And so I shall ask this much from you as a favor: if I find any means or contrivance to punish my husband for these wrongs [and the bride's father and the bride], keep my secret. In all other things a woman is full of fear, incapable of looking on battle or cold steel; but when she is injured in love, no mind is more murderous than hers.

CHORUS LEADER

I will do so. For you will be justified in punishing your husband, Medea, and I am not surprised that you grieve at what has happened.

Enter CREON by Eisodos B.

But I see Creon coming, ruler of this land. He will have some new deliberation to report.

246 del. Wilamowitz

262 del. Lenting

EURIPIDES

ΚΡΕΩΝ

σὲ τὴν σκυθρωπὸν καὶ πόσει θυμουμένην,
 Μήδει', ἀνείπον τῆσδε γῆς ἔξω περὰν
 φυγάδα, λαβοῦσαν δισσὰ σὺν σαντῇ τέκνα,
 καὶ μή τι μέλλειν· ὡς ἐγὼ βραβεὺς λόγον
 275 τοῦδ' εἰμί, κοῦκ ἄπειμι πρὸς δόμους πάλιν
 πρὶν ἄν σε γαίης τερμόνων ἔξω βάλω.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

αἰαί· πανώλης ἢ τάλαιν' ἀπόλλυμαι
 ἐχθροὶ γὰρ ἐξιᾶσι πάντα δὴ κάλων,
 κοῦκ ἔστιν ἄτης εὐπρόσοιστος ἔκβασις.
 280 ἐρήσομαι δὲ καὶ κακῶς πάσχουσ' ὅμως·
 τίνος μ' ἔκατι γῆς ἀποστέλλεις, Κρέον;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

δέδοικά σ' (οὐδὲν δεῖ παραμπίσχειν λόγους)
 μή μοί τι δράσης παῖδ' ἀνήκεστον κακόν.
 συμβάλλεται δὲ πολλὰ τοῦδε δείγματα·
 285 σοφῆ πέφυκας καὶ κακῶν πολλῶν ἴδρις,
 λυπῆ δὲ λέκτρων ἀνδρὸς ἔστερημένη.
 κλύω δ' ἀπειλεῖν σ', ὡς ἀπαγγέλλουσί μοι,
 τὸν δόντα καὶ γήμαντα καὶ γαμουμένην
 δράσειν τι. ταῦτ' οὖν πρὶν παθεῖν φυλάξομαι.
 290 κρεῖσσον δέ μοι νῦν πρὸς σ' ἀπεχθέσθαι, γύναι,
 ἢ μαλθακισθένθ' ὕστερον μεταστένειν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

φεῦ φεῦ.
 οὐ νῦν με πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις, Κρέον,

MEDEA

CREON

You, Medea, scowling with rage against your husband, I order you to leave this land and go into exile, taking your two children with you, and instantly! I am the executor of this decree, and I will not return home again until I expel you from the country.

MEDEA

Oh, I am undone, wholly lost! My enemies are making full sail against me, and there is no haven from disaster that I can reach. Still, though I am ill-treated, I will ask you: Why are you exiling me, Creon?

CREON

I am afraid (no need to dissemble) that you will do some deadly harm to my daughter. Many indications of this combine: you are a clever woman and skilled in many evil arts, and you are smarting with the loss of your husband's love. And I hear that you are threatening—such is the report people bring—to harm the bride, her father, and her husband. So I shall take precautions before the event. It is better for me to incur your hatred now, woman, than to be soft now and regret it later.

MEDEA

Ah me! This is not the first time, Creon, but often before

272 *Μήδει', ἀνείπον* E. Harrison: *Μήδειαν εἶπον* C

284 *τοῦδε δείγματα* Wieseler: *τοῦδε δείματος* C

291 *μεταστένειν* t, sicut coni. Nauck: *μέγα στένειν* C

EURIPIDES

- ἔβλαψε δόξα μεγάλα τ' εἵργασται κακά.
 χρή δ' οὔποθ' ὅστις ἀρτίφρων πέφυκ' ἀνὴρ
 295 παῖδας περισσῶς ἐκδιδάσκεισθαι σοφούς·
 χωρὶς γὰρ ἄλλης ἧς ἔχουσιν ἀργίας
 φθόνον πρὸς ἀστῶν ἀλφάνουσι δυσμενῆ.
 σκαιοῖσι μὲν γὰρ καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ
 δόξεις ἀχρεῖος κοῦ σοφὸς πεφυκέναι·
 300 τῶν δ' αὖ δοκούντων εἶδέναι τι ποικίλον
 κρείσσων νομισθεὶς ἐν πόλει λυπρὸς φανῆ.
 ἐγὼ δὲ καυτῆ τῆσδε κοινωνῶ τύχης·
 σοφῆ γὰρ οὔσα, τοῖς μὲν εἰμ' ἐπίφθονος,
 [τοῖς δ' ἡσυχαία, τοῖς δὲ θατέρου τρόπου,
 305 τοῖς δ' αὖ προσάντης· εἰμὶ δ' οὐκ ἄγαν σοφῆ,]
 σὺ δ' αὖ φοβῆ με μὴ τί πλημμελὲς πάθης;
 οὐχ ᾧδ' ἔχει μοι, μὴ τρέσης ἡμᾶς, Κρέον,
 ὥστ' ἐς τυράννους ἄνδρας ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
 σὺ γὰρ τί μ' ἠδίκηκας; ἐξέδου κόρη
 310 ὄτω σε θυμὸς ἦγεν. ἀλλ' ἐμὸν πόσιν
 μισῶ· σὺ δ', οἶμαι, σωφρονῶν ἔδρας τάδε.
 καὶ νῦν τὸ μὲν σὸν οὐ φθονῶ καλῶς ἔχειν·
 νυμφεύετ', εὖ πράσσοιτε· τήνδε δὲ χθόνα
 ἑατέ μ' οἰκεῖν. καὶ γὰρ ἠδικημένοι
 315 σιγησόμεσθα, κρεισσόνων νικώμενοι.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

λέγεις ἀκοῦσαι μαλθάκ', ἀλλ' ἔσω φρενῶν
 ὄρρωδία μοι μὴ τι βουλευῆς κακόν,
 τοσῶδε δ' ἦσσον ἢ πάρος πέποιθά σοι·

MEDEA

now my reputation has done me great harm. No man who is sensible ought ever to have his children educated beyond the common run. For apart from the charge of idleness they incur, they earn hostility and ill will from their fellow citizens. If you bring novel wisdom to fools, you will be regarded as useless, not wise; and if the city regards you as greater than those with a reputation for cleverness, you will be thought vexatious. I myself am a sharer in this lot, for since I am clever, some regard me with ill will, [others find me retiring, others the opposite, others an obstacle, yet I am not so very wise,] while you on the other hand fear me. What harm are you afraid of? Have no fear, Creon: I am not the kind of person to commit crimes against my rulers. What injustice have you done me? You married your daughter to the man your heart bade you to. It is my husband I hate, while you, I think, acted with perfect good sense in this. And now I do not begrudge you prosperity. Make your marriage, all of you, and may good fortune attend you! But let me stay in this land. For although I have been wronged, I will hold my peace, yielding to my superiors.

CREON

Your words are soothing to listen to, but I am afraid that in your heart you are plotting some harm, and I trust you that

³⁰⁴ om. a, del. Pearson

³⁰⁵ del Hirzel

³¹⁷ βουλευής Elmsley: -σης C

EURIPIDES

- 320 γυνή γὰρ ὀξύθυμος, ὡς δ' αὐτῶς ἀνὴρ,
 ῥάων φυλάσσειν ἢ σιωπηλὸς σοφή.
 ἀλλ' ἔξιθ' ὡς τάχιστα, μὴ λόγους λέγε
 ὡς ταῦτ' ἄραρε κοῦκ ἔχεις τέχνην ὅπως
 μενεῖς παρ' ἡμῖν οὔσα δυσμενῆς ἐμοί.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μή, πρὸς σε γονάτων τῆς τε νεογάμου κόρης.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

- 325 λόγους ἀναλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἂν πείσαις ποτέ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἐξελάς με κοῦδὲν αἰδέσῃ λιτάς;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

φιλω γὰρ οὐ σὲ μάλλον ἢ δόμους ἐμούς.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ὦ πατρίς, ὡς σου κάρτα νῦν μνείαν ἔχω.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πλὴν γὰρ τέκνων ἔμοιγε φίλτατον πολὺ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 330 φεῦ φεῦ, βροτοῖς ἔρωτες ὡς κακὸν μέγα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὅπως ἄν, οἶμαι, καὶ παραστῶσιν τύχαι.

320 σοφή Diggle: σοφός C

⁶ The verb αἰδέομαι and the corresponding noun αἰδώς designate the response that suppliancy requires, respect for the sanctity of the suppliant and acquiescence in what he asks.

MEDEA

much the less than before. A hot-tempered woman—and a hot-tempered man likewise—is easier to guard against than a clever woman who keeps her own counsel. No, go into exile at once—no more talk: my resolve is fixed and there is no way you can remain in our midst since you are hostile to me.

Medea kneels before him in the attitude of a suppliant, grasping his knees and hand.

MEDEA

Do not, I beg you by your knees and by your newly wedded daughter!

CREON

You waste your words. You will never win me over.

MEDEA

But will you banish me without the regard due a suppliant?⁶

CREON

Yes: I do not love you more than my own house.

MEDEA

O fatherland, how I think of you now!

CREON

Yes, after my children it is much the dearest thing to me.

MEDEA

Oh, what a bane to mortals is love!

CREON

I fancy that depends on the circumstances.

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

Ζεῦ, μὴ λάθοι σε τῶνδ' ὄς αἴτιος κακῶν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔρπ', ὦ ματαία, καί μ' ἀπάλλαξον πόνων.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ποιοῦμεν ἡμεῖς κοῦ πόνων κεχρήμεθα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

335 τάχ' ἐξ ὀπαδῶν χειρὸς ὠσθήσῃ βία.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ', ἀλλὰ σ' ἄντομαι, Κρέον.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὄχλον παρέξεις, ὡς ἔοικας, ὦ γύναι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

φευξόμεθ'. οὐ τοῦθ' ἰκέτευσά σου τυχεῖν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

τί δαὶ βιάζῃ κοῦκ ἀπαλλάσῃ χερός;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

340 μίαν με μείναι τήνδ' ἔασον ἡμέραν
καὶ ξυμπερᾶναι φροντίδ' ἧ̄ φευξόμεθα,
παισὶν τ' ἀφορμὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς, ἐπεὶ πατὴρ
οὐδὲν προτιμᾶ, μηχανήσασθαί τινα.
οἴκτιρε δ' αὐτούς· καὶ σύ τοι παίδων πατὴρ
345 πέφυκας· εἰκὸς δέ σφιν εὐνοϊάν σ' ἔχειν.

336 ἄντομαι Wecklein: αἰτούμαι C 339 δαὶ Housman: δ'
αὐ̄ a: δ' οὐ̄ν b χερός Wilamowitz: χθονός C
343 τινα Earle: τέκνοις C

MEDEA

MEDEA

Zeus, mark well who has caused all this woe!

CREON

Go, foolish woman, and rid me of my trouble!

MEDEA

Trouble I have already. I have no need of more.

CREON

In a moment you will be thrown out of the country by my servants.

MEDEA

No, no, not that, I entreat you, Creon!

CREON

Woman, it seems you are bent on causing me annoyance.

MEDEA

I accept my exile: it was not exile I sought reprieve of.

CREON

Why then are you still applying force⁷ and clinging to my hand?

MEDEA

Allow me to remain this one day and to complete my plans for exile and how I may provide for my children, since their father does not care to do so. Have pity on them. You too are a parent: it would be natural for you to show kindness

⁷ The religious obligation to respect the suppliant is so great that those supplicated feel supplication as violence and constraint: cf. *Hippolytus* 325.

345 δέ σφιν Vitelli: δ' ἐστὶν fere C

EURIPIDES

τοῦμοῦ γὰρ οὐ μοι φροντίς, εἰ φευξόμεθα,
κείνους δὲ κλαίω συμφορᾷ κεχρημένους.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

- ἤκιστα τοῦμόν λῆμ' ἔφν τυραννικόν,
αἰδούμενος δὲ πολλὰ δὴ διέφθορα·
350 καὶ νῦν ὀρώ μὲν ἕξαμαρτάνων, γύναι,
ὄμως δὲ τεύξῃ τοῦδε. προυννέπω δέ σοι,
εἴ σ' ἢ ἴπιούσα λαμπὰς ὄψεται θεοῦ
καὶ παῖδας ἐντὸς τῆσδε τερμόνων χθονός,
θανῆ· λέλεκται μῦθος ἀψευδῆς ὄδε.
365 νῦν δ', εἰ μένειν δεῖ, μίμν' ἐφ' ἡμέραν μίαν·
οὐ γάρ τι δράσεις δεινὸν ὦν φόβος μ' ἔχει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- [δύστανε γύναι,]
φεῦ φεῦ, μελέα τῶν σῶν ἀχέων.
ποῖ ποτε τρέψῃ; τίνα προξενίαν
360 ἦ δόμον ἢ χθόνα σωτήρα κακῶν
ἕξευρήσεις;
ὡς εἰς ἄπορόν σε κλύδωνα θεός,
Μήδεια, κακῶν ἐπόρευσεν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- κακῶς πέπρακται πανταχῆ· τίς ἀντερεῖ;
365 ἀλλ' οὔτι ταύτη ταῦτα, μὴ δοκεῖτέ πο·
ἔτ' εἶσ' ἀγῶνες τοῖς νεωστὶ νυμφίοις
καὶ τοῖσι κηδεύσασιν οὐ σμικροὶ πόνοι.
δοκεῖς γὰρ ἄν με τόνδε θωπεύσαι ποτε
εἰ μή τι κερδαίνουσαὶ ἢ τεχνωμένην;

MEDEA

toward them. I do not care if I myself go into exile. It is *their* experience of misfortune I weep for.

CREON

My nature is not at all a tyrant's, and by showing consideration I have often suffered loss. And now, though I see that I am making a serious mistake, nonetheless, woman, you shall have your request. But I warn you, if tomorrow's sun sees you and your children within the borders of this land, you will be put to death. I mean what I have said. Now stay, if stay you must, for one more day. You will not do the mischief I fear by then.

Exit CREON by Eisodos B. Medea rises to her feet.

CHORUS LEADER

[Unhappy woman,] Ah ah, crushed by your misfortunes, where will you turn? What protector of strangers will you find, what house, what land, to save you from calamity? A god has cast you, Medea, into a hopeless sea of troubles.

MEDEA

The situation is bad in every way: who will deny it? But things are not at all as you describe them, do not imagine it: there are still struggles for the newly wedded pair, and for the maker of the match difficulties that are not trifling. Do you think I would ever have fawned on this man unless I stood to gain, unless I were plotting? I would not even have

357 *δύστανε γυναί* om. a: del. Matthiae: post 358 *traí*.
Barthold

359 *προξενίαν* a: *πρὸς ξενίαν*. b: cf. 724

EURIPIDES

- 370 οὐδ' ἂν προσείπον οὐδ' ἂν ἠψάμην χεροῖν.
 ὁ δ' ἔς τοσοῦτον μωρίας ἀφίκετο
 ὥστ', ἐξὸν αὐτῷ τὰ μ' ἐλείν βουλευμάτα
 γῆς ἐκβαλόντι, τήνδ' ἐφῆκεν ἡμέραν
 μείναι μ', ἐν ἧ τρεῖς τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν νεκροὺς
- 375 θήσω, πατέρα τε καὶ κόρην πόσιν τ' ἐμόν.
 πολλὰς δ' ἔχουσα θανασίμους αὐτοῖς ὁδοὺς,
 οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποια πρῶτον ἐγχειρῶ, φίλαι·
 πότερον ὑφάψω δῶμα νυμφικὸν πυρί,
 [ἢ θηκτὸν ὥσω φάσγανον δι' ἥπατος,]
- 380 σιγῇ δόμους ἐσβᾶσ', ἵν' ἔστρωται λέχος;
 ἀλλ' ἐν τί μοι πρόσαντες· εἰ ληφθήσομαι
 δόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη,
 θανοῦσα θήσω τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἐχθροῖς γέλων.
 κράτιστα τὴν εὐθείαν, ἧ πεφύκαμεν
- 385 σοφοὶ μάλιστα, φαρμάκοις αὐτοὺς ἐλείν.
 εἰέν·
 καὶ δὴ τεθνήασι· τίς με δέξεται πόλις;
 τίς γῆν ἄσυλον καὶ δόμους ἐχεγγύους
 ξένος παρασχῶν ρύσεται τοῦμόν δέμας;
 οὐκ ἔστι· μείνας' οὖν ἔτι σμικρὸν χρόνον,
- 390 ἦν μὲν τις ἡμῖν πύργος ἀσφαλῆς φανῆ,
 δόλω μέτειμι τόνδε καὶ σιγῇ φόνον·
 ἦν δ' ἐξελαύνη ξυμφορὰ μ' ἀμήχανος,
 αὐτῇ ξίφος λαβοῦσα, κεῖ μέλλω θανεῖν,
 κτενῶ σφε, τόλμης δ' εἶμι πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν.
- 395 οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν ἦν ἐγὼ σέβω
 μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ξυνεργὸν εἰλόμην,

MEDEA

spoken to him or touched him with my hands. But he has reached such a pitch of folly that, while it lay in his power to check my plans by banishing me, he has permitted me to stay for this day, a day on which I shall make corpses of three of my enemies, the father, his daughter, and my husband.

Now since I possess many ways of killing them, I do not know which I should try first, my friends: shall I set the bridal chamber on fire [or thrust a sharp sword through their vitals,] creeping into the house where the marriage bed is laid out? One thing, however, stands in my path: if I am caught entering the house and plotting its destruction, I will be killed and bring joy to my foes. Best to proceed by the direct route, in which I am the most skilled, and kill them with poison.

So be it! Now let us suppose they have been killed. What city will receive me? What friend will give me a safe country and a secure house and rescue me? There is no one. And so I shall wait a short time yet, and if some citadel of rescue appears, I shall go about this murder by stealth. But if hard circumstance forces me into the open, I shall take the sword and, even though I am sure to die for it, kill them with my own hand, going to the very utmost of daring. By the goddess I worship most of all, my chosen helper

³⁷³ ἐφῆκεν Nauck: ἀφ- C

³⁷⁹ damnat, 380 interrogative dist. Willink, CQ 38 (1988), 313-23

³⁸⁵ σοφοὶ Tate, Dalzel: σοφαὶ C

EURIPIDES

- Ἐκάτην, μυχοῖς ναίουσαν ἐστίας ἐμῆς,
 χαίρων τις αὐτῶν τοῦμόν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαρ.
 πικροὺς δ' ἐγὼ σφιν καὶ λυγροὺς θήσω γάμους,
 400 πικρὸν δὲ κῆδος καὶ φυγὰς ἐμὰς χθονός.
 ἀλλ' εἶα φείδου μηδὲν ὦν ἐπίστασαι,
 Μήδεια, βουλεύουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη
 ἔρπ' ἐς τὸ δεινόν· νῦν ἀγὼν εὐψυχίας.
 ὀρᾶς ἂ πάσχεις; οὐ γέλωτα δεῖ σ' ὀφλεῖν
 405 τοῖς Σισυφείοις τοῖσδ' Ἰάσονος γάμοις,
 γεγῶσαν ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς Ἑλίου τ' ἄπο.
 ἐπίστασαι δέ· πρὸς δὲ καὶ πεφύκαμεν
 γυναῖκες, ἐς μὲν ἔσθλ' ἀμηχανώταται,
 κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

- 410 ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι παγαί,
 καὶ δίκαια καὶ πάντα πάλιν στρέφεται·
 ἀνδράσι μὲν δόλια βουλαί, θεῶν δ'
 οὐκέτι πίστις ἄραρεν.
 415 τὰν δ' ἐμὰν εὐκλειαν ἔχειν βιοτὰν στρέψουσι
 φάμαι·
 ἔρχεται τιμὰ γυναικείῳ γένει·
 420 οὐκέτι δυσκέλαδος φάμα γυναικῆς ἔξει.

ἀντ. α

- μοῦσαι δὲ παλαιγενέων λήξουσ' αἰοιδῶν
 τὰν ἐμὰν ὑμνεῦσαι ἀπιστοσύναν.
 οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἀμετέρα γνώμα λύρας
 425 ὥπασε θέσπιν αἰοιδὰν

MEDEA

Hecate,⁸ who dwells in the inner chamber of my house, none of them shall pain my heart and smile at it! Bitter and grievous will I make their union and bitter Creon's marriage alliance and his banishment of me from the land! Come, Medea, spare nothing of the arts you are mistress of as you plot and contrive! Into the fray! Now it is a contest of courage. Do you see what is being done to you? You must not suffer mockery from this Sisyphian⁹ marriage of Jason, you who are sprung from a noble father and have Helios for your grandsire. You understand how to proceed. And furthermore we are women, unable to perform noble deeds, but most skilful architects of every sort of harm.

CHORUS

Backward to their sources flow the streams of holy rivers, and the order of all things is reversed: men's thoughts have become deceitful and their oaths by the gods do not hold fast. The common talk will so alter that women's ways will enjoy good repute. Honor is coming to the female sex: no more will women be maligned by slanderous rumor.

The poetry of ancient bards will cease to hymn our faithlessness. Phoebus lord of song never endowed our minds with the glorious strains of the lyre. Else I could

⁸ Hecate, among her many functions, is connected with magic arts.

⁹ This wily Sisyphus, famed for dishonest trickery, was a Corinthian.

405 τοῖσδ' Herwerden: τοῖς τ' C

EURIPIDES

Φοῖβος ἀγήτωρ μελέων· ἐπεὶ ἀντάχῃσ' ἄν ὕμνον
ἀρσένων γέννα. μακρὸς δ' αἰὼν ἔχει

430 πολλὰ μὲν ἀμετέραν ἀνδρῶν τε μοῖραν εἰπεῖν.
στρ. β

σὺ δ' ἐκ μὲν οἴκων πατρίων ἔπλευσας
μαιομένα κραδία διδύμους ὀρίσασα Πόν-

435 του πέτρας· ἐπὶ δὲ ξένα

ναίεις χθονί, τᾶς ἀνάν-
δρον κοίτας ὀλέσασα λέκτρον,
τάλαινα, φυγὰς δὲ χώ-
ρας ἄτιμος ἐλαύνη.

ἀντ. β

βέβακε δ' ὄρκων χάρις, οὐδ' ἔτ' αἰδῶς

440 Ἑλλάδι τᾶ μεγάλα μένει, αἰθερία δ' ἀνέ-

πτα. σοὶ δ' οὔτε πατρὸς δόμοι,

δύστανε, μεθορμίσα-

σθαι μόχθων πάρα, σῶν τε λέκτρων

ἄλλα βασιλεία κρείσ-

445 σων δόμοισιν ἐπέστα.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

οὐ νῦν κατείδον πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις

τραχείαν ὀργὴν ὡς ἀμήχανον κακόν.

σοὶ γὰρ παρὸν γῆν τήνδε καὶ δόμους ἔχει

κούφως φερούση κρεισσόνων βουλευμάτα,

450 λόγων ματαίων οὔνεκ' ἐκπεσῆ χθονός.

κάμοι μὲν οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα· μὴ παύσῃ ποτὲ

λέγουσ' Ἴάσον' ὡς κάκιστός ἐστ' ἀνὴρ.

ἂ δ' ἐς τυράννους ἐστί σοι λελεγμένα,

MEDEA

have sounded a hymn in reply to the male sex. Time in its long expanse can say many things of men's lot as well as of women's.

But you sailed from your father's halls, passing with love-maddened heart between the twin rocks of the Black Sea. On strange soil you now dwell, you have lost your marriage bed, your husband's love, poor wretch, and you are being driven from this land a dishonored exile.

The magical power of an oath has gone, and Shame is no more to be found in wide Hellas: she has taken wing to heaven. You have no father's home in which to find shelter from woe, unhappy woman, and another, a princess, greater match than yourself, holds sway in the house.

Enter JASON by Eisodos B.

JASON

Not now for the first time but often before I have seen what an impossible evil to deal with is a fierce temper. Although you could have kept this land and this house by patiently bearing with your superiors' arrangements, you will be exiled because of your foolish-talk. Not that it bothers me: go on, if you like, calling Jason the basest man alive. But as for your words against the ruling family, count your-

443 σῶν τε Porson: τῶνδε C

EURIPIDES

- πᾶν κέρδος ἡγοῦ ζημιουμένη φυγῇ.
 455 κάγῳ μὲν αἰεὶ βασιλέων θυμουμένων
 ὀργὰς ἀφήρουν καὶ σ' ἐβουλόμην μένειν
 σὺ δ' οὐκ ἀνίεις μωρίας, λέγουσ' αἰεὶ
 κακῶς τυράννους· τοιγὰρ ἐκπεσῆ χθονός.
 ὅμως δὲ κακ τῶνδ' οὐκ ἀπειρηκῶς φίλους
 460 ἦκω, τὸ σὸν δὲ προσκοπούμενος, γύναι,
 ὡς μήτ' ἀχρήμων σὺν τέκνοισιν ἐκπέσης
 μήτ' ἐνδεής του· πόλλ' ἐφέλκεται φυγῇ
 κακὰ ξὺν αὐτῇ. καὶ γὰρ εἰ σὺ με στυγεῖς,
 οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην σοὶ κακῶς φρονεῖν ποτε.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 465 ὦ παγκάκιστε, τοῦτο γάρ σ' εἰπεῖν ἔχω,
 γλώσση μέγιστον εἰς ἀνανδρίαν κακόν,
 ἦλθες πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἦλθες ἔχθιστος γεγώς
 [θεοῖς τε κάμοι παντί τ' ἀνθρώπων γένει];
 οὔτοι θράσος τόδ' ἐστὶν οὐδ' εὐτολμία,
 470 φίλους κακῶς δράσαντ' ἐναντίον βλέπειν,
 ἀλλ' ἢ μεγίστη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις νόσων
 πασῶν, ἀναίδει'. εὖ δ' ἐποίησας μολῶν
 ἐγὼ τε γὰρ λέξασα κουφισθήσομαι
 ψυχὴν κακῶς σὲ καὶ σὺ λυπήσῃ κλύων.
 475 ἐκ τῶν δὲ πρώτων πρώτον ἄρξομαι λέγειν
 ἔσωσά σ', ὡς ἴσασις Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι
 ταυτὸν συνεισέβησαν Ἀργῶον σκάφος,
 πεμφθέντα ταύρων πυρπνόων ἐπιστάτην
 ζεύγλαισι καὶ σπεροῦντα θανάσιμον γύνῃ.

MEDEA

self lucky that your punishment is exile. For my part I have always tried to soothe the king's angry temper, and I wanted you to stay. But you would not cease from your folly and always kept reviling the ruling house. For that you will be exiled.

Still, even after this I have not failed my loved ones but have come here in your interests, woman, so that you might not go into exile with your children penniless or in need of anything: exile brings many hardships with it. Even if you hate me, I could never bear you ill will.

MEDEA

Vilest of knaves—for that is the only name I can give you, the worst reproach tongue can frame against unmanly conduct—have you really come to see me when you have made yourself my worst enemy [to the gods, to me, and to the whole human race]? This is not boldness or courage—to wrong your loved ones and then look them in the face—but the worst of all mortal vices, shamelessness. But you did well to come, for it will relieve my feelings to tell you how wicked you are, and you will be stung by what I have to say.

I shall begin my speech from the beginning. I saved your life—as witness all the Greeks who went on board the Argo with you—when you were sent to master the firebreathing bulls with a yoke and to sow the field of death. The dragon who kept watch over the Golden

- 480 δράκοντά θ', ὃς πάγχρυσον ἀμπέχων δέρος
 σπείραις ἔσφζε πολυπλόκοις ἄνπνος ὦν,
 κτείνας' ἀνέσχον σοι φάος σωτήριον.
 αὐτὴ δὲ πατέρα καὶ δόμους προδοῦσ' ἐμοῦς
 τὴν Πηλιῶτιν εἰς Ἴωλκὸν ἰκόμην
- 485 σὺν σοί, πρόθυμος μᾶλλον ἢ σοφωτέρα·
 Πελίαν τ' ἀπέκτειν', ὥσπερ ἄλγιστον θανεῖν,
 παίδων ὕπ' αὐτοῦ, πάντα τ' ἐξείλον δόμον.
 καὶ ταῦθ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ὦ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, παθῶν
 προῦδωκας ἡμᾶς, καὶνὰ δ' ἐκτήσω λέχη,
- 490 παίδων γεγῶτων· εἰ γὰρ ἦσθ' ἄπαις ἔτι,
 συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν σοι τοῦδ' ἐρασθῆναι λέχους.
 ὄρκων δὲ φρούδη πίστις, οὐδ' ἔχω μαθεῖν
 εἰ θεοὺς νομίζεις τοὺς τότε οὐκ ἄρχειν ἔτι
 ἢ καὶνὰ κείσθαι θέσμι' ἀνθρώποις τὰ νῦν,
- 495 ἐπεὶ σύνοισθά γ' εἰς ἔμ' οὐκ εὖορκος ὦν.
 φεῦ δεξιὰ χεῖρ, ἧς σὺ πόλλ' ἐλαμβάνου
 καὶ τῶνδε γονάτων, ὡς μάτην κεχρῶσμεθα
 κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐλπίδων δ' ἡμάρτομεν.
 ἄγ', ὡς φίλω γὰρ ὄντι σοι κοινώσομαι
- 500 (δοκοῦσα μὲν τί πρὸς γε σοῦ πράξειν καλῶς;
 ὁμως δ', ἐρωτηθεῖς γὰρ αἰσχίων φανῆ)
 νῦν ποῖ τράπωμαι; πότερα πρὸς πατρὸς δόμους,
 οὓς σοὶ προδοῦσα καὶ πάτραν ἀφικόμην;
 ἢ πρὸς ταλαίνας Πελιάδας; καλῶς γ' ἂν οὖν
- 505 δέξαιντό μ' οἴκοις ὦν πατέρα κατέκτανον.
 ἔχει γὰρ οὕτω τοῖς μὲν οἴκοθεν φίλοις
 ἐχθρὰ καθέστηχ', οὓς δέ μ' οὐκ ἐχρῆν κακῶς

MEDEA

Fleece, sleeplessly guarding it with his sinuous coils, I killed, and I raised aloft for you the fair light of escape from death. Of my own accord I abandoned my father and my home and came with you to Iolcus under Pelion, showing more love than prudence. I murdered Pelias by the most horrible of deaths—at the hand of his own daughters—and I destroyed his whole house. And after such benefits from me, O basest of men, you have betrayed me and have taken a new marriage, though we had children. For if you were still childless, your desire for this marriage would be understandable.

Respect for your oaths is gone, and I cannot tell whether you think that the gods of old no longer rule or that new ordinances have now been set up for mortals, since you are surely aware that you have not kept your oath to me. O right hand of mine, which you often grasped together with my knees, how profitless was the suppliant grasp upon me of a knave, and how I have been cheated of my hopes!

But come now—for I will share my thoughts with you as a friend (yet what benefit can I expect to get from *you*? Still I will do it, for you will be shown up in an uglier light by my questions)—where am I now to turn? To my father's house, which like my country I betrayed for your sake when I came here? Or to the wretched daughters of Pelias? A fine reception they would give me in their house since I killed their father! This is how things stand: to my own kin I have become an enemy, and by my services to

493 εἰ Reiske: ἦ vel ἦ C

EURIPIDES

- δρᾶν, σοὶ χάριν φέρουσα πολεμίους ἔχω.
 τοιγάρ με πολλαῖς μακαρίαν Ἑλληνίδων
 510 ἔθηκας ἀντὶ τῶνδε· θαυμαστὸν δέ σε
 ἔχω πόσιν καὶ πιστὸν ἢ τάλαιν' ἐγώ,
 εἰ φεύξομαί γε γαῖαν ἐκβεβλημένη,
 φίλων ἔρημος, σὺν τέκνοις μόνη μόνοις·
 καλόν γ' ὄνειδος τῷ νεωστὶ νυμφίῳ,
 515 πτωχοὺς ἀλάσθαι παῖδας ἢ τ' ἔσωσά σε.
 ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ χρυσοῦ μὲν ὄς κίβδηλος ἦ
 τεκμήρι' ἀνθρώποισιν ὅπασας σαφῆ,
 ἀνδρῶν δ' ὄτῳ χρῆ τὸν κακὸν διειδέναι
 οὐδεὶς χαρακτήρ ἐμπέφυκε σώματι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 520 δεινὴ τις ὄργῃ καὶ δυσίατος πέλει,
 ὅταν φίλοι φίλοισι συμβάλωσ' ἔριν.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- δεῖ μ', ὡς ἔοικε, μὴ κακὸν φῦναι λέγειν,
 ἀλλ' ὥστε ναὸς κεδνὸν οἰακοστρόφον
 ἄκροισι λαίφους κρασπέδοις ὑπεκδραμεῖν
 525 τὴν σὴν στόμαργον, ὦ γύναι, γλωσσαλγίαν.
 ἐγὼ δ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ λίαν πυργοῖς χάριν,
 Κύπριν νομίζω τῆς ἐμῆς ναυκληρίας
 σῴτειραν εἶναι θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μόνην.
 σοὶ δ' ἔστι μὲν νοῦς λεπτός—ἀλλ' ἐπίφθονος
 530 λόγος διελθεῖν ὡς Ἔρωσ σ' ἠνάγκασεν
 τόξοις ἀφύκτοις τοῦμὸν ἐκσῶσαι δέμας.
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκριβῶς αὐτὸ θήσομαι λίαν

MEDEA

you I have made foes of those I ought not to have harmed. That, doubtless, is why you have made me so happy in the eyes of many Greek women, in return for these favors! I, poor wretch, have in you a wonderful and faithful husband if I am to flee the country, sent into exile, deprived of friends, abandoned with my abandoned children! What a fine reproach for a new bridegroom, that his children are wandering as beggars, and she who saved him likewise!

O Zeus, why, when you gave to men sure signs of gold that is counterfeit, is there no mark on the human body by which one could identify base *men*?

CHORUS LEADER

Terrible and hard to heal is the wrath that comes when kin join in conflict with kin.

JASON

It appears, woman, that I must be no mean speaker but like the good helmsman of a ship reef my sail up to its hem and run before the storm of your wearisome prattling. Since you so exaggerate your kindness to me, I for my part think that Aphrodite alone of gods and mortals was the savior of my expedition. As for you, I grant you have a clever mind—but to tell how Eros forced you with his ineluctable arrows to save me would expose me to ill will. No, I will not make

- ὄπη γὰρ οὖν ὤνησας οὐ κακῶς ἔχει.
 μείζω γε μέντοι τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας
 535 εἴληφας ἢ δέδωκας, ὡς ἐγὼ φράσω.
 πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ' ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς
 γαίαν κατοικεῖς καὶ δίκην ἐπίστασαι
 νόμοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ πρὸς ἰσχύος χάριν·
 πάντες δέ σ' ἦσθοντ' οὐσαν Ἑλληνες σοφὴν
 540 καὶ δόξαν ἕσχεσ· εἰ δὲ γῆς ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις
 ὄροισιν ᾤκεις, οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν.
 εἶη δ' ἔμοιγε μήτε χρυσὸς ἐν δόμοις
 μήτ' Ὀρφέως κάλλιον ὑμνήσαι μέλος,
 εἰ μὴ πίσσημος ἢ τύχη γένοιτό μοι.
 545 τοσαῦτα μὲν σοι τῶν ἐμῶν πόνων πέρι
 ἔλεξ'. ἄμιλλαν γὰρ σὺ προύθηκας λόγων.
 ἂ δ' ἐς γάμους μοι βασιλικοὺς ὠνείδισας,
 ἐν τῷδε δείξω πρῶτα μὲν σοφὸς γεγώς,
 ἔπειτα σώφρων, εἶτα σοὶ μέγας φίλος
 550 καὶ παισὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν—ἀλλ' ἔχ' ἦσυχος.
 ἐπεὶ μετέστην δεῦρ' Ἰωλκίας χθονὸς
 πολλὰς ἐφέλκων συμφορὰς ἀμηχάνους,
 τί τοῦδ' ἂν εὐρημὶ ἠῦρον εὐτυχέστερον
 ἢ παῖδα γῆμαι βασιλέως φυγὰς γεγώς;
 555 οὐχ, ἦ σὺ κνίζη, σὸν μὲν ἐχθαίρων λέχος
 καινῆς δὲ νύμφης ἰμέρω πεπληγμένος
 οὐδ' εἰς ἄμιλλαν πολύτεκνον σπουδὴν ἔχων·
 ἄλις γὰρ οἱ γεγῶτες οὐδὲ μέμφομαι
 ἀλλ' ὡς, τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, οἰκοῖμεν καλῶς
 560 καὶ μὴ σπανίζοίμεσθα, γιγνώσκων ὅτι

MEDEA

too strict a reckoning on this point. So far as you *did* help me, you did well. But in return for saving me you got more than you gave, as I shall make clear. First, you now live among Greeks and not barbarians, and you understand justice and the rule of law, with no concession to force. All the Greeks have learned that you are clever, and you have won renown. But if you lived at the world's edge, there would be no talk of you. May I have neither gold in my house nor the power to sing songs sweeter than Orpheus' unless fame graces my lot!

Thus far I have spoken to you regarding my labors: for it was you who started this contest of words. As for your reproaches to me against my royal marriage, here I shall show, first, that I am wise, second, self-controlled, and third a great friend to you and my children.

Medea makes a gesture of impatience.

No! Hold your peace! When I first moved here from the land of Iolcus, bringing with me many misfortunes hard to deal with, what luckier find than this could I have made, marriage with the daughter of the king, though I was an exile? It was not—the point that seems to irk you—that I was weary of your bed and smitten with desire for a new bride, nor was I eager to rival others in the number of my children (we have enough already and I make no complaint) but my purpose was that we should live well—which is the main thing—and not be in want, knowing that

EURIPIDES

- πένητα φεύγει πᾶς τις ἐκποδῶν φίλον,
 παῖδας δὲ θρέψαιμ' ἀξίως δόμων ἐμῶν
 σπείρας τ' ἀδελφούς τοῖσιν ἐκ σέθεν τέκνοις
 ἐς ταὐτὸ θείην καὶ ξυναρτήσας γένος
 565 εὐδαιμονοίην. σοί τε γὰρ παίδων τί δεῖ;
 ἐμοὶ τε λύει τοῖσι μέλλουσιν τέκνοις
 τὰ ζῶντ' ὀνήσαι. μῶν βεβούλευμαι κακῶς;
 οὐδ' ἂν σὺ φαίης, εἴ σε μὴ κνίζοι λέχος.
 ἀλλ' ἐς τοσοῦτον ἤκεθ' ὥστ' ὀρθομένης
 570 εὐνής γυναιῖκες πάντ' ἔχειν νομίζετε,
 ἦν δ' αὖ γένηται ξυμφορά τις ἐς λέχος,
 τὰ λῶστα καὶ κάλλιστα πολεμιώτατα
 τίθεσθε. χρῆν γὰρ ἄλλοθέν ποθεν βροτοὺς
 παῖδας τεκνοῦσθαι, θῆλυ δ' οὐκ εἶναι γένος·
 575 χούτως ἂν οὐκ ἦν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις κακόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἰᾶσον, εὖ μὲν τούσδ' ἐκόσμησας λόγους·
 ὅμως δ' ἔμοιγε, κεί παρα γνώμην ἐρῶ,
 δοκεῖς προδοὺς σὴν ἄλοχον οὐ δίκαια δρᾶν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- ἦ πολλὰ πολλοῖς εἶμι διάφορος βροτῶν·
 580 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἄδικος ὦν σοφὸς λέγειν
 πέφυκε πλείστην ζημίαν ὀφλισκάνει·
 γλώσση γὰρ αἰχῶν τ' ἄδικ' εὖ περιστελεῖν
 τολμᾷ πανουργεῖν· ἔστι δ' οὐκ ἄγαν σοφός.
 ὡς καὶ σύ· μή νυν εἰς ἔμ' εὐσχήμων γένη
 585 λέγειν τε δεινός. ἐν γὰρ ἐκτενεῖ σ' ἔπος·

MEDEA

everyone goes out of his way to avoid a penniless friend. I wanted to raise the children in a manner befitting my house, to beget brothers to the children born from you, and put them on the same footing with them, so that by drawing the family into one I might prosper. For your part, what need have you of any more children? For me, it is advantageous to use future children to benefit those already born. Was this a bad plan? Not even you would say so if you were not galled by the matter of sex. But you women are so far gone in folly that if all is well in bed you think you have everything, while if some misfortune in that domain occurs, you regard as hateful your best and truest interests. Mortals ought to beget children from some other source, and there should be no female sex. Then mankind would have no trouble.

CHORUS LEADER

Jason, you have marshalled your arguments very skilfully, but I think, even though it may be imprudent to say so, that in abandoning your wife you are not doing right.

MEDEA

I realize I have far different views from the majority of mortals. To my mind, the plausible speaker who is a scoundrel incurs the greatest punishment. For since he is confident that he can cleverly cloak injustice with his words, his boldness stops at no knavery. Yet he is not as wise as all that. So it is with you. Do not, therefore, give me your specious arguments and oratory, for one word will lay you out:

561 φίλον Driver cl. *El.* 1131: φίλος C

573 τᾶρ Kirchhoff

575 χούτως a: οὔτως δ' b: οὔτως Blaydes

EURIPIDES

χρῆν σ', εἶπερ ἦσθα μὴ κακός, πείσαντά με
γαμῆν γάμον τόνδ', ἀλλὰ μὴ σιγῆ φίλων.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

καλῶς γ' ἄν, οἶμαι, τῶδ' ὑπηρέτεις λόγῳ,
εἴ σοι γάμον κατεῖπον, ἣτις οὐδὲ νῦν
590 τολμᾶς μεθεῖναι καρδίας μέγαν χόλον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὐ τοῦτό σ' εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ βάρβαρον λέχος
πρὸς γῆρας οὐκ εὐδοξον ἐξέβαινέ σοι.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, μὴ γυναικὸς οὐνεκα
γῆμαί με λέκτρα βασιλέων ἂ νῦν ἔχω,
595 ἀλλ', ὥσπερ εἶπον καὶ πάρος, σῶσαι θέλων
σέ, καὶ τέκνοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὁμοσπόρους
φῦσαι τυράννους παῖδας, ἔρυμα δῶμασιν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μή μοι γένοιτο λυπρὸς εὐδαίμων βίος
μηδ' ὄλβος ὅστις τὴν ἐμὴν κνίζοι φρένα.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

600 οἶσθ' ὡς μετεύξῃ καὶ σοφωτέρα φανῆ;
τὰ χρηστὰ μὴ σοι λυπρὰ φαίνεσθαί ποτε,
μηδ' εὐτυχούσα δυστυχῆς εἶναι δοκεῖν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ὑβρίζ', ἐπειδὴ σοὶ μὲν ἔστ' ἀποστροφή,
ἐγὼ δ' ἔρημος τήνδε φευξοῦμαι χθόνα.

600 μέτευξαι Elmsley

MEDEA

if you were not a knave, you ought to have gained my consent before making this marriage, not done it behind your family's back.

JASON

Fine support, I think, would you have given to my proposal if I had mentioned the marriage to you, seeing that even now you cannot bring yourself to lay aside the towering rage in your heart.

MEDEA

It was not this. You thought that in later years a barbarian wife would discredit you.

JASON

You may be quite sure of this, that it was not for the sake of a woman that I married the royal bride I now have, but as I have just said, because I wanted to save you and to beget princes as brothers to my children, to be a bulwark for the house.

MEDEA

A prosperous life that causes pain is no wish of mine, nor do I want any wealth that torments my heart!

JASON

Do you know how to change your prayer and show yourself the wiser? Pray that you may never consider advantage painful nor think yourself wretched when you are fortunate!

MEDEA

Go on, insult me! You have a refuge, but I go friendless into exile.

EURIPIDES

ΙΑΣΩΝ

605 αὐτὴ τάδ' εἶλον· μηδέν' ἄλλον αἰτιῶ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τί δρῶσα; μῶν γαμοῦσα καὶ προδοῦσά σε;

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ἀρὰς τυράννοις ἀνοσίους ἀρωμένη.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

καὶ σοῖς ἀραία γ' οὔσα τυγχάνω δόμοις.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ὡς οὐ κρινούμαι τῶνδέ σοι τὰ πλείονα.

610 ἀλλ', εἴ τι βούλη παισὶν ἢ σαυτῇ φυγῆς
 προσωφέλημα χρημάτων ἐμῶν λαβεῖν,
 λέγ' ὡς ἔτοιμος ἀφθόνῳ δοῦναι χερὶ
 ξένοις τε πέμπειν σύμβολ', οἳ δράσουσί σ' εὔ.
 καὶ ταῦτα μὴ θέλουσα μωρανεῖς, γύναι·
 615 λήξασα δ' ὀργῆς κερδανεῖς ἀμείνονα.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὔτ' ἂν ξένοισι τοῖσι σοῖς χρησαίμεθ' ἂν
 οὔτ' ἂν τι δεξαίμεσθα, μηδ' ἡμῖν δίδου·
 κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ' ὄνησιν οὐκ ἔχει.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ἀλλ' οὔν ἐγὼ μὲν δαίμονας μαρτύρομαι
 620 ὡς πάνθ' ὑπουργεῖν σοί τε καὶ τέκνοις θέλω·
 σοὶ δ' οὐκ ἀρέσκει τὰγάθ', ἀλλ' αὐθαδία
 φίλους ἀπωθῆ· τοιγὰρ ἀλγυνῇ πλέον.

MEDEA

JASON

You yourself chose that. You have no one else to blame.

MEDEA

How? By taking another wife and abandoning you?

JASON

By uttering unholy curses against the royal family.

MEDEA

Yes, and I am a curse to your house too.

JASON

I shall not argue any more of this case with you. But if you wish to get some of my money to help the children and yourself in exile, say the word, for I am ready to give with unstinting hand, and also to send tokens¹⁰ to my friends, who will treat you well. You would be a fool not to accept this offer, woman. Forget your anger and it will be the better for you.

MEDEA

I will accept no help from your friends nor will I take anything from you, so do not offer it. The gifts of a base man bring no benefit.

JASON

At any rate I call the gods to witness that I am willing to help you and the children all I can. But you refuse good treatment and obstinately rebuff your friends. This will only make your pain the greater.

¹⁰ The *sumbolon* is a knucklebone sawed in half and used to serve as a letter of introduction. The host can recognize someone sent to enjoy his hospitality by fitting the half he has with the guest's half.

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

χώρει· πόθῳ γὰρ τῆς νεοδμήτου κόρης
αἰρῆ χρονίζων δωμαίων ἐξώπιος.

625 νύμφευ· ἴσως γάρ—σὺν θεῶ δ' εἰρήσεται—
γαμεῖς τοιοῦτον ὥστε θρηνεῖσθαι γάμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ἔρωτες ὑπὲρ μὲν ἄγαν ἐλθόντες οὐκ εὐδοξίαν
630 οὐδ' ἀρετὰν παρέδωκαν ἀνδράσιν· εἰ δ' ἄλις ἔλθοι
Κύπρις, οὐκ ἄλλα θεὸς εὐχαρις οὕτως.
μήποτ', ὦ δέσποιν', ἐπ' ἐμοὶ χρυσέων
τόξων ἀφείης ἡμέρῳ
635 χρίσασ' ἄφυκτον οἰστόν.

ἀντ. α

στέργοι δέ με σωφροσύνα, δώρημα κάλλιστον
θεῶν·
μηδέ ποτ' ἀμφιλόγους ὀργὰς ἀκόρεστά τε νείκη
640 θυμὸν ἐκπλήξασ' ἑτέροις ἐπὶ λέκτροις
προσβάλοι δεινὰ Κύπρις, ἀποτολέμους δ'
εὐνὰς σεβίζουσ' ὀξύφρων
κρίνοι λέχη γυναικῶν.

στρ. β

ὦ πατρίς, ὦ δώματα, μὴ
δητ' ἀπολις γενοίμαν
τὸν ἀμηχανίας ἔχουσα
δυσπέρατον αἰῶ,

MEDEA

MEDEA

Go: it is clear that you are seized by longing for your new bride as you linger so long out of the palace! Go, play the bridegroom! For perhaps—and this will prove to be prophetic—you will make such a marriage as to cause you to weep.

Exit JASON by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Loves that come to us in excess bring no good name or goodness to men. If Aphrodite comes in moderation, no other goddess brings such happiness. Never, O goddess, may you smear with desire one of your ineluctable arrows and let it fly against my heart from your golden bow!

May moderation attend me, fairest gift of the gods! May dread Aphrodite never cast contentious wrath and insatiate quarreling upon me and madden my heart with love for a stranger's bed! But may she honor marriages that are peaceful and wisely determine whom we are to wed!

O fatherland, O house, may I never be bereft of my city, never have a life of helplessness, a cruel life, most pitiable

626 θρηνείσθαι Dodds: σ' ἀρνείσθαι C

634 ἀφείης Naber: ἐφείης fere C

648 αἰῶ Stinton: αἰῶν' C

EURIPIDES

οἰκτρότατόν <γ> ἀχέων.

- 650 θανάτῳ θανάτῳ πάρος δαμείην
ἀμέραν τάνδ' ἐξανύσασα· μό-
χθων δ' οὐκ ἄλλος ὑπερθευ ἦ
γὰς πατρίας στέρεσθαι.

ἀντ. β

- εἶδομεν, οὐκ ἐξ ἐτέρων
655 μῦθον ἔχω φράσασθαι·
σὲ γὰρ οὐ πόλις, οὐ φίλων τις
οἰκτιρεῖ παθοῦσαν
δεινότατον παθέων.
ἀχάριστος ὄλοιθ' ὄτῳ πάρεστιν
660 μὴ φίλους τιμᾶν καθαρᾶν ἀνοί-
ξαντα κληῖδα φρενῶν· ἐμοὶ
μὲν φίλος οὔ ποτ' ἔσται.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

Μήδεια, χαῖρε· τοῦδε γὰρ προοίμιον
κάλλιον οὐδεὶς οἶδε προσφωνεῖν φίλους.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 665 ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σύ, παῖ σοφοῦ Πανδίουος,
Αἰγεῦ. πόθεν γῆς τῆσδ' ἐπιστροφῆ πέδον;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

Φοίβου παλαιὸν ἐκλιπὼν χρηστήριον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τί δ' ὀμφαλὸν γῆς θεσπιωδὸν ἐστάλης;

649 <γ> Willink

657 οἰκτιρεῖ Wieseler: ὤκτειρε(ν) C

MEDEA

of woes! In death, O in death may I be brought low ere that, bringing my life's daylight to an end! Of troubles none is greater than to be robbed of one's native land.

We ourselves have seen it; it is not from others' report that we can tell this tale. No city, no friend will take pity on you who have suffered the most grievous of sufferings. May that man die unloved who cannot honor his friends, unlocking to them his honest mind! To me at any rate he shall never be friend.

Enter by Eisodos A AEGEUS, the aged king of Athens, in travelling costume.

AEGEUS

Medea, I wish you joy: no one knows a better way than this to address a friend.

MEDEA

Joy to you as well, Aegeus, son of wise Pandion! Where have you come from to be visiting the soil of this land?

AEGEUS

I have come from the ancient oracle of Phoebus.

MEDEA

Why did you go to earth's prophetic center?

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

παίδων ἐρευνῶν σπέρμ' ὅπως γένοιτό μοι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

670 πρὸς θεῶν, ἄπαις γὰρ δεῦρ' αἰεὶ τείνεις βίον;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν δαίμονός τινος τύχη.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

δάμαρτος οὔσης ἢ λέχους ἄπειρος ὢν;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

οὐκ ἐσμέν εὐνής ἄζυγες γαμηλίου.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τί δῆτα Φοῖβος εἶπέ σοι παίδων πέρι;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

675 σοφώτερ' ἢ κατ' ἄνδρα συμβαλεῖν ἔπη.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

θέμις μὲν ἡμᾶς χρησμὸν εἰδέναί θεοῦ;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

μάλιστ', ἐπεὶ τοι καὶ σοφῆς δεῖται φρενός.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τί δῆτ' ἔχρησε; λέξον, εἰ θέμις κλυεῖν.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

ἄσκοῦ με τὸν προύχοντα μὴ λῦσαι πόδα . . .

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

680 πρὶν ἂν τί δράσης ἢ τίν' ἐξίκη χθόνα;

MEDEA

AEGEUS

To inquire how I might get offspring.

MEDEA

Have you really lived so long a life without children?

AEGEUS

I am childless: it is the act of some god.

MEDEA

Have you a wife, or have you no experience of marriage?

AEGEUS

I am not without a wife to share my bed.

MEDEA

What then did Phoebus tell you about children?

AEGEUS

Words too wise for mortal to interpret.

MEDEA

Is it lawful for me to hear the response?

AEGEUS

Most certainly: it calls for a wise mind.

MEDEA

What then did the god say? Tell me, if it is lawful to hear.

AEGEUS

"Do not the wineskin's salient foot untie . . ."

MEDEA

Until you do what or come to what country?

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

πρὶν ἂν πατρώαν ἀδθις ἐστίαν μόλω.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σὺ δ' ὡς τί χρήζων τήνδε ναυστολεῖς χθόνα;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

Πιτθεύς τις ἔστι, γῆς ἄναξ Τροζηνίας.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

παῖς, ὡς λέγουσι, Πέλοπος, εὖσεβέστατος.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

685 *τούτῳ θεοῦ μάντευμα κοινῶσαι θέλω.*

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σοφὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ τρίβων τὰ τοιάδε.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

κάμοί γε πάντων φίλτατος δορυξένων.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἀλλ' εὐτυχοίης καὶ τύχοις ὅσων ἐρᾶς.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

τί γὰρ σὸν ὄμμα χρώς τε συντέτηχ' ὄδε;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

690 *Αἰγεῦ, κάκιστός ἐστὶ μοι πάντων πόσις.*

¹¹ Aegeus is bidden in the oracle's riddling terms not to have sexual intercourse before he reaches home. This oracle, which may be Euripides' own invention, clearly does not belong with the usual story, by which Aegeus has intercourse with Aethra, daugh-

MEDEA

AEGEUS

“. . . until you come to hearth and home again.”¹¹

MEDEA

And what were you in need of that you sailed to this land?

AEGEUS

There is a man named Pittheus, king of Trozen.

MEDEA

The son of Pelops and a man most pious, they say.

AEGEUS

It is with him that I wish to share the god's response.

MEDEA

The man is wise and experienced in such matters.

AEGEUS

What is more, he is closest of all my allies.

MEDEA

Well good luck attend you, and may you obtain what you desire!

AEGEUS

(*noticing Medea's distraught demeanor*) But why is your face dissolved in tears?

MEDEA

Aegeus, my husband is the basest of men.

ter of Pittheus, in Trozen and thus begets Theseus. For how could Aegeus beget a son if he violated the oracle's instructions? There is no indication in our play that Aegeus goes to Trozen from Corinth and some suggestion in 759-60 that he is bound directly for Athens.

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

τί φής; σαφῶς μοι σὰς φράσον δυσθυμίας.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἀδικεῖ μ' Ἰάσων οὐδὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ παθῶν.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

τί χρῆμα δράσας; φράζε μοι σαφέστερον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

γυναῖκ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν δεσπότην δόμων ἔχει.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

695 οὐ πον τετόλμηκ' ἔργον αἰσχιστον τόδε;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σάφ' ἴσθ'· ἄτιμοι δ' ἐσμὲν οἱ πρὸ τοῦ φίλοι.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

πότερον ἐρασθεῖς ἢ σὸν ἐχθαίρων λέχος;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μέγαν γ' ἔρωτα· πιστὸς οὐκ ἔφυ φίλοις.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

ἴτω νυν, εἶπερ, ὡς λέγεις, ἐστὶν κακός.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

700 ἀνδρῶν τυράννων κῆδος ἠράσθη λαβεῖν.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

δίδωσι δ' αὐτῷ τίς; πέραινέ μοι λόγον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

Κρέων, ὃς ἄρχει τῆσδε γῆς Κορινθίας.

MEDEA

AEGEUS

What is this you say? Tell me particulars of your unhappiness.

MEDEA

Jason wrongs me, though he has suffered no wrong from me.

AEGEUS

What has he done? Tell me more plainly.

MEDEA

He has put another woman over me as mistress of the house.

AEGEUS

Surely he has not dared to do such a shameful deed?

MEDEA

He has indeed. Once he loved me, but now I am cast off.

AEGEUS

Was it some passion, or did he grow tired of your bed?

MEDEA

A great passion. He has been unfaithful to his family.

AEGEUS

Pay him no mind then since, as you say, he is base.

MEDEA

His passion was to marry a king's daughter.

AEGEUS

Who has given his daughter to him? Tell me the rest.

MEDEA

Creon, who rules this land of Corinth.

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

συγγνωστὰ μέντ' ἤν σε λυπέισθαι, γυναί.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ὄλωλα· καὶ πρὸς γ' ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

705 πρὸς τοῦ; τόδ' ἄλλο καινὸν αὐ λέγεις κακόν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

Κρέων μ' ἐλαύνει φυγάδα γῆς Κορινθίας.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

ἐᾷ δ' Ἰάσων; οὐδὲ ταῦτ' ἐπήνεσα.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

λόγῳ μὲν οὐχί, καρτερεῖν δὲ βούλεται.

ἀλλ' ἄντομαί σε τῆσδε πρὸς γενειάδος

710 γονάτων τε τῶν σῶν ἱκεσία τε γίγνομαι,

οἴκτιρον οἴκτιρόν με τὴν δυσδαίμονα

καὶ μὴ μ' ἔρημον ἐκπεσοῦσαν εἰσίδης,

δέξαι δὲ χώρα καὶ δόμοις ἐφέστιον.

οὕτως ἔρωσ σοι πρὸς θεῶν τελεσφόρος

715 γένοιτο παίδων καὐτὸς ὄλβιος θάνοις.

εὐρημα δ' οὐκ οἶσθ' οἶον ἠῦρηκας τόδε·

παύσω γέ σ' ὄντ' ἄπαιδα καὶ παίδων γονὰς

σπεῖραί σε θήσω· τοιάδ' οἶδα φάρμακα.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

πολλῶν ἕκατι τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν,

717 γέ F. W. Schmidt; δέ C: v. del. Nauck

MEDEA

AEGEUS

But it is quite understandable, then, that you are distressed!

MEDEA

My life is ruined! Furthermore, I am being exiled from the country.

AEGEUS

By whom? This is yet another misfortune you speak of.

MEDEA

It is Creon who exiles me from Corinth.

AEGEUS

Does Jason accede to this? I do not approve of that either.

MEDEA

He pretends not to, but he is ready to put up with it.

Medea kneels before Aegeus in the posture of a suppliant.

But I beg you by your beard and by your knees and I make myself your suppliant: have pity, have pity on an unfortunate woman, and do not allow me to be cast into exile without a friend, but receive me into your land and your house as a suppliant. As you grant my request, so may your longing for children be brought to fulfillment by the gods, and may you yourself die happy! You do not know what a lucky find you have made in me. I will put an end to your childlessness and cause you to beget children, for I know the medicines to do it.

AEGEUS

Dear woman, for many reasons I am eager to grant you this

EURIPIDES

- 720 γύναι, πρόθυμός εἰμι, πρῶτα μὲν θεῶν,
 ἔπειτα παίδων ὧν ἐπαγγέλλη γονάς·
 ἐς τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ φροῦδός εἰμι πᾶς ἐγώ.
 οὔτω δ' ἔχει μοι· σοῦ μὲν ἐλθούσης χθόνα,
 πειράσομαί σου προξενεῖν δίκαιος ὢν.
- 725 τοσόνδε μέντοι σοι προσημαίνω, γύναι·
 ἐκ τῆσδε μὲν γῆς οὐ σ' ἄγειν βουλήσομαι,
 αὐτῇ δ' εἴανπερ εἰς ἐμούςς ἔλθης δόμους,
 μενεῖς ἄσυλος κοῦ σε μὴ μεθῶ τι.
 ἐκ τῆσδε δ' αὐτῇ γῆς ἀπαλλάσσου πόδα·
- 730 ἀναίτιος γὰρ καὶ ξένοις εἶναι θέλω.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλὰ πίστις εἰ γένοιτό μοι
 τούτων, ἔχοιμ' ἂν πάντα πρὸς σέθεν καλῶς.

ΛΙΓΕΤΣ

μῶν οὐ πέποιθας; ἢ τί σοι τὸ δυσχερές;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- πέποιθα· Πελίου δ' ἐχθρός ἐστὶ μοι δόμος
- 735 Κρέων τε. τούτοις ὀρκίοισι μὲν ζυγεῖς
 ἄγουσιν οὐ μεθεῖ' ἂν ἐκ γαίας ἐμέ·
 λόγοις δὲ συμβὰς καὶ θεῶν ἀνώμοτος
 φίλος γένοι' ἂν κἀπικηρυκέμασιν
 τάχ' ἂν πίθοιο· τὰμὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀσθενῆ,
- 740 τοῖς δ' ὄλβος ἐστὶ καὶ δόμος τυραννικός.

ΛΙΓΕΤΣ

πολλὴν ἔδειξας ἐν λόγοις προμηθίαν·
 ἀλλ', εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, δρᾶν τάδ' οὐκ ἀφίσταμαι.

MEDEA

favor, first, for the sake of the gods, then for the children you promise I will beget. For on that score I am utterly undone. But here is how matters stand with me. If you come to my country, I shall in justice try to act as your protector. This much, however, I tell you in advance: I will not consent to take you from this land. But if you manage by yourself to come to my house, you may stay there in safety, and I will never give you up to anyone. You must go on your own, then, from this land. I wish to be blameless in the eyes of my hosts as well.

MEDEA

It shall be so. But if you were to give me a promise of this, I would have all I could wish from you.

AEGEUS

Do you not trust me? What is it you find difficult?

MEDEA

I trust you. But Pelias' house is hostile to me, and Creon as well. If you are bound by an oath, you will not give me up to them when they come to take me out of the country. But if you have made an agreement in mere words and have not sworn by the gods, you might become their friend and comply with diplomatic requests. For I am weak, while they have wealth and royal power.

AEGEUS

You have shown much prudence in your speech. Well, if you like, I do not object to doing this. Not only is it safer for

⁷²⁵⁻⁶ om. II: 725-8 del. Kirchhoff

⁷³² ἔχοι τὰν Seyffert

⁷³⁵ τούτοις Wecklein: τ. δ' fere C

⁷³⁹ τάχ' Wytttenbach:

οὐκ C

⁷⁴¹ ἔδειξας Sigonius et Valkenaer: ἔλεξας C

EURIPIDES

ἔμοί τε γὰρ τάδ' ἐστὶν ἀσφαλέστερα,
 σκῆψίν τιν' ἐχθροῖς σοῖς ἔχοντα δεικνύναι,
 745 τὸ σόν τ' ἄραρε μᾶλλον· ἐξηγοῦ θεούς.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ὄμνυ πέδον Γῆς πατέρα θ' Ἥλιον πατρὸς
 τοῦμοῦ θεῶν τε συντιθεῖς ἅπαν γένος.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

τί χρῆμα δράσειν ἢ τί μὴ δράσειν; λέγε.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μήτ' αὐτὸς ἐκ γῆς σῆς ἔμ' ἐκβαλεῖν ποτε,
 750 μήτ', ἄλλος ἦν τις τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν ἄγειν
 χρήζῃ, μεθήσειν ζῶν ἐκουσίῳ τρόπῳ.

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

ὄμνυμι Γαῖαν Ἥλιον θ' ἀγνὸν σέλας
 θεούς τε πάντας ἐμμενεῖν ἅ σου κλύω.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἄρκεῖ τί δ' ὄρκῳ τῷδε μὴ ἴμμένων πάθοις;

ΑΙΓΕΤΣ

755 ἂ τοῖσι δυσσεβοῦσι γίγνεται βροτῶν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

χαίρων πορεύου· πάντα γὰρ καλῶς ἔχει.
 καγὰ πόλιν σὴν ὡς τάχιστ' ἀφίξομαι,
 πράξασ' ἂ μέλλω καὶ τυχοῦσ' ἂ βούλομαι.

752 Ἥλιον θ' ἀγνὸν σέλας a: λαμπρὸν ἡλίου τε φῶς b:
 λαμπρὸν θ' ἡλίου φάος c.

MEDEA

me to show your enemies that I have fair cause to refuse them but your own case is more secure. Name the gods I must swear by.

MEDEA

Swear by the plain of Earth, by Helios, my grandfather, and by the whole race of gods all together.

AEGEUS

To do what or to refrain from what? You must say.

MEDEA

That you yourself will never banish me from your land and that, if any of my enemies ask to take me, you will not willingly give me up as long as you live.

AEGEUS

I swear by Earth, by the holy light of Helios, and by all the gods that I will do as I have heard from your lips.

MEDEA

That is good. But what punishment do you call down on yourself if you do not abide by your oath?

AEGEUS

The punishment that befalls mortals who are godless.

MEDEA

Go your way with joy! For all is well, and I shall come to your city as soon as I can, when I have accomplished what I intend and gained what I wish.

Exit AEGEUS by Eisodos A.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 760 ἀλλά σ' ὁ Μαΐας πομπαῖος ἀναξ
 πελάσειε δόμοις ὧν τ' ἐπίνοιαν
 σπεύδεις κατέχων πράξειας, ἐπεὶ
 γενναῖος ἀνὴρ,
 Αἰγεῦ, παρ' ἐμοὶ δεδόκησαι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 765 ὦ Ζεῦ Δίκη τε Ζηνὸς Ἥλιου τε φῶς,
 νῦν καλλίνικοι τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι,
 γενησόμεσθα κεῖς ὁδὸν βεβήκαμεν,
 νῦν ἐλπίς ἐχθροὺς τοὺς ἐμοὺς τείσειν δίκην.
 οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἧ μάλιστ' ἐκάμνομεν
 λιμὴν πέφανται τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
 770 ἐκ τοῦδ' ἀναψόμεσθα πρυμνήτην κάλων,
 μολόντες ἄστυ καὶ πόλισμα Παλλάδος.
 ἤδη δὲ πάντα τὰμά σοι βουλευμάτα
 λέξω· δέχου δὲ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λόγους.
 πέμψασ' ἐμῶν τιν' οἰκετῶν Ἰάσωνα
 775 ἐς ὄψιν ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἐμὴν αἰτήσομαι.
 μολόντι δ' αὐτῷ μαλθακοὺς λέξω λόγους,
 ὡς καὶ δοκεῖ μοι ταῦτά καὶ καλῶς γαμῆ
 γάμους τυράννων οὓς προδοὺς ἡμᾶς ἔχει,
 καὶ ξύμφορ' εἶναι καὶ καλῶς ἐγνωσμένα.
 780 παῖδας δὲ μείναι τοὺς ἐμοὺς αἰτήσομαι,
 οὐχ ὡς λιποῦσ' ἂν πολεμίας ἐπὶ χθονὸς
 ἐχθροῖσι παῖδας τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι,
 ἀλλ' ὡς δόλοισι παῖδα βασιλέως κτάνω.

MEDEA

CHORUS LEADER

May Hermes, Maia's son, patron of travellers, bring you safely to your house, and may you accomplish what you have set your heart on, Aegeus, since in my eyes you are a generous man!

MEDEA

O Zeus and Zeus's justice, O light of the sun, now, my friends, I shall be victorious over my foes: I have set my foot on the path. Now I may confidently expect that my enemies will pay the penalty. For this man, at the very point where I was most in trouble, has appeared as a harbor for my plans: to him will I tie my stern cable when I go to the city of Pallas Athena.

Now I shall reveal to you my entire design. Hear, then, words that will give you no pleasure. I shall send one of my servants and ask Jason to come to see me. When he arrives, I shall speak soothing words to him, saying that I hold the same opinion as he, that the royal marriage he has made by abandoning me is well made, that these are beneficial and good decisions. I shall ask that the children be allowed to stay, not with the thought that I might leave them behind on hostile soil for my enemies to insult, but so that I may

767 *νῦν* Lenting: *νῦν δ'* C

777 *ταῦτά* Barnes: *ταῦτα* C *γαμεῖ* Bolkestein: *ἔχει* C

781 *λιποῦσ' ἄν* Elmsley: *λιποῦσα* C

- 785 πέμψω γὰρ αὐτοὺς δῶρ' ἔχοντας ἐν χεροῖν,
 [νύμφη φέροντας, τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα.,]
 λεπτόν τε πέπλον καὶ πλόκον χρυσήλατον·
 κᾶνπερ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἀμφιθῆ' χροῖ,
 κακῶς ὀλεῖται πᾶς θ' ὃς ἂν θίγη κόρης·
 τοιοῖσδε χρίσω φαρμάκοις δωρήματα.
- 790 ἐνταῦθα μέντοι τόνδ' ἀπαλλάσσω λόγον.
 ᾧμωξα δ' οἶον ἔργον ἔστ' ἐργαστέον
 τοῦντεῦθεν ἡμῖν· τέκνα γὰρ κατακτενῶ
 τᾶμ'· οὔτις ἔστιν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται·
 δόμον τε πάντα συγχέασ' Ἰάσονος
- 795 ἔξειμι γαίης, φιλτάτων παίδων φόνον
 φεύγουσα καὶ τλᾶσ' ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον.
 οὐ γὰρ γελάσθαι τλητὸν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι.
 ἴτω· τί μοι ζῆν κέρδος; οὔτε μοι πατρὶς
 οὔτ' οἶκος ἔστιν οὔτ' ἀποστροφή κακῶν.
- 800 ἡμάρτανον τόθ' ἠνίκ' ἐξελίμπανον
 δόμους πατρῶους, ἀνδρὸς Ἑλληνοσ λόγοις
 πεισθεῖσ', ὃς ἡμῖν σὺν θεῷ τείσει δίκην.
 οὔτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γὰρ παῖδας ὄψεται ποτε
 ζῶντας τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτε τῆς νεοζύγου
- 805 νύμφης τεκνώσει παῖδ', ἐπεὶ κακὴν κακῶς
 θανεῖν σφ' ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐμοῖσι φαρμάκοις.
 μηδεῖς με φαύλην κάσθενῆ νομιζέτω
 μηδ' ἠσυχαίαν, ἀλλὰ θατέρου τρόπου,
 βαρεῖαν ἐχθροῖς καὶ φίλοισιν εὐμενῆ·
- 810 τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων εὐκλεέστατος βίος.

MEDEA

kill the princess by guile. I shall send them bearing gifts, [bearing them to the bride so as not to be exiled,] a finely woven gown and a diadem of beaten gold. If she takes this finery and puts it on, she will die a painful death, and likewise anyone who touches her: with such poisons will I smear these gifts.

This subject, however, I now leave behind. Ah me, I groan at what a deed I must do next! I shall kill my children: there is no one who can rescue them. When I have utterly confounded the whole house of Jason, I shall leave the land, in flight from the murder of my own dear sons, having committed a most unholy deed. The laughter of one's enemies is unendurable, my friends. Let that be as it will. What do I gain by living? I have no fatherland, no house, and no means to turn aside misfortune. My mistake was when I left my father's house, persuaded by the words of a Greek. This man—a god being my helper—will pay for what he has done to me. He shall never from this day see his children by me alive, nor will he have children by his new bride since that wretch must die a wretched death by my poisons. Let no one think me weak, contemptible, untroublesome. No, quite the opposite, hurtful to foes, to friends kindly. Such persons live a life of greatest glory.

785 om. a, del. Valckenaer cl. 940, 943, 950

798-9 del. Leo

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπέπερ ἡμῖν τόνδ' ἐκοίνωσας λόγον,
σέ τ' ὠφελεῖν θέλουσα καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
ξυλλαμβάνουσα δρᾶν σ' ἀπεννέπω τάδε.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως; σοὶ δὲ συγγνώμη λέγειν
815 τὰδ' ἔστί, μὴ πάσχουσαν, ὡς ἐγώ, κακῶς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα δηχθεῖη πόσις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' ἂν γένοιό γ' ἀθλιωτάτη γυνή.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἴτω· περισσοὶ πάντες οὖν μέσῳ λόγοι.
820 ἄλλ' εἶα χῶρει καὶ κόμιζ' Ἰάσονα
(ἐς πάντα γὰρ δὴ σοὶ τὰ πιστὰ χρώμεθα)
λέξεως δὲ μηδὲν τῶν ἐμοὶ δεδογμένων,
εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπότηαις γυνή τ' ἔφυς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

Ἐρεχθεΐδαι τὸ παλαιὸν ὄλβιοι
825 καὶ θεῶν παῖδες μακάρων, ἱερᾶς
χώρας ἀπορθήτου τ' ἄπο, φερβόμενοι
κλεινοτάταν σοφίαν, αἰεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου
830 βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς αἰθέρος, ἔνθα ποθ' ἀγνάς

MEDEA

CHORUS LEADER

Since you have shared this plan with me, and since I wish to help you and uphold the laws of society, I urge you not to do this deed.

MEDEA

It cannot be otherwise. I excuse you for speaking thus since you have not suffered as I have.

CHORUS LEADER

Yet will you bring yourself to kill your own offspring, woman?

MEDEA

It is the way to hurt my husband most.

CHORUS LEADER

And for yourself to become the most wretched of women.

MEDEA

Be that as it may. Till then all talk is superfluous.

(*to the Nurse*) But you, go and fetch Jason (for I use your service on all errands of trust). Tell him nothing of my intentions, if you are loyal to your mistress and a woman.

Exit Nurse by Eisodos B, MEDEA into the house.

CHORUS

From ancient times the sons of Erechtheus have been favored; they are children of the blessed gods sprung from a holy land never pillaged by the enemy. They feed on wisdom most glorious, always stepping gracefully through

EURIPIDES

έννέα Πιερίδας Μούσας λέγουσι
ξανθὰν Ἀρμονίαν φυτεῦσαι·

ἀντ. α

- 835 τοῦ καλλινάου τ' ἐπὶ Κηφισοῦ ῥοαῖς
τὰν Κύπριν κλήζουσιν ἀφυσσαμέναν
χώρας καταπνεῦσαι μετρίους ἀνέμων
840 ἀέρας ἠδυνπούους· αἰεὶ δ' ἐπιβαλλομέναν
χαίταισιν εὐώδη ῥοδέων πλόκον ἀνθέων
τῆ Σοφίᾳ παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἔρωτας,
845 παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς.

στρ. β

- πῶς οὖν ἱερῶν ποταμῶν
ἢ πόλις ἢ θεῶν
πόμπιμός σε χώρα
τὰν παιδολέτειραν ἔξει,
850 τὰν οὐχ ὀσίαν, μετ' ἀστῶν;
σκέψαι τεκέων πλαγάν,
σκέψαι φόνον οἶον αἶρη.
μή, πρὸς γονάτων σε πάν-
τα πάντως ἱκετεύομεν,
855 τέκνα φονεύσης.

ἀντ. β

- πόθεν θράσος ἢ φρενὸς ἢ
χειρὶ †τέκνων† σέθεν
καρδία τε λήψη
δεινὰν προσάγουσα τόλμαν;
860 πῶς δ' ὄμματα προσβαλοῦσα
τέκνοις ἄδακρυν μοῖραν

MEDEA

the bright air, where once, it is said, the nine Pierian Muses gave birth to fair-haired Harmonia.

Men celebrate in song how Aphrodite, filling her pail at the streams of the fair-flowing Cephisus, blew down upon the land temperate and sweet breezes. And ever dressing her hair with a fragrant chaplet of roses she sends the Loves to sit at Wisdom's side, joint workers in every kind of excellence.

How then shall this city of holy rivers or this land that escorts its gods in procession lodge you, the killer of your children, stained with their blood, in the company of her citizens? Think on the slaying of your children, think what slaughter you are committing! Do not, we beseech you by your knees and in every way we can, do not kill your children!

How will you summon up the strength of purpose or the courage of hand and heart to dare this dreadful deed? When you have turned your eyes upon your children, how

838 *χώρας* Reiske: *χώραν* C

840 *αέρας ἠδυνπνόους* Page: *ἠδυνπνόους αὔρας* C

847 *θεῶν* Kovacs: *φίλων* C

850 *ἀστῶν* Jacobs: *ἄλλων* C

857 *τόνον* Willink: fort. *μένος*

EURIPIDES

σχήσεις φόνου; οὐ δυνάσῃ,
 παίδων ἰκετᾶν πιτνόν-
 των, τέγξαι χέρα φοινίαν
 865 τλάμοι θυμῶ.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ἦκω κελευσθείς· καὶ γὰρ οὔσα δυσμενῆς
 οὐ τᾶν ἀμάρτοις τοῦδέ γ', ἀλλ' ἀκούσομαι·
 τί χρῆμα βούλη καινὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ, γύναι;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

Ἰάσον, αἰτοῦμαί σε τῶν εἰρημένων
 870 συγγνώμον' εἶναι· τὰς δ' ἐμὰς ὀργὰς φέρειν
 εἰκός σ', ἐπεὶ νῶν πόλλ' ὑπέργασται φίλα.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐμαυτῇ διὰ λόγων ἀφικόμην
 κάλοιδόρησα· Σχετλία, τί μαίνομαι
 καὶ δυσμεναίνω τοῖσι βουλευουσιν εὔ,
 875 ἐχθρὰ δὲ γαίας κοιράνοις καθίσταμαι
 πόσει θ', ὃς ἡμῖν δρᾷ τὰ συμφορώτατα,
 γήμας τύραννον καὶ κασιγνήτους τέκνοις
 ἐμοῖς φυτεύων; οὐκ ἀπαλλαχθήσομαι
 θυμοῦ—τί πάσχω;—θεῶν ποριζόντων καλῶς;
 880 οὐκ εἰσὶ μὲν μοι παῖδες, οἶδα δὲ χθόνα
 φεύγοντας ἡμᾶς καὶ σπανίζοντας φίλων;
 ταῦτ' ἐννοηθεῖς ἡσθόμην ἀβουλίαν
 πολλὴν ἔχουσα καὶ μάτην θυμουμένη.
 νῦν οὖν ἐπαινῶ σωφρονεῖν τέ μοι δοκεῖς
 885 κῆδος τόδ' ἡμῖν προσλαβών, ἐγὼ δ' ἄφρων,
 ἧ χρῆν μετεῖναι τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων

MEDEA

will you behold their fate with tearless eye? When your children fall as suppliants at your feet, you will not be hard-hearted enough to drench your hand in their blood.

Enter MEDEA from the house, then JASON by Eisodes B accompanied by the Nurse.

JASON

I have come at your bidding. For though you hate me, you will not fail to obtain a hearing from me. What further do you wish from me, woman?

MEDEA

Jason, I beg you to forgive what I said: it is reasonable for you to put up with my anger since many acts of love have passed between us in the past. I have talked with myself and reproached myself thus: "Foolish creature, why am I raving and fighting those who arrange things for the best? Why am I making myself an enemy to the rulers of this land and to my husband, who is acting in my interests by marrying a princess and begetting brothers for my children? Shall I not cease from my wrath (what has come over me?) when the gods are being so kind? Do I not have the children? Is it not true that we are exiles and in need of friends?" These reflections have made me realize that I was being very foolish and was being angry for nothing. So now I approve and I agree that you are acting with sober sense by contracting this marriage alliance for us. It is I who am the fool, since I ought to be sharing in your plans,

EURIPIDES

- καὶ ξυμπεραίνειν καὶ παρεστάναι λέχει
 νύμφην τε κηδεύουσας ἤδυσθαι σέθεν.
 ἀλλ' ἐσμὲν οἷόν ἐσμεν, οὐκ ἐρῶ κακόν,
 890 γυναικες· οὐκ οὖν χρῆν σ' ὁμοιοῦσθαι φύσιν,
 οὐδ' ἀντιτείνειν νήπι' ἀντὶ νηπίων.
 παριέμεσθα καὶ φαμεν κακῶς φρονεῖν
 τότ', ἀλλ' ἄμεινον νῦν βεβούλευμαι τάδε.
 ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, δεῦρο, λείπετε στέγας,
 895 ἐξέλθετ', ἀσπάσασθε καὶ προσείπατε
 πατέρα μεθ' ἡμῶν καὶ διαλλάχθηθ' ἅμα
 τῆς πρόσθεν ἔχθρας ἐς φίλους μητρὸς μέτα·
 σπονδαὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ μεθέστηκεν χόλος.
 λάβεσθε χειρὸς δεξιᾶς· οἶμοι, κακῶν
 900 ὡς ἐννοοῦμαι δὴ τι τῶν κεκρυμμένων.
 ἄρ', ὦ τέκν', οὕτω καὶ πολὺν ζῶντες χρόνον
 φίλην ὀρέξετ' ὠλένην; τάλαιν' ἐγώ,
 ὡς ἀρτίδακρὺς εἶμι καὶ φόβου πλέα.
 χρόνῳ δὲ νεῖκος πατρὸς ἐξαιρουμένη
 905 ὄψιν τέρειναν τήνδ' ἔπλησα δακρύων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κάμοι κατ' ὄσσων χλωρὸν ὠρμήθη δάκρυ·
 καὶ μὴ προβαίη μείζον ἢ τὸ νῦν κακόν.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- αἰνῶ, γύναι, τάδ', οὐδ' ἐκεῖνα μέμφομαι·
 εἰκὸς γὰρ ὄργας θῆλυ ποιεῖσθαι γένος
 910 γάμου †παρεμπολῶντος† ἀλλοίου πόσει.
 ἀλλ' ἐς τὸ λῶον σὸν μεθέστηκεν κέαρ,

MEDEA

helping you carry them out, standing by the marriage bed, and taking joy in tending to your bride. Well, we women are, I will not say bad creatures, but we are what we are. So you ought not to imitate our nature or return our childishness with childishness. I give in: I admit that I was foolish then, but now I have taken a better view of the matter.

Children, children, come here, leave the house, come out!

The children enter from the house with the Tutor.

Greet your father, speak to him with me, and join your mother in making an end to our former hostility against one dear to us! We have made a truce, and our wrath has vanished. Take his right hand. Ah, how I think of something the future keeps hid! My children, will you continue all your lives long to stretch out your dear hands so? Unhappy me! How prone to tears I am, how full of foreboding! And as I now at long last make up the quarrel with your father, my tender eyes are filled with tears.

CHORUS LEADER

(darkly) From my eye too a pale tear starts. May misfortune go no further than it has!

JASON

I approve this, woman. Nor do I blame your earlier resentment. It is natural for a woman to get angry when a marriage of a different sort presents itself to her husband. But your thoughts have changed for the better, and though it

888 *νύμφη* Verrall 890 *φύσω* Stadtmüller cl. *Andr.* 354:
κακοῖς C 894 *δεῦρο* Elmsley: *δεῦτε* C
910 fort. *παρεμπεισόντος*

EURIPIDES

ἔγνωσ δὲ τὴν νικῶσαν, ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ,
βουλὴν γυναικὸς ἔργα ταῦτα σῶφρονος.

915 ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, οὐκ ἀφροντίστως πατήρ
πολλὴν ἔθηκε σὺν θεοῖς σωτηρίαν·

οἶμαι γὰρ ὑμᾶς τῆσδε γῆς Κορινθίας
τὰ πρῶτ' ἔσεσθαι σὺν κασιγνήτοις ἔτι.
ἀλλ' αὐξάνεσθε· τᾶλλα δ' ἐξεργάζεται
πατήρ τε καὶ θεῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν εὐμενής.

920 ἴδοιμι δ' ὑμᾶς εὐτραφεῖς ἠβῆς τέλος
μολόντας, ἐχθρῶν τῶν ἐμῶν ὑπερτέρους·

αὕτη, τί χλωροῖς δακρύοις τέγγεις κόρας,
στρέψασα λευκὴν ἔμπαλι παρηίδα,
κοῦκ ἀσμένη τόνδ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχῃ λόγον;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

925 οὐδέν· τέκνων τῶνδ' ἐννοουμένη πέρι.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

929 τί δή, τάλαινα, τοῖσδ' ἐπιστένεις τέκνοις;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

930 ἔτικτον αὐτούς· ζῆν δ' ὅτ' ἐξηύχου τέκνα,

931 ἐσῆλθέ μ' οἶκτος εἰ γενήσεται τάδε.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

926 θάρσει νυν· εὖ γὰρ τῶνδε θήσομαι πέρι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

δράσω τάδ'· οὔτοι σοῖς ἀπιστήσω λόγους·

928 γυνὴ δὲ θῆλυ καπὶ δακρύοις ἔφν.

915 σωτηρίαν a: προμηθίαν b

MEDEA

took time, you have recognized the superior plan. These are the acts of a prudent woman.

Children, your father has given anxious thought and has gained for you—with the gods' help—complete security. I think that some day with your new brothers you will hold the very first place in the land of Corinth. But grow to manhood. The rest your father will see to, with the help of whatever god it is that smiles on him. May I see you as fine strapping lads coming to young manhood, victorious over my enemies!

Medea turns away weeping.

You there, why do you dampen your eyes with pale tears and turn your white cheek away, and why are you not pleased to hear these words from me?

MEDEA

It is nothing. I was thinking about the children.

JASON

But why, poor soul, do you lament over these children?

MEDEA

I gave them birth, and when you prayed that they might live, I felt pity for them wondering whether this would be.

JASON

Have no fear! I shall take good care of that!

MEDEA

I shall do as you say: I will not distrust your words. Yet a woman is by nature soft and prone to tears.

923 del. Hartung cl. 1148

929-31 post 925 trai. Ladewig:

vide Dyson, *CQ* 38 (1988), 324-7

EURIPIDES

- 932 ἄλλ' ὦνπερ οὔνεκ' εἰς ἔμοῦς ἤκεις λόγους,
τὰ μὲν λέλεκται, τῶν δ' ἐγὼ μνησθήσομαι.
ἐπεὶ τυράννοις γῆς μ' ἀποστείλαι δοκεῖ
- 935 (κάμοι τάδ' ἐστὶ λῶστα, γινώσκω καλῶς,
μήτ' ἐμποδῶν σοὶ μήτε κοιράνοις χθονὸς
ναίειν· δοκῶ γὰρ δυσμενῆς εἶναι δόμοις),
ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐκ γῆς τῆσδ' ἀπαροῦμεν φυγῆ,
παῖδες δ' ὅπως ἂν ἐτραφῶσι σῆ χειρὶ,
- 940 αἰτοῦ Κρέοντα τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

οὐκ οἶδ' ἂν εἰ πείσαιμι, πειρᾶσθαι δὲ χρή.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σὺ δ' ἀλλὰ σὴν κέλευσον ἄντεσθαι πατρὸς
γυναῖκα παῖδας τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

μάλιστα, καὶ πείσειν γε δοξάζω σφ' ἐγώ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- 945 εἶπερ γυναικῶν <γ'> ἐστὶ τῶν ἄλλων μία.
συλλήψομαι δὲ τοῦδέ σοι καγὼ πόνον·
πέμψω γὰρ αὐτῇ δῶρ' ἃ καλλιστεύεται
τῶν νῦν ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν, οἶδ' ἐγώ, πολὺ
[λεπτὸν τε πέπλον καὶ πλόκον χρυσήλατον]
- 950 παῖδας φέροντας. ἀλλ' ὅσον τάχος χρεῶν
κόσμον κομίζειν δεῦρο προσπόλων τινά.

MEDEA

But of the reasons for your coming to talk to me, some have been spoken of, others I shall mention now. The rulers of this land have resolved to exile me—and it is all for the best for me, I am well aware, that I not stay where I am in your way or that of the country's rulers, for I am thought to be an enemy to this house. Therefore I for my part shall leave this land in exile. But in order that the children may be raised by you, beg Creon that they not be sent into exile.

JASON

I don't know whether I shall win him over, but I must try.

MEDEA

Well, then, tell your wife to ask her father that the children not be exiled.

JASON

Most certainly, and I think I shall persuade her.

MEDEA

Yes, if she is a woman like the rest. But I too shall lend a hand in this. By the hand of my children I shall send her gifts, gifts I know well are more beautiful by far than any now among mortals [a finely woven gown and a diadem of beaten gold]. (*to her servants*) One of you servants, quick, bring the raiment out to me!

One of the servants goes into the house.

926 τῶνδε θήσομαι a: τῶνδ' ἐγὼ θήσω b

942 ἀντεσθαι Weidner: αἰτεῖσθαι C

945 Medaeae trib. a: Iasoni contin. b: om. c <γ'> Herwerden

949 del. Bothe cl. 786

EURIPIDES

- εὐδαιμονήσει δ' οὐχ ἔν ἀλλὰ μυρία,
 ἀνδρός τ' ἀρίστου σοῦ τυχοῦσ' ὀμεννέτου
 κекτημένη τε κόσμον ὄν ποθ' Ἥλιος
 955 πατρὸς πατῆρ δίδωσιν ἐκγόνοισιν οἷς.
 λάζυσθε φερνὰς τάσδε, παῖδες, ἐς χέρας
 καὶ τῇ τυράννῳ μακαρία νύμφη δότε
 φέροντες· οὔτοι δῶρα μεμπτὰ δέξεται.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- τί δ', ὦ ματαία, τῶνδε σὰς κενοῖς χέρας;
 960 δοκεῖς σπανίζειν δῶμα βασιλείου πέπλων,
 δοκεῖς δὲ χρυσοῦ; σῶζε, μὴ δίδου τάδε.
 εἶπερ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἀξιοὶ λόγου τινὸς
 γυνή, προθήσει χρημάτων, σάφ' οἶδ' ἐγώ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- μή μοι σύ· πείθειν δῶρα καὶ θεοὺς λόγος·
 965 χρυσὸς δὲ κρείστων μυρίων λόγων βροτοῖς.
 κείνης ὁ δαίμων [κείνα νῦν αὖξει θεός,
 νέα τυραννεί]. τῶν δ' ἐμῶν παίδων φυγὰς
 ψυχῆς ἀν ἀλλαξαίμεθ', οὐ χρυσοῦ μόνον.
 ἀλλ', ὦ τέκν', εἰσελθόντε πλουσίους δόμους
 970 πατρὸς νέαν γυναῖκα, δεσπότην δ' ἐμήν,
 ἱκετεύετ', ἐξαιτείσθε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα,
 κόσμον διδόντες· τοῦδε γὰρ μάλιστα δεῖ,
 ἐς χεῖρ' ἐκείνην δῶρα δέξασθαι τάδε.
 ἴθ' ὡς τάχιστα· μητρί δ' ὦν ἐρᾶ τυχεῖν
 975 εὐάγγελοι γένοισθε πράξαντες καλῶς.

MEDEA

(to Jason) She will have not one happiness but countless, getting in you an excellent husband to share her bed and possessing finery which my grandfather Helios gave to his descendants.

The servant returns with the gifts.

Take this bridal dowry, children, into your hands. Take and give it to the happy royal bride. It will be no unwelcome gift she receives.

JASON

Silly woman, why do you deprive yourself of these things? Do you think the royal house has need of gowns or gold? Keep them, don't give them away! For if my wife holds me in any regard, she will value my wishes more highly than wealth, I am quite sure.

MEDEA

Not a word! They say gifts win over even the gods, and gold is more to mortals than ten thousand words. Hers is the power we must propitiate [heaven is enhancing her lot, she is young and on the throne]. And to free my children from exile I would give my life, not merely gold.

Now, children, when you have entered the rich palace, entreat your father's new wife, my mistress, and beg her that you not be exiled. And give her the finery: this is the most important thing, that she receive the gifts into her hands. Go with all speed. And may you have success and bring back to your mother the good news she longs to hear!

955 ἐκγόνους ἐμός F. W. Schmidt

966-7 κείνα . . . τυραννεί del. Nauck

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

νῦν ἐλπίδες οὐκέτι μοι παίδων ζόας,
 οὐκέτι· στείχουσι γὰρ ἐς φόνον ἤδη.
 δέξεται νύμφα χρυσέων ἀναδευμάτων
 δέξεται δύστανος ἄταν·

980 ξανθῆ δ' ἀμφὶ κόμα θήσει τὸν Ἄϊδα
 κόσμον αὐτὰ χερσῶν.

ἀντ. α

πέσει χάρις ἀμβρόσιός τ' αὐγὰ πέπλον
 χρυσότευκτόν <τε> στέφανον περιθέσθαι·

985 νερτέροις δ' ἤδη πάρα νυμφοκομήσει.
 τοῖον εἰς ἔρκος πεσεῖται
 καὶ μοῖραν θανάτου δύστανος· ἄταν δ'
 οὐχ ὑπεκφεύζεται.

στρ. β

990 σὺ δ', ὦ τάλαν, ὦ κακόννυμφε
 κηδεμῶν τυράνων,
 παισὶν οὐ κατειδῶς
 ὄλεθρον βιοτῆ προσάγεις ἀλόχῳ
 τε σῆ στυγερόν θάνατον.

995 δύστανε, μοίρας ὅσον παροίχῃ.

ἀντ. β

μεταστένομαι δὲ σὸν ἄλγος,
 ὦ τάλαινα παίδων
 μᾶτερ, ἃ φονεύσεις
 τέκνα νυμφιδίων ἔνεκεν λεχέων,
 1000 ἃ σοι προλιπὼν ἀνόμῳς

MEDEA

Exit JASON and children, accompanied by the Tutor and the Nurse, by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Now no more can I hope that the children shall live, no more. For already they are walking the road to murder. The bride will accept, will accept, unhappy woman, ruin in the form of a golden diadem; about her fair hair with her own hand she will place the finery of Death.

Their charm and heavenly gleam will entice her to put on the gown and the circlet of fashioned gold. But the bridal bed she lies in will be with the dead. Such is the snare, such the death, she will fall into. She will not escape destruction.

And you, unlucky bridegroom, married into the house of kings, all unwitting you bring destruction upon your children's life and upon your bride a dreadful death. Unhappy man, how wrong you were about your destiny!

Your sorrows next I mourn, unhappy mother of the children, who mean to kill your sons because of your marriage bed. Your husband wickedly abandoned it and now lives

982 *χεροῖν* Nauck: *χεροῖν λαβοῦσα* C

983 *πέπλον* Elmsley: *πέπλων* a: *πέπλου* b

984 <τϵ> Reiske

EURIPIDES

ἄλλα ξυνοικεῖ πόσις συνεύνω.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

δέσποιν', ἀφείνται παῖδες οἷδε σοι φυγῆς,
καὶ δῶρα νύμφη βασιλῆς ἀσμένη χεροῖν
ἐδέξατ'· εἰρήνη δὲ τὰ κεῖθεν τέκνοις.

ἔα.

1005 τί συγχυθεῖσ' ἔστηκας ἠνίκ' εὐτυχεῖς;
[τί σὴν ἔστρεψας ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα
κοῦκ ἀσμένη τόνδ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχῃ λόγον;]

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

αἰαῖ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τάδ' οὐ ξυνωδὰ τοῖσιν ἐξηγγελμένοις.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

αἰαῖ μάλ' αὖθις.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

1010 οὐκ οἶδα, δόξης δ' ἐσφάλην εὐαγγέλου;
μῶν τιν' ἀγγέλλων τύχην

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἤγγειλας οἶ' ἤγγειλας· οὐ σὲ μέμφομαι.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τί δαὶ κατηφὲς ὄμμα καὶ δακρυρροεῖς;

1006-7 del. Valckenaer cl. 923-4.

1012 κατηφὲς Cobet cl. Hcl. 633: -φεῖς C

MEDEA

with another as his wife.

Enter TUTOR with the children by Eisodos B.

TUTOR

My lady, your sons here have been reprieved from exile, and the princess has been pleased to take the gifts into her hands. From that quarter the children have peace.

Medea turns away and weeps.

Ah! Why are you standing in distress when your fortune is good? [Why have you turned your face away and why do you show no pleasure at this news?]

MEDEA

Alas!

TUTOR

This is not in tune with my tidings.

MEDEA

Alas once more!

TUTOR

Do I in ignorance report some mishap and wrongly think my news is good?

MEDEA

You have reported what you have reported. It is not you I blame.

TUTOR

Why then is your face downcast? Why do you weep?

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

πολλή μ' ἀνάγκη, πρέσβυ· ταῦτα γὰρ θεοὶ
κἀγὼ κακῶς φρονουῖς' ἐμηχανησάμην.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

1015 θάρσει· κάτει τοι καὶ σὺ πρὸς τέκνων ἔτι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἄλλους κατὰξω πρόσθεν ἢ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὔτοι μόνη σὺ σῶν ἀπεζύγης τέκνων
κούφως φέρειν χρῆ θνητὸν ὄντα συμφοράς.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

1020 δράσω τάδ'· ἀλλὰ βαῖνε δωμάτων ἔσω
καὶ παισὶ πόρσυν' οἷα χρῆ καθ' ἡμέραν.
ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, σφῶν μὲν ἔστι δὴ πόλις
καὶ δῶμ', ἐν ᾧ λιπόντες ἀθλίαν ἐμέ
οἰκήσεται αἰεὶ μητρὸς ἐστερημένοι·
1025 ἐγὼ δ' ἐς ἄλλην γαῖαν εἶμι δὴ φυγὰς,
πρὶν σφῶν ὀνάσθαι κάπιδεῖν εὐδαίμονας,
πρὶν λουτρὰ καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ γαμηλίους
εὐνάς ἀγῆλαι λαμπάδας τ' ἀνασχεθεῖν.
ὦ δυστάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς αὐθαδίας.
ἄλλως ἄρ' ὑμᾶς, ὦ τέκν', ἐξεθρεψάμην,

1015 κάτει Porson: κρατεῖς fere C

1026 λουτρὰ Burges: λέκτρα C

¹² The grim wordplay is untranslatable: κατὰγω means both "bring home (from exile)" and "bring down."

MEDEA

MEDEA

I have every reason, old man. The gods, and I in my madness, have contrived it so.

TUTOR

Cheer up: one day your children will bring you home.

MEDEA

Before that there are others I shall bring home,¹² wretch that I am.

TUTOR

You are not the only woman to be separated from her children. We mortals must bear misfortune with resignation.

MEDEA

I will do so. But go into the house and provide the children with their daily needs.

Exit TUTOR into the house.

My children, my children, you have a city and a home,¹³ in which, leaving your poor mother behind, you will live henceforth, bereft of me. I shall go to another land as an exile before I have the enjoyment of you and see you happy, before I have tended to your baths¹⁴ and your wives and marriage beds and held the wedding torches aloft. How wretched my self-will has made me! It was all in vain,

¹³ To the children this would mean Corinth, to Medea it means the nether world. Such veiled discourse is characteristic of this speech, with the exception of the bracketed section below.

¹⁴ A special bath for the bride and the groom preceded the wedding.

EURIPIDES

- 1030 ἄλλως δ' ἐμόχθουν καὶ κατεξάνθη πόνους,
στερρὰς ἐνεγκούσ' ἐν τόκοις ἀλγηδόνας.
ἦ μὴν ποθ' ἦ δύστηνος εἶχον ἐλπίδας
πολλὰς ἐν ὑμῖν, γηροβοσκήσειν τ' ἐμὲ
καὶ κατθανούσαν χερσὶν εὖ περιστελεῖν,
- 1035 ζηλωτὸν ἀνθρώποισι· νῦν δ' ὄλωλε δὴ
γλυκεῖα φροντίς. σφῶν γὰρ ἔστερημένη
λυπρὸν διάξω βίον ἀλγεινόν τ' ἐμόν.
ὑμεῖς δὲ μητέρ' οὐκέτ' ὄμμασιν φίλοις
ὄψεσθ', ἐς ἄλλο σχῆμ' ἀποστάντες βίου.
- 1040 φεῦ φεῦ· τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;
τί προσγελᾶτε τὸν παίνιστατον γέλων;
αἰαί· τί δράσω; καρδία γὰρ οἴχεται,
γυναῖκες, ὄμμα φαιδρὸν ὡς εἶδον τέκνων.
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· χαιρέτω βουλευματα
- 1045 τὰ πρόσθεν· ἄξω παῖδας ἐκ γαίας ἐμούς.
τί δεῖ με πατέρα τῶνδε τοῖς τούτων κακοῖς
λυπούσαν αὐτὴν δις τόσα κτᾶσθαι κακά;
οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγε· χαιρέτω βουλευματα.
καίτοι τί πάσχω; βούλομαι γέλωτ' ὀφλεῖν
- 1050 ἐχθροὺς μεθεῖσα τοὺς ἐμούς ἀζημίους;
τολμητέον τάδ'; ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς κάκης
τὸ καὶ προσέσθαι μαλθακοὺς λόγους φρενί.
χωρεῖτε, παῖδες, ἐς δόμους. ὄτω δὲ μὴ
θέμις παρῆναι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι θύμασιν,
- 1055 αὐτῶ μελήσει· χεῖρα δ' οὐ διαφθερῶ.
[ᾶ ᾶ.
μὴ δῆτα, θυμέ, μὴ σύ γ' ἐργάσῃ τάδε·

MEDEA

I see, that I brought you up, all in vain that I labored and was racked with toils, enduring harsh pains in childbirth! Truly, many were the hopes that I, poor fool, once had in you, that you would tend me in my old age, and when I died, dress me for burial with your own hands, an enviable lot for mortals. But now this sweet imagining has perished. For bereft of you I shall live out my life in pain and grief. And you will no longer see your mother with loving eyes but pass into another manner of life.

Oh! What is the meaning of your glance at me, children? Why do you smile at me this last smile of yours? Alas, what am I to do? My courage is gone, women, ever since I saw the bright faces of the children. I cannot do it. Farewell, my former designs! I shall take my children out of the land. Why should I wound their father with their pain and win for myself pain twice as great? I shall not: farewell, my designs!

But what is coming over me? Do I wish to suffer mockery, letting my enemies go unpunished? Must I put up with that? No, it is mere weakness in me even to admit such tender words into my heart. Children, go into the house. Whoever is not permitted to attend my sacrifice must take care himself not to be there: I shall not weaken my hand. [Oh! Do not, my angry heart, do not do these things! Let

1037 ἐμόν Platnauer: ἐμοί C

1051 post τάδε interrogative dist. Kovacs

1056-64 secl. Kovacs (1056-80 iam Bergk, alii alios): vide CQ 36 (1986), 343-52

EURIPIDES

- ἔασον αὐτούς, ὦ τάλαν, φείσαι τέκνων·
 ἐκεῖ μεθ' ἡμῶν ζῶντες εὐφρανοῦσί σε.
 μὰ τοὺς παρ' Ἄϊδη νερτέρους ἀλάστορας,
 1060 οὔτοι ποτ' ἔσται τοῦθ' ὅπως ἐχθροῖς ἐγὼ
 παῖδας παρήσω τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι.
 πάντως σφ' ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή,
 ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν οἴπερ ἐξεφύσαμεν.
 πάντως πέπρακται ταῦτα κοῦκ ἐκφεύξεται.]
 1065 καὶ δὴ 'πὶ κρατὶ στέφανος, ἐν πέπλοισι δὲ
 νύμφη τύραννος ὄλλυται, σάφ' οἶδ' ἐγώ.
 ἀλλ', εἴμι γὰρ δὴ τλημονεστάτην ὁδὸν
 καὶ τούσδε πέμφω τλημονεστέραν ἔτι,
 1070 παῖδας προσειπεῖν βούλομαι· δότ', ὦ τέκνα,
 δότ' ἀσπάσασθαι μητρὶ δεξιᾶν χέρα.
 ὦ φιλτάτη χεῖρ, φίλτατον δέ μοι στόμα
 καὶ σχῆμα καὶ πρόσωπον εὐγενὲς τέκνων.
 εὐδαιμονοῖτον, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ· τὰ δ' ἐνθάδε
 πατῆρ ἀφείλετ'. ὦ γλυκεῖα προσβολή,
 1075 ὦ μαλθακὸς χρῶς πνευμά θ' ἠδιστον τέκνων.
 χωρεῖτε χωρεῖτ'· οὐκέτ' εἴμι προσβλέπειν
 οἷα τε †πρὸς ὑμᾶς† ἀλλὰ νικῶμαι κακοῖς.

1077 τε πρὸς ὑμᾶς vel ἡμᾶς a: τ' ἐς ὑμᾶς b: τε παῖδας.
 Elmsley: fort. τ' ἐναντί'

15 The author of these lines apparently means Athens. Contrast the expressively ambiguous use of ἐκεῖ to mean Hades in 1073 below.

MEDEA

them go, hard-hearted wretch, spare the children! If they live with me in that other place,¹⁵ they will gladden you. By Hell's avenging furies, I shall never leave my children for my enemies to outrage!¹⁶ They must die in any case. And since they must, the one who gave them birth shall kill them. These things are settled and cannot be undone.]

The children begin to move toward the house.

Already the crown is on her head and the royal bride is perishing in the robe, I know it well. But—since I now go down the road of greatest misery and send these down one unhappier yet—I want to say farewell to the children.

The children return to Medea.

Give me your right hands to kiss, my children, give them to me! O hands and lips so dear to me, O noble face and bearing of my children! I wish you happiness—but in that other place! What is here your father has taken away. Oh, how sweet is the touch, how tender the skin, how fragrant the breath of these children! Go in, go in! I can no longer look at you but am overwhelmed with my pain. And

¹⁶ Among the reasons for considering these lines spurious is that they are internally inconsistent. The present sentence reads as if it were the vehement rejection of a plan Medea had entertained, a plan of leaving the children in Corinth, and the impossibility of doing so is treated as a reason for killing them. But the immediately preceding sentence suggested taking them to Athens, and her vehement refusal to leave them provides no reason for killing them.

EURIPIDES

καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα τολμήσω κακά,
 θυμὸς δὲ κρείστων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,
 1080 ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πολλάκις ἤδη διὰ λεπτοτέρων
 μύθων ἔμολον καὶ πρὸς ἀμίλλας
 ἦλθον μείζους ἢ χρῆ γενεὰν
 θῆλυν ἐρευνᾶν
 1085 ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἔστιν μοῦσα καὶ ἡμῖν,
 ἣ προσομιλεῖ σοφίας ἔνεκεν,
 πάσαισι μὲν οὐ, παῦρον δὲ γένος,
 <μίαν> ἐν πολλαῖς, εὖροις ἂν ἴσως
 οὐκ ἀπόμουσον τὸ γυναικῶν.
 1090 καὶ φημι βροτῶν οἴτινές εἰσιν
 πάμπαν ἄπειροι μηδ' ἐφύτευσαν
 παῖδας προφέρειν εἰς εὐτυχίαν
 τῶν γειναμένων.
 οἱ μὲν ἄτεκνοι δι' ἀπειροσύνην
 1095 εἴθ' ἠδὺ βροτοῖς εἴτ' ἀνιαρὸν
 παῖδες τελέθουσ' οὐχὶ τυχόντες
 πολλῶν μόχθων ἀπέχονται
 οἴσι δὲ τέκνων ἔστιν ἐν οἴκοις
 γλυκερὸν βλάστημ', ἐσορῶ μελέτη
 1100 κατατρυχομένους τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον,
 πρῶτον μὲν ὅπως θρέψουσι καλῶς
 βίωτόν θ' ὀπόθεν λείψουσι τέκνοισ·
 ἔτι δ' ἐκ τούτων εἴτ' ἐπὶ φλαύροις
 εἴτ' ἐπὶ χρηστοῖς

MEDEA

I know well what pain I am about to undergo,¹⁷ but my wrath overbears my calculation, wrath that brings mortal men their gravest hurt.

Exit the children into the house.

CHORUS LEADER

Often ere now I have engaged in discourses subtler, and entered upon contests greater, than is right for woman to peer into. No, we too possess a muse, who consorts with us to bring us wisdom: not with all of us, for it is some small clan, one woman among many, that you will find with a share in the Muse. I say that those mortals who are utterly without experience of children and have never borne them have the advantage in good fortune over those who have. For the childless, because they do not possess children and do not know whether they are a pleasure or a vexation to mortals, hold themselves aloof from many griefs. But those who have in their house the sweet gift of children, them I see worn down their whole life with care: first, how they shall raise their children well and how they may leave them some livelihood. And after that it is unclear whether all

¹⁷ For a discussion of this passage see *CQ* 36 (1986), 343–52.

1078 *τολμήσω* omnes praeter L codd.: *δρᾶν μέλλω* L, tt

1087 *γένος* Reiske: *δὴ γένος* a: *τι γένος* b

1088 <*μίαν*> Elmsley cl. *Hcl.* 327–8

1089 *οὐκ* Π, sicut con. Reiske: *κούκ* C

1099 *ἔσορῶ* Π: *ὄρῶ* C

EURIPIDES

- μοχθοῦσι, τόδ' ἐστὶν ἄδηλον.
 1105 ἐν δὲ τὸ πάντων λοίσθιον ἦδη
 πᾶσιν κατερῶ θνητοῖσι κακόν·
 καὶ δὴ γὰρ ἄλις βίότον θ' ἠῦρον
 σῶμά τ' ἐς ἦβην ἦλυθε τέκνων
 χρηστοί τ' ἐγένοντ'· εἰ δὲ κυρήσαι
 1110 δαίμων οὔτω, φρουδὸς ἐς Ἄιδου
 θάνατος προφέρων σώματα τέκνων.
 πῶς οὖν λύει πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις
 τήνδ' ἔτι λύπην ἀνιαροτάτην
 παίδων ἔνεκεν
 1115 θνητοῖσι θεοὺς ἐπιβάλλειν;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- φίλοι, πάλαι τοι προσμένουσα τὴν τύχην
 караδοκῶ τάκεῖθεν οἷ προβήσεται.
 καὶ δὴ δέδορκα τόνδε τῶν Ἰάσονος
 στείχοντ' ὀπαδῶν· πνεῦμα δ' ἠρεθισμένον
 1120 δείκνυσιν ὡς τι καινὸν ἀγγελεῖ κακόν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

[ὦ δεινὸν ἔργον παρανόμως εἰργασμένη.]
 Μήδεια, φεῦγε φεῦγε, μήτε ναῖαν
 λιπούσ' ἀπήνην μήτ' ὄχον πεδοστιβῆ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τί δ' ἄξιόν μοι τῆσδε τυγχάνει φυγῆς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- 1125 ὄλωλεν ἢ τύραννος ἀρτίως κόρη
 Κρέων θ' ὁ φύσας φαρμάκων τῶν σῶν ὑπο.

MEDEA

their toil is expended on worthless or worthy objects. But the last of all misfortunes for all mortals I shall now mention. Suppose they have found a sufficient livelihood, suppose the children have arrived at young manhood and their character is good: yet if their destiny so chances, off goes death carrying the children's bodies to Hades. How then does it profit us that for the sake of heirs the gods cast upon mortals, in addition to their other troubles, this further grief most painful?

MEDEA

My friends, for a long time now I have been expecting the event, waiting to see how matters in that quarter will turn out. And look, here I see one of Jason's servants coming. His agitated breathing shows that he is about to announce some fresh disaster.

Enter servant of Jason as MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

MESSENGER

[You that have done a terrible deed unlawfully,] Medea, run for your life! The sea vessel and the chariot that treads the ground—do not refuse them!

MEDEA

What event calls for my fleeing thus?

MESSENGER

The princess and her father Creon have just been killed by your poisons!

1110 Ἄιδου II, sicut coni. Earle: Ἀίδην vel -αν C

1117 ποβήσεται. Lenting

1121 om. a et del. Lenting

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

κάλλιστον εἶπας μῦθον, ἐν δ' εὐεργέταις
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη καὶ φίλοις ἐμοῖς ἔσση.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

1130 τί φῆς; φρονεῖς μὲν ὀρθὰ κοῦ μαίνη, γύναι,
ἦτις, τυράννων ἐστίαν ἠκισμένη,
χαίρεις κλύουσα κοῦ φοβῆ τὰ τοιάδε;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

1135 ἔχω τι κάγω τοῖσι σοῖς ἐναντίον
λόγοισιν εἰπεῖν· ἀλλὰ μὴ σπέρχου, φίλος,
λέξον δέ· πῶς ὄλοντο; δις τόσον γὰρ ἂν
τέρψεαις ἡμᾶς, εἰ τεθνάσι παγκάκως.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

1140 ἐπεὶ τέκνων σῶν ἦλθε δίπτυχος γονῆ
σὺν πατρὶ καὶ παρήλθε νυμφικοὺς δόμους,
ἦσθημεν οἵπερ σοῖς ἐκάμνομεν κακοῖς
δμῶες· δι' ὧτων δ' εὐθύς ἦν πολὺς λόγος
σέ καὶ πόσιν σὸν νεῖκος ἐσπείσθαι τὸ πρῖν.
1145 κυνεῖ δ' ὁ μὲν τις χεῖρ', ὁ δὲ ξανθὸν κἀρα
παίδων· ἐγὼ δὲ καὐτὸς ἠδονῆς ὑπο
στέγας γυναικῶν σὺν τέκνοις ἄμ' ἐσπόμην.
δέσποινα δ' ἦν νῦν ἀντὶ σοῦ θαυμάζομεν,
πρῖν μὲν τέκνων σῶν εἰσιδεῖν ξυνωρίδα,
πρόθυμον εἶχ' ὀφθαλμὸν εἰς Ἰάσονα·
ἔπειτα μέντοι προκαλύψατ' ὄμματα
λευκὴν τ' ἀπέστρεψ' ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα,
παίδων μυσασθεῖσ' εἰσόδους· πόσις δὲ σὸς

MEDEA

MEDEA

A splendid report you bring! Henceforth I shall regard you as one of my benefactors and friends.

MESSENGER

What? Can you be in your right mind and not mad, woman? Can you commit an outrage against the royal house, and then rejoice at the news and not be afraid?

MEDEA

I too have something that I could say in reply to your words. Do not be hot and hasty, friend, but tell me: how did they die? You will give me twice the pleasure if they died in agony.

MESSENGER

When your two children came with their father and entered the bride's house, all of us servants who were troubled by your misfortunes were cheered. For our ears buzzed with the frequent report that you and your husband had brought your former quarrel to an end. And someone kissed the hands and another the blond heads of the children. And I myself for very joy went along with the children into the women's quarters. Here the mistress we now honor instead of you, before she saw the two children, had eyes only for Jason. Then she veiled her eyes and turned her white cheek away, disgusted at seeing the children come in. But your husband tried to take away the

1139 *δι' οἴκων* Weil cl. Σ

EURIPIDES

- 1150 ὀργὰς τ' ἀφήρει καὶ χόλον νεάνιδος,
λέγων τὰδ'· Οὐ μὴ δυσμενῆς ἔση φίλοις,
παύσῃ δὲ θυμοῦ καὶ πάλιν στρέψεις κάρα,
φίλους νομίζουσ' οὔσπερ ἂν πόσις σέθεν,
δέξῃ δὲ δῶρα καὶ παραιτήσῃ πατρὸς
- 1155 φυγὰς ἀφείναι παισὶ τοῖσδ' ἐμὴν χάριν;
ἢ δ', ὡς ἐσεῖδε κόσμον, οὐκ ἠνέσχετο,
ἀλλ' ἦνεσ' ἀνδρὶ πάντα, καὶ πρὶν ἐκ δόμων
μακρὰν ἀπέειναι πατέρα καὶ παῖδας σέθεν
λαβοῦσα πέπλους ποικίλους ἡμπέσχετο,
- 1160 χρυσοῦν τε θείσα στέφανον ἀμφὶ βοστρύχοις
λαμπρῶ κατόπτρῳ σχηματίζεται κόμην,
ἄψυχον εἰκὼ προσγελῶσα σώματος.
κᾶπειτ' ἀναστᾶσ' ἐκ θρόνων διέρχεται
στέγας, ἀβρὸν βαίνουσα παλλεύκῃ ποδί,
- 1165 δῶροις ὑπερχαίρουσα, πολλὰ πολλάκις
τένοντ' ἐς ὀρθὸν ὄμμασι σκοπουμένη.
τοῦνθένδε μέντοι δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ' ἰδεῖν·
χροιὰν γὰρ ἀλλάξασα λεχρία πάλιν
χωρεῖ τρέμουσα κῶλα καὶ μόλις φθάνει
- 1170 θρόνοισιν ἐμπεσοῦσα μὴ χαμαὶ πεσεῖν.
καί τις γεραιὰ προσπόλων, δόξασά που
ἢ Πανὸς ὀργὰς ἢ τινος θεῶν μολεῖν,
ἀνωλόλυξε, πρὶν γ' ὄρᾳ διὰ στόμα
χωροῦντα λευκὸν ἀφρόν, ὀμμάτων τ' ἄπο
- 1175 κόρας στρέφουσαν, αἰμά τ' οὐκ ἐνὸν χροῦ·
εἴτ' ἀντίμολπον ἦκεν ὀλολυγῆς μέγαν
κωκυτόν. εὐθύς δ' ἢ μὲν ἐς πατρὸς δόμους

MEDEA

young woman's wrathful mood and said, "You must not be unkind to your kin but must cease your anger and turn your face toward us again, regarding those as near and dear whom your husband so regards. Receive these gifts and ask your father to grant these children release from their exile for my sake."

When she had seen the raiment, she could not hold out but consented to all her husband asked, and before your children and their father had gone far from the house, she took the many-colored gown and put it on, and setting the gold crown about her locks, she arranged her hair in a bright mirror, smiling at the lifeless image of her body. And getting up from her seat she paraded about the room, her white feet making dainty steps, entranced with the gifts, glancing back again and again at the straight tendon of her leg. But then there was a terrible sight to behold. For her color changed, and with legs trembling she staggered back sidelong, and by falling on the chair barely escaped collapsing on the floor. And one old woman among the servants, thinking, I suppose, that a frenzy from Pan or one of the other gods had come upon her, raised a festal shout to the god, until she saw the white foam coming between her lips and her eyes starting out of their sockets and her skin all pale and bloodless. Then indeed she raised a wail in answer to her former shout. And at once one servant went

EURIPIDES

- ὤρμησεν, ἢ δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἀρτίως πόσιν,
 φράσουσα νύμφης συμφορὰν ἅπασα δὲ
 1180 στέγη πυκνοῖσιν ἐκτύπει δραμήμασιν.
 ἦδη δ' ἀνελθὼν κῶλον ἐκπλέθρου δρόμου
 ταχὺς βαδιστῆς τερμόνων ἂν ἤπτετο,
 ὅτ' ἐξ ἀναύδου καὶ μύσαντος ὄμματος
 δεινὸν στενάξασ' ἢ τάλαιν' ἠγείρετο.
 1185 διπλοῦν γὰρ αὐτῇ πῆμ' ἐπεστρατεύετο·
 χρυσοῦς μὲν ἀμφὶ κρατὶ κείμενος πλόκος
 θαυμαστὸν ἴει νᾶμα παμφάγου πυρός,
 πέπλοι δὲ λεπτοί, σῶν τέκνων δωρήματα,
 λευκὴν ἔδαπτον σάρκα τῆς δυσδαίμονος.
 1190 φεύγει δ' ἀναστᾶσ' ἐκ θρόνων πυρουμένη,
 σείουσα χαίτην κρᾶτά τ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοσε,
 ρῖψαι θέλουσα στέφανον· ἀλλ' ἀραρότως
 σύνδεσμα χρυσοῦς εἶχε, πῦρ δ', ἐπεὶ κόμην
 ἔσεισε, μᾶλλον δις τόσως ἐλάμπετο.
 1195 πίτνει δ' ἐς οὐδας συμφορᾷ νικωμένη,
 πλὴν τῷ τεκόντι κάρτα δυσμαθῆς ἰδεῖν·
 οὐτ' ὀμμάτων γὰρ δῆλος ἦν κατάστασις
 οὐτ' εὐφυνὲς πρόσωπον, αἶμα δ' ἐξ ἄκρου
 ἔσταζε κρατὸς συμπεφυρμένον πυρί,
 1200 σάρκες δ' ἀπ' ὀστέων ὥστε πεύκινον δάκρυ
 γνάθοις ἀδήλοις φαρμάκων ἀπέρρεον,
 δεινὸν θέαμα· πᾶσι δ' ἦν φόβος θιγεῖν
 νεκροῦ· τύχην γὰρ εἶχομεν διδάσκαλον.
 πατὴρ δ' ὁ τλήμων συμφορᾶς ἀγνωσία
 1205 ἄφνω παρελθὼν δῶμα προσπίτνει νεκρῷ.

MEDEA

to her father's chambers, another to her new husband to tell of the bride's misfortune: the whole house rang with the sound of drumming footsteps.

And by now a sprinter would have run the return leg of a two-hundred-yard course and would be reaching the finish line¹⁸ when the poor woman wakened from her silence, opened her eyes, and gave forth a terrible groan. For she was being attacked with a double pain. The golden circlet about her head shot forth a terrible stream of consuming fire, and the fine-spun gown, gift of your sons, was eating into the wretched woman's white flesh. All aflame she leapt from the chair and fled, tossing her hair this way and that, trying to shake off the diadem. But the gold crown held its fastenings firmly, and when she shook her hair, the fire merely blazed up twice as high. She fell to the floor, overwhelmed by disaster, barely recognizable to any but her father. Her eyes no longer kept their wonted form nor did her shapely face. From the top of her head blood dripped, mingled with fire, and her flesh dropped from her bones like resin from a pine torch, torn by the unseen jaws of the poison, a dreadful sight to behold. We were all afraid to touch the corpse, taught well by the event we had seen.

But her poor father, ignorant of the calamity, stumbled upon her body unprepared as he entered the chamber.

¹⁸ I.e., about twenty seconds elapsed.

¹¹⁸⁰ δρα[μη]μασιν Π, sicut coni. Cobet:δρομ- C

¹¹⁸¹ ἀνελθὼν Lenting: ἀνέλκων C ἐκπλέθρον Reiske:

ἔκ- vel ἔκπλεθρον C ¹¹⁸² ἄν ἤπτετο Musgrave: ἀνθήπτετο

C ¹¹⁸³ ὄτ' Π: ἡ δ' C ¹²⁰⁵ παρελθὼν Nauck: προσ- C

EURIPIDES

- ὤμωξε δ' εὐθύς καὶ περιπτύξας χέρας
 κυνεῖ προσαυδῶν τοιάδ'. ᾠ δύστηνε παῖ,
 τίς σ' ὦδ' ἀτίμως δαιμόνων ἀπόλεσεν,
 τίς τὸν γέροντα τύμβον ὀρφανὸν σέθεν
 1210 τίθησιν; οἴμοι, συνθάνοιμί σοι, τέκνον.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ θρήνων καὶ γόων ἐπαύσατο,
 χρήζων γεραιὸν ἐξαναστήσαι δέμας
 προσείχεθ' ὥστε κισσὸς ἔρνεσιν δάφνης
 λεπτοῖσι πέπλοις, δεινὰ δ' ἦν παλαισματα.
 1215 ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἤθελ' ἐξαναστήσαι γόνυ,
 ἢ δ' ἀντελάζυτ'· εἰ δὲ πρὸς βίαν ἄγοι,
 σάρκας γεραιᾶς ἐσπάρασσ' ἀπ' ὀστέων.
 χρόνῳ δ' ἀπέστη καὶ μεθῆχ' ὁ δύσμορος
 ψυχῆν· κακοῦ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἦν ὑπέρτερος.
 1220 κεῖνται δὲ νεκροὶ παῖς τε καὶ γέρον πατῆρ
 πέλας, †ποθεινὴ δακρῦοισι συμφορά†.
 καί μοι τὸ μὲν σὸν ἐκποδῶν ἔστω λόγον
 γνώση γὰρ αὐτῆ ζημίας ἐπιστροφῆν.
 τὰ θνητὰ δ' οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ἡγοῦμαι σκιάν,
 1225 οὐδ' ἂν τρέσας εἶποιμι τοὺς σοφοὺς βροτῶν
 δοκοῦντας εἶναι καὶ μεριμνητὰς λόγων
 τούτους μεγίστην μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνειν.
 θνητῶν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ·
 ὄλβου δ' ἐπιρρυέντος εὐτυχέστερος
 1230 ἄλλου γένοιτ' ἂν ἄλλος, εὐδαίμων δ' ἂν οὔ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔοιχ' ὁ δαίμων πολλὰ τῆδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
 κακὰ ξυνάπτειν ἐνδίκως Ἰάσονι.

MEDEA

And at once he groaned aloud and, throwing his arms about her, kissed her and said, "O unhappy daughter, which of the gods has destroyed you so shamefully and has bereft me of you, me, an old man at death's door? Oh, may I die with you, my daughter!" But when he had ceased from his wailing and lamenting and wanted to raise up his aged body to his feet, he was stuck fast to the fine-spun dress, as ivy clings to laurel-shoots, and a terrible wrestling ensued. For he wanted to get up again, but she held him fast and prevented him. And if he used force, he would rip his aged flesh from his bones. Finally the poor man gave up and breathed his last, for he could not overcome the calamity. They lie side by side in death, the daughter and her old father, a sight to make one weep.

As regards your fate, I will say nothing: you will know soon enough the punishment that will visit you. As for our mortal life, this is not the first time that I have thought it to be a shadow, and I would say without any fear that those mortals who seem to be clever and crafters of polished speeches are guilty of the greatest folly. For no mortal ever attains to blessedness. One may may be luckier than another when wealth flows his way, but blessed never.

Exit MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

It seems that fate is this day fastening calamity on Jason,

1218 ἀπέσβη Scaliger

1221 ποθεινῇ δυσνοούσι Musgrave

1223 ἐπιστροφήν Lenting: ἀπο- C

1227 μωρίαν editio Aldina: ζημίαν C

EURIPIDES

- [ὦ πλήμον, ὡς σου συμφορὰς οἰκτίρομεν,
 κόρη Κρέοντος, ἥτις εἰς Ἄιδου δόμους
 1235 οἴχῃ γάμων ἕκατι τῶν Ἰάσονος.]

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- φίλοι, δέδοκται τοῦργον ὡς τάχιστα μοι
 παῖδας κτανούσῃ τῆσδ' ἀφορμᾶσθαι χθονός,
 καὶ μὴ σχολὴν ἄγουσαν ἐκδοῦναι τέκνα
 ἄλλῃ φονεῦσαι δυσμενεστέρα χερί.
 1240 πάντως σφ' ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή,
 ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν οἵπερ ἐξεφύσαμεν.
 ἀλλ' εἶα ὀπλίζου, καρδία· τί μέλλομεν
 τὰ δεινὰ κἀναγκαῖα μὴ πράσσειν κακά;
 ἄγ', ὦ τάλαινα χεὶρ ἐμή, λαβὲ ξίφος,
 1245 λάβ', ἔρπε πρὸς βαλβίδα λυπηρὰν βίου,
 καὶ μὴ κακισθῆς μηδ' ἀναμνησθῆς τέκνων,
 ὡς φίλταθ', ὡς ἔτικτες, ἀλλὰ τήνδε γε
 λαθοῦ βραχεῖαν ἡμέραν παίδων σέθεν
 κᾶπειτα θρήνει· καὶ γὰρ εἰ κτενεῖς σφ', ὅμως
 1250 φίλοι γ' ἔφυσαν· δυστυχῆς δ' ἐγὼ γυνή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

- ὦ Γᾶ τε καὶ παμφαῆς
 ἀκτὶς Ἀλίου, κατίδεν' ἴδετε τὰν
 ὀλομένην γυναικα, πρὶν φοινίαν
 τέκνοις προσβαλεῖν χερ' αὐτοκτόνον·
 1255 σᾶς γὰρ χρυσέας ἀπὸ γονᾶς
 ἔβλασταν, θεοῦ δ' αἷμα <χαμαὶ> πίτνειν
 φόβος ὑπ' ἀνέρων.

MEDEA

and with justice. [O poor woman, daughter of Creon, how we pity your misfortune! Because of your marriage to Jason you have departed to the halls of Hades.]

MEDEA

Friends, my resolve is fixed on the deed, to kill my children with all speed and to flee from this land: I must not, by lingering, deliver my children for murder to a less kindly hand. They must die at all events, and since they must, I who gave them birth shall kill them. Come, put on your armor, my heart! Why do I put off doing the terrible deed that must be done? Come, luckless hand, take the sword, take it and go to your life's miserable goal! Do not weaken, do not remember that you love the children, that you gave them life. Instead, for this brief day forget them—and mourn hereafter: for even if you kill them, they were dear to you. Oh, what an unhappy woman I am!

Exit MEDEA into the house.

CHORUS

O earth, O ray of the Sun that lightens all, turn your gaze, O turn it to this ruinous woman before she lays her bloody murderous hands upon her children! They are sprung from your race of gold,¹⁹ and it is a fearful thing for the blood of a god to be spilt upon the ground by the hands

¹⁹ Helios is the children's great-grandfather.

1233-5 del. Weil

1256 <χαμαι> Diggle

EURIPIDES

ἀλλά νιν, ὦ φάος διογενές, κάτειρ-
γε κατάπαυσον ἕξελ' οἴκων τάλαι-
ναν φονίαν τ' Ἐρινὺν ὑπαλαστόρων.

1260

ἀντ. α

μάταν μόχθος ἔρρει τέκνων,
μάταν ἄρα γένος φίλιον ἔτεκες, ὦ
κνανεᾶν λιπούσα Συμπληγάδων
πετρᾶν ἀξενωτάταν ἐσβολάν.

1265

δειλαία, τί σοι φρενοβαρῆς
χόλος προσπίτνει καὶ ζαμενῆς <φόνου>
φόνος ἀμείβεται;

χαλεπὰ γὰρ βροτοῖς ὁμογενῆ μιά-
σματ', ἔπεται δ' ἄμ' αὐτοφόνταις ξυνφ-
δὰ θεόθεν πίτνοντ' ἐπὶ δόμοις ἄχη.

1270

<ΠΑΙΔΕΣ>

<(ἔσωθεν)>

1270a ἰὼ μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. β

1273 ἀκούεις βοᾶν ἀκούεις τέκνων;

1274 ἰὼ τλᾶμον, ὦ κακοτυχεῖς γυναί.

ΠΑΙΣ Α

1271 οἴμοι, τί δράσω; ποῖ φύγω μητρὸς χέρας;

1260 ὑπαλαστόρων Eden: ὑπ' ἀ. C

1265 φρενοβαρῆς Seidler: φρενῶν βαρὺς C

1266 ζαμενῆς Porson: δυσμενῆς C <φόνου> Wecklein

1269 ἔπεται δ' ἄμ' Leo: ἐπὶ γαίαν C

MEDEA

of mortal men. O light begotten of Zeus, check the cruel and murderous Fury, take her from this house plagued by spirits of vengeance.²⁰

The toil of bearing your children has come to naught, it was to no purpose that you bore your dear offspring, you who left behind the inhospitable strait where the dark blue Symplegades clash. O unhappy woman, why does wrath fall so heavy upon your mind and one rash murder succeed another? Grievous for mortals is the stain of kindred blood. For the murderers are dogged by woes harmonious with their deeds, sent by the gods upon their houses.

CHILDREN

(*within*) Help!

CHORUS

Do you hear the cry, the children's cry? O wretched and accursed woman!

FIRST CHILD

(*within*) Oh, what shall I do? How can I escape my mother's hands?

²⁰ The Chorus see in the murder the work of an Erinys (Fury), one of the punishing divinities usually thought of as under the control of Zeus. That human agents may be sometimes regarded as embodying this spirit or serving as its unconscious agent is clear from Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 749, and Euripides, *Trojan Women* 457.

1270an <Παῖδες (ἔσωθεν)> fere Murray

1270a ωι μ[οι Π: om. C

EURIPIDES

ΠΑΙΣ Β

1272 οὐκ οἶδ', ἄδελφε φίλτατ'· ὀλλύμεσθα γάρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1275 παρέλθω δόμους; ἀρήξαι φόνον δοκεῖ μοι τέκνοις.

ΠΑΙΣ Α

ναί, πρὸς θεῶν, ἀρήξαι· ἐν δέοντι γάρ.

ΠΑΙΣ Β

ὡς ἐγγὺς ἤδη γ' ἐσμὲν ἀρκύων ξίφους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1280 τάλαιν', ὡς ἄρ' ἦσθα πέτρος ἢ σίδαρος, ἅτις τέκνων
ὄν ἔτεκες ἄροτον αὐτόχειρι μοίρα κτενεῖς.

ἀντ. β

μίαν δὴ κλύω μίαν τῶν πάρος
γυναῖκ' ἐν φίλοις χέρα βαλεῖν τέκνοις,

Ἴνὸ μανείσαν ἐκ θεῶν, ὄθ' ἢ Διὸς
1285 δάμαρ νιν ἐξέπεμπε δωμάτων ἄλαις·
πίτνει δ' ἅ τάλαιν' ἐς ἄλμαν φόνω τέκνων δυσσεβεῖ,
ἀκτῆς ὑπερτίνασα ποντίας πόδα,
δυοῖν τε παῖδων ξυνθανοῦσ' ἀπόλλυται.

1290 τί δῆτ' οὐ γένοιτ' ἂν ἔτι δεινόν; ὦ γυναικῶν λέχος
πολύπονον, ὅσα βροτοῖς ἔρεξας ἤδη κακά.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

γυναῖκες, αἱ τῆσδ' ἐγγὺς ἔστατε στέγης,
ἄρ' ἐν δόμοισιν ἢ τὰ δεῖν' εἰργασμένη

1295 Μῆδεια τοισίδ' ἢ μεθέστηκεν φυγῆ;

1273-4 ante 1271-2 trai. Seidler 1277-8 om. Π

1281 ὄν Π, sicut coni. Seidler: ὦν C

MEDEA

SECOND CHILD

(*within*) I know not, dear brother. We are done for!

CHORUS

Shall I enter the house? I am determined to stop the death of the children.

FIRST CHILD

(*within*) Yes, in heaven's name, stop it! Now is the time!

SECOND CHILD

(*within*) We are now close to the murderous snare!

CHORUS

Hard-hearted wretch, you are, it seems, a stone or a piece of iron! You mean to kill the children you gave birth to with a fate your own hand deals out!

One woman, only one, of all that have been, have I heard of who put her hand to her own children: Ino driven mad by the gods when Hera sent her forth from the house to wander in madness. The unhappy woman fell into the sea, impiously murdering her sons. Stepping over the sea's edge, she perished with her two children. What further horror is now impossible? O womankind and marriage fraught with pain, how many are the troubles you have already wrought for mortal men!

Enter JASON by Eisodos B.

JASON

You women who stand near the house, is Medea inside, she who has done these dreadful deeds, or has she fled? She

1285 ἄλαις Π, sicut conī. Blaydes: ἄλη fere C

1290 δῆτ' Π, sicut conī. Hermann: δῆ ποτ' C οὐ Π, οὖν C

1295 τοισίδ' Canter: τοῖσιν a: τοῖσδέ γ' b

EURIPIDES

- δεῖ γάρ νιν ἦτοι γῆς γε κρυφθῆναι κάτω
 ἢ πτηνὸν ἄραι σῶμ' ἐς αἰθέρος βάθος,
 εἰ μὴ τυράννων δώμασιν δώσει δίκην.
 πέποιθ' ἀποκτείνασα κοιράνους χθονὸς
 1300 ἀθῶος αὐτῆ τῶνδε φεύξεσθαι δόμων;
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐτῆς φροντίδ' ὡς τέκνων ἔχω·
 κείνην μὲν οὐς ἔδρασεν ἔρξουσιν κακῶς,
 ἐμῶν δὲ παίδων ἦλθον ἐκσώσων βίον,
 μή μοί τι δράσωσ' οἱ προσήκοντες γένει,
 1305 μητρῶον ἐκπράσσοντες ἀνόσιον φόνον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ τλήμων, οὐκ οἶσθ' οἷ κακῶν ἐλήλυθας,
 Ἰάσον· οὐ γὰρ τούσδ' ἂν ἐφθέγξω λόγους.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὐ πον κάμ' ἀποκτεῖναι θέλει;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παῖδες τεθνᾶσι χειρὶ μητρῶα σέθεν.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- 1310 οἶμοι, τί λέξεις; ὥς μ' ἀπώλεσας, γύναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς οὐκέτ' ὄντων σῶν τέκνων φρόντιζε δή.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ποῦ γάρ νιν ἔκτειν'; ἐντὸς ἢ ἔωθεν δόμων;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πύλας ἀνοίξας σῶν τέκνων ὄψη φόνον.

MEDEA

will have to hide herself beneath the earth or soar aloft to heaven if she is not going to give satisfaction to the royal house. Does she think that having killed the land's ruling family she will escape from this house unscathed?

But it is not so much about her that I am concerned as about the children. *She* will be punished by those she has wronged, but I have come to save the lives of my children, that no harm may come to them from the next of kin, avenging on them their mother's impious crime.

CHORUS LEADER

Poor Jason, you have no idea how far gone you are in misfortune! Else you would not have spoken these words.

JASON

What is it? Surely she does not mean to kill me as well?

CHORUS LEADER

Your children are dead, killed by their mother's hand.

JASON

Ah, what can you mean? You have destroyed me, woman!

CHORUS LEADER

You must realize that your children are no more.

JASON

Where did she kill them? In the house or outside?

CHORUS LEADER

Open the gates and you will see your slaughtered sons.

1308 οὐ πον II, sicut conii. Barthold: ἡ πω et ἡ πον C

EURIPIDES

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- 1315 χαλάτε κληῖδας ὡς τάχιστα, πρόσπολοι,
 ἐκλύεθ' ἄρμούς, ὡς ἴδω διπλοῦν κακόν,
 1316 τοὺς μὲν θανόντας, τὴν δὲ <δράσασαν τάδε,
 1316a φόνου τε παίδων τῶνδε> τείσωμαι δίκην.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- τί τάσδε κινεῖς κἀναμοχλεύεις πύλας,
 νεκροὺς ἐρευνῶν κἀμὲ τὴν εἰργασμένην;
 παῦσαι πόνου τοῦδ'. εἰ δ' ἐμοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχεις,
 1320 λέγ' εἴ τι βούλη, χειρὶ δ' οὐ ψεύσεις ποτέ·
 τοιόνδ' ὄχημα πατρὸς Ἥλιος πατὴρ
 δίδωσιν ἡμῖν, ἔρυμα πολεμίας χερός.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- ὦ μῖσος, ὦ μέγιστον ἐχθίστη γύναι
 θεοῖς τε κἀμοὶ παντί τ' ἀνθρώπων γένοι,
 1325 ἥτις τέκνοισι σοῖσιν ἐμβαλεῖν ξίφος
 ἔτλης τεκοῦσα κἀμ' ἄπαιδ' ἀπόλεσας.
 καὶ ταῦτα δράσασ' ἥλιόν τε προσβλέπεις
 καὶ γαῖαν, ἔργον τλάσα δυσσεβέστατον;
 ὄλοι'. ἐγὼ δὲ νῦν φρονῶ, τότε οὐ φρονῶν,
 1330 ὅτ' ἐκ δόμων σε βαρβάρου τ' ἀπὸ χθονὸς
 Ἑλλην' ἐς οἶκον ἠγόμην, κακὸν μέγα,
 πατρός τε καὶ γῆς προδότιν ἢ σ' ἐθρέψατο.
 τὸν σὸν δ' ἀλάστορ' εἰς ἔμ' ἔσκησαν θεοί·
 κτανοῦσα γὰρ δὴ σὸν κάσιν παρέστιον

1316-16a lac. ind. Kovacs cl. 1185, *Hec.* 518, *Su.* 1035, etc.

1316a τείσωμαι δίκην a: τείσομαι φόνῳ b

MEDEA

JASON

Servants, remove the bar at once so that I may see a double disaster, these children's corpses <and her who did the deed, so that for these children's murder>²¹ I may exact punishment!

Jason tries to open the doors of the house. MEDEA appears aloft in a winged chariot upon the mechane, which rises from behind the skene.

MEDEA

Why do you rattle these gates and try to unbar them, in search of the corpses and me who did the deed? Cease your toil. If you need anything from me, speak if you like. But your hand can never touch me: such is the chariot Helios my grandfather has given me to ward off a hostile hand.

JASON

O detestable creature, utterly hateful to the gods, to me, and to the whole human race, you brought yourself to take the sword to your own children and destroyed my life with childlessness! Having done this can you look on the sun and the earth, when you are guilty of a most abominable deed? Death and ruin seize you! Now I am in my right mind, though I was insane before when I brought you from your home among the barbarians to a Greek house. A great curse you were even then, betrayer of your father and of the land that nourished you. But the gods have visited on me the avenging spirit meant for you. For you killed your

²¹ I give the probable sense of the lacuna.

EURIPIDES

- 1335 τὸ καλλίπρωρον εἰσέβης Ἄργουῦς σκάφος.
 ἤρξω μὲν ἐκ τοιῶνδε νυμφευθεῖσα δὲ
 παρ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδε καὶ τεκοῦσά μοι τέκνα,
 εὐνήσ ἕκατι καὶ λέχους σφ' ἀπώλεσας.
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἤτις τοῦτ' ἂν Ἑλληνὶς γυνή
- 1340 ἔτλη ποθ', ὧν γε πρόσθεν ἠξίουν ἐγὼ
 γῆμαι σέ, κῆδος ἐχθρὸν ὀλέθριόν τ' ἐμοί,
 λείαναν, οὐ γυναιῖκα, τῆς Τυρσηνίδος
 Σκύλλης ἔχουσαν ἀγριωτέραν φύσιν.
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἄν σε μυρίοις ὀνειδέσιν
- 1345 δάκοιμι τοιούδ' ἐμπέφυκέ σοι θράσος·
 ἔρρ', αἰσχροποιῆ καὶ τέκνων μαιφόνε.
 ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν δαίμον' αἰάζειν πάρα,
 ὃς οὔτε λέκτρων νεογάμων ὀνήσομαι,
 οὐ παῖδας οὐς ἔφυσα κάξεθρεψάμην
- 1350 ἔξω προσειπεῖν ζῶντας ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσα.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

- μακρὰν ἂν ἐξέτεινα τοῖσδ' ἐναντίον
 λόγοισιν, εἰ μὴ Ζεὺς πατήρ ἠπίστατο
 οἷ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ πέπονθας οἰά τ' εἰργάσω
 σὺ δ' οὐκ ἔμελλες τᾶμ' ἀτιμάσας λέχη
- 1355 τερπνὸν διάξειν βίοντον ἐγγελῶν ἐμοὶ
 οὐδ' ἠ τύραννος, οὐδ' ὃ σοι προσθεῖς γάμου
 Κρέων ἀνατεῖ τῆσδέ μ' ἐκβαλεῖν χθονός.
 πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ λείαναν, εἰ βούλη, κάλει
 καὶ Σκύλλαν ἣ Τυρσηνὸν ὄκησεν πέτραν·
- 1360 τῆς σῆς γὰρ ὡς χρῆν καρδίας ἀνθηψάμην.

MEDEA

own brother at the hearth and then stepped aboard the fair-prowed Argo.

It was with acts like these that you began. But now when you were married to me and had borne me children, you killed them because of sex and the marriage bed. No Greek woman would have dared to do this, yet I married you in preference to them, and a hateful and destructive match it has proved! You are a she-lion, not a woman, with a nature more savage than Scylla the Tuscan monster! But since ten thousand insults of mine would fail to sting you—such is your native impudence—be gone, doer of disgraceful deeds and murderer of your children! Mine is a fate to bewail: I shall never have the benefit of my new bride, nor will I be able to speak to my children alive, the children I begot and raised, but have lost them.

MEDEA

Long is the speech I would have made in reply to these words of yours if Father Zeus did not know clearly what kind of treatment you have had from me and how you have repaid it. You were not going to dishonor my bed and then spend a pleasant life laughing at me, no, nor the princess either, nor was Creon, who offered you his daughter, going to exile me with impunity! Call me a she-lion, then if you like, and Scylla, dweller on the Tuscan cliff! For I have touched your heart in the vital spot.

1356 οὐδ' . . . οὐδ' Elmsley: οὐθ' . . . οὐθ' C

1359 πέτραν Elmsley: πέδον C: v. del. Verrall

EURIPIDES

ΙΑΣΩΝ

καυτή γε λυπή καὶ κακῶν κοινωνὸς εἶ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σάφ' ἴσθι· λυεὶ δ' ἄλγος, ἦν σὺ μὴ ἔγγελας.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ὦ τέκνα, μητρὸς ὡς κακῆς ἐκύρσατε.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ὦ παῖδες, ὡς ὤλεσθε πατρώα νόσφ.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

1365 οὔτοι νιν ἡμῆ δεξιά γ' ἀπώλεσεν.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἀλλ' ὕβρις οἷ τε σοὶ νεοδμηῆτες γάμοι.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

λέχους σφε κήξίωσας οὔνεκα κτανεῖν;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σμικρὸν γυναικὶ πῆμα τοῦτ' εἶναι δοκεῖς;

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ἦτις γε σώφρων· σοὶ δὲ πάντ' ἐστὶν κακά.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

1370 οἶδ' οὐκέτ' εἰσὶ τοῦτο γάρ σε δήξεται.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

οἶδ' εἰσὶν, οἶμοι, σῶ κάρα μιάστορες.

1365 οὔτοι νιν a: οὔτοι νιν vel οὐ τοίνυν b γ' Hermann:
σφ' C

MEDEA

JASON

Yes, and you also have grief and are a sharer in my misfortune.

MEDEA

Of course, but the pain is worthwhile if you cannot mock me.

JASON

Children, what an evil mother you got!

MEDEA

Children, how you have perished by your father's fault!

JASON

It was not my hand, you know, that killed them.

MEDEA

No: it was the outrage of your new marriage.

JASON

Did you really think it right to kill them because of a marriage?

MEDEA

Do you imagine that loss of this is a trivial grief for a woman?

JASON

For a woman of sense, yes. But you find everything a disaster.

MEDEA

But the children are dead: this will wound you to the quick.

JASON

They live, alas, as spirits to take vengeance on your crimes!

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

ἴσασι ὅστις ἤρξε πημονῆς θεοί.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ἴσασι δῆτα σὴν γ' ἀπόπτυστον φρένα.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

στύγει πικρὰν δὲ βάξιν ἐχθαίρω σέθεν.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

1375 καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σὴν ῥάδιοι δ' ἀπαλλαγαί.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

πῶς οὖν; τί δράσω; κάρτα γὰρ καγὼ θέλω.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

θάψαι νεκρούς μοι τούσδε καὶ κλαῦσαι πάρες.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ σφας τῆδ' ἐγὼ θάψω χερί,
 1380 φέρουσ' ἐς Ἴηρας τέμενος Ἀκράϊας θεοῦ,
 ὡς μὴ τις αὐτοὺς πολεμίων καθυβρίση
 τύμβους ἀνασπῶν γῆ δὲ τῆδε Σισύφου
 σεμνὴν ἑορτὴν καὶ τέλη προσάψομεν
 τὸ λοιπὸν ἀντὶ τοῦδε δυσσεβοῦς φόνου.

αὐτὴ δὲ γαῖαν εἶμι τὴν Ἐρεχθέως,
 1385 Αἰγεί συνοικήσουσα τῷ Πανδίοιο.
 σὺ δ', ὥσπερ εἰκός, καθθανῆ κακὸς κακῶς,
 Ἄργουὺς κἀρα σὸν λευβάνῳ πεπληγμένους,
 πικρὰς τελευτὰς τῶν ἐμῶν γάμων ἰδῶν.

MEDEA

MEDEA

The gods know who struck the first blow.

JASON

Yes, they know indeed your loathesome heart.

MEDEA

Hate on! I detest the hateful sound of your voice.

JASON

And I of yours. To part will be easy.

MEDEA

How? What shall I do? For that is very much my wish as well.

JASON

Allow me to bury these dead children and to mourn them.

MEDEA

Certainly not. I shall bury them with my own hand, taking them to the sanctuary of Hera Akraia,²² so that none of my enemies may outrage them by tearing up their graves. And I shall enjoin on this land of Sisyphus a solemn festival and holy rites for all time to come in payment for this unholy murder.²³ As for myself, I shall go to the land of Erechtheus to live with Aegeus, son of Pandion. But you, as is fitting, shall die the miserable death of a coward, struck on the head by a piece of the Argo, having seen the bitter result of your marriage to me.

²² Hera as worshipped on the Acrocorinth.

²³ In historical times, there appears to have been such a festival, in which young boys and girls of noble family spent a year in the temple precinct.

EURIPIDES

ΙΑΣΩΝ

1390 ἀλλά σ' Ἐρινὺς ὀλέσειε τέκνων
 φονία τε Δίκη.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

τίς δὲ κλύει σοῦ θεὸς ἢ δαίμων,
 τοῦ ψευδόρκου καὶ ξιναπάτου;

ΙΑΣΩΝ

φεῦ φεῦ, μυσαρὰ καὶ παιδολέτορ.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

στείχε πρὸς οἴκους καὶ θάπτ' ἄλοχον.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

1395 στείχω, δισσωὼν γ' ἄμορος τέκνων.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὐπω θρηνεῖς· μένε καὶ γῆρας.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

ὦ τέκνα φίλτατα.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

μητρί γε, σοὶ δ' οὔ.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

κάπειτ' ἔκανες;

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

σέ γε πημαίνουσ'.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

1400 ὦμοι, φιλίου χρῆζω στόματος
 παίδων ὃ τάλας προσπτύξασθαι.

MEDEA

JASON

May the Fury that punishes your children's death, and Justice the murderous,²⁴ destroy you utterly!

MEDEA

What god or power above will listen to you, who broke your oath and deceived a stranger?

JASON

Pah! Unclean wretch! Child-murderer!

MEDEA

Go home! Bury your wife!

JASON

Yes—bereft of my two sons—I go.

MEDEA

Your mourning has yet to begin. Wait until you are old!

JASON

O children most dear!

MEDEA

Yes, to their mother, not to you.

JASON

And so you killed them?

MEDEA

Yes, to cause you grief.

JASON

Alas, how I long for the dear faces of my children, to enfold them in my arms!

²⁴ Both the Erinyes (Fury) and Dikê (Justice) are agents of Zeus.

EURIPIDES

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

νῦν σφε προσαιδᾶς, νῦν ἀσπάζῃ,
τότ' ἀπωσάμενος.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

δός μοι πρὸς θεῶν
μαλακοῦ χρωτὸς ψαῦσαι τέκνων.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

οὐκ ἔστι μάτην ἔπος ἔρριπται.

ΙΑΣΩΝ

- 1405 Ζεῦ, τάδ' ἀκούεις ὡς ἀπελαινόμεθ'
οἶά τε πάσχομεν ἐκ τῆς μυσαρᾶς
καὶ παιδοφόνου τῆσδε λεαίνης;
ἀλλ' ὅποσον γοῦν πάρα καὶ δύναμαι
τάδε καὶ θρηγῶ κάπιθεάζω,
1410 μαρτυρόμενος δαίμονας ὡς μοι
τέκνα κτείνας' ἀποκωλύεις
ψαῦσαί τε χεροῖν θάψαι τε νεκρούς,
οὓς μήποτ' ἐγὼ φύσας ὄφελον
πρὸς σοῦ φθιμένους ἐπιδέσθαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1415 πολλῶν ταμίας Ζεὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἔτελέσθη,
τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἡῦρε θεός.
τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πράγμα.

MEDEA

MEDEA

Now you speak to them, now you greet them, when before
you thrust them from you.

JASON

By the gods, I beg you, let me touch the tender flesh of my
children!

MEDEA

It cannot be. Your words are uttered in vain.

JASON

Zeus, do you hear this, how I am driven away and what
treatment I endure from this unclean, child-murdering
monster? But with all the strength I have, I make my la-
ment and adjure the gods, calling the heavenly powers to
witness that you killed my sons and now forbid me to touch
them or to bury their bodies. Oh that I had never begotten
them, never seen them dead at your hands!

*MEDEA with the corpses of her children is borne aloft away
from Corinth. Exit JASON by Eisodos B.*

CHORUS LEADER

Zeus on Olympus has many things in his treasure house,
and many are the things the gods accomplish against our
expectation. What men look for is not brought to pass, but
a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected. Such is the
outcome of this story.

Exit CHORUS by Eisodos B.

1415-19 del. Hartung, Diggle: defendi TAPA 117 (1987), 268f.