

EUMENIDES



For JULIET

The cover photo was taken during a performance Of
Eumenides in the Teatro Greco, Siracusa, Sicily in 2008

ORESTEIA

THE ORESTES TETRALOGY

PART 3

EUMENIDES

BY AESCHYLUS

Translated by ANDREW WILSON

The usual title of this play, **Eumenides**, “The Kindly Ones” was not Aeschylus’ title, nor are the Furies, the chorus of the play, called by him anything but *Erinyes* (“The Curses”, “The Avengers”), and later *Semnai* (“The Awesome Ones”), after their “naturalisation” in Athens. They’re first called *Eumenides* in Euripides’ very popular play, **Orestes** – after which this title probably became attached to Aeschylus’ drama.

CHARACTERS

THE PRIESTESS OF APOLLO (Pythia), Apollo's mouthpiece

ORESTES, a fugitive

APOLLO, a god

The ghost of KLYTAIMESTRA (Clytemnestra)

The ERINYES (The Avengers) – the CHORUS

ATHENA

Athenian dignitaries, to become the court of the Areopagus –
a secondary CHORUS

Escorts, musicians, attendants

SCENE

DELPHI, in front of Apollo's temple.

Later, ATHENS, the Acropolis.

The choral passages all reproduce the metres of the original Greek –
substituting an English stress accent for Greek pitch.

The abbreviations are explained on the back pages.

Apollo's priestess, a solemn and imposing figures approaches the temple.

THE PRIESTESS

First in this prayer I name, as senior
God of prophetic art, Gaia, and then
Themis, second to replace her mother here
As oracle, tradition says. At the third
Reordering, chosen not forced, Phoebe,
Another Titaness, Kronos' child, took
Her seat: she gave it as a birthday gift
To Phoebus. Taking Phoebe's sobriquet
He left Delos's pool, its rocky ridge,
Sailing towards Pallas's¹ friendly shore, 10
And reached this land, his home on Parnassus.²
Hephaistos' sons³ who laid the paths
Escort him and revere him much, bringing
Civilisation to the barbarous land.
And when he came, the Delphian⁴ populace
Respected him, the country's helmsman-king.
Zeus who inspired his skill in oracles,
Established him – the fourth seer on this throne,
Apollo, mouthpiece of his father Zeus.
These are the gods I look to first in prayers; 20
In thoughts it's Pallas whom I mention first.⁵

¹ Pallas Athena's coast - Attica

² Three generations of deities gave oracles at Delphi: first Gaia (Earth), then Themis (Law) and then Phoebe. She "the Bright One" gave it to her brother "Bright one", Apollo. Apollo left his birthplace on the island of Delos, and came via Athens (an Aeschylean innovation) to Delphi, at the foot of Mount Parnassus.

³ The Athenians, who believed they were descended from Hephaistos.

⁴ After Delphos, son of Poseidon.

⁵ Line 21 deleted by some editors. Athena is called Pronaia because her temple came first on the road, before the main entrance to the sanctuary.

I honour too the Nymphs who haunt the bird-rich
Korykian Cave, where spirits love to meet.
Bromios owns the countryside, I know,
From when the god made war upon the Bakkhai,
And netted Pentheus, hunted like a hare⁶.
I call on Pleistos' springs, Poseidon's power,
And Zeus on high, fulfiller of my prayers,
As I go in as prophetess to take my seat.
And may they now grant me the best of luck,
More than when I've gone in before. If Greeks
Have drawn their lots, let them go first – the custom.
My prophesy's whatever's in the mind of God.

30

She goes into the temple, but emerges moments later on her hands and knees.

Fear how to speak, fear just to use my eyes:
Drove me back out from Loxias's house,
Not capable, not strong enough to stand.
I'm using hands for speed; my legs gave out;
A scared old crone is nothing, more a child.
I crawl towards the festooned inner shrine,
And on the navel-stone I see a blighted man
Like one unpurified sat there: as blood
Drips from his hands, he holds a sword pulled fresh
From wounding, and a lengthy olive branch
Properly topped with a long strip of wool,
A pure white tuft – I trust I'm making sense.

40

⁶ Bringing to mind the pregnant hare mauled by the eagles in Agamemnon? The Greek does actually say 'stitched'

Facing this man, a truly monstrous pack
 Of sleeping women perch upon the seats.
 Not women: Gorgons I will say they are.
 Not even Gorgon-like is accurate
 I once saw female creatures⁷ drawn filching 50
 Phineus's meal; though these do not sport wings,
 Quite black, in all a sight to make one retch,
 They snore with stinky breath you can't get near,
 And from their hostile eyes seeps gore.
 Their garb is not the sort to wear in front
 Of gods, or bring inside a mortals' home.
 I do not know what nation spawned this troupe:
 But any land that gave them birth surely
 Must bitterly regret they nurtured them.
 What happens next? Let it concern the lord 60
 Of this domain, the mighty Loxias.
 He's healer, seer, interpreter of signs,
 And others' houses he has purified. *Exit*

Apollo and Orestes enter from the temple, or are revealed

[ORESTES⁸
 My lord Apollo. You know to not do wrong; 85
 And knowing this, learn too to not forget.
 Your power enables you to do what's right] 87
 APOLLO
 I won't betray you, I'll shield you till the end 64
 Waiting nearby, or aiding from afar,

⁷ The Harpies – winged females who robbed Phineus of his food until killed by the Argonauts

⁸ Lines 85-7 make much more sense here according to some editors

I shan't go soft on enemies of yours.
 You see how these mad creatures have been trapped.
 Fast asleep, the detestable haggards
 Fiends, brattish harridans: none truck with them
 Ever - nor man nor god nor wild beast. 70
 Born just for evil deeds, in evil dark
 They live, in Tartaros below the earth,
 Focus for mortal and immortal hate.
 Run while you can. Show that you can be tough.
 They'll hound you up and down through all of Greece
 Forever circuiting earth's untrod routes,
 Beyond the sea and cities on the shore.
 Don't flag too soon, shepherd your wits to last
 The ordeal. When you reach Athena's city,
 Sit, wrap your arms around her ancient image. 80
 And there with judges for this thing. and words
 To sway them, we shall find a process to
 Release you finally from your agony.
 It was I who made you take your mother's life.
 ORESTES⁹
 My lord Apollo. You know to not do wrong; 85
 And knowing this, learn too to not forget.
 Your power enables you to do what's right. 87
 APOLLO
 Be mindful. Don't let fear confound your wits.
 And you, Hermes, brother in blood, sharing
 A father, guard him, be true to your title,
 The journey-guide, a shepherd to this man,

⁹ Lines 85-7. Some think they should be moved to after line 63. Which do you prefer?

My charge. For Zeus respects a refugee
Approaching men with a respected guide.

GHOST OF KLYTAIMESTRA

Don't let me disturb you, dears! Such sleeping beauties!
With this you have embarrassed me before
My fellow corpses! And I get grief –
How much! – from them for being a murderess!
Among the dead the bitching never stops,
I tell you. This 'haunting' is brought on by shame.
I've suffered horribly from those I loved, 100
But where's the heavenly rage on my behalf,
Butchered, hacked down by matricidal hands?
Look at these wounds! You feel them in your heart!
[The mind asleep's lit up by its own eyes,
In daylight mortals' fate cannot be seen.]¹⁰
You sucked up many of my offerings,
Drinks without wine¹¹, sweeteners unmixed with wine,
And awesome night-time feasts I burned for you
In the fire-pit, hour no other gods could share.
And all this now I see trod underfoot: 110
He like a fawn's escaped and got away,
Skipped effortlessly through the net, what's more;
He's scored and is making piggy-eyes¹² at you.
Take note of what I've said about myself.
Think on it, o you powers of under-earth:
I, Klytaimestra's wraith, now call on you.

¹⁰ These two lines are deleted by many editors – others have struggled to make sense of them.

¹¹ Certain categories of divinity were offered honey and water.

¹² A Greek insult, like thumbing one's nose, or Shakespearian 'bite one's tongue'

CHORUS

Chuntering, snorting

KLYTAIMESTRA

Snort on! The man has gone! Escaped! Away!

Unlike myself, the man has helpful friends!

CHORUS

More growling, mumbling

120

KLYTAIMESTRA

You sleep too long, you don't care what I feel.

His mother's murderer, Orestes, has gone!

CHORUS

Yawning, grunting

KLYTAIMESTRA

You're grunting, still asleep. Wake up! Quick now!

What are you for if not to do bad things?

CHORUS

More 'ohs' and 'ahs, as they continue to grunt in their sleep

KLYTAIMESTRA

The hard work's worn you out. It's much too much.

The dreaded dragoness is all done in.

CHORUS

Louder and more frequent grunts and howls

Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Fetch! Gotcha!

130

KLYTAIMESTRA

In your dream you hunt the beast, you howl

Like a hound ever on track with thoughts of blood.

But action? Up you get, Sleep mustn't win!

Don't dare ignore my pain relaxed, asleep.

My just rebukes should sting you to the gut!

Good as a kicking for anyone with sense.
 Let 'someone' feel your gusts of bloody breath,
 And shrivel, burnt out by your belly's fire;
 With me, take up the chase, and suck him dry.

CHORUS

Wake up, and wake her up as I do you. 140
 Asleep? Get up! Kick sleep away and let
 Us see if there was purpose to this dream.

First Parodos [143 – 177]

Strophe 1

Eww! Eww! Bleugh!! Pain that we felt, my friends!	2do	
We 've suffered much, and all for what?	2ia	
We endured pain as well, horrible pain, my God!	do	
Pain that is hard to bear!	do	
He has slipped through the net, the beast has got away.	3ia	
We fell asleep, let our quarry escape.	3ia (ia cr ba)	

Antistrophe 1

Hey there, Zeus's brat, you are a common thief,	2do	
A boy, you trampled over senior goddesses,	2ia	150
Honoured a fugitive, man whom the gods all hate,	do	
Brutal to family,	do	
You though a god have robbed us of the matricide!	3ia	
What part of this could anyone pretend is just?		3ia

Strophe 2

Out of a dream there came a reprimand for me	3ia
Hitting me like a blow a charioteer	do ia
Swung, with his goad clenched tight,	do

At my belly, straight at my guts. ~~~~~~ (7 short 1 macron)

As though a cruel public flogging dealt me cold 3ia 160

A weighty very weighty lash. 2ia

Antistrophe 2

This is the way these younger gods behave to us 3ia

Despotic, lording it beyond what's right. do ia

His throne is awash with blood do

From bottom right up to the top, ~~~~~~ (7 short 1 macron)

As though Earth's navel-stone were to be viewed 3ia

Caked with a tainted crust of gore. 2ia

Strophe 3

In your own home oracular you have 3ia

Poisoned your sanctuary by your own choice, on purpose, do arist

Broken the law of gods, esteemed humankind, 2 do

Trampled privilege assigned of old. do ia

Antistrophe 3

Yes, I am hurt! Apollo will not rescue him; 3ia

If he escapes to Hell, not even there he'll be chain-free do arist

Being a dirtied one, he goes where he'll confront 2do

Another Nemesis who'll have his head. do ia

APOLLO enters in full regalia, brandishing his bow; his speech is somewhat high-flown as befits an angry god!

APOLLO

Away! I bid ye, quit this sacred hall at once!

Clear off! Depart this oracle's sanctum! 180

Lest ye attract my wingèd, glitt'ring serpent,

Despatched from bowstring of embossèd gold,

And, agonised, puke blackened human froth,

Expelling globs of gore ye gorged upon.

It is not meet to approach these hallowed walls;

Your justice ends in head-chopping, and death,

Eyes gouged, castrated boys, their manhood marred,

Limbs lopped, and stonings, screams of men impaled,

So loud and pitiful. Have ye not heard

190

The kind of feast it pleases ye to hold

Revolts the gods? The way ye look makes all

Quite clear. Your sort should live in lairs

Where blood-besotted lions lurk, not spread

Your filth around this oracle of mine.

A herd of nanny-goats unshepherded:

A breed detested by the gods. Be gone –

CHORUS

Apollo, lord: you listen now to us!

You do not **share** the guilt for this,

It is **all** yours, the guilt for what you did!

200

APOLLO

Did what? Enough, stop there! You go too far!

CHORUS

Your oracle told the stranger “Kill your mother!”

APOLLO

I told him to avenge his father. So?

CHORUS

Then housed a person freshly-steeped in blood

APOLLO

I said to come here to be purified.

CHORUS

And yet you insult those escorting him.

APOLLO

Yes. You don't suit this temple, bursting in.

CHORUS

But this what we are obliged to do!

APOLLO

"Obliged" you say. How so?? It's fine, boast on!

CHORUS

We hunt down mother-killers, drive them out.

210

APOLLO

What of a wife who takes her husband's life?

CHORUS

That is not murder of one's own blood-kin.

APOLLO

Clearly by this you nullify, debase

The pledges¹³ Zeus and Hera sanctify;

Love's¹⁴ stained, rejected, by your claim,

The source of sexual joy for humankind.

Bed's bond for man and woman's meant to be

More potent than an oath, enshrined in law.

If you are soft on those who kill a spouse,

Don't punish or frown angrily on **them**.

220

You're wrong to drive Orestes from his home.

The mother's case you back wholeheartedly,

His blatantly you show less ardour for.

The goddess Pallas¹⁵ will decide who's right.

CHORUS

¹³ Marriage

¹⁴ Kypris the Cyprian, Aphrodite

¹⁵ Athena

I'll not lose track of him, that man, ever!

APOLLO

Keep chasing then, find trouble for yourself.

CHORUS

You cannot take my rights from me with words!

APOLLO

I wouldn't take your 'rights', not even as a gift.

CHORUS

You have what you need, from sitting close to Zeus!

I, driven by a mother's blood, will trail

230

This man and hunt him down for Justice's sake.

The Chorus begin to leave..

APOLLO

But I will help the boy and keep him safe.

For men and gods, a suppliant's wrath is to be

Greatly feared, should I betray him knowingly.

Apollo re-enters his temple, as the remaining chorus rush past him.

The scene changes to Athens. Time has passed.

ORESTES

I've come, my queen, by Loxias' command;

Athena, welcome me, I took revenge but am

No more polluted, and my hands are cleansed,

With guilt worn down and further rubbed away

At other temples, dealing with other men.

I've travelled far by land and sea, keeping

240

The orders from Apollo's oracle,

And, goddess, reached your image and your shrine.

I watch, await your judgment on my case.

He clings to her statue to await deliverance. Instead, the chorus re-enter, sniffing like bloodhounds who have temporarily lost the scent of their quarry.

CHORUS

It's his. This odour's unmistakable
 Come on. Follow the silent witness' lead;
 We look for drops of blood, just like a hound
 Tracking a terminally wounded fawn,
 Who, with devastating effort gasps out
 Its guts. Like sheep who leave no grass untouched,
 We've winged our way over all lands and seas: 250
 No ship could have sped faster in pursuit.
 And now he's here, he's cowering somewhere near:
 The smell of human blood smiles up at me.

Second parodos [254 – 275] - astrophic *Parts were possibly sung by different sections.*

Look, and then look again!	do	
Keep looking everywhere!	do	
Don't let him get away free; he stole his mother's life.	2do	
And there he is! With sanctuary!	2ia	
Throwing his arms around the goddess's effigy:	2do	
Decided he wants a trial, for the blood on his hands!	2do	260
Not possible!: His mother's blood once spilled on earth	3ia	
Can't be put back. What horror!	ia ba	
When a liquid soaks the ground, then it has gone for good.	2do	
But you must give us back red fluid from your limbs,	3ia	
Alive, for us to taste. I want to take from you	2do	
To nourish me, a draught no mortal man may drink!	3ia	
I'll drag you off, alive, to Hell and shrink you up,	3ia	
So you can pay the price for mother-murdering.	3ia	
If any other mortal sins, dishonouring	3ia	

Either some god, or guest, or parents dear,	do ia	270
You will observe how they	do	
Each have the fitting punishment that they deserve.	3ia	
For Hades is a great correcting-force for men	3ia	
Down there below the earth:	do	
He's noted everything, and inscribed it in his mind.	2do	

ORESTES

My bad experiences have taught me well -		
I know about the moment: when it's right		
To talk, and when keep quiet. And here today,		
My wise instructor ordered me to speak.		
The blood on my hand is dry and faded now,		280
The stain of matricide's been washed away .		
When it was fresh still, it was purged from me;		
I sacrificed a pig at Phoebus' hearth.		
And going back, there's much I could have said,		
About all those I met and never harmed.		
[For Time and passing years cleanse everything]		
I'm fit to summon through this holy door		
Athena, queen of this fair land., to come		
To my defence. She'll gain, without a war,		
Myself, and Argos' land and people as		290
Her justly loyal allies for all time.		
Whether you are in some location near		
Libya's Triton Lake where you were born,		
At ease, or stepping out defending friends;		
Or like a bold man captaining patrols		
Across the plains of Phlegraia, please come -		

As god you hear things even far away -

To be my saviour at this crucial time.

CHORUS

Neither Apollo nor Athena's strength

Would stop your exile, save the reject told 300

'Get lost!', his mind kept ignorant of joy,

His blood sucked out by demons – us! A wraith!

The chorus pause. Orestes fails to react.

Nothing to say? Just spit my words straight out,

After I've groomed you, readied you for sacrifice?

The altar? No, we'll cut you up alive!

Now you shall hear this spell that binds you tight!

Anapaests

Come! Let dance be part of the binding, as

It's decreed we should show

Our gruesome talent for horror,

And tell how our little band fulfil 310

Our duties performed for the human race.

We believe that our judgments are fair and straight.

No one presenting his hands unpolluted,

Need fear to be overwhelmed by our wrath,

He can spend his whole life without fear.

But for one who's a criminal like this man

Hiding his hands with their bloodstains,

We stand by, true witnesses for the murdered,

Showing we have the final authority

To collect from him what he owes, his blood. 320

First Stasimon ('The Binding Song') [321 – 396]

Strophe 1

Mother, you who gave me birth, mother	lec sp
Night, to give to the blind and those who see ¹⁶	da lec
Vengeance. Hear me now. Leto's sprog	sp 2cr
Takes from me my respect, he	2cr + macron
Grabs this man, steals the hare	2cr
Sacrifice marked to cleanse	2cr
Blood his murdered mother shed.	lec

Ephymnion 1

Over a man, waiting for death	2cr (vvv~ vvv~)
This is our song, killing your wits,	2cr (vvv~ vvv~)
Wrecking your brain, driving you mad	2cr (vvv~ vvv~) 330
Anthem that the Furies sing	lec
Binding minds, a song without	lec
Music, parching mortal souls.	lec

Antistrophe 1

This the function she who sees things through	lec sp
Moirai, our sister, spun for us to keep	da lec
Always so we watch wicked men's	sp 2cr
Spiteful acts done on purpose ¹⁷	2cr +macron
Keeping close till the day	2cr
Down below earth he goes –	2cr
Death where liberty is short!	lec 340

Ephymnion 1 (repeat)

Over a man, waiting for death	2cr (vvv~ vvv~)
This is our song, killing your wits,	2cr (vvv~ vvv~)
Wrecking your brain, driving you mad	2cr (vvv~ vvv~)

¹⁶ Ie to the dead and the living

¹⁷ Lines 336-7 are probably corrupt – my attempt to make sense of them.

Dancing and kicking¹⁹ with fury. 3da

*Ephymnion 3*²⁰

Because I jump way up high 2cr
Then from above drop down hard 2cr
When I land firm on my feet - 2cr
Cunning legs, sprinter's speed – 2cr
He can't sidestep disaster! pher

Antistrophe 3

But as he's tripped he is ignorant due to his mind's destruction; 5da
Such is the darkness of contamination that clouds him, 5da
News that brings tears in abundance reveals that a black mist 5da
Came down and blotted his house out. 3da 380

Strophe 4

We never budge. Versatile, 2ia
And competent, conscious of 2ia
All that is wrong, formidable, 2ia
Implacable towards mankind 2ia
Fulfilling our derided role, 2ia
Quarantined from the gods in sunless slime, 3ia
Such are the rocks that we toss in your pathway: 4da
Whether you see them or not! lec

Antistrophe 4

What mortal does not show respect 2ia
And does not fear such things as this, 2ia 390
When he has heard from my lips 2ia
The law decreed by fate, endorsed 2ia
By all the gods? I possess 2ia

¹⁹ Not a can-can – but there's other evidence that choral dancing could involve kicks!

²⁰ Possible hints for the choreographer!

An ancient privilege that's held in awe, 3ia
 Although my place may be down there below ground - 4da
 Dark, where sunlight never shines, lec

ATHENA

From far away I heard your voice's call,
 From Skamandros²¹; I was claiming land I own,
 Which Athens' ministers and leading men
 Assigned to me in perpetuity – 400
 A great proportion of the captured wealth,
 A special gifting for the sons of Theseus²².
 From there I travelled painlessly, and fast:-
 No wings: my aegis²³throbbing with the speed. 404
 Yoking these fine colts to my chariot²⁴ 405
 But this is new, this group of visitors:
 Not that I'm frightened, just surprised and shocked.
 Who are you? I'm addressing all of you –
 The stranger clinging to my statue there.
 As well as you, who're like no living things, 410
 Not goddesses as seen among the gods,
 And no similitude to any mortal shape.
 But to insult others who've done no wrong
 Is far from right. Justice does not take sides.

CHORUS

You'll soon know everything, daughter of Zeus.
 For we are children of eternal Night,

²¹ Or Scamander, the river of the Troad, near Troy.

²² Not literally – the Athenians,

²³ A sort of tunic, possible of goat-skin, with an apotropaic Gorgon's head. It had a variety of magical powers.

²⁴ Either 404 Or 405 should be deleted. Take your choice.

At home below the earth they call us “Curses”.

ATHENA

I now know who you are. Your name says much.

CHORUS

And soon you’ll learn what respect’s due to us.

ATHENA

I would, if someone could enlighten me.

420

CHORUS

We hunt down murderers and drive them out.

ATHENA

And where do killers run to, in the end?

CHORUS

A place where joy’s not something recognised

ATHENA

Your hue and cry is for this runaway?

CHORUS

He chose to be his mother’s murderer.

ATHENA

Under duress? In fear of someone’s wrath?

CHORUS

What sort of goad could provoke matricide?

ATHENA

There are two sides and only one’s been heard.

CHORUS

He’d not accept our oath, nor give his own.

ATHENA

You want to be called just, but not be just.

430

CHORUS

How so? Instruct me! Don’t hoard your wisdom!

ATHENA

Don't win an unfair victory with oaths.

CHORUS

Then have a proper trial: start questioning.

ATHENA

You'd trust the conduct of this case to me?

CHORUS

Yes! We return the respect you've shown us!

ATHENA

It's your turn, stranger. What say you to this?

Say where you're from, what family, and what

Your situation is; then face their charge.

If sitting in my house embracing my statue

440

You genuinely trust in Justice, a

Sincere petitioner like Ixion,

Answer these questions for me in plain words.

ORESTES

My queen, Athena, first I shall dispel

The real disquiet your final words revealed.

I do not sit beneath your image here

With hand that's stained, and I am not defiled²⁵:

I have convincing proof to give to you;

The law is that a homicide can't speak,

Until one who can purify blood-guilt

Has sprinkled him with a young creature's blood;

450

I was made pure some time ago in other

Places, with animals and flowing streams.

So this anxiety I can dismiss.

²⁵ As Ixion (who attempted to rape Hera) was. Hence O's anxiety when Athena mentions him!

My family background you shall hear of next.

I am from Argos. My father you know well:

Agamemnon, commander of the fleet,

With whose help you reduced the town of Troy

To no-town. When he came back home he died

Ingloriously. My mother, she blood-black

Of soul, killed him, snared with elaborate

460

Hunt-nets, which murder in the bath revealed.

And I returned, an exile up till now,

And killed my mother, this I won't deny,

Avenging my beloved father's death.

And Loxias shares in the guilt with me,

Foretelling agony to stab my heart

Unless I moved against those guilty ones.

You judge whether my case is just or not:

However you decide it, I shall be content..

ATHENA

This matter is too big, for any human

470

To think he can resolve. Nor is it right

For me to judge a murder-case so smart

With anger. You have suffered agonies,

To come here clean and safe to plead,

While they've a task that's hard to give up on,

And if they do not get a victory,

Poison will spread from their ill-will, and cause

Perpetual ineradicable blight.

So this is how things are: both ways – you stay,

480

You go – for me cause agonising pain.

Since this decision's forced upon us here,²⁶
 I'll fix a law in perpetuity,
 And swear-in judges²⁷ fit for murder-trials.
 You, call for witnesses and evidence,
 To help to guarantee Justice prevails.
 When I have picked my finest citizens,
 I'll come to settle fairly this dispute.
 Just hearts will never violate their oaths.
 Exit ATHENA.

Second Stasimon [490 – 565]

Strophe 1

Law is now turned upside down,	lec	490
Ancient law, if it wins - what a dangerous precedent! -	2cr lec	
This man's suit, the matricide's.	2cr	
Freeing him will make all men comfortable	cr lec	
Breaking all taboos they wish.	lec	
Children's deeds devised to hurt them	2tr	
Threaten every parent now	lec	
Time to come will prove this true.	lec	

Antistrophe 1

There will be no longer outrage	lec	
At those crimes, crimes we stop, "wild ones" who keep watch on men;	2cr lec	500
Murder of every kind	2cr	
I'll let thrive! One interrogates his friend,	cr lec	
Or points out a neighbour's crimes,	lec	

²⁶ Most editors believe there's a lacuna here. Perhaps a long one, where Athena outlined the legal procedure.

²⁷ Panels of dikasts were both judge and jury.

Searching for a cure, relief,	2tr	
Victims call for reparation,	lec	
Feeble, hopeless - and in vain.	lec	

Strophe 2

Let not any person call out	lec	
When struck down by tragedy	lec	
Mouthing words that sound like this:	lec	510
“Justice, o!	cr [ia]	
O ye Furies on your thrones!”	lec	
Soon such cries will come from fathers,	lec	
Mothers too now suffering,	lec	
Shall echo our lamentation,	lec	
When the Home of Justice falls.	lec	

Antistrophe 2

Fear is good – it has a place	lec	
Where it should remain enthroned	lec	
Scrutinising human hearts:	lec	
Learning sense	cr	520
Through duress makes perfect sense!	lec	
There is not a man on earth,	lec	
No community of men,	lec	
Follows Justice if they’re not	lec	
Forced by fear to honour it.	lec	

Strophe 3

Do not praise anarchy:	2cr [2ia]
Do not praise life subject to	lec

Tyranny. God has decreed that the middle is better, but how he	cr 5da	
Handles it varies	2 da	530
<i>Moderation's</i> what I say.	lec	
Violence is truly the offspring of sin.	4½ da	
Minds that are healthy	2da	
Beget what all long to have:	ia cr	
Prosperity they pray for.	arist	

Antistrophe 3

You I tell, always will:	2cr	
Justice's altar craves respect.	lec	539
Do not when you can see profit then kick at it, godlessly wiping your	cr 5da	
feet on it. Vengeance	2da	
Waits; the destined end is near.	lec	
Therefore offer your parents respect	4½ da	
Honour them, and to your guests	2da	
Inside your home, always be	ia cr	
Hospitable and kindly.	arist	

Strophe 4

A man who's just, willingly and uncompelled.	ia lec	550
Will not be disfavoured,	cr ba (ithyphallic)	
And will avoid total ruin.	ia cr ba	
But I declare one who dares fight Justice,	ia lec	
And stuffs his hold illegally with heaped-up wealth,	3ia	
In due time finds his sail's been torn down,	ba cr ba	
Struck by the storm when trouble swamps him,	cho ia	
Yard-arm's been smashed to pieces.	arist	

Antistrophe 4

He screams but there's no one who hears his cries,	ia lec	
Wrestling mid the whirlpool;	cr ba	
The daimon mocks, laughs at his pretensions -	ia cr ba	560
The braggart who'd never be meshed in trouble –	ia lec	
Now seen too feeble to surmount a surging wave.	3ia	
The riches he'd built up all throughout life,	ba cr ba	
Wrecked upon retribution's rocks;	cho ia	
Death without witness or mourner.	arist	

Preliminaries to the trial (566 -584)

ATHENA to a herald

Give the order – and bring order to the crowd,

To a trumpeter

Fill your lungs and let the shrill Etruscan trumpet

Blast out its piercing notes to quell the crowd.

Now that the council is fully convened, 570

Silence is vital, so the whole city

And these men too may learn my rules laid down

For all time, how true Justice may be found.

Enter APOLLO²⁸, quietly and unobtrusively (?)

Apollo,²⁹ sir, take charge of your own case.

Reveal what part you play in this affair.

APOLLO

It is as witness I come here. This man's

A legal bona fide suppliant;

He came to me; I cleansed him of murder,

²⁸ Presumably Apollo must enter here. His unheralded entry is unique in Greek tragedy. He has no status in Athens!

²⁹ Lines 274-5 are given to the Chorus in mss.

And I shall speak for him. I am to blame
For this man's mother's death. So start the trial.

580

Take care of Justice in the way you know.

ATHENA *to the Chorus*

Make your speech now; as I open the trial.

The prosecutor, speaking first, starts off

And thus should properly explain the case.

The prosecution (585 – 608)

CHORUS

There are a lot of us: we'll keep it brief.

Give answer point by point as put to you.

First question: your mother; did you kill her?

ORESTES

I did. There's no denial of this fact.

CHORUS

Down once already – first of your three falls!

ORESTES

I am not on the floor, do not gloat yet.

590

CHORUS

Next you must tell us how you slaughtered her.

ORESTES

Of course. With sword in hand I cut her throat.

CHORUS

By whom were you persuaded? Whose advice?

ORESTES

Apollo's oracles. He'll vouch for me.

CHORUS

The prophet's message was to kill your mother?

ORESTES

And up till now, I've not been critical.

CHORUS

But when you lose the vote you'll change your tune.

ORESTES

I know my father sends help from his grave.

CHORUS

A corpse help you who made your mother one!

ORESTES

She is contaminated by two crimes.

600

CHORUS

How come? Explain this to the jury please.

ORESTES

She killed her husband and my father too.

CHORUS

What? Dead, she's freed from murder. You're alive.

ORESTES

Why did you not pursue her when she lived?

CHORUS

The man she killed was not of her own blood.

ORESTES

And am I then my mother's true blood-kin?

CHORUS

How else could she have fed you in her womb,

You filth? Disown your mother's precious blood?

The defence (609 – 673)

ORESTES

Vouch for me now, speak up for me, did I,

Apollo, kill her with Right on my side? 610

I don't deny I did it – that is fact.

But was the bloodshed justified or not?

Give your opinion so I can tell them.

APOLLO

To you, great court of Athens, I shall say

“Yes, Justified” – A prophet never lies.

On my prophetic seat never have I

Said anything to man or woman or

A city - unless by father Zeus' command.

See just how strong it is, his plea:

I urge you to comply with Father's will. 620

An oath can not be mightier than Zeus.

CHORUS

Zeus, you allege, instructed you to give

Orestes here an oracle: “Avenge

Your father's death!” Did his mother count for nothing?

APOLLO

It's not the same when an important man is killed,

One dignified by a sceptre Zeus gave him,

And this at a woman's hand, not felled by deadly

Arrows, well-aimed by Amazons or like,

But as you'll hear, Pallas, and those who sit

With you, so you may vote to judge this case. 630

She welcomed him, back from his job, the war –

Where he'd done pretty well – with loving words;

She stood beside the tub, his bath now over,

And threw a robe around him like a tent -

Then struck him down, trapped in its ample folds.

You've heard described the murder of a man,
A splendid man, commander of the fleet.
I speak like this, to shock the people who
Are those appointed to resolve this case.

CHORUS

You say Zeus thinks more of a father's death: 640

He tied his aged father Kronos up!

Can you not see this contradicts your claim?

To the jury

I call on you to take good note of this.

APOLLO

You loathsome animals, abhorred by gods,

One can be freed from chains, redress

Exists in many forms to undo a wrong.

But once the earth has soaked up human blood,

The man is dead: no one can bring him back.

No miracles like this did he allow,

My father, though he steered the ups and downs 650

Of everything, with never a pause for breath!

CHORUS

Mind how you plead to let this man go free:

He spilled his mother's blood upon the earth;

Is he to have his father's house in Argos?

What public altars is he fit to use?

What guild will let him near their holy water?³⁰

APOLLO

Now I'll say this; be sure I'll tell it straight:

³⁰ Guild: a phratry was a group of citizens who formed a religious guild. The inference is that if Orestes has no phratry, he's no longer a citizen.

The so-called mother is not the child's actual
Parent, just the newly-planted foetus' nurse.

Who penetrates, delivers; with god's help
She hosts the tender shoot, her guest.

Here's proof of what I say. A father could
Give birth without a mother. Here there is
A witness, daughter of Olympian Zeus,
Who did not grow in darkness in a womb,
A shoot the like no goddess could produce!
Pallas, there's many ways I know to make
Your city and your people great ...

So have I sent this man to lodge with you,

To be a loyal friend for all of time,

So you goddess, may gain an alliance³¹

With him and his descendants, which will last,
A bond of trust with them for evermore.

660

670

The Areopagus (674 -710)

ATHENA

Should I now tell these men to use their votes,
With wise judgment? There has been talk enough.

APOLLO

We've certainly already shot our bolt,
I wait to hear what the outcome will be.

ATHENA *to the Chorus*

What should I do to avoid censure from you?

CHORUS *to the jury*

You've heard what you have heard, but as you vote

³¹ Refers to the alliance between Athens and Argos 461 BC

Remember, strangers, in your hearts, your oath.

680

ATHENA

People of Athens, hear now my decree,

As you judge this first trial for shedding blood.

In future there shall always be this place

Where Aigeus' race³² deliberate the law.³³

This "Areopagus", where the Amazons³⁴

Once pitched their tents, in their revenge-attack

On Theseus, and built a rival city

Opposite this one, tower matching tower,

And sacrificed to Ares: whence the hill

Became Ares's, named for him. Awe then

690

And terror (much the same) shall deter men

From doing wrong in daylight or by night,

As long as the people don't amend the laws.

If you pollute a spring by stirring in

Foul lumps of mud, you'll never get your drink.

I urge my citizens: do not embrace

Or foster anarchy or tyranny,

And don't exclude fear wholly from the state.

What man who has no fear can still be just?

If they fear, rightly, such an august body,

700

They'd have a fortress and a safeguard for

Their land such as no others of mankind:

Not even in Scythia or the Peloponnese.³⁵

I'm setting up this council that shall be

³² The Athenians. Aigeus was the father of Theseus, the first king of Athens.

³³ Justices = dikasts, who were both judge and jury; bouleuterion = a place for discussion/argument.

³⁴ The traditionally the Areopagus was so called because it's where Ares stood trial for killing his daughter's rapist. Aeschylus needs to change this, to make Orestes' the first murder trial.

³⁵ Two regions famous for their good governance: now Athens will outdo them.

Untainted by corruption, dutiful,
Zealous, a watch-tower, so all may sleep sound.
I've given this advice in full to my
Citizens for the years to come.

You must

Stand, take a pebble and decide this case,
Remembering your oath. I've said my piece.

710

The vote (711 – 753)

One by one the 11 jurors advance to drop their pebble into one of the two urns before them. A juror votes after each couplet in the dialogue that follows. A very solemn and formal scene.

CHORUS

I advise you not to slight our sisterhood,
There is much damage we can do this land.

APOLLO

And I suggest you fear my oracles-
And Zeus's – lest they bear no fruit.

CHORUS

You foster bloody deeds – beyond your charge –
The ones you'll give will bear their taint.

APOLLO

Then was my Father's guidance wrong, when he
The first to kill, Ixion, appealed to him?³⁶

CHORUS

Your words. But if I don't get justice we
Shall come back and wreak havoc on this land.

720

APOLLO

³⁶ Zeus purified Ixion, the first murderer, and took him up to heaven, where however he tried to seduce Hera. Not such a good example!

You've no respect among the gods, the young,
Or the older ones. I'll be victorious!

CHORUS

Such as your actions in Pheres's house:
You made the Fates grant immortality.³⁷

APOLLO

Was it not right to reward that worthy man,
Especially in his hour of real need?

CHORUS

You undermined the gods' established roles -
Led senior goddesses astray with wine.³⁸

APOLLO

If in this case you do not get your prize,
Spew your poison – it won't bother your foes!

730

CHORUS

You're young, I'm old. You're trying to trample me.
I wait to hear the outcome of this trial:
Then Athens may experience my rage!

The 11th vote is cast during these 3 lines. Athena moves to the urns.

ATHENA

This my role, to be the last to judge.
I'll add this pebble for Orestes' cause.
It was no mother who brought me to birth,
In all I back the male, wholeheartedly,
Marriage excepted. I'm my father's child.

³⁷ The plot of Euripides' *Alcestitis*. Apollo had to do work experience for a mortal (Admetus, son of Pheres), who treated him so well he offered to postpone his death – if he could persuade someone to die in his place. He didn't make anyone immortal. Another poor argument..

³⁸ An almost comic notion of Apollo getting the fates drunk so as to save Admetus!

I am not influenced by a woman's death,
Not one who killed the man who guards the house.

740

Orestes wins – if the judges' votes are split.
You judges who have been assigned this job,
Quick now, tip out the tokens from the urns.

ORESTES

Phoibos Apollo, what will the verdict be?

CHORUS

Dark mother, Night, do you have eyes on this?

ORESTES

Is death now hanging over me, or life?

CHORUS

Shall we be outcasts, or retain respect?

APOLLO

My friends, now count the votes correctly,
Make no mistakes when sorting them. A vote
Missed for acquittal deals the house a blow.
A single vote puts it back on its feet.

750

ATHENA

The man is acquitted on the murder charge.
The number of the counted votes is equal.

Orestes' farewell (754 -777)

ORESTES

Pallas Athena, you have saved my house,
You have settled me back in my father's lands,
Lands taken from me. Now the Greeks will say:
"The man is back in Argos! He lives there
With all his father' wealth, all thanks to Pallas

And Loxias, and the third who managed all -
 Zeus Saviour." Honouring my father's fate, 760
 He saved me – seeing my mother's legal team!
 Before I leave for home, for this your land
 And for your people I'll have sworn an oath,
 Valid for evermore and for all time,
 That truly no man, captain of my state,
 Shall lead his well-armed spearmen here.
 Though we ourselves be in our grave by then,
 We shall contrive for those who break my oaths,
 Utter failure, woeful catastrophe,
 Their journey here ill-omened, grim: 770
 Making sure that they regret they even tried!
 But if they're steadfast and maintain always
 The military pact with Pallas' city,
 We shall be constant loyal friends to them.
 Goodbye, to you and all the people here.
 May you keep a choke-hold on your enemies,
 Keep safe and win the victory in the fight.
Orestes leaves for home. The Chorus stay – to carry out their promised punishment of Athens.

Songs of rage (778 – 880)

CHORUS

Strophe 1

You young, you adolescent gods! Trampling underfoot 2ia do
 Time-honoured laws. You snatched him from my very grasp. 3ia
 I, stripped of honour, poor mad wretch, am furious. 3ia 780
 Watch out! On this land do
 I shall rain my poison down, poison gnawing at my heart, 2 lec

Drip, drop, drip on the ground,	do	
There's no antidote,	do	
Nothing shall grow, no shoot, no child – it's justice, just! –	3ia	
A waste land is left.	do	
I'll seed the countryside with deadly plagues.	3ia	
I'm screaming. What to do?	2ba	
I'm laughed at. The jury	2ba	
Gave me foul abuse.	do	790
Daughters of Night, how much pain and grief must we bear,	2do	
Robbed of respect and honour?	arist	
ATHENA		
Trust me, your protests need not be so loud!		
You were not beaten, true Justice emerged;		
The equal vote was no disgrace to you.		
The evidence was clear-cut – straight from Zeus,		
While the oracle himself could testify		
Orestes, though he killed, should not be harmed.		
So don't take out your anger on this land,		
Curb your resentment, do not generate		800
Crop-failure, spewing forth rage-driven showers,		
With spear-like rain fatal to growing seeds.		
I promise you – this unconditionally –		
That you shall have a place within this land,		
To sit on glistening thrones beside your hearths ³⁹ ,		
Much-honoured by these citizens of mine.		
CHORUS		
<i>Antistrophe 1</i>		
You young, you adolescent gods! Trampling underfoot	2ia do	

³⁹ I.e. altars where Athenians will sacrifice to them

Time-honoured laws. You snatched him from my very grasp.	3ia	
I, stripped of honour, poor mad wretch, am furious.	3ia	810
Watch out! On this land	do	
I shall rain my poison down, poison gnawing at my heart,	2 lec	
Drip, drop, drip on the ground,	do	
There's no antidote,	do	
Nothing shall grow, no shoot, no child – it's justice, just! -	3ia	
A waste land is left.	do	
I'll seed the countryside with deadly plagues.	3ia	
I'm screaming. What to do?	2ba	
I'm laughed at. The jury	2ba	
Gave me vile abuse.	do	820
Daughters of Night, how much pain and grief must we bear,	2do	
Robbed of respect and honour?	arist	
ATHENA		
You're not dishonoured, goddesses, don't fume		
In fury, no cause to foul the humans' land!		
I have support too - need I tell you ?– Zeus!		
I am the only god who knows which keys		
Unlock the room where thunderbolts are stored.		
Not that we'll need them. Be convinced by me		
Do not shower empty words upon the earth,		830
Predicting harvests where all crops have failed.		
Sedate the stinging wave of black resentment:		
We're neighbours – you are venerated too.		
Always you've had the first-fruits sacrificed		
In this great land for children and a blessed		
Marriage: thus you'll accept my argument.		
CHORUS		

Strophe 2

This is the way I'm used!	do	
Faugh!		
I am too old and wise! Live in this country, me?	2 do	
Filthy offensive words!	do	
Faugh!		
Look how I snort with rage! I seethe. I'm possessed!	2 do	840
Bah! What is the use!	do	
Why this agony, crushing my heart and soul?	2 do	
Listen, our mother, Night!	do	
The sly tricks of the gods stole away from me	2 do	
The honour I always had and made me a nobody.	2 do	
ATHENA		
I'll bear your anger: you're my senior,		
Therefore as such much wiser than I am,		
Though Zeus gave me intelligence of sorts!		850
If you join other people somewhere else,		
You'll pine for us, like parted lovers. True!		
The years to come will bring more honour to		
Our land and people; you will have a home,		
A valued one right next to Erechtheus ⁴⁰		
And you'll receive from men, and women's bands,		
Such as you'd get from no one else on earth.		
[But do not pitch into the lands of mine		
A blood-stained whetstone, rousing young men's spirits:		
Intoxicating fever, war-madness -		860
Nor force their hearts to beat like fighting cocks',		

⁴⁰ Erechtheus was variously a god, an early king of Athens, and a hero with an important cult. He shared the temple of Athena Polias at this date with Athena herself.

Lodging the War-god with my citizens,
 Eager for civil strife, each other's doom.
 Let war be fought abroad – not difficult
 For one who has a true passion for fame.
 No place for cockfights in the home, I say!]⁴¹
 Such are the opportunities I offer you,
 Do well, be treated well, be well-honoured,
 Having a part of this land loved by gods.

CHORUS

Antistrophe 2

This is the way I'm used!	do	870
Faugh!		
I am too old and wise! Live in this country, me?	2 do	
Filthy offensive words!	do	
Faugh!		
Look how I snort with rage! I seethe. I'm possessed!	2 do	
Bah! What is the use!	do	
Why this agony, crushing my heart and soul?	2 do	
Listen, our mother, Night!	do	
The sly tricks of the gods stole away from me	2 do	
The honour I always had and made me a nobody.	2 do	880

ATHENA

I shall not stop telling you the benefits,
 So you could never say an ancient god's
 Been told to push off by a younger one,
 Unwelcome to the people and expelled.
 But if you respect Persuasion's holy power –

⁴¹ Lines 855-866 are an insertion - not needed in the context. Some scholars delete them, following Dindorff (Taplin), other follow Dodds in accepting them as inserted, but as an insertion by Aeschylus – troubled by the prospect of civil war in 458 BC.

My words designed to please and charm –
You'd stay. But If your choice is not to stay,
You'd not be right to then unleash your fury
On the citizens or hurt them in your rage.

You could become an owner of this land,
And live here, rightly honoured, for all time.

890

CHORUS

Athena, queen, what home do you say I'll have?

ATHENA

Somewhere with no more pain or fear. Take it!

CHORUS

Suppose I do. What honour's left for me?

ATHENA

Without your blessing, there's no house will thrive.

CHORUS

You'd do this, giving so much power to me?

ATHENA

I'll control the fate of those who honour you.

CHORUS

And can you guarantee that, for all time?

ATHENA

If I wasn't going to, I could have said nothing!

CHORUS

It seems you'll charm me; I feel my anger fade.

900

ATHENA

By being in this land you'll make new friends.

CHORUS

What do you want me to invoke for it?

ATHENA

Whatever fits a victory fairly won;
 That blessings come from earth and from the sea,
 And from the sky, that winds may blow, and bring
 The sunshine with the breeze, that fruitfulness
 May stream in plenty over crops and herds,
 Making a people strong now and forever,
 Safeguarding our nation's fertility.
 Endure the virtuous have more success. 910
 For I do love, just like a gardener,
 To nurture this crop of just citizens.
 Such is your role. And I shall not shirk mine:
 To bring these special mortal men to victory,
 In all the glorious toils that make up war.

Song of blessing (916 -1020)

CHORUS

Strophe 1

I'll accept sharing in Athena's home.	cr lec	
I won't shame the city which	lec	
Mighty Zeus himself and Ares too	sp lec	
Keep for an outpost of the gods,	2ia	
To defend the altars,	cr ba (ithyphallic)	
Glory of the gods of Greece.	lec	920
Now I offer prayers for her,	lec	
Prophesying thoughtfully,	lec	
That sunshine gleaming bright make earth abundantly	3ia	
Sprout forth new growing shoots -	3sp (kaibelianus)	
Beneficial boost to life.	lec	

ATHENA [anapaests]

For the good of the citizens I do all this,
 Encouraging these deities who are great
 And hard to appease to remain in our land;
 The role that they've been allotted entails 930
 Managing everything human-related.
 He who has met with their hostility
 Never knows whence came the blows that destroyed him:
 For the crimes of his ancestors summon him
 Before these goddesses. Silent destruction
 Grinds him to dust through their baleful fury
 However loudly he shouts.

CHORUS

Antistrophe 1

May no tree-killer blight unleash –	cr lec	
(Here's a promise I can make)	lec	
Leaf-burn, that can shrivel plants in bud –	sp lec	
(It shall not spread inside your land),	2ia	940
Neither may the disease,	cr ba	
Causing crops to wither, strike.	lec	
But may Pan breed healthy sheep,	lec	
Who produce their lambs as twins	lec	
On time, in season. May the population who	3ia	
Make this country wealthy	3sp	
Honour gods who give them luck!	lec	

ATHENA [anapaests]

Do you hear all this, guards of the city?
 What she is offering?
 For the Erinyes is mightily powerful, 950
 Over the gods, over those in the underworld,

And in human affairs it is obvious how
 Effectively they perform their task,
 Giving some life to rejoice in,
 Others a life that is bleary with weeping.

CHORUS

Strophe 2

Chance that robs men of life	2cr (2ia)	
Prematurely I forbid.	lec	
Give the girls they cherish lives	lec	
Spent with the husbands good fortune provided,	5da	960
You gods with power,	ba sp (2ia)	
Fates, you sisters of mine,	hemiepes	
You who apportion things fairly,	hemiepes	
Who play a part in each household,	3da	
Truly important at all times,	3da	
Everywhere you leave your mark,	lec	
Righteous goddesses, esteemed the most.	sp lec	

ATHENA [anapaests]

I celebrate these guarantees the Erinyes
 Promised my country
 I'm pleased Persuasion kept eyes on me, 970
 Guiding my tongue and my lips when they
 Said aggressively 'No!' to my vision.
 Zeus who champions debate won through,
 Our fight for what's good
 Won the argument, and it shall last!

CHORUS

Antistrophe 2

May the unstoppable	2cr
---------------------	-----

Noise of bitter party strife lec

Be not heard here; that's my prayer. lec

Let not the dust that soaks up the red blood of its people, 5da 980

On fire for vengeance, ba sp

Welcome the fall of the city, hemiepes

Promising mutual destruction. hemiepes

Let what they pay back be good things 3da

Let them share thoughts of what's lovely, 3da

Let them settle whom to hate. lec

Healing many problems humans have. sp lec

ATHENA [anapaests]

They surely are wise in finding their way

Towards kindlier words?

From these frightening creatures I see great 990

Benefits building for these my people;

If you were to show these kindly ones kindness

Always respecting them, you would stand out

As beacons of justice

To country and city for evermore.

CHORUS

Strophe 3

Then fare you well, fare you well, with your future riches! praxillea⁴²

Farewell, Athens' citizens, lec

Settled near to Zeus's dear lec

Virgin daughter, dear to her, lec

Prudent men, who're needed now. lec

Nestled under Pallas' wings.	lec	1000
Zeus himself is awed by you.	lec	
ATHENA [anapaests]		
Farewell yourselves, but first I must go down		
So as to show you your rooms,		
As the holy light of the torches held		
By your escorts guides us.		
Go, with these special victims for sacrifice ⁴³		
In your eagerness, mind you keep ruin away,		
While delivering benefits victory can bring.		
And you city-leaders, you sons of Kranaos ⁴⁴		1010
Lead the way for these resident guest-friends. ⁴⁵		
May the citizens show		
Good will to those who do them good.		
CHORUS		
<i>Antistrophe 3</i>		
Farewell again fare you well – my good wishes doubled! – praxillean		
All you city residents,	lec	
Deities and mortal men	lec	
Citizens of Pallas's,	lec	
If you show respect to my	lec	
Residency here with you,	lec	
You'll have no complaint with life!	lec	1020

ATHENA

I praise the sentiments these prayers express,
And with the brilliant light from torches I

⁴³ Probably a black cow would be a suitably solemn (special) sacrifice for female chthonic deities

⁴⁴ Kranaos – a mythical king of Athens: Aeschylus is referring to the Areopagites

⁴⁵ Metoikoi (metics). Not necessarily honoured as Aeschylus suggests. It was a specific status in Athens – an immigrant registered as having a right to remain. Unlike citizens, they paid a tax (most were entrepreneurs) and could not vote or serve in the army.

Shall send you to the regions underground
 With the girls who watch my statue faithfully.
 The flower, the élite of all the land of Theseus,
 May they join them, a fine procession of
 <Women and children, a band of grandmothers⁴⁶> `1027
 < >
 Honour those wrapped in mantles purple-dyed,
 And let the torchlight flames lead off,
 So this land's company of friendly ones, `1030
 May inspire for ever manly excellence.

Exodos (1032 – 1047)

ESCORTS⁴⁷

First strophe

Go on your way, o you great ones, you proud 4da
 Childless children of Night, in this friendly convoy; 5da
 Pray keep silence, you countrymen paroemiac⁴⁸

First antistrophe

Under the earth in her primeval caverns, 4da
 Honours and sacrifice shall serve your fortunate future, 5da
 Pray keep silence, all citizens. paroemiac

Second strophe

Join the procession, you awesome ones, earnest 4da 1040
 Generous goddesses, blessing this land, 4da
 Torches are lighting your route – so rejoice! 3½ da

⁴⁶ Line 1027. It's felt by commentators that this line is either an interpolation, or a survival from a longer passage which has been lost – possibly detailing the future cult of the Erinyes in Athens.

⁴⁷ Presumably the female attendants of Athena, the secondary chorus. Much of the text of this section is corrupt.

⁴⁸ -----

Raise your voices and join in our singing! paroemiac

Second antistrophe

Now there's a pact, there's a permanent treaty 4da

Sealed by the people of Athens which Zeus who 4da

Oversees all, and Fate, have agreed. 3½ da

Raise your voices and join in our singing! paroemiac

The procession moves off – towards the Acropolis. Somerville's suggestion:

1 Two torch-bearers

2 Athena

3 Priestess with attendants leading the sacrificial victim or victims (a black cow?)

4 Athena's other attendants (the ones who brought the robes)

5 The herals and trumpeter

6 The Areopagites

7 The purple-robes Eumenides.

He reckons about 35 people.

AMW Marshfield Woods, 10 September 2023

Guide to Greek metre

ia iambus $\sim\text{--}\sim$ (“In God we trust”)

da dactyl $\text{--}\sim\sim$ (“somebody”)

sp spondee $\text{--}\text{--}$ (“long-held”)

cr cretic $\text{--}\sim\text{--}$ (“plain to see”)

ba bacchiac $\sim\text{--}\text{--}$ (“the big fight”)

cho choriamb $\text{--}\sim\sim\text{--}$ (“What can I do?”)

tr trochee $\text{--}\sim\sim$ (“Where the bee sucks”)

an anapaest $\sim\sim\text{--}$ (“Mrs T”) “Anapaests” denotes lines of (usually) 4 anapaests, any of which can be replaced by a dactyl or spondee.

lec lecythion $\text{--}\sim\sim\sim\sim\text{--}$ (“found a spot to pitch her tent”)

do dochmius – highly variable: most basic is $\sim\text{--}\sim\sim\text{--}$ (“My coffee is cold”)

ith ithyphallic = cr+ ba $\text{--}\sim\sim\sim\sim$

paroemiac $\sim\sim\sim\sim\sim\sim\sim\sim$

arist aristophanean $\text{--}\sim\sim\sim\sim\sim$

Often a macron -- can be replaced by a dibrach $\sim\sim$, and vice versa!

