THE TRAGEDIES OF
ÆSCHYLOS

A New Translation
WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY, AND AN APPENDIX OF RHYMED CHORAL ODES

BY THE LATE E. H. PLUMPTRE, D.D.
DEAN OF WELLS

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THE SUPPLIANTS
ARGUMENT.

When Io, after many wanderings, had found refuge in Egypt, and having been touched by Zeus, had given birth to Epaphos, it came to pass that he and his descendants ruled over the region of Cañópos, near one of the seven mouths of Ncilos. And in the fifth generation there were two brothers, Danaos and Ægyptos, the sons of Belos, and the former had fifty daughters and the latter fifty sons, and Ægyptos sought the daughters of Danaos in marriage for his sons. And they, looking on the marriage as unholy, and hating those who wooed them, took flight and came to Argos, where Pelasgos then ruled as king, as to the land whence Io, from whom they sprang, had come. And thither the sons of Ægyptos followed them in hot pursuit.
Dramatis Personae.

Danaos.

Pelagios, king of Argos.

Herald.

Chorus of the daughters of Danaos.
THE SUPPLIANTS.

SCENE.—Argos, the entrance of the gates. Statues of Zeus, Artemis, and other Gods, placed against the walls.

[Enter Chorus of the Daughters of Danaos, in the dress of Egyptian women, with the boughs of suppliants in their hands, and fillets of white wool twisted round them, chanting as they move in procession to take up their position round the thymele.

Zeus, the God of Suppliants, kindly
Look on this our band of wanderers,
That from banks at mouths of Neilos,
Banks of finest sand, departed 1
Yea, we left the region sacred,
Grassy plain on Syria’s borders, 2
Not for guilt of blood to exile
By our country’s edict sentenced,
But with free choice, loathing wedlock,
Fleeing marriage-rites unholy
With the children of Ægyptos.
And our father Danaos, ruler,
Chief of council, chief of squadrons,
Playing moves on fortune’s draught-board. 4

(1) The daughters of Danaos are always represented as fifty in number. It seems probable, however, that the vocal chorus was limited to twelve, the others appearing as mutes.
(2) The alluvial deposit of the Delta.
(3) Syria is used obviously with a certain geographical vagueness, as including all that we know as Palestine, and the wilderness to the south of it, and so as conterminous with Egypt.
(4) Elsewhere in Æschylus (Agam. 36, Fr. 182) we trace allusion to games played with dice. Here we have a reference to one, the details of which
Chose what seemed the best of evils,
Through the salt sea-waves to hasten,
Steering to the land of Argos,
Whence our race has risen to greatness;
Sprung, so boasts it, from the heifer
Whom the stinging gadfly harassed,
By the touch of Zeus love-breathing:
And to what land more propitious
Could we come than this before us,
Holding in our hand the branches
Suppliant, wreathed with white wool fillets?
O State! O land! O water gleaming!
Ye the high Gods, ye the awful,
In the dark the graves still guarding;
Thou too with them, Zeus Preserver,
Guardian of the just man’s dwelling,
Welcome with the breath of pity,
Pity as from these shores wafted,
Us poor women who are suppliants.
And that swarm of men that follow,
Haughty offspring of Ægyptos,
Ere they set their foot among you
On this silt-strown shore,—oh, send them
Seaward in their ship swift-rowing;
There, with whirlwind tempest-driven,
There, with lightning and with thunder,
There, with blasts that bring the storm-rain,
May they in the fierce sea perish,
Ere they, cousin-brides possessing,
Rest on marriage-beds reluctant,
Which the voice of right denies them!

are not accurately known to us, but which seems to have been analogous
to draughts or chess.
(1) See the whole story, given as in prophecy, in the Prometheus, v. 865-890.
(2) The invocation is addressed — (1) to the Olympian Gods in the
brightness of heaven; (2) to the Chthonian deities in the darkness below
the earth; (3) to Zeus the Preserver, as the supreme Lord of both.
(3) An Athenian audience would probably recognise in this a description
of the swampy meadows near the coast of Lerna. The descendants
of Io had come to the very spot where the tragic history of their ancestors
had had its origin.
THE SUPPLIANTS. 139

Strophe. I.

And now I call on him, the Zeus-sprung steer,
Our true protector, far beyond the sea,
Child of the heifer-foundress of our line,
Who cropped the flowery mead,
Born of the breath, and named from touch of Zeus.

*And lo! the destined time
*Wrought fully with the name,
And she brought forth the "Touch-born," Epaphos.

Antistrophe. I.

And now invoking him in grassy fields,
Where erst his mother strayed, to dwellers here
Telling the tale of all her woes of old,
I surest pledge shall give;
And others, strange beyond all fancy's dream,
Shall yet perchance be found;
And in due course of time
Shall men know clearly all our history.

Strophe. II.

And if some augur of the land be near,
Hearing our piteous cry,
Sure he will deem he hears
The voice of Tereus' bride,
Piteous and sad of soul,
The nightingale sore harassed by the kite.

Antistrophe. II.

*For she, driven back from wonted haunts and streams,
Mourns with a strange new plaint
The home that she has lost,
And wails her son's sad doom,
How he at her hand died,
Meeting with evil wrath unmotherly;

(1) The invocation passes on to Epaphos, as a guardian deity, able and willing to succour his afflicted children.
(2) Philomela. See the tale as given in the notes to Agam. 1113.
(3) "Streams," as flowing through the shady solitude of the groves which the nightingale frequented.
Stroph. III.
E'en so do I, to wailing all o'er-given,
In plaintive music of Ionian mood,\(^1\)
*Vex the soft cheek on Neilos' banks that bloomed,
And heart that bursts in tears,
And pluck the flowers of lamentations loud,
Not without fear of friends,
*Lest none should care to help
This flight of mine from that mist-shrouded shore.

Antistroph. III.
But, O ye Gods ancestral! hear my prayer,
Look well upon the justice of our cause,
Nor grant to youth to gain its full desire
Against the laws of right,
But with prompt hate of lust, our marriage bless.
*Even for those who come
As fugitives in war
The altar serves as shield that Gods regard.

Stroph. IV.
May God good issue give!\(^2\)
And yet the will of Zeus is hard to scan:
Through all it brightly gleams,
E'en though in darkness and the gloom of chance
For us poor mortals wrapt.

Antistroph. IV.
Safe, by no f:ll tripped up,
The full-wrought deed decreed by brow of Zeus;
For dark with shadows stretch
The pathways of the counsels of his heart,
And difficult to see.

Stroph. V.
And from high-towering hopes He hurleth down
To utter doom the heir of mortal birth;

(1) "Ionian," as soft and elegiac, in contrast with the more military character of Dorian music.
(2) In the Greek the paronomasia turns upon the supposed etymological connexion between θεός and τιθήμι. I have here, as elsewhere, attempted an analogous rather than identical feu de mort.
Yea sets He in array
No forces violent;
All that Gods work is effortless and calm:
Seated on holiest throne,
Thence, though we know not how,
He works His perfect will.

ANTISTROPH. V.

Ah, let him look on frail man’s wanton pride,
With which the old stock burgeons out anew,
   By love for me constrained,
   In counsels ill and rash,
And in its frenzied, passionate resolve
   Finds goad it cannot shun;
   But in deceived hopes,
   Shall know, too late, its woe.

STROPH. VI.

Such bitter griefs, lamenting, I recount,
   With cries shrill, tearful, deep,
   (Ah woe! ah woe!)
That strike the ear with mourner’s woe-traught cry.
Though yet alive, I wail mine obsequies;
   Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,¹
   I greet (our alien speech
   Thou knowest well, O land,)
And oftentimes fall, with rendings passionate,
On robe of linen and Sidonian veil.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

But to the Gods, for all things prospering well,
   When death is kept aloof,
Gifts votive come of right.
   Ah woe! Ah woe!
Oh, troubles dark, and hard to understand!

¹ The Greek word which I have translated “bluff” was one not familiar to Attic ears, and was believed to be of Kyrenean origin. Æschylus accordingly puts it into the lips of the daughters of Danaos, as characteristic more or less of the “alien speech” of the land from which they came.
Ah, whither will these waters carry me?
    Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,
    I greet (our alien speech
    Thou knowest well, O land,)
And ofttimes fall, with rendings passionate,
On robe of linen and Sidonian veil.

STROPH. VII.

The oar indeed and dwelling, timber-wrought,
With sails of canvas, 'gainst the salt sea proof
    Brought me with favouring gales,
    By stormy wind unvexed;
Nor have I cause for murmur. Issues good
May He, the all-seeing Father, grant, that I,
    Great seed of Mother dread,
In time may 'scape, still maiden undefiled,
    My suitor's marriage-bed.

ANTISTROPH. VII.

And with a will that meets my will may She,
The unstained child of Zeus, on me look down,
    *Our Artemis, who guards
    The consecrated walls;
And with all strength, though hunted down, uncaught,
May She, the Virgin, me a virgin free,
    Great seed of Mother dread,
That I may 'scape, still maiden undefiled,
    My suitor's marriage-bed.

STROPH. VIII.

But if this may not be,
    We, of swarth sun-burnt race,
Will with our suppliants' branch go to him,
    Zeus, sovereign of the dead,
The Lord that welcomes all that come to him,
    Dying by twisted noose

(1) So in v. 235 Danaos speaks of the "second Zeus" who sit as Judge
in Hades. The feeling to which the Chorus gives utterance is that of—
"Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo."
If we the grace of Gods Olympian miss.
By thine ire, Zeus, 'gainst Io virulent,
   The Gods' wrath seeks us out,
   And I know well the woe
Comes from thy queen who reigns in heaven victorious;
   For after stormy wind
   The tempest needs must rage.

\textit{Antistrophe. VIII.}

And then shall Zeus to words
Unseemly be exposed,
Having the heifer's offspring put to shame,
   Whom He himself begat,
And now his face averting from our prayers:
   Ah, may he hear on high,
Yea, pitying look and hear propitiously!
By thine ire, Zeus, 'gainst Io virulent,
   The Gods' wrath seeks us out,
   And I know well the woe
Comes from thy queen, who reigns in heaven victorious;
   For after stormy wind
   The tempest needs must rage,

\textit{Danaos.} My children, we need wisdom; lo! ye came
With me, your father wise and old and true,
As guardian of your voyage. Now ashore,
With forethought true I bid you keep my words,
As in a tablet-book recording them:
I see a dust, an army's voiceless herald,
Nor are the axles silent as they turn;
And I descry a host that bear the shield,
And those that hurl the javelin, marching on
With horses and with curved battle-cars.
Perchance they are the princes of this land,
Come on the watch, as having news of us;
But whether one in kindly mood, or hot
With anger fierce, leader on this great array,
It is, my children, best on all accounts
To take your stand hard by this hill of Gods.
Who rule o'er conflicts. 1 Better far than towers
Are altars, yea, a shield impenetrable.
But with all speed approach the shrine of Zeus,
The God of mercy, in your left hand holding
The suppliants' boughs wool-wreathed, in solemn guise, 2
And greet our hosts as it is meet for us,
Coming as strangers, with all duteous words
Kindly and holy, telling them your tale
Of this your flight, unstained by guilt of blood;
And with your speech, let mood not over-bold,
Nor vain nor wanton, shine from modest brow
And calm, clear eye. And be not prompt to speak,
Nor full of words; the race that dwelleth here
Of this is very jealous: 3 and be mindful
Much to concede; a fugitive thou art,
A stranger and in want, and 'tis not meet
That those in low estate high words should speak.

Chor. My father, to the prudent prudently
Thou speakest, and my task shall be to keep
Thy goodly precepts. Zeus, our sire, look on us!

Dan. Yea, may He look with favourable eye!

Chor. I fain would take my seat not far from thee.

[Chorus moves to the altar not fur from

Danaos.

Dan. Delay not then; success go with your plan.

Chor. Zeus, pity us with sorrow all but crushed!

Dan. If He be willing, all shall turn out well.

Chor.

Dan. Invoke ye now the mighty bird of Zeus. 4

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1 Some mound dedicated to the Gods, with one or more altars and statues of the Gods on it, is on the stage, and the suppliants are told to take up their places there. The Gods of conflict who are named below, Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, presided generally over the three great games of Greece. Hermes is added to the list.
2 Comp. Litiatio-Poera, 1024, Exemn. 44.
3 The Argives are supposed to share the love of brevity which we commonly connect with their neighbours the Laconians.
4 The "might bird of Zeus" seems here, from the answer of the Chorus, to mean not the "eagle" but the "sun," which roused men from their sleep as the cock did, so that "cock-crow" and "sunrise" were synonymous. It is, in any case, striking that Zeus, rather than Apollo, appears as the Sun-God.
Chor. We call the sun’s bright rays to succour us.
Dan. Apollo too, the holy, in that He, A God, has tasted exile from high heaven.  
Chor. Knowing that fate, He well may feel for men.  
Dan. So may He feel, and look on us benignly!  
Chor. Whom of the Gods shall I besides invoke?  
Dan. I see this trident here, a God’s great symbol.  
Chor. Well hath He brought us, well may He receive!  
Dan. Here too is Hermes, as the Hellenes know him.  
Chor. To us, as free, let Him good herald prove.  
Dan. Yea, and the common shrine of all these Gods
Adore ye, and in holy precincts sit,
Like swarms of doves in fear of kites your kinsmen,
Foes of our blood, polluters of our race.
How can bird prey on bird and yet be pure?
And how can he be pure who seeks in marriage
Unwilling bride from father too unwilling?
Nay, not in Hades’ self, shall he, vain fool,
Though dead, ’scape sentence, doing deeds like this;
For there, as men relate, a second Zeus
Judges men’s evil deeds, and to the dead
Assigns their last great penalties. Look up,
And take your station here, that this your cause
May win its way to a victorious end.

Enter the King on his chariot, followed by Attendants.

King. Whence comes this crowd, this non-Hellenic band,
In robes and raiment of barbaric fashion
So gorgeously attired, whom now we speak to?

(1) The words refer to the myth of Apollo’s banishment from heaven and servitude under Admetos.
(2) In the Acropolis at Athens the impress of a trident was seen on the rock, and was believed to commemorate the time when Poseidon had claimed it as his own by setting up his weapon there. Something of the same kind seems here to be supposed to exist at Argos, where a like legend prevailed.
(3) The Hellenic Hermes is distinguished from his Egyptian counterpart, Thoth, as being different in form and accessories.
(4) A possible reference to the Egyptian Osiris, as lord or judge of Hades. Comp. v. 145.
This woman's dress is not of Argive mode,
Nor from the climes of Hellas. How ye dared,
Without a herald even or protector,
Yea, and devoid of guides too, to come hither
Thus boldly, is to me most wonderful.
And yet these boughs, as is the suppliant's wont,
Are set by you before the Gods of conflicts:
By this alone will Hellas guess aright.
Much more indeed we might have else conjectured,
Were there no voice to tell me on the spot.

Chor. Not false this speech of thine about our garb:
But shall I greet thee as a citizen,
Or bearing Hermes' rod, or city ruling? ¹

King. Nay, for that matter, answer thou and speak
Without alarm. Palæchthon's son am I,
Earth-born, the king of this Pelasgic land;
And named from me, their king;² as well might be,
The race Pelasgic reaps our country's fruits;
*And all the land through which the Strymon pours
Its pure, clear waters to the West I rule;
And as the limits of my realm I mark
The land of the Perrhebi, and the climes
Near the Pseonians, on the farther side
Of Pindos, and the Dodonæan heights;³
And the sea's waters form its bounds. O'er all
Within these coasts I govern; and this plain,
The Apian land, itself has gained its name
Long since from one who as a healer lived;⁴
For Apis, coming from Naupactian land

(1) "Shall I," the Chorus asks, "speak to you as a private citizen, or as a herald, or as a king?"
(2) It would appear from this that the king himself bore the name Pelasgos. In some versions of the story he is so designated.
(3) The lines contain a tradition of the wide extent of the old Pelasgic rule, including Thessalia, or the Pelasgic Argos, between the mouths of Peneus and Pindos, Perrhebia, Dodona, and finally the Apian land or Peloponnnesos.
(4) The true meaning of the word "Apian," as applied to the Peloponnnesos, seems to have been "distant." Here the myth is followed which represented it as connected with Apis the son of Telchin, (son of Apollo, in the sense of being a physician-prophet,) who had freed the land from monsters.
That lies beyond the straits, Apollo's son,
Prophet and healer, frees this land of ours
From man-destroying monsters, which the soil,
Polluted with the guilt of blood of old,
By anger of the Gods, brought forth,—fierce plagues,
The dragon-brood's dread, unblest company;
And Apis, having for this Argive land
Duly wrought out his saving surgery,
Gained his reward, remembered in our prayers;
And thou, this witness having at my hands,
May'st tell thy race at once, and further speak;
Yet lengthened speech our city loveth not.

Chor. Full short and clear our tale. We boast that we
Are Argives in descent, the children true
Of the fair, fruitful heifer. And all this
Will I by what I speak show firm and true.

King. Nay, strangers, what ye tell is past belief
For me to hear, that ye from Argos spring;
For ye to Libyan women are most like,¹
And nowise to our native maidens here.
Such race might Neilos breed, and Kyprian mould,
Like yours, is stamped by skilled artificers
On women's features; and I hear that those
Of India travel upon camels borne,
Swift as the horse, yet trained as sumpter-mules,
E'en those who as the Æthiops' neighbours dwell.
And had ye borne the bow, I should have guessed,
Undoubting, ye were of th' Amazons' tribe,
Man-hating, flesh-devouring. Taught by you,
I might the better know how this can be,
That your descent and birth from Argos come.

Chor. They tell of one who bore the temple-keys
Of Hera, Io, in this Argive land.

King. So was't indeed, and wide the fame prevails:
And was it said that Zeus a mortal loved?

(1) The description would seem to indicate—(1) that the daughter of
Danaos appeared on the stage as of swarthy complexion; and (2) that
Indians, Æthiopians, Kyprians, and Amazons, were all thought of as in
this respect alike.
Chor. And that embrace was not from Hera hid.
King. What end had then these strifes of sovereign Ones?
Chor. The Argive goddess made the maid a heifer.
King. Did Zeus that fair-horned heifer still approach?
Chor. So say they, fashioned like a wooing steer.
King. How acted then the mighty spouse of Zeus?
Chor. She o'er the heifer set a guard all-seeing.
King. What herdsman strange, all-seeing, speak'st thou of?
Chor. Argos, the earth-born, him whom Hermes slew.
King. What else then wrought she on the ill-starred heifer?
Chor. She sent a stinging gadfly to torment her.
[Those who near Neilos dwell an æstros call it.]
King. Did she then drive her from her country far?
Chor. All that thou say'st agrees well with our tale.
King. And did she to Canôbos go, and Memphis?
Chor. Zeus with his touch, an offspring then begets.
King. What Zeus-born calf that heifer claims as mother?
Chor. *He from that touch which freed named Epaphos.
King, [What offspring then did Epaphos beget?] 1
Chor. Libya, that gains her fame from greatest land
King. What other offspring, born of her, dost tell of?
Chor. Sire of my sire here, Belos, with two sons.
King. Tell me then now the name of yonder sage.
Chor. Danaos, whose brother boasts of fifty sons.
King. Tell me his name, too, with ungrudging speech.
Chor. Ægyptos: knowing now our ancient stock,
Take heed thou bid thine Argive suppliants rise.
King. Ye seem, indeed, to make your ancient claim
To this our country good: but how came ye
To leave your father's house? What chance constrained you?

(1) The line is conjectural, but some question of this kind is implied in the answer of the Chorus.
Chor. O king of the Pelasgi, manifold
Are ills of mortals, and thou could'st not find
The self-same form of evil anywhere.
Who would have said that this unlooked-for flight
Would bring to Argos race once native here,
Driving them forth in hate of wedlock's couch?

King. What seek'st thou then of these the Gods of
conflicts,

Holding your wool-wreathed branches newly-pluck'd?

Chor. That I serve not Ægyptos' sons as slave.

King. Speak'st thou of some old feud, or breach of
right?

Chor. Nay, who'd find fault with master that one
loved?

King. Yet thus it is that mortals grow in strength. 1

Chor. True; when men fail, 'tis easy to desert them.

King. How then to you may I act reverently?

Chor. Yield us not up unto Ægyptos' sons.

King. Hard boon thou ask'st, to wage so strange a war.

Chor. Nay, Justice champions those who fight with her.

King. Yes, if her hand was in it from the first.

Chor. Yet reverence thou the state-ship's stern thus
wreathed, 2

King. I tremble as I see these seats thus shadowed. 3

Strophe I.

Chor. Dread is the wrath of Zeus, the God of sup-
pliants:

Son of Palæchthon, hear;

Hear, O Pelasgic king, with kindly heart.

Behold me suppliant, exile, wanderer,

*Like heifer chased by wolves

Upon the lofty crags,

Where, trusting in her strength,

(1) By sacrificing personal likes to schemes
(2) The Gods of conflict are the pilots of the
altar dedicated to them is as its stern; the gar-
lands and wands of sup-
pliants which adorn it are as the decorations of
the vessels.
She lifteth up her voice
And to the shepherd tells her tale of grief.

King. I see, o'ershadowed with the new-plucked
boughs,

*Bent low, a band these Gods of conflict own;
And may our dealings with these home-sprung stran-
gers
Be without peril, nor let strife arise
To this our country for unlooked—for chance
And unprovided! This our State wants not.

Antistrophe. I.

Chor. Yea, may that Law that guards the suppliant's
right
Free this our flight from harm,
Law, sprung from Zeus, supreme Apportioner,
But thou, [to the King,) though old, from me, though
younger, learn:

If thou a suppliant pity
Thou ne'er shalt penury know,
So long as Gods receive
Within their sacred shrines

Gifts at the hands of worshipper unstained.

King. It is not at my hearth ye suppliant sit;
But if the State be as a whole defiled,
Be it the people's task to work the cure.
I cannot pledge my promise to you first
Ere I have counselled with my citizens.¹

Strophe. II.

Chor. Thou art the State—yea, thou the common-
wealth,
Chief lord whom none may judge;
'Tis thine to rule the country's altar-hearth,

(1) Some editors have seen in this an attempt to enlist the constitu-
tional sympathies of an Athenian audience in favour of the Argive king,
who will not act without consulting his assembly. There seems more
reason to think that the aim of the dramatist was in precisely the oppo-
site direction, and that the words which follow set forth his admiration
for the king who can act, as compared with one who is tied and hampered
by restrictions.
With the sole vote of thy prevailing nod;
And thou on throne of state,
Sole-sceptred in thy sway,
Bringest each matter to its destined end;
Shun thou the curse of guilt.

King. Upon my foes rest that dread curse of guilt!
Yet without harm I cannot succour you,
Nor gives it pleasure to reject your prayers.
In a sore strait am I; fear fills my soul
To take the chance, to do or not to do.

Antistrophe. II.

Chor. Look thou on Him who looks on all from heaven,
Guardian of suffering men
Who, worn with toil, unto their neighbours come
As suppliants, and receive not justice due:
For these the wrath of Zeus,
Zeus, the true supplicant's God,
Abides, by wail of sufferer unappeased.

King. Yet if Ægyptos' sons have claim on thee
By their State's law, asserting that they come
As next of kin, who dare oppose their right?
Thou must needs plead that by thy laws at home
They over thee have no authority.¹

Strophe. III.

Chor. Ah! may I ne'er be captive to the might
Of males! Where'er the stars
Are seen in heaven, I track my way in flight,
As refuge from a marriage that I hate.
But thou, make Right thy friend,
And honour what the Gods count pure and true,

(1) By an Attic law, analogous in principle to that of the Jews, (Num. xxxvi. 8; 1 Chron. xxiii. 22), heiresses were absolutely bound to marry their next of kin, if he claimed his right. The king at once asserts this as the law which was prima facie applicable to the case, and declares himself ready to surrender it if the petitioners can show that their own municipal law is on the other side. He will not thrust his country's customs upon foreigners, who can prove that they live under a different rule, but in the absence of evidence must act on the law which he is bound officially to recognise.
King. Hard is the judgment: choose not me as judge.  
But, as I said before, I may not act  
Without the people, sovereign though I be,  
Lest the crowd say, should aught fall out amiss,  
"In honouring strangers, thou the State did'st ruin."

Antistrophe. III.

Chor. Zeus, the great God of kindred, in these things  
Watches o'er both of us,  
Holding an equal scale, and fitly giving  
To the base evil, to the righteous blessing.  
Why, when these things are set  
In even balance, fear'st thou to do right?  

King. Deep thought we need that brings deliverance,  
That, like a diver, mine eye too may plunge  
Clear-seeing to the depths, not wine-bedrenched,  
That these things may be harmless to the State,  
And to ourselves may issue favourably:  
That neither may the strife make you its prey,  
Nor that we give you up, who thus are set  
Near holy seat of Gods, and so bring in  
To dwell with us the Avenger terrible,  
God that destroyeth, who not e'en in Hades  
Gives freedom to the dead. Say, think ye not  
That there is need of counsel strong to save?

Strophe. I.

Chor. Take heed to it, and be  
Friend to the stranger wholly faithful found;  
Desert not thou the poor,  
Driven from afar by godless violence.

Antistrophe. I.

See me not dragged away;  
O thou that rul'st the land! from seat of Gods:  
Know thou men's wanton pride,  
And guard thyself against the wrath of Zeus.

Strophe. II.

Endure not thou to see thy suppliant,  
Despite of law, torn off,
As horses by their forelegs, from the forms
Of sculptured deities,
Nor yet the outrage of their wanton hands,
Seizing these brodered robes.

**Antistrophe. II.**

For know thou well, whichever course thou take,
Thy sons and all thy house
*Must pay in war the debt that Justice claims,
Proportionate in kind.*

Lay well to heart these edicts, wise and true,
Given by great Zeus himself.

_**King.** Well then have I thought o'er it. To this point_ Our ship's course drives. Fierce war we needs must risk Either with these (pointing to the Gods) or those. Set fast and firm

Is this as is the ship tight wedged in stocks;
And without trouble there's no issue out.
For wealth indeed, were our homes spoiled of that,
There might come other, thanks to Zeus the Giver,
More than the loss, and filling up the freight;
And if the tongue should aim its adverse darts,
Baleful and over-stimulant of wrath,
There might be words those words to heal and soothe.
But how to blot the guilt of kindred blood,
This needs a great atonement—many victims
Falling to many Gods—to heal the woe.
*I take my part, and turn aside from strife;
And I far rather would be ignorant Than wise, forecasting evil. May the end,
Against my judgment, show itself as good!_

_Chor._ Hear, then, the last of all our pleas for pity.

_**King.** I hear; speak on. It shall not 'scape my heed._

_Chor._ Girdles I have, and zones that bind my robes.

_**King.** Such things are fitting for a woman's state._

_Chor._ With these then, know, as good and rare de-

vice . . . .
King. Nay, speak. What word is this thou’lt utter now?
Chor. Unless thou giv’st our band thy plighted word . . . .
King. What wilt thou do with this device of girdles?
Chor. With tablets new these sculptures we’ll adorn.
King. Thou speak’st a riddle. Make thy meaning plain.
Chor. Upon these Gods we’ll hang ourselves at once.
King. I hear a word which pierces to the heart. 460
Chor. Thou see’st our meaning. Eyes full clear I’ve given.

King. Lo then! in many ways sore troubles come.
A host of evils rushes like a flood;
A sea of woe none traverse, fathomless,
This have I entered; haven there is none.
For if I fail to do this work for you,
Thou tellest of defilement unsurpassed;¹
And if for thee against Ægypios’ sons,
Thy kindred, I before my city’s walls
In conflict stand, how can there fail to be
A bitter loss, to stain the earth with blood
Of man for woman’s sake? And yet I needs
Must fear the wrath of Zeus, the suppliant’s God;
That dread is mightiest with the sons of men.
Thou, then, O aged father of these maidens!
Taking forthwith these branches in thine arms,
Lay them on other altars of the Gods
Our country worships, that the citizens
May all behold this token of thy coming,
And about me let no rash speech be dropped;
For ’tis a people prompt to blame their rulers.
And then perchance some one beholding them,
And pitying, may wax wrathful ’gainst the outrage
Of that male troop, and with more kindly will
The people look on you; for evermore
Men all wish well unto the weaker side.

(1) Æ., the pollution which the statues of the Gods would contract if they carried into execution their threat of suicide.
Dan. This boon is counted by us of great price,
To find a patron proved so merciful.
And thou, send with us guides to lead us on,
And tell us how before their shrines to find
The altars of the Gods that guard the State,
*And holy places columned round about;
And safety for us, as the town we traverse.
Not of like fashion is our features' stamp;
For Neios rears not race like Inachos.\(^1\)
Take heed lest rashness lead to bloodshed here;
Ere now, unknowing, men have slain their friends.

**King (to Attendants).** Go then, my men; full well the
stranger speaks;
And lead him where the city's altars stand,
The seats of Gods; and see ye talk not not much
To passers-by as ye this traveller lead,
A suppliant at the altar-hearth of Gods.

[**Exeunt Danaos and Attendants.**

Chor. Thou speak'st to him; and may he go as bidden!
But what shall I do? What hope giv'st thou me?

**King.** Leave here those boughs, the token of your
grief.

Chor. Lo! here I leave them at thy beck and word.

**King.** Now turn thy steps towards this open lawn.

Chor. What shelter gives a lawn unconsecrate? \(^2\)

**King.** We will not yield thee up to birds of prey.

Chor. Nay, but to foes far worse than fiercest dragons.

**King.** Good words should come from those who good
have heard.

Chor. No wonder they wax hot whom fear enthralls.

**King.** But dread is still for rulers all unmeet.

Chor. Do thou then cheer our soul by words and deeds.

**King.** Nay, no long time thy sire will leave thee
lorn;

\(^{1}\) Inachos, the river-God of Argos, and as such contrasted with
Neios.

\(^{2}\) i.e., "Unconsecrate," marked out by no barriers, accessible to all,
and therefore seeming to offer but little prospect of a safe asylum. The
place described seems to have been an open piece of turf rather than a
grove of trees.
And I, all people of the land convening,
Will the great mass persuade to kindly words;
And I will teach thy father what to say.
Wherefore remain and ask our country's Gods,
With suppliant prayers, to grant thy soul's desire,
And I will go in furtherance of thy wish:
Sweet Susasion follow us, and Fortune good! [Exit.

STROPH. I.

Chor. O King of kings! and blest
Above all blessed ones,
And Power most mighty of the mightiest!
O Zeus, of high estate!
Hear thou and grant our prayer!
Drive thou far off the wantonness of men,
The pride thou hatest sore,
And in the pool of darkling purple hue
Plunge thou the woe that comes in swarthy barque.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Look on the women's cause;
Recall the ancient tale,
Of one whom Thou did'st love in time of old,
The mother of our race:
Remember it, O Thou
Who did'st on Io lay thy mystic touch.
We boast that we are come
Of consecrated land the habitants,
And from this land by lineage high descended.

STROPH. II.

Now to the ancient track,
Our mother's, I have passed,
The flowery meadow-land where she was watched,—
The pastures of the herd,
Whence Io, by the stinging gadfly driven,
Flees, of her sense bereft,
Passing through many tribes of mortal men;
And then by Fate's decree
Crossing the billowy straits,
On either side she leaves a continent.\(^1\)

**Antistrophe. II.**

Now through the Asian land
She hastens o'er and o'er,
Right through the Phrygian fields where feed the flocks;
And passes Teuthras' fort,
Owned by the Mysians,\(^2\) and the Lydian plains;
And o'er Kilikian hills,
And those of far Pamphylia rushing on,
By ever-flowing streams,
On to the deep, rich lands,
And Aphrodite's home in wheat o'erflowing.\(^3\)

**Strophe. III.**

And so she cometh, as that herdsman winged
Pierces with sharpest sting,
To holy plain all forms of life sustaining,
Fields that are fed from snows,\(^4\)
Which Typhon's monstrous strength has traverséd,\(^5\)
And unto Neilos' streams,
By sickly taint untouched,\(^6\)
Still maddened with her toil of ignominy,
By torturing stings driven on, great Hera's frenzied slave.

**Antistrophe. III.**

And those who then the lands inhabited,
Quivered with pallid fear,

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\(^1\) Comp. the narrative as given in *Prometheus Bound*, vv. 660, et seq.

\(^2\) Teuthras' fort, or Teuthrania, is described by Strabo (xii. p. 571) as lying between the Hellespont and Mount Sipylos, in Magnesia.

\(^3\) Kypros, as dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite, and famous for its wine, and oil, and corn.

\(^4\) The question, what caused the mysterious exceptional inundations of the Nile, occupied, as we see from Herodotos (ii. c. 19-27), the minds of the Greeks. Of the four theories which the historian discusses, *Eschylus* adopts that which referred it to the melting of the snows on the mountains of central Africa.

\(^5\) Typhon, the mythical embodiment of the power of evil, was fabled to have wandered over Egypt, seeking the body of Osiris. Isis, to baffie him, placed coffins in all parts of Egypt, all empty but the one which contained the body.

\(^6\) The fame of the Nile for the purity of its water, after the earthly matter held in solution had been deposited, seems to have been as great in the earliest periods of its history as it is now.
That filled their soul at that unwonted marvel,
Seeing that monstrous shape,
The human joined with brute,
Half heifer, and half form of woman fair:¹
And sore amazed were they.
Who was it then that soothed
Poor Io, wandering in her sore affright,
Driven on, and ever on, by gadfly's maddening sting?

STROPH. IV.

Zeus, Lord of endless time
[Was seen All-working then;]
He, even He, for by his sovereign might
That works no ill, was she from evil freed;
And by his breath divine,
She findeth rest, and weeps in floods of tears
Her sorrowing shame away;
And with new burden big,
Not falsely 'Zeus-born' named,
She bare a son that grew in faultless growth,

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Prosperous through long, long years;
And so the whole land shouts with one accord,
"Lo, a race sprung from him, the Lord of life,
In very deed, Zeus-born!
Who else had checked the plagues that Hera sent?"
This is the work of Zeus:
And speaking of our race
That sprang from Epaphos
As such, thou would'st not fail to hit the mark.

STROPH. V.

Which of the Gods could I with right invoke
As doing juster deeds?
He is our Father, author of our life,

(1) Io was represented as a woman with a heifer's head, and was probably a symbolic representation of the moon, with her crescent horns. Sometimes the transformation is described (as in v. 294) in words which imply a more thorough change.
The King whose right hand worketh all his will,
Our line's great author, in his counsels deep
   Recording things of old,
Directing all his plans, the great work-master, Zeus.

Antistrophe. V.

For not as subject hastening at the beck
   Of strength above his own,¹
Reigns He subordinate to mightier powers;
Nor does He pay his homage from below,
While One sits throned in majesty above; ³
   Act is for him as speech,
To hasten what his teeming mind resolves.

Re-enter Danaos.

Dan. Be of good cheer, my children. All goes well
With those who dwell here, and the people's voice
Hath passed decrees full, firm, irrevocable.

Chor. Hail, aged sire, that tell'st me right good news?¹
But say with what intent the vote hath passed,
And on which side the people's hands prevail.

Dan. The Argives have decreed without division,
   So that my aged mind grew young again;
For in full congress, with their right hands raised
Rustled the air as they decreed their vote
That we should sojourn in their land as free,
Free from arrest, and with asylum rights;
And that no native here nor foreigner
Should lead us off; and, should he venture force,
That every citizen who gave not help
Dishonoured should be driven to exile forth.
Such counsel giving, the Pelasgian King
Gained their consent, proclaiming that great wrath

(1) Perhaps—
   "For not as subject sitting 'neath the sway
   Of strength above his own."

(2) The passage takes its place among the noblest utterances of a faith
passing above the popular polytheism to the thought of one sovereign
Will ruling and guiding all things, as Will,—without effort, in the calmness of a power irresistible.
Of Zeus the God of suppliants ne'er would let
The city wax in fatness,—warning them
That double guilt upon the State would come,
Touching at once both guests and citizens,
The food and sustenance of sore disease
That none could heal. And then the Argive host,
Hearing these things, decreed by show of hands,
Not waiting for the herald’s proclamation,
So it should be. They heard, indeed, the crowd
Of those Pelasgi, all the winning speech,
The well-turned phrases cunning to persuade;
But it was Zeus that brought the end to pass.

_Chor._ Come then, come, let us speak for Argives
  Prayers that are good for good deeds done;
Zeus, who o’er all strangers watches,
May He regard with his praise and favour
The praise that comes from the lips of strangers,
*And guide in all to a faultless issue.

_Strophe._ I.

_Half-Chor._ A. Now, now, at last, ye Gods of Zeus
begotten,²
Hear, as I pour my prayers upon their race,
That ne’er may this Pelasgic city raise
From out its flames the joyless cry of War,
  War, that in other fields
Reapeth his human crop:
  For they have mercy shown,
And passed their kind decree,
Pitying this piteous flock, the suppliants of great Zeus.

_Antistrophe._ I.

They did not take their stand with men ’gainst women
Casting dishonour on their plea for help,

(1) Double, as involving a sin against the laws of hospitality, so far as
the suppliants were strangers—a sin against the laws of kindred, so far as
they might claim by descent the rights of citizenship.
(2) If, as has been conjectured, the tragedy was written with a view to
the alliance between Argos and Athens, made in B.C. 461, this choral ode
must have been the centre, if not of the dramatic, at all events of the
political interest of the play.
*But looked to Him who sees and works from heaven,
*Full hard to war with. Yea, what house could bear
   To see Him on its roof
   Casting pollution there? ¹
   Sore vexing there he sits.
   Yes, they their kin revere,
Suppliants of holiest Zeus;
Therefore with altars pure shall they the Gods delight.

STROPH. II.
Therefore from faces by our boughs o’ershadowed ²
Let prayers ascend in emulous eagerness:
   Ne’er may dark pestilence
   This State of men bereave;
   May no fierce party-strife
Pollute these plains with native carcasses;
   And may the bloom of youth
   Be with them still uncropt;
And ne’er may Aphrodite’s paramour,
   Ares the scourge of men,
Mow down their blossoms fair!

ANTISTROPH. II.
And let the altars tended by the old
*Blaze with the gifts of men with hoary hairs;
   So may the State live on
   In full prosperity!
   Let them great Zeus adore,
The strangers’ God, the one Supreme on high,
By venerable law
Ordering the course of fate.
And next we pray that ever more and more
Earth may her tribute bear,
And Artemis as Hecate preside ³
   O’er woman’s travail-pangs.

(1) The image is that of a bird of evil omen, perched upon the roof, and defiling the house, while it uttered its boding cries.
(2) The suppliants’ boughs, so held as to shade the face from view.
(3) The name of Hecate connected Artemis as, on the one side, with the unseen world of Hades, so, on the other, with child-birth, and the purifications that followed on it.
Strophe. III.
Let no destroying strife come on, invading
This city to lay waste,
Setting in fierce array
War, with its fruit of tears,
Lyreless and danceless all,
And cry of people’s wrath;
And may the swarm of plagues,
Loathly and foul to see,
Abide far off from these our citizens,
And that Lykeian king, may He be found
Benignant to our youth! 1

Antistrophe. III.
And Zeus, may He, by his supreme decree,
Make the earth yield her fruits
Through all the seasons round,
And grant a plenteous brood
Of herds that roam the fields!
May Heaven all good gifts pour,
And may the voice of song
Ascend o’er altar shrines,
Unmarred by sounds of ill!
And let the voice that loves with lyre to blend
Go forth from lips of blameless holiness,
In accents of great joy!

Strophe. IV.
*And may the rule in which the people share
Keep the State’s functions as in perfect peace,
E’en that which sways the crowd,
*Which sways the commonwealth,
By counsels wise and good;
And to the strangers and the sojourners
May they grant rights that rest on compacts sure,

(1) The name Lykeian, originally, perhaps, simply representing Apollo as the God of Light, came afterwards to be associated with the might of destruction (the Wolf-destroyer) and the darts of pestilence and sudden death. The prayer is therefore that he, the Destroyer, may hearken to the suppliants, and spare the people for whom they pray.
Ere War is roused to arms,  
So that no trouble come!

Antistrophe. IV.

And the great Gods who o'er this country watch,  
May they adore them in the land They guard,  
With rites of sacrifice,  
And troops with laurel boughs,  
As did our sires of old!

For thus to honour those who gave us life,  
This stands as one of three great laws on high;  
Written as fixed and firm,  
The laws of Right revered.

Dan. I praise these seemly prayers, dear children mine.

But fear ye not, if I your father speak  
Words that are new, and all unlooked-for by you;  
For from this station to the suppliant given  
I see the ship; too clear to be mistaken

The swelling sails, the bulwark's coverings,  
And prow with eyes that scan the onward way;  
But too obedient to the steerman's helm,  
Being, as it is, unfriendly. And the men  
Who sail in her with swarthy limbs are seen,  
In raiment white conspicuous. And I see  
Full clear the other ships that come to help;  
And this as leader, putting in to shore,  
Furling its sails, is rowed with equal stroke.  
'Tis yours, with mood of calm and steadfast soul,  
To face the fact, and not to slight the Gods.  
And I will come with friends and advocates;  
For herald, it may be, or embassy,  
May come, and wish to seize and bear you off,  
Grasping their prey. But nought of this shall be;

(1) The "three great laws" were those ascribed to Triptolemos, "to honour parents, to worship the Gods with the fruits of the earth, to hurt neither man nor beast."

(2) The Egyptian ships, like those of many other Eastern countries, had eyes (the eyes of Osiris, as they were called) painted on their bows.
Fear ye not them. It were well done, however,
If we should linger in our help, this succour
In no wise to forget. Take courage then;
In their own time and at the appointed day,
Whoever slights the Gods shall pay for it.

STROPH. I.

Chor. I fear, my father, since the swift-winged ships
Are come, and very short the time that's left.
A shuddering anguish makes me sore afraid,
Lest small the profit of my wandering flight.
   I faint, my sire, for fear.

Dan. My children, since the Argives' vote is passed,
Take courage: they will fight for thee, I know.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Hateful and wanton are Egyptos' sons,
Insatiable of conflict, and I speak
To one who knows them. They in timbered ships,
Dark-eyed, have sailed in wrath that hits its mark,
   With great and swarthy host.

Dan. Yet many they shall find whose arms are tanned
In the full scorching of the noontide heat.¹

STROPH. II.

Chor. Leave me not here alone, I pray thee, father!
Alone, a woman is as nought, and war
Is not for her. Of over-subtle mind,
And subtle counsel in their souls impure,
Like ravens, e'en for altars caring not,—
   Such, such in soul are they.

Dan. That would work well indeed for us, my children
Should they be foes to Gods as unto thee.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. No reverence for these tridents or the shrines
Of Gods, my father, will restrain their hands:

(1) A side-thrust, directed by the poet, who had fought at Marathon,
against the growing effeminacy of the Athenian youth, many of whom
were learning to shrink from all activity and exposure that might spoil
their complexions. Comp. Plato, Phaedros, p. 289.
THE SUPPLIANTS.

Full stout of heart, of godless mood unblest,
Fed to the full, and petulant as dogs,
And for the voice of high Gods caring not,—
Such, such in soul are they.

Dan. Nay, the tale runs that wolves prevail o'er dogs; 749
And byblos fruit excels not ear of corn. 1

Chor. But since their minds are as the minds of brutes,
Restless and vain, we must beware of force.

Dan. Not rapid is the getting under weigh
Of naval squadron, nor their anchoring,
Nor the safe putting into shore with cables.
Nor have the shepherds of swift ships quick trust
In anchor-fastenings, most of all, as now,
When coming to a country havenless;
And when the sun has yielded to the night,
That night brings travail to a pilot wise,
[Though it be calm and all the waves sleep still;]
So neither can this army disembrace
Before the ship is safe in anchorage.
And thou beware lest in thy panic fear
Thou slight the Gods whom thou hast called to help.
The city will not blame your messenger,
Old though he be, being young in clear voiced-thought.

Exit.

STROPHE. I.

Chor. Ah, me! thou land of jutting promontory
Which justly all revere,
What lies before us? Where in Apian land
Shall we a refuge find,
If still there be dark hiding anywhere?
Ah! that I were as smoke

(1) The saying is somewhat dark, but the meaning seems to be that if
the "dogs" of Egypt are strong, the "wolves" of Argos are stronger;
that the wheat on which the Hellenes lived gave greater strength to limbs
and sinew than the "byblos fruit" on which the Egyptian soldiers and
sailors habitually lived. Some writers, however, have seen in the last
line, rendered—
"The byblos fruit not always bears full ear,"
a proverb like the English,
"There's many a slip 'Twixt the cup and the lip."
That riseth full and black
Nigh to the clouds of Zeus,
Or soaring up on high invisible,
Like dust that vanishes,
Pass out of being with no help from wings!

**Antstrophe. I.**

*E'en so the ill admits not now of flight;
My heart in dark gloom throbs;
My father's work as watchet brings me low;
I faint for very fear,
And I would fain find noose that bringeth death,
In twisted cordage hung,
Before the man I loathe
Draws near this flesh of mine:
Sooner than that may Hades rule o'er me
Sleeping the sleep of death!

**Strophe. II.**

Ah, might I find a place in yon high vault,
Where the rain-clouds are passing into snow,
Or lonely precipice
Whose summit none can see,
Rock where the vulture haunts,
Witness for me of my abysmal fall,
Before the marriage that will pierce my heart
Becomes my dreaded doom!

**Antstrophe. II.**

I shrink not from the thought of being the prey
Of dogs and birds that haunt the country round;
For death shall make me free
From ills all lamentable:
Yea, let death rather come
Than the worse doom of hated marriage-bed!
What other refuge now remains for me
That marriage to avert?
STROPH. III.

Yea, to the Gods raise thou
Cloud-piercing, wailing cry
Of songs and litanies,
Prevailing, working freedom out for me:
And thou, O Father, look,
Look down upon the strife,
With glance of wrath against our enemies
From eyes that see the right;
With pity look on us thy suppliants,
O Lord of Earth, O Zeus omnipotent!

ANTISTROPH. III.

For lo! Ægyptos' house,
In pride intolerable,
O'er-masculine in mood,
Pursuing me in many a winding course,
Poor wandering fugitive,
With loud and wild desires,
Seek in their frenzied violence to seize:
But thine is evermore
The force that turns the balance of the scale:
What comes to mortal men apart from Thee?

Ah! ah! ah! ah!
*Here on the land behold the ravisher
Who comes on us by sea!
*Ah, may'st thou perish, ravisher, ere thou
• Hast stopped or landed here!
*I utter cry of wailing loud and long,
*I see them work the prelude of their crimes,
Their crimes of violence.
Ah! ah! Ah me!
Haste in your flight for help!
The mighty ones are waxing fat and proud,
By sea and land alike intolerable.
Be thou, O King, our bulwark and defence!
Enter Herald of the sons of Eypotos' advancing to the daughters of Danaos.

Her. Haste, haste with all your speed unto the barque.
Chor. Tearing of hair, yea, tearing now will come,
And print of nails in flesh,
And smiting off of heads,
With murderous stream of blood.
Her. Haste, haste ye, to that barque that yonder lies,
Ye wretches, curse on you.

Strophe I

Chor. Would thou had'st met thy death
Where the salt waves wildly surge,
Thou with thy lordly pride,
In nail-compact ed ship:
*Lo! they will smite thee, weltering in thy blood,
*And drive thee to thy barque.
Her. I bid you cease perforce, the cravings wild
Of mind to madness given.
Ho there! what ho! I say;
Give up those seats, and hasten to the ship:
I reverence not what this State honoureth.

Antistrophe I

Chor. Ah, I may ne'er again
Behold the stream where graze the goodly kine,
Nourished and fed by which
The blood of cattle waxes strong and full!
*As with a native's right,
*And one of old descent,
I keep, old man, my seat, my seat, I say.
Her. Nay, in a ship, a ship thou shalt soon go,
With or without thy will,
By force, I say, by force:

(1) The words recall the vision of the "seven well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed," which "came out of the river," as Pharaoh dreamed, (Gen. xii. 1, 2,) and which were associated so closely with the fertility which it ordinarily produced through the whole extent of the valley of the Nile.
THE SUPPLIANTS.

Come, come, provoke not evils terrible,
Falling by these my hands.

STROPH. II.

Chor. Ah me! ah me!

Would thou may'st perish with no hand to help,
Crossing the sea's wide plain,
In wanderings far and wide,

Where Sarpedonian sand-bank\(^1\) spreads its length,

Driven by the sweeping blasts!

Her. Sob thou, and howl, and call upon the Gods:

Thou shalt not 'scape that barque from Ægypt come,

Though thou should'st pour a bitterer strain of grief.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. Woe! woe! Ah woe! ah woe,

For this foul wrong! Thou utterest fearful things;

*Thou art too bold and insolent of speech.

*May mighty Nile that reared thee turn away

Thy wanton pride and lust

That we behold it not!

Her. I bid you go to yon ship double-prowed,\(^2\)

With all your speed. Let no one lag behind;

But little shall my grasp your ringlets spare.

[Seizes on the leader of the Suppliants.

STROPH. III.

Chor. Ah me! my father, ah!

The help of holiest statues turns to woe;

He leads me to the sea,

With motion spider-like,

Or like a dream, a dark and dismal dream,

Ah woe! ah woe! ah woe!

O mother Earth! O Earth! O mother mine!

Avert that cry of fear,

O Zeus, thou king! O son of mother Earth!

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(1) Two dangerous low headlands seem to have been known by this name, one on the coast of Kilikia, the other on that of the Thrakian Chersonese.

(2) No traces of ships of this structure are found in Egyptian art; but, if the reading be right, it implies the existence of boats of some kind, so built that they could be steered from either end.
Her. Nay, I fear not the Gods they worship here; They did not rear nor lead me up to age.

Antistrophe. III.

Chor. Near me he rages now,
   That biped snake,
And like a viper bites me by the foot.
   Oh, woe is me! woe! woe!
O mother Earth! O Earth! O mother mine!
   Avert that cry of fear.
O Zeus, thou king! O son of mother Earth.
   Her. If some one yield not, and to you ship go,
The hand that tears her tunic will not pity.

Strophe. IV.

Chor. Ho! rulers of the State!
   Ye princes! I am seized.
   Her. It seems, since ye are slow to hear my words,
That I shall have to drag you by the hair.

Antistrophe. IV.

Chor. We are undone, undone!
We suffer, prince, unlooked-for outrages.
   Her. Full many princes, heirs of great Ægyptos,
Ye soon shall see. Take courage; ye shall have
No cause to speak of anarchy as there.

Enter King followed by his Bodyguard.

King. Ho there! What dost thou? and with what intent
Dost thou so outrage this Pelasgic land?
Dost think thou comest to a town of women?
Too haughty thou, a stranger 'gainst Hellenes,
And, sinning much, hast nothing done aright.
   Her. What sin against the right have I then done?
King. First, thou know'st not how stranger-guest should act.
Her. How so? When I, but finding what I lost . . .
King. Whom among us dost thou then patrons call?
Her. Hermes the Searcher, chiefest patron mine.¹
King. Thou, Gods invoking, honourest not the Gods.
Her. The Gods of Neinos are the Gods I worship.
King. Ours then are nought, if I thy meaning catch. ⁹⁰⁰
Her. These girls I'll lead, if no one rescues them.
King. Lay hand on them, and soon thou'lt pay the cost.

Her. I hear a word in no wise hospitable.
King. Who rob the Gods I welcome not as guests.
Her. I then will tell Ἐγύπτιων' children this.
King. This threat is all unheeded in my mind.
Her. But that I, knowing all, may speak it plain,

(For it is meet a herald should declare
Each matter clearly,) what am I to say?
By whom have I been robbed of that fair band
Of women whom I claim as kindred? Nay,
But it is Ares that shall try this cause,
And not with witnesses, nor money down,
Settling the matter, but there first must fall
Full many a soldier, and of many a life
The rending in convulsive agony.

King. Why should I tell my name? In time thou'lt
know it,
Thou and thy fellow-travellers. But these maidens,
With their consent and free choice of their wills,
Thou may'st lead off, if godly speech persuade them:
But this decree our city's men have made
With one consent, that we to force yield not
This company of women. Here the nail
Is driven tight home to keep its place full firm;²

¹ Hermes, the guardian deity of heralds, is here described by the
epithet which marked him out as being also the patron of detectives.
Every stranger arriving in a Greek port had to place himself under a
prozenos or patron of some kind. The herald, having no prozenos among
the citizens, appeals to his patron deity.
² The words refer to the custom of nailing decrees, proclamations,
treaties, and the like, engraved on metal or marble, upon the walls of
temples or public buildings. Traces of the same idea may possibly be
These things are written not on tablets only,
[Nor signed and sealed in folds of byblos-rolls ;]
Thou hear'st them clearly from a tongue that speaks
With full, free speech. Away, away, I say:
And with all speed from out my presence haste.

Her. It is thy will then a rash war to wage:
May strength and victory on our males attend!

[Exit.

King. Nay, thou shalt find the dwellers of this land
Are also males, and drink not draughts of ale
From barley brewed. [To the Suppiants.] But ye, and
your attendants,
Take courage, go within the fencèd city,
Shut in behind its bulwark deep of towers;
Yea, many houses to the State belong,
And I a palace own not meanly built,
If ye prefer to live with many others
In ease and plenty: or if that suits better,
Ye may inhabit separate abodes.
Of these two offers that which pleases best
Choose for yourselves, and I as your protector,
And all our townsmen, will defend the pledge
Which our decree has given you. Why wait'st thou
For any better authorised than these?

Chor. For these thy good deeds done may'st thou in
good,
All good, abound, great chief of the Pelasgi!
But kindly send to us
Our father Danaos, brave and true of heart,
To counsel and direct.
His must the first decision be where we
Should dwell, and where to find
A kindly home; for ready is each one

found in the promise to Eliakim that he shall be "as a nail in a sure
place," (Isa. xxii. 23,) in the thanksgiving of Ezra that God had given
His people "a nail in his holy place," (Ezra ix. 8.)

(1) As before, the bread of the Hellenes was praised to the disparage-
ment of the "byblos fruit" of Egypt, so here their wine to that of the
Egyptian beer, which was the ordinary drink of the lower classes.
To speak his word of blame 'gainst foreigners.
   But may all good be ours!
And so with fair repute and speech of men,
   Free from all taint of wrath,
So place yourselves, dear handmaids, in the land,
As Danaos hath for each of us assigned
   Dowry of handmaid slaves.

Enter Danaos followed by Soldiers.

Dan. My children, to the Argives ye should pray,
And sacrifice, and full libations pour,
As to Olympian Gods, for they have proved,
With one consent, deliverers: and they heard
*All that I did towards those cousins there,
*Those lovers hot and bitter. And they gave
To me as followers these that bear the spear,
That I might have my meed of honour due,
And might not die by an assassin's hand
A death unlooked-for, and thus leave the land
A weight of guilt perpetual: and 'tis fit
That one who meet such kindness should return,
*From his heart’s depths, a nobler gratitude;
And add ye this to all already written,
Your father's many maxims of true wisdom,
That we, though strangers, may in time be known;
For as to aliens each man’s tongue is apt
For evil, and spreads slander thoughtlessly;
But ye, I charge you, see ye shame me not,
With this your life's bloom drawing all men’s eyes.
The goodly vintage is full hard to watch,
All men and beasts make fearful havoc of it,
Nay, birds that fly, and creeping things of earth;
And Kypris offers fruitage, dropping ripe,
*As prey to wandering lust, nor lets it stay;¹
And on the goodly comeliness of maidens

¹ The words present a striking parallelism to the erotic imagery of the Song of Solomon: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil our vines, for our vines have tender grapes" (ii. 15).
Each passer-by, o'ercome with hot desire,
Darts forth the amorous arrows of the eye.
And therefore let us suffer nought of this,
Through which our ship has ploughed such width of sea,
Such width of trouble; neither let us work
Shame to ourselves, and pleasure to our foes.
This two-fold choice of home is open to you:
[Pelasgos offers his, the city theirs.]
To dwell rent-free. Full easy terms are these:
Only, I charge you, keep your father's precepts,
Prizing as more than life your chastity.

Chor. May the high Gods that on Olympos dwell
Bless us in all things; but for this our vintage
Be of good cheer, my father; for unless
The counsels of the Gods work strange device,
I will not leave my spirit's former path.

Stroph. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Go then and make ye glad the high
Gods, blessed for ever,
Those who rule our towns, and those who watch over our
city,
And they who dwell by the stream of Erasinos ancient.¹

Semi-Chor. B. And ye, companions true,
Take up your strain of song.
Let praise attend this city of Pelasgos;
Let us no more no more adore the mouths of Neilos
With these our hymns of praise;

Antistroph. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Nay, but the rivers here that pour calm
streams through our country,²

(1) The Erasinos was supposed to rise in Arcadia, in Mount Stymphalos, to disappear below the earth, and to come to sight again in Argolis.
(2) In this final choral ode of the Supplicants, as in that of the Seven against Thebes, we have the phenomenon of the division of the Chorus, hitherto united, into two sections of divergent thought and purpose. Semi-Chorus A. remains steadfast in its purpose of perpetual virginity. Semi-Chorus B. relents, and is ready to accept wedlock.
Parents of many a son, making glad the soil of our meadows,
With wide flood rolling on, in full and abounding richness.

Semi-Chor. B. And Artemis the chaste,
May she behold our band
With pity; ne'er be marriage rites enforced
On us by Kythereia: those who hate us,
Let that ill prize be theirs.

STROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Not that our kindly strain does slight
to Kypris immortal;
For she, together with Hera, as nearest to Zeus is mighty,
A goddess of subtle thoughts, she is honoured in mysteries solemn.

Semi-Chor. B. Yea, as associates too with that their mother beloved,
Are fair Desire and Suasion,¹ whose pleading no man can gainsay,
Yea, to sweet Concord too Aphrodite's power is entrusted,
*And the whispering paths of the Loves.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Yet am I sore afraid of the ship that chases us wanderers,
Of terrible sorrows, and wars that are bloody and hateful;
*Why else have they had fair gale for this their eager pursuing?

Semi-Chor. B. Whate'er is decreed of us, I know that it needs must happen;
The mighty purpose of Zeus, unfailing, admits no transgression:

(1) The two names were closely connected in the local worship of Athens, the temples of Aphrodite and Peitho (Suasion) standing at the south-west angle of the Acropolis. If any special purpose is to be traced in the invocation, we may see it in the poet's desire to bring out the nobler, more ethical side of Aphrodite's attributes, in contrast with the growing tendency to look on her as simply the patroness of brutal lust.
*May this fate come to us, as to many women before us,
*Fate of marriage and spouse!

STROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. Ah, may great Zeus avert
From me all marriage with Ægyptos' sons!
Semi-Chor. B. Nay, all will work for good.
Semi-Chor. A. Thou gloze'st that which will no glozing
bear.
Semi-Chor. B. And thou know'st not what future
comes to us.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. How can I read the mind
Of mightiest Zeus, to sight all fathomless?
Semi-Chor. B. Well-tempered be thy speech!
Semi-Chor. A. What mood of calmness wilt thou
school me in?
Semi-Chor. B. Be not o'er-rash in what concerns the
Gods.

STROPH. IV.

Semi-Chor. A. Nay, may our great king Zeus avert
that marriage
With husbands whom we hate,
E'en He who, touching her with healing hand,
Freed Io from her pain,
Putting an end from all her wanderings,
Working with kindly force!

ANTISTROPH. V.

Semi-Chor. B. And may He give the victory to women!
I choose the better part,
Though mixed with ill; and that the trial end
Justly, as I have prayed,
By means of subtle counsels which God gives
To liberate from ills.¹

¹ The play, as acted, formed part of a trilogy, and the next play, the Danaids, probably contained the sequel of the story, the acceptance by the Suppliants of the sons of Ægyptos in marriage, the plot of Danaos for the destruction of the bridegrooms on the wedding-night, and the execution of the deed of blood by all but Hypermnestra.