

Go, my son,—for thy father's end hath come,—summon, I pray thee, all thy brethren; summon, too, the hapless Alcmena, in vain the bride of Zeus,—that ye may learn from my dying lips what oracles I know.

HY. Nay, thy mother is not here; as it chances, she hath her abode at Tiryns by the sea. Some of thy children she hath taken to live with her there, and others, thou wilt find, are dwelling in Thebè's town. But we who are with thee, my father, will render all service that is needed, at thy bidding.

HE. Hear, then, thy task: now is the time to show what stuff is in thee, who art called my son.

It was foreshown to me by my Sire of old that I should perish by no creature that had the breath of life,

Most MSS. have *φανῆς* (the Aldine reading), or *φανῆς*. *πρόφαντον* L.

1159 *πρόφαντον* 1:

1160 *πρὸς τῶν πνεόντων* (*πλεόντων* V<sup>2</sup>) *μηδενὸς θανεῖν ὑπο* MSS. (1) Keeping *ὑπο*, Erfurdt conj. *τῶν ἐμπνεόντων*: Dindorf, *ἀνδρῶν* (Blaydes *βροτῶν*) *πνεόντων*: Blaydes also, *τῶν μὲν πνεόντων*. (2) Keeping *πρὸς*, Musgrave conj. *θανεῖν ποτέ* (Dobree *ποτ' ἄν*): Wecklein, *χρῆναι θανεῖν*.

afterwards slew Iphitus, and then sought a refuge for his household at Trachis (39). But, in the course of the fifteen months since he departed for Lydia, Alcmena had returned to Tiryns, (Eurystheus having no cause to fear the aged widow,)—and had taken some of her grandchildren with her, in order to lighten the burden on the hospitality of Ceÿx.—*ξυλλαβοῦσ'*, here simply=*λαβοῦσα μεθ' ἐαυτῆς*: cp. *O. T.* 971 n.

1154 *τὸ Θήβης ἄστυ*. Thebes, the birthplace of Heracles (116), and his early home (510), was a place where some of his children might well find friends. Sophocles has perhaps taken a hint here from his elder contemporary, the logographer Pheræcydes, who related that, after the death of Eurystheus, Thebes became the home of the Heracleidae; fr. 39 (Müller *Frag. Hist.* 1. p. 82) *Ἴλλος δὲ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἡρακλεῖδαι καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀποθανόντος Εὐρυσθέως κατοικίζονται πάλιν ἐν Θήβαις*.—*ἄν...* *μάθοις*: sc. *εἰ πύθοιο*: since he has been so long abroad.

1155 f. *ὅσοι παρέσμεν*. The plural includes those who had accompanied Heracles from Euboea: cp. 1194 *ξὺν οἷς χρήσεις φίλων*. We are not obliged to suppose that any *son* besides Hyllus was at home; though verses 54 f. implied that. Nauck rejects v. 1156 because (1) Hyllus could not say *ὅσοι*, and (2) Heracles has not yet asked him to do

anything.—*ἐξυπηρετήσομεν*: cp. *O. T.* 217 n.

1157 f. *σὺ δ' οὖν ἄκουε*: there is no emphasis on *σύ* (as if it referred to the absence of the others): rather the sense is, 'Well, then (since you are ready to help), hear the task.' For this use of *δ'* *οὖν*, cp. *O. T.* 669 n.—*τοῦργον*=*ὅ τι δραστήον ἐστιν*: cp. *Ph.* 26 *τοῦργον οὐ μακρὰν λέγεις*.—*ἐξήκεις*, you have reached a point, a situation: cp. *O. T.* 1515 *ἄλῃς ἔξῃς δακρύων*: *ib.* 1158 *εἰς τὸδ' ἤξεις*.—*ἐμὸς* without *παῖς*: cp. 1205: *Ai.* 547 *εἶπερ δικαίως ἔστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρώθεν*. The stress falls on the participial clause (592 n.).

1159 *γάρ* is merely prefatory.—*πρόφαντον ἐκ πατρὸς*: this oracle, given by Zeus at an unspecified time and place, is not mentioned elsewhere in the play. Nor is it noticed by any other writer. Sophocles may, however, have found it in some earlier treatment of the fable.

1160 *τῶν ἐμπνεόντων*, Erfurdt's correction of *πρὸς τῶν πνεόντων*, is the most probable. *ἐμπνεῖν* as=*ζῆν* (*Ph.* 883) is frequent, while *πνεῖν* has that sense only in the Homeric *πνέει τε καὶ ἔρπει* (*Il.* 17. 447, *Od.* 18. 131). *ὑπο* might, no doubt, have arisen from *πο[τέ]*, but is presumably genuine: it closes a verse in 1077, *O. T.* 949, *Ph.* 334, 583, *El.* 553: and it is associated with *θνήσκω* in *O. T.* 1246, *Ph.* 334, *El.* 444. The combination of *πρὸς* with *ὑπό* cannot be defended