

γαίας μονόφρουρον ἔρκος.

ἢκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμήστρα, κράτος·
δίκη γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀρχηγοῦ τίειν
γυναικ' ἔρημωθέντος ἄρσενος θρόνου.
σὺ δ' εἴτε κεδνὸν εἴτε μὴ πεπυσμένη

270

273. δ' εἰ τὸ corr. to text.

known, the plain, the sea, the mountains, and the fortress. For 'Απλα γαῖα Argolis see L. and Sc. s.v.: for *γαῖας ἔρκος* cf. Eur. *Heracl.* 441 ποῖον δὲ γαῖας ἔρκος οὐκ ἀφίγμεθα;—These lines have been made difficult only by wrong punctuation. They are generally given (by those who do not alter the words) thus; πέλοιτο...εὔπραξις, ως θελει...ἔρκος, 'Let good fortune follow, as is the wish of this one sole defence of Argos, bound by close ties', the last words being supposed to describe either the speakers or Clytaemnestra. But (1) *εὔπραξις*, for *εὔπραγ्यα*, is an incorrect form, and *εὐ πρᾶξις* is no better: this objection has been frequently taken and many emendations are based on it: but further (2) *γαῖας ἔρκος* is not a possible description of a person or persons; in translation this is partly concealed by the use of the abstract 'defence', but *ἔρκος* is a *rampart* or *wall* and *γαῖας ἔρκος* a *town* or *fort*, as appears by Eur. *I. c.*; in no language could persons describe themselves without explanation as 'this fence' or 'this fort': (3) *ἄγχιστον* has then no point, and indeed the whole sentence, so taken, is beside the purpose.

270. *σεβίζων...κράτος* i.e. in obedience to her command. Here Clytaemnestra comes forth attended (see v. 363).

273—275. *Whether tidings good or not good prompt thee to celebrate this ceremony of hopeful announcement, I would gladly learn; though, if thou wouldest keep the secret, I am content.* *κεδνὸν* literally 'a good thing', cf. θαυμαστὸν ποιεῖς, ἀτοπὸν λέγεις, etc. Kühner *Gk. Gr.* § 403.—With *μὴ* supply *κεδνόν*, as the

context and order of the words require. The elders, as persons worthy of the queen's confidence, wish to know whether her demonstration is genuine or a feint. She has intimated that she has good news; but as she has not disclosed it, the elders feel a very natural doubt whether in reality she is not merely trying to fore-stall and discredit a *bad* report which has reached her and must soon get abroad. That this is their doubt and the purport of their question is shown not only by the words of it, but by the addition *οὐδὲ σιγώσῃ φθόνος*. Only on the supposition that the news was really bad could the queen have any motive for such concealment. The elders, it must be remembered, are preoccupied with the dangers near home, to which they have just referred and afterwards more plainly refer. They attribute their fears to the queen, as, assuming her honesty, they must do; indeed she herself had pretended to share them (see v. 874).—*εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν*, dative (Latin ablative) of circumstance, literally 'with fair-announcing hopes', i.e. with promising announcement; see v. 101, ἐκ θυσιῶν φαίνοντ' ἐλπίς.—*εἰ τὸ* (M. but corrected by the same hand) is a mere slip.—*εἰ τι* (Auratus) is widely adopted, with the interpretation 'But whether thou hast heard some good news, or hast not heard any, but art sacrificing in the hope of such' etc. But (1) the proper form to express this would be *εἰ τι κεδνὸν πεπυσμένη*, *εἴτε μή*, (2) the mere expectation of news would be no reasonable motive for the ceremony at all.