

Greek Literature Weekend in Gloucester

16-17 June 2018

Course materials



Paris carries off Helen

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Session 1. Introductory

I. The Greek alphabet

Capital	Lower case	Name	Pronunciation	Transliteration
A	α	alpha	lard/cup	a
B	β	beta	bat	b
Γ	γ	gamma	goat	g
Δ	δ	delta	dog	d
E	ε	epsilon	bet	e
Z	ζ	zeta	wisdom/lids	z
H	η	eta	nag	ē
Θ	θ	theta	thin	th
I	ι	iota	bid/eat	i
K	κ	kappa	kit	c/k
Λ	λ	lambda	lot	l
M	μ	mu	mat	m
N	ν	nu	not	n
E	ξ	xi	axe	x
O	ο	omicron	log	o
Π	π	pi	pat	p
P	ρ	rho	rot	rh/r
Σ	σ/ς	sigma	sit	s
T	τ	tau	top	t
Υ	υ	upsilon	Fr. lune	y
Φ	φ	phi	fat	ph
X	χ	chi	loch	ch/kh
Ψ	ψ	psi	dypsomaniac	ps
Ω	ω	omega	raw	ō

II. Greek alphabet exercise

Transliterate using the rules above and suggest English words derived from these:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. κόσμος | 2. μοῖρα | 3. ὄνομα (ὀνόματ-) | 4. χορός |
| 5. κακός | 6. κάλλος | 7. σῶμα (σώματ-) | 8. ἀμαθία |
| 9. ψυχή | 10. λόγος | 11. πρᾶγμα (πραγματ-) | 12. ἡγεμών |
| 13. ἐναντίος | 14. ἴσος | 15. ἀνήρ (ἄνδρ-) | 16. πατήρ |
| 17. πόλις | 18. σοφία | 19. γυνή (γυναῖκ-) | 20. ἔργον |

III. Dramatic Parts

Tragedy (session 4)

Table A: 1. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* [Clytemnestra, Chorus, Aegisthus]

Table B: 2. Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* [Clytaemestra, Orestes, Pylades, Follower]
4. Sophocles *Electra* [Chorus, Clytemnestra, Electra]

Table C: 3. Euripides *Electra* [Electra, Clytemnestra, Chorus]

Tragi-comedy (session 7)

Table A: 3. 526-651 [Helen, Menelaus, 1st Messenger]

Table B: 2. 435-525 [Old Woman, Menelaus, Chorus]

Table C: 1. 1-67 [Helen]

Comedy (session 8)

Table A: 3. 1001-1231 [Archer, Inlaw, Echo, Euripides, Chorus-leader]

Table B: 1. 1-278 [Inlaw, Euripides, Servant, Agathon]

Table C: 2. 848-949 [Inlaw, Critylla, Euripides, Prytanis]

2. Mythography: Apollodorus *Library of Greek Mythology*

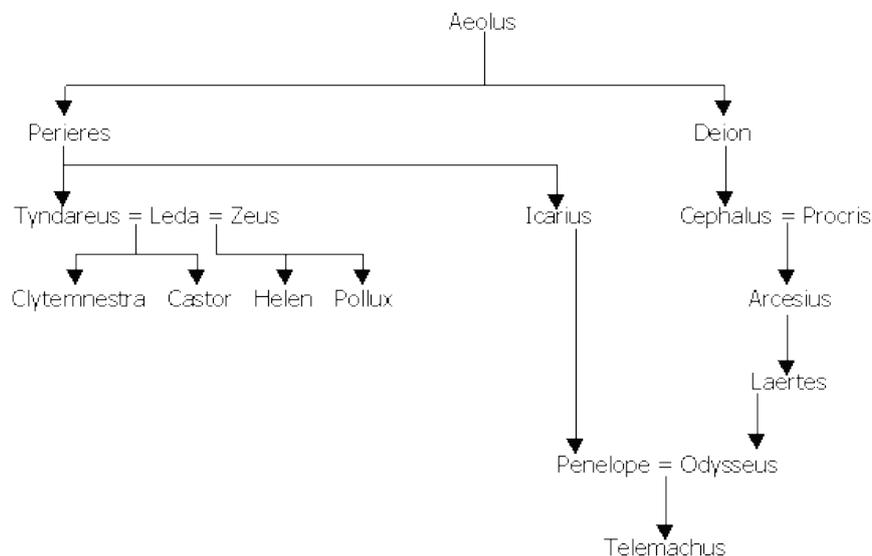
Tyndareus, Leda, and their children

Library III.10 6. Tyndareus and Leda had some daughters, namely, Timandra, who became the wife of Echemos, and Clytemnestra, who became the wife of Agamemnon, and also Phylonoe, who was made immortal by Artemis.

7 Taking the form of a swan, Zeus had intercourse with Leda, as did Tyndareus on the same night, and she bore Polydeuces and Helen to Zeus, and Castor [and Clytemnestra¹] to Tyndareus. According to some, however, Helen was a daughter of Zeus by Nemesis; for when Nemesis tried to avoid intercourse with Zeus by changing herself into a goose, Zeus in turn took the form of a swan and had intercourse with her. As the fruit of their intercourse, she laid an egg, which was discovered in the woods by a shepherd, who took it to Leda and presented it to her. She placed it in a chest and kept it safe, and when in due time Helen hatched out, Leda brought her up as her own daughter.

Helen's early adventures

Epitome 1.23 Having made a compact with Pirithous that they would marry daughters of Zeus, Theseus, with the help of Pirithous, carried off Helen from Sparta for himself, when she was twelve years old, and in the endeavor to win Persephone as a bride for Pirithous he went down to Hades. And the Dioscuri, with the Lacedaemonians and Arcadians, captured Athens and carried away Helen, and with her Aethra, daughter of Pittheus, into captivity; but Demophon and Acamas fled.



¹ and *Clytemnestra*: most editors favour this addition; but since Clytemnestra has been mentioned already with Timandra and Phylonoe as one of Tyndareus' children by Leda, it cannot be assumed that Ap. must have listed her as one of the children conceived on this occasion (and Carriere remarks that she is not always included in comparable lists, e.g. VM 2. 132).

The Trojan War

The judgement of Paris and abduction of Helen

Epitome 3.1 Afterwards Alexander abducted Helen, in accordance, some say, with the will of Zeus, so that his daughter would become famous for having brought Europe and Asia to war, or, as others have said, to ensure that the race of demigods would be raised to glory. 2 For one of these reasons,² Eris threw an apple in front of Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite as a prize for the most beautiful, and Zeus instructed Hermes to take them to Alexander on Mount Ida, to be judged by him for their beauty. They promised to give Alexander gifts; Hera promised him universal dominion if she were preferred above all other women, While Athene offered victory in war, and Aphrodite the hand of Helen. He decided in favour of Aphrodite, and sailed to Sparta with ships built by Phereclos. 3 He was entertained for nine days by Menelaos, and on the tenth, when Menelaos departed for Crete to celebrate the funeral of his maternal grandfather Catreus, Alexander persuaded Helen to go away with him. She abandoned Hermione, who was nine years old at the time, and loading most of the treasures on board, she set out to sea with him by night. 4 Hera sent a violent storm against them, which forced them to put in at Sidon; and fearing that he might be pursued, Alexander delayed a long while in Phoenicia and Cyprus. When he thought that there was no further risk of pursuit, he went on to Troy with Helen. 5 It is said by some, however, that Helen was stolen by Hermes in obedience to the will of Zeus and taken to Egypt, where she was entrusted to Proteus, king of the Egyptians, for safe keeping, and Alexander went to Troy with a phantom of Helen fashioned from clouds.

The events at Aulis

Epitome 3. 21 When, after sailing over from Argos, they arrived in Aulis for the second time, the fleet was held back by adverse winds. Calchas declared that they would be unable to sail unless the most beautiful of Agamemnon's daughters was offered in sacrifice to Artemis; for the goddess was angry with Agamemnon, because he had said when shooting a deer at a hunt on Icarion, 'Not even Artemis [could have shot as well as that],' and because Atreus had failed to sacrifice the golden lamb to her. 22 On hearing this oracle, Agamemnon sent Odysseus and Talthybios to Clytemnestra to ask her for Iphigeneia, claiming that he had promised to give her in marriage to Achilles as a reward for taking part in the expedition. So Clytemnestra sent her off, and Agamemnon brought her to the altar and was just about to slaughter her when Artemis carried her off to the land of the Taurians and installed her there as her priestess, substituting a deer for her at the altar. According to some accounts, Artemis made her immortal.

² *For one of these reasons*: Homer remarks enigmatically in *Il.* 1. 5 that the war fulfilled the will of Zeus, but offers no explanation. Elsewhere two main reasons are adduced (which need not be exclusive), one, as here, that it was to be a source of glory for those involved, and another that Zeus wanted to lighten the burden on the Earth, which was weighed down by an excessive number of mortals (thus the Cypria as quoted in *sc. Il.* 1. 5; some included the Theban War as part of the plan, *sc. Eur. Orest.* 1641).

The sons of Pelops

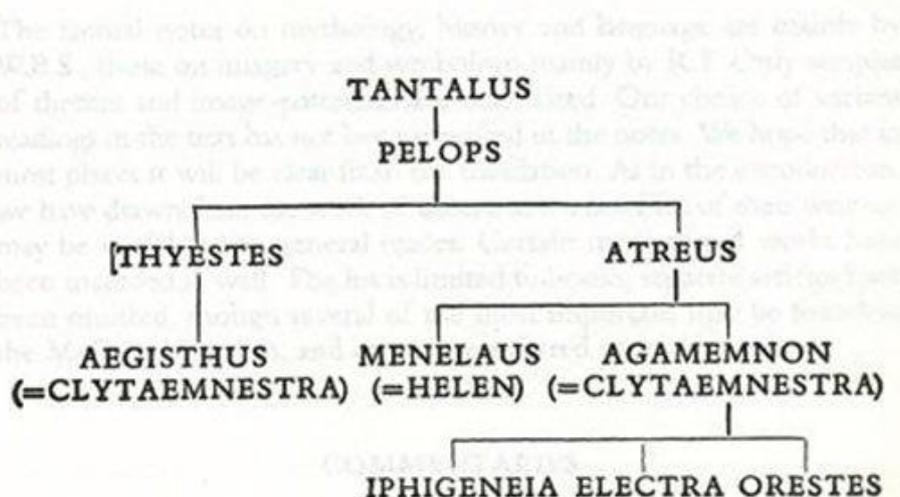
Epitome 2.10 The sons of Pelops were Pittheus, Atreus, Thyestes, and others. Now the wife of Atreus was Aerope, daughter of Catreus, and she loved Thyestes. And Atreus once vowed to sacrifice to Artemis the finest of his flocks; but when a golden lamb appeared, they say that he neglected to perform his vow, [11] and having choked the lamb, he deposited it in a box and kept it there, and Aerope gave it to Thyestes, by whom she had been debauched. For the Mycenaeans had received an oracle which bade them choose a Pelopid for their king, and they had sent for Atreus and Thyestes. And when a discussion took place concerning the kingdom, Thyestes declared to the multitude that the kingdom ought to belong to him who owned the golden lamb, and when Atreus agreed, Thyestes produced the lamb and was made king. [12] But Zeus sent Hermes to Atreus and told him to stipulate with Thyestes that Atreus should be king if the sun should go backward; and when Thyestes agreed, the sun set in the east; hence the deity having plainly attested the usurpation of Thyestes, Atreus got the kingdom and banished Thyestes. [13] But afterwards being apprized of the adultery, he sent a herald to Thyestes with a proposal of accommodation; and when he had lured Thyestes by a pretence of friendship, he slaughtered the sons, Aglaus, Callileon, and Orchomenus, whom Thyestes had by a Naiad nymph, though they had sat down as suppliants on the altar of Zeus. And having cut them limb from limb and boiled them, he served them up to Thyestes without the extremities; and when Thyestes had eaten heartily of them, he showed him the extremities, and cast him out of the country. [14] But seeking by all means to pay Atreus out, Thyestes inquired of the oracle on the subject, and received an answer that it could be done if he were to beget a son by intercourse with his own daughter. He did so accordingly, and begot Aegisthus by his daughter. And Aegisthus, when he was grown to manhood and had learned that he was a son of Thyestes, killed Atreus, and restored the kingdom to Thyestes. [15] “But³ the nurse took Agamemnon and Menelaus to Polyphides, lord of Sicyon, who again sent them to Oeneus, the Aetolian. Not long afterwards Tyndareus brought them back again, and they drove away Thyestes to dwell in Cytheria, after that they had taken an oath of him at the altar of Hera, to which he had fled. And they became the sons-in-law of Tyndareus by marrying his daughters, Agamemnon getting Clytaemnestra to wife, after he had slain her spouse Tantalus, the son of Thyestes, together with his newborn babe, while Menelaus got Helen.”

³ The passage translated in this paragraph does not occur in our present text of Apollodorus, which is here defective. It is found in Tzetzes, *Chiliades* i.456-465, who probably borrowed it from Apollodorus; for in the preceding lines Tzetzes narrates the crimes of Atreus and Thyestes in agreement with Apollodorus and actually cites him as his authority, if, as seems nearly certain, we should read Apollodorus for Apollonius in his text. The restoration of the passage to its present place in the text of Apollodorus is due to the German editor R. Wagner. Here after describing how Aegisthus had murdered Atreus and placed his own father Thyestes on the throne of Mycenae, Apollodorus tells us how the nurse of Atreus's two children, Agamemnon and Menelaus, saved the lives of her youthful charges by conveying them to Sicyon. The implied youthfulness of Agamemnon and Menelaus at the time of the death of their father Atreus is inconsistent with the narrative of Hyginus, *Fab.* 88, who tells how Atreus had sent his two sons abroad to find and arrest Thyestes.

[16] And Agamemnon reigned over the Mycenaeans and married Clytaemnestra, daughter of Tyndareus, after slaying her former husband Tantalus, son of Thyestes, with his child. And there were born to Agamemnon a son Orestes, and daughters, Chrysothemis, Electra, and Iphigenia. And Menelaus married Helen and reigned over Sparta, Tyndareus having ceded the kingdom to him.

3. But afterwards Alexander carried off Helen, as some say, because such was the will of Zeus, in order that his daughter might be famous for having embroiled Europe and Asia; or, as others have said, that the race of the demigods might be exalted. [2] For one of these reasons Strife threw an apple as a prize of beauty to be contended for by Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite; and Zeus commanded Hermes to lead them to Alexander on Ida in order to be judged by him. And they promised to give Alexander gifts. Hera said that if she were preferred to all women, she would give him the kingdom over all men; and Athena promised victory in war, and Aphrodite the hand of Helen. And he decided in favour of Aphrodite; and sailed away to Sparta with ships built by Phereclus. [3] For nine days he was entertained by Menelaus; but on the tenth day, Menelaus having gone on a journey to Crete to perform the obsequies of his mother's father Catreus, Alexander persuaded Helen to go off with him. And she abandoned Hermione, then nine years old, and putting most of the property on board, she set sail with him by night. [4] But Hera sent them a heavy storm which forced them to put in at Sidon. And fearing lest he should be pursued, Alexander spent much time in Phoenicia and Cyprus. But when he thought that all chance of pursuit was over, he came to Troy with Helen. [5] But some say that Hermes, in obedience to the will of Zeus, stole Helen and carried her to Egypt, and gave her to Proteus, king of the Egyptians, to guard, and that Alexander repaired to Troy with a phantom of Helen fashioned out of clouds.

THE GENEALOGY OF ORESTES ACCORDING TO AESCHYLUS



The later history of the Pelopids

Epitome 6.23 When Agamemnon arrived back at Mycenae with Cassandra, he was killed by Aigisthos and Clytemnestra; for she gave him a tunic without sleeves or a neck, and he was struck down as he tried to put it on. Aigisthos became king of Mycenae, and they killed Cassandra too. 24 But Electra, one of the daughters of Agamemnon, stole away her brother Orestes, and entrusted him to Strophios the Phocian to rear; and he brought him up with his own son, Pylades. On reaching manhood, Orestes went to Delphi to ask the god whether he should take vengeance on his father's murderers. 25 When this was authorized by the god, he left Mycenae in secret, accompanied by Pylades, and killed his mother and Aigisthos. Not long afterwards, he was struck by madness, and pursued by the Furies, he went to Athens, where he was put on trial in the Areiopagos. According to some, he was indicted by the Furies, or according to others, by Tyndareus, or again, by Erigone, the daughter of Aigisthos and Clytemnestra, and when the votes at his trial were evenly divided, he was acquitted. 26 When Orestes asked the oracle how he could be delivered from his affliction, the god replied that this would be achieved if he fetched the wooden statue that lay in the land of the Taurians. Now the Taurians are part of the Scythian race, who murder strangers and cast their bodies into the sacred fire. The fire lay in the sanctuary and rose up from Hades through a certain rock. 27 So when Orestes arrived with Pylades in the land of the Taurians, they were discovered, captured, and taken in chains to Thoas, the king, who dispatched the pair of them to the priestess. But Orestes was recognized by his sister, who was performing the rites amongst the Taurians, and he fled with her, taking the wooden statue with him. It was brought to Athens, where it is now called the Tauropolos Statue; but it is said by some that Orestes was driven by a storm to the island of Rhodes, [where the statue remained] and was dedicated in a defensive wall in obedience to an oracle. 23 Returning to Mycenae, he united his sister Electra to Pylades, while he himself married Hermione, or according to some, Erigone, and became the father of Tisamenos. He died from a snake-bite at Oresteion in Arcadia. 29 Menelaos, with a total of five ships under his command, put in at Sounion, a headland of Attica; and when he was driven away from there by the winds towards Crete, he was carried a great distance, and wandered along the coasts of Libya, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Egypt collecting a wealth of treasure. 30 According to some accounts, he discovered Helen at the court of Proteus, king of Egypt; for until that time, Menelaos had possessed only a phantom of her, fashioned from clouds. After wandering for eight years, he sailed back to Mycenae, where he found Orestes, who was there after avenging his father's murder. From there, he went to Sparta and recovered his own kingdom; and after he had been made immortal by Hera, he went to the Elysian Fields with Helen.

3. Homer: Helen in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

1. *Iliad* 3 tr. Fagles

And now a messenger went to white-armed Helen too,
Iris, looking for all the world like Hector's sister
wed to Antenor's son, Helicaon's bride Laodice,
the loveliest daughter Priam ever bred.

And Iris came on Helen in her rooms . . . 150

weaving a growing web, a dark red folding robe,
working into the weft the endless bloody struggles
stallion-breaking Trojans and Argives armed in bronze
had suffered all for her at the god of battle's hands.
Iris, racing the wind, brushed close and whispered,
"Come, dear girl, come quickly --

so you can see what wondrous things they're doing,
stallion-breaking Trojans and Argives armed in bronze!
A moment ago they longed to kill each other, longed
for heartbreaking, inhuman warfare on the plain.

Now those very warriors stand at ease, in silence-
the fighting's stopped, they lean against their shields,
their long lances stuck in the ground beside them.

Think of it: Paris and Menelaus loved by Ares
go to fight it out with their rugged spears --
all for you — and the man who wins that duel,
you'll be called his wife!"

And with those words
the goddess filled her heart with yearning warm and deep
for her husband long ago, her city and her parents.

Quickly cloaking herself in shimmering linen, 170
out of her rooms she rushed, live tears welling,
and not alone— two of her women followed close behind,
Aethra, Pittheus' daughter, and Clymene, eyes wide,
and they soon reached the looming Scaean Gates.

And there they were, gathered around Priam,
Panthous and Thymoetes, Lampus and Clytius,
Hicetaon the gray aide of Ares, then those two
with unflinching good sense, Ucalegon and Antenor.
The old men of the realm held seats above the gates.
Long years had brought their fighting days to a halt 180
but they were eloquent speakers still, clear as cicadas

settled on treetops, lifting their voices through the forest,
rising softly, falling, dying away . . . So they waited,
the old chiefs of Troy, as they sat aloft the tower.
And catching sight of Helen moving along the ramparts,
they murmured one to another, gentle, winged words:
"Who on earth could blame them? Ah, no wonder
the men of Troy and Argives under arms have suffered
years of agony all for her, for such a woman.
Beauty, terrible beauty!
A deathless goddess — so she strikes our eyes!

190

But still,
ravishing as she is, let her go home in the long ships
and not be left behind . . . for us and our children
down the years an irresistible sorrow."

They murmured low
but Priam, raising his voice, called across to Helen,
"Come over here, dear child. Sit in front of me,
so you can see your husband of long ago,
your kinsmen and your people.
I don't blame you. I hold the gods to blame.
They are the ones who brought this war upon me,
devastating war against the Achaeans—

200

Here, come closer,
tell me the name of that tremendous fighter. Look,
who's that Achaean there, so stark and grand?
Many others afield are much taller, true,
but I have never yet set eyes on one so regal,
so majestic . . . That man must be a king!"

And Helen the radiance of women answered Priam,
"I revere you so, dear father, dread you too --
if only death had pleased me then, grim death,
that day I followed your son to Troy, forsaking
my marriage bed, my kinsmen and my child,
my favorite, now full-grown,
and the lovely comradeship of women my own age.
Death never came, so now I can only waste away in tears.
But about your question—yes, I have the answer.
That man is Atreus' son Agamemnon, lord of empires,
both a mighty king and a strong spearman too,
and he used to be my kinsman, whore that I am!

210

There was a world . . . or was it all a dream?"

Her voice broke but the old king, lost in wonder, 220
cried out, "How lucky you are, son of Atreus,
child of fortune, your destiny so blessed!
Look at the vast Achaean armies you command!
Years ago I visited Phrygia rife with vineyards,
saw the Phrygian men with their swarming horses there—
multitudes—the armies of Otreus, Mygdon like a god,
encamped that time along the Sangarius River banks.
And I took my stand among them, comrade-in-arms
the day the Amazons struck, a match for men in war.
But not even those hordes could match these hordes of yours, 230
your fiery-eyed Achaeans!"

And sighting Odysseus next
the old king questioned Helen, "Come, dear child,
tell me of that one too—now who is he?
Shorter than Atreus' son Agamemnon, clearly,
but broader across the shoulders, through the chest.
There, you see? His armor's heaped on the green field
but the man keeps ranging the ranks of fighters like a ram --
yes, he looks to me like a thick-fleeced bellwether ram
making his way through a big mass of sheep-flocks,
shining silver-gray."

Helen the child of Zeus replied, 240
"That's Laertes' son, the great tactician Odysseus.
He was bred in the land of Ithaca. Rocky ground
and he's quick at every treachery under the sun—
the man of twists and turns."

Helen paused
and the shrewd Antenor carried on her story:
"Straight to the point, my lady, very true.
Once in the past he came our way, King Odysseus
heading the embassy they sent for your release,
together with Menelaus dear to Ares.
I hosted them, treated them warmly in my halls 250
and learned the ways of both, their strategies, their traits.
Now, when they mingled with our Trojans in assembly,
standing side-by-side, Menelaus' shoulders
mounted over his friend's in height and spread,
when both were seated Odysseus looked more lordly.

But when they spun their appeals before us all,
Menelaus spoke out quickly—his words racing,
few but clear as a bell, nothing long-winded
or off the mark, though in fact the man was younger.
But when Odysseus sprang up, the famed tactician 260
would just stand there, staring down, hard,
his eyes fixed on the ground,
never shifting his scepter back and forth,
clutching it stiff and still like a mindless man.
You'd think him a sullen fellow or just plain fool.
But when he let loose that great voice from his chest
and the words came piling on like a driving winter blizzard-
then no man alive could rival Odysseus! Odysseus . . .
we no longer gazed in wonder at his looks."

Catching sight

of a third fighter, Ajax, the old king asked her next, 270
"Who's that other Achaean, so powerful, so well-built?
He towers over the Argives, his head, his massive shoulders!"

And Helen in all her radiance, her long robes, replied,
"Why, that's the giant Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans.
And Idomeneus over there — standing with his Cretans —
like a god, you see? And the Cretan captains
form a ring around him. How often Menelaus,
my good soldier, would host him in our halls,
in the old days, when he'd sail across from Crete.
And now I see them all, the fiery-eyed Achaeans, 280
I know them all by heart, and I could tell their names . . .
but two I cannot find, and they're captains of the armies,
Castor breaker of horses and the hardy boxer Polydeuces.
My blood brothers. Mother bore them both. Perhaps
they never crossed over from Lacedaemon's lovely hills
or come they did, sailing here in the deep-sea ships,
but now they refuse to join the men in battle,
dreading the scorn, the curses hurled at me ..."

So she wavered, but the earth already held them fast,
long dead in the life-giving earth of Lacedaemon, 290
the dear land of their fathers.

Lunging at Paris, he grabbed his horsehair crest,
swung him round, started to drag him into Argive lines
and now the braided chin-strap holding his helmet tight 430
was gouging his soft throat—Paris was choking, strangling.

Now he'd have hauled him off and won undying glory
but Aphrodite, Zeus's daughter quick to the mark,
snapped the rawhide strap, cut from a bludgeoned ox,
and the helmet came off empty in Menelaus' fist.
Whirling it round the fighter sent it flying
into his Argives scrambling fast to retrieve it—
back at his man he sprang, enraged with brazen spear,
mad for the kill but Aphrodite snatched Paris away, 440
easy work for a god, wrapped him in swirls of mist
and set him down in his bedroom filled with scent.

Then off she went herself to summon Helen
and found her there on the steep, jutting tower
with a troop of Trojan women clustered round her.
The goddess reached and tugged at her fragrant robe,
whispering low, for all the world like an old crone,
the old weaver who, when they lived in Lacedaemon,
wove her fine woolens and Helen held her dear.
Like her to the life, immortal Love invited,
"Quickly—Paris is calling for you, come back home! 450
There he is in the bedroom, the bed with inlaid rings—
he's glistening in all his beauty and his robes!
You'd never dream he's come from fighting a man,
you'd think he's off to a dance or slipped away
from the dancing, stretching out at ease."

Enticing so
that the heart in Helen's breast began to race.
She knew the goddess at once, the long lithe neck,
the smooth full breasts and the fire in those eyes—
and she was amazed, she burst out with her name:
"Maddening one, my Goddess, oh what now? 460

Lusting to lure me to my ruin yet again?
Where will you drive me next?
Off and away to other grand, luxurious cities,
out to Phrygia, out to Maeonia's tempting country?
Have you a favorite mortal man there too?

But why now? —

because Menelaus has beaten your handsome Paris
and hateful as I am, he longs to take me home?
Is that why you beckon here beside me now
with all the immortal cunning in your heart?
Well, go to him yourself—you hover beside him! 470
Abandon the gods' high road and be a mortal!
Never set foot again on Mount Olympus, never! —
suffer for Paris, protect Paris, for eternity . . .
until he makes you his wedded wife — that or his slave.
Not I, I'll never go back again. It would be wrong,
disgraceful to share that coward's bed once more.
The women of Troy would scorn me down the years.
Oh the torment—never-ending heartbreak!”

But Aphrodite rounded on her in fury: 480
“Don't provoke me—wretched, headstrong girl!
Or in my immortal rage I may just toss you over,
hate you as I adore you now — with a vengeance.
I might make you the butt of hard, withering hate
from both sides at once, Trojans and Achaeans—
then your fate can tread you down to dust!”

So she threatened
and Helen the daughter of mighty Zeus was terrified.
Shrouding herself in her glinting silver robes
she went along, in silence. None of her women
saw her go . . . The goddess led the way.

And once they arrived at Paris' sumptuous halls 490
the attendants briskly turned to their own work
as Helen in all her radiance climbed the steps
to the bedroom under the high, vaulting roof.
There Aphrodite quickly brought her a chair,
the goddess herself with her everlasting smile,
and set it down, face-to-face with Paris.

And there Helen sat, Helen the child of Zeus
whose shield is storm and lightning, glancing away,
lashing out at her husband: "So, home from the wars!
Oh would to god you'd died there, brought down 500
by that great soldier, my husband long ago.
And how you used to boast, year in, year out,
that you were the better man than fighting Menelaus
in power, arm and spear! So why not go back now,

hurl your challenge at Menelaus dear to Ares,
fight it out together, man-to-man again?

Wait,

take my advice and call a halt right here:
no more battling with fiery-haired Menelaus,
pitting strength against strength in single combat—
madness. He just might impale you on his spear!"

510

But Paris replied at once to Helen's challenge:
"No more, dear one—don't rake me with your taunts,
myself and all my courage. This time, true,
Menelaus has won the day, thanks to Athena.
I'll bring him down tomorrow.
Even we have gods who battle on our side.

But come --

let's go to bed, let's lose ourselves in love!
Never has longing for you overwhelmed me so,
no, not even then, I tell you, that first time
when I swept you up from the lovely hills of Lacedaemon,
sailed you off and away in the racing deep-sea ships
and we went and locked in love on Rocky Island . . .
That was nothing to how I hunger for you now—
irresistible longing lays me low!"

520

He led the way to bed. His wife went with him.
And now, while the two made love in the large carved bed,
Menelaus stalked like a wild beast, up and down the lines—
where could he catch a glimpse of magnificent Paris?

2. *Odyssey* 4 tr. Lattimore

Now Helen, who was descended of Zeus, thought of the next thing.
Into the wine of which they were drinking she cast a medicine 220
of heartsease, free of gall, to make one forget all sorrows,
and whoever had drunk it down once it had been mixed in the wine bowl,
for the day that he drank it would have no tear roll down his face,
not if his mother died and his father died, not if men
murdered a brother or a beloved son in his presence
with the bronze, and he with his own eyes saw it. Such were
the subtle medicines Zeus' daughter had in her possessions,
good things, and given to her by the wife of Thon, Polydamna
of Egypt, where the fertile earth produces the greatest number
of medicines, many good in mixture, many malignant, 230
and every man is a doctor there and more understanding
than men elsewhere. These people are of the race of Paiéon.
Now when she had put the medicine in, and told them to pour it,
taking up the story again she began to speak to them:
'Son of Atreus, dear to Zeus, Menelaos: and you who
are here, children of noble fathers; yet divine Zeus sometimes
gives out good, or sometimes evil; he can do anything.
Sit here now in the palace and take your dinner and listen
to me and be entertained. What I will tell you is plausible.
I could not tell you all the number nor could I name them, 240
all that make up the exploits of enduring Odysseus,
but here is a task such as that strong man endured and accomplished
in the Trojan country where you Achaians suffered miseries.
He flagellated himself with degrading strokes, then threw on
a worthless sheet about his shoulders. He looked like a servant.
So he crept into the wide-wayed city of the men he was fighting,
disguising himself in the likeness of somebody else, a beggar,
one who was unlike himself beside the ships of the Achaians,
but in his likeness crept into the Trojans' city, and they all
were taken in. I alone recognized him even in this form, 250
and I questioned him, but he in his craftiness eluded me;
but after I had bathed him and anointed him with olive oil
and put some clothing upon him, after I had sworn a great oath
not to disclose before the Trojans that this was Odysseus
until he had made his way back to the fast ships and the shelters,
then at last he told me all the purpose of the Achaians,
and after striking many Trojans down with the thin bronze

edge, he went back to the Argives and brought back much information.
 The rest of the Trojan women cried out shrill, but my heart
 was happy, my heart had changed by now and was for going back 260
 home again, and I grieved for the madness that Aphrodite
 bestowed when she led me there away from my own dear country,
 forsaking my own daughter, my bedchamber, and my husband,
 a man who lacked no endowment either of brains or beauty.'
 Then in answer fair-haired Menelaos said to her:
 'Yes, my wife, all this that you said is fair and orderly.
 In my time I have studied the wit and counsel of many
 men who were heroes, and I have been over much of the world, yet
 nowhere have I seen with my own eyes anyone like him,
 nor known an inward heart like the heart of enduring Odysseus. 270
 Here is the way that strong man acted and the way he endured
 action, inside the wooden horse, where we who were greatest
 of the Argives all were sitting and bringing death and destruction
 to the Trojans. Then you came there, Helen; you will have been moved by
 some divine spirit who wished to grant glory to the Trojans,
 and Deiphobos, a godlike man, was with you when you came.
 Three times you walked around the hollow ambush, feeling it,
 and you called out, naming them by name, to the best of the Danaans,
 and made your voice sound like the voice of the wife of each of the Argives.
 Now I myself and the son of Tydeus and great Odysseus 280
 were sitting there in the middle of them and we heard you crying
 aloud, and Diomedes and I started up, both minded
 to go outside, or else to answer your voice from inside,
 but Odysseus pulled us back and held us, for all our eagerness.
 Then all the other sons of the Achaians were silent:
 there was only one, it was Antiklos, who was ready to answer,
 but Odysseus, brutally squeezing his mouth in the clutch of his powerful
 hands, held him, and so saved the lives of all the Achaians
 until such time as Pallas Athene led you off from us.'
 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer: 290
 'Great Menelaos, son of Atreus, leader of the people:
 so much the worse; for none of all this kept dismal destruction
 from him, not even if he had a heart of iron within him.
 But come, take us away to our beds, so that at last now
 we can go to bed and enjoy the pleasure of sweet sleep.'

4 Tragedy: Clytemnestra's case

1. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* tr. Harrison

The palace doors swing open and reveal CLYTEMNESTRA standing over the bodies of AGAMEMNON and CASSANDRA

CLYTEMNESTRA I've spoken many words to serve the moment
which I've no compunction now to contradict.
How else but by lying and seeming so loving
could I have plotted my enemy's downfall?
How rig the net so it can't be leapt out of?
This is the bloodgrudge, the grudge's fruition
something I've brooded on quite a long time.
I've done what I meant to. I wouldn't deny it.
Over his head I cast a vast trammel
the sort that hauls in whole shoals at each casting.
He couldn't get out of his rich, flowing doom-robe.
Twice I struck him. He screamed twice, then crumpled.
Once he'd fallen I struck him a third blow,
one struck for Zeus in his role as corpse-keeper.
He lay there gasping and splurting his blood out
spraying me with dark blood-dew, dew I delight in
as much as the graincrop in the fresh gloss of rainfall
when the wheatbud's in labour and swells into birthpang
So that's how it is, old men of Argos.
Cheer if you want to. I revel in glory.
He's had his libation, spurts from his bloodvein.
He poured woe and bitterness into our wine bowl.
He's got the last goblet and laps up the lees!

CHORUS Your words revolt me. How can you trumpet,
so unlike a woman, over your manlord?

CLYTEMNESTRA Still you can treat me like a woman who's witless?
My heart's made of steel, and as I have stated
whether you like it or not there's Agamemnon.
This is the swordhand that brought him to bloodright.
I hacked down my husband. That's how it is.

CHORUS Woman! Some earthbane's driving you crazy.
To brave the damning voice of the people!
You've sown and you'll reap. Banishment. Exile.
Driven out of the country. Cursed at and spat at.

CLYTEMNESTRA O now you're ready with banishment, exile,
the people's hatred and public damnation.

And how did you punish this murderer here?
Meant as little to him as slaughtering cattle.
His sheepfolds were bursting, he butchered his she-child
the she-child I laboured to launch on her life-lot,
as some specious god-sop to settle the stormsquall.
You should have banished him for pollution,
but it's now that you start to play at stern judges.
Banishment! If you can make me. If you enforce it.
If I prove the stronger I'll teach you some wisdom.
You'll go back to school and learn some hard lessons.

CHORUS

You're maddened by powerlust, raving.
Your brain's beweeviled with blood-deeds.
Your eyes have red bloodflecks for pupils.
Your doom's to be honourless, friendless, defenceless
and stabwound for stabwound you'll reap retribution.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Then listen to this, the oath that I'll swear by.
By bloodright exacted on behalf of my she-child,
by Iphigeneia whose bloodgrudge has roosted,
by the Fury for whom Agamemnon's the booty,
I swear I'll never let fear to my fireside
as long as the hearth's kept alight by Aegisthus,
loyal friend always, my shield, my protector.
Look at him, Shaggermemnon, shameless, shaft-happy,
ogler and grinder of Troy's golden girlhood.
Look at her, spearprize, prophetess, princess,
whore of his wartent, his bash back on shipboard.
They've got their deserts the two of them now.
There he lies. She's sung her swansong and lies
as she should do stretched out alongside him,
his 'dear's' death a side-dish to the banquet of his.

CHORUS

Please send me my end now, but not too painful,
let me lurch gently out of my life-lot
now that our king's been dragged under the death-yoke.
Two women made him suffer then die.
Wild Helen causing the death-throes of thousands
now you've won your garland of glory,
a blood-wreath whose redness can't be rubbed off.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Don't call on death or surrender to torment.
Don't turn your hatred on Helen my she-kin.
Don't think she alone brought the Greeks to their ruin
as though only she were the cause of their anguish.

CHORUS As far back as Tantalus the grudge-demon started,
 harried this bloodclan from those days to these days,
 harries it now in the shapes of these she-kin,
 Clytemnestra Helen those carrion crows
 cawing discordantly over our gables
 maws crammed with corpse-flesh and carrion gobbets.

CLYTEMNESTRA Better to blame the blood-guzzling grudge-hound
 battening on us for three gorgings of gore.
 He kindles the gore-lust in the guts of our bloodkin.
 As one sore scars over new pus starts spurting.

CHORUS Insatiable bloodgrudge, gore-ogre, flesh-glutton
 goes on and on plagueing and galling
 but what isn't godsent? Zeus is behind it.
 Nothing occurs but the gods make it happen.
 King Agamemnon, how can we mourn you,
 how give a voice to bereavement and loveloss,
 there in the spider's web spewing your life out
 the impious weapon swung by the spousefiend?

CLYTEMNESTRA Spouse? No! Wife? No! What swung the swordblade's
 the semblance, the shape of this corpse's spouse only.
 Wielding the weapon was no wife and no woman
 but his family's phantom, Atreus the flesh-chef
 offering flayed these fully fledged victims
 one for each butchered and barbecued babe.

CHORUS You guiltless? You guiltless? And who'll be your witness
 though some god must have helped you fulfill the bloodgrudge.
 Black Ares amok, wading deep in the blood-bog --
 the bloodgrudge that goads him the cold joints of children.
 King Agamemnon, how can we mourn you,
 how give a voice to bereavement and loveloss,
 there in the spider's web spewing your life out,
 the impious weapon swung by the spousefiend?

CLYTEMNESTRA His death's no worse than the one he inflicted
 when he forged his own link in this house's doom-chain.
 He suffered the fate he made others suffer —
 Iphigeneia still wept for, sweet flower, his she-child.
 Don't go boasting in Hades, steel-slinger, sword-brute,
 you got back your stabwounds, all you inflicted.

CHORUS My mind's off its moorings. Its foundations are shaking.
 No longer a drizzle, a hammering bloodstorm,
 Fate strops its blade for more and more blood-bouts.

Earth Earth Earth why didn't you take me
rather than let me live to see the king humbled
sprawled out in his blood in a bathtub of silver.
Who'll bury the body? Who'll sing the gravedirge?

To CLYTEMNESTRA

You wouldn't surely, first kill our clanchief
then pour specious tributes over his tombcairn?
Who'll mourn him with real grief and not a mask only?

CLYTEMNESTRA That's not your business. I hacked him down and the sword hand
strong enough to strike him can dig him a ditch.
No mourning. From no-one. All that's forbidden.

Iphigeneia she'll greet him by the waters of sorrow
flinging her arms round her father to kiss him.

CHORUS Choler for choler, bloodgrudge for bloodgrudge.
while Zeus the high he-god is still the gods' clanchief
the law for the living is killers get killed.

Blight's in the bloodstream, curse in the corpuscles,
the feet of this clan bogged down in the bloodquag.

CLYTEMNESTRA The future, the truth, you're beginning to see them.
I'll make a bond with this palace's bloodfiend.

What's happened so far I'll accept and fall in with,
hard though that is, I'll do it, provided
the fiend leaves this house and finds other quarters
to ravage the people and goad them to murder.

Riches mean nothing. A little suffices
if only this frenzy of kin-killing ceases.

Enter AEGISTHUS from a side entrance with a silent bodyguard, an 'anti-chorus', the same number as the chorus

AEGISTHUS A great day when bloodright comes into its own.
This proves there are gods who see crimes and punish.
I'm happy, so happy to see this man tangled
in robes of dark red the Furies have woven,
fulfilling the bloodgrudge caused by his father.
This man's father, Atreus, once king of Argos,
there being some dispute as to who should be clanchief.
drove my father (his brother) Thyestes away.
Thyestes came back as a suppliant begging
at least his life sparing, the minimum mercy,
no son's blood staining his father's own threshold.
But this man's father, Atreus, Atreus the godless,
whose mask of warm welcome kept hatred hidden

threw a great banquet as if for Thyestes
 and dished up his children as the daintiest titbits.
 The fingers and toes he chopped off to disguise it
 and my father alone of the guests got this childstew.
 Not being aware what it was he was eating
 he bolted the banquet that blasted this bloodclan.
 When he knew what he chewed, he choked on the childstew,
 shrieked, reeled backwards, spewed out the offal,
 turned over the tables and cursed the whole bloodclan
 grinding the meat into mush with his boot-heel.
 And that's why your clanchief's lying there murdered.
 And I wove the net we got him ensnared in.
 Third son of Thyestes, I plotted for bloodright.
 Driven out with my father while only a baby
 as a man I've returned escorted by bloodright.
 In exile I had all the threads twisted ready
 bidding my time for the trap to be fashioned.
 Now I'd die happy, happy now bloodright's
 got Agamemnon caught fast in fate's trammel.

2. Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* tr. Lattimore

Clytaemestra What is this, and why are you shouting in the house?

Follower I tell you, he is alive and killing the dead.

Clytaemestra Ah, so. You speak in riddles, but I read the rhyme.

We have been won with the treachery by which we slew.

Bring me quick, somebody, an ax to kill a man.

(Exit Follower.)

and we shall see if we can beat him before we
go down—so far gone are we in this wretched fight.

890

(Enter Orestes and Pylades with swords drawn.)

Orestes You next: the other one in there has had enough.

Clytaemestra Beloved, strong Aegisthus, are you dead indeed?

Orestes You love your man, then? You shall lie in the same grave
with him, and never be unfaithful even in death.

Clytaemestra Hold, my son. Oh take pity, child, before this breast
where many a time, a drowsing baby, you would feed
and with soft gums sucked in the milk that made you strong.

Orestes What shall I do, Pylades? Be shamed to kill my mother?

Pylades What then becomes thereafter of the oracles
declared by Loxias at Pytho? What of sworn oaths?

Count all men hateful to you rather than the gods.

Orestes I judge that you win. Your advice is good.

(*To Clytaemestra.*) Come here.

My purpose is to kill you over his body.

You thought him bigger than my father while he lived.

Die then and sleep beside him, since he is the man
you love, and he you should have loved got only your hate.

Clytaemestra I raised you when you were little. May I grow old with you?

Orestes You killed my father. Would you make your home with me?

Clytaemestra Destiny had some part in that, my child.

Orestes Why then
destiny has so wrought that this shall be your death.

Clytaemestra A mother has her curse, child. Are you not afraid?

Orestes No. You bore me and threw me away, to a hard life.

Clytaemestra I sent you to a friend's house. This was no throwing away.

Orestes I was born of a free father. You sold me.

Clytaemestra So? Where then is the price that I received for you?

Orestes I could say. It would be indecent to tell you.

Clytaemestra Or if you do, tell also your father's vanities.

Orestes Blame him not. He suffered while you were sitting here at home.

Clytaemestra It hurts women to be kept from their men, my child. 910

Orestes The man's hard work supports the women who sit at home.

Clytaemestra I think, child, that you mean to kill your mother.

Orestes No.
It will be you who kill yourself. It will not be I.

Clytaemestra Take care. Your mother's curse, like dogs, will drag you down.

Orestes How shall I escape my father's curse, if I fail here?

Clytaemestra I feel like one who wastes live tears upon a tomb.

Orestes Yes, this is death, your wages for my father's fate.

Clytaemestra You are the snake I gave birth to, and gave the breast.

Orestes Indeed, the terror of your dreams saw things to come
clearly. You killed, and it was wrong. Now suffer wrong. 920

(*Orestes and Pylades take Clytaemestra inside the house.*)

Since this is in our nature, when our husbands choose
 to despise the bed they have, a woman is quite willing
 to imitate her man and find another friend.
 But then the dirty gossip puts us in the spotlight;
 the guilty ones, the men, are never blamed at all. 1040
 If Menelaus had been raped from home on the sly,
 should I have had to kill Orestes so my sister's
 husband could be rescued? You think your father would
 have borne it? He would have killed me. Then why was it fair
 for him to kill what belonged to me and not be killed?
 I killed. I turned and walked the only path still open,
 straight to his enemies. Would any of his friends
 have helped me in the task of murder I had to do?
 Speak if you have need or reason. Fight me free;
 demonstrate how your Father died without full justice. 1050
 Chorus Justice is in your words but justice can be ugly.
 A wife should give way to her husband in all things
 if her mind is sound; if she refuses to see this truth
 she cannot enter fully counted to my thought.
 Electra Keep in mind, Mother, those last words you spoke,
 giving me license to speak out freely against you.
 Clytemnestra I say them once again, I will not deny you.
 Electra But when you hear me, Mother, will you hurt me again?
 Clytemnestra Not so at all. I shall be glad to humor you.
 Electra Then I speak— and here is the keynote of my song. 1060
 Mother who bore me, how I wish your mind were healthy.
 Although for beauty you deserve tremendous praise,
 both you and Helen, flowering from a single stalk,
 you both grew sly and lightweight, a disgrace to Castor.
 When she was raped she walked of her own will to ruin,
 while you brought ruin on the finest man in Greece
 and screened it with the argument that for your child
 you killed your husband. The world knows you less well than I.
 You, long before your daughter came near sacrifice,
 the very hour your husband marched away from home, 1070
 were setting your brown curls by the bronze mirror's light.
 Now any woman who works on her beauty when her man
 is gone from home indicts herself as being a whore.
 She has no decent cause to show her painted face
 outside the door unless she wants to look for trouble --
 Of all Greek women, you were the only one I know

to hug yourself with pleasure when Troy's fortunes rose,
 but when they sank, to cloud your face in sympathy.
 You needed Agamemnon never to come again.
 And yet life gave you every chance to be wise and fine. 1080
 You had a husband scarcely feebler than Aegisthus,
 whom Greece herself had chosen as her king and captain;
 and when your sister Helen—did the things she did,
 that was your time to capture glory, for black evil
 is outlined clearest to our sight by the blaze of virtue.
 Next. If, as you say, our Father killed your daughter,
 did I do any harm to you, or did my brother?
 When you killed your husband, why did you not bestow
 the ancestral home on us, but took to bed the gold
 which never belonged to you to buy yourself a lover? 1090
 And why has he not gone in exile for your son
 or died to pay for me who still alive have died
 my sister's death twice over while you strangle my life?
 If murder judges and calls for murder, I will kill
 you — and your own Orestes will kill you — for Father.
 If the first death was just, the second too is just.
 Clytemnestra My child, from birth you always have adored your Father. 1100
 This is part of life. Some children always love
 the male, some turn more closely to their mother than him.
 I know you and forgive you. I am not so happy
 either, child, with what I have done or with myself.
 How poorly you look. Have you not washed? Your clothes are bad.
 I suppose you just got up from bed and giving birth?
 O god, how miserably my plans have all turned out.
 Perhaps I drove my hate too hard against my husband. 1110
 Electra Your mourning comes a little late. There is no cure.
 Father is dead now. If you grieve, why not
 recall the son you sent to starve in foreign lands?
 Clytemnestra I am afraid. I have to watch my life, not his.
 They say his father's death has made him very angry.
 Electra Why do you let your husband act like a beast against us?
 Clytemnestra That is his nature. Yours is wild and stubborn too.
 Electra That hurts. But I am going to bury my anger soon.
 Clytemnestra Good; then he never will be harsh to you again.
 Electra He has been haughty; now he is staying in my house. 1120
 Clytemnestra You see? you want to blow the quarrel to new flames.
 Electra I will be quiet; I fear him — the way I fear him.

Clytemnestra Stop this talk. You called me here for something, girl.

Electra I think you heard about my lying-in and son.
 Make me the proper sacrifice—I don't know how --
 as the law runs for children at the tenth night moon.
 I have no knowledge; I never had a family.

Clytemnestra This is work for the woman who acted as your midwife.

Electra I acted for myself I was alone at birth.

Clytemnestra Your house is set so desolate of friends and neighbors? 1130

Electra No one is willing to make friends with poverty.

Clytemnestra Then I will go and make the gods full sacrifice
 for a child as law prescribes. I give you so much
 grace and then pass to the meadow where my husband rests
 praying to the bridal Nymphs. Servants, take the wagon,
 set it in the stables. When you think this rite
 of god draws to an end, come back to stand beside me,
 for I have debts of grace to pay my husband too.

Electra Enter our poor house. And, Mother, take good care
 the smoky walls put no dark stain upon your robes. 1140
 Pay sacrifice to heaven as you ought to pay.

(Clytemnestra walks alone into the house; the Trojan girls withdraw with the chariot.)

4. Sophocles *Electra* tr. Grene

Chorus If I am not a distracted prophet
 and lacking in skill of judgment,
 justice foreshadowing the event
 shall come, in her hands a just victory.
 Yes, she will come, my child, in vengeance
 and soon.

Of that I was confident
 when I lately heard, 480
 of this dream of sweet savor.
 Your father, the king of the Greeks,
 has never forgotten,
 nor the ax of old,
 bronze-shod, double-toothed,
 which did him to death
 in shame and baseness.
 There shall come many-footed, many-handed,
 hidden in dreadful ambush, 490
 the bronze-shod Fury.

Wicked indeed were they who were seized
 with a passion for a forbidden bed,
 for a marriage accursed, stained with murder.
 In the light of this, I am very sure
 that never, never shall we see
 such a portent draw near without hurt
 to doers and partners in crime.
 There are no prophecies for mortal men
 in dreadful dreams and soothsayings
 if this night vision come not, 500
 well and truly to fulfilment.
 Horsemanship of Pelops of old,
 loaded with disaster,
 how deadly you have proved
 to this land!
 For since the day that Myrtilus
 fell asleep, sunk in the sea,
 wrecked utterly with the unhappy
 wreck of his golden carriage, 510
 for never a moment since
 has destruction and ruin
 ever left this house.

(Queen Clytemnestra enters from the palace.)

Clytemnestra It seems you are loose again, wandering about.
 Aegisthus isn't here, who always restrains you
 from going abroad and disgracing your family.
 But now that he is away you pay no heed
 to me, although there's many a one you have told 520
 at length how brutally and how unjustly
 I lord it over you, insulting
 you and yours.
 There is no insolence in myself,
 but being abused by you so constantly
 I give abuse again.
 Your Father, yes,
 always your father. Nothing else is your pretext—
 the death he got from me. From me. I know it,
 well. There is no denial in me. justice,
 justice it was that took him, not I alone.
 You would have served the cause of justice it
 you had been right-minded.

For this your father whom you always mourn, 530
 alone of all the Greeks, had the brutality
 to sacrifice your sister to the Gods,
 although he had not toiled for her as I did,
 the mother that bore her, he the begetter only.
 Tell me, now, why he sacrificed her. Was it
 For the sake of the Greeks?
 They had no share in my daughter to let them kill her.
 Was it for Menelaus' sake, his brother,
 that he killed my child? And shall he not then pay for it?
 I Had not this Menelaus two children who 540
 ought to have died rather than mine? It was their parents
 for whose sake all the Greeks set sail for Troy.
 Or had the God of Death some longing to feast
 I on my children rather than hers? Or had
 that accursed father lost the love of mine
 and felt it still for Menelaus' children?
 This was the act of a father thoughtless
 or with had thoughts. That is how I see it
 even if you differ with me.
 The dead girl, 550
 if she could speak, would bear me out.
 I am not dismayed by all that has happened.
 If you think me wicked, keep your righteous judgment
 and blame your neighbors.
 Electra This is one time you will not be able to say
 that the abuse I receive from you was provoked
 by something painful on my side.
 But if you will allow me I will speak truthfully
 on behalf of the dead man and my dead sister.
 Clytemnestra Of course, I allow you. If you had always begun
 our conversations so, you would not have been
 so painful to listen to.
 Electra I will tell you, then.
 You say you killed my father. What claim more shameful
 than that, whether with justice or without it? 560
 But I'll maintain that it was not with justice
 you killed him, but the seduction of that bad man,
 with whom you now are living, drew you to it.
 Ask Artemis the Huntress what made her hold
 the many winds in check at Aulis. Or

I'll tell you this. You dare not learn from her.
 My Father, as I hear, when at his sport,
 started from his feet a horned dappled stag
 within the Goddess' sanctuary. He
 let fly and hit the deer and uttered some boast
 about his killing of it. The daughter of Leto 570
 was angry at this and therefore stayed the Greeks
 in order that my father, to compensate
 for the beast killed, might sacrifice his daughter.
 Thus was her sacrifice — no other deliverance
 for the army either homeward or toward Ilium.
 He struggled and fought against it. Finally,
 constrained, he killed her — not for Menelaus.
 But if—I will plead in your own words—he had done so
 for his brother's sake, is that any reason
 why he should die at your hands? By what law?
 If this is the law you lay down for men, take heed 580
 you do not lay down for yourself ruin and repentance.
 If we shall kill one in another's requital,
 you would be the first to die, if you met with justice.
 No. Think if the whole is not a mere excuse.
 Please tell me for what cause you now commit
 the ugliest of acts — in sleeping with him,
 the murderer with whom you first conspired
 to kill my father, and breed children to him, and
 your former honorable children born 590
 of honorable wedlock you drive out.
 What grounds for praise shall I find in this? Will you say
 that this, too, is retribution for your daughter?
 If you say it, still your act is scandalous.
 It isn't decent to marry with your enemies
 even for a daughter's sake.
 But I may not
 even rebuke you! What you always say
 is that it is my mother I am reviling.
 Mother! I do not count you mother of mine,
 but rather a mistress. My life is wretched
 because I live with multitudes of sufferings,
 inflicted by yourself and your bedfellow. 600
 But the other, he is away, he has escaped
 your hand, though barely. Sad Orestes now

wears out his life in misery and exile.
Many a time you have accused me
of rearing him to be your murderer.
I would have done it if I could. Know that.
As far as that goes, you may publicly
proclaim me what you like—traitor, reviler,
a creature full of shamelessness.

If I am

naturally skilled as such, I do no shame
to the nature of the mother that brought me forth.

Chorus I see she is angry, but whether it is in justice, 610
I no longer see how I shall think of that.

Clytemnestra What need have I of thought in her regard
who so insults her mother, when a grown woman?
Don't you think she will go to any lengths, so shameless
as she is?

Electra You may be sure I am ashamed,
although you do not think it. I know why
I act so wrongly, so unlike myself
The hate you feel for me and what you do
compel me against my will to act as I do. 620
For ugly deeds are taught by ugly deeds.

Clytemnestra O vile and shameless, I and my words and deeds
give you too much talk.

Electra It is you who talk, not I. It is your deeds,
and it is deeds invent the words.

Clytemnestra Now by the Lady Artemis you shall not escape
the results of your behavior, when Aegisthus comes.

Electra You see? You let me say what I please, and then
you are outraged. You do not know how to listen.

Clytemnestra Hold your peace at least. Allow me sacrifice, 630
since I have permitted you to say all you will.

Electra I allow you, yes, I bid you, sacrifice.
Do not blame my lips; for I will say no more.

5. Rhetoric

1. Gorgias *Encomium of Helen* tr. Patrick

Κόσμος πόλει μὲν εὐανδρία, σώματι δὲ κάλλος, ψυχῇ δὲ σοφία, πράγματι δὲ ἀρετή, λόγῳ δὲ ἀλήθεια· τὰ δὲ ἐναντία τούτων ἀκοσμία. ἄνδρα δὲ καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ λόγον καὶ ἔργον καὶ πόλιν καὶ πράγμα χρῆ τὸ μὲν ἄξιον ἐπαίνου ἐπαίνῳ τιμᾶν, τῷ δὲ ἀναξίῳ μῶμον ἐπιθεῖναι· ἴση γὰρ ἀμαρτία καὶ ἀμαθία μέμφεσθαι τε τὰ ἐπαινετὰ καὶ ἐπαινεῖν τὰ μωμητά.

1. What is becoming to a city is manpower, to a body beauty, to a soul wisdom, to an action virtue, to a speech truth, and the opposites of these are unbecoming. Man and woman and speech and deed and city and object should be honored with praise if praiseworthy and incur blame if unworthy, for it is an equal error and mistake to blame the praisable and to praise the blamable. 2. It is the duty of one and the same man both to speak the needful rightly and to refute {the unrightfully spoken. Thus it is right to refute} those who rebuke Helen, a woman about whom the testimony of inspired poets has become univocal and unanimous as had the ill omen of her name, which has become a reminder of misfortunes. For my part, by introducing some reasoning into my speech, I wish to free the accused of blame and, having reproved her detractors as prevaricators and proved the truth, to free her from their ignorance.

3. Now it is not unclear, not even to a few, that in nature and in blood the woman who is the subject of this speech is preeminent among preeminent men and women. For it is clear that her mother was Leda, and her father was in fact a god, Zeus, but allegedly a mortal, Tyndareus, of whom the former was shown to be her father because he was and the latter was disproved because he was said to be, and the one was the most powerful of men and the other the lord of all.

4. Born from such stock, she had godlike beauty, which taking and not mistaking, she kept. In many did she work much desire for her love, and her one body was the cause of bringing together many bodies for men thinking great thoughts for great goals, of whom some had greatness of wealth, some the glory of ancient nobility, some the vigor of personal agility, some command of acquired knowledge. And all came because of a passion which loved to conquer and a love of honor which was unconquered. 5. Who it was and why and how he sailed away, taking Helen as his love, I shall not say. To tell the knowing what they know shows it is right but brings no delight. Having now gone beyond the time once set for my speech, I shall go on to the beginning of my future speech, and I shall set forth the causes through which it was likely that Helen's voyage to Troy should take place.

6. For either by will of Fate and decision of the gods and vote of Necessity did she do what she did, or by force reduced or by words seduced {or by love possessed}. Now if through the first, it is right for the responsible one to be held responsible; for god's predetermination cannot be hindered by human premeditation. For it is the nature of things, not for the strong to be hindered by the weak, but for the weaker to be ruled and drawn by the stronger, and for the stronger to lead and the weaker to follow. God is a stronger force than

man in might and in wit and in other ways. If then one must place blame on Fate, and on a god, one must free Helen from disgrace.

7. But if she was raped by violence and illegally assaulted and unjustly insulted, it is clear that the raper, as the insulter, did the wronging, and the raped, as the insulted, did the suffering. It is right then for the barbarian who undertook a barbaric undertaking in word and in law and deed to meet with blame in word, exclusion in law, and punishment in deed. And surely it is proper for a woman raped and robbed of her country and deprived of friends to be pitied rather than pilloried. He did the great deeds; she suffered them. It is just therefore to pity her but to hate him.

8. But if it was speech which persuaded her and deceived her heart, not even to this is it difficult to make an answer and to banish blame as follows. Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity. I shall show how this is the case, since 9. it is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers: I both deem and define all poetry as speech with meter. Fearful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing come upon its hearers, and at the actions and physical sufferings of others in good fortunes and in evil fortunes, through the agency of words, the soul is wont to experience a suffering of its own. But come, I shall turn from one argument to another. 10. Sacred incantations sung with words are bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain, for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of the incantation is wont to beguile it and persuade it and alter it by witchcraft. There have been discovered two arts of witchcraft and magic: one consists of errors of the soul and the other of deceptions of opinion. 11. All who have and do persuade people of things do so by molding a false argument. For if all men on all subjects had {both} memory of things past and {awareness} of things present and foreknowledge of the future, speech would not be similarly similar, since as things are now it is not easy for them to recall the past nor to consider the present nor to predict the future. So that on most subjects most men take opinion as counselor to their soul, but since opinion is slippery and insecure it casts those employing it into slippery and insecure successes.

12. What cause then prevents the conclusion that Helen similarly, against her will, might have come under the influence of speech, just as if ravished by the force of the mighty? For it was possible to see how the force of persuasion prevails; persuasion has the form of necessity, but it does not have the same power. For speech constrained the soul, persuading it which it persuaded, both to believe the things said and to approve the things done. The persuader, like a constringer, does the wrong and the persuaded, like the constringed, in speech is wrongly charged.

13. To understand that persuasion, when added to speech, is wont also to impress the soul as it wishes, one must study: first, the words of astronomers who, substituting opinion for opinion, taking away one but creating another, make what is incredible and unclear seem true to the eyes of opinion; then, second, logically necessary debates in which a single speech, written with art, but not spoken with truth, bends a great crowd and persuades; {and} third, the verbal disputes of philosophers, in which the swiftness of thought is also

shown making the belief in an opinion subject to easy change. 14. The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, other delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion.

15. It has been explained that if she was persuaded by speech she did not do wrong but was unfortunate. I shall discuss the fourth cause in a fourth passage. For if it was love which did all these things, there will be no difficulty in escaping the charge of the sin which is alleged to have taken place. For the things we see do not have the nature which we wish them to have, but the nature which each actually has. Through sight the soul receives an impression even in its inner features. 16. When belligerents in war buckle on their warlike accoutrements of bronze and steel, some designed for defense, others for offense. If the sight sees this, immediately it is alarmed and it alarms the soul, so that often men flee, panic-stricken, from future danger {as though it were} present. For strong as is the habit of obedience to the law, it is ejected by fear resulting from sight, which coming to a man causes him to be indifferent both to what is judged honorable because of the law and to the advantage to be derived from victory. 17. It has happened that people, after having seen frightening sights, have also lost presence of mind for the present moment; in this way fear extinguishes and excludes thought. and many have fallen victim to useless labor and dread diseases and hardly curable madneses. In this way the sight engraves upon the mind images of things which have been seen. And many frightening impressions linger, and what lingers is exactly analogous to {what is} spoken. 18. Moreover, whenever pictures perfectly create a single figure and form from many colors and figures, they delight the sight, While the creation of statues and the production of works of art furnish a pleasant sight to the eyes. Thus it is natural for the sight to grieve for some things and to long for others, and much love and desire for many objects and figures is engraved in many men. 19. If, therefore, the eye of Helen, pleased by the figure of Alexander, present to her soul eager desire and contest of love, what wonder? If, {being} a god, {love has} the divine power of the gods, how could a lesser being refuse it? But if it is a disease of human origin and a fault of the soul, it should not be blamed as a sin, but regarded as an affliction. For she came, as she did come, caught in the net of Fate, not by the plans of the mind, and by the constraints of love, not by the devices of art.

20. How then can one regard blame of Helen as just, since she is utterly acquitted of all charge, whether she did what she did through falling in love or persuaded by speech or ravished by force or constrained by divine constraint?

21. I have by means of speech removed disgrace from a woman; I have observed the procedure which I set up at the beginning of the speech; I have tried to end the injustice of blame and the ignorance of opinion; I wished to write a speech which would be a praise of Helen and a diversion to myself.

Plato parodies Gorgias

οὗτος δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀλλοτριότητος μὲν κενοῖ, οἰκειότητος δὲ πληροῖ, τὰς τοιάσδε συνόδους μετ' ἀλλήλων πάσας τιθεὶς συνιέναι, ἐν ἐορταῖς, ἐν χοροῖς, ἐν θυσίαισι γιγνόμενος ἡγεμῶν· πραότητα μὲν πορίζων, ἀγριότητα δ' ἐξορίζων· φιλόδωρος εὐμενείας, ἄδωρος δυσμενείας· ἴλεως ἀγαθός· θεατὸς σοφοῖς, ἀγαστὸς θεοῖς· ζηλωτὸς ἀμοίροις, κτητὸς εὐμοίροις· τρυφῆς, ἀβρότητας, χλιδῆς, χαρίτων, ἰμέρου, πόθου πατήρ· ἐπιμελὴς ἀγαθῶν, ἀμελὴς κακῶν· ἐν πόνῳ, ἐν φόβῳ, ἐν πόθῳ, ἐν [197e] λόγῳ κυβερνήτης, ἐπιβάτης, παραστάτης τε καὶ σωτὴρ ἄριστος, συμπάντων τε θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων κόσμος, ἡγεμῶν κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος, ᾧ χρὴ ἔπεσθαι πάντα ἄνδρα ἐφυσμνουῖντα καλῶς, ᾠδῆς μετέχοντα ἦν ἀδει θέλων πάντων θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων νόημα.

[197d] He it is who casts alienation out, draws intimacy in; he brings us together in such friendly gatherings as the present; at feasts and dances and oblations he makes himself our leader; politeness contriving, moroseness outdriving; kind giver of amity, giving no enmity; gracious, superb; a marvel to the wise, a delight to the gods coveted of such as share him not, treasured of such as good share have got; father of luxury, tenderness, elegance, graces and longing and yearning; careful of the good, careless of the bad; [197e] in toil and fear, in drink and discourse, our trustiest helmsman, boatswain, champion, deliverer; ornament of all gods and men; leader fairest and best, whom everyone should follow, joining tunefully in the burthen of his song, wherewith he enchants the thought of every god and man.

καὶ γὰρ με Γοργίου ὁ λόγος ἀνεμίμησκεν, ὥστε ἀτεχνῶς τὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου ἐπεπόνθη· ἐφοβούμην μὴ μοι τελευτῶν ὁ Ἀγάθων Γοργίου κεφαλὴν δεινοῦ λέγειν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον πέμψας αὐτόν με λίθον τῇ ἀφωνίᾳ ποιήσειεν. [Plato *Symposium* 198c]

For his speech so reminded me of Gorgias that I was exactly in the plight described by Homer: I feared that Agathon in his final phrases would confront me with the eloquent Gorgias' head, and by opposing his speech to mine would turn me thus dumbfounded into stone. [tr. Fowler]

6. The other story of Helen

1. Plato *Phaedrus* 242b-243b

Socrates.: When I was about to cross the river, my good man, I had that supernatural experience, the sign which I am accustomed to having — on each occasion, you understand, it holds me

back from whatever I am about to do -- and I seemed to hear a voice from the very spot, which forbids me to leave until I have made expiation, because I have committed an offence against what belongs to the gods. Well, I am a seer; not a very good one, but like people who are poor at reading and writing, merely good enough for my own purposes; so I already clearly understand what my offence is. For the fact is, my friend, that the soul too is something which has divinatory powers; for something certainly troubled me some while ago as I was making the speech, and I had a certain feeling of unease, as Ibycus says (if I remember rightly), ‘that for offences against the gods, I win renown from all my fellow men’. But now, I realise my offence.

Phaedrus.: Just what do you mean?

S.: A dreadful speech it was, Phaedrus, dreadful, both the one you brought with you, and the one you compelled me to make.

P.: How so?

S.: It was foolish and somewhat impious; what speech could be more dreadful than that?

P.: None, if you're right in what you say.

S.: What? Don't you think Love to be the son of Aphrodite, and a god?

P.: So it is said.

S.: Not I think by Lysias, at any rate, nor by your speech, which came from my mouth, bewitched as it was by you. But if Love is, as indeed he is, a god, or something divine, he could not be anything evil; whereas the two recent speeches spoke of him as if he were like that. So this was their offence in relation to Love, and besides their foolishness was really quite refined — parading themselves as if they were worth something, while actually saying nothing healthy or true, in case they would deceive some poor specimens of humanity and win praise from them. So I, my friend, must purify myself, and for those who offend in the telling of stories there is an ancient method of purification, which Homer did not understand, but Stesichorus did. For when he was deprived of his sight because of his libel against Helen, he did not fail to recognise the reason, like Homer; because he was a true follower of the Muses, he knew it, and immediately composed the verses

‘This tale I told is false. There is no doubt:

You made no journey in the well-decked ships

Nor voyaged to the citadel of Troy.’

And after composing the whole of the so-called *Palinode* he at once regained his sight. So I shall follow a wiser course than Stesichorus and Homer in just this respect: I shall try to render my palinode to Love before anything happens to me because of my libel against him, with my head bare, and not covered as it was before, for shame.

2. Herodotus *Histories*

2.112 Pheros was succeeded by a native of Memphis, whose name in the Greek language was Proteus. To this day there is a sacred precinct of his at Memphis, very fine and richly adorned, and situated south of the temple of Hephaestus. The whole district hereabouts is known as the Camp of the Tyrians, because the houses in the neighbourhood are occupied by Phoenicians from Tyre. Within the enclosure there is a temple dedicated to the Foreign Aphrodite. I should guess, myself, that it was built in honour to Helen the daughter of Tyndareus, not only because I have heard it said that she passed some time at the court of Proteus, but also, and more particularly, because of the description of Aphrodite as 'the foreigner', a title never given to this goddess in any of her other temples. **113** I questioned the priests about the story of Helen, and they told me in reply that Paris was on his way home from Sparta with his stolen bride, when, somewhere in the Aegean sea, he met foul weather, which drove his ship towards Egypt, until at last, the gale continuing as bad as ever, he found himself on the coast, and managed to get ashore at the Salt-pans, in the mouth of the Nile now called the Canopic. Here on the beach there was a temple, which still exists, dedicated to Heracles, and in connexion with it there is a very ancient custom, which has remained unaltered to my day. If a runaway slave takes refuge in this shrine and allows the sacred marks, which are the sign of his submission to the service of the god, to be set upon his body, his master, no matter who he is, cannot lay hands on him. Now some of Paris' servants found out about this and, wishing to get him into trouble, deserted, and fled as suppliants to the temple and told against him the whole story of his abduction of Helen and his wicked treatment of Menelaus. They brought these charges against their master not only before the temple priests, but also before the warden of that mouth of the Nile, a man named Thonis. **114** Thonis at once sent a dispatch to Proteus at Memphis. 'A Trojan stranger (the message ran) has arrived here from Greece, where he has been guilty of an abominable crime: first he seduced the wife of his host, then carried her off together with a great deal of valuable property; and now stress of weather has forced him to land on this coast. Are we to let him sail away again in possession of his stolen goods, or should we confiscate them?' Proteus answered: 'No matter who it is that has committed this crime against his friend, arrest him and send him to me, that I may hear what he can say for himself.' **115** Thonis accordingly arrested Paris, held his ships, and took both him and Helen to Memphis, together with the stolen property and the servants who had taken sanctuary in the temple. On their arrival Proteus asked Paris who he was and where he had come from, and Paris gave him his name and all the details of his family and a true account of his voyage; but when he was further asked how he had got possession of Helen, then, instead of telling the truth, he began to vacillate, until the runaway servants convicted him of lying and told the whole story of his crime. Finally Proteus gave his judgement: 'If,' he said, 'I did not consider it a matter of great importance that I have never yet put to death any stranger who has been forced upon my coasts by stress of weather, I should have punished you for the sake of your Greek host. To be welcomed as a guest, and to repay that kindness by so foul a deed!

You are a villain. You seduced your friend's wife, and, as if that were not enough, persuaded her to escape with you on the wings of passion you roused. Even that did not content you — but you must bring with you besides the treasure you have stolen from your host's house. But though I cannot punish a stranger with death, I will not allow you to take away your ill-gotten gains: I will keep this woman and the treasure, until the Greek to whom they belong chooses to come and fetch them. As for you and the companions of your voyage, I give you three days in which to leave my country — and to find an anchorage elsewhere. If you are not gone by then, I shall treat you as enemies.'

116 This was the account I had from the priests about the arrival of Helen at Proteus' court. I think Homer was familiar with the story; for although he rejected it as less suitable for epic poetry than the one he actually used, he left indications that it was not unknown to him. For instance, when he describes the wanderings of Paris in the *Iliad* (and he has not elsewhere contradicted his account), he says that in the course of them he brought Helen to Sidon in Phoenicia. The passage occurs in the section of the poem where Diomedes performs his great deeds and it runs like this:

There were the light robes woven by the women of Sidon,
Whom the hero Paris, splendid as a god to look on,
Brought from that city when he sailed the wide sea
Voyaging with high-born Helen, when he took her home.

There is also a passage in the *Odyssey* alluding to the same fact:

These drugs of subtle virtue the daughter of Zeus was given
By an Egyptian woman, Polydamna, wife of Thon;
For the rich earth of Egypt bears many herbs
Which steeped in liquor have power to cure, or to kill.

and, again, Menelaus is made to say to Telemachus:

In Egypt the gods still stayed me, though I longed to return,
For I had not paid them their due of sacrifice.

Homer makes it quite clear in these passages that he knew about Paris going out of his way to Egypt - the point of the first I have quoted being that Syria borders on Egypt, and the Phoenicians, to whom Sidon belongs, live in Syria. **117** Another thing which is proved by these passages, and especially by the one about Sidon, is that Homer was not the author of the *Cypria*; for in that poem it is stated that Paris reached Troy with Helen three days after he left Sparta, having had a good voyage with a fair wind and calm sea, whereas we learn from the *Iliad* that he was forced to take her far out of his way — but I must take my leave of Homer and the *Cypria*.

118 I asked the priests if the Greek story of what happened at Troy had any truth in it, and they gave me in reply some information which they claimed to have had direct from Menelaus himself. This was, that after the abduction of Helen, the Greeks sent a strong force to the Troad in support of Menelaus' cause, and as soon as the men had landed and established themselves on Trojan soil, ambassadors, of whom Menelaus was one, were

dispatched to Troy. They were received within the walls of the town, and demanded the restoration of Helen together with the treasure which Paris had stolen, and also satisfaction for the injuries they had received. The Trojans, however, gave them the answer which they always stuck to afterwards — sometimes even swearing to the truth of it: namely, that neither Helen nor the treasure was in their possession, but both were in Egypt, and there was no justice in trying to force them to give satisfaction for property which was being detained by the Egyptian king Proteus. The Greeks, supposing this to be a merely frivolous answer, laid siege to the town, and persisted until it fell; but no Helen was found, and they were still told the same story, until at last they believed it and sent Menelaus to visit Proteus in Egypt. **119** He sailed up the river to Memphis, and when he had given a true account of all that had happened, he was most hospitably entertained and Helen, having suffered no evils, was restored to him with all the rest of his property. Nevertheless, in spite of this generous treatment, Menelaus proved himself no friend to Egypt; for when he wished to leave, but was delayed for a long time by contrary winds, he took two Egyptian children and offered them in sacrifice. The discovery of this foul act turned the friendship of the Egyptians to hatred; he was pursued, but managed to escape with his ships to Libya. Where he went afterwards the Egyptians could not say. They told me that they had learned of some of these events by inquiry, but spoke with certain knowledge of those which had taken place in their own country.

120 This, then, is the version the Egyptian priests gave me of the story of Helen, and I am inclined to accept it for the following reason: had Helen really been in Troy, she would have been handed over to the Greeks with or without Paris' consent; for I cannot believe that either Priam or any other kinsman of his was mad enough to be willing to risk his own and his children's lives and the safety of the city, simply to let Paris continue to live with Helen. If, moreover, that had been their feeling when the troubles began, surely later on, when the Trojans had suffered heavy losses in every battle they fought, and there was never an engagement (if we may believe the epic poems) in which Priam himself did not lose two of his sons, or three, or even more: surely, I repeat, in such circumstances as these, there can be little doubt that, even if Helen had been the wife of Priam the king, he would have given her back to the Greeks, if to do so offered a chance of relief from the suffering which the war had caused. Again, Paris was not heir to the throne, and so could not have been acting as regent for his aged father; for it was Hector, his elder brother and a better man than he, who was to have succeeded on Priam's death, and it was not likely that Hector would put up with his brother's lawless behaviour, especially as it was the cause of much distress both to himself and to every other Trojan besides. The fact is, they did not give Helen up because they had not got her; what they told the Greeks was the truth, and I do not hesitate to declare that the refusal of the Greeks to believe it came of divine volition in order that their utter destruction might plainly prove to mankind that great offences meet with great punishments at the hands of God. This, then, is my own interpretation.

7. Tragi-comedy: Euripides *Helen*

The play is set in Egypt in front of the Palace of King Theoclymenus. The pillared tomb of Proteus, the father of Theoclymenus, is situated downstage, where Helen has placed herself as suppliant. There is a centre stage entrance from the palace via a pair of gates, and side stage entrances from A the sea and B the country's interior.

1. 1-67

HELEN Here we are on Egypt's soil,
 Watered by the Nile's flowing
 Currents, in which swim so many
 Nymphs of beauty, currents fed by
 White snow melting, lacking any
 Rain drops from the gods in Heaven.
 Proteus was this country's ruler,
 When alive. On Pharos island
 There he dwelt, the Lord of Egypt,
 And to Psamathe was wedded,
 Who was living in the waters
 Of the sea with other maidens,
 After she had left Aeacus'
 Bed; and here within the palace
 Psamathe bore him two children,
 Theoclymenus, a male,
 Named because he so respected
 All his life the gods immortal,
 And a noble daughter, Ido,
 Since her mother doted on her
 As a babe, but when she blossomed
 So that she was fit to marry,
 They all called her Theonoe,
 Knowing all by divination
 Of the present and the future,
 Having taken on this office
 From Nereus, her grandfather.
 My birthplace, the land of Sparta,
 Is well known, as is my father
 Tyndarus, although the story,
 If there's any credence to it,
 Claims that Zeus flew to my mother,

10

Taking on a swan's appearance,
As a bird that from an eagle
Fled, so by deceit he raped her. 20
Anyway my name is Helen.
I must tell you what I've suffered.
On a beauty competition
Three goddesses came to Ida's
Deepest glen, to Alexander,
Hera, Cypris and the Virgin,
Mighty Zeus's noble daughter,
Wanting him to give his judgement
On their looks. Because she promised
Alexander he could marry
Me, as peerless in my beauty,
Though my beauty was my downfall,
Cypris won; and Trojan Paris
Left his cattle stalls for Sparta,
So he'd take me as his partner. 30
Finding fault because she hadn't
Beaten both her other rivals,
Hera made his bed as empty
As the wind. It wasn't me she
Gave him, but a living image,
Fashioned from the shining ether,
For the son of old King Priam.
And indeed he thought he had me,
Though it was an empty likeness.
But concurrent with these evils
Were the firther plans of mighty
Zeus, for to the land of Hellas
And the luckless Phrygian nation
He brought war, because he wished to
Lighten Earth of its great numbered 40
Hosts of men, its mob, its rabble,
Wishing also to establish
Knowledge of the strongest Hellene.
I was cited as the reason
For the fight against the Trojans,
As the prize of war for Hellas,
Though not me, but my name only.
Zeus was not forgetful of me.

Wrapped inside a cloud, then Hermes
Took me in the folds of Heaven,
And set me in Proteus' household,
Whom he judged the best of mortals,
So I'd keep my bed unsullied
For my husband, Menelaus.

I came here, but he, poor Wretch, went
And assembled one big army
For my capture, hot in pursuit
Going to the walls of Troas.

50

In the waters of Scamander
Many souls so sadly perished
For my sake; and I, who've suffered
All of this, am cursed for seeming
To have cheated on my husband,
Bringing to the Greeks a mighty
War. So why should I continue
With my life? Well, Hermes told me
I would live once more in Sparta's
Famous plain with Menelaus,
Who'd have learnt I hadn't gone to
Troy, unless I share my favours
With another marriage partner.

All the While that Proteus saw the
Light of day, I Was kept safe from
Being Wed, but once his body
Was concealed in the darkness
Of the earth, his son pursued me
With his suit. But honouring my
Spouse of old, I crouch here as a
Suppliant by Proteus' tombstone,
So that it might keep me faithful
To my husband, Menelaus,
So that though they much malign me
All through Hellas, yet my body
Will not here be violated.

60

2. 435-525

Enter elderly female servant from the palace

OLD WOMAN Who is there? Won't you be off from
This household. Don't stand disturbing
By the courtyard gates my master.
If a Hellene, they will surely
Kill you, for Greeks have no business
In this place. 440

MENELAUS Old woman, doubtless
What you say it is well spoken.
You've your orders-I'll obey them.
But you need not sound so strident.

OLD WOMAN Be off, will you. It's my duty,
Stranger, to ensure no Hellene
Ever comes inside the building.

MENELAUS Take your hands off. Do not push me.

OLD WOMAN You're to blame. You won't obey me.

MENELAUS Will you go and tell your masters...

OLD WOMAN If I did the consequences
Would be grim...

MENELAUS That I'm a shipwrecked
Stranger. They're obliged to help me.

OLD WOMAN Go elsewhere for such assistance. 450

MENELAUS Let me in and do not stop me.

OLD WOMAN Don't you see you're just a nuisance.
Soon by force you'll be ejected.

MENELAUS And to think of my position!

OLD WOMAN Somewhere else you were important,
But not here.

MENELAUS I don't deserve this –
Such contempt.

OLD WOMAN Oh stop your blubbing.
Why should someone give you pity?

MENELAUS For my former circumstances,
Rich and proud.

OLD WOMAN Your friends will give you
Sympathy, so take your tears to
Them.

MENELAUS What do you call this country?
And whose is this royal palace?

OLD WOMAN Proteus owns it. This is Egypt. 460
 MENELAUS Egypt! Curse my luck for sailing
 Here.
 OLD WOMAN And what is your objection
 To the Nile's sparkling waters?
 MENELAUS None at all. It is my fate I
 Curse.
 OLD WOMAN But many are unlucky –
 Not just you.
 MENELAUS Is he then in the
 Palace whom you named your king here?
 OLD WOMAN Here's his tomb: his son's our ruler.
 MENELAUS Where is he - inside the palace?
 OLD WOMAN No, he's not. And he's so hostile
 To all Hellenes.
 MENELAUS What's the reason?
 Might I learn it?
 OLD WOMAN Zeus's daughter,
 Helen, living in the palace. 470
 MENELAUS How can that be? Do you mean it?
 Can you please repeat your answer?
 OLD WOMAN Helen, daughter of Tyndareus,
 Helen who once lived in Sparta.
 MENELAUS But please tell me where she came from
 And explain the course of action.
 OLD WOMAN She came here from Lacedaemon.
 MENELAUS But just when? Has she been captured
 From the cave this very hour?
 OLD WOMAN Long ago, before you Hellenes
 Went to Troy, but you had better
 Creep off from this house, dear stranger.
 Something's happened in the household
 To upset the royal palace.
 You've come here at such a bad time.
 If the master apprehends you,
 Death will be the strangers' welcome. 480
 I am well disposed to Hellenes,
 Speaking sharply to you only
 Out of fear of my employer.

Exit old woman into the palace.

Far. And then she said he's somewhere
 Near this land, a shipwrecked sailor,
 Cast ashore with some few comrades.
 So alas when you will reach here,
 You'll be truly more than welcome! 540
 Who is this? Some machination
 Of the wicked son of Proteus?
 Where to hide, or swift as horses
 Or as Bacchae should we race him
 To the tomb? He must be here to
 Hunt me down, this utter savage
 By his looks.

MENELAUS Hey, you there, frantic
 In attempts to reach the tombstone
 And its pillars, black with charcoal
 Smoke, stand still! Why are you running?
 Seeing you, with consternation,
 Your appearance makes me speechless.

HELEN We are being violated, 550
 Women. From the sanctuary
 Of this tomb this man prevents me.
 Seizing me, he wants to give me
 To the tyrant for a marriage
 I have fled.

MENELAUS We are not robbers,
 Kidnappers or malefactors.

HELEN But you're wearing round your body
 Shapeless rags.

MENELAUS Do not be fearful.
 Keep your feet from rapid motion.

HELEN Now I've reached the tomb, I'm stopping.

MENELAUS So who are you and who is it
 You resemble?

HELEN And you also?
 I must ask the self same question.

MENELAUS Never did I see a person
 So alike.

HELEN You gods in heaven!
 It's a god to recognise the
 Ones we love. 560

MENELAUS You're Greek or local?

HELEN Greek, but I must ask the question
Of yourself.

MENELAUS I'm looking at you.
You are very much like Helen.

HELEN And you're so like Menelaus
That I'm almost rendered speechless.

MENELAUS So you rightly recognise me,
Though I've suffered much misfortune.

HELEN Come at last into the hands of
Your dear wife.

MENELAUS Which wife? Don't touch my
Garments.

HELEN That wife given to you
By my father, Tyndareus.

MENELAUS Hecate, goddess of the torchlight,
Send me now a kindly phantom.

HELEN Seeing me, you are not looking 570
At some ghastly apparition
Which attends the Wayside Goddess.

MENELAUS But as one man I cannot be
Husband of two different women.

HELEN You are husband of which other
Wife?

MENELAUS The one within the cavern,
Brought from Troy.

HELEN You have no other
Wife but me.

MENELAUS My eye malfunctions,
Nor can I be thinking clearly.

HELEN Seeing me you do not think you
See your wife.

MENELAUS You look exactly
As she looks. I can't be certain.

HELEN Look's the proof. You need no other.

MENELAUS Certainly you seem to be her.
That's a fact there's no denying.

HELEN What else then will better teach you
Than your eyes? 580

MENELAUS I said they're faulty,
For I have another woman
As my wife.

You have something strange to speak of
From your state of zealous frenzy.

Ist MESSENGER I've to tell you all the hardships
You endured now count for nothing.

MENELAUS You've lamented that beforehand.
Tell me what's the new disaster.

Ist MESSENGER It's your wife. She must have vanished
To the upper reaches of the
Atmosphere, and she's now hidden
In the sky. She's left the holy
Cave wherein we kept her guarded,
Saying, "All you wretched Phrygians
And you Greeks, beside Scamander's
Banks you died by Hera's cunning,
Thinking Paris to be Helen's
Possessor. In fact he wasn't.
To the sky, which is my father,
I am off, for my appointed
Time down here I've finished serving.
But Tyndarus' wretched daughter
Has incurred such dreadful slander
Quite unjustly."

610

Leda's daughter,
So you're here. I bid you greetings.
I was saying you had travelled
To the starry reaches of the
Firmament. I hadn't realised
You had wings. I won't allow you
Anymore to ridicule us
In this way, as you provided
Quite sufficient Trojan labours
For your husband and his allies.

620

MENELAUS That's it then. Your words are truthful.
Your account and hers do tally.
Longed for day which lets me take you
In my arms.

HELEN Of all men dearest,
Menelaus, it's been ages.
But my joy is now transpiring.
Friends, I take my husband gladly,
And put loving hands around him,

8. Comedy: Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazousae*

1. 1-278

[Enter, by a side passage, Euripides and his Inlaw, the latter lagging a little behind and seeming fatigued. Euripides stops in front of the stage-house.]

INLAW [to himself]: O Zeus, is the springtime really going to come at last? That man will kill me yet, the way he's been traipsing about ever since sunrise. [To Euripides] Might it be possible, before I've coughed up my spleen entirely, to learn from you, Euripides, where you're taking me?

EURIPIDES: You don't have to hear it all from me, considering that you're presently going to be seeing it in person.

INLAW: What do you mean? Say it again. I've not got to hear it?

EURIPIDES: Not what you're going to be seeing.

INLAW: So I've not to see either?

EURIPIDES: Not what you've got to hear, no.

INLAW: What is the advice you're giving me? You do put it cleverly! You say that I mustn't either hear or see? 10

EURIPIDES: The point is that the two things are distinct in nature.

INLAW: How do you mean, distinct?

EURIPIDES: This is how they were separated originally. When in the beginning the Sky became a separate entity, and took part in begetting living, moving beings within itself, it first devised the eye "in imitation of the solar disc", whereby they should see, and as a funnel for hearing made the perforations of the ears.

INLAW: So because of this funnel I'm not to hear or see? By Zeus, I am delighted to have learnt that! What a wonderful thing it is, I must say, this intellectual conversation! 20

EURIPIDES: Oh, you could learn a lot more things like that from me.

INLAW: Then is there any chance, to add to these blessings, that you could discover a way for me to learn how to — be lame in both legs?

EURIPIDES: Come over here and give me your attention.

INLAW [joining Euripides]: Here I am.

EURIPIDES [pointing to the door of the stage-house]: Do you see that door?

INLAW: By Heracles, I think I do!

EURIPIDES: Keep quiet then.

INLAW: I'm keeping quiet about the door.

EURIPIDES: Listen.

INLAW: I'm listening to the door and keeping quiet about it.

EURIPIDES: This is where the famous Agathon has his residence, the tragic poet. 30

INLAW: What Agathon is that?

EURIPIDES [*declaiming*]: There is one Agathon -

INLAW: You don't mean the bronzed, muscular one?

EURIPIDES: No, a different one; haven't you ever seen him?

INLAW: Not the one with the bushy beard?

EURIPIDES: You haven't ever seen him!

INLAW: I certainly haven't — at least not that I know of.

EURIPIDES: And yet you've fucked him - but perhaps you're not aware

of the fact! [*The door opens.*] Let's crouch down out of the way,

because a servant of his is coming out with fire and a myrtle wreath

— to make an offering. I suppose, for his master's poetry.

[*Agathon's servant, who has come out of the house, advances to the stage-altar, as Euripides and Inlaw conceal themselves.*]

SERVANT: Let all the people close their lips

40

and speak fair; for the holy band of Muses

is residing and composing song

within my master's halls!

[*Kindling incense on the altar*]

Let windless heaven restrain its blasts,

let the blue waves of the sea

make no noise -

INLAW: Boom di boom!

EURIPIDES [*to Inlaw*]: Quiet! What's he saying?

SERVANT: Let the tribes of birds be lulled to sleep,

let the feet of the beasts that range the woods

be bound fast in stillness -

INLAW: Boom didi boom di boom!

SERVANT: For Agathon of the lovely language, our suzerain, is about -

50

INLAW [*louder*]: Not about to be fucked, is he?

SERVANT: Who is it that spoke?

INLAW: Windless heaven.

SERVANT: — to lay the stocks on which to commence a play.

He is bending new verbal timbers into shape,

now gluing songs together, now fashioning them on the lathe,

and coining ideas and creating metaphors

and melting wax and rounding out

and casting in a mould -

INLAW: And sucking cocks.

SERVANT: What rustic is this that approaches these corniced walls?

INLAW [*advancing upon him*]: One who's ready to take you and your poet

of the lovely language, round you up,

60

bend you over, and then cast

this prick of mine here up your cornice!

SERVANT: You certainly must have used to behave outrageously when you were young, old sir!

EURIPIDES [*hastily coming up to them; addressing Servant*]: My dear fellow, leave him be - but please, I implore you, call Agathon to come out here to me.

SERVANT: No need to implore; he'll be coming out anyway himself soon. He's starting to compose a lyric, and the thing is, being winter, it's not easy to bend and twist them into shape unless he comes outside in front in the sun.

EURIPIDES: So what should I do?

70

SERVANT: Just wait here, because he's coming out. [*He goes back inside*]

EURIPIDES [*in tones of desperate tragic appeal*]:

"O Zeus, what is 't thy mind to do to me this day?"

INLAW [*to himself*]: I want to find out, by the gods, what all this business is about. [*To Euripides*] What are you groaning for? What are you so upset about? You shouldn't be hiding it from me when you're a relation of mine.

EURIPIDES: There's terrible trouble been cooked up for me.

INLAW: What son of trouble?

EURIPIDES: This day it will be decided whether Euripides is still among the living or whether he is a dead man.

INLAW: But how can that be? Why, the lawcourts won't be holding any trials today, and there isn't a sitting of Council either, because it's the middle day of the Thesmophoria.

80

EURIPIDES: Yes, that's exactly what I'm expecting will be my ruin. The women have hatched a plot against me, and today in the Thesmophorian sanctuary they're going to hold an assembly about me with a view to my liquidation.

INLAW: Why, may I ask?

EURIPIDES: Because I lampoon them and slander them in my tragedies.

INLAW: Then you'll be getting your just deserts, by Poseidon! But in this situation, what scheme have you got?

EURIPIDES: To persuade Agathon, the tragic dramatist, to go to the Thesmophorian sanctuary.

INLAW: And do what, pray?

EURIPIDES: And speak in the women's assembly, saying whatever needs to be said in my defence.

90

INLAW: In his own person, or in disguise?

EURIPIDES: In disguise, wearing a woman's outfit.

INLAW: An elegant idea, that, and very much in your style! When it comes to scheming, we absolutely take the cake!

[A platform begins to roll out of the central door, on which is Agathon, sitting on a bed. He is dressed as a woman, and holds a lyre. Scattered over the bed are a variety of clothes and accessories, most of them feminine]

EURIPIDES: Keep quiet!

INLAW: What's the matter?

EURIPIDES: Agathon's coming out.

INLAW [looking around him]: What, where is he?

EURIPIDES: Where is he? There he is — the man who's being wheeled out now.

INLAW: What, am I blind or something? I don't see any man here at all; what I see is Madam Cyrene!

[Agathon begins to half sing, half hum an elaborate wordless melody]

EURIPIDES: Quiet now; he's getting ready to sing a lyric.

INLAW: What *is* that tune he's warbling his way through? "Anthill Passages" or what? 100

[In the ensuing song Agathon, singing falsetto and accompanying himself on the lyre, takes alternately the part of a Priestess and of a Chorus of Trojan maidens.]

AGATHON *[as Priestess]*:

Take up, maidens, the holy torch of the Two Nether Goddesses and in the hour of freedom dance with the loud songs of your fathers.

[as Chorus:]

To which of the gods shall my festive song be?

Tell me, pray. My heart is eager to obey you and render worship to the gods.

[as Priestess:]

Come now, felicitate in song
him who draws the golden bow,
Phoebus, who established the precinct
of our city in the land of the Simois. 110

[as Chorus:]

Rejoice in our beautiful song,
O Phoebus, and be first to receive
this holy privilege in our fair tribute of music.

[as Priestess:]

And hymn the Maiden of the mountains where the oak trees grow,
Artemis, Lady of the Wild.

[as Chorus:]

I follow you, glorifying the august
and blessed child of Leto,

Artemis the virgin inviolate.

[*as Priestess:*]

And Leto, and the strains of the Asian lute, out
of time and in time to your step, at the beck
of the Phrygian Graces. 120

[*as Chorus:*]

I give honour to our Lady Leto
and to the lute, mother of songs,
esteemed for its loud masculine tones.

[*as Priestess:*]

Whereby light sparkles forth in the eyes of the god,
as also by reason of your vocal attack; wherefore
glorify Lord Phoebus!

[*as Chorus:*]

All hail, blest son of Leto!

[*Agathon ends with a loud feminine ritual ululation.*]

INLAW [*coming up to Agathon*]: Holy Genetyllides, how delightful that
song was! how feminacious, how fully tongued, how frenchkissy! 130
Why, as I listened to it I felt a tickle stealing right up my backside!
And now, young sir, I want to ask you in the style of Aeschylus, in
words from the Lycurgus plays, what manner of woman you are.

"Whence comes this epicene? What is its country, what its garb?"

[*Examining the objects on the bed*] What confusion of life-styles is this?

What has a bass to say to a saffron gown? or a lyre to a hair-net?
What's an oil-flask doing with a breast-band? How incongruous! 140

And what partnership can there be between a mirror and a
sword? And what about yourself, young 'un? Have you been
reared as a man? Then where's your prick? Where's your cloak?
Where are your Laconian shoes? Or as a woman, was it? Then
where are your tits? What's your answer? Why aren't you saying
anything? Or shall I find you out by your song, seeing that you
don't want to tell me yourself?

AGATHON: Old man, old man, I heard your jealous censure, but I did
not feel the smart of it. I change my clothing according as I change
my mentality. A man who is a poet must adopt habits that match 150
the plays he's committed to composing. For example, if one is
writing plays about women, one's body must participate in their habits.

INLAW: So when you write a Phaedra, you mount astride?

AGATHON [*ignoring this*]: If you're writing about men, your body has
what it takes already; but when it's a question of something we
don't possess, then it must be captured by imitation.

INLAW: Ask me over, then, when you're writing a satyr-play, so I can collaborate with you, long and hard, from the rear.

AGATHON [*again ignoring him*]: And besides, it's unaesthetic to see a poet who looks like a hairy yokel. Think of the famous Ibycus, and Anacreon of Teos, and Alcaeus — the men who put the flavour into music - how they all minced and wore bandeaux in Ionian fashion. And Phrynichus - you must have actually heard him sing - he was an attractive man and he also wore attractive clothes, and that's why his plays were attractive too. One just can't help creating work that reflects one's own nature. 160

INLAW: Ah, that's why Philocles who's ugly writes ugly plays, and Xenocles who's a wretch writes wretched ones, and Theognis too, being a cold character, writes frigid ones. 170

AGATHON: It's absolutely inevitable, and it's because I recognized that fact that I gave myself this treatment.

INLAW [*misunderstanding him*]: What treatment was it, in heaven's name?

EURIPIDES [*to Inlaw*]: Stop yapping now. I was like that too at his age, when I was just beginning to compose.

INLAW: I don't envy you your upbringing, by Zeus!

EURIPIDES: Please let me say what I came here to say.

INLAW: Go ahead.

EURIPIDES: Agathon, "it is the mark of a wise man to be able to compress a long discourse elegantly into brief compass". I have been stricken by an unprecedented disaster, and have come to you as a suppliant. 180

AGATHON: Of what do you stand in need?

EURIPIDES: Today at the Thesmophoria the women are going to liquidate me, because I slander them.

AGATHON: So what assistance can we provide for you?

EURIPIDES: All the assistance in the world! If you seat yourself among the women, incognito - because anyone would think you were a woman - and answer them on my behalf, you'll save me, for sure. Only you are capable of making a speech that's worthy of me.

AGATHON: In that case why don't you make your own defence in person?

EURIPIDES: I'll tell you. In the first place, I'm someone that people recognize; and secondly, I'm bearded and white-haired, whereas you're fresh-faced, fair-complexioned, clean-shaven, you've a woman's voice, soft cheeks, attractive looks. 190

AGATHON: Euripides -

EURIPIDES: Yes?

AGATHON: Did you once write:

"You rejoice to see
The light of day; think you your father does not?"?

EURIPIDES: I did.

AGATHON: Then don't expect us to bear your troubles. We'd be quite mad to do so. It's your business; bear it yourself as your private affair. It is right to endure one's misfortunes, not with clever scheming but with willing submission.

INLAW: Just as *you*, you young faggot, got your dilated arsehole not by words but by willing submission! 200

EURIPIDES: What is it that you're afraid of about going along there?

AGATHON: I'd be even worse tom apart than you.

EURIPIDES: How come?

AGATHON: How come? Because they think I steal women's *knockturnal* business, and rob them of the female's natural rights.

INLAW: "Steal" indeed! Get fucked, that's what you mean! But I must say it's a fair enough excuse!

EURIPIDES [*to Agathon*]: How about it then? Will you do it for me?

AGATHON: Don't you imagine it!

EURIPIDES [*in despair*]: Thrice wretched that I am! I am absolutely done for!

INLAW [*comforting him*]: Euripides — my dear, dear fellow — my kinsman — don't give up your own cause! 210

EURIPIDES: So what am I to do, then?

INLAW: Tell him he can go to blazes, then take me and use me any way you like.

EURIPIDES: All right then, since you're offering yourself to me, take off that cloak.

INLAW [*doing so*]: There you are, it's on the ground. Here, what are you meaning to do with me?

EURIPIDES: To shave off this lot [*indicating Inlaw's beard*] and to singe off what's down below.

INLAW [*after a brief, shocked pause*]: Very well, do it, if that's what you want to do. Else I ought never to have offered myself to you in the first place.

EURIPIDES: Agathon, you carry a razor all the time, so could you possibly lend us one?

AGATHON [*pointing to one of the objects on the bed*]: Take it yourself from the razor-holder here. 220

EURIPIDES: You're a gentleman. [*To Inlaw*] Sit down, and puff out your right cheek. [*Inlaw obeys, and Euripides begins to shave him. The beard is tough, and Euripides is not a skilful barber.*]

INLAW: He-elp!

EURIPIDES: What are you shouting about? I'll have to shove a peg in your mouth if you don't keep quiet.

INLAW [*nicked again*]: Aagh! AAGH! [*He jumps up and starts running away.*]

EURIPIDES: Hey, you, where are you running off to?

INLAW: To the sanctuary of the Dread Goddesses. I will not, by Demeter, stay here being cut in pieces.

EURIPIDES: You'll look plain ridiculous then, won't you, clean-shaven on *one side* of your face?

INLAW: I couldn't care less!

EURIPIDES: In the gods' name, don't desert me! Come back here.

INLAW [*returning reluctantly and sitting down again*]: Poor, poor me!

EURIPIDES: Stay right here, keep still, and put your head back. 230

[*He continues shaving Inlaw, but when the razor gets under his chin Inlaw tries to turn his head away.*]

What are you twisting round for?

[*He turns Inlaw's head firmly back into position, and clamps his mouth shut with one hand while continuing to shave him with the other — and cutting him a third time.*]

INLAW [*trying to scream with his mouth shut*]: Mmmmmmmmm!

EURIPIDES: What are you mmmmmmmming about? It's all nice and done now.

INLAW [*fingering his bare cheeks and chin*]: Poor me, I'll have to serve my next campaign in the Bare Skin Brigade!

EURIPIDES: Don't worry! You're going to look really handsome.

[*Picking up a mirror from the bed*] Do you want to have a look at yourself?

INLAW: Bring it here, if you want.

EURIPIDES [*holding the mirror in front of him*]: Do you see yourself?

INLAW: No, I don't, I see Cleisthenes! '

EURIPIDES: Stand up, so I can singe you; bend over and stay like that.

INLAW [*standing up*]: Heaven help me, I'm going to be made a pig of!

EURIPIDES [*calling into the stage-house*]: Someone bring me a torch or a lamp from in there. [*A torch is brought.*] Bend right over.

[*Inlaw does so.*] Now mind the tip of your tail.

INLAW: I'll take care of it all right— [*Euripides rapidly singes his bottom* 240

with the torch] —only I'm on FIRE! Help, help! Water, neighbours, water, before the flames catch hold of another arse!

EURIPIDES: Don't be frightened.

INLAW: What do you mean, don't be frightened? I've been burnt to the ground!

EURIPIDES: You've got nothing to worry about any more; you're through the worst part of the job.

INLAW [*who has been gingerly applying his hand to the affected area, and now inspects it*]:

Ugh! Look at this soot! I've got all charred, all round the crotch!

EURIPIDES: Don't worry. Someone else will sponge it for you.

INLAW: Anyone who tries to wash my bum will live to regret it!

EURIPIDES: Agathon, since you're not prepared to offer your own person, at least please lend us a mantle and a breastband for my friend here to wear. You're not going to say you haven't got them.

250

AGATHON [*waving his arm towards the bed*]: Take them and use them; I don't grudge you them at all.

INLAW: What should I take, then?

EURIPIDES: What should you take? First take the saffron gown and put it on.

INLAW [*taking gown from bed, and sniffing it*]: By Aphrodite, this has a nice smell of willy! [*He puts it on, not very skilfully*] Quick, belt it up. [*Euripides belts the gown and adjusts its folds.*]

EURIPIDES [*to Agathon*]: Now pass me a breastband.

AGATHON: Here you are.

[*Euripides takes a (padded) breastband from him, ties it round Inlaw, and then brings up the gown over the breastband and pins it at the shoulders.*]

INLAW [*looking down*]: Come on now, sort me out around the legs.

[*Euripides makes sure that the lower part of the gown is hanging correctly*]

EURIPIDES: We need a hair-net and a bandeau.

AGATHON: No, no, here's a put-on headpiece, which I wear at night.

EURIPIDES [*taking it*]: By Zeus, it's really just what's wanted!

INLAW: Will it fit me?

260

EURIPIDES [*putting it on him and inspecting the effect*]: Why, it's excellent!

[*To Agathon*] Give me a mantle.

AGATHON: Take this one from the bed. [*Euripides takes mantle and puts it on Inlaw.*]

EURIPIDES: We need shoes.

AGATHON [*taking off his boots*]: Take these of mine. [*Euripides passes them to Inlaw.*]

INLAW: Will they fit me? [*He puts them on, and finds them very roomy.*]

You certainly like wearing them loose!

AGATHON: You be the judge of that. Now you've got all you need — so someone please wheel me inside, right away.

[*Agathon's platform is rolled back into the stage-house, and the door closed.*]

EURIPIDES [*stepping back and inspecting Inlaw*]: There we are; this gentleman is now a lady — to look at, anyway. Only, if you talk, make sure you put on a good, convincing woman's voice.

INLAW [*in a squeaky falsetto*]: I'll try!

EURIPIDES: Off you go, then.

INLAW: By Apollo, I will not, not unless you swear to me -

270

EURIPIDES: Swear what?

INLAW: To help and save me by hook or by crook, if any danger befalls me.

EURIPIDES: Then I swear it by the Sky, the dwelling-place of Zeus.

INLAW: That's no more an oath than saying "by Hippocrates' tenement block".

EURIPIDES: Very well, I swear it by all the gods, the whole lot.

INLAW: Just remember this, then, that it was your heart that swore; it wasn't your tongue that swore nor did I ask it to.

EURIPIDES [*looking off*]: Hurry up out of here, quickly; the signal's gone up for the assembly at the Thesmophorium. I'm going now.

2. 848-949

INLAW [*who has for some time been peering into the distance*]: I've gone cross-eyed with looking out for him, and still no sign of him. What can be holding him up? It can only be that he's ashamed of Palamedes because it was such a bore. What play can I use to entice him here? I know; I'll act his new Helen. I've got the woman's costume already, anyway.

850

CRITYLLA: What plot are you cooking up now? What do you keep staring this way and that for? I'll give you a Helen or two in a minute, if you don't behave yourself properly until one of the Prytaneis tums up.

INLAW [*as Helen*]:

This is the beauteous maiden stream of Nile,
Who takes the place of heaven's showers, and waters
Egypt's white plains and swarthy laxative-takers.

CRITYLLA: You're a rogue, you are, by Hecate the Bringer of Light.

INLAW: My native land is not unknown to fame;

'Tis Sparta, and Tyndareos is my father.

860

CRITYLLA: He's your father, you scum? More likely Phrynondas is!

INLAW: And Helen am I named.

CRITYLLA: Becoming a woman again, are you, before you've even paid the penalty for your last female impersonation?

INLAW: And for my sake full many a soul hath perished
Beside Scamander's stream.

CRITYLLA: And so ought you to have done too.

INLAW: And I am here; but my unhappy husband,
My Menelaus, still he comes not hither.

Why then do I yet live?

CRITYLLA: Because the ravens are no good at their job.

INLAW [*seeing Euripides approaching*]:

But now, as 'twere, there's something strokes my heart:

O of this rising hope, Zeus, cheat me not!

870

[Inlaw covers his face with his mantle. Enter Euripides, in the role of the shipwrecked Menelaus, clad in tatters of sailcloth.]

EURIPIDES: Who is the master of this strong-walled house,
That will receive a stranger in distress
By storm and shipwreck on the swelling sea?

INLAW: These are the halls of Proteus.

CRITYLLA: What do you mean, Proteus, you miserable wretch? *[To Euripides]* He's lying, I assure you, by the Two Goddesses;
Proteas has been dead for ten years.

EURIPIDES *[ignoring her]*:

And in what country came our bark to land?

INLAW: In Egypt.

EURIPIDES: Woe is me, how far we have wandered!

CRITYLLA: Do you really believe this blasted villain when he burbles
such nonsense? This here is the Thesmophorium! 880

EURIPIDES: Is Proteus' self within, or gone from home?

CRITYLLA *[before Inlaw can answer]*: You really must still be queasy
from your voyage, sir. You heard me tell you that Proteas is dead,
and then you ask "is he within or gone from home?"

EURIPIDES: Ah! Dead? Where is he laid and sepulchred?

INLAW: This is his very tomb whereat I sit.

CRITYLLA: May all hell take you — and it will too, I can tell you — for
having the audacity to call the altar a tomb!

EURIPIDES:

Then, lady, why thus robe-veiled keepest thou
Beside the tomb thy seat? 890

INLAW: 'Tis Proteus' son

Would force me to partake his marriage-bed.

CRITYLLA: Why are you still trying to mislead the gentleman, you
wretch? *[To Euripides]* This man is a criminal, sir, who came up
here where the women are in order to steal their gold ornaments.

INLAW: Yea, hurl thy snarling slanders at my person!

EURIPIDES: Lady, who is this crone abuses thee?

INLAW: 'Tis Proteus' child Theonoe.

CRITYLLA: No, it isn't, by the Two Goddesses; it's Critylla, daughter
of Antitheus, from Gargettus. And you're just a rogue.

INLAW: Say all thou wilt:

Never will I thy brother marry, nor
Betray my husband Menelaus at Troy. 900

EURIPIDES: What said'st thou, lady? Hither tum thine eyes.

INLAW *[somewhat reluctantly unveiling himself]*:

I blush before thee for my outraged cheeks.

EURIPIDES: What can this be? I am gripped by speechlessness.

[Examining him more closely]

Ye gods, what sight is this? Who art thou, lady?

INLAW: And who art thou? As thou say'st, so say I.

EURIPIDES: Art thou a native woman, or a Greek?

INLAW: Greek; but I fain would know the like of thee.

EURIPIDES: Lady, I never saw one more like Helen.

INLAW: Nor I like Menelaus, by that sailcloth.

910

EURIPIDES: Thou knowest aright this man of wretched fate.

INLAW *[rushing to his arms]*:

O come at long last to thy wife's fond hearth!

Take me, take me, husband, throw your arms around me!

Come, let me kiss thee.

[In a whispered scream] Take me and get me away, away, get me away from here, quick and fast! *[Euripides is about to leave with him, but Critylla blocks their way]*

CRITYLLA: Well, anyone who does take you away will be crying soon, by the Two Goddesses, when he gets hit with this torch *[brandishing it]*!

EURIPIDES: Wouldst hinder me from taking mine own wife, The daughter of Tyndareos, home to Sparta?

CRITYLLA: Dammit, I reckon you're a thorough villain as well, and a fellow-conspirator of this man's. No wonder the two of you were playing at Egyptians before! But now *[looking off]* he is going to get his just deserts; here come the Prytanis and the archer.

920

EURIPIDES *[quietly to Inlaw]*: That's bad, that is. I'll have to slip gently away.

INLAW: And poor me, what am I supposed to do?

EURIPIDES: Just stay quietly here. I'll never let you down while there's breath in my body, if my countless contrivances don't desert me.

[He goes, leaving Inlaw in utter dejection, his head in his hands.]

CRITYLLA *[highly satisfied]*: Well, that line caught no fish!

[Enter a Prytanis, followed by a Scythian archer. The archer is clean-shaven, long-haired, and dressed in a sleeved jacket and trousers. His bow and arrows are in a case slung over his shoulder; he also wears a curved sword and carries a whip.]

PRYTANIS *[to Critylla]*: Is this the rogue that Cleisthenes told us about?

[Critylla nods. The Prytanis turns to Inlaw.] Here, you, why can't you hold your head up? *[To the archer]* Take him inside, archer,

930

and fasten him to the board, and then stand him up here and let no one approach him; you've got your whip, use it on anyone who does approach.

CRITYLLA: That's right, by Zeus; only just now a sail-stitching fellow nearly stole him away from me.

INLAW [*clasping the Prytanis' right hand*]: Mr. Prytanis, I beg you by your right hand, which you so much love to put out, cupped, when someone offers you money — grant me a small boon, doomed though I am to die.

PRYTANIS: What boon do you want me to grant you'?

INLAW: Tell the archer to strip me naked before fastening me to the board, so that an old man like me won't be left dressed in saffron gowns and headbands to be a laughing- stock to the ravens as they feed on me.

PRYTANIS: The Council has decided that you should be clamped wearing these clothes, so as to make it manifest to all who pass by what a villain you are.

INLAW [*sighing and groaning, as the archer, threatening him with the whip, forces him to move towards the stage-house*]: Ah, saffron

gown, what you have done to me! And there's no more hope of saving myself now, none at all!

[*He goes reluctantly in, followed by the archer. The Prytanis and Critylla depart.*]

940



Scythian archers: Attic Black-Figure Psykter c.530 BCE

3. 1001-1231

[The archer comes out, dragging a large board, to which Inlaw is fastened by an iron collar round his neck and clamps at the wrists and ankles. He props the board up against the stage-house wall.]

ARCHER: Now you gan 'owl 'ere in de oben air.

INLAW: Archer, I implore you -

ARCHER: Don' you imblore me.

INLAW: — slacken the nail!

ARCHER: Ogay, I do dat. *[He drives the nail in a little, thus tightening the collar.]*

INLAW: Help, help, you're making it tighter!

ARCHER: You wan' even dighder? *[He tightens the collar further.]*

INLAW: Aagh! AAGH! Damn and curse you!

ARCHER: Quiet, you wredged ol' man. 'Ere, let me bring out a mat, so I guard you. *[He goes inside]*

INLAW *[alone]*: And this is the best joy I've got from Euripides!

[But looking off to the side, he suddenly sees something that restores his spirits]

Ah! Ye gods, O Saviour Zeus, there's still hope! It seems
as though that man is not going to let me down after all. He just
popped out there got up as Perseus, to give me a secret signal that
I've got to become Andromeda. Well, I've got the bonds, at any
rate. It's clear, then, that he is going to come and save me;
otherwise he wouldn't have buzzed by like that.

[Singing, in the character of Andromeda]

Maidens, beloved maidens,
how can I get away and
escape unseen by that Scythian?
Dost thou hear, O thou in the caves
that singest in response to my cries?

Grant my prayer and let me
go home to my wife!
Pitiless he who bound me,
me the most afflicted of men:
having just escaped from that decayed
old woman, I'm done for just the same.

For this Scythian, long since
posted to guard me, has hung me up,
doomed, friendless, to make a meal for the ravens.
Seest thou this? Not now in choral dances, nor
among the young women of my own age
do I stand, holding a voting-um by the funnel,

but enmeshed in numerous bonds
 I am cast forth to be food for the monster Glaucetes.
 Not with a hymn for a bride
 but with one for a captive
 lament me, you women,
 for I am wretched and have suffered wretchedly —
 O unhappy, unhappy man that I am! —
 and treatment, moreover, at kindred hands, against all right
 though I besought the man, 1040
 kindling a tearful
 lament of death —
 ah me, ah me! [*sobbing*] —
 he who began by shaving me,
 he who garbed me in a saffron robe,
 and moreover sent me up
 to this sanctuary, where the women are.
 Alack for my fate
 which a god engendered!
 Accursed that I am!
 Who will not behold
 my unenviable sufferings, in which such sorrows are present?
 Would that the fiery meteor of the sky — 1050
 might utterly destroy that barbarian!
 For no longer does it please me to look
 on the immortal flame of day, since I have been hung up here
 in a god-sent torment to make one slit one's throat,
 on a darkling journey to the land of the dead.
 [*Enter Echo, an elderly goddess.*]
 ECHO: Greeting, dear child; and may the gods destroy
 Thy father Cepheus, who exposed thee thus!
 INLAW: And who art thou that pitiest my plight?
 ECHO: Echo, the mocking mimicker of words —
 [*reverting suddenly to conversational zones*] the same who last year, in 1060
 this very place, personally assisted Euripides in the competition.
 Now, child, it's up to you to do your bit and wail piteously.
 INLAW: While you wail in response after me.
 ECHO: I'll take care of that. Now you start uttering.
 [*She hides as Inlaw begins to sing.*]
 INLAW: O sacred Night,
 how long a course thou pursuest,
 steering thy chariot o'er the star-faced ridges

of the sacred sky

'through most holy Olympus!

ECHO: Holy Olympus! _

INLAW: Why, why have I, Andromeda, been allotted

1070

a share of woe beyond all others —

ECHO: Beyond all others —

INLAW: With death, ah hapless me —

ECHO: With death, ah hapless me -

INLAW: You'll be the death of me, old woman, with your chatter.

ECHO: With your chatter.

INLAW: By Zeus, your blasted intrusion is just too irritating!

ECHO: Just too irritating!

INLAW: Let me sing my solo, my good man, and you'll be doing me a favour. Just stop it!

ECHO: Just stop it!

[*From here on the exchanges get louder and louder.*]

INLAW: Go to blazes!

ECHO: Go to blazes!

INLAW: What's the matter with you?

1080

ECHO: What's the matter with you?

INLAW: You're drivelling!

ECHO: You're drivelling!

INLAW: Curse you!!

ECHO: Curse you!!

INLAW: Bugger off!!!

ECHO: Bugger off!!!

[*The Archer, attracted by the noise, comes out, carrying a mat.*]

ARCHER [*to Inlaw*]: 'Ere, you, what you dalkin'?

ECHO: 'Ere, you, what you dalkin'?

ARCHER: I go gall de Brydaneis.

ECHO: I go gall de Brydaneis.

ARCHER [*threatening Inlaw with his whip*]: Is bad for you —

ECHO [*from another direction*]: Is bad for you —

ARCHER [*moving towards the voice*]: Where dat voice from?

ECHO [*from behind him*]: Where dat voice from?

ARCHER [*turning on Inlaw again*]: You dalkin'?

ECHO: You dalkin'?

ARCHER [*again brandishing his whip*]: You goin' to 'owl.

ECHO: You goin' to 'owl.

ARCHER: You make fun at me?

ECHO: You make fun at me?

INLAW: No, I'm not, it's this woman close by.

1090

ECHO: Woman close by.

ARCHER: Where is she, de villain?

INLAW [*jerking his head to the right*]: Look, she's running away.

ARCHER [*running in the direction indicated*]: Where you runnin'? You no get free!

ECHO [*away on the left*]: You no get me!

ARCHER [*turning around to chase the voice*]: You still oben mout'?

ECHO [*behind him again*]: You still oben mout'?

ARCHER [*turning again, and at last seeing her*]: Grab 'er, de villain!

ECHO [*dodging his grasp and escaping*]: Grab 'er, de villain!

ARCHER [*shouting at her as she disappears*]: Damn jadderbox of a woman!

[*The theatrical flying-machine swings Euripides into view. He is costumed as Perseus, wearing winged cap and winged sandals, carrying in his hand a scimitar and over his shoulder the leather bag in which Perseus kept the Gorgon's head.*]

EURIPIDES: What barbarous land is this, O gods, where I

Swift-sandalled have arrived? Cleaving a path

Across the heavens I ply my wingèd foot,

Perseus, to Argos voyaging, my freight

The Gorgon's head.

ARCHER: What you say? You ganyin' de 'ead of Gorgo de segretar'?

EURIPIDES: I say, the Gorgon's.

ARCHER: Yes, I dell you, Gorgo, dass what I say.

EURIPIDES [*descending to the ground in front of the stage-house, on the far side of the stage from Inlaw, and beholding him with affected astonishment*]:

But ah, what rock do I see? who is this maiden,

Fair as a goddess, ship-like moored to it?

INLAW: Good sir, take pity on my wretched plight,

Release me from my bonds!

ARCHER [*threateningly*]: Stop dalkin', will you? You dare dalk, damn you, when you soon be dead?

EURIPIDES: Maid, I thee pity, seeing thee hanging here.

1100

ARCHER: She no maid, she a wicked ol' man, a t'ief, a villain.

EURIPIDES: Nonsense, O Scythian:

This is Andromeda, the child of Cepheus.

ARCHER [*lifting up Inlaw's lower garments*]: Look at her fig! Don' look all dat small, do it?

EURIPIDES: Give me her hand here; let me touch the maid.

Come now, O Scythian. Every man on earth

Hath some affliction, and so too have I:

Love of this maid has ta'en me prisoner.

ARCHER: I don' envy you. Now if 'is arse'ole was durned roun' dis way, I no grudge you dake 'im an' bugger 'im.

1120

EURIPIDES: Why, Scythian, wilt thou not let me release her To fall upon the bed and nuptial couch?

ARCHER: If you wan' all dat much bugger de ol' man, den bore a 'ole in de board an' fuck her from be'ind.

EURIPIDES: Nay, but I'll loose her bonds.

[*He approaches Inlaw, but the Archer, whip at the ready, blocks him.*]

ARCHER: Den I whip you.

EURIPIDES: Yet will I do it.

ARCHER [*brandishing his sword*]: Den your 'ead, I jop 'im off wid dis sabre.

EURIPIDES: Alack! what shall I do, to what words tum? —

But no, his barbarous mind won't take them in:

"To feed slow wits with novel subtleties

1130

Is effort vainly spent." No, I must bring to bear

Some other scheme, more suited to this man.

[*He departs.*]

ARCHER: De foxy villain! de mongey drick 'e dried on me!

INLAW [*calling after Euripides*]: Perseus! remember the wretched plight you leave me in!

ARCHER [*cracking his whip*]: You still fancy geddin' de whip, do you?

[*Seeing that Inlaw seems unlikely to cause further trouble, the Archer reclines on his mat and relaxes; by the time the ensuing choral song is finished, he is asleep.*]

CHORUS:

It behoves me to summon hither to our dance

Pallas, lover of the dance,

the unwed virgin Maid

who is sole guardian of our city,

1140

holds sway over it in the eyes of all,

and is called the Keeper of the Keys.

Show thyself forth, as is right and proper,

thou hater of tyrants!

See, the people of the women call thee:

mayest thou come and bring me

peace, the friend to festivity.

And come ye. O our Ladies,

in kindness and in favour to your sacred precinct,

where you light up with your torches

1150

the holy secret rites, unlawful for men to behold,

a vision of immortal beauty.

Approach, come, we beseech you,
O most sovereign Thesmophoroi!
If ever heretofore you have come
in answer to our call. now too, we implore you,
come hither to us!

[Euripides returns. He is wearing a veil— which for the moment is raised — and a woman's outer garment which, but for his face, would make him look like an elderly female brothel-keeper; he is carrying a harp. He is accompanied by Fawn, a dancing-girl, and Woodworm, a boy piper.]

EURIPIDES *[to the chorus]*: Ladies, if you are willing to make a peace treaty with me for the future, you have the opportunity now, on the terms that you won't have anything bad said about you by me ever again. This is a formal offer. 1160

CHORUS-LEADER: For what purpose do you bring forward this new proposal?

EURIPIDES: This man fastened to the board *[indicating Inlaw]* is a relation of mine. If I can have him back, you absolutely will not ever hear any slander of you from me. But if you won't do as I ask, then I'll tell on you to your husbands, when they're back here from campaign, about the things you're getting up to now at home behind their backs.

CHORUS-LEADER *[after seeking and gaining the assent of her colleagues]*: We can tell you that as far as we're concerned, your terms are agreed; but as for this barbarian here, you'll have to get round him yourself. 1170

EURIPIDES: That job will be mine. *[He veils his face.]* Your job, Fawn, is to remember to do just what I was telling you on our way here. First of all, go across there and dance a trot; and you, Woodworm, strike up a Persian tune as well.

[Fawn goes over to where the Archer is lying. Euripides begins to play on his harp, Woodworm on his pipes. Before they have finished their prelude, the Archer wakes, sits up and looks around him.]

ARCHER: What dis buzzin'? Some rev'llers wakin' me up.

EURIPIDES: Archer, the girl was just about to rehearse; she's on her way to some gentlemen to dance.

ARCHER: She dance, she re'earse, I no stop'er. *[Fawn dances.]* 'Ow nimble she is, like a flea on a blanget! 1180

EURIPIDES *[laying the harp aside; to Fawn]*: Come, child, let's have this mantle — over your head, so.

[Fawn removes her mantle; she is wearing nothing underneath.]

Sit down on the Scythian's knees

and stretch out your feet so I can take off your sandals. *[Fawn hesitates.]*

ARCHER: Oh yes, yes, siddown, siddown, oh yes, yes, liddle baby.

[Fawn sits gingerly on the tips of the Archer's knees; he at once begins to feel her over.]

My, my, 'ow firm dat diddy is, like a durnip!

[Euripides having removed Fawn's sandals, she rises and begins to dance again.]

EURIPIDES *[to Woodworm]*: Play faster. *[To Fawn]* Are you still frightened of the Scythian?

[The music speeds up, and Fawn's dance becomes even more uninhibited]

ARCHER: Dat bum, 'e is gorgeous. *[Apparently talking to something inside his trousers]* You forit if you don' stay inside!

[Taking down his trousers, and revealing a large erect phallus]

Dere, dat's broberly arranged wid de willy.

EURIPIDES *[to Fawn, who has finished dancing]*: That's fine. Take your mantle; it's time for us to be moving now.

1190

[Fawn takes the mantle and is about to put it on, when the Archer puts out a hand to stop her.]

ARCHER: Won' she giss me firs'?

EURIPIDES: By all means. Kiss him. *[Fawn does so, at some length.]*

ARCHER: Oh-oh-oh! Wow-wowee! Dat dongue, 'ow sweet 'e is, like At'enian 'oney! Why don' she sleep wid me?

EURIPIDES *[firmly withdrawing Fawn from him]*: Goodbye, archer. That can't be done.

ARCHER: Do, do, ol' lady, do me dis favour.

EURIPIDES: You'll pay a drachma, then?

ARCHER: Oh, yes, yes, I bay.

EURIPIDES: Let's have the money, then.

ARCHER: But I not got any. 'Ere, dake my shaft-gase. *[He hands the bow-case to Euripides.]* Den you bring it back again. *[To Fawn]*

Follow me, liddle baby. You, ol' lady, dis ol' man 'ere, you geeep an eye on 'er. An' what's your name?

1200

EURIPIDES: Artemisia.

ARCHER: Den I remember dat name. Artamouxia. *[He takes Fawn inside.]*

EURIPIDES: Hermes, god of deception, that's well done again!

[Giving the harp and the bow-case to Woodworm]

You run off, kid, with these things, while I release him.

[Exit Woodworm. Euripides begins to undo the clamps holding Inlaw down.]

And you, the moment you're freed, run away like a man, and make for your wife and children at home.

INLAW: I'll take care of that, if once I'm set free.

EURIPIDES *[who has completed his task]*: You are free now. Over to you: run for it, before the archer comes and finds you here.

[He runs off, without waiting for Inlaw.]

INLAW: I'm doing just that! *[He runs off after Euripides]*

[*The Archer returns, with Fawn and without his erection.*]

ARCHER: Ol' lady, she was so delightful, your liddle daughder! Not 1210

bad-dempere, jus' nice an' go-oberadive. -- 'By, where's de ol'

lady? 'Elp, I ruined! Where's de ol' man dat was 'ere? Ol' lady!

Ol' woman! I don' appreciate dis, ol' lady! Anamouxia!! [*But*

answer comes there none.] De ol' woman's been diddled me! [*To*

Fawn] Run after 'er, fast as you can. [*Fawn runs off.*] Is rightly

galled a shaft-gase; I lost it by shaftin'!

[*Coming towards the orchestra, gesticulating wildly in the general direction of the Chorus*]

'Elp, whaddo I do? Where de ol' lady gone? Artamouxia!

CHORUS-LEADER: Are you asking about the old woman that was

carrying the harp?

ARCHER: Oh, yes, yes. 'Ave you seen 'im?

CHORUS-LEADER: Yes, she's gone off that way [*pointing off left*] —

both the woman herself, and there was some old man went after her.

ARCHER: De ol' man, she wearin' a saffron gown? 1220

CHORUS-LEADER: That's right. You can still catch them if you chase

them that way [*this time pointing off right*].

ARCHER [*bewildered running first one way then another*]: De villain

he is, dat ol' woman! Which way I run? Artamouxia!

CHORUS-LEADER [*continuing to give inconsistent directions to the Archer as he blunders this*

way and that]: Chase them straight up

there! — Where are you off to? Back this way is where to chase

them! — You're running the wrong way, you are!

ARCHER: De gods mus' 'ave gursed me! But I still run! Artamouxia!!

[*He disappears, in the opposite direction to that taken by Euripides and Inlaw.*]

CHORUS-LEADER [*calling after him*]: Run after them all the way to

Hades, and hon voyage! [*To her companions*] We have disported

ourselves enough; indeed it is now time for us to go each to her own

home. And may the Thesmophoroi recompense us for our service

with blessing and favour. [*Exeunt.*] 1230

Appendix 1: Time line

BCE

800

c.730 Homer

700

600

500

c. 525-456 Aeschylus 458 *Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, Eumenides*

496-406 Sophocles c. 410 *Electra*

484-406 Euripides c. 415 *Electra*
412 *Helen*

484-428 Herodotus c. 440 *Histories*

c. 480-c.380 Gorgias *Encomium of Helen*

469-399 Socrates

447-386 Aristophanes 411 *Thesmophoriazousae*

400

427-347 Plato c. 385-370 *Symposium*
c. 360 *Phaedrus*

300

200

100

CE

100 ? [Apollodorus] 1st – 2nd century CE *Library of Greek Mythology*

Appendix 2: Assessments of Gorgias' style

That Athenian oratory was highly developed before the arrival of Gorgias is implied by Cleon's speech on the Mytilenaeans in Thuc. iii 37 ff. Speaking in 427, the very year of Gorgias' arrival, Cleon reproaches the Athenians with regarding a debate in the assembly as a kind of show. 'You are lovers of new-fangled expressions,' he says, 'the slaves of each new paradox: you cannot resist the delights of the ear, and sit there like an audience at a sophistic exhibition, not like men deliberating on matters of state.' This is important evidence, if Thucydides is not guilty of anachronism here. That he is not guilty of anachronism is strongly suggested by some of the formal speeches in quite early plays of Euripides; for instance, by Jason's speech in the *Medea*, 522 ff. [...] Gorgias, the ancient authorities tell us, was the first writer of Greek prose to exploit consciously the use of rhyming clauses. Whereas in earlier prose rhymes naturally arose out of symmetrical structure, in Gorgias and Isocrates, and other writers under the Gorgianic influence, they are deliberately sought out. Double rhymes, too, are not infrequently found. Compare Gorgias, *Hel.* (Fr. 11) τοῦ μὲν γενομένου θεοῦ, λεγομένου δὲ θνητοῦ. [...] Certain rhymes are part of the common stock-in-trade of these purveyors of puerility: φήμη μνήμη, ῥώμη γνώμη, ὤρα χώρα, and so forth. Further, with a view to obtaining both rhyme and symmetry, clauses are padded with superfluous synonyms. [...]

To the use of short, symmetrical rhyming clauses, we must add the use of similarly derived words in close juxtaposition: μόνος μόνῳ σύνεστιν, and the like. This is a characteristic device of Greek poetry, and of those prose writers whose style is coloured by poetry—the early philosophers, Thucydides, Plato, and Xenophon. The orators rarely employed it, I think because they thought it too poetical.

Such are the simple ingredients of the manner of Gorgias. Starting with the initial advantage of having nothing in particular to say, he was able to concentrate all his energies upon saying it. And, to an author so fortunately placed, technique offers no especial difficulty. [...]

After this we are left wondering how it was that Gorgias, performing in the πρυτανεῖον τῆς σοφίας, before an audience whose taste had been educated by a century of great literature, was able to 'get away with it'. [J. Denniston *Greek Prose Style* pp. 9-12]

Gorgias's style has often been characterised as overly antithetical and symmetrical in structure and overly alliterative and assonant in sound. How could the Greek audience have valued so highly a style than jingles unpleasantly to modern ears? One possible answer is that the Greek audience was conditioned by its oral culture to respond to such auditory spellbinding. Listening to Gorgias apparently aroused not only intense sensual pleasure but also a shared sense of participation available no other way. The power of his words was akin to magic, conjuring up conviction where no knowledge had existed before. At the same time that Gorgias's rhetoric provided this magical experience, however, which was like the power of poetry, its very artificiality called attention to its manipulative effects. In other words, Gorgianic rhetoric pointed up the fact that language can be crafted to suit particular purposes; powerful speech is not simply the result of the speaker's inspiration or the audience's transport. [A.J. Patrick]

Appendix 3: Correspondences between *Helen* and *Thesmophoriazousae*

<i>Helen</i>	<i>Thesmophoriazousae</i>
1-3 Νείλου μὲν αἶδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί, ὄς ἀντι δίας ψακάδος Αἰγύπτου πέδον λευκῆς τακείσης χιόνος ὑγραίνει γύας.	855-7 Νείλου μὲν αἶδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί, ὄς ἀντι δίας ψακάδος Αἰγύπτου πέδον λευκῆς νοτίζει μελανοσυρμαῖον λεών.
16-7 ἡμῖν δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως·	859-60 ἐμοὶ δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως.
22 Ἑλένη δ' ἐκλήθην.	862 Ἑλένη δ' ἐκλήθην.
52-3 ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρῖοις ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον·	864-5 ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρῖαις ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον.
49 κὰγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ' εἴμ', ὁ δ' ἄθλιος πόσις	866 κὰγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ' εἴμ'· ὁ δ' ἄθλιος πόσις
56 τί δῆτ' ἔτι ζῶ;	868 τί οὖν ἔτι ζῶ;
68 τίς τῶνδ' ἐρυμνῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος;	871 τίς τῶνδ' ἐρυμνῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος,
460 Πρωτεύς τάδ' οἰκεῖ δώματ',	874 Πρωτέως τάδ' ἐστὶ μέλαθρα.
461 Αἴγυπτος; ὦ δύστηνος, οἱ πέπλευκ' ἄρα.	878 ὦ δύστηνος οἱ πεπλώκαμεν.
466 τόδ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ μνημα,	886 τόδ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ σῆμ',

549	ἔκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης.	904	τουτί τί ἔστιν; ἀφασία τίς τοί μ' ἔχει.
72 + 557	ὦ θεοί, τίν' εἶδον ὄψιν; τίς εἶ; τίν' ὄψιν σὴν, γύναι, προσδέρομαι;	905	ὦ θεοὶ τίν' ὄψιν εισορῶ; τίς εἶ γύναι;
558	Σὺ δ' εἶ τίς; αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κάμ' ἔχει λόγος.	906	σὺ δ' εἶ τίς; αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κάμ' ἔχει λόγος.
561*	<Ἑλληνίς εἶ τις ἢ ἐπιχωρία γυνή;>	907	Ἑλληνίς εἶ τις ἢ 'πιχωρία γυνή;
562	Ἑλληνίς· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.	908	Ἑλληνίς. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.
563	Ἑλένη σ' ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ' εἶδον, γύναι.	909	Ἑλένη σ' ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ' εἶδον γύναι.
564	ἐγὼ δὲ Μενελέω γε σέ· οὐδ' ἔχω τί φῶ.	910	ἐγὼ δὲ Μενελάω σ' ὅσα γ' ἐκ τῶν ἰφύων.
565	ἔγνωσ γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.	911	ἔγνωσ ἄρ' ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.
566	ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐς χέρας.	912	ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐσχάρας

Appendix 4: Further Reading

[Apollodorus]

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Detail of Peitho, Leda and Hypnos from a painting depicting the tale of Leda and the Swan.

Apulian Red-Figure Loutrophoros c.350-340 BCE