

The Tragedy of Euripides called Iphigeneia,¹ translated out of Greek into English.

[translated by Jane Lumley; modernised and annotated by Tom Bishop]

The Argument of the Tragedy.²

After that the captains of the Grecians, with the navy and the other preparations of battle, did come together unto the haven of Aulida,³ that from thence they might sail towards Troy, there came suddenly such a calm weather that for want of wind they could have no passage. Wherefore the host, being grieved that they spent there their time idly, asked counsel of the wise men,⁴ to whom Calchas the prophesier answered that if Iphigeneia, the daughter of Agamemnon, were sacrificed to the goddess Diana of Aulida, that then the Grecians should have a fortunate passage to Troy. Wherefore, the host being called together, Menelaus did persuade his brother Agamemnon to agree that his daughter might be sent for. And because that Clytemnestra her mother should be the willinger to let her go, they feigned that she should be married to Achilles, one of the chiefest noblemen of Greece. This excuse none knew but only Agamemnon, Menelaus, Calchas, and Ulysses. But Agamemnon, after that he had written unto his wife of this matter, repented greatly that which he had done, lamenting much the death of his daughter. Wherefore in the night he wrote other letters privily unto his wife, declaring that she should not need to send the virgin her daughter unto Aulida, for her marriage should be deferred unto another time. These letters he delivered afore day unto an old man, his servant, that he might carry them into Greece, declaring unto him what they contained. But Menelaus, waiting afore day for the coming of the virgin, took the old man carrying the letter, and did reprove Agamemnon very vehemently for his unconstancy. In the meantime, one of Clytemnestra's company told Agamemnon, Menelaus being there present, that Iphigeneia, with her mother Clytemnestra and young Orestes⁵ her brother, was come unto Aulida, and that all the host knew of their coming. Menelaus then perceiving that Agamemnon could not send his daughter home again, began feignedly to persuade him not to slay the virgin for his sake. In the meantime, whilst they are reasoning

of this matter, Clytemnestra cometh⁶ in with Iphigeneia her daughter, through whose coming Agamemnon is wonderfully troubled, because he purposed to keep secret the counsel of his daughter's death. Wherefore, whilst he goeth about to ask counsel of Calchas, Achilles cometh in the meantime to chide with him. Whom Clytemnestra hearing, she doth salute him as though he should have been her son-in-law. Achilles, being ignorant of this matter, doth wonder at it. Then Agamemnon's servant, the old man to whom the letters were delivered, doth bewray Agamemnon's counsel, and declareth to them the whole matter. Then Achilles, being angry that under the colour of his name they had determined the death of the virgin, he doth defend her in the council of the Grecians, that she should not be slain, but he is overcome with the voice of the common people. Wherefore, when the matter was brought to such a trouble that the whole host required the virgin, and Achilles only was ready to contend against them all, then Iphigeneia herself changed her mind, and persuadeth her mother that it is better for her to die a glorious death, than that, for the safeguard only of her life, either so many noble men⁷ should fall out within themselves, or else such a noble enterprise, being taken in hand, should shamefully again be let slip. Wherefore she, being brought to the altar of the goddess, was taken up to the country of Taurus, and in her place was sent a white hart. And when the sacrifice was thus finished, the Grecians sailed to Troy.

The end of the Argument.⁸

The names of the speakers in this Tragedy.⁹

1. Agamemnon, the king.¹⁰

2. Senex, an old man, his servant.

3. Chorus, a company of women.
4. Menelaus, Agamemnon's brother.
5. Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife.
6. Iphigeneia, the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon.
7. Achilles, her feigned husband.
8. Nuncius, the messenger.

Here beginneth the tragedy of Euripides called Iphigeneia.

*[Enter Agamemnon and Senex.]*¹¹

Aga. Come hither, O thou old man.

Sen. I come, but what is the matter, O king?

Aga. Thou shalt know anon.

Sen. I make haste to come for my old age is very quick and ready. For both the strength of my limbs and also the sight of mine eyes doth yet continue.

Aga. But what meaneth this? Methinks I see a star shoot.

Sen. It may be so indeed, for it is not yet midnight, as it may be judged by the course of the seven stars.¹²

Aga. I think so too, for I hear no noise of birds, neither of the sea nor yet of the wind. All things now are quiet and at rest.

Sen. What is the cause, O king, that at this time of night thou comest abroad? For all they that be of this haven do take their rest still. Yea, and the watchmen as yet are not come from the walls. Wherefore I think it meet to go in.

Aga. O thou old man, thou seemest unto me to be very happy. For I do

think that mortal man to be very fortunate which, being without honour, doth lead his life quietly. For I cannot judge their estate to be happy which rule in honour.

Sen. In these things the glory and renown of man's life doth chiefly consist.

Aga. But this renown is very brickle.¹³ For to wish for dignity, it seemeth very pleasant, but it vexeth them that obtain it. For sometimes the gods not truly honoured take vengeance of man's life, and otherwhiles again men's minds with care and thought to bring their matters to pass are wonderfully troubled.

Sen. I do not praise this opinion in a nobleman. For, O Agamemnon, thou wast not born to have all things chance happily unto thee. For seeing thou art a mortal man, thou must sometime rejoice and sometimes again be sorry. For whether you will or no, this must needs happen, because it is so appointed by the gods. But methinks you are writing a letter by candle light. What is this writing that you have in your hand so, which sometime you tear and then write again, otherwhiles you seal it and anon unseal it again, lamenting and weeping? For you seem to make such sorrow as though you were out of your wit. What is the matter, O king? What is the matter? If you will show it me, you shall tell it to a trusty man and a faithful. For thou knowest me to be one that Tyndarus, thy wife's father, sent with her, as part of her dowry, because he thought me to be a messenger meet for such a spouse.

Aga. Thou knowest that Leda, Thyestes' daughter, had three daughters: Phoebe, and Clytemnestra whom I married, and Helena, whom many noble men¹⁴ desired to have to their wives. But her father, Tyndarus, considering what great destruction was threatened to them that obtained her, doubted long whether he should give her in marriage to any of them, or no. Wherefore, because he desired to have all things to happen prosperously, he caused all the young men that desired to marry his daughter to come all together into the temple, and there to make a promise each to other before the gods, that

if any man either Grecian or else barbarian would go about to take Helena from him who she chose to be her husband, that then they all would with cruel battle take vengeance of that man. And this being thus brought to pass, Tyndarus gave her free liberty to choose among them all whom she liked best, and she chose Menelaus. But I would to god it had not happened, for within a while after, Paris, who, as the common voice saith, was judge between the gods of their beauty, came to Lacedaemon.¹⁵ And he being a goodly young man and of noble parentage, began to fall in love with her, and so, taking her privily away, brought her to a little village upon the hill Ida.

But as soon as these news were brought to Menelaus, he being as one half out of his wit for anger, began to rehearse the covenant which he and divers other noblemen¹⁶ had made betwixt them at the desire of Tyndarus, saying that it was meet that they then should help him, seeing he was oppressed with such a manifest injury. And the Grecians being wonderfully moved with his pitiful complaint decreed that they all would with battle invade the Trojans, which so wrongfully had taken away Helen. Wherefore, after that they had prepared weapons, horses, chariots, and all other things necessary for the battle, they chose me to be their captain, because I was Menelaus' brother. But I would that this honour had happened to some other in my place! For now we, having gathered together our host and prepared ourselves ready to battle, are constrained to tarry here idle at this haven, because, the winds being against us, we can sail no further. And Calchas the prophet, studying long what should be the cause of it and occasion, at length hath answered that if my daughter, Iphigeneia, be slain and sacrificed to the goddess Diana, that then the whole host shall not only have free passage to Troy, but also victoriously conquer it. But without the death of my daughter, none of all these things can be brought to pass. As soon as I heard of this, I commanded that the host should be sent home again. For I answered that my daughter should never be slain through my consent. But I using all manner of means to persuade my brother to the contrary, yet notwithstanding, I was so moved with his earnest desire, that at length, I, agreeing to his cruel request, wrote a letter to my wife, that she should send my daughter hither. And because she should be the better willing to let her go, I feigned that she should be married to Achilles, because he was so desirous of her that he denied to go to battle without he

might have her to his wife. So that now I have determined the death of my daughter, under the colour of marriage, and none knoweth of this, save only Menelaus, Calchas, and Ulysses. But now I, repenting me of the message which I wrote to my wife of, have here in this letter denied all that I said before. So that if you will carry this letter unto Greece, I will declare unto you all that is contained in it, because I know you to be a faithful servant both to my wife and me.

Sen. Show me, I pray you, what answer I shall make to your wife agreeable to the letter?

Aga. Tell her that she shall not need at this time to send my daughter hither. For her marriage shall be deferred unto another time.

Sen. Will not Achilles, think you, be angry, for that under the colour of him you have determined the death of your daughter?

Aga. Achilles beareth the name only, but he is not partaker of the thing, neither knoweth he what craft we go about.

Sen. Thou hast prepared grievous things, O king. For thou hast determined to sacrifice thy own child under the colour of marriage.

Aga. Alas, I was then wonderfully deceived, for the which I am now marvellously troubled. Wherefore, I pray thee, make haste, and let not thy old age hinder thee in this journey.

Sen. I make haste to go, O king.

Aga. Do not stay by the pleasant springs, and tarry not under the shadowing trees, neither let any sleep hinder thee.

Sen. Do not you think any such slothfulness in me, O king.

Aga. I pray you mark well the way and look about it diligently, lest

that my wife, preventing¹⁷ you, happen to come hither with my daughter in the meantime.

Sen. It shall be done even so.

Aga. Make haste, I pray thee. And if thou meet my wife, turn her back again.

Sen. But what shall I do that your wife and your daughter may believe me?

Aga. Deliver them this token, which is enclosed in this letter. Go quickly, for the day beginneth to appear. I pray thee, help me now in this matter, for there is no man to whom all things have chanced happily.

[Exit Agamemnon and Senex.]

[Enter Chorus]

Cho. What is this? Methinks I see Menelaus striving with Agamemnon's servant!

[Enter Senex and Menelaus.]

Sen. Darest thou, O Menelaus, commit so grievous an offence in taking away those letters, which is neither meet, neither lawful that thou shouldst see?

Men. Go thy way! Thou art too faithful to thy master.

Sen. Truly,¹⁸ you have objected to me a good reproach.

Men. Thou hast deserved punishment!

Sen. It is not meet that thou shouldst open those letters which I carry.

Men. Neither oughtest thou to bring such a mischief upon all Greece!

Sen. Thou strivest in vain, Menelaus, for I will not deliver my letters to thee.

Men. Thou shalt not pass with them.

Senex. And I will not leave them behind me.

Men. If thou wilt not deliver them to me, I will break thy head with my mace.

Sen. I pass not for that,¹⁹ for I think it a good thing to die for my master's cause.

Men. O thou froward fellow! Deliver me thy letters and make no more business here.

[Menelaus takes the letters and opens them.]

Sen. Help, O Agamemnon! I suffer injury here of Menelaus! For with strong hand he hath taken away your letter, and he passeth not of honesty nor yet of right.

[Enter Agamemnon.]

Aga. How! What business and contention is there amongst you?

Sen. I ought rather to tell the matter than you, Menelaus.

*[Exit Senex.]*²⁰

Aga. What have you to do, Menelaus, with my servant? Or what cause have you to strive with him, and to take away that which pertaineth to me?

Men. Turn toward me I pray you, that I may tell you all the matter.

Aga. Think you that I, the son of Atreus, am afraid to look upon thee,
Menelaus?

Men. Seest thou, O Agamemnon, these thy letters which contain thy crafty
counsel?

Aga. I see them very well, but thou shalt not keep them long.

Men. Surely I will not deliver them to thee before that I have showed them
unto the whole host.

Aga. Wilt thou desire to know that which doth not become thee? And darest
thou open the seals of my letters?

Men. As soon as I had opened thy letter I marvelled what mischief had put
those things in thy mind, which thou hast privily declared in this letter.

Aga. Where didst thou get my letter?

Men. I took them from your servant, for I watching by the host to hear of
your daughter's coming, by chance met with him.

Aga. Do you think it meet that you should know of my matters? I pray you,
is not this a token of a naughty and unshamefast²¹ man?

Men. It was my pleasure so to do. For I owe no duty to thee.

Aga. Think you that I can suffer this so grievous a thing, that I should
neither do my business nor yet rule mine own house after my fancy?

Men. Surely you change your mind oftentimes, for sometime you think
one thing, and by and by again you are in another mind.

Aga. Indeed you file your words well! But a learned tongue disposed to evil

is a naughty thing.

Men. Yea, and an unconstant and a divers mind is as evil. But now I will overcome you with your own words, if you will not deny them for anger. For I will not speak them greatly for your praise. Do not you remember that when you desired to be made captain over the Grecians, you seemed to refuse it, although indeed you wished for it? How lowly then did you show yourself, taking every man by the hand, and keeping open household, and saluting every man after his degree, as though you would have bought your honour with the good will of the people. But as soon as you had obtained this honour, you began to change your conditions. For you refused the friendship of them which had showed themselves friendly to you afore, and then you waxed proud, keeping yourself secretly within your house. But it doth not become a good man to change his fashions after that he is in honour, for he ought then to be more faithful to his friends, when that he is in place to do them pleasure. I have objected this reproach unto you because I myself have had proof of it. After that you with the whole host were come to this haven, you were careless. But when you could have no passage over the sea, and the Grecians desired licence to go home, refusing to spend their time idly here, then you, being wonderfully troubled, fearing lest an evil report should rise of you, because you, being captain over a thousand ships, should not overcome Troy -- you asked counsel of me what you might do, that you might neither lose dignity nor yet dishonour your name. Wherefore, as soon as Calchas the prophesier had answered that the Grecians should both pass the sea quietly and also conquer Troy if your daughter were sacrificed to the goddess Diana, then you were very glad and promised of your own accord to give your daughter to be sacrificed. And being not compelled by any power, you sent unto your wife for your daughter, feigning that she should be married to Achilles. But now suddenly you have changed your mind, and have written other letters saying that you will not agree to the death of your own child. Take heed that you do not deny this, for the heaven itself can bear witness of your sayings. Truly, this same doth happen to divers other men, which in the beginning when they take any weighty matter in hand do labour very diligently till they have obtained it, and then they leave it off shamefully, which shame doth chance sometimes through the fearfulness

of the subjects, and sometimes when they do rule the commonwealth which are unmeet for it. But now I do chiefly lament the state of the unfortunate Grecians, which, when they took in hand a noble enterprise against the²² barbarians, are constrained, through your occasion and your daughter's, with great dishonour to leave the same. Wherefore truly I think that no captain ought to be chosen for dignity nor yet for favour, but rather for wit. For he that should rule an host ought in wisdom to excel all other.

Cho. Surely, it is a grievous thing that one should fall out with another, but specially that any contention should be among brethren.

Aga. Now I will tell you of your faults, Menelaus, but in few words, lest I should seem to be unshamefast. Wherefore I will speak to you as it becometh one brother to another. Tell me, I pray you, why you do sigh so? Who hath done you any injury? Do you lament the taking away of your wife? But we cannot promise you to get her again for you. For you yourself have been the occasion of your own trouble. Wherefore, seeing I have not offended you, there is no cause that I should suffer punishment for that which I am not guilty of. Doth my preferment trouble you? Or else doth the desire of your beautiful wife vex you? For evil men divers times have suchlike desires. And although truly I am to blame for that I have not better determined my matters, yet I fear me lest you are much more to be reprehended, for that you being delivered of an evil wife cannot be contented.

Cho. These sayings truly do not agree with that which was spoken before. Yet notwithstanding they do teach us well that we ought not willingly to hurt our children.

Aga. Alas, I, wretch, have never a friend!

Men. Yes you have divers friends, except you will neglect them!

Aga. But it doth become friends to lament one with another.

Men. If you would have friends, you were best to love them whom you desire to help and not them whom you would hurt.

Aga. Why, do you not think that Greece needeth help in this matter?

Men. Yes, but I think that both you and Greece also are bewitched of some god.

Aga. Brother, methinks you are too proud of honour. Wherefore I must seek some other way and get me other friends.

[Enter Messenger.]

Nun. O Agamemnon, thou valiant captain, I have brought to thee Iphigeneia, thy daughter, whom thou didst send for, and with her is come Clytemnestra, thy wife, and Orestes, that thou mightest be comforted with the sight of them. I have made haste to bring you this news because I see all the Grecians waiting for the coming of your daughter as it were for some strange thing, and some of them say that you have sent for her because you are desirous to see her, other judge that she should be married, and some thinketh that she should be sacrificed to the goddess Diana. Tell me, O king, I pray thee, to whom shall she be married? But now let us leave to speak of such things, for it is need and time to prepare that which shall be necessary for the wedding. Wherefore I pray you, Menelaus, also be merry, for this day, as I trust, shall be very fortunate to Iphigeneia.

Aga. Thou hast said well. Wherefore go thou in, for all things will chance happily to thee. But what shall I say, which am thus in trouble and yet may not bewail my own misery? For this occasion they which are of mean estate seem unto me very happy. For they may complain of their misery and bewail with tears the death of their children, but to noblemen no such thing is granted. For I dare not lament my unfortunate chance, and yet it grieveth me that I may not show my misery. Wherefore I know not what I should say unto my wife, nor with what face I should look upon her. Alas, she hath undone me because of her coming, although indeed she thinketh she

hath a good occasion, for she believeth that her daughter shall be married, in which thing she shall find me a liar. Again, I have pity of the little girl, for I know she will speak thus unto me: "O father, will you kill me? If you forsake me, of whom shall I ask remedy?" Alas, what answer shall I make to this? Surely nature ought to move me to pity, and if that would not, yet shame should let²³ me. Alas, alas! What a great reproach is it, the father to be an occasion of his own child's death. How therefore am I troubled! On this part pity and shame; on the other side honour and glory doth much move me.

Cho. We also lament your chance, so much as it becometh women to lament the misery of princes.

Men. I pray you brother, let me see your hand.

Aga. I give you liberty, for I will put all the victory in your hand.

Men. I will not flatter you, brother, but I will show you faithfully my opinion. Surely when I saw you in such misery I was moved with brotherly pity, and lamented much your chance. Wherefore now I counsel you not to slay your daughter, neither to do yourself any damage²⁴ for my cause. For it is not meet that through my occasion you should hinder either yourself or any of your children. For I, weighing the matter, consider what a grievous thing it is to kill your own child. And besides this I pity much her, because I do consider she is my kinswoman and hath not deserved to die for Helen's cause. Wherefore I will counsel you not to sacrifice your daughter, but rather to send home again the whole host. And as for my part, I will agree unto you. For I, considering how a father ought to love his child, have changed clean my opinion. For I know a good man ought to follow that which is good.

Cho. O Menelaus, you have spoken like a nobleman.²⁵

Aga. I praise you, Menelaus, because you have changed your mind so gently.²⁶

Men. Surely, ambition and desire of wealth hath caused much strife between brethren, howbeit I do abhor such cruel brotherhood.

Aga. Although you are agreed, yet I am compelled to slay my daughter.

Men. Why? Nobody will compel you.

Aga. Yes truly, the whole host will require her of me.

Men. If you will send her home again, you need not deliver her to the Grecians.

Aga. If I should deceive them here, then they would punish me when I come home.

Men. You ought not, truly, to fear so much the host. For they know not of this matter.

Aga. But I doubt lest Calchas show them of it.

Men. You may remedy that in punishing him.

Aga. Brother, do you not fear Ulysses?

Men. Yes, truly, for it doth lie in his power to hurt either you or me.

Aga. I doubt²⁷ that, for he studieth very much to get the good will and favour of the people.

Men. He is desirous indeed of ambition and honour.

Aga. If he should gather the people together and declare unto them what Calchas hath said of my daughter, surely he might quickly persuade them to slay you and me, that they might get her the easilier. But if it should

chance that I should fly, then truly they would not only seek to destroy me, but also my children. Now therefore seeing that I am in such trouble that I know not what to do, I shall desire you, O Menelaus, not to show this news unto my wife before that Iphigeneia be already sacrificed, that I may be less moved with her piteous complaint. And I pray you also, O ye women, not to open this matter.

[Exeunt Agamemnon and Menelaus.]

Cho. Truly we may see now that they are most happy which, being neither in too high estate nor yet oppressed with too much poverty, may quietly enjoy the company of their friends. But behold, here cometh Clytemnestra the queen and Iphigeneia her daughter, being adorned with all noblesse.²⁸ Let us therefore meet her with much mirth, lest she should be abashed at her coming into a strange country.

[Enter Clytemnestra and Iphigeneia, with infant Orestes.]

Cly. This truly is a token of good luck that so many noblewomen meet us. Let us therefore come down from our chariot, that they may bring us to Agamemnon's lodging.

Iphi. I pray you, mother, be not offended with me, though I do embrace my father.

[Enter Agamemnon.]

Cly. O king Agamemnon, I am come hither to fulfil your commandment in that you sent for me.

Iphi. And I also, O father, am come, being not a little joyous that I may see you.

Aga. Neither am I sorry of your company, daughter, for of all my children I love you best.

Iphi. What is the cause, father, that you seem to be so sad, seeing you say you are so joyful at our coming?

Aga. You know, daughter, that he which ruleth an host shall have divers occasions to be troubled.

Iphi. Although indeed a captain over an host shall be disquieted with sundry causes, yet I pray you set aside all such troubles, and be merry with us which are therefore come unto you.

Aga. I will follow your counsel, daughter, for I will rejoice as long as I may have your company.

Iphi. But what meaneth this, father, that you do lament so?

Aga. I have good cause to mourn, for after this day I shall not see you again of a great while.

Iphi. I do not understand, O father, what you mean by this.

Aga. Truly, daughter, the more witley you speak, the more you trouble me.

Iphi. If it be so, father, then will I study to seem more foolish, that you may be delighted.

Aga. Surely I am constrained to praise greatly your wit, for I do delight much in it.

Iphi. I pray you then, father, set away all other business, and tarry amongst us, your children.

Aga. Indeed I am desirous so to do, although I cannot as yet have liberty.

Iphi. What is the matter, father, that you tarry here so long in this haven.

Aga. Truly, we are desirous to go hence, but we can have no passage.

Iphi. Where, I pray you, dwell those people which are called the Trojans?

Aga. They are under the Kingdom of Priamus.

Iphi. I would to god I might go with you into those parties.²⁹

Aga. I will grant you your request, daughter, for I am determined to take you with me.

Iphi. Shall I go alone, or else with my mother?

Aga. No, truly, you shall neither have the company of me, nor yet of your mother.

Iphi. Why? Will you set me in a strange house?

Aga. Leave to enquire of such things. For it is not lawful that women should know them.

Iphi. Make haste, O father, to go unto Troy, that you may come quickly again from thence.

Aga. So I do, daughter, but I must sacrifice first.

Iphi. Shall I be at the sacrifice, father?

Aga. Yea, daughter, for you must be one of the chiefest.

Iphi. Why? Shall I dance about it?

Aga. Truly, I count myself more happy because you do not understand me. Go your way, therefore, and make you ready with the other virgins. But let me

first take my leave of you, for this day shall separate you and me far asunder. Although this your marriage shall be very noble,³⁰ yet truly it doth grieve me to bestow you so far off, whom with such care I have brought up.

[Exit Iphigeneia.]

Clyt. Although you are somewhat troubled, yet I am not of so slender a wit but that I can easily be persuaded, seeing that both the custom and also time doth require. But tell me, I pray you, shall not Achilles be my daughter's husband?

Aga. Yes, truly.

Clyt. He is a meet marriage indeed, but I am desirous to know where he dwelleth.

Aga. His dwelling is about the flood, Aphidna.

Clyt. When, I pray you, shall the wedding be?

Aga. Truly, very shortly, for we make haste to go hence.

Clyt. If it be so, then you have need to sacrifice, that which must be done before the wedding.

Aga. I will go about it therefore, that the marriage may be done the quicklier.

Clyt. Where I pray you shall the feast be?

Aga. Here, because of the host.

Clyt. Show me, I pray you, the place, that I may be partaker of it.

Aga. I pray you, wife, obey me in this matter.

Clyt. What cause have you, O king, to say so, for when did I ever disobey you?

Aga. I am determined to marry my daughter here.

Clyt. Shall not I, being her mother, be at the wedding?

Aga. No, truly. For she shall be married amongst the Grecians.

Clyt. Where then shall I tarry?

Aga. It is best for you to go again to Greece.

Clyt. If I leave my daughter behind me, who shall then be in my stead?

Aga. Truly, I will do your office, for it doth not become you to be amongst such a company of men.

Clyt. Although that it be not meet indeed, yet the mother ought to be at the marriage of the daughter.

Aga. But I think you have more need to be amongst your other daughters at Greece. Make you ready therefore to go home.

Clyt. I will not go home yet, for you ought to do sacrifice only, but I must see all things made ready for the marriage.

[Exit Clytemnestra.]

Aga. I have laboured in vain. For although I have used deceit and craft, yea unto my dearest friends, yet I cannot fulfil my purpose.

*[Exit Agamemnon. Chorus remains.]*³¹

[Enter Achilles.]

Achil. Where is Agamemnon, the captain of the Grecians, or who of his servants will call him unto me? For I, being moved with the piteous complaints of the people, am compelled to enquire of their captains the cause why they, being constrained to forsake both their wives, their children, and also their country, now lie here idly without any valiant deeds doing.

[Enter Clytemnestra.]

Clyt. As soon as I heard your voice, O Achilles, I came out hastily to meet you.

Achil. What woman is this that seemeth so beautiful?

Cly. I do not marvel though you know not me, whom you never saw. Yet nevertheless, I must needs praise your shamefastness.³²

Achil. Who are you, I pray you, that you being a woman dare come amongst such a company of men?

Cly. My name is Clytemnestra, and I am the daughter of Leda and the wife of Agamemnon.

Achil. You have declared very well in few words what you are, and, although you be a noblewoman, yet is it not lawful for me to tarry here.

Clyt. Whither go you? I pray you let us shake hands together. For I trust this marriage shall be very fortunate unto you.

Achil. It is not lawful that I should be so familiar with Agamemnon's wife.

Clyt. Yes, truly, you may well enough, seeing you shall marry my daughter.

Achil. I do not know what marriage you mean, except you have heard some

news, which, because you know to be untrue, you report as a false tale.

Clyt. I do not marvel, although you will not be acknown of this marriage.
For it is the fashion of all young men to keep it secret for a time.

Achil. No, truly, I will not dissemble with you. For indeed I never desired
the marriage of your daughter.

Clyt. If it be so indeed, then I marvel as much of your sayings as you did
of mine.

Achil. Tell me, I pray you, wherefore you have spoken these things. For it
may happen that both of us are deceived.

Clyt. Think you that it is not a great shame unto me, that I have told
such a lie? But I will now go, and know the truth of all this matter.

Achil. Tell me, I pray you, or you go hence, where your husband is. For I am
very desirous to speak with him.

[Enter Senex.]

Sen. Tarry I pray you, O Achilles, for I must speak both with you and also
with Clytemnestra.

Clyt. Who doth call me so hastily?

Sen. It is even I -- the servant of Agamemnon.

Clyt. If you have anything to say to us, come near and tell it quickly
without any circumstance, for you need not to doubt us. For I know you
have ever served diligently both me and also divers of mine ancestors.

Sen. Because I have been ever faithful unto you, therefore now I must
open unto you a very secret thing. Truly, Agamemnon hath determined to slay

Iphigeneia his daughter in sacrifice.

Clyt. Surely, I think either you be mad to tell such an unlikely tale, or else, if it be so indeed, Agamemnon to be half out of his wit to agree to such a cruel murder.

Sen. No, truly, he is not mad, though indeed he hath played the madman's part.

Clyt. Wherefore, I pray you, hath he pretended³³ to do so cruel a deed.

Sen. Truly he is compelled to do so. For Calchas the prophesier hath answered that the Grecians cannot sail to Troy without the death of your daughter.

Clyt. If this be true, wherefore then did he feign that she should be married?

Sen. That was because you should be the better willing to let her come.

Clyt. How I pray you, do you know this?

Sen. Agamemnon himself showed me of this thing. For once he did repent himself so much of the consenting to his daughter's death that he was determined to send you another letter by me which was contrary to the first.

Clyt. Why did you not deliver them to me?

Sen. As I was bringing them, I happened to meet with Menelaus, who with violence took them from me.

*[Exit Senex.]*³⁴

Cly. Hear you this, O Achilles?

Achil. Yea, truly, I hear it well, and I pity you much. For I do even abhor this cruel deed of your husband.

Clyt. Now therefore, seeing this thing is chanced so unfortunately unto me, I shall most earnestly desire you, O Achilles, to help me now in this misery. For the reproach shall be yours, seeing my daughter, being sent for under the colour of your name, shall now be slain. Besides this, if you do not help us, we can by no means avoid this mischief. For I alone being a woman cannot persuade Agamemnon. And if you forsake us, none shall dare to take our part.

Cho. Truly, it is a very troublesome thing to have children. For we are even by nature compelled to be sorry for their mishaps.

Achil. My mind is troubled more and more, for I am wonderfully moved with your piteous complaint. Wherefore, seeing you have required help at my hand, I will promise you to deliver both you and your daughter from this misery, if by any means I may withstand the cruel pretence of Agamemnon and his brother. For this matter pertaineth unto me also, because that if she, being sent for in my name, should be slain, then truly it would turn to no small dishonour to me. Wherefore I am compelled to help your daughter so much as shall lie in my power, not only for that I am moved with pity, but also because it should sound to no little reproach to me if that through my occasion your daughter should be slain.

Clyt. Surely you have spoken very well and like a noble man. How therefore, I pray you, shall I give you thanks worthy your desserts? For if I should praise you too much, I fear lest I should move you to hatred rather than to pity, for then you would judge me to be a flatterer, which of all noble men is to be abhorred. Again, if I should give you fewer thanks than you deserve, then I may well be counted unthankful. So that now I doubt what to do. But seeing you so gently have promised me your help, I will submit both me and my daughter under your rule. Wherefore, if it please you, I will send for her hither, that she herself may require³⁵ help at your hand.

Achil. No, truly, I think it not meet that she should come abroad. For, surely, men would judge evil of her if she should come much amongst company. It is best therefore that you keep her at home, and as for my part, truly I will do as much for her as shall lie in my power. But I think it best that you should prove first if you can persuade her father not to deliver her.

Clyt. Surely, I shall not prevail with him. For he is so fearful, that he dareth do nothing without the consent of the whole host.

Achil. Although you think you shall not persuade him, yet it is meet that first you should show him what a grievous thing it is to be called a destroyer of his own children. And if he be nothing moved with that, then you may lawfully seek help at other folk's hands.

Clyt. You have spoken very well, wherefore I will follow your counsel. But tell me, I pray you, where shall I find you, that I may show you what answer he doth make me?

Achil. I will tarry here till you come again. For surely if I should go with you, you should be slandered³⁶ by me.

Clyt. In all this matter I will be ruled by you. Wherefore, if I obtain my suit, the thanks shall be yours and not mine. *[Enter Agamemnon.]* But now here cometh Agamemnon. Show me, I pray you therefore, what I should answer him if he ask for my daughter, seeing that she maketh such moan.

*[Exit Achilles.]*³⁷

Aga. I am glad that I have met with you, O Clytemnestra. For I have divers things to talk with you of.

Clyt. If you have anything to say to me, tell me, I pray you, for I am ready to hear.

Aga. First, call out my daughter that she may go with me to the temple of the goddess Diana. For I have prepared all thing ready for the sacrifice.

Clyt. You have spoken well, though indeed your doings do not agree with your words. But go your ways, daughter, with your father, and take with you your brother, Orestes.

*[Enter Iphigeneia with Orestes.]*³⁸

Aga. Why do you weep and lament so, daughter?

Iphi. Alas! How should I suffer this trouble, seeing that all mortal men are vexed both in the beginning, the middest, and the ending of their misery.

Aga. What is the cause that all you are so sorrowful?

Clyt. I will show you, if you will promise me to tell me one thing which I will require.

Aga. Yes, truly, I will grant you your request. For I did think to have asked it of you.

Clyt. I hear say that you go about to slay your own child.³⁹

Aga. What! You have spoken those things which you ought neither to say nor yet to think.

Clyt. Answer me, I pray you, to this question, as you promised.

Aga. It is not lawful for me to answer you to those things which you ought not to know.⁴⁰

Clyt. I have not enquired of anything that doth not become me. But take you heed rather, lest you make such an answer as you ought not.

Aga. Who hath done you any injury, or who hath given you cause to say so?

Clyt. Ask you this question of me? As though your craft could not be perceived!

Aga. Alas, I am troubled more and more. For all my secret counsel is now openly declared.

Clyt. Indeed I have heard of all that which you have prepared for your daughter. Yea, and you yourself have partly confessed it in holding your peace.

Aga. I am constrained to hold my peace because I have told you so manifest a lie that I cannot deny it.

Clyt. Hearken now, I pray you, therefore. For I must needs tell you of your fault. Do you not remember that you married me without the good will of all my friends, taking me away with strong hand after that you had slain my other husband, Tantalus? Which cruel deeds my brother Castor, and Pollux, would have revenged, except Tyndarus my father had delivered you out of that peril. So that by his means you did obtain me to be your wife, who after I was married never showed myself disobedient unto you in anything. And then I happened to have three sons at one birth, and afterward one daughter. And will you now slay her, knowing no just cause why? For if any man should ask of you the cause of the death of your daughter, you would answer "For Helen's sake", which can be no lawful cause. For it is not meet that we should slay our own child for a naughty woman's sake, neither destroy those that by nature we ought to love for their cause only which are hated of all men. Besides this, if you kill my daughter, what lamentation must I needs make, when I shall go home and want the company of her, considering that she was slain by the hands of her own father! Wherefore, if you will not be moved with pity, take heed lest you compel me to speak those things that do not become a good wife. Yea, and you yourself do those things that a good man ought not. But tell me now, I pray you: what good do you obtain by the death of your daughter? Do you look for a fortunate return? Truly, you

cannot by this means get that, for that journey cannot end happily which is begun with mischief. Besides this, surely you shall stir up the gods to anger against you. For they do even hate them, that are man-quellers. Again, you cannot enjoy the company of your other children when you come home, for they will even fear and abhor you, seeing that willingly you do destroy your daughter. And you shall not only fall into this mischief, but also you shall purchase yourself the name of a cruel tyrant. For you were chosen the captain over the Grecians to execute justice to all men, and not to do both me and also your children such an injury. For it is not meet that your children should be punished for that which pertaineth not to you. Neither ought I to lose my daughter for Helena's cause, who hath never showed herself faithful to her husband.

Cho. It is meet, O Agamemnon, that you should follow your wife's counsel. For it is not lawful that a father should destroy his child.

Iphi. Now, O father, I, kneeling upon my knees and making most humble suit, do most earnestly desire you to have pity upon me, your daughter, and not to slay me so cruelly. For you know it is given to all mortal men to be desirous of life. Again, remember that I am your daughter, and how you seemed ever to love me best of all your children, in so much that you were wont ever to desire that you might see me married to one worthy of my degree, and I did ever wish again that I might live to see you an old man, that you might have much joy both of me and also of your other children. And will you now consent to my death, forgetting both that which you were wont to say, and also what pain you and my mother took in bringing me up, knowing no cause in me worthy of death? For what have I to do with Helena? But now, father, seeing you are nothing moved with my lamentation, I will call hither my young brother Orestes, for I know he will be sorry to see his sister slain.⁴¹ And again you cannot choose, but you must needs have pity either of him or else of me, considering what a lawful request we do desire. For you know that all men are desirous of life, and there is no wise man but he will choose rather to live in misery than to die.

Aga. I know in what things I ought to show pity, and wherein I ought not.

And I love my children as it becometh a father. For I do not this of myself, nor yet for my brother's sake, but rather by compulsion of the host. For the gods have answered that they cannot pass the sea without your death, and they are so desirous to go thither that they care not what trouble and misery they suffer, so that they may see it. Wherefore it lieth not in my power to withstand them. For I am not able to make any resistance against them. I am therefore compelled, daughter, to deliver you to them.

[Exit Agamemnon.]

Clyt. Alas, daughter, into what misery are both you and I driven, seeing that your own father will consent to your death!

Iphi. Alas, mother, this is the last day that ever I shall see you. O unhappy Troy, which hast nourished and brought up that wicked man, Paris. O unfortunate Venus, which didst promise to give Helena to him, for you have been the cause of my destruction, though indeed I through my death shall purchase the Grecians a glorious victory. Alas, mother, in what an unlucky time was I born, that mine own father, which hath consented unto my death, doth now forsake me in this misery. I would to god that the Grecians had never taken in hand this journey. But methinks, mother, I see a great company of men coming hither. What are they, I pray you?

Clyt. Truly, yonder is Achilles.

Iphi. Let me then, I pray you, go hence that I may hide my face. For I am ashamed.

Clyt. What cause have you so to do?

Iphi. Truly, because it was said that I should have been his wife.

Clyt. Daughter, you must lay away all shamefastness now, for you may use no niceness,⁴² but rather prove⁴³ by what means you may best save your life.

[Enter Achilles.]

Cho. Alas, Clytemnestra, how unhappy art thou! For truly there is great talking of thee in the whole city.

Clyt. Whereof, I pray you?

Cho. Of your daughter how she shall be slain.

Clyt. You have brought me very evil news. But tell me, I pray you, doth nobody speak against it?

Achil. Yes I myself have been in danger of my life, because I took your daughter's part.

Clyt. Who, I pray you, dare hurt you?

Achil. Truly, the whole host.

Clyt. Do not your own countrymen of Myrmido help you?

Achil. No, truly, for even they also did speak against me, saying that I was in love with her, and therefore I did prefer mine own pleasure above the commodity⁴⁴ of my country.

Clyt. What answer then made you unto them?

Achil. I said that I ought not to suffer her to be slain which was reported by her own father that she should have been my wife.

Clyt. You said well, indeed. For Agamemnon sent for her from Greece, feigning that it⁴⁵ was for that purpose.

Achil. But though I could not prevail against such a multitude of people, yet I will do as much as shall lie in my power for you.

Clyt. Alas, then you alone shall be compelled to strive against many.

Achil. Do you not see a great company of harnessed⁴⁶ men?

Clyt. I pray god they be your friends!

Achil. Yes, truly, that they be.

Clyt. Then I hope my daughter shall not die.

Achil. No that she shall not, if I can help her.

Clyt. But will there come anybody hither to slay her?

Achil. Yea, truly, Ulysses will be here anon with a great company of men to take her away.

Clyt. Is he commanded to do so, or doth he it but of his own head?

Achil. No, truly, he is not commanded.

Clyt. Alas, then he hath taken upon him a wicked deed, seeing he will defile himself with the danger and death of my daughter.

Achil. Truly, but I will not suffer him.

Clyt. But if he go about to take my daughter away with strong power, what shall I do then?

Achil. You were best to keep her by you, for the matter shall be driven to that point.

Iphi. Hearken, O mother, I pray you, unto my words. For I perceive you are angry with your husband, which you may not do. For you cannot obtain your

purpose by that means. And you ought rather to have thanked Achilles, because he so gently⁴⁷ hath promised you his help, which may happen to bring him into a great mischief. I would counsel you therefore to suffer this trouble patiently, for I must needs die, and will suffer it willingly. Consider, I pray you mother, for what a lawful cause I shall be slain. Doth not both the destruction of Troy, and also the wealth of Greece, which is the most fruitful country of the world, hang upon my death? And if this wicked enterprise of the Trojans be not revenged, then truly the Grecians shall not keep neither their children nor yet their wives in peace. And I shall not only remedy all these things with my death, but also get a glorious renown to the Grecians for ever. Again, remember how I was not born for your sake only, but rather for the commodity of my country. Think you therefore that it is meet that such a company of men being gathered together to revenge the great injury which all Greece hath suffered should be let of⁴⁸ their journey for my cause? Surely, mother, we cannot speak against this. For do you not think it to be better that I should die than so many noble men to be let of their journey for one woman's sake? For one noble man is better than a thousand women. Besides this, seeing my death is determined amongst the gods, truly, no mortal man ought to withstand it. Wherefore I will offer myself willingly to death for my country. For by this means I shall not only leave a perpetual memory of my death, but I shall cause also the Grecians to rule over the barbarians, which doth as it were properly belong to them. For the Grecians by nature are free, like as the barbarians are born to bondage.

Cho. Surely you are happy, O Iphigeneia, that you can suffer so patiently all this trouble.

Achil. Truly, I would count myself happy if I might obtain thee, O Iphigeneia, to be my wife. And I think thee, O Greece, to be very fortunate because thou hast nourished such a one. For you have spoken very well in that you will not strive against the determination of the gods. Wherefore I, being not only moved with pity for that I see you brought into such a necessity, but also stirred up more with love towards you, desiring to have you to my wife, will promise you faithfully to withstand the Grecians, as

much as shall lie in my power, that they shall not slay you.

Iphi. Surely, I have spoken even as I thought, indeed. Wherefore I shall desire you, O Achilles, not to put yourself in danger for my cause, but suffer me rather to save all Greece with my death.

Achil. Truly, I wonder greatly at the boldness of your mind. And because you seem to be so willing to die, I cannot speak against you. Yet nevertheless I will promise to help you still, lest you should happen to change your mind.

*[Exit Achilles.]*⁴⁹

Iphi. Wherefore, mother, do you hold your peace, lamenting so within yourself?

Clyt. Alas, I, wretched creature, have great cause to mourn!

Iphi. Be of good comfort, mother, I pray you, and follow my counsel, and do not tear your clothes so.

Clyt. How can I do otherwise, seeing I shall lose you?

Iphi. I pray you, mother, study not to save my life, for I shall get you much honour by my death.

Clyt. What? Shall not I lament your death?

Iphi. No, truly, you ought not, seeing that I shall both be sacrificed to the goddess Diana, and also save Greece.

Cly. Well, I will follow your counsel, daughter, seeing you have spoken so well. But tell me, what shall I say to your sisters from you?

Iphi. Desire them, I pray you, not to mourn for my death.

Clyt. And what shall I say unto the other virgins from you?

Iphi. Bid them all farewell in my name. And, I pray you, for my sake bring up my little brother, Orestes, till he come to man's age.⁵⁰

Clyt. Take your leave of him, for this is the last day that ever you shall see him.

Iphi. Farewell, my well-beloved brother. For I am even as it were compelled to love you, because you were so glad to help me.

Clyt. Is there any other thing that I may do for you at Greece?

Iphi. No, truly, but I pray you not to hate my father for this deed. For he is compelled to do it for the wealth and honour of Greece.

Clyt. If he hath done this willingly then truly he hath committed a deed far unworthy of such a noble man as he is.

Iphi. Who is this that will carry me hence so soon?⁵¹

Clyt. I will go with you, O daughter.

Iphi. Take heed, I pray you, lest you happen to do that which shall not become you. Wherefore, O Mother, I pray you follow my counsel and tarry here still. For I must needs go to be sacrificed unto the goddess Diana.

Clyt. And will you go away, O daughter, leaving me, your mother, here?

Iphi. Yea, surely, mother, I must go from you unto such a place from whence I shall never come again, although I have not deserved it.

Clyt. I pray you, daughter, tarry and do not forsake me now.

Iphi. Surely, I will go hence, mother. For if I did tarry, I should move you to more lamentation. Wherefore I shall desire all you women to sing some song of my death, and to prophesy good luck unto the Grecians. For with my death I shall purchase unto them a glorious victory. Bring me therefore unto the altar of the temple of the goddess Diana, that with my blood I may pacify the wrath of the goddess⁵² against you.

Cho. O Queen Clytemnestra of most honour, after what fashion shall we lament, seeing we may not show any token of sadness at the sacrifice?

Iphi. I would not have you to mourn for my cause, for I will not refuse to die.

Cho. Indeed, by this means you shall get yourself a perpetual renown for ever.

Iphi. Alas, thou sun, which art comfort to man's life, O thou light which dost make joyful all creatures, I shall be compelled by and by to forsake you all and to change my life.

[Exit Iphigeneia.]

Cho. Behold, yonder goeth the virgin to be sacrificed, with a great company of soldiers after her, whose beautiful face and fair body anon shall be defiled with her own blood. Yet happy art thou, O Iphigeneia, that with thy death thou shalt purchase unto the Grecians a quiet passage, which I pray god may not only happen fortunately unto them, but also that they may return again prosperously with a glorious victory.

[Enter Messenger.]

Nun. Come hither, O Clytemnestra, for I must speak with you.

Clyt. Tell me, I pray you, what would you with me that you call so hastily? Is there any more mischief in hand that I must hear of?

Nun. I must tell you of a wonder which hath happened at the sacrificing of your daughter.

Clyt. Show me, I pray you, quickly what it is!

Nun. As we went unto the place where the sacrifice should be, and passed through the pleasant fields where the whole host waited for your daughter, Agamemnon, seeing her brought unto her death, began to lament and weep. But she, perceiving what moan her father made, said unto him these words: "O father, I am come hither to offer my body willingly for the wealth of my country. Wherefore seeing that I shall be sacrificed for the commodity of all Greece, I do desire you that none of the Grecians may slay me privily. For I will make no resistance against you." And when she had spoken these words, all they which were present were wonderfully astonished⁵³ at the stoutness of her mind. So after this, Achilles with the rest of the whole host began to desire the goddess Diana that she would accept the sacrifice of the virgin's blood, and that she would grant them a prosperous success of their journey. And when they had made an end, the priest, taking the sword in his hand, began to look for a place convenient where he might slay your daughter. Suddenly there chanced a great wonder! For although all the people heard the noise of the stroke, yet she vanished suddenly away. And when all they, marvelling at it, began to give a great screech, then there appeared unto them a white hart⁵⁴ lying before the altar, struggling for life. And Calchas, being then present and seeing what had happened, did wonderfully rejoice and told the captains that this hart was sent of the goddess because she would not have her altar defiled with the blood of your daughter. Moreover, he said that this was a token of good luck, and that their journey should chance prosperously unto them. Wherefore he willed that they should tarry no longer here. And when this was so finished, Agamemnon willed me to show all these things unto you, because that I myself was present then. Wherefore I shall desire you to think no unkindness in the king, your husband. For surely the secret power of the gods will save them whom they love. For this day, your daughter hath been both alive and dead.

Cho. Surely, O Clytemnestra, you ought to rejoice of this news, that your daughter is taken up into heaven.

Clyt. But I am in doubt whether I should believe that thou, O daughter, art amongst the gods, or else that they have feigned it to comfort me.⁵⁵

Cho. Behold, yonder cometh Agamemnon, who can tell the truth of all this matter.

[Enter Agamemnon.]

Aga. Truly, wife, we are happy for our daughter's sake. For surely she is placed in heaven. But now I think it best that you go home, seeing that we shall take our journey so shortly unto Troy. Wherefore now, fare you well. And of this matter I will commune⁵⁶ more at my return. And in the mean season I pray god send you well to do, and your heart's desire.

Cho. O happy Agamemnon, the gods grant thee a fortunate journey unto Troy, and a most prosperous return again.

Finis.

¹ Lumley's spelling of the names of her characters is not consistent. On her title page and in the list of characters she uses the Greek spelling, "Iphigeneia", but twice in the play's Argument she also uses the Latin spelling "Iphigenia". In the script's running heads at the top of each page, she uses "Iphigeneya", except once. Clytemnestra is spelled with both "I" and "y". Agamemnon sometimes loses his second "m". Etc.

² This Argument is not extant in Greek but was added by Erasmus, from whom Lumley translates it.

³ Aulis in antiquity was a small town on the central Boeotian coast in the Epirus Strait facing the island of Euboea. Lumley seems to think of it as not in Greece, from which the host has come and to which Agamemnon will urge Clytemnestra to return.

⁴ MS: wisemen; which may indicate a particular professional category, i.e. prophets, rather than simply men who are wise, cf. the Biblical “magi” or “Three Wise Men”. In Erasmus there is only “Calchas augur” who speaks “consultis extis” = having consulted the entrails. Lumley may have changed this to downplay the play’s paganism.

⁵ Erasmus, following Euripides, makes it clear that Orestes is an infant (“Oreste infante”). Lumley does not translate this detail, adding instead the reminder that Orestes is Iphigeneia’s brother. Her thinking throughout is not focused on issues of staging, and she may not have thought of Orestes, a babe in arms, as a prominent figure.

⁶ Lumley’s move to the present tense here differs from Erasmus’ text, which has been in a historic present throughout. It is perhaps significant that the shift coincides with the arrival of Iphigeneia and her mother.

⁷ MS: noble men. Throughout, Lumley gives two words even when the modern sense clearly requires the meaning “aristocrats”. Erasmus here has “principes” = princes. Lumley’s parallel between “noble men” and their “noble enterprise” (rem tantam) is also not in Erasmus.

⁸ This tag, “argumenti finis” in Latin, does not appear in all editions of Erasmus.

⁹ The Greek text and *some* editions of Erasmus give nine “personae fabulae” [characters in the plot]. Other Erasmus editions, including the 1507 Venetian edition, omit, as does Lumley, the eighth on the list: “Senex minister”, an old man attendant. (The corresponding Gk term “therapōv”, appearing in the 1503 Aldine text from which Erasmus worked, does not imply an age; it is unclear why Erasmus assumed he was old.) This omission, along with Lumley’s translation of “The end of the argument” points to the specific edition of Erasmus’s translation she was using. The order of the characters given in Lumley, except for the omission, follows the Greek and Latin texts and, broadly but not precisely, the action of the play. The role omitted may designate the servant who first announces the arrival of Clytemnestra and Iphigeneia in Aulis, denoted in the script proper as Nuntius by Erasmus and as “Agg.[elos]” in Greek. (Modern editions generally distinguish two messengers, one in this role and a different one announcing Iphigeneia’s death at the play’s end.)

¹⁰ The description with the title “king” corresponds to the Latin “Agamemnon imperator” which appears in some earlier editions of Erasmus’s Latin. Other editions simply give “Agamemnon”.

¹¹ The Lumley MS, like Erasmus’ text, has no stage directions. I have added them in an attempt to clarify the action, using Erasmus and the Greek text for guidance where they provide staging details Lumley omits. This absence of stage directions tends to reinforce the likelihood that Lumley thought of her translation as a scholarly and philological endeavour rather than one intended for full theatrical performance, though a text for reading aloud by a group would also not need directions.

¹² i.e. the Pleiades. Erasmus and Euripides both have Agamemnon ask what that star is, moving across the sky. There, the Old Man replies that it is Sirius, near the Pleiades, still

riding high in the middle of the night. Lumley's version, with its "shooting star" is more suggestive of some sort of portent bearing on the present crisis.

¹³ fragile

¹⁴ Erasmus: iuvenes Graeciae opulentissimi.

¹⁵ Sparta.

¹⁶ MS: noble men. Erasmus refers only to the agreement ("vetusta soceri foedera").

¹⁷ coming ahead of you.

¹⁸ The words "truly" (occurring 50 times in the play) and "surely" (22 times) function as intensive or assertive markers that indicate the speaker is staking out a position of especial conviction. Many of the play's exchanges are structured as duelling claims flagged by such assertions.

¹⁹ I don't care about that.

²⁰ Senex falls silent at this point. Whether he here leaves or stays on stage is not indicated in any of the texts, which are interested only in speech, not stage action.

²¹ indecorous, immodest.

²² MS gives this word as a catchword only at the bottom of the previous page, omitting it by error on the following page. Speech-prefix catchwords are sometimes missing or erroneous throughout the MS.

²³ hinder

²⁴ MS: damage (cf. Fr. dommage), has a sense of attracting pity as well as injury.

²⁵ MS: noble man. Erasmus here refers more specifically to Menelaus' ancestry.

²⁶ The MS reading. Retained here to keep the point about social status: i.e. in the manner of a "gentleman".

²⁷ suspect, an ordinary meaning in early modern English.

²⁸ MS: nobles, but no-one accompanies them. Erasmus here has the Chorus give a speech in praise of their nobility and descent: "ad summum sunt evectae/ Decus ac fortunae splendorem."

²⁹ parts, places.

³⁰ Purkiss (172): "Agamemnon imagines Iphigeneia married to Hades", the god of the underworld.

³¹ A further Choral ode is omitted at this point, preceding Achilles' entrance. The resulting transition in Lumley is rather awkward.

³² modesty

³³ intended

³⁴ Lumley indicates no exit for the character. He does not speak again and the play turns its attention elsewhere.

³⁵ request

³⁶ That is, Clytemnestra's reputation for honour and chastity would suffer if Achilles were to be seen with her, as a married woman.

³⁷ The translation is confusing here, as Lumley has omitted a Choral Ode between Achilles' departure and Agamemnon's entrance. During this Choral interlude, Clytemnestra also leaves the stage, telling Iphigeneia offstage of the plan to sacrifice her. This explains why she already knows of it when she appears shortly after, which is obscure in Lumley.

³⁸ It is clear from both Greek and Latin that Orestes is to be brought on here, carried by Iphigeneia in the folds of her garment. However, this dramatic detail is passed over by Lumley.

³⁹ MS: "daughter" is crossed out and "childe" written above; Erasmus has "Gnatam" = female child. Lumley has had to choose and may have changed her mind here.

⁴⁰ MS: *thos thynges, whiche*. It seems more likely, though, that Agamemnon is claiming he need not speak of anything improper for women to know, not just the immediate case.

⁴¹ In Erasmus, following Euripides, Iphigeneia here pathetically enlists the silent baby Orestes, whom she is already holding, as taking her part and begging Agamemnon not to kill her.

⁴² delicacy

⁴³ test, try

⁴⁴ Advantage, interest, benefit. It does not have solely an economic application.

⁴⁵ MS: *is*. An error.

⁴⁶ in armour

⁴⁷ MS: *gentelly*

⁴⁸ hindered in, prevented from

⁴⁹ In Erasmus, following Euripides, Achilles outlines, and then presumably leaves to initiate, a plan to save Iphigeneia from death, should she happen to change her mind at the last minute. Lumley omits this plan, along with much else in this scene, keeping the focus instead on Iphigeneia's decision.

⁵⁰ Orestes at man's age will kill Clytemnestra, in punishment for having killed Agamemnon for sacrificing Iphigeneia.

⁵¹ Iphigeneia's question seems to imply that someone has entered ("this"), whose identity she seeks to know. In Erasmus, she simply asks who it will be who will lead her away -- "*Me quis hinc deduxerit*".

⁵² In the MS, goddess and gods are alike spelled "goddess" throughout. I have chosen the reading in each case that seems most likely. Here it could be either, but the Greek legend specified that it was specifically the anger of Artemis that was delaying the fleet, so I have preferred this reading.

⁵³ astounded, amazed.

⁵⁴ A hart is a male deer. Interestingly, Lumley has changed the gender of the beast. In the Latin ("*cerva*") and Greek ("*elaphos gar aspairous*"), it is clearly female, a doe or hind. The change, which includes giving it the immaculate colour "white," may have to do with an

association of Lumley's between Iphigeneia's sacrifice and that of Christ, though the latter is typically imagined as a lamb, not as a deer. Compare also Psalm 41 (Vulgate):

"Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus"
[Just as the hart longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, o God]. The change of gender may also be significant for considering Lumley's emphasis on the reorientation of Iphigeneia from the role of bride to that of hero-saviour of Greece. (A white hart was also the personal emblem of Richard II, but a connection is inscrutable.)

⁵⁵ Clytemnestra's suspicions are ominous for the future.

⁵⁶ i.e. discuss, consult