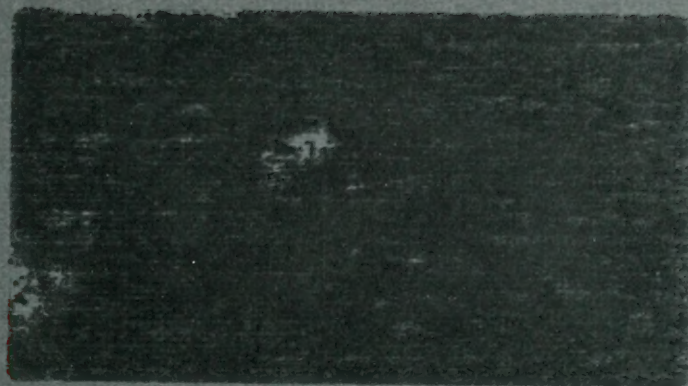



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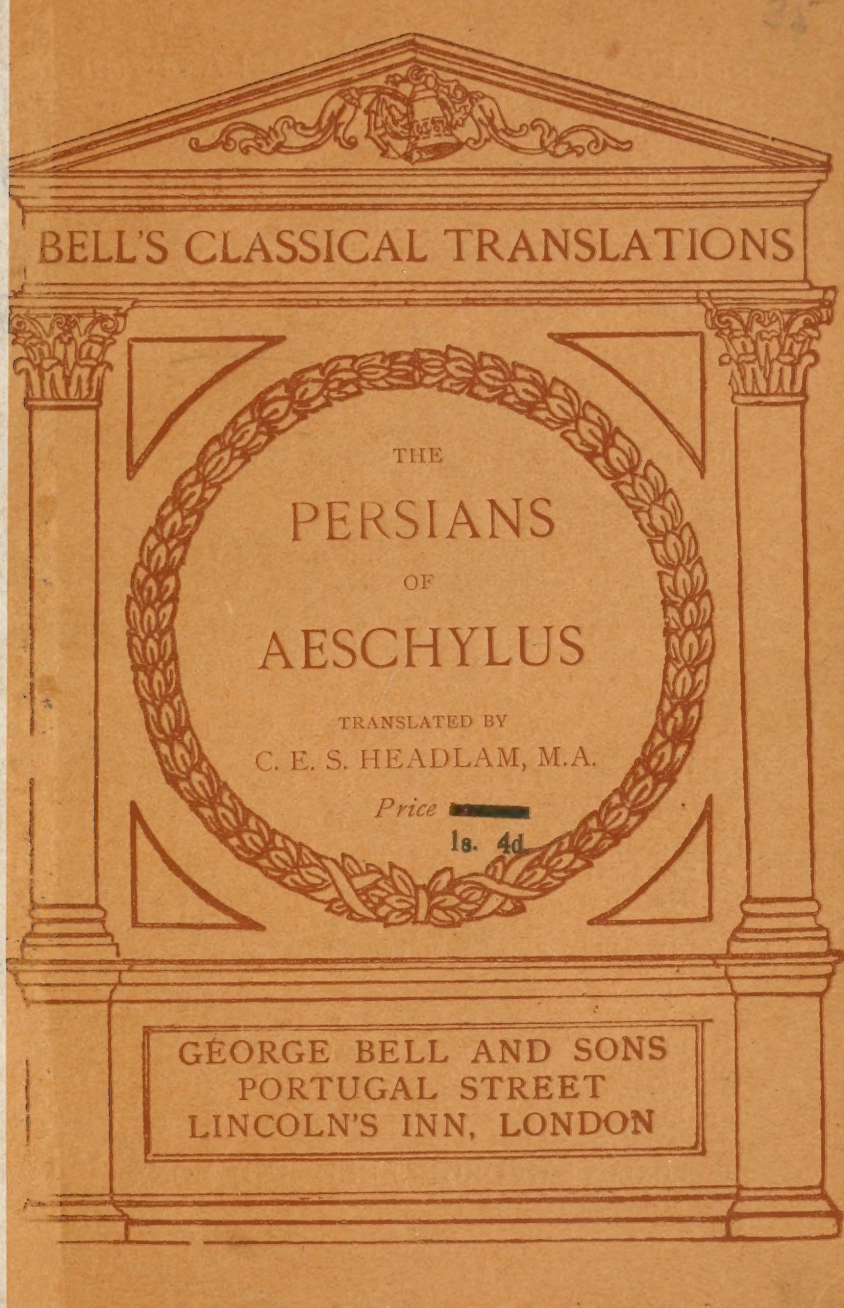


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PREFATORY NOTE

THE plays of Æschylus which have already appeared in this series were translated by Dr Walter Headlam.

The following version of the *Persae* is not from his hand, but the Translator has been aided in the interpretation of several passages by notes which he left. The text used is that of Wecklein (1885). In a few places only other readings have been adopted, either due to Walter Headlam or known to have been approved by him. These, with the exception of some differences in punctuation, will be found indicated in the margin. The references to other authors occasionally added in support of alterations are his, and the subjoined remarks on the diction of the play.

The dialect of the *Persae* is different from that of the other plays of Æschylus. The characters are Persians, the scene is laid in their chief city, and the whole play reflects the manners and ideas of the East. To suit the local colour, the language has an appropriate cast. Æschylus makes his Persians speak in an archaic-sounding Ionic style, the Greek of Asia. This effect is obtained partly by metre, *e.g.* the use of long trochaics; partly by forms of

words and pronunciation (as νεὸς ἐὼν νεὰ φρονεῖ, κυάνεον, εὐπέτεος, νεώς); partly also by forms of phrase. A similar effect was sought long afterwards by Timotheus, as we can now observe in his recently discovered dithyramb, the Πέρσαι. There, describing the battle of Salamis, he puts broken Asiatic Greek into the mouth of a Persian.

C. E. S. H.

December 1908.

THE PERSIANS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CHORUS OF PERSIAN ELDERS.

ATOSSA, the Queen-Mother.

XERXES.

GHOST OF DAREIOS.

A MESSENGER.

THE PERSIANS.

Scene : *The palace of Xerxes at Susa.*

Time : *The forenoon after the nocturnal vision of Atossa*
(v. 182 sqq.).

The Chorus, assembled in front of the palace (v. 144), *give voice to their anxiety concerning the fate of the armada sent against Greece.*

Chorus. Behold in us the 'Trusty' remnant—as our name declares—of the Persians who are gone to the land of Hellas, and guardians of the opulent palace rich in gold ; whom king Xerxes, prince of Dareios' line, did himself select for our ripe years to watch over his country.

Now as to the return of our king and of his army rich in gold, my soul within me is at this present time disturbed, 10 presaging disaster. For all the strength of the Asian nation is gone abroad, and murmurs at having a new king,¹ and neither any messenger nor any horseman arrives at the city of the Persians who left Susa and went forth, and Ecbatana, and the ancient Cissian stronghold, some on horseback, some on shipboard, or as infantry forming close ranks 20 of war.

¹ v. 784. Cf. also vv. 746 and 854 sqq.

Amistres, for instance, and Artaphrenes speed forth, and Megabates and Astaspes, Persian leaders; kings subject to the Great King, overseers of a mighty host, masters of the bow and steed, terrible to look on and deadly in combat, in full confidence of spirit.¹ Artembares too, who delights in horsemanship, and Masistres, and doughty Imæus, 30 master of the bow, and Pharandakes, and Sosthanes driver of steeds. Others did the great and fertilising river Nile send forth; Susiskanes was there, Pegastagon of Egyptian family, and the prince of sacred Memphis, mighty Arsames, and Ariomardos, governor of ancient Thebes; and inhabitants of a marshy region—rowers of ships—skilful, and in 40 multitude innumerable. And a crowd of soft-living Lydians, who keep in subjection a nation entirely land faring, goes with them, whom Metrogathes and valiant Arcteus, ruling princes, and Sardis rich in gold send out, borne in many chariots, in two-shafted ranks and in three-shafted ranks, a sight terrible to see. Set too are the borderers on sacred Tmolus on casting the yoke of servitude about Hellas,— 50 Mardon, Tharybis, anvils of the spear, and men of Mysia whose weapon is the javelin. Babylon too, the rich in gold, sends a mixed multitude in long array, some carried on ships, some trusting in their courage to draw the bow. And the scimitar-armed peoples of all Asia go with them, under the dread mandates of the king. So fair a flower of men of the Persian land is gone from it, in respect of whom 60 all the country of Asia which reared them is constrained with vehement longing; and parents and wives, as they count the days, tremble at the lengthening out of time.

The army of the king by now has passed to the neighbouring land beyond the narrow sea, having crossed the strait of Helle daughter of Athamas on a cable-fastened

¹ εὐτλήμονι (which some MSS. have). Cf. Simonides *ep.* 40 εὐτόλμω ψυχῆς λήματι πειθόμενοι.

pontoon-bridge, by casting a riveted causeway as a yoke 70
upon the neck of Ocean.

Against a whole continent does the fiery leader of populous Asia direct his wondrous flock of men, in two divisions, with land-forces and on sea, putting his trust in his stalwart sturdy commanders—a being like unto the gods, of a race sprung 80
from gold.

And flashing from his eyes the dark glance of a deadly python, with many a warrior and many a sailor, and urging forward his Syrian chariot, he is bringing against a people famous for the spear a nation in arms whose pride is the bow.

There is no one of such proved puissance as to withstand the mighty torrent of men, and with secure defences 90
keep back the resistless tide; for the Persian army cannot be faced, and stout-hearted are their people.

But the beguiling Illusion of a god what mortal man shall escape? Who is he that with agile foot is master of an easy leap [~~over the net~~]?

Aye, for fawning at first upon him, as though with kind intent,¹ it leads a man astray into the toils of Calamity, 100
whence it is not possible for a mortal to escape and flee.

For by the gods' will since long ago Fate has been dominant, and has laid it upon the Persians to pursue wars that demolish towers, and shocks of cavalry in action, and destructions of cities.

110

Also they learned, putting trust in the slight structure of tackling and in contrivances for carrying men [over the waters], to look upon the ocean plain of the broad sea when it whitens beneath the furious blast.

Therefore my soul, shrouded in gloom, is racked with dread (Ah! Ah!) for this Persian expedition, fearing lest 120

¹ Cf. *Agam.* 726 and 1227. So Plutarch *Them.* 29 οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ . . . προσεϊπὼν φιλοφρόνως ('with an appearance of cordiality').

the state may learn that the great city of the Susian district is made desolate of men, and the Cissians' town, as a crowd of women utter this cry Ah ! Ah !, may echo back the strain, and lest rending may fall on linen garments.

For all the host, driving steeds or tramping over the 130 plain, is gone forth, like bees in a swarm, together with the captain-general of the expedition ; having crossed over the projecting arm of the sea,¹ now bridged over, which is common to both continents.

And by reason of yearning for absent warriors couches are filled with weeping ; and Persian wives, indulging their grief,² each one of them, having sent away [to the war] her gallant armèd consort, is left solitary. 140

But come, Persians, let us seat ourselves beneath the shade of this ancient palace and take good counsel from the depths of thought (and need there is for it), as to how haply fares Xerxes our king of Dareios' line, of the race of [Perseus] our common ancestor—whether it is the drawing of the bow that conquers, or has the power of the pointed 150 spear the mastery ? But here is hasting forth an effulgence like to the eyes of gods, the Mother of the King, my Queen ; I prostrate myself before her. And fitting also is it that we all address her in words of salutation.

(*Enter ATOSSA in a chariot, see v. 610.*)

Queen supreme of Persia's deep-girt women, venerable mother of Xerxes, wife to Dareios, hail ! Consort wert thou of the Persian's god ; and mother art thou of a god—unless its ancient happy fortune is now departed from the host. 160

Atossa. In just that fear did I leave the gold-appointed palace and the bridal-chamber which I shared with Dareios,

¹ The Hellespont ; see v. 882. Compare Eur. *Iph. Aut.* 120.

² ἀβροπενθεῖς restored by Paley. Cf. ἀβρόγροι v. 544.

and now come hither. My thoughts are racking my heart ; and to you, my friends, will I tell my tale, being by no means without misgiving about myself, in dread lest great Good Fortune,¹ raising over the earth the dust [of a military advance], shall have overturned with its foot the [fabric of] Prosperity which Darcios reared not unaided by some god. Therefore is there a twofold anxious thought, inexpressible, in my mind—not to honour with reverence a mass of riches lacking men ; and again, that light shines not equal to their strength on men lacking wealth. Our wealth, indeed, is 170 beyond cavil, but there is alarm concerning our eye—for I hold the master's presence to be the eye of the palace—wherefore, Persians, since these things are so, lend me, ye aged Trusty ones, your counsel. For in my case all sound resolutions are dependent upon you.

Chorus. Be well assured, Queen of this land, not twice hast thou to indicate either word or deed [to us] respecting matters in which Power is wont to lead the way ; for loyal to thy interests are we whom thou summonest as counsellors in these affairs.

Atossa. By many a dream in the night-time have I been haunted ever since my son, having fitted out an armada, 180 went hence with design to ravage the Ionians' land. But never saw I aught so clear as in the night just passed—and I will tell it to thee. There seemed to appear before me two women in fair attire, one apparelled in Persian raiment, the other in Dorian, the twain pre-eminent in stature beyond those living now, flawless in beauty, and sisters of the same family. The country they inhabited was in the case of one sister, Hellas—she having acquired it by lot—in the case of the other, barbarian soil. These twain, as I thought 190

¹ δαίμων Heimsoeth ; see v. 727. Cf. *Agam.* 392-5. and 993 (πότμος). The active verb in this image is used on the same principle as v. 828 (ὄλβον ἐκχέει), 510 (ἀπέρρηξεν), 320 (ἀμείβων).

I perceived, were pursuing a quarrel one with the other; and my son, having become aware of it, was seeking to check and to pacify them, and yokes the pair to a chariot and places harness over their necks. And one of them towered loftily in these trappings, and kept her mouth tractable in the reins; but the other began to plunge, and with her hands tears in pieces the harness of the chariot, and drags it furiously along with her, heeding not the bit, and snaps the yoke asunder. Then falls my son, and his 200 father Darcios stands beside commiserating him. And Xerxes, when he perceives him, rends his robes around his body.

These things I tell you I beheld in the night; but when I had arisen, and touched with my hands the fair waters of a spring, I took my station at an altar with incense in my hand, intending to offer a sacred mixture to the divinities who avert evil, for whom these ceremonies are proper. But I see an eagle fleeing for refuge to the altar of Phœbus,—and from terror I stood speechless, my friends,—and after that I see a hawk rushing with outstretched wings upon him, and with his talons plucking at his head; and 210 the eagle did nothing but cower down and yield his body. This was terrifying for me to see, and so it is for you to hear. For know ye well that my son, should he be successful, would be regarded with awe, and supposing he should not be successful,—he¹ cannot be called to account by the state, and if he escapes alive, he is, in any event, the ruler of this land.

Chorus. We desire not, O Mother, either to alarm thee unduly by our words, or unduly to raise thy hopes; but if thou didst see anything sinister, thou shouldst supplicate 220 the gods with prayer, and beseech diversion of these evils,

¹ She alters the conclusion of her sentence, wishing to dispel in advance ideas which might be suggested by *κακῶς δὲ πράξας*.

and that all good things may be fulfilled for thyself and thy children and for the city and for all thy friends. And in the second place it is proper that thou pour a libation to the earth and to the dead; and in propitiatory wise do thou ask this boon of thy spouse Dareios, whom thou declarest thou didst see by night,—to send good things for thee and for thy son to the light of day from beneath the earth; and [ask that] the reverse of this, detained below the earth, may fade away in darkness. Thus I advise thee with kindly intent, guided only by the promptings of my mind. And our interpretation is that in all ways a good issue will be brought to pass for thee in this matter.

Atossa. With kind intent, I know, to my son and to my house, didst thou, the first interpreter of these visions, 230 determine thus their import. May what is good come to pass. And all these things, as thou dost enjoin, will I perform for the gods and for those dear to me beneath the earth when I have gone into the palace. But now on the following points, my friends, I wish to be exactly informed;—In what part of the world do they say Athens is situated?

Chorus. Far hence towards the west, where are the waning fires¹ of our Lord the Sun.

Atossa. Was then my son so eager to make this city his prey?

Chorus. Yes, for thus would all Hellas become subject to the Great King.

Atossa. Is theirs an army with so full a complement of men?

Chorus. Aye, and an army of such quality as once wrought havoc on the Medes.

Atossa. And what else have they besides? Is there sufficing wealth in their homes?

Chorus. They have of silver, as one might say, a spring; a treasury in the earth.

240

¹ φθινάσμασιν Pauw.

Atossa. Is the arrow-point drawn by the bow to be seen in their hands?

Chorus. Not at all. They have spears for close fighting, and harness for the shield. *(They answer they carry bows.)*

Atossa. Who is over them as master, and dominates the host?

Chorus. To no man are they reckoned slaves or in subjection.

Atossa. How then shall they abide the coming of a foe?

Chorus. So [stoutly] that they destroyed a large and goodly army of Dareios.

Atossa. Terrible, truly, are thy words for the parents of those who have gone forth to reflect upon.

Chorus. Stay, thou wilt soon, as I think, know all for certain; for the [fashion of] running of this man coming is plain to recognise as Persian; and he brings clear tidings of something, be it good or ill.

250

(Enter MESSENGER.)

Messenger. O ye cities of all Asia! O land of Persia, and mighty haven of wealth, how at a single stroke is all your great prosperity destroyed, and the flower of the Persians fallen and gone! Alas! a thankless office it is to be the first to bring tidings of disaster: yet needs must I unfold all that has happened to the Persians. The whole barbarian host has perished.

Chorus. Grievous, grievous disaster, all unexpected, and 260 miserable! Alas, Persians, bathe your eyes in tears, now that of this disaster ye hear.

Messenger. Yes, [hearing] that all with them is quite destroyed, and that I myself behold the day of my return beyond my expectation.

Chorus. Too long indeed, as I may say, life doth now

appear to us old men, that we should hear of this unexpected calamity.

Messenger. And, look you, Persians, I being present then can tell you, not from hearing others' talk, what evil fate was dealt out. 270

Chorus. Woe is me! In vain did the mingled multitude of shafts go from the land of Asia against an enemy's country—the land of Hellas.

Messenger. The shores of Salamis, and every neighbouring place, are full of dead, who perished in evil case.¹

Chorus. Woe is me! Thy words imply that the bodies of those dear to us are drifting, lifeless, sea-beaten, water-logged, on the tides as they ebb and flow.² 280

Messenger. Yes, for our bows availed nought, and our whole host has perished, beaten down by charges amidships of [the enemy's] vessels.

Chorus. Wail aloud for the luckless Persians a cry of woe with mournful sound, for their utter misfortune. Alas for the destruction of the host!

Messenger. O name of Salamis, most hateful to our ears! Alas! how I groan when I remember Athens!

Chorus. Aye, hateful is Athens to her foes. Well may 290
you call to mind how many Persian women she made widows and husbandless, with nought for us to set down as gain.

Atossa. Long have I kept silence in my misery, shocked at the ills which have befallen us; for this sad event is too great for me to speak of, or inquire the details. Nevertheless mortals must endure afflictions when the gods award them. Do thou compose thyself, and, unfolding all that happened, even though thou groanest at the evil of it, speak out. Who is there that is *not* dead? Whom, of the leaders of the host, *are* we to bewail as having been appointed to

¹ *I.e.* without burial, cf. *v.* 328 (Paley).

² Or, 'on floating ship-timber.'

bear the baton of command and leaving by his death a 300
rank forlorn without its chief?

Messenger. Xerxes himself is alive and beholds the light.

Atossa. A great light to my house, and a brightly dawning
day after black night, are in these words of thine !

Messenger. But Artembares, leader of a myriad horse, is
being dashed against the rocky shores of Sileniæ. And the
chiliarch Dadakes beneath the shock of a spear leapt with
a light spring overboard. Tenagon, too, the true-born
chieftain of the Bactrians, is moving to and fro about the
surf-beaten isle of Aias. Lilaïos and Arsames and, thirdly, 310
Argestes, around the dove-breeding island keep butting,
these three, helplessly against the unyielding shore.
Arcteus too, whose dwelling is nigh unto the waters of
Egyptian Nile, Adeues, and, thirdly, † Phreseues, † Phar-
nuchos, these fell from one vessel. Matallos of Chrysa,
commander of ten thousand, leader of thirty thousand black
cavalry, soaked in death his thick and bushy auburn beard, 320
changing its colour with a staining of dark purple. And
Magian Arabos perished there, and Artabes the Bactrian,
a settler now in a rugged land. Amistris, and Amphistreus
wielder of an active spear, and gallant Ariomardos—a cause
of grief [by his death] to Sardis—and Sisames the Mysian,
and Tharybis of Lyrnaian race, commander of five times
fifty ships, a warrior of goodly presence, lies dead, unhappy
man, in sorely wretched case. And a Syennesis, foremost
in courage, governor of the Cilicians, fell gloriously, after
giving more trouble to the foe than any other one man.
Of such among our leaders have I now made mention. I 330
report but a few out of the many misfortunes which I have
in mind.✓

Atossa. Alas ! I hear in this the very height of disaster—a
disgrace to the Persians, and [a cause for] shrill lamentations.
But turn thou back again, and tell me this, How great was

the number of the Greek vessels that they ventured to join battle with the Persian armament by charging with their ships'-beaks upon it?

Messenger. As to numbers, be well assured that the barbarians¹ had the advantage in ships; for on the Greek side the whole numbers came to three divisions of thirty vessels, and there was besides these a select division of ten. But Xerxes had, for I know, a thousand in number of which he was commander, and those [besides] of superior class in speed were two hundred and seven; this is the tale of them. You do not think us the inferior force in this engagement? No, it was some divinity that destroyed the host, having depressed the scales of fortune with a weight against our side. The gods keep safe the city of their goddess Pallas. 350

Atossa. Then is Athens still unravaged?

Messenger. Yes, for whilst her warriors live she has a sure protection.

Atossa. Now tell me what was the beginning of the naval encounter. Who were they who made the first move in the fight? The Greeks? Or my son, from a sense of exultation at the number of his ships?

Messenger. Some fiend it was, O mistress, or evil spirit that appeared from somewhere, who began all the mischief. A Greek, who came from the Athenian host, told thy son Xerxes that if the darkness of black night should come the Greeks would not stand fast, but, leaping on to the thwarts of their vessels, would, each taking his own direction, endeavour to save their lives by stealthy flight. And he, as soon as he heard this, not realising the wile of the Greek nor the jealousy of the gods, publishes to all the captains the following order—when the sun should have ceased to illumine the earth with his rays and darkness should have laid hold on the temple of the sky, then to draw up vessels 360

¹ βαρβάρους Turnebus.

advance!—Deliver your country, deliver your children and your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods, the tombs of your ancestors. Now is the contest which decides all!" And then a confused noise of Persian tongues met them from our line, and no longer was it a time for inaction, but forthwith ship against ship struck its armoured prow. A Greek vessel commenced the charge, and breaks off the whole stern part of a Phœnician ship, and each [captain] then steered his bark against some other vessel. At first indeed the torrent of the Persian armament held its own. But since the multitude of our ships was crowded in the narrows, and they could give no assistance the one to the other but [on the contrary] were rammed by the brazen-pointed beaks of their friends, they splintered their whole equipment of oars,—the Greek ships, too, all around them noting their opportunity, kept charging them on every side, —and the hulls of our vessels began to be capsized nor was the sea any longer visible, so choked was it with wrecks and slaughtered men; and the shores and the reefs were full of them. Then in rout and confusion every ship, as many as there were of the barbarian armament, sought to row away. But the Greeks kept striking and hewing, as though we were tunnies or some draught of fish, with fragments of broken oars and splinters of wreckage; and cries of anguish filled the open sea with shrieks, until the appearance of dark night broke off [the combat]. Now the total of our misfortunes, not even were I to recite the list of them for ten days, could I complete for thee; for be well assured that never on a single day died so great a number of men.

Atossa. Alas! in very truth a mighty sea of troubles has burst over the Persians and all the barbarian race.

Messenger. Know well that their trouble reaches not yet the half. Such an visitation of sufferings came upon them

as by balance to draw, even twice over, an equal weight with these [which I have pictured].

Atossa. What turn of fortune *could* be yet more hateful than this? Say what the event is which thou declarest came to the host, inclining the scale far on the side of evil.

Messenger. As many of the Persians as were in the very flower of life and most valiant in spirit and distinguished by noble birth, and were ever amongst the foremost in loyalty to the monarch himself, are dead in shameful plight by a most inglorious doom.

Atossa. Ah! grieved am I, my friends, at a grievous event. But by what nature of doom sayest thou they are lost to us?

Messenger. An island there is, lying off Salamis—in- 450 significant in size, a dangerous anchorage for ships—which Pan who loves the dance doth oft-times visit, haunting the sea-beach thereof. Thither Xerxes sends these [chosen warriors] in order that, whenever their foes wrecked from out their ships should attempt to win safe to the island, they might make an easy prey of the Greek soldiery and slay them; and help their own comrades to safety from out the sea-way—sadly at fault in his opinion of the future: for when some god had given the glory of [victory in] the sea-fight to the Greeks, that same day having secured their bodies with brazen armour they set to leaping out of their ships and forming a circle round about the entire island, 460 so that [the Persian band] were at a loss whither to turn. For oft they were struck by stones thrown by hand and arrows from the bow-string fell upon and destroyed them; and at last [the Greeks] charging upon them with a simultaneous cheer strike them down, and hack in pieces the limbs of the unhappy men, till they had utterly destroyed the life in all of them. And Xerxes groaned aloud when he saw the depth of his calamities, for he had a seat in full

view of all the army—a high knoll close to the ocean brine ; 470 and, having rent his garments and uttered a shrill cry of wailing and issued orders rapidly to the land-force, he dismisses them in flight all disorderly.

Such is the event which, in addition to the aforementioned, thou hast to bewail.✓

Atossa. O hateful divinity, how hast thou cheated the Persians of their expectations ! Bitter¹ to himself did my son find his [intended²] punishment of Athens ; and those of the barbarians whom aforetime Marathon destroyed were not enough [to satisfy thee], but my son—thinking to exact atonement for them—drew down upon himself all this mass of woe.

480

But as to the ships which have escaped destruction, tell me where thou didst leave them. Hast thou skill to indicate it clearly ?

Messenger. The commanders of the ships which yet remained to us take to straggling flight before the wind precipitately. But the rest of the host came near destruction in Bœotia, some around the refreshment of a spring, while harassed by thirst ; but others, panting and exhausted, make their way through to the land of the Phocians and the Dorian country, and the Melian bay where the Spercheios waters the plain with his kindly stream. And 490 thence the soil of the Achæan land received us sore in need of food, and the towns of Thessaly : where indeed very many perished by thirst and hunger, for both of these were our lot. And we come to the Magnesian territory and the land of the Macedonians, to the ford of Axios and the reedy fens of Bolbe, and to Mount Pangaios—Edonian country. But in that night Heaven called up winter weather out of season, and freezes all the stream of sacred 500

¹ For this predicative use of *πικρὸς* see Euripides *Medea* 399.

² Cf. Herodotus vii, 8.

Strymon: and [many a] one¹ who before that reckoned the gods of no account did then pray to them with supplications, doing lowly reverence to earth and heaven.

But when the army had made an end of invocations, it essays to pass across the ice-bound stream.² And whosoever of us started to do so before the rays of the sun-god were shed abroad, is now in safety; for the sun's orb, blazing brightly with its rays, by the heat of its flame penetrated [the ice of] the middle of the passage; and, one upon another, our men fell in, and fortunate indeed was he who soonest lost his breath and died.

510

And such as survived and won to safety, after having with difficulty made their way in much tribulation to Thrace, have now accomplished their escape and reached the land of their homes—in scanty numbers; so that the city of the Persians may well vent her grief in regret for the best-beloved youth of our nation.

Chorus. O divinity hard to strive against, how with thy feet didst thou leap over-heavily upon the whole Persian race!

Atossa. Woe is me, in grief for the army so completely destroyed! O clear dream-vision, how all too plainly didst thou signify misfortune to me! And ye, all too lightly did ye interpret it! Still, since your warning voice determines thus, I am minded to make prayer to the gods; then will I return, after fetching from my palace a sacred mixture, as a gift to the earth and to the departed—over things I well knew cannot be undone, but with a view to the future, if haply something better may come to us. Your part is now to communicate trusty counsel to Trusty comrades concerning what has come to pass; and, as for my son, if he

520

¹ So Ovid, *atque aliquis pendens in cruce vota facit.*

² κρυσταλλοπήγα διὰ πόρον περᾶ στρατός. Hartung after Porson (στρατὸς περᾶ).

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come hither before me, do ye console him and escort him to the palace, lest to our misfortunes a yet further misfortune be added. [Exit ATOSSA.]

Chorus. O sovereign Zeus, now indeed hast thou destroyed the armament of the high-vaunting and populous Persian nation, and shrouded in the gloom of mourning the cities of Susa and Agbatana. And many [women] rending their veils 540 with delicate hands are now bedewing their swelling robes with floods of tears, partaking in our sorrow. And the Persian wives, indulging their grief, through longing to behold their lately wedded lords, abandon the soft coverings of their couches—the delight of their delicate youth—and mourn with insatiate lamentations. And I too in good sooth do now raise high my song of mourning for the fate of those who are gone. 550

(*Kommos.*) Now indeed does the whole land of Asia groan, made desolate of her men. Xerxes led them forth, alack! and Xerxes lost them, alackaday! and Xerxes managed everything foolishly with his¹ ocean galleys. Why was not Dareios, who [proved so] scatheless a captain of archers to his citizens, a leader dear to Susa, then in command? 560

Land-forces and sea-forces our ships, with dark-painted eyes, and a line of oars on either side like an outstretched wing,² did carry forth, alack! and our ships let them perish, alackaday! under destructive charges of the foe; and through the hands of the Ionians the King himself but narrowly slipped away over the chilly tracks which traverse the plains of Thrace. 570

And some there were, the first to meet their doom, alas!

¹ βαρίδεσσι ποντίαις with some MSS. [βαρίδες τε ποντίαι M. cum accentu dativi.]

² διδυμόπτεροι Walter Headlam. Cf. Plutarch *Ant.* 63 τοὺς ταρσοὺς τῶν νεῶν ἐγείρας καὶ πτερῶσας ἐκατέρωθεν.

who, left perforce, ah me! around the shores of Cychreia, ah! ah! <are tossing on the waves>. Weep aloud, and gnash the teeth, and utter a deep note of woe for sorrows which reach from earth to sky, ah! ah! and prolong the sad murmuring sound, the voice of misery.

And gnawed in darkness¹ they are torn by dumb children of the One whom none should pollute,² alas! and the home 580 mourns for its lord, deprived of his presence. Parents too, left childless³ (ah! ah!), mourning in their old age these heaven-sent woes, are an utter grief to those who listen.

And for some time now up and down the coast of Asia the [settlers] no longer own the Persian sway, nor bring tribute any more under the constraint imposed by their suzerain, nor bowing themselves to earth do they show their 590 awe; since now the power of our monarchy is utterly perished.

Nor even are the tongues of men kept under guard; for the populace are set free to speak their minds, now that the yoke of strength has been loosed. And, showing on its soil the stains of blood, the sea-washed isle of Aias holds all [that once was] Persian. 600

(*Re-enter ATOSSA.*)

Atossa. Friends, whosoever has had dealings in misfortune knows that, when a surge of troubles comes upon mortals, a man gets to be afraid of everything—(though whenever the Divinity of Fortune runs smoothly for him, he is confident that it will in this same fashion⁴ continue to

¹ ἀιδνά Walter Headlam.

² *I.e.* water. Respect for the purity of the Elements was a doctrine taught by the Persian Μάγοι. See Herodotus i. 38.

³ ἄπαιδες δαιμόνι' ἄχῃ Porson.

⁴ τὸν αὐτὸν ἀεὶ τοῦτον Walter Headlam. (So in Carcinus *fr.* 8, in

waft him onwards),—and so for me everything is full of terror: before my eyes appear the visitations¹ of the gods and in my ears a din, not of triumph, is ringing. Such is the amazement from evil tidings which scares away my wits.

Therefore have I come this way from my palace a second time, without either car or pomp as before, bringing for 610 my son's father propitiatory libations, such as render the dead gracious to us; white milk sweet to drink from a sacred cow, and transparent honey, the distillation from blossoms of the busy bee, together with lustrations of water from a virgin spring; and this pure liquor from a mother of the open field—the refreshing juice of an ancient vine. And here too is the fragrant fruit of the pale-green 620 olive, which ever puts forth a luxuriant growth in foliage; and wreaths of flowers, children of earth the mother of all.

(*Addressing them in the character of Persian Μάγοι.*)
Come now, my friends, chant solemn verses as the libations to the dead are poured, and call up [the shade of] Dareios; and I will lead the procession of these drink-offerings made to earth in honour of the gods below.

Chorus. Royal lady, venerable majesty of the Persians, do thou convey libations to the chambers under ground, and we in solemn chant will implore the conductors of the dead to be favourable [to our request]. 630

[*As the libations are poured, they chant in solemn tones an incantation couched in mystic language, abounding in obscure terms outlandish to Greek ears.*]

Come, ye holy divinities of the under-world, Earth, and Hermes, and thou, Monarch of the dead, send the spirit from beneath to the light of day; for if he knows any

the unmetrical line *λυπεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ κτῆμα τοὺς κεκτημένους*, should be read *αὐτὸ τοῦτο*, taking up *φθόρος* in the preceding verse.)

¹ *τὰνταῖα* i.e. *προσβολαί*, *ξυναλλαγαὶ θεῶν*.

remedy for our woes beyond [our efforts by prayer], he alone of mortals can tell us how to bring it to effect.

Does then the god-like King of blessed memory hear me as I utter my manifold plaintive doleful cries, in barbaric 640 language hard to understand,¹—is it for me to shout aloud our grievous sorrows?²—does he from beneath the earth give ear to me?

Come, O Earth and ye other Rulers of the lower world, suffer the illustrious spirit, the god of the Persians born at Susa, to pass from his abiding-place; and send to upper air him like to none yet whom the Persian soil hath covered.

Dear indeed was he, and dear is his sepulchral mound; 650 for dear are the qualities which now lie hidden. May'st thou, O Aidoneus who dost send shades to the world above, permit Dareios to arise, such a king, ah me! as † Dareios was!

Aye, for as at no time did he lose men by fatal defeats in war, so was he named an inspired counsellor to the Persians; and an inspired counsellor he was, for well did he conduct his army, ah me!

Lord, ancient Lord, come forth, draw nigh! Come thou 660 upon the topmost point of the mound—lifting thy saffron-dyed sandal, displaying the cheek-coverings of thy royal tiara. Come forth, O father Dareios, author of no ill, Ho!

To hear of new and unexpected sorrows, Lord of our 670 Lord, appear! for a Stygian-like gloom overshadows us,

¹ βάρβαρ' ἀσαφηνῇ Walter Headlam. Cf. Lucian i. 40 (ὁ μάγος) παραμυγνὺς ἅμα καὶ βαρβαρικὰ τινα καὶ ἄσημα ὀνόματα.

² Dindorf is probably right in reading here βάγματ', ἦ. "Or must I pierce the earth with yet more agonising cries?" Cf. Lucan vi. 744. So Statius *Theb.* iv. 500 (*Teiresias*) *cassusne sacerdos Audior? an rabido iubeat si Thessala cantu Ibitis?* et, *Seythiciis quotiens armata venenis Colchis aget, trepido pallebunt Tarsiara motu?*

since the youth of our nation is now all destroyed. Come forth, O father Dareios, author of no ill, Ho !

Alas, alas ! O thou who diedst so deeply grieved for by thy friends, wherefore did these redoubled penalties of mistaken judgment <happen> as a twofold disaster to thy 680 country? All the three-banked ships are now ships no more, ships no more.

(GHOST OF DAREIOS *rises.*)

Ghost. O Trusty band of Trusty ones, compeers of my youth, aged Persians, with what trouble is our city troubled? The plain groans, and is cleft¹ and scarred. And seeing here my spouse hard by the grave I am in anxious dread, and I accept her libations with gracious mind. And ye are wailing as ye stand near my grave and, raising your voices in mournful cries that call up spirits, do piteously summon me; though 'tis no easy matter to issue [from the tomb], especially as the gods of the under-world are altogether 690 better at receiving than at letting us go. Nevertheless I, having rule amongst them, am come. Despatch with speed, that I may be free of blame for the time [of my absence]. What heavy unexpected sorrow have the Persians?

Chorus. I shrink from looking upon thee, and I shrink from speaking in thy presence, by reason of my old-accustomed dread of thee.

Ghost. Nay, but since I have come from beneath in compliance with thy piteous moan, do thou, telling a tale not 700 tedious but concise, speak out and complete the whole matter, laying aside thine ancient awe of me.

Chorus. I fear to do thy pleasure, I fear to speak

¹ This probably refers to the effect of the *ψυχαγωγοὶ γόοι*. Cf. Tibullus i. 2. 45 *hæc cantu finditque solum manesque sepulcris Elicit*. Seneca *Œdipus* 567.

in thy presence with a tale of unwelcome news to those dear to me.

Ghost. Well, since the old-time dread in thy mind stands in thy way, do *thou*, my venerable wedded consort, high-born lady, cease from these wailings and cries of woe, and tell me a clear tale. Human calamities, thou knowest, must befall mankind. For many ills by sea and many by land happen to mortals, if their life be extended to its full span.

710

Atossa. O thou who in prosperity didst excel all men by thy fortunate destiny, how much—even as during the time thou didst behold the rays of the sun, envied of all thou didst continue like a god to lead a life of happy days for the Persians—do I now envy thee for dying before beholding the depth of our present misfortunes. For all the tale thereof, Darcios, thou shalt hear in a moment's space. The fortunes of the Persians are ruined, almost utterly.

Ghost. In what way? Came there any stroke of pestilence to our city, or civil strife?

Atossa. By no means. But the whole host has been destroyed round about Athens.

Ghost. Which of my sons led an expedition there? tell me.

Atossa. Hot-headed Xerxes, after draining [of men] the surface of all the continent of Asia.

720

Ghost. By land or by sea did the luckless one make this rash attempt?

Atossa. Both. A combined front there was of two armaments.

Ghost. But how was it that so large a land force accomplished a passage [over sea]?

Atossa. With appliances he contrived a bridge over the strait of Helle, so as to have a way across.

Ghost. And did he carry this so far into effect as to close the mighty Bosphorus?

Atossa. The fact is so. But some divinity, I trow, had a share in his decision.

Ghost. Alas, some divinity came in might upon him, so that his judgment was at fault.

Atossa. True: we can see now how evil was the accomplishment which he achieved.

Ghost. And over what result to the troops art thou lamenting thus?

Atossa. The naval armament by its overthrow involved in ruin the force on land. 730

Ghost. And is the whole nation thus destroyed by the spear?

Atossa. Aye, therefore does all the town of Susa groan aloud at its desolation——

Ghost. Alas for the good help and aid of the host!

Atossa. ——and the whole Bactrian people is perished and gone: not only some aged folk.

Ghost. Unhappy man! how much of the youth of our allied peoples did he lose?

Atossa. They say that Xerxes, by himself and destitute, with but a few followers——

Ghost. Ended how and where? Is there any [assurance of his] safety?

Atossa. ——was glad to reach the bridge contrived to link two continents——

Ghost. ——and that he reached this continent in safety, is that beyond a doubt?

Atossa. Yes. The account proves that distinctly, and there is no contradiction in it. 740

Ghost. Alas, right soon has come fulfilment of the oracles, and upon my son Zeus has inflicted the doom declared by heaven. I for a long time past felt assured that the gods would in some way bring it to accomplishment, but when a man is of himself hurrying [to the doom appointed] the

gods too lend a helping hand. A fountain of misfortune for all those dear to me seems now to have been discovered : and my son, not knowing their full meaning, brought these things to pass by his youthful rashness—inasmuch as he thought to hold from its course the sacred Hellespont, the divine stream of Bosphorus, by shackles as it were a slave ; and sought to rule the Strait in harmony [with his will]. Having encompassed it with hammer-wrought fetters, he 750 completed a huge road for his huge army, and thought mistakenly that, mortal though he was, he would master even the god Poseidon. Surely in this a distemper of mind possessed my son? I fear lest my great hard-won wealth may become a prey to the first comer.

Atossa. These notions impetuous Xerxes learns by consulting with misguided men. They tell him how that thou didst win great wealth for thy children by help of the spear-point, whilst he, from lack of manhood, keeps his spear at home and increases not at all the wealth he inherited. Hearing again and again such taunts as these from misguided men, he planned this expedition and armada against Hellas.

760

Ghost. Therefore by him has a deed been brought to its accomplishment, exceeding great, never to be forgotten, such as never before fell upon and made desolate this city of Susa since first sovereign Zeus assigned to a man this dignity, that he alone should be the ruler of Asia with its flocks and herds,¹ holding a sceptre of supreme command.

For [Astyages] a Median was the first who was leader of a great host, and his son [Cyaxares], another Median, completed the work—since good sense guided his mind. And, third from him, Cyrus, a fortunate man, when he 770 came to the throne established peace for all his own people, and gained over the Lydian and Phrygian nations and

¹ The old Ionic epithet of Asia.

subdued by force of arms all Ionia: for the gods hated him not, inasmuch he was of moderate temper. And, fourth in succession, [Cambyses] son of Cyrus was ruler of the host. Then, fifthly, Mardos came to power, a disgrace to his country and the ancient throne; but him by stratagem valiant Artaphrenes, with the aid of friends whose part this was, slew in the palace. (And sixth was Maraphis, and seventh Artaphrenes.) And I attained the 780 lot which I desired, and went on a foreign expedition attended by a mighty host, but did not bring such a great disaster as this upon the state. But my son Xerxes, being still youthful, has a young man's thoughts, and does not bear in mind my injunctions. Of this be well assured, ye compeers of my age,—the whole number of us who obtained the empire could not be shown to have done it so much harm:

Chorus. What then, my lord Darcios? Pointing to what end dost thou bring to a close thy speech? In what way 790 can we, the Persian people, after what has happened, find best fortune?

Ghost. If we make no expedition against the Grecian territory—not even though the Median force be superior in numbers; for to them the very earth is an ally.

Chorus. In what sense meanest thou that? In what way does it fight on their side?

Ghost. By slaying through famine such as are over-many in number.

Chorus. Well, in that case, we will muster a picked mobile force.

Ghost. Nay, not even the troops that have remained now in Greek territory shall attain a safe return.

Chorus. How sayest thou? Does not the whole bar- 800
barian army succeed in crossing from Europe over Helle's strait?

Ghost. Only a few out of all the number—if, looking at what has happened, one is to put faith in the declarations of heaven; for they are coming true, not partly only [but in every particular].

No, their abiding-place is where Asopus waters the plain with his streams—a kindly nourishment for the Bœotians' land: where the height of disaster is in store for them to suffer as retribution for their pride and impious spirit, in that when they came to Hellas they made no scruple to 810 despoil the statues of the gods, nor to burn temples. Altars have been demolished, and shrines of divinities are overthrown from their foundations in heaps of ruin. Therefore, for the evil they did, an equal measure do they endure, and more will they in the future, nor yet is the bottom reached of [their fountain of] misfortunes,¹ but it still is gushing forth. For so great shall be the mass of clotted gore in the Plateans' land beneath the Dorian spear, that heaps of dead shall bear witness even to the third generation that one who is mortal should not entertain 820 thoughts too high for him: for Presumption when it blossoms forth bears as fruit a crop of Calamity, whence it reaps a harvest of tears.

Seeing then that of such a sort are the wages of these things, forget not Athens and Hellas; and let none of you, in contempt of his present fortune, from desire of what he has not, cast away great prosperity. Zeus, thou knowest, is one who chastises an over-arrogant spirit, a heavy-handed corrector. Therefore do ye, being now counselled to be 830 prudent by divine warnings, instruct my son with the admonitions of reason to cease from seeking in over-arrogant daring to hinder the gods from their will. And

¹ Cf. *v.* 745 above. But the verb ὑπεστίω seems impossible with κρηνῆς, unless the latter has its usual sense, 'foundation.' Mr Housman ingeniously suggests κρηνῆς ἀπέσβηκ'.

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do thou, beloved venerable mother of Xerxes, go into the palace, and bringing forth vesture, such as is seemly, make ready to meet thy son ; for all about his body by reason of his grief tatters of his embroidered robes are hanging in shreds. But do thou affectionately comfort him with thy words, for to thee alone, I know, will he endure to listen. 840 I will depart to the darkness beneath the earth. Ye aged men, fare ye well, giving to your souls such pleasure as ye may day by day, seeing that to the dead wealth is of no use at all. [*Descends.*]

Chorus. I felt pain when I heard of the many woes which are, and shall yet be, the lot of the barbarians.

Atossa. O Fortune, how many bitter griefs are coming down upon me ! Most of all does this thing wound me—to hear of the misused robes about the body of my son, 850 which envelope him. But I will go, and fetching fair apparel from the palace will try to meet my son ; for we will not desert our dearest in his misfortune. ✓

[*She goes into the palace.*]

Chorus. Ah me ! Goodly, indeed, and happy was the life we enjoyed under civil government so long as the aged monarch, author of no ill, a king who sought not war, god-like Dareios ruled the land. 860

In the first place, we paraded a glorious army, and a system of laws, steadfast as towers, kept all things under control. And our returns from war brought us <back to> ¹ happy homes, without suffering distress or defeat.

And all the cities that he took !—without crossing the ford of the river Halys, and without stirring forth from his own hearth : such, for instance, as the Acheloian cities 870 of the Strymonic gulf, established near the Thracian dwellings ;

¹ αἰθῆς (Blaydes) ἐς (Walter Headlam). οἰκία ἐν πρᾶττουσα was a common phrase.

And, outside the estuary, the cities on the mainland fortified round about by towers owned him as king, and the cities, too, which are proud [to be] round about the strait of Helle; and embayed Propontis, and the [Thracian] outlet of Pontus; 880

The sea-washed islands, too, off the projecting arm of the sea, lying near this land: Lesbos, for instance, and olive-growing Samos, Chios and Paros, Naxos, Myconos, and Andros, adjoining Tenedos as a near neighbour; 890

And of the sea-girt islands mid-way between the continents was he lord, Lemnos, and the settlement of Icaros, and Rhodes, and Cnidos; and Aphrodite's cities Paphos and Soli; and Salamis, whose mother-city is the cause of our present moans.

Also the wealthy populous cities in the Ionian district 900 did he control by his prudent mind. And there was a tireless strength of armed warriors and of allies from every nation ready at hand. But now, on the contrary, in no doubtful fashion, we are enduring these inflictions from the gods, defeated signally in battle through disasters on the sea. 910

(*Enter XERXES.*)

Xerxes. O wretched am I in having encountered this grievous doom, most baffling to my judgment! How savagely did Fortune assail the Persian race! What is there for me yet to endure in my misery? The strength of my limbs is relaxed when I behold the age of my citizens to be what I see here before me. Would that me also, O Zeus, the doom of death had hidden from sight along with the warriors who have perished!

Chorus. Alack, my sovereign, for the goodly army and 920 the great prestige of the Persian empire, and the fair array of men whom Fortune hath shorn away! The land

bewails her native youth, slaughtered all for Xerxes, the plenisher of Hades with Persians; for many men of Agdabata are destroyed—the flower of the land, masters of the bow, a body of warriors exceeding dense in number. Alas, alas for our trusty strength! And the land of Asia, 930 O monarch of the country, is pitiably pitiably bowed to her knees.

Xerxes. Here am I before you, ah me! a man to grieve over, and in misery, who was born, it seems, a curse to his race and his country.

Chorus. In salutation of thy return I will utter a cry boding ill, the voice of a Mariandynian mourner busied 940 with woe, a tearful wail.

Xerxes. Pour forth a plaintive piteous cry of sorrow; for Fortune, as ye see, has turned against me.

Chorus. I will utter a cry piteous indeed, in recognition of heavy sorrows for wave-tossed corpses, and † sufferings of the people † which are [now the portion] of the city mourning for her sons, and will again cry aloud a tearful 950 lamentation.

Xerxes. Aye, for at the hands of the Ionians, the Ionians, did our embattled array of ships, yielding the victory to the foe, obtain a harvest of woe; after having had the dark surface of the sea reaped close, and the fatal shore.

Chorus. Alas! cry aloud, and inquire all that happened.—Where is the rest of the multitude of thy friends? Where are they who stood by thy side; such, for instance, as 960 Pharandakes was, Susas, Pelagon, and Dotamas, and Agabates, Psammis, and Susiskanes, who came from Ecbatana?

Xerxes. Fallen in wretched plight from a Tyrian ship I left them, by the shores of Salamis, dashing against a stubborn beach.

Chorus. Alas! and what of thy Pharnuchos, and the 970

brave Ariomardos? Where is prince Seualkes, or Lilaïos of noble lineage, Memphis, Tharybis, and Masistras, and Artembares, and Hystaichmes? These things I ask of thee.

Xerxes. Woe, woe is me! after having beheld ancient Athens, hateful city, all, by one shock of battle, ah! poor 980 wretches, lie gasping upon the ground.

Chorus. Didst thou in very truth leave there him of the Persians who was thine Eye, faithful in all things, who numbered thy tens upon tens of thousands, goodliest of men, son of Batanochus the son of Sesames the son of Megabates; Parthos, too; and the mighty Oebares? Alas for the hapless ones! Evils beyond evils to noble Persians thou dost relate to us.

990

Xerxes. Regrets indeed for my brave comrades dost thou call to my mind, speaking of baleful hateful evils beyond evils. My heart within me moans aloud, moans for the luckless ones.

Chorus. Aye, and there are others whom we long to see again, Xanthes, captain of ten thousand Mardian warriors, and martial Auchares, and Diaixis, and Arsakes, leaders of cavalry, and Kegdadates, and Lythimnes, and Tolmos, who 1000 had never enough of battle. I am dismayed, astonished, that they follow¹ not in thy train screened by tents borne on wheels.

Xerxes. [Vain thy longing,] for they who were the leaders² of the army are gone.

Chorus. Gone! alas, ingloriously.

Xerxes. Ah me! ah me!

Chorus. Alas, alas, Divinities, ye caused us an unlooked-for disaster, that makes clear to all men how watchful is the eye of Calamity.

1010

¹ ἐπομένους restored by Hartung. ἐπόμενοι was an alteration made (as the scholiast's note shows) because ἔταφον was taken as ἐτάφησαν.

² ἀγρέται Tourp. (Hesychius ἀγρέταν : βασιλεα, θεόν).

Xerxes. We are struck down. What turns of fortune are there in ¹ life!

Chorus. We are struck down, 'tis clearly so,

Xerxes. Unlooked-for sorrows, unlooked-for sorrows!

Chorus. ——— having encountered Ionian seamen in an evil hour. Unfortunate indeed in war are the Persian nation.

Xerxes. Surely so. Unhappy man, I am struck down in the matter of all my huge army.

Chorus. What is there then of the Persians, O thou of great ill-fortune, that is not destroyed?

Xerxes. See'st thou what is left of my vesture (*pointing* 1020 *to it*)—

Chorus. I see, I see.

Xerxes. ———and this quiver,

Chorus. What is it thou sayest is saved?

Xerxes. ——a receptacle for shafts?

Chorus. Little enough out of so much.

Xerxes. We are in lack of supporters.

Chorus. The Ionian people shrinks not from the fray.

Xerxes. Heroic are they. I was witness of an unlooked-for calamity.

Chorus. Is it of the lines of thy naval host turned to flight that thou wilt speak? 1030

Xerxes. Aye, and I rent my robes at the advent of disaster.

Chorus. Alas, alas!

Xerxes. Aye,—and more than alas!

Chorus. True, for twofold are our woes, and threefold.

Xerxes. Grievous woes; but a joy to our enemies.

Chorus. And our strength has been maimed,

Xerxes. I am stripped of my escort.

Chorus. ——by the disaster at sea of thy friends.

¹ But *δὲ αἰῶνος* can hardly be right in this place,

Xerxes. Shed tears, tears for the calamity ; and go towards thy home.

Chorus. Alas, alas ! Grief, grief ! 1040

Xerxes. Cry aloud now in response to me.

Chorus. A wretched offering to a wretched man from wretched men !

Xerxes. Wail aloud, making the sound in unison.

Chorus. Alack, alack ! Here is another heavy blow. Alas ! much indeed do I grieve over this.

Xerxes. Beat, beat on [thy head], and groan aloud for my sake.

Chorus. I shed tears in lamentation.

Xerxes. Cry aloud now in response to me.

Chorus. 'Tis my concern, O master. 1050

Xerxes. Raise thy voice now with wailing.

Chorus. Alack, alack ! Again shall fall confusedly blows that bruise and call forth shrieks of pain.

Xerxes. Beat thy breast too, and cry aloud the Mysian lament,

Chorus. Grievous, grievous fate !

Xerxes. ——and make havoc, I bid you, of the white hair of thy beard,

Chorus. With clutching hands [I do so] 'mid cries of anguish.

Xerxes. ——and utter a shrill note,

Chorus. This too will I do. 1060

Xerxes. ——and with thy fingers rend thy robes about thy breast,

Chorus. Grievous, grievous fate !

Xerxes. ——and pluck thy hair, and lament over the army.

Chorus. With clutching hands [I do so] 'mid cries of anguish.

Xerxes. Let thine eyes grow moist.

Chorus. I am bathed in tears.

Xerxes. Cry aloud now in response to me.

Chorus. Ah me! Ah me!

Xerxes. Go towards your homes with sounds of mourning,

Chorus. Alas, Persian land, so sad now to tread! 1070

Xerxes. ——crying Alas! through the city.

Chorus. Alas indeed! yea, yea.

Xerxes. Utter aloud your lament, as ye step delicately
onward.

Chorus. Alas, Persian land, now so sad to tread!

Xerxes. Ah me! ah me! in three-banked galleys (ah
me!) all perished . . .!

Chorus. I will escort thee with mournful sounds of woe.

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