

There is something singularly impressive in the very simplicity of this conception, this living embodiment of the divine command. It is worth notice, that the compression of the part is in no way due to stage-necessity or limited resources. On the contrary Pylades speaks just at that point in the play, when, with a limited number of actors, it is not very convenient that he should, and is silent through long scenes in which it would have been easy to provide him with a voice. But with Aeschylus Pylades, like Orestes, is simply the servant of Apollo, sent with him lest at any time, lest above all at the last dreadful moment, the arm of flesh should fail. He acts when he does, and only then, because there is no other need for his function. The spirit of the legend could not in any way be more sharply and vigorously expressed.

From another point of view the play of Aeschylus explains, what otherwise we could hardly guess, how and why the person of Pylades was introduced into the narrative. Certainly we could not discover it from Sophocles, in whose admirable drama Pylades, with no part at all, is little more than a piece of the scenery, and but for conventional expectation might apparently have been left out. But the legend, as we find it in Aeschylus, by making Orestes homeless and resourceless, made it also necessary that he should be provided with a helper. He goes (and Aeschylus does not let us forget it) to slay a despot, whose power and person were defended by armed men, and to deliver his country from a tyrannical usurpation. Had he been sent alone, he would have been sent, unless the god designed to work a miracle for him, to certain death, if indeed he had ever arrived in Argos. But Pylades, as Pindar tells us¹, was a man who had 'rich lands' at Cirrha, in the sacred plain between Parnassus and the sea. Pylades therefore had means and men at command, and with him to aid, the journey and enterprise of Orestes were possible. In sharing the peril Pylades, as well as Orestes, acted by command of Apollo, who even dictated the means of attack that they were to use². This is all that Aeschylus tells or suggests, and probably the legend furnished no more.

There is an accidental circumstance, which makes it specially desirable that, in approaching the *Choephoroi*, we should clear our minds

¹ *Pyth.* XI. 15. Pindar's story of Orestes is in so many respects at variance with that of Aeschylus, that we cannot borrow a trait from him with confidence. But since the only thing that he notices about Pylades is that he was rich, and

since this fact precisely fits the purpose for which Pylades is required in the circumstances given by Aeschylus, we may perhaps conclude that it is a common and primitive touch.

² *vv.* 556 foll.