

Tecmessa

At last he challenged me - and with what threats -
To tell him all that had happened, where he was
And how he came there. I was afraid, my friends,
And told him everything I knew. At that
He broke into such piteous cries of anguish
As I had never heard him use before;
For he had always taught me that loud crying
Was only fit for cowards and mollicoddles;
If he lamented it was with low moans,
A bull's deep groaning - never a shrill complaint.
And so he still sits, utterly dejected;
Will take no food nor drink, but only sits
Still where he fell among the slaughtered beasts.
He clearly means to do some dreadful thing,
If there is any meaning in his words,
His bitter cries.

O friends, come in and help me -
I am here only to ask you this - come in
And help me if you can.

c. l. 320

- i) What was 'all that had happened'? 3
ii) Why did Ajax have to be told? 2
iii) What is the 'anguish' he feels? (Examine different aspects.) 6
iv) Who are the 'friends' Tecmessa calls on, and what kind
of help do they offer? 4

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AJAX (*within*): O! O!...)

TECMESSA:

We have not seen the worst. Do you hear him now?

How he groans!

AJAX: O! O!...)

CHORUS: Is he still afflicted

Or suffering at the sight of what he did

When the rage was on him?

AJAX: O my son, my son!)

TECMESSA: He calls for his son Eurysaces. Ah why?

Eurysaces, where are you? ... O what shall I do?

AJAX: Teucer! ... Where's Teucer?..

l. 330

- i.) Why does Sophocles have Ajax's cries heard off-stage? 3,
and when is this effect repeated? 2
ii) How do we next see Ajax, & how is this appearance different
from his first appearance? 6
iii) Why does he call on his son? 4

