

Euripides: IPHIGENEIA AT AULIS.

Brief notes by P. G. Brown

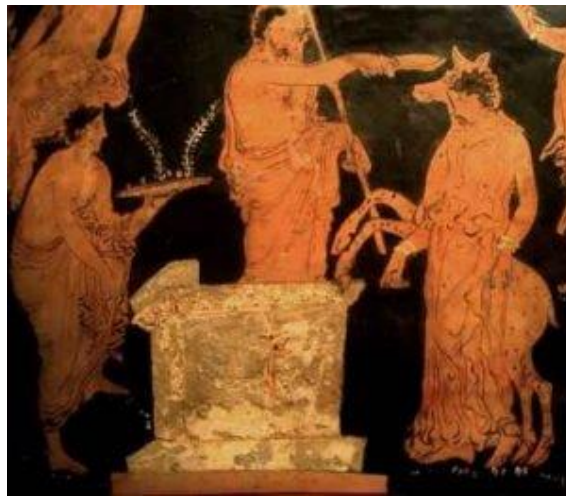


Figure 1. *Iphigeneia at Aulis*.

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The Greek Tragic Theatre, H.C. Baldry (1971)

Euripides:

- Born 480 B.C. (It was said that he was born on the day when the battle of Marathon took place), son of Mnesarchus and Cleito in the village of Phlya in the central Attica.
- He had very little success during his life. He rarely won first prize but his plays became greatly admired and revived after his death. Although not liked by the Athenian judges he was well respected outside of Athens. He is the most often quoted of writers in antiquity.
- His artistic form is very traditional and stiff. Arguments presented in his plays are very logically structured: ‘on the one hand ... on the other ...’, ‘firstly ... secondly...’ and so on, yet his ideas are often speculative and innovative. He used ancient myths but modifies them more ambitiously than any other playwright (judging by the extant plays). 17 of his plays (out of possibly as many as 92) survive which exceeds the total number of surviving plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In comparing Sophocles and Euripides, Porson said: *illum admiramus, hunc legimus* (‘we admire the one and read the other’).

- He grew up during the 'golden age' of Athens, with its artistic rise to greatness, and its limitless confidence after the defeat of the Persians, followed by its arrogance and decline during the years of the Peloponnesian Wars.
- He is often portrayed by comic writers (especially Aristophanes) as a 'hater of women' and an 'atheist'. As we read his plays, the former of these charges seems strange, since his heroines are often treated with greater interest and insight than his male heroes. The Athenian audience probably expected their women to be presented in an idealised way rather than as real human beings. In fact one of the Greek philosophers said 'the greatest glory for a woman is to be as little mentioned as possible among men'. Notwithstanding Klytemnestra in Aeschylus and Antigone in Sophocles, women in these playwrights (as far as we can glean from the surviving plays) do not generally have much of a 'presence'. Euripides also mirrors in some of his plays, the speculative theology that was rife among the Sophists, but to call him an 'atheist' is to miss the point of his works. His apparent disrespect towards the goddess Hera and Aphrodite must be understood in the context of *myth* (μῦθος). The *Bacchae* also, in my mind, leaves no doubt as to his view of the power of the gods in the lives of men.
- In 408 he went to Macedonia as an exile (cause unknown) at the age of 71, invited by Archelaos, who had gathered many other 'men of learning' at his court. He died approximately two years later. The plays *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Alcmaeon* (lost) and *Bacchae* were found among his possessions and performed posthumously.

Metre:

Most of the dialogue passages we will read are in Iambic Trimeter. This consists of 6 feet, each foot being made up from one of:

- The Iambus ˘ - e.g. Διός
- The Spondee - - e.g. ἔς καί
- The Tribrach ˘ ˘ ˘ e.g. ἰκέτις
- The Anapaest ˘ ˘ - e.g. προγόνου
- The Dactyl - ˘ ˘ e.g. κλωπικός

The 6 feet may consist

(a) entirely of iambs, e.g. line 36.

κενήν δόκησιν, οὐκ // ἔχων. τὰ δὲ αὖ Διὸς

(b) of two short syllables (a Pyrrhic) standing in place of the last iamb, e.g. line 2

ὅς ἀντὶ δίας ψακάδας Αἰγύπτου πέδον

(c) of a spondee in any of the odd feet, (i.e. 1st, 3rd or 5th) e.g. line 1

Νείλου μὲν αἶδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί

(d) resolution of the two short syllables for one long one giving a tribrach. This may happen in any of the first 4 feet (rarely in the fifth), but more than one tribrach in a line is very rare. e.g. line 64.

ἰκέτις, ἴνῳ ἀνδρὶ τὰ μὰ διασώση λέχη

(e) a dactyl for a spondee in the 1st or 3rd foot, e.g. line 20

ὅς δόλιον εὐνήν ἐξέπραξθ' ὑπὸ αἵετου

(f) an Anapaest in the first foot (or if a proper name, in any one of the first five feet), e.g. line 86.

Τελαμών, Σαλαμῖς δὲ πατρὶς ἢ θρέψασά με

Caesura: In all the above examples there was a word break in either the 3rd or 4th foot (denoted by //), most commonly in the 3rd. This is called a caesura.

Rule of the Cretic Ending: The combination $\bar{~} \sim \bar{~}$ is called a Cretic. In tragic verse, a word or phrase of this shape cannot end a line if it is preceded by a long syllable (with the exception that that syllable is a preposition or some other monosyllable closely attached to the Cretic word).

The Greek Theatre:

- The plays were performed once only at the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens, which holds about 17,000. The theatre consisted of an ὀρχήτρα where the

Chorus sang, a high wooden stage, the σκηνή which was painted and possibly an altar in the middle of the ὀρχήστρα. A crane, μηχανή, was used to bring the god or goddess into view above the stage to speak the epilogue, (*deus ex machina*).

- Wealthy citizens (*choregoi*) paid for the chorus.
- All actors were male. They wore elaborate masks and high platform shoes. This made facial expression and rapid movement impossible. Gestures and voice modulation were probably the main techniques for expressing emotion.
- Chorus rarely takes part in the action, but rather comment on it. This is less true in Euripides' plays.

The play was performed in 405 BC after Euripides' death.

(In class we will read lines 49-114, 303-334, 402-453, 801-916, 1098-1170, 1209-1275, 1368-1401, 1532-1629 (Total 538 lines). Choral Odes are taken from Perseus.

Prologue: 1-163.

The scene is in front of the tent of Agamemnon at Aulis. The play appears to begin with an anapaestic dialogue unlike any of the other extant plays, which begin with a monologue. (The *Andromeda* appears to begin with anapaests). Many editors have therefore transposed lines 1-48 to follow after 49-114. This puts the monologue of Agamemnon at the beginning in keeping with all other extant plays (except Rhesos, which is not regarded to be by Euripides). Collard and Morwood maintain the standard numbering.

Lines 49-114.

49. 'daughter of Thestias'. Thestias was the king of Aitolia, the region of northern Greece north west of the Peloponnesos.

50. Phoibe plays no significant role in the mythology.

51b. 'the foremost in wealth'.

54. ξυνίσταθ' - tr. 'began to take shape'.

56b-57a. 'as to how he might best deal with the situation'.

57b. 'he had the following idea' or 'the following came into his head'.

58ff. 'that the suitors should join in an oath, take one another by the right hand, burn sacrifices and pour libations'.

60. καὶ ἐπαράσασσασθαι - 'and to swear'.

63. ἀπωθοίη λέχους - 'might drive away from his marriage-bed'.

65. ὄπλων μέτα - 'by force of arms', take with κατασκάψειν.

67. ὑπήλθεν - 'tricked'.

Τυνδάρεως is nominative.

69. ὅτου- 'to whomever'. Lenting reads ὅποι - 'wherever', which is probably better.

73ff. 'bright-coloured in the style of his clothes, and ablaze with golden barbarian luxury'.

76. 'finding Menelaos away from home'.

77. οἰστρήσας δρόμῳ -lit. 'being stung at a run', tr. 'rushing madly'.

80. ἄξαντες δορί - 'darting off with spear in hand'.

81. βάρη - 'straits'.

84. Despite the obelisks, only κῆτα is really in doubt (since this combination only ever begins a clause) with several options having been proposed, but none of them certain.

85. τὸ ἀξίωμα - 'the honour'.

88. χρώμενοι - tr. 'experiencing'.

89. ἀπορίᾳ κεχηρημένοις - 'to us having consulted (the oracle) in our desperation'.

90. ἀνεῖλεν -`ordered, declared that'. This is a technical term for the oracle's response.

93. `for us sacrificing (her), but if we did not sacrifice, it would not happen'. This line bracketed by some but kept by Collard and Morwood.

94. ὀρθίῳ -`shrill, loud', tr. `with a loud proclamation'.

97. οὐ -`from that time on, whereupon'.

101. ἐγκαυρούμενος -`exulting'. This compound does not occur elsewhere.

103. λέχος -tr. `bride'.

104. πειθῶ -acc. `means of persuasion', `inducement'.

105. `putting together a false marriage for (ἀντί - in exchange for) the girl'.

105-114 are frequently bracketed by editors who place 49-114 first.

108. μεταγράφω καλῶς -lit. `I rewrite well', tr. `I countermand'.

109b. `in the shadow of night'.

Lines 1-48. (These are in anapaests).

4-5. `for old age attends a lack of sleep and my eyes are alert'.

6. πορθμεύει -lit. `ferries (itself)'.

8. μεσσήρης -`high in heaven'. Tr. `Sirius still high in heaven speeding his course near the Pleiades as they fare on their seven paths'.

15. ἀκίνητοι -tr. `(there is) no sign of movement'.

20. `yet in this is the nobility of life'.

22. φιλότιμον -`longing for glory'.

23. `but when it stands near it brings grief'.

27. διέκναισαν -`shatter it'.

34. ἀμπετάσας -`having uncovered'.

37. συγχέῃς -this appears to mean 'erase'.

39. πεύκην - 'pine (tablet)'.

41-2. Lit. 'lacking in nothing of difficulties so as not to be mad', i.e. 'with all the problems you have, you are on the verge of madness'.

47-8. 'as part of the dowry and a just bridal attendant'.

Lines 115-163.

118. σύντονα - 'in concert with'.

119. ἴνιν - 'daughter'.

121. ἀκλύσταν - 'sheltered from waves'.

123. δαίνυμι - 'feast, celebrate'.

124. ἀπλακών - 'having lost, been deprived of'.

125. 'greatly angered (lit. puffed up) not rise up against you and your wife'.

127. φῆς - 'mean'.

130. ἐπιφημίζω - 'promise'.

131ff. Lit. 'to give for the bridal beds of embraces in bed', tr. 'for the embrace of the bridal bed'.

134. τῷ τῆς θεᾶς - 'to the son of the goddess'.

135. φατίζω - 'betroth'.

136. 'I have changed my mind', or perhaps 'I have gone mad'.

139. ἐρεσσων -lit. 'ply the oar', tr. 'make haste'.

143. 'speak words of good omen'.

144b. 'as you pass the road that divides'.

145. τις ... ἀπήνη - 'any wagon'.

149ff. `Start then from the bolted gates, and if you meet the escort, start them back again, and drive at full speed to the abodes of the Cyclopes’.

153. πιστός - `believed’.

160. σύλλαβε - `assist (me)’.

Parodos: 164-302.

Strophe:

To the sandy beach of sea-coast Aulis I have come after a voyage through the tides of narrow Euripus, leaving Chalcis, my city which feeds the waters of far-famed Arethusa near the sea, so that I might behold the army of the Achaeans and the ships rowed by those godlike heroes; for our husbands tell us that fair-haired Menelaus and high-born Agamemnon are leading them to Troy on a thousand ships in quest of Helen, whom Paris the herdsman carried off from the banks of reedy Eurotas, his gift from Aphrodite, when that queen of Cyprus entered beauty's contest with Hera and Pallas at the gushing fountain

Antistrophe:

Through the grove of Artemis, rich with sacrifice, I sped my course, my cheek stained with red from maiden modesty, in my eagerness to see the soldiers' camp, the tents of the mail-clad Danaids, and their crowd of horses. I saw two met together in council; one was Aias, son of Oileus; the other Aias, son of Telamon, crown of glory to the men of Salamis; and I saw Protesilaus and Palamedes, sprung from the son of Poseidon, sitting there amusing themselves with intricate figures at checkers; Diomedes too at his favourite sport of hurling quoits; and Meriones, Ares' son, a marvel to mankind, stood at his side; likewise I beheld the son of Laertes, who came from his island hills, and with him Nireus, handsomest of the Achaeans.

Epode:

Achilles next, that nimble runner, swift on his feet as the wind, whom Thetis bore and Chiron trained, I saw upon the beach, racing in full armour along the shingle, and straining every nerve to beat a team of four horses, as he sped round the track on foot; and Eumelus, the grandson of Pheres, their driver, was shouting when I saw him, goading on his lovely steeds, with their bits of chased

gold-work; the centre pair, that bore the yoke, had dappled coats picked out with white, while the tracehorses, on the outside, facing the turning-post in the course, were bays with spotted fetlocks. Close beside them Peleus' son leapt on his way, in all his harness, keeping abreast the rail by the axle-box.

Strophe:

Next I sought the countless fleet, a wonder to behold, that I might fill my girlish eyes with gazing, a sweet delight. The warlike Myrmidons from Phthia held the right wing with fifty swift cruisers, upon whose sterns, right at the ends, stood Nereid goddesses in golden effigy, the ensign of Achilles' armament.

Antistrophe:

Near these were moored the Argive ships in equal numbers, over which Mekisteus' son, whom Talaus his grandfather reared, and Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, were in command; next in order, Theseus' son was stationed at the head of sixty ships from Attika, having the goddess Pallas set in a winged chariot drawn by steeds with solid hoof, a lucky sight for mariners

Strophe:

Then I saw Boeotia's fleet of fifty sails decked with ensigns; these had Kadmus at the stern holding a golden dragon at the beaks of the vessels, and earth-born Leitus was their admiral. And there were ships from Phokis; and from Lokris came the son of Oileus with an equal contingent, leaving famed Thronion's citadel.

Antistrophe:

And from Mykenai, the Cyclopes' town, Atreus' son sent a hundred well-manned galleys, and Adrastos was with him in command, as friend with friend, that Hellas might exact vengeance on the one who had fled her home to wed a foreigner. Also I saw upon Gerenian Nestor's prows from Pylos the ensign of his neighbour Alpheus, four-footed like a bull.

Epode:

Moreover there was a squadron of twelve Aenianian sail under King Gouneus; and then near them the lords of Elis, whom all the people named Epeians; and

Eurytus was lord of these; likewise he led the Taphian warriors with the white oar-blades, the subjects of Meges, son of Phyleus, who had left the isles of the Echinades, where sailors cannot land.

Lastly, Aias, reared in Salamis, was joining his right wing to the left of those near whom he was posed, closing the line with his outermost ships, twelve barques obedient to the helm, as I heard and then saw the crews; the one who brings his barbaric boats to grapple Aias shall obtain no safe return. There I saw the naval armament, but some things I heard at home about the gathered army, of which I still have a recollection.

First Episode: 303-542.

Menelaus and the Old Man enter the stage fighting over the tablet which the Old Man is holding and which Menelaus is trying to take from him.

309. ἀμιλλῶ -middle imperative 'argue, contend'.

Lines 317-401 are in trochaic tetrameters. This is uncommon in dialogue passages and suggests heightened emotional intensity. (See note in Tarkow, p. vi.)

318. κυριώτερος λέγειν -'is more entitled to speak'.

320. εἰς ἡμάς – tr. 'in the face'.

321. Note the pun on τρέσας and Ἀτρέως (using a false etymology of the name).

ἀνακαλύψω βλέφαρον -'avert my gaze'.

322. ὑπηρέτιν -lit. 'servant', tr. 'instrument'.

325. καιρός -'(it is not) the right time'.

325b. 'having opened the seal'.

327b. Genitive of exclamation.

329. ἀναισχύντου τάδε -'characteristic of a shameless man'.

330a. τὸ βούλεσθαι -'my desire'.

330. κνίζω - `to provoke'.
331. οἰκεῖν - `to manage'.
332. πλάγια - `shifty, treacherous'.
333. κομψεύω - tr. `refine, dress up'.
- 333b. `a clever tongue is a hateful thing'.
336. κατατενῶ - take with τάληθές - `strain the truth'.
338. `seeming to decline but intentionally wanting to'.
341. προόρησις - `permission to address you'.
342. ἐκ μέσου - `right out in the open', or `from the midst (of the Greeks)'.
345. κλήθρων - lit. `the bolts on the door', tr. `aloof inside your citadel'.
353. διήγγελλον - `kept ordering you'.
- πονεῖν - `to labour on'.
- 354-5. `what dismay was in your eye and confusion that ruling then thousand ships you were not able to fill up the plain of Priam with weapons'.
356. Read τίνα δὲ πόρον εὔρω πόθεν.
363. ὑποστρέψας - lit. `having turned back', here `having changed your mind'.
366. μυρίοι - tr. `countless others'.
- 367a. `they make an effort while in power'.
368. ἐνδίκως - `just as they deserve'.
370. κεδνον- `good'.
- βαρβάρους τοὺς οὐδένας - `these nobody barbarians'.
371. ἐξανήσει - tr. `will let go scot-free'.
378. εἰπεῖν κακῶς - `to speak ill = to find fault'.
- 382b. `do you long for a virtuous wife?'

386b. `casting aside discretion`.

394a. This line appears in quotations but not in the manuscripts, `For the divine is not without sense but is able to discern ...`.

395. παγέντας - `making fast`.

396. τὸ σόν - `your affair`.

397. εὔνις - `wife`.

τιμωρία - `for the sake of vengeance on`.

400. ῥάδια - `easy (to understand)`.

406a. `how can you show ...`.

407. `to share in your moderation, not your madness`.

409. παρακάλει - `ask me for help`.

411. κατὰ θεόν - `by the plan of some god`.

417. δέμας - tr. `the person of`.

420. μακράν - sc. ὁδόν - `a long trip`.

421. θηλύπουν βάσιν - `lit. `female-footed step`. Tr. `tender feet`.

422. χλόην - `green (grass)`.

423. βορᾶς - `forage`.

429. περίβλεπτοι - `admired`.

433. προτελίζουσι ... νεάνιδα - `offer the young girl as a preliminary marriage sacrifice`, with obvious double meaning. Tr. `consecrating`.

435. `begin the rites with the baskets concerned with these things`.

437. εὐτρέπιζε - `make ready`.

438. λωτός - `reed pipe`.

439. φῶς ... τοδε - `this light`, i.e. `this day`.

441. `as fate progresses’.

444. ὑπήλθεν - `tricked’.

446. `There is a certain usefulness about lowly birth’.

448. ἀνολβα - `miserable things’, i.e. `to relate all their woes’.

449ff. `while to the high-born man come these same sorrows, but we have pride (ὄγκον) as an overseer of our life and are the people's slaves. I, for instance, am ashamed to weep, and no less ashamed, poor wretch, not to weep at the terrible disaster I am come to.’

455b. `how will I look her in the eye?’

456b. `in addition to the problems I already have’. (He did not expect Klytaimnestra to be coming as well).

458b. `perform the fondest duties’.

461. νυμφεύσει - `will make her his bride’.

462. sc. με.

472. κράτος - tr. `victory’.

476. ἐπίτηδες - `cunningly’.

478. ἀνταφίημι - `let go (a tear)’.

479. ἐξάφισταμαι - `I withdraw’.

480a. `for I am not afraid of you’.

482a. `to prefer my interest’.

494. `what has this maiden to do with Helen?’

502. μετέπεσον - `I have changed (my opinion)’.

506b-507a. `beyond my expectation, you have made this suggestion’.

510. συγγένειαν - tr. `relationship’.

515. νιν - refers to Iphigeneia.

516. 'I will escape notice (doing) this, but I would not in regard to those other matters'.

520. 'for the entire race of seers is base and greedy'.

521. 'yes good for nothing and profitless'.

522. οὐμ' = ὃ ἔμε.

525a. 'there is no way that ...'.

527. 'he is held captive by ambition, a terrible malady'.

530. ὑπέστην - 'I undertook'.

537. ἠπόρημαι - 'I am at a loss'.

First Stasimon: 543-589.

Strophe:

Happy are they who find the goddess come in moderate might, sharing with self-restraint in Aphrodite's gift of marriage and enjoying calm and rest from frenzied passions, where the Love-god, golden-haired, stretches his charmed bow with twin arrows, and one is aimed at happiness, the other at life's confusion. O lady Cypris, queen of beauty! far from my bridal bower I ban the last. Be mine delight in moderation and pure desires, and may I have a share in love, but shun excess!

Antistrophe:

Men's natures vary, and their habits differ, but virtue is always manifest. Likewise the training that come of education conduces greatly to virtue; for not only is modesty wisdom, but it has also the rare grace of seeing by its better judgment what is right; whereby a glory, ever young, is shed over life by reputation. A great thing it is to hunt virtue, for women when they love secretly; while in men, an inborn sense of order, shown in countless ways, adds to a city's greatness.

Epode:

You came, O Paris, to the place where you were reared to herd the cows among the white heifers of Ida, piping in foreign strain and breathing on your reeds an echo of the Phrygian airs Olympos played. Full-uddered cows were browsing at the spot where that verdict between goddesses was awaiting you—the cause of your going to Hellas to stand before the ivory palace, kindling love in Helen's entranced eyes and feeling its flutter in your own breast; from which the fiend of strife brought Hellas with her spear and ships to the towers of Troy.

Oh! great is the bliss the great enjoy. Behold Iphigenia, the king's child, my lady, and Clytemnestra, the daughter of Tyndareus; how proud their lineage! how high their pinnacle of fortune! These mighty ones, whom wealth attends, are very gods in the eyes of less favoured folk.

Let us stand here, maidens of Chalkis, and lift the queen from her chariot to the ground without stumbling, supporting her gently in our arms, with kind intent, that the renowned daughter of Agamemnon, just arrived, may feel no fear; strangers ourselves, let us avoid anything that may disturb or frighten the strangers from Argos.

Second Episode: 607-750.

607-8. `We understand your kindness and gracious greeting as a favourable omen'.

612. εὐλαβούμενοι - `taking good care'.

614. ἀσθενές -tr. `faltering, unsteady'.

615. Addressing the chorus.

617. στηρίγματα - `support'.

618a. `from my chariot seat'.

620. ἀπαράμυθον -tr. `when there is none beside to soothe it'.

625. κῆδος - `connection by marriage (with)'.

- 628b. `me to be blessed’.
629. πλησία - `near’.
631. ὑποδραμοῦσα - `being about to outrun’.
639. τῶδε - refers to Agamemnon.
644. ἔκηλον - `at your ease’.
648. `Smooth to kindly aspect the furrows of your brow’.
649. `I rejoice as indeed I do rejoice at seeing you’.
651. ἐπιούσα - `being about to come’. `For the long absence that is about to come upon us’.
652. The line does not scan and hence may be corrupt. The sense is clear.
655. The first half of the line is an aside. `I cannot bear the silence, I praise you(r reply)’.
659. `Those things which have destroyed me will also destroy others’.
665. The line does not scan. The sense is `we feel the same way about it’, Lit. `you have come O daughter to the same place as your father’. Others take it to mean `you have come to the same plight as your father’.
674. ἱεροῖς -tr. `sacred rites’.
675. εἴσει -future of οἶδα.
ἐστήξεις - future perfect middle.
677. τοῦ μηδὲν φρονεῖν - `on account of your ignorance’.
683. ταχεῖα -tr. `sudden’.
684. νοτίς -lit. `wetness’, tr. `burst of tears’.
- 685b. `I apologise for these tears’.
686. κατοικτίζω - `I lament’.
692. νοθετέω - `admonish, chastise’.

694. `custom, together with time, will dry up (the pain)´.
695. κατήνεσας - `you have betrothed´.
699. πρόμον - `great man´, `a leading man´.
702. βίᾳ θεῶν - `in defiance of the gods´.
703. `Zeus betrothed her and her guardian gave consent´.
705. `where Cheiron dwells, in the sacred folds of Mt. Pelion´.
707. ἔδαισαν - `celebrated´.
718. προτέλεια - `preliminary sacrifice´.
719. tr. `I was engaged in this very matter´.
723. εὐπρύμνοισιν -lit. `well-sterned´, tr. `well-built´.
724. `well enough if needs must, may it come to pass´. She would have preferred a wedding in a more pleasant setting.
730. τηνικαῦτα - `during this time´.
731. τημέλει - `protect´, imperative. There are other girls to look after at home.
732. φλόγα -tr. `marriage torch´.
- 734b. `or do you regard these things as unimportant´. There are textual variants here.
- 744b-5a. `I make plots and devise schemes against my own dearest´.
748. ἐξιστορήσων - `to expediate´. Lit. `to enquire to the end´.

Second Stasimon: 751-800.

Strophe:

The Hellenes' gathered army will come in arms aboard their ships to Simois with its silver eddies, to Ilium, the plain of Troy beloved by Phoebus; where Cassandra, I am told, wildly tosses her golden tresses, wreathed with crown of green laurel, whenever the god's resistless prophecies inspire her.

Antistrophe:

And on the towers of Troy and round her walls shall Trojans stand, when sea-borne troops with brazen shields row in on shapely ships to the channels of the Simois, eager to take Helen, the sister of that heavenly pair whom Zeus begot, from Priam, and bear her back to Hellas by toil of Achaean shields and spears.

Epode:

The son of Atreus, encircling Pergamon, the Phrygians' town, with murderous war around her stone-built towers, dragging Paris's head backward to cut his throat and sacking the city from roof to base, shall be a cause of many tears to maids and Priam's wife. And Helen, the daughter of Zeus, shall weep in bitter grief because she left her lord. Never may there appear to me or to my children's children the prospect which the wealthy Lydian ladies and Phrygia's brides will have as at their looms they converse: "Tell me, who will pluck me away from my ruined country, tightening his grasp on lovely tresses till the tears flow? it is all through you, the offspring of the long-necked swan; if indeed it is a true report that Leda bore you to a winged bird, when Zeus transformed himself there, or whether, in the tablets of the poets, fables have carried these tales to men's ears idly, out of season."

Third Episode: 801-1035.

804. ἐξ ἴσου - 'on equal terms', 'on an equal basis', 'equally'.

808. ἄπαιδες - taken as is, the sense is literally, 'others are childless with respect to their wives'. The text has been emended to καὶ παίδας.

809. τῆσδε στρατείας - 'for this expedition'.

813. ἐπί - 'because of, by reason of'.

814. προσκείμενοι - 'pressing on, being insistent'.

818. μελλήματα - 'delays'.

822b. 'possessed of fair appearance'.



Figure 2. Achilles and Klytimestra, from a movie adaptation of the play.

824. `I praise your reverent address to modesty`.

826. πεφραγμένους - `heavily armoured`, lit. `fenced in, fortified`.

829. κάρια - `the relevant facts`.

830. `I am embarrassed to converse with women`.

837. ἀφασία - `speechlessness`.

838. καινουργεῖς -lit. `innovate`, tr. `you are making this up`.

839-840. `it is in everyone's nature to be shy as they look on new friends and are reminded of their marriage`.

844. θαύμαζε - `marvel at (once again)`.

845. `it is our common task to conjecture`.

846. For οὐ ψευδόμεθα read ἐψευδόμεθα. `For we were both perchance deceived by what was said`.

847. μνηστεύω - `I am paying court`.

848. εἴξασιν - `as (they, the marriages) seem`, tr. `so it seems`. Third p. pl. of εἶοικα.

850. `Come, don't give it a care and make light of it`.

853. τόδε -refers to χάϊρε.

The Old Man, who is slave to both Agamemnon and Klytimestra, appears.

Lines 855-916 are in trochaic metre. This is a brisker rhythm and marks an increase in tension.

857. 'who is calling through the half-opened door like a frightened man?'

858. 'I show no pride in this'.

860. 'of her (who is) in front of the house'.

862. ἐφέστατον perfect dual from ἐφίστημι.

864. σώσατε -aor. mid. imper.

865. 'your speech will save them in the distant future, it has a certain pomposity'. Monk reads σώσει for ἄν ὤση. For ὄγκον some editors read ὄκνον - 'hesitation'.

866. δεξιᾶς ἑκάτι - 'for the sake of touching my right hand' (in supplication).

878. ὁ ἐπάγων - 'driving him on'.

882. εἰς Ἴφιγένειαν -tr. 'to involve'. 'What has the fated return home of Helen to do with Iphigeneia?'

888. στέγω - 'hold back'.

891. πρὸς - 'in relation to'.

892. ξυγκελεύων - 'confirming'.

897b. 'and I do not bear my own part in the matter lightly'.

899. ἀπλῶς - 'simply'. Achilles feels particularly slighted by what has happened, as he will expound in his speech later.

901b. 'for why should I be proud'.

903. δυσπραξία - 'sore distress'.

904. 'and her who was spoken of as your wife'.

905. καταστέψασα - 'having covered her (with a veil)'.

910. ἀπώλεσε - 'ruined'.

910b. `(the name) by which you ought to be defending me`.

ἀμυναθεῖν -a strong aor. inf. of ἀμύνω.

912. γελάειν -tr. `smile upon me`.

914-5a. `lawless, bold in an evil cause and useful when it suits them`.

917b. `a potent spell`.

918. ὑπερκάμνω -`to fight on behalf of`.

920. ἀσχαλᾶν -`to be distressed at`.

921. tr. `and with equal moderation to rejoice when at prosperity`.

ἐξογκόω -`to make to swell`, here in the sense of `grown full`. I rather bold metaphor.

922ff. `for such men have reasoned how to go through life with good judgement`.

927. ἀπλοῦς -`single`, perhaps here `simple, straightforward`.

931. `as far as in me lies, do honour to Ares with my spear`.

933. `with regard to acts befitting young man`.

934. καταστελῶ -`I will set right`.

936. ἐμὴ φατισθεῖσα -lit. `one spoken of as mine`, i.e. `betrothed`.

ἐμπλέκειν πολκάς -`to play tricks with`.

938. ἦρατο -`raise`.

940. ἀγνόν -tr. `untainted`.

942. οὐκ ἀνεκτά -`unbearable`.

943a. Lit. `marvelous, how unworthy`, tr. `wondrously unworthy things`.

944-5. `I would be the basest man in Argos, I would be nothing, and Menelaus would count for a man`.

947b. `for your husband`.

949. φυτουργόν - `father`.

951b. Lit. `so as to touch her dress`.

952ff. `otherwise Sipylos, the barbarian stronghold from which our commanders draw their descent, will be (thought) a city, and there will be no mention of the name of Phthia`. Some editors read πολύς for πόλις. Sipylos was a small town, supposed home of Tantalos.

955. προχύτας χέρνιβας - `barley meal and lustral water`.

958. τυχών -tr. `when he gets lucky`.

963. θήραμα - `as a snare`.

966a. `if the journey (νόστος) to Ilium faltered on this matter`.

967a. `to advance the common good`.

968bff. `with the generals treating me well or badly is a light matter`.

969. ἐν εὐμαρεῖ - `it is easy`.

970. σίδηρος - tr. `sword`.

971. `I will stain with stains of bloody murder`.

978. `nor falling short of this, would I lose the favour`.

979. `for when the good are praised, they have some sort of feeling of hatred for those who raise excessively`.

981. παραφέρουσα - `intruding with`.

982b. `but you are uninfected by my troubles`.

983. ἔχει τοι σχῆμα - `it is good form`, `it is seemly`.

988. ὄρνις - `ill-omen`.

889. `a thing which you must guard against`.

993. ἀπαρθέεντα - `unseemly for a maiden`.

994. Lit. `with the modest glance of a free born maiden`.

996. Lit. `things worthy of respect are respected`.

1000. ἀργός -Lit. `idle`, but here `free from`.

1001. λέσχας -`gossip`.

1002. εἰς ἴσον -`to the same result`.

1012a. `he is something of a coward`.

1013. καταπαλαίουσιν -`overthrow`.

1017a. `for in the case where you persuade him of what we want ...`.

1018b. `for this ensures our safety`.

1022a. `and if things turned out well`.

1029. ἐπτοημένην -`distraught`.

Third Stasimon: 1036-1097. (The wedding of Peleus and Thetis).

Strophe:

What wedding-hymn was that which raised its strains to the sound of Libyan flutes, to the music of the dancer's lyre, and the note of the pipe of reeds? It was on the day Pieria's lovely-haired choir came over the slopes of Pelion to the wedding of Peleus, beating the ground with print of golden sandals at the banquet of the gods, and hymning in dulcet strains the praise of Thetis and the son of Aiakos, over the Centaurs' hill, down woods of Pelion. There was the Dardanian boy, dainty morsel of Zeus' bed, drawing off the wine he mixed in the depths of golden bowls, Ganymede the Phrygian; while, along the gleaming sand, the fifty daughters of Nereus graced the marriage with their dancing, circling in a mazy ring.

Antistrophe:

The revel-rout of Centaurs came too, mounted on horses, to the feast of the gods and the mixing-bowl of Bacchus, leaning on fir-trees, with wreaths of green foliage round their heads; and Chiron cried loudly: "Daughter of Nereus, you shall bear a son, a dazzling light to Thessaly;" and the prophet, skilled in

arts inspired by Phoebus, gave his name; "for he shall come with an army of Myrmidon spearmen to the famous land of Priam, to set it in a blaze, his body cased in a suit of golden mail forged by Hephaestus, a gift from his goddess-mother, from Thetis who bore him." Then the gods shed a blessing on the marriage of the high-born bride, who was first of Nereus' daughters, and on the wedding of Peleus.

Epode:

But the Argives will crown you, wreathing the lovely tresses of your hair, like a pure, dappled heifer brought from some rocky cave, and staining with blood your human throat; though you were never reared among the piping and whistling of herdsmen, but at your mother's side, to be decked as the bride of a son of Inachos. Where now does the face of modesty or virtue have any strength? seeing that godlessness holds sway, and virtue is neglected by men and thrust behind them, lawlessness over law prevailing, and mortals no longer making common cause to keep the jealousy of gods from reaching them.

Fourth Episode: 1098-1275.

1098. προσκουμένη - 'looking for'.

1101. μεταβολάς - 'variations', 'modulations'.

1103. Agamemnon enters. 'I had made mention of Ag. who (in fact) is standing nearby.'

1106. ἐν καλῶ - 'in good time', 'opportunely'.

1109. καιρός - tr. 'opportunity'.

ἀντιλάζομαι - 'to seize'.

1111ff. 'the water for sprinkling is ready, and the barley to throw on the cleansing fire with both hands'.

1114. φυσήματα - 'spurting', lit. 'blowings'. The line is deleted by some editors, Diggle suggests φυσήματι.

1115. ὀνόμασιν -tr. 'words'.

1116. ὀνομάσασαν - 'naming them', 'mentioning them'.

1123. πρόσθε -`in front (of your eyes)´.

1125-6. Lit. `for it is possible to present (use) all (my woes) first, or put them past or midway, anywhere´. Some editors reject line 1126 and we may render, `I may treat them all as foremost´.

1127. εἷς ἕν -tr. `as one´.

1128. `having confusion and agitation in your eyes´.

1132. τλήμονα -tr. `bold, reckless´.

1136. δαίμων-tr. `destiny´.

1137b. `one (fortune) in respect of three misfortunes´.

1139. `A thought which amounts to thoughtlessness´.

1142. `is of you agreeing´, tr. `is a sign of your agreement´.

1145. προσλαβεῖν -`to add´.

1147. παρωδοῖς -`obscure´, lit. `singing beside´.

1150. Neither Homer nor Aischylos say anything about this previous marriage.

1151-2. `you dashed to the ground my baby while alive tearing it violently from my breast´. Read ζῶν προσούδισσας πέδω in the second half of line 1151. Others read προσώρισσας from προσορίζειν and translate: `didst add my babe to the allotted share of booty´. In defense of this, one wonders why Kl. did not make comparison with the present situation.

1157. `having become reconciled to you in this´.

1159a. `chaste in love´.

1162. σπάνιον ... θήρευμα -`a rare catch´.

1163. φλαύραν -`worthless´.

1168. For the corrupt γένος read γέ τοι, `it is indeed a fine thing to pay with children the fee for a bad wife´.

1179. Possibly spurious line, with variant readings.

1180. βραχείας προφάσεως -`of a trifling pretext`.
1184. sc. κακός.
1190. αὐθένταισιν -`murderers`.
1191. προσπεσεῖ -`embrace`.
1193. `if coming near you might kill one of them`.
1194. `Has any of this come into your calculations?`
1195. διαφέρειν-`to carry about`.
1204. For ὑπόροφον read ὑπότροφον -`reared at her breast`.
- Tr. `attending to her child reared at her breast`.
1211. λόγον -tr. `the power of speech`.
- 1214a. `I would have gone to this length`.
1216. ἵκετηρίαν -`as a suppliant's branch`, tr. `supplication`.
1218. ἄωρον -`before my time`.
- 1226-7. `and I for my part (would say) as I was hanging upon your beard, which now I take hold of with my hand, ...`.
- ἐξαρτωμένης -sc. ἐμοῦ from ἐμός.
- 1228ff. `what shall I see you doing? Shall I welcome you when an old man into my house with loving reception father, repaying you're the nurturing substance of your labours`.
1233. sc. ἵκετεύω.
1234. ὠδίνουσα ἐμέ -`who labored to bear me`.
1246. For βίου read βίον, otherwise we can take this as a genitive of cause (`for my life`) after a verb of emotion.
1247. ἀντόμεσθα -`we entreat`.
1249. `summing up my whole argument into one, I will prevail`.

1255. 'I am cognizant of what calls for pity and what does not'.

1259. ναύφρακτον -lit. 'ship-fenced', tr. 'surrounded by ships'.

1263. βᾶθρον-'foundation'. Some editors interchange lines 1262 and 1263.

1264. Ἀφροδίτη τις -tr. 'certain desire'.

1268. λύσω -tr. 'disregard'.

1270. 'nor am I guided by his desire'.

1272b. 'for we find ourselves powerless in this matter'.

1273ff. 'for it is necessary for her to be free, as far as it lies in your power daughter, or mine; or they, who are the sons of Hellas, must be pillaged of their wives by barbarian robbery'.

Threnody: 1276-1335.

Kl. My child! oh, foreign women! Alas for me, for your death! Your father escapes, surrendering you to Hades.

Iph. Alas for me, mother! for the same lament has fallen to both of us in our fortune. No more for me the light of day! no more these beams of the sun! Oh, oh! that snow-beat glen in Phrygia and the hills of Ida, where Priam once exposed a tender baby, torn from his mother's arms to meet a deadly doom, Paris, called the child of Ida in the Phrygians' town. Would that he never had settled Alexander, the herdsman reared among the herds, beside that water crystal-clear, where are fountains of the Nymphs and their meadow rich with blooming flowers, where hyacinths and rose-buds blow for goddesses to gather! Here one day came Pallas and Kypris of the subtle heart, Hera too and Hermes messenger of Zeus; Kypris, proud of the longing she causes, Pallas of her prowess; and Hera of her royal marriage with king Zeus; to decide a hateful strife about their beauty; but it is my death, maidens, bringing, it is true, glory to the Danaids, that Artemis has received as an offering, before they begin the voyage to Ilium.

O mother, mother! he that begot me to this life of sorrow has gone and left me all alone. Ah! woe is me! a bitter, bitter sight for me was Helen, evil Helen! to me now doomed to bleed and die, slaughtered by an impious father! I wish

this Aulis had never received in its havens here the stems of their bronze-beaked ships, the fleet which was speeding them to Troy; and would that Zeus had never breathed on the Euripus a wind to stop the expedition, tempering, as he does, a different breeze to different men, so that some have joy in setting sail, and sorrow some, and others hard constraint, to make some start and others prepare and others delay! Full of trouble then, it seems, is the race of mortals, full of trouble indeed; and it is Fate's decree that man should find distress. Woe! woe to you, you child of Tyndareus, for the suffering and anguish sore, which you are causing the Danaids!

Trochaic Tetrameter: 1336-1401.

1343-4. 'our current situation calls not for delicate feelings. This is not the time for affected dignity if we are able ...'.

1349. θόρυβον -lit. 'tumult', tr. 'trouble'.

1354. ἀπεκάλουν -'were disparaging'.

ἦσσανα -'slave'.

1356. ἐφίμισεν -'promised'.

1357. τὸ πολὺ -'to mob'.

1359b. 'may you get some benefit from this intent'.

1364. μιαιφονεῖν -'to stain his hands with blood'.

1367. Perhaps better taken as a question: 'On account of this she shall not be slaughtered?'

1370. καρτερέω -'to bear, persevere, remain steadfast'.

1371. 'it is right to thank the stranger (Achilles) for his ready zeal'.

1376b. 'dismissing completely what is ignoble'.

1378. πορθμός -'crossing'.

1381. Textual problems here. For τούδε read τάσδε.

1382. τείσαντας -'having paid the price'.

1389a. Tr. 'to take action against the enemy'.

1392. ἐκεῖνα - 'those points', 'what follows'. Tr. 'Let us come to the next point'.

1399. διὰ μακροῦ sc. χρόνου - tr. 'enduring'.

Third Episode (resumes): 1402-1474.

1409-10. 'abandoning strife against the will of the god, which is too strong for you, you have reckoned fairly that which is good and that which must be done'.

1415. ἄθρησον - 'look carefully'.

1416. The line has been restored as:

λέγω τάδ' οὐδὲ, οὐδένϋεὺλαβουμένη

'I say this without regard to anyone'.

1417a. The reference is to Helen.

1428. χρήσει - 'avail yourself'.

1432. καρδοκῆσω - 'I will watch anxiously'.

1440b. 'as far I can make you, you will be famous'.

1448. ἐξάψησ - 'fasten upon'.

1451. προσέλκυσαι - 'embrace'.

1452. 'O dear one, you have helped your friends as much as you could'.

1458. σπαράσσεσθαι - 'be grasped'.

1467ff. ἐπευφημήσατε ... παιάνα ... Ἄρτεμιν - 'sing a paian to Artemis'.

1469. εὐφημία - 'solemn hush'.

1470. 'begin to offer grain from the ritual baskets'.

Threnody resumes: 1475-1531.

Iphigenia

Lead me away, the destroyer of Ilium's town and the Phrygians; give me wreaths to cast about me; bring them here; here are my tresses to crown; bring lustral water too. Dance to Artemis, queen Artemis the blest, around her shrine and altar; for by the blood of my sacrifice I will blot out the oracle, if it must be. O mother, lady revered! I will, not give you my tears; for at the holy rites it is not fitting. Sing with me, maidens, sing the praises of Artemis, whose temple faces Chalcis, where angry spearmen madly chafe, here in the narrow havens of Aulis, because of me. O Pelasgia, land of my birth, and Mykenae, my home!

Chorus

Is it on Perseus' citadel you call, that town Cyclopean workmen built?

Iphigenia

To be a light to Hellas did you rear me, and so I do not say No to death.

Chorus

You are right; no fear that fame will ever desert you!

Iphigenia

Hail to you, bright lamp of day and light of Zeus! A different life, a different lot is henceforth mine. Farewell I bid you, light beloved!

Chorus

Behold the maiden on her way, the destroyer of Ilium's town and the Phrygians, with garlands twined about her head, and drops of lustral water on her, soon to be sprinkled with her gushing blood the altar of a murderous goddess, when her shapely neck is severed. For you fair streams of a father's pouring and lustral waters are in store, for you Achaia's army is waiting, eager to reach the citadel of Ilium. But let us celebrate Artemis, the daughter of Zeus, queen among the gods, as if upon some happy chance. O lady revered, delighting in human sacrifice, send on its way to Phrygia's land the army of the Hellenes, to Troy's abodes of guile, and grant that Agamemnon may wreath his head with deathless fame, a crown of fairest glory for the spearmen of Hellas.

Epilogue: 1532-1629.

1538. θαυμαστά σοι καὶ δεινά - 'wonderful and strange'.

1541-2. 'unless my memory (lit. opinion) is in error and confuses my tongue in the telling of the tale'.

1556. ἄγοντας - '(I allow them) to lead'.

1557. τοῦπ' ἔμ' = τὸ ἐπὶ ἔμε - 'for my part'.

1562. εὐψυχίαν - 'courage'.

1569. ἔβρεξε < βρέχω - 'sprinkle'.

1579. 'was looking at her neck to see where he would strike'.



Figure 3. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

1586. Lit. 'which although seen there was no belief present', i.e. 'no-one believed what they were seeing'.

1587. ἀσπαίρουσα - 'convulsing', 'gasping'.

1588. διαπρεπής τε τὴν θεάν - lit. 'distinguished in respect of the sight', tr. 'magnificent to see'.

1589. 'with whose blood the altar of the goddess was thoroughly (ἄρδην) bedewed'.

ἄρδην - 'completely, all over'.

1590b. `you can imagine how happy he was`.

1594. `she welcomes this rather than the girl`. An odd but not impossible use of μάλιστα.

1597. ἐπιδρομάς - `inroads, attack`.

1602. κατηνθρακώθη - `had been burnt to ashes`.

1603. τὰ πρόσφορα - `favourable things`.

1608. ἀφίπτατο - imperfect of ἀφιπτομαι `has flown away`.

1609. `take yourself away from your grief and put away your anger against your husband`.

1616ff. `how shall I now say that these words are spoken in vain to console me?`

1621. ὀλβιζοίμεθ' ἄν- `we may be counted happy`.

1265. προσφθέγματα - `greetings`.