

Persians

Characters:

Chorus of Persian Elders

Queen of Persia, widow of Dareius and mother of Xerxes

Persian Messenger

Ghost of King Dareius, father of Xerxes

King Xerxes

Setting: a crossroads near Susa, capital of the Persian Empire. Near a council house. On the left, a road leading from the Imperial Palace. On the right, a road leading to Susa from the West. A group of twelve Persian elders enters, left.

Chorus of Persian Elders:

When all the Persian troops had gone
To conquer Greece, we old men known LX 11-move #1
As 'The Trustees' were left to guard
A rich, gold-glittering estate.
Xerxes himself, High King, War Lord,
(And eldest ~~offspring~~ ~~saion~~ of the late
Dareius) ordered us to head
The empire while he is abroad,
Trusting in our long years of service.

For some time now I have been nervous
For him and his gold-glittering host—
When will they ever come back home? LX 12-move #2
The fortuneteller in my breast
Has cried out with the voice of doom
Because the whole strength of the land
Has set out eagerly yapping round
An inexperienced man, and still LX 13-move to #3
No page or courier has come
With dispatch to the capital. LX 14-move to #4. Watch Er.

From Susa, Ecbatana and the ancient
Kissian castle-keep,
They left on horseback, foot and ship,
Each marshalling his own contingent:
Artaphernes, Megabates,
Astaspes and Amistris—all
Persians who love their King. Astraddle
Horses and spurring countless bodies,
Those bowmen were a frightening sight,
So fierce in battle, so much pride. LX 15
Masistris reckoned in their number,
Artembares war-horse-tamer, LX 16
Imaios the high-minded archer,

Pharnadakes and Sosthanes
Urging his team of stallions on.

Glorious for the floods they nurture,
The streams of Nile sent Sousikanes,
Egypt's own Pegastagon
And large Arsames who is famous
For chanting at the Memphian altar.
Among them, too, was Ariomardos
~~Overseer~~ **Governor** of Thebes the Elder,
And those old hands at mud and fen,
Delta-goers, skillful rowers,
Innumerable rivermen.

LX 17- move to #6

Next went the wealthy Lydians
Who govern all the coastal clans.
With funding from gold-glittering Sardis,
Two of the High King's officers,
Mitrogathes and brave Arkteus,
Sent tribesman forth as charioteers
To drive their countless battle-cars.
Half were twin-, half triple-poled,
But all were dreadful to behold.

LX 18

LX 19

Our lance-shattering anvils, then,
Tharybis, Mardon, rushing down
The slopes of holy Tmolus, led
A light-armed Mysian brigade
To clap Greece in a slavish yoke;
And gold-glittering Babylon

LX 20- chorus move

Dispatched its massive alloyed corps:

Men mounted on a rowing-deck
Or shooting valiance from afar.

LX 21- complete shift

Every saber-bearing race

LX 23

In Asia has assumed its place
In Xerxes' terrifying train
Thus was the flower of manhood,
The best of Persia, sent abroad.

The continent that nursed them **signs**
and burns to have them home again.

Their wives and children mark the days

LX 25- for song

Shuddering as the time drags on.

SQ 2.9- song begins

Strophe A

The High King's city-engulfing host

Has long since breached the coast
That dares oppose his own. Sea's neck
Harnessed beneath a yoke,
Our soldiers crossed the stretch of water
Named from Athamas' daughter
On a road made of dowels and knots,
A boulevard of boats. LX 29

Antistrophe A

Prolific Asia's willful master
Drove pious flocks to pasture
On separate fields: some graze the brine;
Others, the battle-plain; LX 30
But everywhere staunch deputies
Have set his mind at ease.
Only a golden race could breed
A man so like a god. LX 31

Strophe B

How like a surfeit serpent's slits
His eyes shine black, emit no light.
From his Assyrian chariot
This king of countless **troops** and fleets LX 32
Leads a far-shooting god of war
Against men famous for the spear.

Antistrophe B

Nothing, not even an army tried
In battle can withstand our flood
Of soldiers, no stone mole exclude
The rising and impossible tide.
Our empire has an iron will;
Its battery is unstoppable. LX 33

Strophe C

Destiny, by the will of heaven,
has ruled for years and always given
Our race success when it engages
In rampart-devastating sieges,
The counter-play of charging horses
Or leveling a hill-top fortress. LX 34

Antistrophe C

And when the gale-wind's boisterous breath
Battered our passage to white froth
We pierced the wild groves of the sea
With our ingenuity,

Daring to trust a file of troops
[To] bold devices, ~~plaited~~ **braided** ropes. LX 35

Epode

And yet . . . what mortal can outwit
Deities skilled at sleight of hand?
What nimble tumbler with a bound
Clear the encircling [net]? LX 36

Clever Calamity spreads grins
Around the entrance to the trap;
And man, once caught, for all he strains
And wriggles, never can [escape]. LX 37

Strophe D

So my heart wears a sable cloak
[And] shudders at its fears— LX 38
The army never coming back
And, soon as the whole city hears
The mighty seat of Susa is
Unmanned and [vacuous]. LX 39

Antistrophe D

The walls of Kissia responding
As the women keen,
Responding to the rhythmic pounding
Of female fists on their own [skin]. LX 40- chorus X US
I fear their gorgeous muslin dresses
Will be ripped to [pieces]. LX 41

Strophe E

Now that all our warlike men
On horseback and on foot left home
As bees swarm from the honeycomb
And marched with the [high] suzerain) LX 42
Over the ridge that joins two lands
(A yoke across the continents),

Antistrophe E

All our marriage-beds are brimming
With tears of longing. Wives who saw
Armed eager husbands off to war
Are still awaiting their home-coming: LX 43
They sit here wistful and alone,
Tenderly grieving men long [gone]. LX 44

SQ 4.9

End of song

LX 45- Music out.

Come, old Persians, since the need
 Has come upon us, let us gather
 Under this ancient roof and brood
 Wisely and thoroughly upon
 These matters: Is Darius' son
 True to the great name of his father
 And successful in this war?
 Has the back-bent longbow won
 Or the hefty tapered spear?

LX 51- Anti, El EN SR
 LX 52- Bondo lies down. El almost at C.
 LX 53- Stephen EN SR
 LX 54- Others EN SR
 LX 55- SW/B place head on deck
 LX 56- See El at top of stairs
 LX 57- El ties bow on new train

LX 50
 SQ 5.2

The Queen of Persia enters on a chariot and with retinue, left.

But look there! Xerxes' royal mother
 Is sweeping towards us, luminary
 As gods' eyes carved in statuary.
 I bow down humbly to the floor.
 Come, let us duly welcome her:

Ellen 1/3 way down steps
 LX 58
 SQ 5.3

The Persian elders prostrate themselves before the Queen as if she were a god.

Greetings to the most exalted of the deep-sashed Persian matrons!
 All hail Xerxes' reverend mother and the widow of Darius!
 Queen, you are the former consort of a Persian god, as such,
 You in turn are mother to a god—unless, perhaps, the faithful
 Guardian spirit of the army has at long last turned against it.

VISUAL
 LX 59- El on deck

The Queen:

Such fears are the reason I have set forth from the gilded palace,
 Left the chamber King Darius and myself once held in common—
 I have come because a thought gnaws on my heart. Since apprehension
 Never lets me rest, old friends, I shall confess my fear: by kicking
Dust-clouds up around the world, our own colossal wealth may ruin
 All the benefits Darius heaped up with a god's assistance.

LX 60

LX 65- El pulls train

LX 66- El
 pulls train

Hence the double cares fretting my breast: that heaps of wealth are nothing
 Without soldiers, and that splendor never shines on beggared races,
 Even if their strength is great. Although our wealth is not in danger,
 I am worried about Xerxes—he is daylight in my eyes:
 Yes, his regal presence shines like daylight in the palace.

LX 67- before turn

SQ 5.8- on turn

Therefore,

Seasoned loyalists, old Persians, since this matter stands just so,
 Share your minds with me. I rest my hopes entirely on your guidance.

LX 68- for Eric

Chorus-leader:

High Queen of the land, be certain you need never twice request
 Any act or any counsel our mean powers can offer you.
 You have called on counselors who only have the best intentions.

SB LX 70

The Queen:

I have been nightly visited by dreams LX 70

Since that first evening when my son the king,
With all his panoply arrayed around him,
Departed for the land of the Ionians.
None of my visions, though, were half so vivid
As what I saw last night. Let me describe it:

Dream LX 72 SQ 6.3

Two ladies, on parade before my eyes,
Were modeling distinctive kinds of dress.
Though they were sisters of a common stock,
And though, perfectly lovely both, they stood
Taller than any women of this world,
One of them head to foot was lapped in Persian
Finery, while the other simply wore
A Doric skirt. The latter had obtained
Greece as her lot, their common fatherland;
The former settled in our Eastern Empire.

Something had come between them, or so it seemed,
And when my son found out about the quarrel,
He bound them both and broke them to the harness
Beneath his chariot. When the yoke was laid
Across their necks, the girl in Persian dress
Stood tower-like in her caparisons

LX 75- chorus stands

And like a good mare answered to the bit.
The other mettlesomely flicked the reins;
Hands tearing harness from the tracing-pole,
She bucked and galloped with free-rein until
The pole was broken and my son went reeling.
And there beside the wreckage stood his father,
Darius, pitying him. Beneath that gaze

LX 76- El gathers fabric

Xerxes could only tear the gorgeous gown
Wrapped round and round his body into ribbons.

SQ 6.6- bird

Straight out of bed I went to dip my hands
In lustral water. Later, at the altar,

LX 77- El/ER stand

Poised in the act of offering honey, oil
And barley to the talismanic gods
Who honor rites like these, I saw an eagle
Aflutter and diving toward the Sun-god's shrine.
I stopped and stood there, gaping at the omen.

SQ 6.7- bird

A falcon intercepted it, mid-flight.

SQ 6.8- bird

Wings beating, talons tearing at its crest,
The reeling eagle only could sink lower
And lower—an auspice striking to my eyes
As to your ears.

$\frac{1}{2}$ beat

LX 78 SQ 6.9

Now mark my words: my son,

When he succeeds, will be a paragon
Among us; but if somehow he should fail,
He will in no way be accountable.
Let me be clear: if Xerxes makes it home
Alive, he will command us as before.

Chorus-leader:

Since you are a mother, we would neither frighten you unduly LX 79
Nor build up your hopes too high:

if you have witnessed a dire omen,
Supplicate the gods, pray that they ward the evil off, transmuting
Perils into benefits for you and yours, your friends, the city.
Next, go pour libations to the Earth and Dear Departed, wisely
Asking that your spouse Darius (whom you witnessed in the vision) LX 80
Send, from darkness to the light, good fortunes for your son and you;
Further stipulate that the opposing fortunes be detained there,
Pent beneath the earth, to fade into the gloom—

such is the counsel

I present to you with high hopes and heartfelt prognostication.
We predict that all will turn out well for you in every way.

Queen:

As the first to read my dream, sir, you have shown my son and palace
That you certainly mean well. May only good things come to pass. LX 80.5- walk US
Back at my estate, I shall perform these rites as you instructed,
Paying honor both to gods and family beneath the earth.

There are several further questions I would like to ask you: first, _____
Where in the wide world is Athens said to have been situated?

Chorus-leader:

Far off westward where the Sun-god dims his brilliance and goes down.

Queen:

This, then, is the outpost Xerxes so long wanted to expunge?

Chorus-leader:

When that town is taken, all of Greece will answer to your son.

Queen:

Do they have on hand sufficient bodies to comprise an army?

Chorus-leader:

Yes, an army strong enough to have wreaked havoc on the Medes.

Queen:

What besides can they lay claim to? Well-stocked coffers in a palace?

LX 81-
chorus lands
in front of
curtains

Chorus-leader:

Rather fountainheads of silver, treasure buried in the earth.

Queen:

Do the bow and arrow fit as comfortably in their hands?

Chorus-leader:

Hardly, rather spears for hand-to-hand and shields, their only armor.

Queen:

Does that herd have any head, some suzerain to urge them on? LX 89- ER/EL move US

Chorus-leader:

Neither slaves nor subjects, they are said to serve no king at all.

Queen:

How can they expect to join in common cause against invasion?

Chorus-leader:

Well enough to have once crushed the noble legions of Darius.

Start music
LX 90
SQ 8.5

Queen:

Hard words, truly, for the parents who have sent their sons to war.

The Messenger appears at the far end of the road on the right, disheveled and panting from a long run.

LX 91- GM at center

Chorus-leader:

You will swiftly hear a full, candid account, it seems—this fellow
Dashing towards us shows the clear signs of a Persian in his gait.
Doubtless, he is bringing recent tidings—good, perhaps, or grim.

SB LX 92 AND
LX 100 & SQ 8.7

LX 92- GM out

Messenger:

You Asian strongholds and you Persian earth,
Port of colossal wealth, a single blow,
And all your vast prosperity is shattered!
The flower of Persia wilted and has died.

VISUAL- I STOP
BONDO AT
CENTER
When Bondo lands DS
LX 100
8.8.8.7

Although the first man to relate hard news
Has a hard task before him, duty bids me
Ravel the whole disaster out. In sum:
The entire army of the East is lost.

Chorus:

Strophe A

Weighty, weighty disaster breaks
Suddenly, cruelly over us!
Weep, weep, Persians, since he speaks
Of heaviness.

Messenger:

All of those troops destroyed! And I, past hope,
Survived to see the day of my return.

Chorus:

Antistrophe A

The course of our longevity
Has dragged out age for too long now—
To hear of so much misery
Out of the blue!

Messenger:

I was there, Persians, saw it all first-hand
And can report what sorts of wrongs we suffered.

LX 105 SQ 9.3

Chorus:

Strophe B

Woe—we deployed an arsenal
To conquer Greece, the land of Zeus,
And all our sundry ways to kill
Were of no use, no use.

Messenger:

The shores of Salamis and coastal stretches
Abound in lonely corpses, heaps of corpses.

Chorus:

Antistrophe B

Woe—you have told us our loved ones
Are now sea-beaten, dead.
Some of them, weighted by their gowns,
Are swaying in the tide.

Messenger:

Our archery proved pointless; our armada
Went down penetrated by their prows.

Chorus:

Strophe C

Raise a despairing, comfortless
Wail for the Persians, a fierce race,
Who now are utterly undone.
Woe, woe for our lost campaign.

Messenger:

‘Salamis’ is a hiss, a hated name,
And Ah! I choke up when pronouncing ‘Athens.’

SB LX 110 SQ 10

Chorus:*Antistrophe C*

Athens is ruthless to invasion.
 Never forget how many Persian
 Women built their nests in vain—
Athens has killed our sons, our men.

Music out LX 110 SQ 10

Queen:

I have stood sad and silent for some time
 Because your news has stuck me dumb, because
 The whole thing has so overwhelmed me that
 I cannot properly fit words together
 And ask you how it happened.

LX 111- El X DS

All the same,

It is the task of mankind to endure
 Whatever woes our deities decide on.
 Now pull yourself together, sir: unravel
 The whole disaster from beginning to end,
 Even if you must groan while telling it.

LX 112- El DSC

Who has survived? And whom are we to mourn?
 Which leaders set to watch with rod in hand
 Forever have deserted our front-lines?

LX 113

Messenger:

Xerxes survived and yet looks on the light.

Queen:

Those words are radiance shining through the palace,
 Daylight ending the great gloom of night!

Mess Music LX 114 SQ 10.5

Messenger:

But Artembares, who as general had
 Ten thousand horseman at his beck and call,
 Is being ground down to nothing, as we speak,
 On the hard headland of Sileniai;
 The Chiliarch Dadakes bounded nimbly
 Over the gunnel when a spear struck home,
 And that blue-blooded Bactrian, Tenagon,
 Resides now on the wave-washed Isle of Aias.

Oceans LX 115 SQ 10.7

Lilaius and Arsames, with Argestes,
 Rammed in defeat a rocky promontory
 Where pigeons come to roost. Arkteus, once neighbor
 To the headwaters of Egyptian Nile,
 Went tumbling headlong overboard, beside
 Shield-wielding Pharnouchos and Adeues.

Matallus, born in Chrysa, once a captain
 Who drove ten thousand troops to battle, once
 The leader of the thirty thousand riders
 Known as the Sable Horse, drowned in the strait,
 His full, red, bristling beard turning to purple
 In brackish water. Arabus the Mage
 And Bactrian Artabes both fell there,
 Aliens, now, on foreign soil. Amistris,
 And Amphistreus, hurler of painful lances,
 Good Ariomardos (a home grief for Sardis!),
 Mysian Seisames, even Tharybis,
 Admiral of five times fifty ships,
 A ~~dashing chap~~ **handsome man**, and a Lerneian—all
 Had bad luck there and died in shameful ways.

At least the governor of the Cilicians,
 Sunnesis the Courageous, wreaking havoc
 Hand-to-hand among them, passed in glory.

Music out LX 119 SQ 11.4

That's the extent of what I can relate
 About the leaders, since, out of so many
 Disasters, I can only list a few.

Queen:

~~Revolting~~ **Hideous** news! The scene you are describing
 Reaches the height of all catastrophe—
 Humiliation for the Persians, reason
 For piercing cries. But turn back to your story
 And tell me this: how multitudinous was
 The Greek armada, that they hoped to match
 Our navy in a battle, prow for prow?

Mess Music LX 120 SQ 11.6

Messenger:

If one can trust in numbers, rest assured
 We should have crushed them. All in all, their fleet was
 A mere three-hundred vessels, ten of which
 Were worthy of respect. Xerxes' armada
 Was fully a thousand galleys strong, I swear,
 And of that sum at least two hundred seven
 Matchless in swiftness—so much for the odds.

Really, do you believe arithmetic
 Had any bearing? No, it was some god
 That shattered our whole fleet, dropping a sinking
 Destiny onto our side of the balance.
 The gods prop up the citadel of Pallas.

Queen:

So Athens still has not been razed to rubble?

Messenger:

With men to man them, city-walls are strong.

Queen:

But tell me: who began the naval engagement?

Was it the Greeks or did my son strike first,

Puffed up with false pride in his multitude?

LX 121

Messenger:

Some vengeful spirit or some spiteful power
Must have begun our troubles, queen. A Greek
Came to our barracks, an Athenian,
And told your son, King Xerxes, that the foe
Would not engage us, no, they meant to man
The benches in the darkest hours of night
And slip away in secretive retreat,
Some this way and some that, to save their lives.
Your son accepted the whole story, never
Conceiving that a Greek could be a liar,
Nor that a god could bear a grudge against him.

In the harangue he told his admirals
That when the sun released the land from light
And darkness claimed the precinct of the sky
Three squadrons from the navy should be sent
To guard the straits which lead to open ocean,
And that a fourth division should blockade
The Isle of Aias. Further, if the Greeks
Should somehow find means in their single ships
Secretly to outstrip their final hour,
Every admiral would die, headless.
So spoke the Great King with a hopeful mind—
Too hopeful, for he did not understand
The gods' intent.

When we had messed that evening,
All hands yarely and with one spirit fit
The oars they knew so well into the straps.
The last rays of the twilight died, and night
Came rushing in, and every man walked up
The gangplank like a sultan of his oar
And captain of the rigging. Exhortations
Swept through our massive hulls from bench to bench
As each ship coasted to its post. All night
The captains kept the navy under sail.

Though night was nearly done, still the Greek army
 Had not attempted any sly escape;
 However, when dawn rose on her white horses
 And filled the world with radiance, a cry,
 Ominous and melodious, resounded
 Over the water from the Greek encampment.
 Straightway, the headlands of the island answered
 Hoarsely their battle-song, and terror fell
 On us barbarians. We had been mistaken.

Ocean in
 LX 122
 SQ 13

Not in retreat were the Greek soldiers singing
 The sacred battle-hymn, no, they were rushing
 To combat, hopeful, even confident.

SB SQ 13.3-13.6

Their hearts took fire from a bellowing trumpet,
 And smartly as the helmsmen called the strokes,
 The plashing and the rhythmic oar dug up

Swaths of the sea. Soon we could see them coming: SQ 13.3

There in the vanguard was the right wing, locked

In tight formation; then their navy wholly SQ 13.4

Swept into sight. At last we could make out SQ 13.5

The words they shouted over and over again: SQ 13.6

‘Onward, O sons of Greece, come, free the land
 That bore you; liberate your wives and children;
 Free tombs of ancestors and temple-homes
 Of native gods. This battle is all-in-all.”
 Out of our ranks only a Persian murmur
 Rose to oppose them—then when every instant
 Cried out for action!

Soon a beak of bronze
 Stove in a ship—it was some vessel of theirs
 That started all the ramming, ripped the stern
 Of a Phoenician warship clean away.
 Each of their captains steered his prow dead on
 Into our hulls. Our massive Persian navy
 Put up a fight at first, but as it was,
 So many vessels in so tight a strait,
 No help from anywhere, the bronze-toothed beaks
 Of our own warships beat on our own boards
 And shivered all the rowing-gear. All tact
 And prudence, they kept pounding on our planks
 In circular formations. Soon our keels
 Were in the air, and the sea’s surface, crammed
 With naval wreckage and remains of men,
 Was nowhere to be seen. The barrier-reefs
 And even the shoreline were awash with bodies.
 When every ship that still survived to bear
 The remnants of our army into flight
 Scattered disorderly, they caught us, flayed us

SB LX 123 & SQ 14

Like mackerel, like some school of fish, with riven
Oars and the splinters of our wreck. Our wailing
Coursed through the sea, a wailing mixed with shrieks,
Until the black eye of the night released us.

Music out LX 123 SQ 14

I never could detail the whole disaster,
Not if I had ten days to tell it in,
For never in one day (and mark me well),
Never in one day only has so vast
A multitude of soldiers met its fate.

Queen:

Truly a huge and catastrophic ocean
Has broken on Persia and the Eastern peoples.

Messenger:

And that's not even half of it—so weighty
An agony succeeded this first stroke
That in the balance we sunk twice as low.

Queen:

But what misfortune could be worse than this!
Speak of this second blow, which, as you say,
Tipped the scales further downward for our army.

Messenger:

Persians in their peak and prime, of courage
Noted and by pedigree distinguished—
Men who were staunchly faithful to their King—
Expired in manners most humiliating.

Queen:

Ah, my friends, these evils lay me low.
What deaths, though, do you say they suffered?

Messenger:

Off Salamis lies an island, small, a mooring
Tricky for men-of-war. Along its shore,
The dance-god Pan supposedly goes traipsing.
Here had your son assigned his best men, first,
To pick off handily whichever Greeks
Sought safety from a shipwreck on dry land
And, second, in the odd chance that our sailors
Went overboard, to fish them from the straits—
So foolishly he reckoned on the future.

The very day that god had granted them
Fame in the form of victory at sea,

The Greeks (armed to a man from head to foot)
Vaulted from gunnels all around the island—
There was nowhere to turn. With stone in hand
And arrow on the string, they wore away
Our nobles at long range. In the end, however,
With one last rush and rallying cry, they hacked,
No, butchered piecemeal our gentility,
Until no one was left alive.

Seaside,
Atop a peak with a commanding view
Of the whole army, Xerxes looked downward
Into the depth of the disaster and groaned.
His vestments rent by his own hands, he shrieked
Immediate retreat at the foot-soldiers
And fled, indecorous—a further reason
To grieve on top of all that came before.

Queen:

O deity detestable for stealing
Our Persian common sense! My son contrived
Harsh punishments indeed for glorious Athens!
All the Eastern lives that Marathon
Had wasted, to his mind, were not enough.
Sure of avenging our defeat, he brought on
Only so many more afflictions.

Tell me,
What ships escaped? Where did you see them last?
You know enough to tell me in detail?

Messenger:

The captains of the few remaining vessels
Awkwardly started homeward, and for this
The wind was not unfriendly. In Boeotia
The remnants of our army went on dying,
Some of them parched and yards from bracing springs.
Others of us, though breathless, made our way
To Phocis, Doris, and the Malian Gulf
Where Sperchios so generously begins
To irrigate the plain.

On to Achaia,
Then, and Thessalian citadels—cold comfort
For starving soldiers. There our numbers dwindled
Further from hunger and thirst, for hunger and thirst
Abounded there. We passed into the lands
Of the Magnesians and the Macedonians,
Forded the Axios and, after slogging
Through Bolbe's cattails, pitched camp at the foot
Of Mt. Pangaion in Edonia.

Messg. Music LX 124 SQ 15.5

That night god gathered an untimely storm
 And froze the flowing of the sacred Strymon
 Straight across, from bank to bank. Old soldiers
 Who never talked much to the gods before
 Hunkered like dogs on hands and knees, invoking
 Heaven and Earth. After these warm entreaties,
 We tried our footing on the frozen crossing,
 But only those who skittered over sooner
 Than the Sun-god had scattered all his beams
 Happened to reach the other bank alive.
 His keen orb with persistent glinting clove
 The river down the middle and, when the rearguard
 Went tumbling in on top of those before them,
 Luckiest was the man who first exchanged
 His breath for water.

Few, the chance survivors
 Who, laboring through further pain in Thrace,
 Escaped at last and reached their hearths and homes.

Here is good reason for the capital
 To grieve—the loss of its beloved youth.
 Every word of this is true, and still
 I have omitted most of the afflictions
 God has visited upon us Persians.

Oar drop LX 195 SQ 16.5

The Messenger exits, left.

LX 196- Bondo X DS over gold

Chorus-leader:

Hard-hearted god, you leapt up and have crushed
 The Persian race beneath your heavy feet.

Queen:

I am destroyed. Oh, our entire army
 Massacred! Nocturnal vision, how
 Precisely you prefigured our misfortunes!
 And you, my sage dream-readers, brushed it off
 As nothing serious.

Still, since you happened
 To counsel ritual service, I am bound
 To make good on my vows and offer worship,
 First, to the gods above. Then, on returning,
 I shall provide Earth and the Dear Departed
 With choice libations from the palace stores.
 But since I know that deeds, once done, are done
 Forever, I shall offer for the future,
 Hoping for the better.

LX 198- Anti El stand

SQ 16.9- El stands

Careful, friends—

LX 199

Henceforth be more dependable to those
 Dependent on you for your good advice.
 If Xerxes happens to return before me,
 Comfort him if you can and to the palace
 Escort him before something else goes wrong.

The Queen exits in her chariot and with her retinue, left.

Chorus:

Astrophic

Absolute Zeus, you have undone
 The wide-mouthed, many-headed
 Army of Persia; you have shrouded
 Susa and Ecbatana in
 Sorrows as black as funeral weeds.

Fingers fitter for caresses
 Have learned to tear veils into shreds;
 Women are sprinkling their dresses'
 Folds with tears—each has a share
 In our misfortunes. Newlyweds,
 Lavish in longing for the men
 Who warmed their blankets and were gone,
 Struggle to release all thoughts
 Of bedrooms and the coverlets
 Where youthful dalliance lay in love—
 No, they can never mourn enough.

Therefore I, too, shall duly grieve
 Our honored dead, raising my voice
 To sing of many miseries:

Strophe A

Now we can be certain all
 Asia raises an empty howl.
 Our youth embarked with Xerxes. Ah!
 Xerxes destroyed them. (Woe, woe.)
 Xerxes it was
 Who heeded bad advice,
 Mismanaged our broad men-of-war.

Why was it no mischance could injure
 Saintly Darius, master-archer,
 Susa's redoubtable emperor?

Antistrophe A

Pitch-eyed ships with linen sails
 Berthed our sea- and land-details.

El Exit
 LX 200
 SQ 17

LX 201- music out
 Silence before move

LX 201.4- Leon
 stands

Music
 SQ-17.4

Bondo Dance
 LX 201.6
 SQ 17.7

LX 203

Our youth embarked on ships, and Ah!,
Those ships destroyed them. (Woe, woe.)
The ships it was
That yielded, piece by piece,
To those strong-gripped Ionians.

Our king had trouble while retreating
Through Thrace, we hear: he lost his footing
On icy back roads through the plains.

LX 204- El/Er X

Strophe B

Survivors scattered with such haste
(No, no.)
The first warriors we lost
Were left on the Kychreian coast.
(It can't be true.)

Gnash your teeth and heave a sigh.
Raise a complaint, for all its weight,
Raise it and hurl it at the sky;
Release the cries
That stick like snarling in the throat,
A grating, grief-afflicted noise.

LX 205

Antistrophe B

The ocean's hostile eddies thrash
(No, no.)
Bobbing bodies, and dumb fish
Frenziedly snap at human flesh.
(It can't be true.)

Now must a household mourn its master.
Once father and mother, man and wife
Lament a heaven-sent disaster,
Angry such news
Should fall upon them late in life—
Such catastrophic casualties.

Stinger
LX 206
SQ 18.7

Strophe C

All over Asia underlings
Will take no stock in Persian laws.
Nor will the title 'King of Kings'
Squeeze tribute from the provinces.

LX 207- El enters SR foot on deck

None of our subjects will bow down
Before a decimated throne—
All imperial power is gone.

Antistrophe C

Tongues no longer held in check,
The yoke of empire shaken off,
People will be free to speak
Whatever they are thinking of.

SB
LX 208 & SQ 19

On all sides round the breakers lap
Aias's Isle which, drop by drop,
Appropriated Persia's hope.

Dance out/ding
LX 208
SQ 19

The Queen enters alone and on foot, left. She is carrying three pitchers and a basket.

Queen:

Everyone that has suffered through his share
Of troubles knows that, if one wave of woes
Comes crashing in, the human heart delights
In giving way to absolute despair;
But let a guardian god once grant smooth sailing
And that same heart will just as soon assume
The lucky breeze will always swell its sail.

LX 209

LX 210- for chorus sit

All things for me are filled with fear already.
Inside my eyes, visions of hostile gods
Are flickering; and in my ears a trickling
Drips in a way that soothes me not at all.
Disaster on disaster has so shocked me
That I am at wit's end.

This is the reason

Why I have left the palace once again—

Without my chariot and former glory.

I stand before you with these vessels full

Of sweet appeasements that the dead delight in,

LX 213

And may they reach the father of my son:
There's milk, the fine white coating for the throat
Drawn from a sacred heifer's udders; honey
That workers in the flowers have distilled
Splendid as sunlight; water that has run
In virgin springs; and that great charmer, wine,
As unadulterated as the soil
That gave it life, a venerable vintage.
I brought the olives from the olive-tree
That, silver as it is, still flourishes
Even into old age. I hope its scent
Will be enticing. Lastly a bouquet
Of flowers, offspring risen from the earth
That raises all.

LX 214-El X back to chorus

Dear friends, accompany
The pouring of these offerings with hymns

SB LX 215
SQ 19.9

To please the dead; summon Dareius' shade
And I shall pave the way by pouring honors
To parched Earth and the gods of underground.

LX 215
SQ 19.9

Chorus:

Queen Mother, worshipped and obeyed
Throughout the land, while you are pouring
Gifts to the chambers in the ground,
We shall sing ritual songs, imploring
The deities who rule the dead
To hear us and be kind:

Pure gods who dwell beneath our feet,
Earth first, Hermes next, then you,
Lord of the Dear Departed, please
Release a spirit to the light.

LX 216- Kneel

If there is something we can do,
Beyond mere prayer, to cure our woes,
He is the only mortal who
Can tell us what it is. **Beat. Beat. Beat. GO**

LX 217
SQ 20

Strophe A

SB SQ 20.1-20.9

But will our reverend Emperor,
A peer of gods, still recognize

SQ 20.1

The imprecise barbaric language
In which I frame these desperate cries?

SQ 20.2

Am I to shout out utter anguish

SQ 20.3

Or is he heeding me down there?

SQ 20.4

Antistrophe A

Earth and you gods who rule in her,
I beg you, please release a shade
Of great renown from his new home.

SQ 20.5

Send us a man that Susa bred,

SQ 20.6

A Persian god the likes of whom

SQ 20.7

Our soil had never held before. **Beat. Beat. Go.**

SQ 20.8

LX 220
SQ 20.9

Strophe B

Dear is the tomb, and dear the man,
And dear the character within.

SB Thunder

Aidoneus, Aidoneus,

As escort to the upper air.

Thunder
LX 221
SQ 21

Please give Dareius back to us,
Release our pious Emperor.

Antistrophe B

Because he spent no lives on sieges
Deities later would begudge us

Thunder
LX 222
SQ 21.2

He was known throughout the realm
 As Reverent. He earned that title
 Standing at the army's helm
 Steering it prudently through battle.

Thunder
 LX 223
 SQ 21.3

Strophe C

Rise, Ancient Sultan, to the light.
 Reveal your miter, tier by tier;
 Come, let the sandals on your feet
 Stand, all saffron, atop your bier.

LX 224

We can find no fault in you—
 Yet you are a father, too.

LX 225

Antistrophe C

Despot of Despots, please appear
 And listen to our sad hard tale.
 The mist of Styx is thick up here—
 All of our young men perished, all.

Drone
 LX 226
 SQ 21.4

We can find no fault in you—
 Yet you are a father, too.

Epode

O thou much-lamented loss
 To friend and kin, what does it mean?
 Dear sultan, why must we endure
 This not-to-be-forgotten twin
Disaster? All the triple-tiered
 Ships that we built have disappeared.
 Our ships are ships no more, no more. **Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat. GO**

LX 227
 SQ 21.5

Darius Music
 SQ 21.6

Ghost of Darius:

LX 228

Loyal trustees of my estate, old men

LX 235

As staunch as when in youth we were companions,
 What happened to my empire? The earth groans,
 Its surface beaten down by trampling **feet**.

LX 240- SW Stands

Seeing the woman who once shared my chamber
 Bent at my tomb has filled me with alarm.

With good will I received her offerings
 While you, mourning at my memorial,
 Summoned me up in a most desperate fashion
 With necromantic gasps. Though leave is never
 Easy to obtain from Hades (since the gods
 Of underground are less inclined to lend
 Than take away), I have come all the same
 For I am of some influence below.

LX 241-
 VISUAL SW
 USR

 -
 Stephen sits- MIC
 ON

Now to the point, so that I not be charged LX 242
With truancy, divulge what unexpected
And grievous wrong has fallen upon my Persians.

Chorus:

Strophe

Full of the old respect, we
Cannot look on you directly,
Cannot address
Your highness face to face. LX 243

Ghost of Dareius:

I have come a long way upward in obedience to your summons,
So do not now waste the time in protest. Cast your awe aside. LX 244- SW at head
Cut the tale down to essentials; tell me everything at once.

Chorus:

Antistrophe

Dazzled by you, old friend,
We cannot act on your command,
Cannot break
News that is hard to take. LX 245

Ghost of Dareius:

Since the die-hard veneration in your hearts obstructs my wishes,
You, the former partner of my private chamber, noble lady,
Dry your eyes now; no more wailing. Bluntly sum the matter up.

It is only natural that setbacks mar your human fortunes LX 246- SW x to JEd
Since, for mortals, there are many tribulations, some on land,
Some at sea, but always more and more the longer life continues. LX 247

Queen:

Lucky husband, you surpassed all living men with your successes.
Every year that you were up here in the sunlight, admiration
Envied you; prosperity adorned you like a Persian god—
So now, too, I envy you for dying without ever seeing
Such great casualties. Dareius, hear the whole tale in an instant:

The success of Persia, has been, in a word, completely ruined.

OAR DROP LX 248 SQ 22.7

Ghost of Dareius:

How, though? Did a plague descend? Did civil war divide the empire?

Queen:

Neither—no, our army met destruction out near Athens.

Ghost of Dareius:

Tell me straight: which son of mine has gone campaigning over there? LX 250

Queen:

Zealous Xerxes, after drafting the whole continental shelf.

Ghost of Dareius:

Did that wretch attempt this folly with the army or the navy?

Queen:

Both of them. The thrust was twofold and dependent on both branches.

Ghost of Dareius:

How, though, did so large an army make its way across the strait?

Queen:

Xerxes fashioned an ingenious yoke to span the Hellespont.

Ghost of Dareius:

And he really did this? Locked up tight the mighty Bosphorus?

Queen:

Even so. Some spirit must have put the thought into his head.

Ghost of Dareius:

Ah! a mighty power indeed to make him lose his commonsense! LX 256- directional change

Queen:

Yes, the outcome of his plan clearly exposed how poor it was.

Ghost of Dareius:

What befell them there that you are mourning for them in this manner?

Queen:

When it met defeat, the navy dragged the army down with it. LX 257- B lies down

Ghost of Dareius:

So the spear has wiped out both the branches of our military?

Queen:

Yes, and Susa, therefore, grieves the utter absence of defense.

SB Mic out
and on. LX
261 and SQ
23.9

Ghost of Dareius:

Ah! to lose our local garrison and all support from allies!

Mic OUT

SW set US

Queen:

Yes, and all our Bactrians wiped out—not one old soldier lived.

Mic ON

Curse GO

Ghost of Dareius:

Curse that boy! He has destroyed our allies' fresh stock in its prime!

Thunder
LX 261
SQ 23.9

Queen:

Xerxes, it is said, forlorn and with a scanty retinue—

Ghost of Dareius:

Tell me how and where he perished. Any chance he has survived?

Queen:

—luckily has crossed the bridge that harnesses the continents.

Ghost of Dareius:

He has safely made his way back into Asia, is it so?

Queen:

Yes, a sound report attests the fact. No others have denied it. LX 262- Circle

Ghost of Dareius:

Ah, the oracle has turned into a real event too early!
Zeus has dropped the prophecy's fulfillment on my own son's head.
All these years I had assumed the gods would bring the thing to pass
Generations down the line. Still, whenever a rash person
Recklessly goes rushing forward, god need only lend a hand.
Now a font of woes, it seems, has been unearthed for all my kinsmen

Youthful, ignorant and hasty, my own son has done the damage.
Striving to restrain the holy flowing of the Hellespont, LX 271- El at C
God's beloved Bosphorus, like some old servant in the stocks,
He contrived a new bridge and, by casting manacles upon it,
Made a massive roadway for a massive army. He attempted,
Mortal though he is, to be the master of the gods. What folly!
Playing sea-god like Poseidon! How is this not symptomatic
Of a brain-disease? I am afraid the ample stores of treasure LX 272
I heaped up are now mere plunder waiting for the first marauder.

Queen:

Xerxes all too readily picked up these habits from the bad advisors
Who attended him. They told him that, whereas you had amassed
Heaps of wealth for your descendents, he in cowardly fashion played LX 278- Er X US curtains
Soldier in his chamber, adding nothing to his father's stores.
Thus provoked to action day in, day out by these noxious fellows
He at last conceived his new sea-bridge and the campaign to Greece.

Ghost of Dareius:

He has accomplished something great indeed
And unforgettable: no ruler ever
Has managed to drain all the men from Susa
Since High King Zeus bestowed imperial honors
Upon us, setting up one lord monarchic LX 279

SB LX 279 LX 281 & SQ 25 El/SW in circle

To rule as suzerain with rod in hand
Over the livestock-nourishing domains of Asia

King Medos was the first to lead our army.
Second, ~~an~~ **his** heir who actually managed
To reach the same distinction as his father,
Because in *his* case prudence proved the pilot
That steered his governance. The third was Cyrus,
A blessed man, who in his reign concluded
A general peace among the well-disposed:
He easily annexed the lands of Lydia
And Phrygia and pacified Ionia
By force, because no god could bear a grudge
Against so circumspect a man. His son
Succeeded him, fourth in the line to lead
The army in war.

Our fifth king, though, was Mardos,
A blot upon the empire and the throne.
Good Artaphernes crept into the palace
And with a gang of friends in a just cause
Slaughtered him; and the sixth was Maraphis; LX 288- Leon EN curtains
Seventh came Artaphernes; then in turn
I hit upon the lot I long desired.
I campaigned amply with an ample army
And never with such thorough decimation
Assailed the Persian capital.

My son
Is young yet, so his plans are immature;
He has forgotten, of course, all that I told him.
Trust me when I say this, dear old friends--
None of the kings who held the throne would ever LX 289- before LI X DS of SW
Have been the source of so much suffering.

Chorus-leader:

But, Lord Dareius, what comes next? Do you
Have any parting words? How can the Persians
Thrive in the future, after such a setback?

Ghost of Dareius:

By never sending troops against the Greeks,
Not even if our Medic army is larger.
In Greece the very soil serves as their ally.

Chorus-leader:

How do you mean? In what way does it aid them?

Ghost of Dareius:

It uses famine to reduce large armies.

Chorus-leader:

What if we send picked, well-provisioned soldiers?

Ghost of Dareius:

Not even the contingent left in Greece
Will live to see the day of its return.

Chorus-leader:

What do you mean? Won't the surviving soldiers
March out of Europe through the Hellespont?

Ghost of Dareius:

Of many, few—since, after having learned
Of what already happened, I must trust
In all the gods have prophesied concerning
What is to come. All oracles come true,
Not merely some. Now, since this is the case, LX 295- SW X DSC
It's clear that Xerxes placed his confidence
On empty hopes when he resolved to leave
His picked troops as a garrison in Greece.

Bivouacked where Asopos feeds the plain
With tributary streams, they soon will be
A handsome fattening for Boiotian soil.
An end awaits them there, a crown defeat
To clear the debts of pride and sacrilege.
When they arrived in Greece, they went around LX 296 before they lay
Defacing sacred images and burning
Temples down. Altars have been uprooted;
Statues of gods, snapped at the feet, have tumbled
From pedestals and lie about like rubble.

Certainly they will suffer nothing less
Than all they earned, and still more in the future.
Far from dry, the well-spring of their woes
Gushes as thickly as their blood will flow
When Doric spears, by slaughtering them, transform
Plataia's topsoil into swampy ground. LX 297
The bodies heaped in mute commemoration SQ 26.9
Will clearly show even our great-grandchildren
That mortals never should be over-boastful.
Outrage, once ripened, yields a bumper-crop
Of retribution, of tears reaped in season.

Such are the penalties for their misdeeds.
Study them well; remember Greece and Athens,
And let no Persian in the future scorn

The guardian god of present happiness
 And, by desiring more and still more, squander
 Prosperity. Zeus is a stringent judge
 Of willful overreach, a heavy censor.
 Though Xerxes has been chastened well already, LX 298
 Remind him, all the same, in gentle phrases,
 To cease offending god with wide-mouthed violence. SQ 27.2

And you, my darling, his devoted mother,
 Go to the palace and selecting there
 Whichever garment best will cloak his shame,
 Ride out to meet your son. In his distress,
 His fingernails have clawed the gowns of state
 To shreds and patches. You should be the one
 To daub his tears, because, as I well know,
 He will accept his mother's consolation
 Only. LX 300

I must return now to the darkness.
 Goodbye, old friends. Even in times of trouble
 Delight yourselves each day with trifling pleasures.
 All wealth is worthless in the underworld.

LX 301
 SQ 27.3
 Mic out

The Ghost of Dareius descends into his tomb.

LX 301.2- Anticipate El.
 Sooner than you think

Queen:

O god, so many worries rush at me!
 But one concern has cut me to the quick:
 My son's disgrace—the regal raiment hanging
 In tatters from his body. I am going
 To fetch fresh wraps from home and welcome him
 With what scant pomp I can—I must not fail
 My dearest darling in his darkest hour. LX 301.4

Chorus-leader:

I feel grief for the Eastern peoples, knowing
 Their current casualties and those to come. LX 302- GM X

The Queen exits, left.

Chorus:

Strophe A **Eric**

What glorious benefits we had,
 What laws to guide the commonweal,
 Back when the aged, capable
 And safe Dareius, like a god,
 Ruled over us as Emperor.
 He was not over-fond of war.

LX 303- GM to
 railing
 QUICK
 LX 304- Chorus
 sits

Antistrophe A **Emily**

He used two kinds of methods—men-
At-arms to frighten enemies
And laws like towers to supervise
All that occurred in his domain.
Unbeaten and with all their limbs,
Our troops returned to happy homes.

Strophe B **Ellen**

Though he never crossed the Halys,
Never stirred from his fireplace,
How far he spread his empery—
He took towns on the Achelaus
That neighbor with the land of Thrace
Down along the Strymon sea;

Antistrophe B **Stephen**

Then citadels on higher ground
Bowed to receive his governance,
As did the depots that are set
On either side of Helle's sound,
Remote Propontic settlements,
And towns along the Pontic straight,

Strophe C **J.Ed**

And all those waved-washed islands close
To our west coast, fanned out before us:
Lesbos is one, and Samos rich
In olive-orchards, Andros (which
Is only yards from Tenos), Paros,
And Chios, Naxos, Mykonos.

Antistrophe C **Bondo**

He seized those lands ringed by the sea
That lie removed from the land mass—
Lemnos, Cnidos, Rhodes, the seat
Of Ikarus, and Cypriot
Paphos, Soloi and Salamis,
Whose source-town caused this misery.

Epode **Leon**

And he controlled by fixity of mind
The rich and populous Greek colonies
On the Ionian coast. Ready supplies
Of troops and allied tribes were then on hand.

Akiko

Now, though, a sea-beating has wiped us out,
And there can be no doubt

It was the gods that fixed us with this loss.

Xerxes enters, right, in tatters, riding in a tattered palanquin, his retainers also in rags.

Xerxes:

Astrophic

Ah! suddenly unfortunate,
I stumbled on a hateful fate.
Some god has jumped up and with bloody
Vengeance crushed the Persian race.
Wretched as I am already,
What suffering is to come? One glance
At these imposing veterans,
And all my sinews are unstrung.

Oh Zeus,
I wish the doom of death had hid me
Deep down beneath the earth among
My ranks upon ranks of casualties.

Chorus:

Oh High King, alas, alas,
The Persian power was once revered!
How glorious our army was.
Fine outfits clothed our soldier's bodies—
Some god has cut them all to shreds.
Earth groans for the boys she reared
To die for Xerxes, glitter of Hades.

In dense and countless multitudes,
Platoons of soldiers, bow in hand,
The entire flower of the land,
Marched off to dwell in darkness. We
Groan for our lost security.
O King, how wretched: Asia is
Bent over double on her knees.

Strophe A

Xerxes:

Here I am, Woe!, the object of
Your lamentation; to my nation,
My fatherland, a source of grief.

Chorus:

Yes, I shall send you, in salute,
A cursing and accursed shout,
The Mariandynian lament
Choked with sobbing, dissonant.

LX 400- GM EN

SB LX 400.5 and LX 401 &
SQ 29

LX 400.5- GM at door

GM second to last step
LX 401
SQ 29

LX 402- chorus lean

LX 403

LX 404
SQ 29.5

LX 405

LX 406- GM X

SB LX 407.
LX 408 & SQ 29.7

LX 407

LX 408
SQ 29.7

LX 409- circle
formed

Antistrophe A

Xerxes:

Go on, raise a discordant cry
Brimming with woes and tears because
My guardian god has turned on me. LX 410

Chorus:

I, with the help of our sad State,
Shall cry out to commemorate
Your losses, our sea-stricken men.
Sobbing will rattle in the groan. LX 411

Strophe B

Xerxes:

Some foreigner-repellant power,
Some plank-destroying god of war,
Backs the Ionian cause.
Each night he scours the open seas
And that accursed shore.

Chorus:

Cry Woe! Look back at all that you have lost!
Where is the rest of your expansive host?
Where have your guardsmen gone? I mean, such men as
Ecbatanian Sousikanes,
Pelagon, Pharnadakes, Dotamas?
Sousas and Psammis? Agbatas?

LX 413
SQ 30.5

Antistrophe B

Xerxes:

I left them where I saw them last.
During the battle they were tossed
From their Phoenician ship.
Salamis with a sharp outcrop
Now pins them to its coast.

Chorus:

Cry Woe! Come, tell us where Pharnouchos is
And noble Ariomardos. Tharybis
And Memphis—are they lost with Artembares,
Masistras and Hystaichamas? Where is
The Lord Seualkes? With genteel Lilaïos?
We need to know all. Satisfy us.

Drum
LX 414
SQ 31

Strophe C

Xerxes:

Woeful, woeful—they beheld

Abominable old

Athens and in a quick sweep of the oar
Exhaled their last gasp on the shore.

Chorus:

Where is that flower of our land,
The faithful Eye who counted myriads of men?
He was the favorite son of Batanouchus, son
Of Sesames, Megabates' heir.
Oibares, Parthus the Renowned—
How could you have left them there?
Weep for the troops who were cut down.
You speak of trouble
Beyond all trouble.
Woe for our Persian noblemen.

Antistrophe C

Xerxes:

You move me with your wryneck's call: SQ 31.5
You speak of unforgettable
Disasters for my comrades, woes on woes.
My heart keeps mourning for the loss.

Chorus:

So many men we long to see:
Xanthes with his myriad of Mysians;
Anchares heading a brigade of Arians;
Then there's Diaixis and Arsakes,
Captains of the cavalry;
Then there's Lithimnas and Dadakes,
And Tolmos ravenous for war.
I stand aghast—
So large a host,
And none attend you...

LX 418 SQ 31.6

Strophe D

Xerxes:

All of the army's generals are gone.

Chorus:

All gone without a grave.

Xerxes:

Woe for them, woe.

Chorus:

You gods have struck us with a sudden blow.
Calamity glared once, and it was done.

Antistrophe D

Xerxes:

Our old luck failed; defeat has struck us down. LX 420

Chorus:

Yes, we have all been struck.

Xerxes:

By fresh regret.

Chorus:

Our fortune failed when we engaged their fleet.
The Persians are unlucky on campaign.

Strophe E

Xerxes:

A cursed campaign! Already wrecked, I suffer
Afresh from so much lack of a parade

Chorus:

Wrecker of Persia, what is not destroyed?

Xerxes:

Do you discern these rags, my regal apparel?

Chorus:

I see. I see.

Xerxes:

This bow without a quarrel?

Chorus:

What did you save?

Xerxes:

An archer's empty coffer.

Chorus:

So many set forth; you return with little.

Xerxes:

We lack protection.

Chorus:

And the Greeks love battle.

Antistrophe E

Xerxes:

They worship battle. I cannot believe
That we have suffered such catastrophe.

Chorus:

You mean the loss of all our men at sea? LX 429

Xerxes:

Yes, the disaster made me rend my dress.

Chorus:

A shameful sight.

Xerxes:

Disgrace beyond disgrace.

Chorus:

Twofold and threefold

Xerxes:

joy for foes, our grief.

Chorus:

Our strength is hobbled.

Xerxes:

And me without a train!

Chorus:

Because the sea took vengeance on our men.

GM Stands LX 430 SQ 33.6

Strophe F

Xerxes:

March for the palace, weeping as you go.

Chorus:

Misery, misery, woe on woe. LX 431

Xerxes:

Now when I lead, you sing the antiphon.

Chorus:

Woes for the woeful from the woebegone.

Xerxes:

Cry like the wryneck; join your song with mine.

SB LX 432 SQ 34 Add drums

Chorus:

Ah, ah,

The burden is heavy. Yes, I feel the pain.

Add drums LX 432 SQ 34

Antistrophe F

Xerxes:

Row with your arms now; groan in sympathy.

Chorus:

I cannot keep from weeping. Woe is me.

Xerxes:

Now when I lead, you sing the antiphon.

Chorus:

Suzerain, the burden will be mine.

Xerxes:

Now launch your lamentation overseas.

Chorus:

Ah, ah,

Bruising blows are mixed in with our cries.

Strophe G

Xerxes:

Drum your chest now; rave like Mysians.

LX 434- GM walk US

Chorus:

Pitiful, pitiful downfall.

Xerxes:

Pluck at the gray beards on your chins.

Chorus:

Fingers rooting, I wail and wail.

Xerxes:

Now raise a cry.

Chorus:

I must obey.

Antistrophe G

Xerxes:

Tear with your fingers; shred our dresses.

SB LX 435

Chorus:

Pitiful, pitiful downfall.

LX 435

Xerxes:

Pluck out your hair and grieve our losses.

Chorus:

Fingers rooting, I wail and wail.

Xerxes:

Weep now, weep.

Chorus:

The tears won't stop.

Epode

Xerxes:

I lead; you sing the antiphon.

Chorus:

Undone, undone.

Xerxes:

Start marching toward my palace, joyless.

Chorus:

Alas, alas. LX 436- chorus breaks circle

Xerxes:

Shout your grief throughout the city.

Chorus:

King, I am crying, crying loud.

Xerxes:

Keep wailing; but march delicately. LX 437- Bondo/Eric in line w/GM

Chorus:

The Persian earth is hard to tread.

Xerxes:

Warships with triple-banks of oars!

Chorus:

The warships killed our warriors.

Xerxes:

Walk with me to my palace now. LX 438- GM Gesture

Chorus:

Yes, we will join you, crying Woe.

Xerxes, his three retainers, and the twelve Persian elders exit on foot toward the palace, left.

LX 439- GM hits top step	10 seconds
DOOR CLOSSES	LX 450- curtain call
LX 440 & SQ 35.9	SQ 36- Company walks US post bows
	LX 451- House up
	SQ 37- House is clear