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SOPHOCLES

THE PLAYS AND FRAGMENTS.

PART VI.
THE ELECTRA.
SOPHOCLES

THE PLAYS AND FRAGMENTS

WITH CRITICAL NOTES, COMMENTARY, AND TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH PROSE,

BY

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CAMBRIDGE, AND M.P. FOR THE UNIVERSITY:
HON. D.C.L. OXON.: HON. LL.D. EDINBURGH, HARYARD, DUBLIN, AND GLASGOW:
HON. DOCT. PHILOS., BOLOGNA.

PART VI.
THE ELECTRA.

EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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1894

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PREFATORY NOTE.

A commentary on this play, intended chiefly for young students, was contributed by me in 1867 to the series entitled *Catena Classicorum*. After a second edition of it had appeared in 1870, it was stereotyped, and since that date I have had no opportunity of further revision. The present work is not an enlargement of that book, but, as the different plan and scope required, a new one throughout.

R. C. J.

CAMBRIDGE,
*March, 1894.*
CORRIGENDA.

In the Greek text.
Page 96, verse 681. For κοῦν read κλεων.
" 142, v. 1045. For ποιήσω read ποιήσω.

In the translation.
" 159, line 5. For 'wert' read 'wast.'

In the notes.
" 25, critical n. on v. 128, line 3. For 1813 read 1814.
" 79, commentary, column 1, last line. For 530 read 537.
" 98    "    col. 2, l. 6 from bottom. For 833 D read 833 A.
" 111    "    col. 1, l. 5 from bottom. For 'Sparta' read 'Tegea.'
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§ 20. The Electra of Sophocles is one of his later plays. Internal evidence. Conclusion.


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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. The story of Orestes the avenger was complete in every essential particular before it came to the earliest of those three Attic dramatists, each of whom has stamped it so strongly with the impress of his own mind.

In the Iliad there is no hint that the house of Pelops lay under a curse which entailed a series of crimes. The sceptre made by Hephaestus for Zeus, and brought by Hermes to Pelops, is peacefully inherited by Atreus, Thyestes and Agamemnon. Yet the Iliad makes at least one contribution to the material which Aeschylus found ready to his hand. It is the figure of Agamemnon himself, with eyes and head like those of Zeus, in girth like Ares, in breast like Poseidon; ‘clad in flashing bronze, all glorious, and pre-eminent amid all’ As Helen stands with Priam on the walls of Troy, and watches the Achaeans enemies moving on the battle-field, she asks who this one may be:—There are others even taller by a head, but never did I behold a man so comely or so majestic (γεραρόν); he is like unto one that is a king. This is the royal Agamemnon, ὁ παντόσεμνος, who lives in the Aeschylean drama, and whose image reappears in later poetry. For the rest, the Iliad gives us just one far-off glimpse of the king’s home beyond the Aegaean, where Orestes is a child in the fortress-palace at Mycenae, with three sisters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa; children of that Clytaemnestra to whom, in the opinion of her lord at Troy, the damsel Chryseis was ‘in no wise inferior, in beauty or in stature, in wit or in skill?’

1 II. 2. 100 ff. 2 ib. 478 f. 3 ib. 578 f. 4 II. 3. 168 ff. 5 Aesch. Eum. 637. 6 II. 9. 142 ff. 7 II. 1. 113 ff.
INTRODUCTION.

The *Odyssey* tells the story as follows. Agamemnon, before going to Troy, charged a certain minstrel (αὐδὸς) to watch over Clytaemnestra at Mycenae. The precaution implies a sense of possible danger, but not necessarily distrust of Clytaemnestra. Presently a tempter came to the lonely wife in the person of her husband’s first-cousin, Aegisthus, son of Thyestes, who, while his kinsmen were fighting at Troy, dwelt ‘at peace, in the heart of Argos’. For some time Clytaemnestra ‘refused the shameful deed; for she had a good understanding.’ Meanwhile the gods themselves, by their messenger Hermes, warned Aegisthus against the course of crime upon which he was entering. But Hermes spoke in vain. Aegisthus removed the minstrel to a desert island, and there left him, a prey to dogs and birds. He then took the ‘willing’ Clytaemnestra to his home; while he sought to propitiate the gods by burnt-offerings on their altars, and by hanging up in their temples ‘many gifts of embroidery and gold’.

Agamemnon, after a stormy voyage from Troy, landed on the coast of Argolis at a point not far from the dwelling of Aegisthus; who, apprised by a watcher, came in his chariot, and invited the king to a banquet; after which he slew him, ‘as a man slays an ox at the manger’.

In this narrative (given by Menelaüs to Telemachus) Clytaemnestra is not even named; though Menelaüs had previously spoken of her ‘guile’ as aiding the crime. It is only in a part of the *Odyssey* which is of later origin than the ‘Telemachy’ in books I—IV,—viz., the *Nékvia* in the eleventh book,—that Clytaem-

---

1 ἀρνωταὶ ἄκωτα, Od. 3. 268. Nothing could better illustrate the social consideration enjoyed by the Homeric ἄκωτα, or the reverence felt for his office. Athenæus (p. 14 B) conceives this guardian minstrel of Clytaemnestra as a sort of cultivated domestic chaplain, whose function was not merely to keep her mind agreeably occupied, but also to edify her with examples of female excellence (ἀρετὰς γυναικῶν διερχόμενοι).
2 Od. 3. 263.
3 ib. 265 f. ὡς ἄλοχος ἄλοχος ἄλοχος, ἄλοχος ἄλοχος, ἄλοχος ἄλοχος, ἄλοχος ἄλοχος.
4 Od. 1. 35—43.
5 Od. 3. 269 ff.
6 Od. 4. 514—535.
7 Od. 4. 92 (Aegisthus slays Agamemnon) λάθης, ἄνωστι, δόλως ὀφθαλμῶν ἄλοχος.
nestra appears as actively sharing in the horrors of the banquet, where she slays Cassandra with her own hand. And, even there, it is by the sword of Aegisthus alone that Agamemnon is slain1.

The young Orestes fled, or was conveyed, to Athens. For seven years Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra reigned at Mycenae. In the eighth, Orestes returned, and slew Aegisthus2. Clytaemnestra died at the same time, but how, we are not told; and Orestes ‘made a funeral feast,’ for both of them, ‘to the Argives’3.

Two points distinguish this Homeric legend from later versions. First, Aegisthus is the principal criminal4. Clytaemnestra’s part is altogether subordinate to that of her paramour. Secondly, the vengeance of Orestes is regarded as a simple act of retributive justice. It is not said that he slew his mother; the conjecture is left open that she may have died by her own hand. Nothing comes into the Epic view which can throw a shadow upon the merit of the avenger. The goddess Athena herself exhorts Telemachus to emulate the example and the renown of Orestes5.

§ 2. In the interval between the Odyssey and the Lyric age, Cyclic legends connected with the house of Pelops were further

1 Od. 11. 404—434 (the shade of Agamemnon tells the story to Odysseus).
2 Od. 3. 304—308. Orestes returns ἄψ ἄψ' Ἀθηνᾶω (v. 307). Zenodotus wished to reconcile the Odyssey with the later account by writing ἄψ ἀπὸ Φακίων.
3 Ἰ. 309. Ἡ τοῦ τῶν κτείνας δαίνυ τάφων Ἄρχεων | μηνρὸς τε στυγηρῆς καὶ ἀν-

δελεάδος Αγλεόνου. According to the scholia in several MSS. (M, Q, R, T) these two verses were absent from some of the ancient ἔκδοσεις. But Aristarchus, at any rate, must have thought them genuine, since he remarked (as we learn from the same source) ὅτι ἀδ τῶν τοῖσι παρυσοφαινέναι ἃν ὀνομάζεται Αγλεόνος ἡ Κληταιμνήστρα, τὸ δὲ ἐκ καὶ ὑπὸ Ὀρέστου, ἱδόν οὖν εἶναι.

The fact that the funeral feast was given ‘to the Argives’ implies that they welcomed Orestes as a deliverer, and also that (whatever had been the manner of his mother’s death) they did not regard him as resting under any defilement which incapacitated him for religious acts.

4 The conception of the murder (no less than the execution) is always attributed to him in the Odyssey (3. 194 Ἀγλεόνοσ ἐμήσατο: 4. 529 Αγ. δόλων ἐφρόσυσε τέχνην: 11. 409 Αγ. τεῖχος ἥτανα τοὺς μύρον τε).
5 Od. 1. 298 ff. Cp. Nestor’s comments on the good deed of Orestes, in his speech to Telemachus, Od. 3. 156 ff. ὡς ἀγάθων καὶ πάθω καταφημένου λεπέθα | ἄθροι, κ.τ.λ.
INTRODUCTION.

developed in some of the Cyclic epics\(^1\). The Cypria\(^2\), ascribed to Stasimus of Cyprus (\textit{circ.} 776 B.C.), related the immolation of Iphigeneia at Aulis,—a story unknown to Homer,—and distinguished her from the Iphianassa of the \textit{Iliad} (9.145). A new source of poetical interest was thus created, since it could now be asked (as Pindar asks\(^3\)) how far Clytaemnestra was actuated by resentment for the sacrifice of her daughter. In another epic, the Nostoi\(^4\) (by Agias of Troezen, \textit{circ.} 750 B.C.), Clytaemnestra aided Aegisthus in the murder, though probably in a subordinate capacity. Further, Pylades was associated with Orestes. And the name of Pylades at once points to Delphi\(^5\),—the agency by which the primitive legend of Orestes was ultimately transformed.

\(\S\) 3. The influence of the Delphic priesthood rose and spread with the power of the Dorians. It did so, not merely because that power was an apt instrument for its propagation, but also because in Hellas at large the time was favourable. The religion of Apollo, as his Pythian interpreters set it forth, was suited to an age which had begun to reflect, but which retained a vivid faith in the older mythology. Here we are concerned with only one aspect of the Apolline cult, that which relates to blood-guiltiness. The Homeric man who has killed another

\(^1\) The Epic Cycle (\textit{Ετήσια οικολογία}) was a body of epic poems by various hands, arranged in the chronological order of the subjects, so as to form a continuous history of the mythical world. One part of this Cycle consisted of poems concerning the Trojan War. A grammarian named Proclus (\textit{circ.} 140 A.D.?), in his \textit{Χρονομετρία}, or \textit{Manual of Literature},' gave short prose summaries of the poems in the Trojan part of the Cycle. The Manual itself is lost, but fragments have been preserved by the patriarch Photius (9th century) in his Bibliotheca.

\(^2\) The Cypria related the origin of the Trojan war, and its progress down to the point at which the \textit{Iliad} begins. (Cp. my Introduction to Homer, p. 153.)

\(^3\) \textit{Pyth}. 11. 22. See below, § 8.

\(^4\) The Nostoi described the adventures of some Greek heroes on their return from Troy,—especially those of Menelaüs, who visited Egypt, and of Agamemnon, who was slain by Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra. (\textit{Introd. to Homer}, p. 154.)

\(^5\) There happens to be an independent proof (if any were needed) that the religion of Delphi animated the Nostoi. The poem related how Calchas committed suicide, because Mopsus, whom he met at Colophon, proved to be a greater seer than himself. Mopsus belongs to the traditions of the Apolline \textit{μαντής}; he is sometimes called the son of Apollo by Manto, a daughter of Teiresias.
may either pay a fine to the kinsfolk, or go into exile; but in Homer there is no idea that he can be purified by a ritual. In other words, there is the notion of a debt in this respect, but hardly of a sin; of quittance, but not of absolution. It was a somewhat later stage when men began more distinctly to recognise that in cases of homicide there are kinds and degrees of moral guilt which cannot be expressed in the terms of human debtor and creditor. Clearly a man ought to do what the gods command. But what if a god tells a man to do something which most men think wrong? If the man obeys, and if his conduct is to be judged aright, the tribunal, like the instigation, must be divine. Nor is this so only when the opinion offended is that of men. A god may command a mortal to do an act by which some other god, or supernatural being, will be incensed. Suppose, for instance, that a man receives a divine mandate to slay a guilty kinsman; if he obeys, nothing can save him from angering the Erinyes, who resent every injury to kinsfolk.

For questions such as these the Pythian creed provided an answer, or at least a mystic compromise. Apollo, the god of light, is the all-seeing arbiter of purity. A man who commits homicide displeases Apollo, who abhors every stain of blood. But Apollo can estimate the degree of guilt. And he has empowered his servants to administer rites by which, under certain conditions, a defiled person may be freed from the stain. In later days the critics of Apollo could object that he had encouraged crime by thus far alleviating its consequences. But in the age when the doctrine was first put forth, it must have been, on the whole, beneficent. It tempered the fear of capricious or vindictive deities by trust in a god who, as his priestes taught, never swerved from equity, and who was always capable of clemency. At the same time it laid the unabsolved offender under a ban worse than mere out-

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1 In II. 9. 632—636 the payment of the fine is indicated as the ordinary course, though II. 24. 480 f. suffices to show that cases of exile were also frequent. In Homeric society the blood-feud is in process of being extirpated by these compromises; and, further, there is already a moral pressure of public opinion on the kinsmen of the slain man to accept the payment of the fine when tendered. See Mr Leaf’s paper in the Journal of Hellenic Studies, vol. VIII. pp. 122—132.
INTRODUCTION.

lawry, for it cut him off from the worship of the temple and of the hearth, and, indeed, from all intercourse with god-fearing men. It made his hope depend on submission to a religion representing the highest spiritual influence which ever became widely operative among the people of pagan Hellas.

The ritual of Apollo the Purifier had already a place in the Cyclic epic called the *Aethiopis*¹, said to have been composed by Arctins of Miletus, about 776 B.C. More than a century elapsed after that date before Lyric poetry was matured; and meanwhile the worship of the Pythian Apollo, with its ritual of purification from blood, was diffused throughout the Greek world. It was to be expected, therefore, that, when the story of Orestes began to receive lyric treatment, the influence of Delphi should be apparent. If, in avenging his father, Orestes killed Clytaemnestra as well as Aegisthus, the Pythian priesthood had a text than which they could desire none more impressive. For, according to the immemorial and general belief of Hellenes, Orestes did well to avenge Agamemnon. If, however, he slew his mother, the Erinyls were necessarily called into activity. Who, then, was to vindicate the avenger? Who was to assert, even against the Erinyls, that his deed was righteous? Who but Apollo, the supreme judge of purity? And then it was only another step to represent Apollo himself as having prescribed the vengeance. A Greek vase-painting² portrays him in the act of doing so. The scene is in the temple at Delphi. Apollo, laurel-crowned, is sitting on the omphalos; in his left hand is a lyre; with the stem of a laurel-branch, held in his right, he is touching the sheathed sword of Orestes, who stands in a reverent attitude before him; he thus consecrates it to the work of retribution. Behind Apollo, the Pythia sits upon the tripod, holding a diadem for the brows of Orestes, when he shall have done the deed³; and near her is Pylades.

¹ The *Aethiopis* took up the war of Troy where the *Iliad* left off. It included the death of Achilles; also the contest for his arms between Ajax and Odysseus.

² On an amphora found in South Italy (Lucania), and now in the Naples Museum. It is reproduced by Baumeister, p. 1110 (from Rochette, *Mon. ined.*, pl. 37), and by Michaelis in Jahn’s *Electra*, p. 37 (cp. ib. p. vii).


στέψω τ’ ἄδελφου κράτα τοῦ μηχήριον.
THE ORESTEIA OF STESICHRUS.

§ 4. Stesichorus, of Himera in Sicily, flourished towards the close of the seventh, and in the earlier part of the sixth, century B.C.¹. The Choral Lyric, which Alcman had already cultivated under the Dorian inspirations of Sparta, received a new development from Stesichorus. He applied it to those heroic legends which had hitherto been the peculiar domain of Epos. In style and in dialect, no less than in choice of themes, he was here essentially an epic poet employing the lyric form.² This character, and the popularity which he won by it, are significantly attested in the words of Simonides³,—¹ Thus Homer and Stesichorus sang to the people. One of his most celebrated poems was that in which he told the story of Orestes (Ὀρέστεια). It was of large compass, being divided into at least two books or cantos.⁴ The direct sources of information concerning it are meagre, consisting only of a few small fragments (less than twelve lines altogether), gleaned from the passing allusions of later writers. But archaeology comes to the aid of literature. The supplementary evidence of Greek art makes it possible to reconstruct, if not with certainty, at least with high probability, a partial outline of the once famous poem. This has been done by Carl Robert, in an essay on ‘The death of Aegisthus,’—one of the series of essays, entitled Bild und Lied, in which he brings archaeological illustration to bear upon the heroic myths.⁵ The substance of his results may be briefly given as follows.

§ 5. A red-figured Attic vase⁶, belonging to the first half of the fifth century B.C., depicts a scene which does not come from any extant literary source. Orestes, wearing a cuirass, has

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¹ Apollodorus (ὁφ. Hesychius) places his birth in Ol. 37 (630 B.C.) and his death in Ol. 68 (556 B.C.). Cp. Prof. Hans Flach, Geschichte der griechischen Lyrik (1884), p. 316.
² Quintilian (10. 1. 69) describes him as epici carminis onera lyra sustinens.
³ Frag. 53: 4 ὅσον γὰρ Ὀμηρος ἦδὲ Στηρίχορος δεῖξαι λαὸς.
⁵ Bild und Lied: Archäologische Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Helden- sage (Berlin, 1881). The fifth essay is ‘Der Tod des Aigisthos,’ pp. 149—191.
⁶ Found at Cervetri (Caere), and now in the Museum at Vienna: published in Monumenti dell’Inst., vol. viii. pl. xv, and described by Benndorf, Annal. dell’Inst. (1865) pp. 212—216. Reproduced in O. Jahn’s Elektra, p. 175 (cp. the note by Michaelis, ib. p. vii). The vase has been designated as a πελίκη.
plunged his sword into the breast of Aegisthus, who is falling from his seat,—the throne that once was Agamemnon's. Meanwhile, something has startled Orestes; his face is turned away from Aegisthus; he glances over his right shoulder at a woman who hurries up behind him. This is Clytaemnestra, as an inscription certifies. She grasps the handle of an axe with both hands; she is coming to the rescue of Aegisthus. But an old man, wearing the conical hat of a herald, has overtaken her; his left hand grasps her right arm, his right, the axe; her purpose is baffled. Between her and Orestes stands a maiden whose uplifted hands express horror; this (as the artist informs us) is Chrysothemis. Vase A (as we shall call this one) must next be compared with vase B,—another red-figured Attic vase of the fifth century, but of later date than the other. The subject on B is fundamentally the same as on A, but it is curiously abridged, or rather mutilated. Orestes—who here is in full armour, with helmet and greaves as well as cuirass—has dealt the mortal wound to Aegisthus, and is looking straight at him. Clytaemnestra, furiously brandishing her axe, is close behind Orestes,—so close, that nothing can now save him from her blow. Electra (the name is inscribed) stands behind the dying Aegisthus; her out-stretched right hand points at Clytaemnestra, her left is raised to the back of her head with a gesture of bewilderment and terror; evidently she is uttering a cry of warning to Orestes. The painter of B was led by considerations of style or convenience to omit a vital feature of A,—viz., the old man who stops Clytaemnestra at the critical moment.

Now A and B belong, as Robert shows, to a small group of vases which must have had a common archetype; and while A has preserved the meaning of the whole scene more truly than B, the latter has preserved some details which A has lost. The scene represented by the archetype was probably as follows:—Orestes, in full armour, slays Aegisthus, who falls from his throne; Clytaemnestra rushes up behind Orestes, with an axe; Electra, standing at the back of Aegisthus, cries out

1 A stamnos found on the site of Volci in Etruria, and now in the Berlin Museum (no. 1007). Published by Gerhard, Etrusk. und Campanische Vasenbilder, pl. xxiv. It may be seen in Baumeister's Denkmäler, p. 1113; and in Jahn's Electra, p. 148.
TRACES IN GREEK ART.

to warn her brother; but already the aged herald has seized Clytaemnestra, and defeated her intent. Who is this old man, the herald, who interposes so opportunely? He appears along with Orestes in another work of art, earlier than these vases,—viz., a marble relief, in the developed archaic style, found at Melos. The scene there is as follows:—Electra sits in deep dejection at her father’s tomb; the aged Nurse stands behind her. Three travellers have just arrived together; the foremost is the old man with the herald’s hat and stave, who is accosting the Nurse; behind him a youth of noble mien (Orestes) stands beside a horse, his left hand resting on its back; a third person (Pylades, or a servant?) follows. The question is answered when it is observed that, according to a widely-spread legend, the person who saved Orestes from the murderers, by carrying him away from Mycenae, was Talthybius, the faithful herald of Agamemnon. Talthybius is here returning to Mycenae with the rightful heir, and preparing the way for the recognition by speaking to the old Nurse, who will remember him. He is the original of the Paedagogus in the Electra of Sophocles, and of the Old Man (πρήσβυς) in the Electra of Euripides; he also accounts for the prominence given to the herald in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus.

§ 6. The scene described above, in which Talthybius once more saves Orestes by foiling the armed Clytaemnestra, must have been taken from some familiar literary source. It was essential for a vase-painter’s purpose that his version of a story should be popularly known. What, then, was this source? Certainly not Aeschylus. Vase A is assigned on grounds of style to an earlier date than 458 B.C., the year of the Aeschylean Oresteia. But,

1 Published by Conze in Monum. dell’ Instit. vol. vi. pl. 57. Reproduced in Roscher’s Lexikon der gr. und rom. Mythologie, art. Elektra, p. 1238.
2 Nicolaüs Damascenus (flor. circ. 20 B.C.) fr. 34 (Müller, Frag. Hist. vol. iii. p. 374) τοῦτον δὲ (Orestes) ἡράσατο Ταλθύβιος ἡμαρτάνας, καὶ ἑκάτεροι εἰς τὴν Φαυλίδα παρὰ Στρώφων. The legend appears also in the so-called ‘Dictys Cretensis,’ bk. 6, c. 2, Talthybius Oresten Agamemnonis filium manibus Aegisthi erexitm Idomeno, qui apud Corinthum agebat, tradidit. This work, written probably in the fourth cent. a.d. by one Septinius, purports to be translated from a history of the Trojan war by a Cretan contemporary with that war, named Dictys. See Teuffel, Hist. Kom. Lit., vol. ii. § 476.
3 Robert, Bild und Lied, p. 160.
INTRODUCTION.

even apart from this fact, it is evident that the scene has not been suggested by anything in the *Choephori*. Clytaemnестra there calls, indeed, for an axe, when she hears that Orestes has slain Aegist hus (v. 889):

\[ \text{δοθή τις ἀνδροκυήτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος}; \]
\[ \text{εἰδώμεν ἤ νικώμεν ἤ νικώμθα.} \]

But there is no time for her to obtain the weapon; at that moment Orestes confronts her. Her futile cry rather indicates that Aeschylus had in mind some earlier version which actually armed her with an axe at a similar crisis. And in Sophocles, too, we find that the axe is prominent. The murder of Agamemnon by the guilty pair is thus described (v. 99): *σχίζουσι κάρα φονίῳ πελέκει.* Still more significant is the passage in which Sophocles describes the axe itself as resenting the deed of which it was made the instrument (482 ff.):

\[ \text{oὐ γὰρ ποτὲ ἀμαστεῖ γ’ ὁ φίλος σ’ Ἐλλάνων ἀναξ,} \]
\[ \text{oὐδ’ ἡ παλαιὰ χαλκόπλακτος ἀμφάκης γένες,} \]
\[ \text{ἀ νιν κατέπεφνεν αὐχότασι ἐν αὐχάσισ.} \]

Some Roman sarcophagi\(^1\), on which the story of Orestes is treated, show three Erinyses sleeping at the tomb of Agamemnon. Among them lies the axe of Clytaemnестra,—a symbol, as with Sophocles, of the crime which calls for vengeance.

The *Oresteia* of Stesichorus was popular at Athens in the fifth century B.C. There is a striking proof of this. Aristophanes, in the *Peace* (775 ff.), has adopted some verses from the beginning of that *Oresteia*\(^2\), without naming Stesichorus. He could reckon on his playful allusion to so famous a poem being at once recognised by an Athenian audience. Between the *Odyssey* and Aeschylus, no other handling of the subject seems to have rivalled the work of Stesichorus in celebrity. In the epic

\(^1\) Robert, *Bild und Lied*, p. 177, n. 23. One of these sarcophagi, that in the Museo Pio-Clementino in the Vatican, is reproduced (from Visconti, Mus. Pio-Clem. v. 22) in Baumeister’s *Denkmüter*, p. 1115. The three sleeping Erinyses, with the axe, occupy the left part of a relief of which the centre represents the slaying of Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus. Michaelis (Arch. Zeit. 1875, p. 107) was the first to point out that these Erinyses form a separate scene.

\(^2\) The scholiast on Ar. *Pax* 775 and 800 informs us that the quotations are from Stesichorus, and in 797 refers to the ‘*Ορέστεια*. They are fragments 31—34 in Bergk.
LITERARY EVIDENCE.

Nostoi, where the deed of Orestes was only one of many episodes, it would be treated, one may suppose, on a relatively small scale.

Now it is known that Stesichorus made Clytaemnestra kill her husband by wounds on the head,—probably, therefore, with the axe, as Sophocles describes in the passages quoted above. This appears from the nature of the dream which terrified the Clytaemnestra of Stesichorus just before the retribution. A serpent approached her with gore upon its head, and then changed into Agamemnon:—

τῷ δὲ δράκων ἕδοκησε μολὼν κάρα βεβρωτωμένος ἀκρον.

ἔκ δ' ἀρα τοῦ βασιλείας Πλεισθενίδας ἐφάνη 1.

Such a dream would necessarily (according to Greek ideas) act upon her mind in the manner described by the Attic dramatists. In the Oresteia of Stesichorus, just as in the Choephoroi and in the Sophoclean Electra, the guilty and terrified woman must have sent propitiatory offerings to the grave of her murdered husband. But, like the dramatists again, the lyric poet would make her send them by the hands of some one else; even her hardness could not dispense with an intermediary in this case. Whom did Stesichorus choose as her emissary? It is a notable fact that Electra, who is unknown to Homer, appears in the fifth century B.C. as a central personage of the story. And it seems that Aeschylus was not the first poet who had spoken of her. The earliest writer recorded as mentioning her is a lyric poet named Xanthus, who said that her original name was Laodicè, and that she was called Electra because she was so long unmarried (ἀλεκτρος); an

1 Frag. 41 (ed. Bergk), preserved by Plut. De sera Numinis vindicta, c. 10.

Robert (Bild u. Lied, p. 171) thinks that these two verses give only the first part of the dream as imagined by Stesichorus, and that the rest may be inferred from Aeschylus. When the serpent changed into Agamemnon, the offspring of his renewed union with Clytaemnestra was the serpent who, as she dreams in the Choephoroi, drew blood in sucking her breast.

It has struck me that the missing link between the Stesichorean and the Aeschylean dream—viz., the renewed conjugal union—may be traced, as a reminiscence, in the language of Sophocles, where Chrysothemis describes her mother’s vision (417 f.):—

λόγος τις αὐτήν ἐστιν εἰσίδειν πατρός | τοῦ σοῦ τε κάμοι δευτέραν δημιλάν | ἐλθόντος εἰς φῶς.
etymology which points to a Dorian source (‘Αλέκτρα)\footnote{Aelian Var. Hist. 4. 26 Σάθος ὁ ποιητής τῶν μελῶν, ἀγένετο γὰρ οὗτος πρεσβύτερος Στρατεύσας τοῖς ἱμαλοῖς, λέγει τὴν Ἡλέκτραν τοῖς ἀγαμόμενοι οὐ τοῦτο ήκει τοῦμα πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ Λαοδίκην. ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἀγαμόμουν άνηρπῆ, τὴν γὰρ Κλημανίστραν ὁ Διήγος ήγεμον καὶ ἱσταλεισα, Ἡλέκτραν οὖσαν καὶ καταγερώουσαν παρθένοι Αργείων Ἡλέκτραν ἐκέλευσε διὰ τὸ άμορφον ἄνδρον καὶ μὴ πεπερασθέν ἡκέτρων.}. Stesichorus, we are told, mentioned Xanthus as a lyric predecessor, and adapted much from him. The Oresteia is especially named as a work in which Stesichorus was thus indebted to Xanthus\footnote{Ath. 12. p. 513 Α (quoting from Megacleides, who wrote περὶ Ὀμήρου, and was, as some think, a periaptetik): καὶ Σάθος ὁ μελοποιὸς, πρεσβύτερος ὡς Στρατεύσας, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Στρατεύσας μαρτυρεῖ, ὡς φησιν ὁ Μεγαλέκτρος, ὡς τούτην αὐτὴν (Hercules) περιθύει τὴν στολὴν, ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀμηρην, πολλὰ δὲ τῶν Σάθου παραπεποίηκεν ὁ Στρατεύσας, ὡς εκεῖ καὶ τὴν Ὀρεστείαν καλουμένην.}. How far, and in what sense, that statement is true, cannot now be known; but it is at least certain that Xanthus remained wholly obscure, while Stesichorus was widely popular. The introduction of Electra may be one of the points in which the Stesichorean Oresteia was indebted to Xanthus; and the fact of her figuring in that poem would fully explain her later prominence. Let us suppose, then, that Stesichorus, like Aeschylus, sent Electra with Clytaemnestra’s offerings to Agamemnon’s tomb. Orestes, on his return, would hasten to make his offerings there—as is assumed by all the three Attic dramatists. At the tomb the brother and sister would meet and recognise each other, as they do in Aeschylus. We know that Stesichorus brought in the nurse, whom he called Laodamia\footnote{Schol. on Aesch. Cho. 733.}. Pindar makes a nurse save Orestes from the hands of Clytaemnestra, but he does not say that she carried him out of Argolis.\footnote{Pyth. 11. 17.} The Laodamia of Stesichorus may have done likewise—giving Orestes to the trusty Talthybius, who carried him forth, and

1 Aelian Var. Hist. 4. 26 Σάθος ὁ ποιητής τῶν μελῶν, ἀγένετο γὰρ οὗτος πρεσβύτερος Στρατεύσας τοῖς ἱμαλοῖς, λέγει τὴν Ἡλέκτραν τοῖς ἀγαμόμενοι οὐ τοῦτο ήκει τοῦμα πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ Λαοδίκην. ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἀγαμόμουν άνηρπῆ, τὴν γὰρ Κλημανίστραν ὁ Διήγος ήγεμον καὶ ἱσταλεισα, Ἡλέκτραν οὖσαν καὶ καταγερώουσαν παρθένοι Αργείων Ἡλέκτραν ἐκέλευσε διὰ τὸ άμορφον ἄνδρον καὶ μὴ πεπερασθέν ἡκέτρων.

2 Athen. 12. p. 513 Α (quoting from Megacleides, who wrote περὶ Ὀμήρου, and was, as some think, a periaptetik): καὶ Σάθος ὁ μελοποιὸς, πρεσβύτερος ὡς Στρατεύσας, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Στρατεύσας μαρτυρεῖ, ὡς φησιν ὁ Μεγαλέκτρος, ὡς τούτην αὐτὴν (Hercules) περιθύει τὴν στολὴν, ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀμηρην, πολλὰ δὲ τῶν Σάθου παραπεποίηκεν ὁ Στρατεύσας, ὡς εκεῖ καὶ τὴν Ὀρεστείαν καλουμένην.

The meaning of παραπεποίηκεν seems to be ‘adapted.’ It certainly need not mean ‘spoiled in copying,’ as Schweighäuser takes it (‘dum mutatus est, mutavit et corrupti’).

Robert, Bild und Lied, p. 174 f. thinks that Megacleides was the source of Aelian also (see last note), and thus is our sole authority for the existence of this Xanthus. That Stesichorus mentioned some one named Xanthus cannot be doubted; but whether his debt to an earlier lyric poet of that name was such as Megacleides affirms, is (the critic thinks) very questionable. It is certainly strange that, if Xanthus was so important a source to Stesichorus, absolutely nothing should have come down to us concerning him, beyond the two meagre notices above quoted.
in due time came back with him. After the recognition of Orestes by Electra at the tomb, Stesichorus may have related the vengeance in the manner depicted on the Attic vases above mentioned. We know that Euripides was following Stesichorus in representing Orestes as defending himself against the Erinys with the bow and arrows given by Apollo. And the fact that the Stesichorean Orestes was pursued by the Erinys shows that he slew Clytaemnestra as well as Aegisthus.

§ 7. A combination of literary with artistic evidence leads, Summary. then, to the hypothesis that the Oresteia of Stesichorus was planned somewhat as follows. Clytaemnestra slew her husband by striking him on the head with an axe. The nurse Laodameia saved the young Orestes, and entrusted him to his father's faithful herald Talthybius, who carried him away,—probably to Phocis. After some years, Clytaemnestra has the alarming dream, and sends Electra (accompanied by the nurse) with gifts to Agamennon's tomb. Orestes arrives there with Talthybius, and is recognised by his sister. He then enters the house, while Talthybius keeps watch near the doors. Clytaemnestra, hearing the shriek of the dying Aegisthus, rushes to his aid with an axe; a cry from Electra warns Orestes of the peril; but Talthybius has already seized Clytaemnestra; who is presently slain by her son. The Erinys then appear to Orestes, who defends himself with the bow and arrows given by Apollo.

1 The relief from Melos has already been noticed, in which Talthybius and Orestes find Electra and the nurse at the tomb (p. xvii). The period indicated by the style of that work is the latter part of the sixth century B.C., when the Oresteia of Stesichorus was already well-known; and nothing is more likely than that the artist of the relief was indebted to that source.

2 Schol. on Eur. Or. 568 ἔστω τὸξα μοι κερυλέα, δῶρα Δοξίου.

3 The influence of Delphi on the poem of Stesichorus appears in the fact that Apollo provides Orestes with the means of defence against the Erinys; and it is therefore not unlikely that the refuge of Orestes was with Strophius at Crisa. Whether Stesichorus brought in Pylades, there is nothing to show.

4 As the Paedagogus does in Sophocles (El. 1331 ff.).

5 There is no clue to the manner in which Stesichorus managed the sequel. He may have followed the local Peloponnesian legend, which assigned a refuge to Orestes at the Arcadian town of Oresteion (Thuc. 5. 64) in Parrhasia, the primitive home of the Orestes-myth. Robert (Bild und Lied, p. 181, n. 30) finds a possible trace of this in Eur. Or. 1643 ff.
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If this hypothesis be even approximately correct,—and I, at least, am persuaded that it is so,—the result is of considerable interest, not merely in relation to Stesichorus, but also in its bearing on the Attic dramatists. It would appear that Aeschylus followed the general outlines of Stesichorus pretty closely; while Sophocles, who did not do so, has retained at least one Stesichorean trait, the part of the old man. Aeschylus did not need him, since his Clytaemnestra herself sent Orestes to Strophius; on the other hand, he retains the part of the nurse, which for Sophocles was superfluous. But even if the hypothesis be rejected, there remains that fragment of the Stesichorean poem which describes Clytaemnestra’s dream. This proves that Stesichorus conceived her in a manner which was much nearer to the Aeschylean than to the Homeric. And this change—whether first made by him or not—was connected with another of still larger scope. Stesichorus related in the Oresteia that Tyndareus had incurred the anger of Aphrodite, who doomed his daughters, Helen and Clytaemnestra, to evil careers.¹ Here is the tendency—wholly absent from the Iliad—to bring crimes into the house of Pelops. The Dorian conquerors of Peloponnesus envied the renown which the old local lore, worked up by Ionian art in the Iliad, had shed around their Achaeans predecessors, the ancient masters of Mycenae and Sparta. Under Dorian influences, the story of the Pelopidae was interwoven with those dark threads which appear in Attic Tragedy, while brighter traits were given to the legends of Heracles and the Heracleidae.

§ 8. Between Stesichorus and Aeschylus, the only poet who illustrates the story of Orestes is Pindar. In the eleventh Pythian ode (478 B.C.), he describes a victory in the Pythian games as won ‘in the rich corn-lands of Pylades, host of Laconian Orestes; whom, when his sire was murdered, the nurse Arsinoë rescued from the violent hands of Clytaemnestra and from her deadly guile.’ That ‘piteless woman’ slew Aga-

¹ Frag. 35. It was from Hesiod that Stesichorus derived this story. It is probable that the Kαρδαγός of Hesiod contained references to the crimes in the house of Pelops: see Robert, Bild u. Lied, p. 189.
PINDAR'S ELEVENTH PYTHIAN.

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memnon and Cassandra. What, asks Pindar, was her motive? Was it 'the slaying of Iphigeneia at the Euripus'? Or was it an adulterous passion? 'Meanwhile, Orestes, a young child, became the guest of the aged Strophius, who dwelt at the foot of Parnassus. But in time, with the help of Ares, he slew his mother, and laid Aegisthus in blood.'

Three points in this sketch are noteworthy. (1) Pindar makes Orestes 'a Laconian'; following the tradition, adopted also by Stesichorus and Simonides, that Amyclae in Lacedaemon was the place where Agamemnon was slain. (2) The house of Strophius, 'at the foot of Parnassus,' is the refuge of Orestes; and Pylades is his friend. Probably the Nostoi (c. 750 B.C.), in which Pylades figured, gave this account; but Pindar is the earliest extant source of it. (3) Clytaem-

1 Pind. Pyth. 11. 15—37. 2 Schol. on Eur. Or. 46.

3 Pyth. 11. 31 ἦκεν μὲν αὐτὸς ἤρρις Ἀτρεβαῖς ἰκάς χρῶν κλύται ἐν Ἀμώκλαις. Pausanias (3. 19. 5) saw at Amyclae memorials of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Cassandra.

The dominant influence of Sparta on the early development of the Dorian Choral Lyric may possibly help to explain how, in the lyric age, the local tradition of Lacedaemon could prevail over the Homeric version on a point of such importance. It is certainly a curious illustration of Dorian influence in modifying the Achaeans legends of the Peloponnesus—though, in this case, the influence was not permanent, as it was in blackening the family history of the Pelopidae.

4 In his brilliant and suggestive Introduction to the Choephoroi, Mr Verrall holds (p. xiv, note 1) that Pindar gives no countenance to the legend followed by Euripides, that Pylades was the son of Strophius. Pindar, he thinks, suggests no connection between them. 'The home of Pylades in the 'rich fields' of Cirrha is distinguished clearly from that of Strophius on 'the foot (spur) of Parnassus,' that is to say at Cirra.'

Is this so? Pindar first designates the Pythian festival by the words ἰγών... Κιρρας (Pyth. 11. 12), and presently adds that the victory of which he sings was won ἐν ᾠραιαῖας ἄροιαναι Πολύδα (ib. 15). In Pyth. 10. 15 f. the Pythian festival is similarly designated as βαθελείων ὑπὸ Κιρρας ἰγών ἐπὶ πέτραν: where Κιρρας...πέτρα... is clearly equivalent to the Κρασαίων λόφων of Pyth. 5. 35, and the Κρασαίων ἐν πετραῖς of Pyth. 6. 18. It is the spur of Parnassus under which Crissa was situated: there was no such πέτρα or λόφος near the site of Cirrha on the gulf. And, by adding βαθελείων, Pindar interprets this large sense of Κιρρας. In his time the town of Cirrha no longer existed (see n. on Soph. El. 180). The plain in which the Pythian games were held extended from the site of Cirrha on the south to that of Crissa (the seat of Strophius) on the north. It was called 'Cirrhean' as well as 'Crisaean.' Hence the festival could be called 'the contest of Cirrha,' and its scene could also be identified with 'the cornlands of Pylades.'

Was Euripides (in I. T. 917 f.) the first poet, as Mr Verrall suggests, who made Strophius a brother-in-law, and Pylades a nephew, of Agamemnon? It seems hardly
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nestra, not Ageisthus, is in the foreground; and the speculations as to her motive reminds us that the myth had now grown into a shape which was ready for dramatic handling. Twenty years after this ode was written, Aeschylus produced his Oresteia.

§ 9. A poet imbued with the ideas of Aeschylus could never have accepted the view presented in the Odyssey, that the vengeance of Orestes was a simply righteous retribution, by which the troubles of the house were closed. To the mind of Aeschylus the version which Stesichorus had followed would naturally commend itself: Orestes, the slayer of a mother, could be saved from the Erinyes only by divine aid. And the trilogy, the distinctively Aeschylean form of work, was a framework perfectly suited to such a conception. Clytaemnestra’s crime is the subject of the Agamemnon; the vengeance of Orestes fills the Choephoroi; and the judgment upon him is given in the Eumenides.

The Agamemnon is pervaded from first to last by the thought of the hereditary curse upon the house: Clytaemnestra, indeed, identifies herself with this ‘ancient, bitter Alastor’; and the Argive Elders recognise that this dread power, though it does not excuse her, has presumably helped her. She is the principal agent in the crime. Her dominant motive is not love of her paramour, but hatred of the husband who slew Iphigeneia. Ageisthus is a dastard, ‘the wolf mated with the lioness’; at the close he blusters, and threatens the Elders, while the strong woman treats them with a cold scorn. The shadow of the vengeance is cast before. Cassandra predicts the return of the exiled heir; ‘for the gods have sworn a great oath!’ And the Chorus reply to the menaces of Ageisthus by reminding him that Orestes lives.

probable. Anaxibia, daughter of Pleisthenes by Aëropè, and sister of Agamemnon, was mentioned by Hesiod (Theog. Erg. in Iliad., p. 68, 48); and as her only mythological function was to be the wife of Strophius and the mother of Pylaides, it may be supposed that Hesiod knew those relationships. As we have seen, the association of Pylaides with Orestes dates at least from the Nostoi (circ. 750 B.C.).

1 Agam. 1500—1508.
2 ib. 1415 ff.: 1431—1447: 1556: 1555.
3 ib. 1258.
4 ib. 1280 ff.
5 ib. 1646, 1667.
AESCYLUS. THE CHOEPHORI.  xxv

The Choephoroi begins with a scene at Agamemnon’s grave, near the palace¹. Orestes, who has just arrived from Phocis, enters with Pylades, and lays a lock of his own hair on the tomb. A train of women, dressed in mourning, approaches. These are fifteen Trojan captives, now domestics of the palace, who form the Chorus. They escort Electra. Orestes thinks that he recognises his sister, and draws aside, with Pylades, to observe the procession.

The Chorus chant the parados, and we learn that they have come with libations to the tomb. ‘The impious woman’ has been alarmed by a dream; and the sooth-sayers declare that the dead king is wroth. But such offerings, the Chorus add, cannot atone for her deed. Agamemnon inspired reverence by his majesty; the usurpers rule by fear alone. How long will justice tarry?

Electra asks the Chorus what prayer she is to utter in pouring the libations². Can she ask the dead to receive these gifts from the murderess? Or shall she present them in silence? Guided by the counsel of her attendants, she prays to Hermes, and to her father’s spirit,—with a special petition that Orestes may return.

In pouring the drink-offerings on the tomb, she finds the lock of hair, and turns in excitement to the Chorus. It resembles her own, and she surmises that it is the hair of Orestes,—not brought by him, of course, but sent. Presently she notices footmarks, which have a resemblance to her own. Orestes now steps forward, and, after a short dialogue, reveals himself. She at first fears an imposture, but is convinced by his appeal to the signs which she had already seen, and also to a third,—a piece of work embroidered by her own hand.

¹ Mycenae is not named by Aeschylus, but is not excluded by his mention of ‘Argos’ (Ag. 24, etc.), where it may mean the land, as in Soph. El. 4 (n.). See on this point W. G. Clark, Peloponnesus, pp. 70 ff. (1858).
² Electra enters with the Chorus at v. 22, but it is not till v. 84 that she speaks. Aeschylus knew the dramatic effectiveness of such silence. In the Persae, when the Messenger first announces the disaster at Salamis, he is interrupted by the Chorus, but Atossa is mute till v. 290 (εγὼ πάλαι). In the Prometheus Vinctus it is only at v. 88 that the sufferer’s voice is heard. Cassandra is long dumb before Clytaemnestra (Ag. 1035—1071). The Aristophanic Euripides criticises this device, but the god Dionysus reproves him:—εγὼ δ’ έκαρον τῇ σωτρί (Aret. 911 ff.).
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She welcomes him as 'the hope awaited with tears, the heir and the deliverer'; to her, at once father, mother, sister, and brother, Orestes responds with a prayer to Zeus for Electra and himself. He then declares the oracle of Apollo, commanding him, under terrible penalties, to avenge his father. 'Must not such oracles be trusted? In any case, the deed must be done.'

Then comes one of the most characteristic and magnificent passages of the play,—a prolonged lyric chant or dirge (kommos), in which the Chorus, Orestes, and Electra take part by turns. It is a solemn litany, addressed to the divine powers who are to aid the vengeance, and to the spirit of the dead.

After the lyric chant, Orestes and Electra continue in iambic verse the same strain of supplication. Then Orestes asks why his mother had sent gifts to the tomb? She dreamed—the Chorus reply—that she gave birth to a serpent, and was suckling it, when it drew blood from her breast. Orestes accepts the omen: the part of the serpent shall be his own.

He announces his plan. Electra is to enter the house. He and Pylades will arrive at the outer gate, wearing the garb of travellers, and imitating the Phocian accent. Electra now goes within, while Orestes and Pylades withdraw to prepare for their enterprise.

The Chorus, left alone, comment on the power of passion over women; Althaea wrought the death of Meleager, and Scylla, of Nisus; the Lemmian women slew their lords. And this house, too, has known such a deed. 'But now 'the anvil of Justice is firmly set, and Fate is forging the sword.'

Here ends the first of the three main chapters or 'acts' into which the drama falls.

Orestes and Pylades are courteously received by Clytemnestra. He describes himself as a Phocian from Daulis. With his companion, he was on his way to Argos, when a Phocian

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1 Cho. 236 δικαιότατος ὑπὸ σβήματος σωτηρίου.
2 In the Choephoré no living sister of Electra is mentioned.
3 Cho. 297 ἔλεγω δὲ χρήσιμοι ἄρα χρὴ πεποιθῆναι; | κεὶ μὴ πέπωθα, τοβργὼν ἵπτον ἐργαστέον.
4 Cho. 561 ἐσεῖσι πώλας, as distinguished from those of the women's apartments mentioned in 878 (γυναικείαν πώλας).
5 Cho. 563 ἀμφότεροι δὲ φωτὶ ἠγομεν Παρνασσά, | γάλαςς δὴν ἦκαν Φωκίδας μμοκενίας.
named Strophius—a stranger—asked him to carry the news that Orestes was dead, in case the youth’s friends should wish to fetch the ashes home.—Clytaemnestra speaks, or rather declaims, as the afflicted mother, and then has the two visitors ushered into the guest-chambers, saying that she will break the sad news to ‘the master of the house.’

A short choral ode follows. It is time that deceiving Persuasion should help the avenger, and that Hermes of the shades should be his guide.

An old slave-woman, who had been the nurse of Orestes, IV. Third then comes forth, having been sent by Clytaemnestra to summon Aegisthus. She mourns for Orestes,—recalling, with quaint pathos, all the trouble that the child had given her.—It seems that the queen has ordered Aegisthus to come with armed attendants. The Chorus prevail on the nurse not to give this part of the message, but to summon Aegisthus alone. At the same time they give her a hint that Orestes still lives, and that all may yet be well.

In the second stasimon the Chorus invoke Zeus, Apollo and Hermes. Next, apostrophising Orestes as though he were present, they exhort him to answer his mother’s cry, ‘my son,’ with the name of ‘father,’ and to bear a heart like that of Perseus when he slew the Gorgon Medusa.

Aegisthus enters. The report that Orestes is dead seems to him doubtful. Women are credulous. He must see the messenger, who will not impose on him. And so he enters the house.

A moment of suspense is marked by the short third stasimon. Now is the struggle that must bring ruin or freedom. May Orestes succeed!

The shriek of the dying Aegisthus is heard within. A slave runs out, crying that his master is slain; and, knocking at the door of the women’s apartments, summons Clytaemnestra. She knows that she is lost; but her spirit never quails; she calls for a battle-axe—’let us see if we are to conquer or to fall.’ But, before she can obtain a weapon, Orestes comes forth:—’Tis for thee that I am looking;—with him, ’tis well enough.’

1 Cho. 769 διανεκε κελευσαν δορυφόρους ἀπάνως.
2 Cho. 827 ff.