

CAG1002: WEEKS 2.5–2.7: AESCHYLUS' *PERSIANS* AND THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS

A Persian soldier describes the moment, at the beginning of the sea-battle at Salamis, when the Greek fleet first came into sight:

<p>[...] οὐ γὰρ ὡς φυγῇ παῖαν' ἐφύμνου σειμένον "Ἕλληνες τότε, ἀλλ' ἐς μάχην ὀρμώντες εὐψύχῳ θράσει· σάλπιγξ δ' αὐτῇ πάντ' ἐκεῖν' ἐπέφλεγεν. 395 εὐθύς δὲ κώπης ῥοθιάδος ξυνεμβολῇ ἔπαισαν ἄλμην βρύχιον ἐκ κελεύματος, θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν. τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας ἤγεῖτο κόσμῳ, δεύτερον δ' ὁ πᾶς στόλος 400 ἐπεξεχώρει, καὶ παρῇν ὁμοῦ κλύειν πολλὴν βοήν· " ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρῶων ἔδη, θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών." Aeschylus, <i>The Persians</i>, 392–405</p>	<p>A [...] Not for flight Did the Hellenes then chant that inspiring hymn, But resolutely going into battle, Whereto the trumpet set all hearts on fire. The word was given, and, instantaneously, Oars smote the roaring waves in unison And churned the foam up. Soon their whole fleet appeared; The port division thrown out like a horn In precise order; then the main of them Put out against us. We could plainly hear The thunder of their shouting as they came: "Sons of the Greeks, deliver your fatherland, deliver your children, wives, the temples of your fathers' gods and the tombs of your ancestors; now the contest is on behalf of them all!" <i>trans. G. Cookson (Oxford Gk. Verse in Translation)</i></p>
<p>B They were no fugitives who sang that terrifying Paean, but Hellenes charging with courageous haste To battle. The loud trumpet flamed along their ranks. At once their frothy oars moved with a single pulse, Beating the salt waves to the bo'suns' chant; and soon Their whole fleet hove clear into view; their right wing first, In precise order, next their whole array came on, And at that instant a great shout beat on our ears: "Forward, you sons of Hellas! Set your country free! Set free your sons, your wives, tombs of your ancestors And temples of your gods. All is at stake: now fight!" <i>trans. P. Vellacott (Penguin)</i></p>	<p>C for then the Hellenes chanted their solemn paean, not as in flight, but as men rushing to the onset with the courage of gallant hearts. [395] The trumpet with its blast set all their side afire, and instantly, at the word of command, with the even stroke of foaming oars they struck the briny deep. Swiftly they all came clear into view. Their right wing, well marshalled, [400] led on in orderly advance, next their whole army pressed on against us, and at the same time a loud shout met our ears: "On, you men of Hellas! Free your native land. Free your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods, [405] and the tombs of your ancestors. Now you are fighting for all you have." <i>trans. H.W. Smyth (Loeb)</i></p>

1. What forms of which verbs (give the 'dictionary form') are the following?

ἐφύμνου (393)	ἦσαν (398)
ἐπέφλεγεν (395)	παρῇν (401)
ἤγεῖτο (400)	ἔπαισαν (397)
ἐπεξεχώρει (401)	ἰδεῖν (398)

1. lines 392-395:

- Find the Greek equivalent for "chant that inspiring hymn" (A). Which Greek word of those identified in q. 1 is the verb? Give its meaning.
Give the nom. sing. of Greek words for "inspiring" and "hymn", and their dictionary meaning.
Comment on the Greek word choice and phrasing of 392–3.

- “resolutely going into battle”. Match up Greek word(s) translated as “going”, “into battle” and “resolutely”. Give literal meaning of each word/phrase, and comment on any differences from the English translations (A, B & C).
- “set all their hearts on fire” (A). Find the Greek equivalent and translate the Greek literally. How effective is the English translation given here, in relation to the Greek? Compare the versions of translations B & C.

2. lines 396-401

- Find the dictionary forms of all words in these lines (\Rightarrow ἐπεξεχώρει). Identify the form of each word.
- Translate the Greek, sticking as closely as possible to Greek word order and vocabulary while still making sense in English. Compare with the printed translations in terms of (i) meaning and (ii) phrasing and style.

3. lines 401-405

- “We could plainly hear the thunder of their shouting as they came” (lines 401-2).

What form of which verb is παρῆν? What does it mean?

Translate the Greek equivalent of the whole phrase literally, and compare with the printed translations.

- “the temples of your fathers’ gods” (line 404)

“the tombs of your ancestors” (line 405)

Find the Greek equivalents of each of these phrases, and give the dictionary form of each Greek word.

- Which words are translated as “deliver” (line 403)? What verbal form is this? What would the 1st person singular present tense form be?

- What case is πάντων (line 405) in? Why is it in this case? What does it mean?

What case does the Greek equivalent for ‘contest’ need to be in? Which is the equivalent Greek word?

- Comment on the style of the Greek (including alliteration) in 401–405, and its effectiveness. How well does any of the translations reflect this?