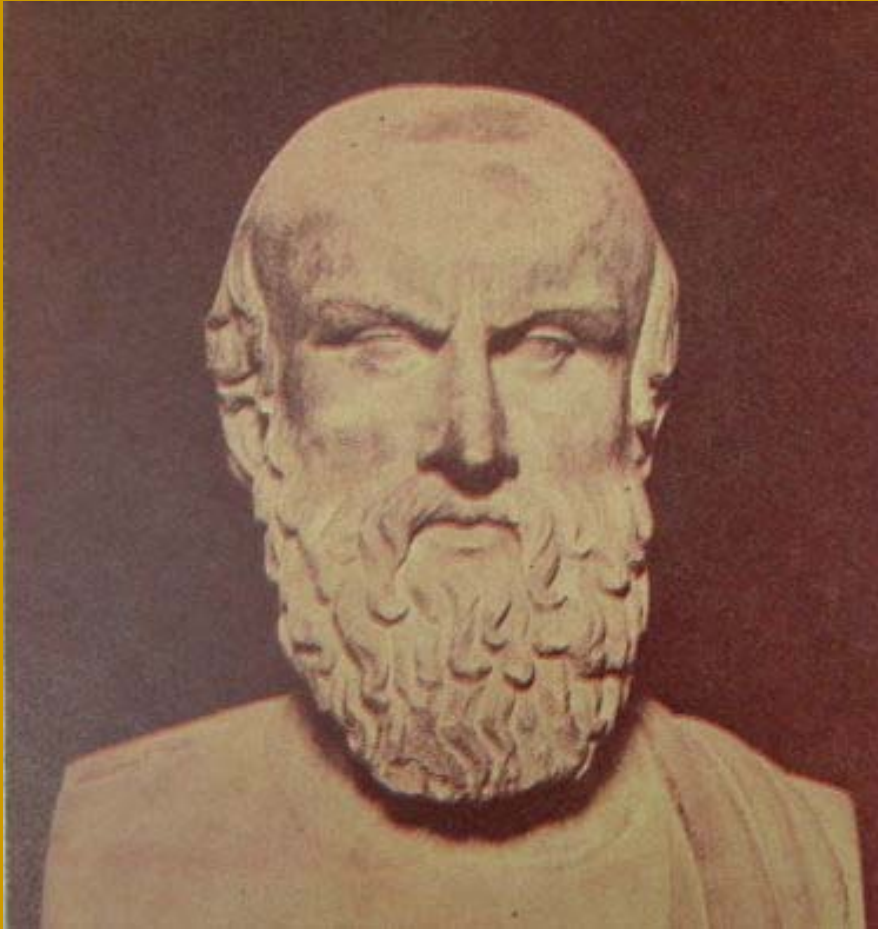


Aeschylus (525~456BC)

The Oresteia Trilogy



Oresteia Trilogy:

1. *Agamemnon*

2. *The Libation Bearers*

3. *The Eumenides*

The subject of the Oresteia Trilogy is nothing less than the growth of civilization,, represented by the gradual transition from a primitive law of *vendetta* (“blood for blood”) to the rational society of civilized human beings.

The Oresteia Trilogy

1. *Agamemnon*: On the way to Troy, King Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigeia to get an easy passage for the Greek troop.

→ conflict between public and personal responsibility

Vendetta: Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter → Clytemnestra (and Aegithus) murdered her husband

2. *The Libation Bearers*: show the effects of the operation of the law of *vendetta* on Agamemnon's son, Orestes.

Vendetta: To revenge for his father, Orestes (with the encourage of his sister Electra) killed his mother Clytemnestra → Orestes was hunted by the Furies (the goddesses of vengeance)

→ conflict: the contradiction of the law of *vendetta*

3. *The Eumenides* (= the kindly ones =the Furies)

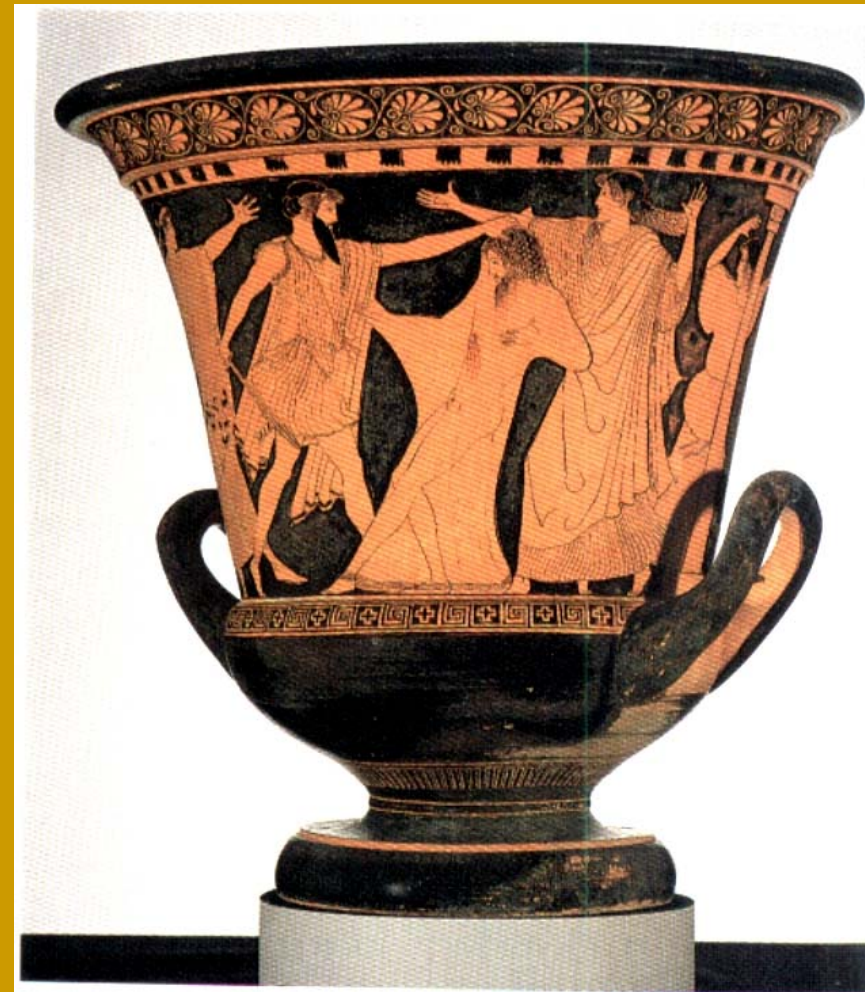
→ resolution through reason and persuasion → Athena as judge, Apollo for Orestes, the Furies against Orestes

The Oresteia Trilogy

Aeschylus affirms his belief that progress can be achieved by reason and order. This gradual transition from darkness to light is handled throughout the three plays with unfailing skills.



- Mask of Agamemnon



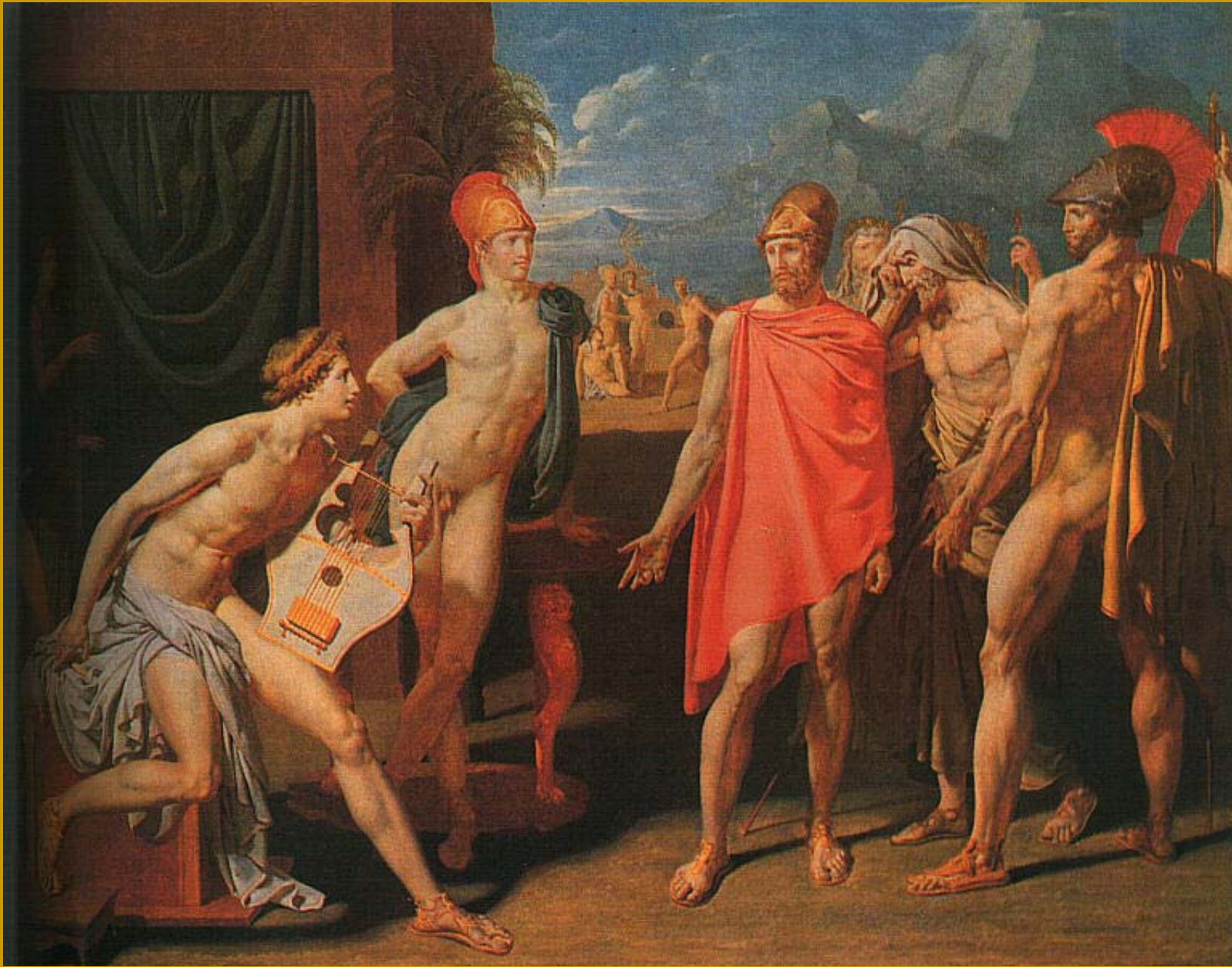
The murder of Agamemnon by Aegisthus

Agamemnon and Achilles



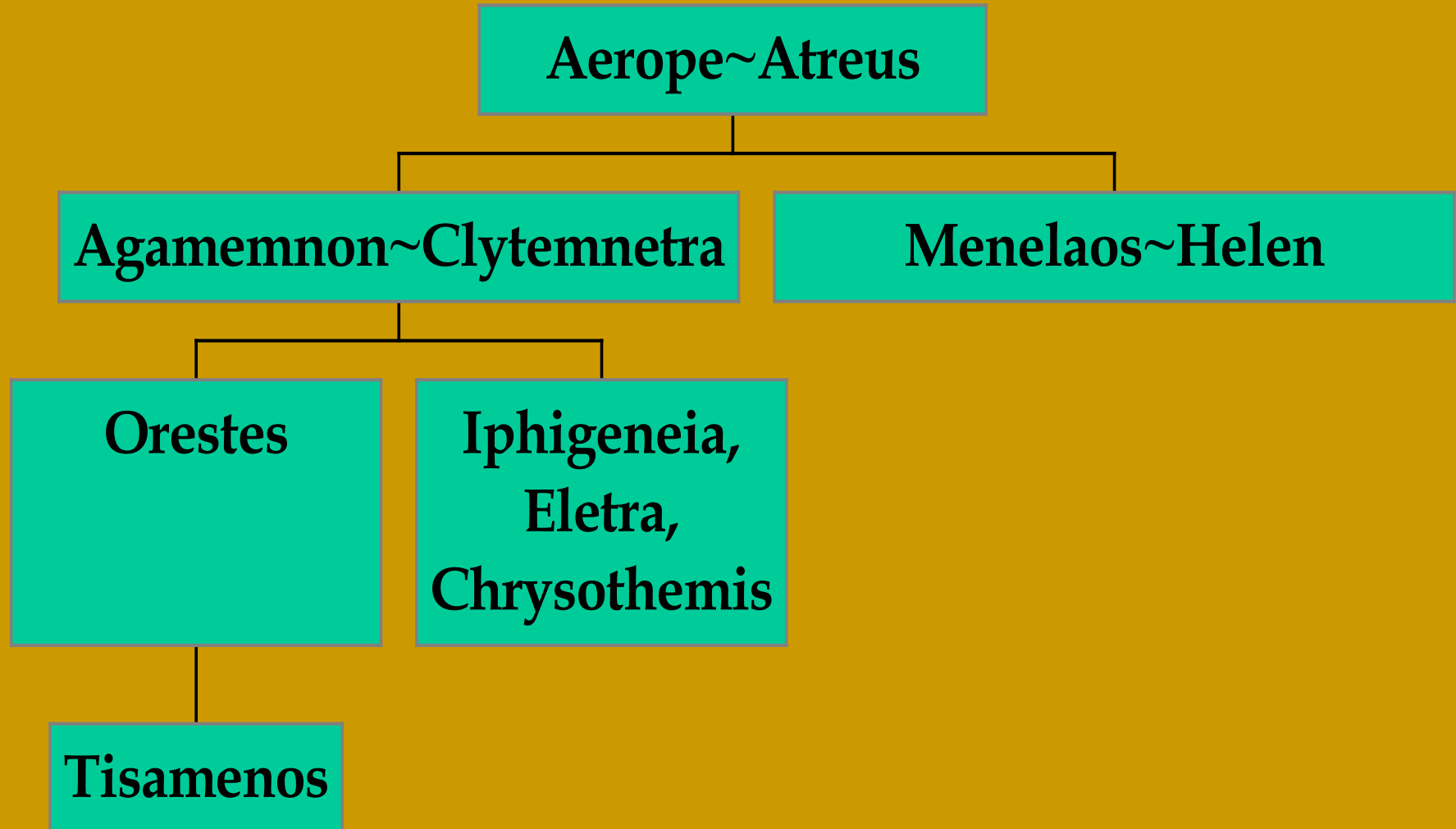
Peter Paul Rubens 1577-1640: Achilles vertoomd op Agamemnon. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML

Achilles considers killing the throned Agamemnon, who has just declared that he would take the former's sweetheart Briseis for himself. But while Achilles ponders, Athena comes from heaven and, invisible to the others, seizes him by his hair and stays his anger. To the left old Nestor watches the scene.



- Agamemnon and Achilles

The Family of Agamemnon



- Iphigenia



Anselm Feuerbach 1829-1890: Iphigenia.
Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.

Conflicts

Blood for Blood (Vendetta):

**Agamemnon sacrificed
Iphigenia**

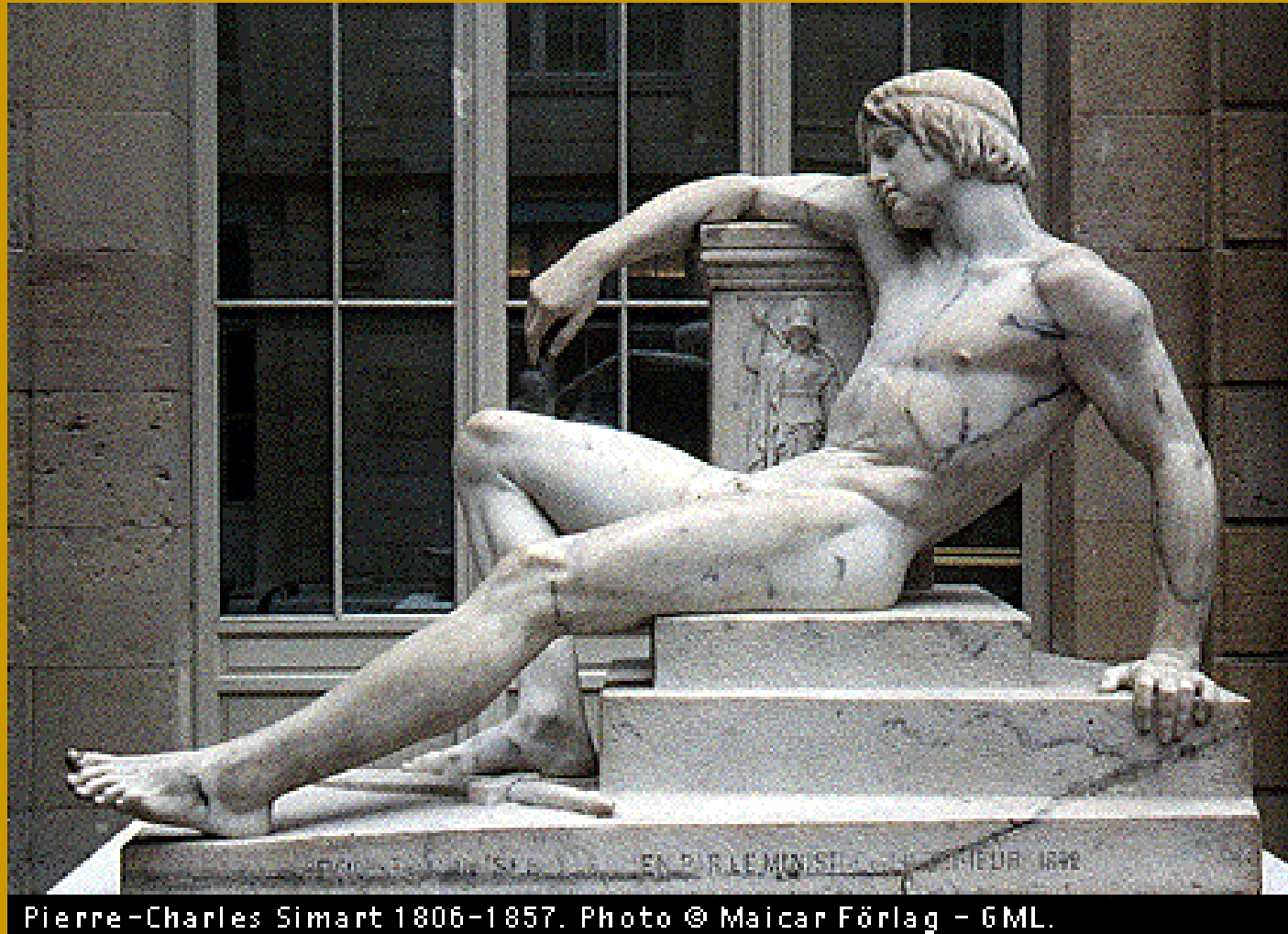
**→Clytemnestra and Aigisthus
murdered Agamemnon**

→Orestes killed Clytemnestra



Pierre-Narcisse Guérin 1774-1833: Clytemnestre avant de frapper Agamemnon.
Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.

- Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra, just about to slay Agamemnon



- Orestes

- Eletra



Hermann Wilhelm Bissen 1798-1868:
Electra.
Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.

**Resolution through
reason and
persuasion**

Athena as judge

Furies against Orestes

Apollo for Orestes

- Erinyes (Furies)



Johann Heinrich W. Tischbein, 1751-1829: Erynnyen. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.