THE CÆSURA OF THE *SYMBOLON*
IN AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*

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εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον, μή τις *ἀμαθία* προσῇ
τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ
    λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν,
μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ', ὡς οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.
᾽εστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσιν,
βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἔκαστος *μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά* ·
                Aristophanes *Frogs* 1109–14

But do not fear lest there be some *nescience*
Among the audience,
    That they may not understand your finest points,
Don't fear this, for this is no longer possible.
For they have been armed,
They have the book in hand and are *learning the*
    subtleties.

What envy the modern philologist feels imagining the casual ignorance of Aristophanes' audience poring over their popular editions of the *Oresteia*, envy shaped by what are, in the case of the parodos to the *Agamemnon*, some of the most important and intractable instances of ἀμαθία or nescience in the history of western literary scholarship! What approach has yet to be essayed over the centuries to resolve the critical enigmas surrounding Calchas' prophecy? And where else has the absence of the book, a secure text, given rise to greater perplexities? The prudent efforts of classical philologists to secure the text in the face of the anxieties that this uniquely

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complex work presents must not go unappreciated, but neither should such prudence any longer be allowed, in contravention of the spirit of Aristophanes' challenge, to foster an excessive, putatively empirical conservatism that impedes a courageous embrace of the polyvalencies of Aeschylean ambiguity. For only such an approach will finally provide solutions to the age-old questions: what is the significance of Calchas' prophecy? What is the prophecy's relationship to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia? Why did Artemis demand the sacrifice of Iphigeneia? Moreover, such an approach is also necessary to provide the answer to a question that has not yet been properly posed, the key to all the others: *did Artemis demand the sacrifice of Iphigeneia*? And to some others not yet imagined: what is the role of the *symbolon*? and the *graphê*? So we, too, must take the book in hand to respect the equally important exigencies expressed in the phrase, μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά,[1] i.e., "getting it right," without succumbing to an ἀμαθία, a lack of knowledge, as regards the rhetorical subtleties of Aeschylean ambiguity and their profound implications.

First, however, in the spirit of Aristophanes' indirect address to his Athenian audience, it is necessary to establish renewed attention to the dramaturgical-textual complexities and self-referential character of the *Agamemnon*. Segal's essay, "Vérité, tragédie, et écriture," displays a sensitivity to the multiple dimensions of the aesthetics of tragedy, particularly in its emphasis on the role of writing: "Désormais les poètes tragiques ne s'intéressent pas seulement à créer un spectacle, mais ils veulent aussi attirer l'attention sur leur propre *pouvoir* de créer des spectacles, sur le système des conventions avec lequel la forme elle-même opère" (1992.339). It is just such a dynamic that characterizes the opening of the *Agamemnon*, for Aeschylus alerts us in the closing words of the lookout's speech that special attention is due to what may be therein concealed (38–39):

> σαφέστατ᾽ ἂν λέξειεν· ὡς ἑκὼν ἐγὼ
> μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ κοὐ μαθοῦσι λήθομαι

> [these walls] would tell these things most clearly, for I
>   speak willingly

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1 The phrase means "to learn τὰ δεξιά," literally "to learn the things on the right," where τὰ δεξιά has the further sense of "rhetorical subtleties." Translations are the author's own unless noted otherwise.

> to *those who understand* but to *those who do not*
> *understand* I am concealed.

Although it will be "most clear" only later, these words announce Aeschylus' precise relationship to his own audience (be it that of 458 B.C., 405 B.C., or in perpetuity)—in the clarity of his own words to follow and the division between those who will, and those who will not, learn his meaning.

The lookout, alone on the palace roof, addresses the audience directly in a manner that simultaneously initiates the action of the play and reveals its aesthetic form. While explicit at 31, αὐτός τ' ἔγωγε φροίμιον χορεύσομαι, "I myself *will dance* the prelude," (as χορεύσομαι indicates the imminent entrance of the chorus, χορός, on stage), a more subtle conjunction is anticipated on the eastern horizon. A certain pause—καὶ νῦν—establishes the present moment of the spectacle, while the lookout, alone with the audience, surveys the silent firmament (8–9):

> καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τὸ *σύμβολον*,
> αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσαν ἐκ Τροίας *φάτιν*

> and now I am on the lookout for the *symbolon* of the
> signal fire,
> *ray* of fire bearing forth from Troy the *speech*

It is from among the stars, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι ἀστέρας (6–7), that the ray of fire will appear, and its appearance will be indicated by a term for *explicit appearance*, πρέπει (30), specific to the *objective* order of the *symbolon*. The *symbolon* arises from this transcendent horizon, along with the rising stars, ὅταν φθίνωσιν ἀντολαῖς (7), bearing with it the force of that objective beyond registered in the very syntax of the clause αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσαν ἐκ Τροίας *φάτιν*. However, due to the objective apposition to τὸ σύμβολον, that which otherwise would be a simple transitive statement, subject-participle-object, "*ray* of fire bearing from Troy the *speech*," exhibits a potential retrograde symmetry in the feminine accusative nouns, *object*-participle-object, as the force of φάτιν, "report" or "speech," is rhetorically balanced against, and vies with, that of αὐγὴν, "ray of light," accusative by apposition:[2] a retrograde undertone presaged by the reference,

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2 A definite instance at 112 of such a syntactical reversal directly related to this will be addressed below.

in the preceding line, to the setting of the stars below the horizon, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολαῖς τε τῶν (7). For a tentative moment, a subtle conjunction also appears that indicates the production of poetic images to be advanced in the forthcoming retrospectives of the chorus to which this is all the prelude, …ς ὁ φρυκτὸς ἀγγέλλων *πρέπει*, "as the beacon *appears* bearing the message" (30), "I myself will dance [χορεύσομαι] the prelude" (31), only, however, eventually to wane in the more radical threat of *disjunction* inherent in the etymology of σύμ-βολον.[3] That which is "symbolically" "*thrown together*" is also prone to coming apart: as it was *speech* that kindled the visual component in the form of fire, so will it be the speech of the chorus that will lead *back,* in a train of recollections, to a *blinding* image in the Gorgonic epiphany of the *graphê.*

The lookout seeks an ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων (1, 20), "release, or *transformation,* from suffering," now only tentatively able to resist the brunt of the *sym-bolon* put into etymological play (15):

τὸ μὴ βεβαίως βλέφαρα *συμ-βαλεῖν* ὕπνῳ

lest my eyelids be forcefully *thrown together* in sleep

Such an ἀπαλλαγή, however, will elude what will prove to be a futile attempt to reconstitute the sundered and counterposed components of the aural and visual registers, of αὐγήν and φάτιν, that comprise the *symbolon.* Where does this retrograde path lead? Only to flames atop the promontories of Troy? Or backwards, and back further, to a more distant scene whose stunning impact was the origin of this disjunction, the disaesthesis, of speech and image?

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3 Bollack's commentary on the line, 1981.16, begins to pursue this line of thought, "Mais on ne tient pas compte ainsi de l'unité que forme le vers 9 avec ses deux éléments qui associent la parole à l'éclat du feu: le « signe » du flambeau est analysé, la matière distincte du message qu'elle porte. En un troisième temps, le message est à son tour divisé et la parole (βάξιν) en tant que médium du message, distincte de la nouvelle de la prise (ἁλώσιμον), comme son contenu. La *dissociation* [emphasis added] isole, dans le signe, le dynamisme propre de l'élément de la fonction qu'il parvient à remplir." For a more developed treatment of the *symbolon* along these lines, see Lallot 1974.

CALCHAS, THE "TRUSTED" PROPHET

In the first two strophic stanzas[4] of the play, only four lines[5] among the predominantly dactylic verses are true *epic* hexameters, the rest convey only epic *tone*. And it is subtle inflections of tone that attend the first, ostensibly epic, words of the chorus' intricate path to the altar in Aulis, κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὅδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν (104), "I have the authority to tell of the auspicious force of men underway." A critical bearing must be identified that turns a distrustful eye on the *stratomantis* (martial prophet) Calchas. In the extensive literature, Peradotto alone (1969a.238) questions in any way what otherwise has amounted to implicit faith (not dissimilar to that faith for which Agamemnon will later be criticized, μάντιν οὔτινα[6] ψέγων, "in no way impugning the prophet" [186]), in the apparent significance of Calchas' prophecy: "Is it correct to say that Artemis *demands* the sacrifice of Iphigeneia? All the text tells us (in the words of Calchas) is that she caused adverse winds, precipitating (σπευδομένα) the sacrifice, and that the sacrifice was a μῆχαρ, an expedient or remedy for the bad weather, proposed by Calchas, and uncontested by Agamemnon (μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων, 186). Artemis compels Agamemnon to nothing." That a lack of scrutiny is unwarranted is unequivocally evident from the contrastive and skeptical charge of the modest particle δὲ, "but," in the verse responding to the chorus' guarded assertion of their authority and ability to sing persuasively of the acts of powerful men, even, when irony demands, in proper hexameters, κεδνὸς δὲ στρατόμαντις ἰδὼν δύο λήμασι δισσοὺς (123), "*But* the *trusted* prophet of the army . . ." The significance is *un*equivocal as the chorus matches its voice to, pits its *natural* powers of persuasion against (ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνείει πειθώ, μολπᾷ δ᾽ ἀλκὰν σύμφυτος αἰών, "For still persuasion from god blows down upon me, strength in song natural to my years" [105–06]) "trusted" Calchas' *technical skill*, (εἶπε τεράζων, "thus he spoke *interpreting the portents* . . ." [125]) only to mete out syllable by responding syllable a punctuated, veiled critique fitting the apotropaic

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4 Lines 104–21, 122–39.

5 104, 123; 119, 136.

6 Certainly an adverbial (accusative short alpha, οὔτινα, long by position) as opposed to adjectival modification of μάντιν here is beyond dispute, for who else but Calchas, Κάλχας, could be thus poetically identified in this moment, and this locale, Χαλ-κίδος πέραν? This twist on Calchas' name will be seen below in its full significance.

circumstances, αἴλινον, αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω (121, 138, 159),
"woe, woe, but may the good prevail."[7]

  From the innuendo of tone there emerges an express indication of
Calchas' role, as the ascendancy of the Atridae's power is eclipsed in the
striking syntactic reversal that the unexpected appearance of the θούριος
ὄρνις, "warlike bird," effects upon the δίθρονον κράτος, "two-throned
power"—as what appears to be the nominative subject of the following
statement is abruptly shifted to the objective register of the neuter *accusative*
(109–13):

> ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας
>   ξύμφρονα ταγάν,
> πέμπει σὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι
>   θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αἶαν

  The accusation[8] now lights equally upon *Calchas*, who is the
θούριος ὄρνις, the οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς, "king of birds,"[9] and the Atridæ,
βασιλεῦσι νεῶν (114), "kings of ships,"[10] in the tragic reformulation of that

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7 Peradotto 1969a.239: "The difficulty [in interpreting the prophecy] is further compounded
 by calculated verbal obscurity in Calchas' interpretation and the chorus' narration, both
 motivated by the fear that a too explicit reference to untoward events or their causes will
 bring them about."

8 Note that when the δίθρονον κράτος is supplanted as subject, the clause Ἑλλάδος ἥβας
 ξύμφρονα ταγάν, "the *taxis* of the young of Hellas forged together in mind," ceases to
 operate as supposed direct object of the agency of the supposed subject κράτος. Instead, it
 is *set on a syntactical, appositional, par* with κράτος adding a subtle shift in nuance. The
 allegiant youth of Greece is no longer the neutral object of the Atridæ's command, but
 rather is, by virtue of the now appositional grammar, the *invaluable* substance of their
 power, whose exploitation, by Agamemnon's hubristic nescience *and* Calchas' devious-
 ness, is damnable.

9 Since, by one degree of metonymy, οἰωνῶν, "birds," may be "omens" and name the
 specific power that makes Calchas a metaphorical king, then there is no reason to doubt
 that ὄρνις, "bird," by two degrees of metonymy, names him metaphorically, particularly
 given the emphasis on his bird cries at 156 and 201 to be addressed below.

10 The deprecatory judgment of artificiality by Denniston-Page 1957.78, i.e., in its chiasmic
 phonetics: *oiônôn basileus* [X] *basileusi neôn,* ironically fails to recognize the genius of
 the chiasmus whose artificiality is precisely the expression of the chorus' deliberate parody
 of Calchas' artificiality. It was also never adequate to accept, with Fraenkel 1950.67,
 unexamined suppositions of imprecisions ("loosely connected" [Schneidewin]) regarding
 the apparent discrepancies between the *singular* king and *multiple* birds, for Aeschylus
 draws specific attention to the implausibility of such a loose interpretation, first, in the
 focused chiasmic juxtaposition between *singular* βασιλεύς (referring to Calchas the
 θούριος ὄρνις) and plural βασιλεῦσι and, definitively, in the rare and deliberate use of the

old and famous rancor of *Il.*1.106ff.[11] Calchas' duplicity is written all over line 122, ἰδὼν δύο λήμασι δισσούς, duplicity that picks up both sides of *δάω, of receptive "perceiving" and causal, *agential*,[12] "teaching": δισσοὺς Ἀτρείδας μαχίμους ἐδάη λαγοδαίτας. It will presently be seen that Agamemnon fared poorly in his lesson in rhetoric, τὸν πάθει μάθος (177), "learning by suffering," failing to raise the proper questions, μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων, "in no way questioning, or impugning, the prophet," and missing the critical δεξία (145), "subtleties," to be explicated below. Why would Aeschylus have gone to such pains to present the chorus' suspicions of Calchas if not to alert his readers to attend to the sophisticated rhetorical complexities found in the substance of the prophecy itself? The point is *not* to follow the tragic path of Agamemnon's undoing, that is, *not* to fail to impugn, ψέγειν, the words of the prophet.

ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟΝ ΙΦΙΓΕΝΕΙΑΣ

Calchas also gives an indication of the status of his own speech at the same time as he appears to be referring solely to what properly should be the independent circumstances of the portent, δεξιὰ μὲν κατάμομφα δὲ φάσματα (145), "appearances at once *dexia* and evil." Calchas both deploys and reveals his own rhetorical duplicity in the word *dexia*. If "that which is good (*dexia*)[13] and that which is bad" are not simply as they have appeared,

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dual βοσκομένω (119) (referring to the *two* eagles), which should well be retained from Denniston-Page.

11 I thank Marcel Detienne for reminding me of his analysis of the implicit struggle in κραίνειν between kings and prophets that will find its consummate tragic apotheosis below at line 144: see Detienne 1973 passim.

12 Throughout the passage, the archaic, hypostatic role of the prophet is questioned in light of the politically charged suggestion that Calchas acts individually. Acts, that is, as an individual *agent*, who, as the *king of birds*, *actively* determines, or *assigns*, ἐδάη, the "significance" of the portent of eagles, and is thereby vying for what would properly be the command of the *kings of ships*. This adds a further dimension to the question (central to ethico-juridically oriented interpretations) of Agamemnon's personal culpability for the sacrifice of his daughter. The question is not simply *whether* Agamemnon is personally culpable for the sacrifice, but also whether *he* is the one who is culpable. This question will become all the more problematic (along with prospects for a definitive ethico-juridical resolution) once the essentially unexamined question of whether *Artemis* initially de-manded the sacrifice is re-examined below. I would like to thank G. Nagy who noted the hypostatic role of the *mantis* viva voce.

13 Beyond, or rather historically prior to, the sense of *dexia* as rhetorical subtleties, the term indicates the right side on which auspicious portents appear.

then what precisely are those apparent things, φάσματα, "appearances," on the one hand, *dexia*, "subtle" (*and* "right"), *and,* on the other, "wrong," κατάμομφα δὲ? What else may these φάσματα be than those winged dogs, πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ (135), that respond to their characterization by the chorus in the terms of the objective order of the *symbolon* as *all-too-evident*, παμπρέπτοις ἐν ἕδραισιν (117)? The answer lies in the complexities of that word they modify, τὰ ξύμβολα (144), "the 'symbols.'"

These complexities relate directly to the question of the role of Artemis, a role that is most essential to what will later be the retributive "sacrifice" of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra. It is here that Peradotto's question may again be raised with a slightly different inflection:[14] "Did *Artemis* demand the sacrifice?" Presumably the reason this question has not yet been asked is that it seems to be one of the only certain elements in the prophecy. After all, what could be more straightforward than Calchas' statement that Artemis demanded that the symbols be accomplished (140), that she fashioned the ship-delaying winds (147), that she urged on that other catastrophic sacrifice (150)? Yet might not the tragically paradoxical nature of this moment, in which Artemis demanded the sacrifice of the one, Iphigeneia, who would have been most dear to her, have offended the rapidly evolving civility of Aeschylus' Athens much as it disturbs us? After all, Artemis' kindly disposition towards the young is related with particular emphasis, τόσον *περ* εὔφρων ἁ καλὰ (140), "For so kindly *indeed* is the beautiful one to the young of beasts," in the immediately preceding passage. It is again a modest particle, περ (which bridges the apotropaic *interruption* of the syntax of Calchas' prophecy preceding the epode) that has turned all critical attention away from the solution to the enigmas. Modern editions, without exception, have followed the verse division in punctuating 137 with a period and commencing a new sentence at 140. Yet *περ* suggests that lines 140–43 present an appositional clause qualifying the preceding subject of what is now, once the interrupting incantation of the chorus is excised from their *quotation* of Calchas' prophecy, one complex sentence (134–43):

οἴκτῳ γὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὰ
πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρὸς

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14 Whereas Peradotto identifies the issue of the gulf between Calchas' mediacy and the purported will of the goddess Artemis, further confirmation of his thesis, along with other implications, is to be found in the following analysis of the intricacies of the expression of that mediacy.

αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισιν·
137   στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετων[,]
140   τόσον *περ* εὔφρων ἁ καλὰ
δρόσοις ἀέπτοις μαλερῶν λεόντων
πάντων τ᾽ἀγρονόμων φιλομάστοις
θηρῶν ὀβρικάλοισι τερπνά[.]

For in pity reverend Artemis is wroth
with the wingèd dogs of the father
sacrificing the pathetic hare . . .
137   and she abhors the feast of eagles[,]
140   for so kindly *indeed* is the beautiful one
to the wingless young of ravenous lions
and tender to all the suckling young in the wild[.]

This amendment does not present a problem until the impact of the period at 143 on the syntax of the following sentence is considered (144–50):[15]

144   τούτων αἰτεῖ ξύμβολα κρᾶναι[16][,]
δεξιὰ μὲν κατάμομφα δὲ φάσματα⟨ ⟩
ἰήιον δὲ καλέω Παιᾶνα,
μή τινας ἀντιπνόους Δαναοῖς χρονί-
ας ἐχενῇδας ἀπλοίας
τεύξῃ, ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ θυσίαν ἑτέραν ἄνομόν τιν᾽
ἄδαιτον

Artemis ceases to be the subject of αἰτεῖ, and thus *is no longer to be seen as demanding* the sacrifice. Instead, the ξύμβολα, "symbols," in the *nominative*[17] plural, govern not only the third person singular of the finite form

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15 The common translation of this passage: "[Artemis] demands that the 'symbols' of these things be accomplished, appearances at once auspicious and evil, and I invoke Paean [Apollo, god of healing], lest *she fashion* upon the Danaans ship-detaining winds, *urging* on another sacrifice, unholy, inedible," will presently be amended element by element.

16 The significance of the term κρᾶναι here actually goes beyond the conflict between the roles of prophets and those of kings—where both will be seen to be supplanted on a more enigmatic level by the force of the *symbola* themselves.

17 The rhetorical switch of the *symbola* from the accusative plural in the conventional reading (which takes Artemis as the subject of the verb), to the nominative plural of this ambiguous reading was explicitly and prospectively confirmed above in the opposite shift of the

αἰτεῖ, but τεύξῃ as well, and finally, in the crowning moment of this grammatical exercise in *exceptions to the rules*, govern what may now be read as the *neuter plural*, σπευδ-ό-μενα, of the participle by virtue of the paleographic undeterminability of the *Doric* ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ.

Despite the complexities of these rhetorical intricacies, they are *clear*, that is, "most clear to those who have learned" the *dexia*. In a rhetorical *tour de force*, Aeschylus presents Artemis as if she is demanding the sacrifice, while simultaneously revealing in the ambiguous *dexia* what amounts to a diametrically opposed significance. Due to the morphological identity between the nominative and accusative cases in the neuter of ξύμβολα, the term, which has always been understood as accusative direct object of the verb αἴτει, "demands," whose subject has been supposed to be only Artemis, can grammatically also stand as subject of the verb, "the *symbola demand . . .*" In accordance with the grammatical exception by which neuter *plural* nouns take third *singular* verb forms, the ξύμβολα, instead of (or in addition to) Artemis, are the subject of αἴτει and τεύξῃ, "fashion." And finally, according to the conventional use in tragedy of the Doric dialect in choral odes, where the Attic letter eta, a long syllable, is replaced with a long alpha, what would be a feminine singular participle in Attic, taking Artemis as subject, σπευδομένη becomes σπευδομένα. But whereas eta is always a long syllable, alpha can be, *on its face*, either long or short. While this ambiguity is precluded in modern minuscule type by the position of the accent, the original paleographic text was written *without accents*. It is upon this final *coup de grace* that all the preceding ambiguities depend, for if the participle ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ, "urging on," could not be read as governed by the neuter plural subject of the *symbola*, it could also not be taken as subject of the previous finite verbs.

Before hastening forward, however, a certain objection must be noted that would call for the metrical healing of a παιάν[18] to check the transgressions that follow. "It doesn't scan" will be the rallying cry of those who fear the vicissitudes of unbridled ambiguity! For while the two possible forms are indistinguishable in the written form, this is not the case when spoken. Thus if the *Agamemnon* were *essentially* an oral text, that is, if the dactylic, epic *tone* of this passage was understood to actually qualify it as an

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apparent subject in the nominative case of the δίθρονον κράτος to its actual status as an accusative direct object.

18 A choral song of healing addressed to Apollo or Artemis.

oral text (as with archaic epic proper), this entire brilliant rhetorical edifice would fall *having been weighed in the balance of the length of one syllable*! Fortunately, however, there is clear evidence—indeed the proof will finally be all-too-graphically evident—and Aeschylus is finally due a more literate appreciation lest Aristophanes' promise of an enlightened audience go unfulfilled. For now, the cry ἰήιον[19] Παιᾶνα (146) must be left to Calchas, in his gesture to obscure the threat that the *symbola* present and to maintain the dissimulatory dactyls[20] of his duplicitous rhetoric.

So what is gained? In this reading, *Artemis* did not demand the sacrifice, instead she is only proffered in name, μάντις ἔκλαγξεν προφέρων, "the prophet screeched forth proffering [the name] 'Artemis,'" according to the θέμις, the "law" or "tradition" or "custom," of such extreme circum-stances—the *themis* that will lead Agamemnon to believe in the justifiability of his bitter "decision,"[21] παρθενίου θ᾽ αἵματος ὀργᾷ περιοργῷ σφ᾽ ἐπιθυμεῖν θέμις (215), "and it is *themis* that they should lust passionately, wrathfully, after the virgin's blood." Artemis did not *demand* the sacrifice, on the contrary, she *abhorred* it.[22] The *symbola* themselves demand to govern. But what would the implications of this be? Ultimately, the *symbola* will overwhelm even Calchas, who, despite his less-than-favorable relation-ship with Agamemnon, may be assumed to still have genuine hopes that the significance of the portent will not be fulfilled. But what exactly are the *symbola*? Previous interpretations have assumed that they are limited to the

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19 That is, the *voiced* paean.

20 Is it not curious that precisely here there should appear a line that does not scan dactylic and interrupts the preceding and following dactylic lines? Curious too, that the "cretic,"— δε καλε—suggests the impetuous rhythm that would be threatening in both the meter, *and the sense*, of σπευδομενα, were it to be pronounced in the neuter form?

21 Decision indeed it was, but on the basis of misinformation. Though Agamemnon will be saddled, or yoked, with the repercussions of his decision, it should be remembered that his first mistake was not here, but instead earlier when he did not question the authority of the "trustworthy" prophet.

22 This is confirmed in the pointedly *an*artemisian terms that describe the act: δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν ἄναγνον, ἀνίερον (219), where ἄναγνον, "impure" echoes her explicit epithet at 134, Ἄρτεμις ἁγνά, as well as in the alpha privatives of Calchas' description of the sacrifice, ἄνομόν τιν᾽ ἄδαιτον (150). The sacrifice is *an*artemisian, *not* demanded by Artemis. It is here also that the aforementioned metrical observations may be proposed. This is the first of four lines that exhibit runs of short syllables comparable to what would have been the meter of σπευδόμενα, had it been *voiced that way*: str.: ἀνίερον (220), παρακοπὰ (223), ant.: φιλόμαχοι (230), περιπετῆ (233), all of which exhibit in sense and meter what would be the impetuousness of σπευδομενα.

portent of the eagles; the result is various inadequate attempts to explain Artemis' anger.

But there is a convincing course beyond these difficulties that begins with a re-examination of the critical ambiguity at 136 that Vidal-Naquet once addressed, αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομέ-νοισιν,[23] but whose full significance has yet to be appreciated. In the first place, it confirms what has been said above, for surely Artemis could not have at once abhorred the sacrifice of Iphigeneia (who is without doubt the αὐτότοκον) *and* demanded it, which leads directly to the second aspect. For given that the phrase signifies simultaneously the portent of the eagles devouring the hare *and* the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, and, specifically, that the "wingèd dogs of the father" refer simultaneously to the eagles *and* Agamemnon's henchmen, then Artemis' wrath applies *both* to the eagles *and* Agamemnon, and *thus to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia itself*.

Yet if Artemis, even when she is maintained as the subject of the verbs analyzed above, didn't demand *this* sacrifice, i.e., the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, then what would be the meaning of *σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν (150), what actually is the *other* sacrifice? The plural form of the *symbola*,[24] which now takes on a new significance, provides the solution. The plural *symbola* must not be understood simply, as in modern semiotics, as vague "symbols" acting as signifiers of independent referents. Rather, they must be understood in their archaic sense as opposing halves guaranteeing a contractual relationship.[25] The θυσίαν ἑτέραν is the other sacrifice of a pair. It is the compensatory sacrifice of *Agamemnon*, equally ἄνομον and ἄδαιτον, for that of Iphigeneia. From the perspective of the objective order of the *symbolon*, prefigured in the responson of the chorus' introduction, παμ-πρέπτοις[26] ἐν ἕδραισιν (118), the portent of the eagles and the

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23 1969.408. The phrase means (due to the curious ambiguity, which appears to have certain specifically Eleatic overtones, of the word λόχος, stemming from the word for "lying," between [lying in] "childbirth" and [lying in] "ambuscade"), on the one hand, "[the wingèd dogs of the father, i.e., the eagles] sacrificing the pathetic hare with her unborn before their birthing," and, "[the wingèd dogs of the father, i.e., Agamemnon's henchmen] sacrificing his own young [Iphigeneia] before the host."

24 Which, incidentally, provides for *all* those ambiguities associated with the nominative reading.

25 For a thorough explanation of this significance of the term, see Gauthier 1972 and Lallot 1974.

26 The phrase indicates, with that term that is the hallmark of the objective order of the *symbolon*, the all-too-evident appearance of the eagles, i.e., the sacrificers.

sacrifice of Iphigeneia are one, that is, *one and the same*, a fact that is precisely established in the brilliant "ambiguity" of line 136. Once the portent of eagles is absolutely, i.e., objectively, identified with the sacrifice, the phrase ceases to be an *ambiguity* in the strict sense of a reference to two different, i.e., *independent*, referents. This horrific statement, with its peculiarly *epic* ring (as one of those four true hexameters), is directly mocked by the line to which it is responding in the chorus' introduction, an introduction that refers to that act so pathetically, and blindly, lacking in *aristeia*, βοσκομένω λαγίναν ἐρικύμονα φέρματι γένναν (119), "feeding on the pregnant hare along with her young." One shudders at this nightmarish, lascivious[27] act, blatantly evident to all, including the Gods. Moreover, the reference to Iphi*gen*eia is confirmed by the pun, *γένναν*, on her name, which means "strong birth." From the objective order of the *symbolon*, this phrase—which, according to the modern conception of the symbolic, is understood as indicating *ambiguously* two independent events, where the "one" "symbolizes" the "other"—is as little dissociable into two significations as the victim is divisible into two corresponding components, one "literal," relating to Iphigeneia, the other "metaphorical," relating to the hare. The phrase, à la Heraclitus, does not *signify*, it *sym-bolizes*, in the etymological sense that Aeschylus is developing of συμ-βαλεῖν.[28] With the collapse of the erroneous "symbolic" distinction of the σύμβολον Ἰφιγενείας into one, comes as well the collapse of Calchas' ruse that would *proffer* "Artemis," προφέρων Ἄρτεμιν, as demanding what is no longer the "*other*" sacrifice of Iphigeneia, while, nonetheless, Calchas' dactylic, *prophetic*, κρᾶναι, may still stand. For somehow the anger of "Artemis" will still overwhelm the βασιλεῦσι νεῶν, "kings of ships."

THE "HYMN" TO "ZEUS"

So, by an odd turn, it almost seems possible to reverse what has already been asserted regarding Artemis. It may now almost be said once again that she *did* demand the sacrifice, *but*, that it was not the sacrifice it once seemed to be. Indeed, one finds confirmation in the clarity of the now

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27 Remember παρθενίου θ᾽ αἵματος ὀργᾷ περιοργῷ σφ᾽ ἐπιθυμεῖν (215).

28 *Sum-ballein*, "throw together." That Aeschylus is working out the etymology of the *symbolon* is clear from the lookout's speech. He first announces the *symbolon* [8], followed by the phrase τὸ μὴ βεβαίως βλέφαρα *συμ-βαλεῖν* ὕπνῳ (15), which puts the verbal form into grammatical play.

explicit references to Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon in those clos-
ing lines of the prophecy usually only taken as *askance* allusions: "For there
ever remains a returning fear, a house-dwelling deceit, mindful child-avenging
wrath (152)."[29] Any complacency with such an interpretation of Artemis'
role will falter, however, along with Calchas' ametrical faltering on the name
of the God, Παιᾶνα, he would invoke. [30] In response to this moment, which
involves the skepticism resulting from the cæsura of signification,[31] in the
very moment of recognition, due to Calchas' ruse of *signification* per se, the
best the chorus can attempt to do is *agnostically* direct a name towards,
προσ-εν-έπειν, that which is ineffable (160–66):

> Ζεὺς ὅστις ποτ᾽ ἐστιν, εἰ τόδ᾽ αὐ-
> τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ·
> τοῦτό νιν *προσεννέπω*
> οὐκ ἔχω πορσεικάσαι
> *πάντ᾽ ἐπισταθμώμενος*
> πλὴν Διός, εἰ τό μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
> χρὴ *βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως*·

> "Zeus," "whatever" he may be, if it is dear to him
>   to be called this,
> This I will call him in my address,
> And I can liken forth no other instead,
>   *having measured all these things*

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29 In the phrase νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον, οὐ δεισήνορα (151), it should be noted that,
    grammatically, δεισήνορα is modifying τέκτονα, *not* νεικέων. *This* sacrifice, which is the
    born-together (σύμ-φυτον as in σύμ-βολον) author of strife, is that which does not fear
    man, i.e., Clytemnestra's sacrifice of Agamemnon. Moreover, there is a distinct retrograde
    overtone in παλίνορτος, similar to those associated with the returning *symbolon* in the
    lookout's speech.

30 The point being that the calculation, σταθμᾶν, of δε καλε as a "cretic" simply obscures an
    unmetrical moment of angst-ridden self-reflection during which Calchas' epic facade is
    failing and vulnerable to an imminent disruption. Despite Aristotle's assertion that those of
    Aeschylus' day would not have known the name, it is hard to overlook either the irony of
    the fact that this line could well have been analyzed by him as containing a metrical παιάν
    (three short and one long syllables), or the applicability of its description, "[in *written*
    prose] . . . the *paean* must be adopted, since from this alone of rhythms mentioned *no
    definite meter arises,*" *Rh*. 1409a6ff.

31 Here in the peculiar case of not only the naming of Παιᾶνα, but also Calchas' indirect self-
    reference in the first person verb, καλέω.

> save Zeus, if it is necessary to *strike truly* the
> grief from my mind in vain.

To speak the name, Ζεὺς ὅστις πότ᾽ ἐστιν, "Zeus" whoever (or whatever) he (or "it") may be,"[32] reverberating through its inflections in the spirit of this now quite advanced lesson in grammar, τὸν πάθει μάθος (177)—that is, to attempt to assign a name, is all the chorus is able to do having measured all these things, πάντ᾽ ἐπισταθμώμενος (164).[33] And their calculations of what has gone before impels them forward into the very mysteries of the etymology of the inflecting name of God, χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως (166), "If it is necessary to strike (*balein*) truly (*etêtumôs*, root of "etymology")"! None save "Zeus" can be proffered, for what little good it will do, proffered in dactyls recalling the tone of the prophecy, as the chorus' solution. For it is in *screeching* forth, again in dactyls, that name that one will hit the mark, Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων / τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν· (174–75), "For one *screeching* forth prognostically "Zeus" [in the accusative case], the victorious will have happened upon the truth."

But, by Zeus, one of the cases, the dative, is missing,[34] having been replaced by the pronoun, εἰ τόδ᾽ αὐτῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ (160), "if it is amenable to "him" . . ." and left merely insinuated in the unexpressed correlative of προσεικάσαι taking the dative of comparison. Aeschylus' unusual use of the term identifies a certain impasse that combines the

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32 Given the chorus' agnosticism, ὅστις need not conform to a conventional assumption of anthropomorphism. For as Greek attributes gender to *all* classes of objects, this "masculine" indefinite need not be translated in the personified sense of "whoever" but could just as well be rendered as "whatever," particularly as here the signified of the name is itself in question. Regardless of how strange it sounds to strip this "Zeus" of the personification that a translation of the indefinite in the masculine lends "him," connotations of the gender of the term are not what they appear in English, whose inanimate objects lack gender. This subtle distinction devolves upon what is assumed in notions of persona.

33 In the *Frogs,* this term figures in the weighing of verses of Aeschylus and Euripides. This reference fits a broader pattern. First, there is the reference to the book at 1114. Aeschylus reads the invocation to Hermes (apparently to suggest the *hermeneusis* required of Aeschylus' poetry) that opens the second play of the *Oresteia.* Then, although one might expect the prophecy of Calchas, it is not until a bit later (1285ff.) that Euripides' mockery of Aeschylus *on metrical grounds* will turn out to include the verses of the chorus' introduction to the prophecy (104ff.). Finally, after his mockery of Euripides, it is Aeschylus who suggests that their verses be weighed, Ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀγαγεῖν βούλομαι (1365).

34 Actually two, counting the vocative for which one must wait until the next cycle of odes at 355, ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, which will be touched upon below.

apotropaic circumstances of the baleful caveat of Calchas' prophecy and the agnosticism of the guarded naming of "Zeus." Apparently none save "Zeus" can be identified as underlying the tragic impact of the prophecy and sacrifice, but, *who* or *what* is "Zeus"? The inability of the chorus to make the "comparison" is in fact an expression of the diaporesis that attends *eo ipso* this exposure to the very *adequational* semiosis, the referential "symbolization," upon which depend the baleful ambiguities of Calchas' prophecy. For although the solution to the enigmas depends upon a recovery of the archaic *symbolon*, it is only by virtue of the *disarticulation* of the *symbolon* that the ambiguous reading that appears to assert Artemis' demand of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, and thus her putative sanction of such according to "*themis*," arises in the first place. Moreover, the diaporesis is indicated precisely in connection with the semiosis of naming in the emphatic repetition of the preposition προς in 162 and 163: τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω· / οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι. For just as the chorus can only agnostically direct a name towards, προσ-εν-έπω, this name's ineffable object, so also do they doubt their own ability to arrive at an adequate solution to Calchas' prophecy, that is, they doubt their ability to make the proper "*ad*-equation," προσ-εικάσαι, save in identifying "Zeus," πλὴν Διός, *whoever* or *whatever* "he" may be. That to which the chorus casts out the name indicates the abyssal locus of tragedy, exposed through the disaesthesis of the *symbolon*. For whereas προσεννέπω belongs expressly within the realm of the poetic, that is, the realm of speech, προσεικάσαι belongs to the register of graphic representation. Thus the diaporesis is resolved into two components: the chorus, uncertain of the adequacy of the name and nescient of the name's ineffable object, cast *forth* into the abyss, προσεννέπω, a name for the ineffable only to see it go reeling off in its inflections, but so also are they unable to make a visual adequation, to liken *forth,* προσεικάσαι an image.

Yet beyond the generally accepted interpretation of these passages as an abstract theological interlude—and even beyond the still relatively undetermined agnostic implications just considered—there are more specific implications to be identified. The key lies in re-evaluating the odes in the light of the chorus' recognition of Calchas' duplicity. And this is no mean task, given that the guarded expression of their suspicions, and the apotropaic context of the portent, conceal the extent of their understanding of the prophecy. It is this difficulty that gives the agnosticism of what is essentially a meditation on the name of Zeus its peculiarly intractable charge. Nonetheless, progress is possible when the odes are viewed in a broader framework.

CALCHAS, INVERSE CASSANDRA

Once Calchas' duplicity has been established, it may be adduced that his role is precisely the inverse of Cassandra's. Calchas is the *false* prophet that *everyone* trusted. Cassandra's description of her own prophesying, beginning at 1178, is in direct contrast to Calchas', καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ᾽ ἐκ καλυμμάτων ἔσται δεδορκὼς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην, "My prophecy will no longer be such as that glancing from under veils in the manner of a newly-wed bride." She avers, in what amounts to an indirect condemnation of Calchas' prophecy, φρενώσω δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐξ αἰνιγμάων, "I will no longer reckon from enigmas," and then asks in reference to herself the question that should properly have been asked of Calchas, ἢ ψευδόμαντίς εἰμι, "Am I a false prophet?"

Furthermore, the sole other instance of the term προσεικάσαι[35] appears in conjunction with Cassandra, confirming the interpretation of 163 just advanced. The chorus, trying to decipher Cassandra's visions, states (1130–31):

> οὐ κομπάσαιμ᾽ ἂν θεσφάτων γνώμων ἄκρος
> εἶναι *κακῷ* δέ τῳ *προσεικάζω* τάδε.

> though I shall not boast, I am the best at interpreting
> the meaning of oracles, I do *liken forth* these things to *evil*.

While the picture is still vague, and the vagueness of this picture of evil is reminiscent of the uncertainties associated with the agnostic picture of "Zeus," two critical issues are nonetheless clarified: first, the argument above, that Aeschylus is juxtaposing the visual and aural registers, is well-founded. The chorus' difficulties in adequating Cassandra's prophetic words and visions are plainly stated, τούτων ἄιδρίς εἰμι τῶν μαντευμάτων (1105), "I am *blind* to these prophecies,"[36] and, more expressly still (1112–13):

> οὔπω ξυνῆκα· νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων
> ἐπαργέμοισι θεσφάτοις ἀμηχανῶ.

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35 The term, with the preposition, is uncommon. It appears elsewhere only twice, once in both the *Seven* and the *Choephoroi*.

36 The term ἄιδρις means "unknowing" from the root οἶδα, "to know," but literally "to have seen."

It would not appear too outlandish to translate this as:

> I can't put it together (ξυνῆκα):
> I am now at an impasse with these veiled[37] oracles of
>   enigmas.

But more specifically still, it is only once Cassandra's exhortations demand that the chorus literally "See! See!" ἆ ἆ ἰδοὺ ἰδού (1125) that they will be able, if imperfectly, to "see through" her words and liken these images, προσεικάζω, to evil.

The second point relates to the hymn to Zeus, for the sole recurrence of προσεικάζω in connection with Cassandra confirms that the odes to Zeus express neither abstract theology nor merely a *vague* agnosticism. Instead, these passages speak directly to the enigmas of the prophecy. When viewed as the chorus' statement of their own attempt at interpreting Calchas' prophecy, the odes take on a much more immediate and integrated role in the development of the narrative and, indeed, reveal certain ambiguities yet to be recognized.

Lines 165–66 (and responding lines 174–73), dactylic lines that directly recall Calchas' tone, take on a distinctly different appearance. The first pair have always been difficult (165–66):

> πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
> χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως·

βαλεῖν must be linked with the evolving etymologization of the *symbolon* (particularly given its proximity to ἐτητύμως) inaugurated in lines 8 and 15 of the lookout's speech and reaching its apotheosis in the *symbola* of Calchas' prophecy. It is in correctly reading the *symbola* that the enigmas of Calchas's prophecy are revealed. Accordingly, there is definite reason to believe that βαλεῖν here refers directly to the *symbola*: "If it is necessary to *strike*, or *cast* [the *symbola*] correctly." Given what we now know about the chorus' awareness of Calchas' duplicity, interpretations that rely upon construing μάταν as adverbial or even as qualifying adjectivally (in sense) ἄχθος to suggest that the burden is inconsequential[38] no longer make much

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37 ἐπαργέμος means literally to have a film over the eyes.
38 For example, Denniston-Page 1957.84, "'If need arises truly to cast away (ἀπό with βαλεῖν) the vain burden of anxiety.' μάταν:*futile*, because being anxious does nothing to

sense. If "striking" truly meant solving the prophecy then it would seem that it would be μάταν, "folly" or "delusion," (that is, μάταν[39] taken simply as an accusative object of the infinitive βαλεῖν), that would be struck from the mind, ἀπὸ φροντίδος. Thus, if it weren't for the problem of the second accusative ἄχθος, the line would be saying that "Zeus" is all that can be proffered in name, if it is necessary to strike truly the false appearance of the prophecy from the mind. Unfortunately, I can offer no certain solution as to how to construe ἄχθος. But even if, as may be the case, it is just not quite possible to construe μάταν as the object of βαλεῖν, it is still most likely preferable to restore the Tr text, εἰ γε μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως, to be translated as, "if [εἰ], *though* [γε] futile, it is necessary to strike truly the burden from the mind."

   Furthermore, one point must not be overlooked: the chorus are recounting the *past*, and although the sacrifice of Iphigeneia had yet to transpire by this point in the *recollection* of the sequence of past events, and although it is important dramaturgically to consider the audience as experiencing these events as if in the present,[40] the *chorus* knows that the sacrifice will in fact have occurred. It is for this reason that the burden, or anxiety, can neither be conceived of as inconsequential nor even vague. For if so, the anxiety would not have persisted to the present. Thus it may be ventured that it is the chorus' "solution" to the prophecy (as their best attempt at casting the *symbola* correctly) that they sense is futile, that is, the interpretation that despite the horrific nature of the sacrifice, Zeus sanctions the Atridae's actions. And thus the anxiety is not that of the past that is realized simply in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, but instead is that which persists into the present. If the prophecy finally meant simply what both Agamemnon and the tradition have supposed, namely that *the full extent* of the evil caveat of Calchas' prophecy was *limited* to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and that once that heinous deed had been carried out the worst was over, then there would no longer be grounds for *present* anxiety, remorse perhaps, but not an ἄχθος that *continues* to weigh on the mind. It may be stated thus: *the*

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help matters," etc. By contrast, Fraenkel's discussion, 1950.2.102, does not dismiss the problem so simply and cites what appears to be a more reasonable solution in Headlam's, "cast off the strange, vague burden on my mind."

39 There is another question that resists solution: is there, beyond the instance noted above of the ambiguity of ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ, rhyme or reason for Aeschylus' employment of Doric forms, such as μάταν here?

40 That is, as in the *illo tempore* pre-conditioned by the tradition of epic recitation.

sacrifice was not cathartic. The chorus is left with the lingering burden of anxiety as they sense, even if they can't quite peg what is hidden in the prophecy, that the sacrifice did not expiate the full evil of the caveat. And along with their lack of faith in the form of the "solution" to the specific crisis, i.e., "Zeus," comes a general crisis in their faith in the substance of this "solution," the crisis of a formalist agnosticism.

But this is not all, for the lines that respond to this syntactical quagmire also have secrets to yield. In this case, the syntax is a bit more forgiving, Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων / τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν (174–75). Again, it is a matter of naming Zeus. But beyond the conventional, abstract, mythico-theological interpretation, "one crying forth 'Zeus' the victorious will hit the mark entirely," the lines again must be read in the specific context of the prophecy. Beyond the ring of the isolated dactyls of this line, which forge a link to their dactylic critique in the introduction to the prophecy, there is a specific reference to Calchas to be identified in τις, "one who." This reference emerges from an ambiguity based on two points. First, the morphological convergence of τυγχάνω and τεύχω in the future tense, and, second, the fact that φρενῶν may be either the genitive plural of the noun φρήν or the nominative singular participle of the rare poetic verb φρενόω. "But one[41] screeching[42] with forward mind[43] the victory rites, contrives[44] 'Zeus,'[45] deliberately instructing[46] . . ." Although this reading actually makes neater work of the double accusative (ζῆνα, ἐπινίκια), the two ambiguous elements must be supported.

Φρενῶν as a participle of φρενόω is supported by the relationship of Calchas and Cassandra. Whereas here it may be said that that which Calchas contrives in his prophecy, i.e., "Zeus," amounts, through all that has

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41 I.e., Calchas.

42 Κλάζων. Recalling most immediately ἀπέκλαγξεν at 156 and anticipating ἔκλαγξεν at 201. Indeed *all* occurrences of κλάζω in the play are in reference to Calchas, with the one exception of line 48, which poses no contradiction.

43 Προφρόνως. The temporal force of προ- indicates that Calchas' prophecy was deliberative.

44 Τεύξεται as future of τεύχω. The verb is taken here generally in the sense of "bringing to pass." Whereas one may more or less *by chance* (as in a dice throw?) "hit upon" (τεύξεται from τυγχάνω) the name of "Zeus" as the answer, Calchas quite *intentionally* contrives by active deliberation (τεύξεται from τεύχω) this name by means of rhetorical *technæ*. The further implications of this term in this context will be addressed below.

45 With the skeptical echo of line 160, "'Zeus,' whatever he may be . . ."

46 Φρενῶν as participle of φρενόω. This translation attempts to reflect what was argued above regarding Calchas' agency. He assigns meaning to the portent, and the means are those of the technical skill of his rhetoric. The ellipsis will be completed below.

just been said, to an enigma, in Cassandra's first extended speech,[47] she announces: "I will no longer prophesy[48] from enigmas," φρενώσω δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων (1183). The use of this rare poetic verb[49] is telling, particularly as it is thus that she will prove herself no false prophet.

It is in Cassandra's next extended speech that supporting evidence is to be found for the ambiguity between τυγχάνω and τεύχω. For just before Cassandra states plainly that Clytemnestra will be the murderer of Agamemnon, she notes that Agamemnon has failed to identify the delusion of her words (1228–33):

> οὐκ οἶδεν οἶα γλῶσσα μισητῆς κυνός
> λέξασα κἀκτείνασα φαιδρόνους δίκην
> ἄτης λαθραίου, τεύξεται κακῇ *τύχῃ*.
> τοιαῦτα τολμᾷ· θῆλυς ἄρσενος φονεύς
> ἐστίν· τί νιν καλοῦσα δυσφιλὲς δάκος
> *τύχοιμ᾽ ἂν*;

> He does not see the ways in which the tongue of the
>   accursèd
> hound, speaking and extending a shining welcome
> in the manner of secret delusion, *will contrive* with evil
>   *fortune*.
> She dares such acts: the woman is the murderer of
> the man: what shall I call her, what ill-loving beast,
> and *hit upon the truth*?

While it is interesting to note the confusion that the possible ambiguity of τεύξεται has given rise to among the commentators in *this* instance,[50] it is to

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47 Appearing shortly after that other link to the hymns to Zeus in προσεικάζω identified above.

48 The use of this term to translate φρενώσω is not meant to be literal. Rather it is used to indicate all that is involved in Cassandra's visions and utterances.

49 The verb appears only in poetry, only extremely infrequently, only in two other instances in Aeschylus' extant œuvres, and solely here, unambiguously that is, in the *Agamemnon*. It is worth noting as well in support of the ambiguity, that this form with epsilon in the stem is distinctly contrasted to the two forms with omicron that essentially bracket it, προφρόνως (174) and φρονεῖν (176). More will be said on the proliferation of these φρήν terms below.

50 See, for example, Denniston-Page 1957.182 who opt for a reading of τυγχάνω: "'He does not know what kind of detestable bitch's tongue, having spoken and with cheerful

be asserted that the proximity of τεύξεται (here from τεύχω[51] in connection with the art of rhetoric and the delusion, ἄτη, closely connected to it throughout the play) to first τύχη and then expressly τύχομαι[52] amounts essentially to an exegesis of the occurrence of τεύξεται in connection with Calchas, where the ambiguity is not overt. That this occurrence of τεύξεται is both from τεύχω and referring back to the chorus' ambiguous reference to Calchas is moreover indirectly confirmed in the closing words of Cassandra's speech. Having revealed her *true* prophecy of the false ways of Clytemnestra (that is, of she who, as the φοβερὰ παλίνορτος [154], "the recurring fear," the μνάμων Μῆνις [155], "the Wrath that does not forget," will effect, τεύξεται, by her *false* means of *persuasion,* the other sacrifice), Cassandra speaks of her own powers of *persuasion* (1239–41):

> καὶ τῶνδ᾽ ὁμοῖον εἴ τι μὴ πείθω· τί γάρ;
> τὸ μέλλον ἥξει· καὶ σύ μ᾽ ἐν τάχει παρών
> *ἄγαν γ᾽ ἀληθόμαντιν* οἰκτίρας ἐρεῖς.

> But if somehow I shall not have *persuaded* you of these
>   things, it is just the same. What of it?
> What is to be will come; and soon you will anyway, in
>   pity,
> call me *too-true a prophet.*

Whereas Cassandra openly announces her attempts at persuasion, Calchas' artful contrivances are only obliquely identified after the sacrifice in the closing words of the parodos, τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι (248), "the *technae* of Calchas did not go unaccomplished."

    The ambiguity of τεύξεται (175) is all the more significant, more-over, when both its aspects are viewed in their distinct relations to its formal

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disposition prolonged her plea, *shall strike* by evil chance the target of secret destruction [emphasis added].'" The problem here involves the notion of the tongue "striking." For an elaborate, but unconvincing, attempt to circumvent this problem see Thomson 1966.2.97. The reading offered here concurs, in the matter of the meaning of τεύξεται, with Fraenkel 1950.1.167: "[He] knows not, after the fine and lengthened speeches that the lewd creature's tongue has uttered with radiant friendliness, like a treacherous *Ate*, what work she *will bring to pass*, with Evil's blessing." The translation above of "contrive" stresses the role of the artifice of persuasion.

51 The verb that indicates to produce or bring forth by art.

52 Both terms from τυγχάνω meaning "to happen or hit upon."

responson to βαλεῖν (166). It is critical not to undervalue the convention-
ally accepted reading, as τεύξεται from τυγχάνω has a well-established
relationship to βάλλω[53] when taken in its root sense of "striking," as in
"striking a target." In this aspect, the responson of τεύξεται reinforces the
sense of βαλεῖν as "striking" the burden from the mind. But what is all the
more remarkable is that the other aspect of τεύξεται, from τεύχω, reinforces
precisely the radical sense of βαλεῖν that Aeschylus is seeking in his
etymologization of the *symbolon*. It is here that Aeschylus' meditation on
the *symbolon*, as a species of the *sêma*, comes into conjunction with critical
lexical connections in the *Iliad* between the *sêma* and the perfect form of
τεύχω, τέτυκται.[54]

Is there then, continuing to draw out the implications of the am-
biguous reading of τεύξεται, an indication of what is effected by Calchas'
technae? It appears there is, once the emphasis of the repetitions of the φρήν
terms is considered. Here it is once again a matter of not being deterred by
the transition to a new strophe at 176 and ignoring the punctuation of
modern editions. The text to be considered may be presented as follows
(174–81):

> Ζῆνα δέ τις *προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων*
> τεύξεται *φρενῶν* τὸ πᾶν
> τὸν *φρονεῖν* βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
>   σαντα, τὸν πάθει *μάθος*
> θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν·
> στάζει δ᾽ ἀνθ᾽ ὕπνου πρὸ καρδίας
> μνησιπήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ᾽ ἄ-
>   κοντας ἦλθε *σωφρονεῖν*.

The translation above of lines 174–75 may now be completed. The first
indication that there are grounds to suspect that there may be a hidden
content in these words comes from the reference to μάθος ("learning"),
recalling for the first time the self-reflexive words of the lookout at 39.[55]

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53 See L.S.J. τυγχάνω, B. I.
54 These connections are explained in my forthcoming book on the *Iliad*, *The Curse of
    Achilles*: *The Heroic Nihility of Homer's* Iliad. The ambiguity that Aeschylus' exploits in
    the future τεύξεται does not hold for the perfect form so important in the *Iliad*.
55 The reference to those who do, and those who do not, "learn," μαθοῦσιν, what is most
    clear.

Next is the repetition of the φρήν terms, which, as related to cognition, also relate to μάθος. What is to be learned, who is to learn it, and how? Once it is recalled that the chorus already suggested of Calchas that his "interpretation" of the portent involved an active assignment of its meaning at 124, ἐδάη, it makes all the more sense to see Calchas as the τις and thus as the subject of φρενῶν (φρενόω):

> One [i.e., Calchas] deliberating actively and/or[56] in advance (προφρόνως) screeching the victory rites will contrive "Zeus," *giving the instruction* (φρενῶν, [ἐδάη]) *to consider* (τὸ . . . φρονεῖν)[57] him [Zeus] (τὸν[58]) entirely[59] (πᾶν) as the one who puts the men [Argives] on the road,[60] as he who lays it down that the law of "learning by suffering" hold sway:[61] thus the toil of a mindful misery stands[62] before the heart instead of sleep, and *sound consideration* (σωφρονεῖν) comes against their will.

Lest there be any reluctance in accepting the crux of this reading in the articular infinitive τὸ φρονεῖν, consider first the development of the φρήν terms, their momentum: first, Calchas deliberates, προφρόνως; second, he articulates, φρενῶν; third, the host accepts the rendition Calchas offers by virtue of this active manifestation of the φρήν in their own φρήν, φρονεῖν, and, finally, this activity, φρονεῖν, which entails the acceptance of Calchas' false advice, is *corrected* by the πάθει μάθος, and *sound* consider-

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56 Both senses of προ-.

57 Articular infinitive as direct object.

58 Direct object of the articular infinitive τὸ . . . φρονεῖν.

59 That is, without question.

60 Where ὁδώσαντα recalls explicitly the earlier references to the *road*, ὅδιον κράτος (104) and μόρσιμ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀρνίθων ὁδίων (158).

61 This institution of power, κυρίως ἔχειν, recalls the first word of the chorus' ironic critique of Calchas, κύριός εἰμι (104).

62 The hypothesis offered here, though not of consequence to the argument being advanced, is that the text may have read στατεῖ as a third singular of what would be an occurrence of an unattested form of the otherwise prefixed form of ἱστήμι, -στατέω. Although the point is not to be pressed, one would have to consider first that this prefixed form is rare before the fifth century, but ubiquitous with a variety of prefixes in Aeschylus. More important, however, is the resonance that is suggested between ἀνθ᾽ ὕπνου (179) and πόνος (180) and the same resonance in the lookout speech at line 14, ἀνθ᾽ ὕπνου παραστατεῖ, and by association line 1, πόνων, as well as 976: δεῖμα προστατήριον καρδίας.

ation comes upon them, σωφρονεῖν. Now consider that in lieu of (or rather in addition to) the conventional interpretation where φρονεῖν (176) is taken in its verbal force in indirect statement, this nominal reading of φρονεῖν as an articular infinitive is supported by the nominal force of that term that is directly related to it in sense, σωφρονεῖν, despite the absence of an expressed article.

The conclusion of this extended course of interpretation comes in the antistrophe (184ff.), where what is actually the divergent, "epiphenomenal," course of the supposedly theological—be it theistic or but vaguely agnostic—interlude converges with the specific and fully integrated continuation of the interrogation of Calchas, and both courses break unequivocally into the open expression of the train of baleful events leading to the sacrificial altar at Aulis. Thus it is in response (186) to the closing words of the "theological" interlude that the effectuation of Calchas' ruse is manifest in Agamemnon's fatal mistake to "in no way impugn the prophet." And thus, soon thereafter, the prophet proffers[63] forth "Artemis" with the result that Agamemnon will say, βαρεῖα μὲν κὴρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι (206), meaning ostensibly that it is heavy not to *obey* the goddess, but also carrying with it a more literal reference to Calchas' *persuasion*. And it is *Kal-khas'* name that rings out in the description of the site of the atrocity: Aulis across from Χαλκίδος (190).

THE TROPE OF EVIL BRONZE

If one name, ὦ Ζεῦ (355), will forever resist hermetically the would-be hermeneutic blows of the chorus' attempt at a solution to the prophecy, εἰ χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως, another will utterly succumb to the προς-βολαῖς (391) (from βαλεῖν). And it is quite correct to speak here of a hermeneusis, for the chorus indicates the necessity for such plainly in their words to the messenger in reference to Clytemnestra's preceding speech (615–16):

> αὕτη μὲν οὕτως εἶπε *μανθάνοντί* σοι,
> τοροῖσιν *ἑρμηνεῦσιν* εὐπρεπῶς λόγον·

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63 Where the term προφέρων echoes the train of φρήν terms noted above, both προ-φρόνως and φρενῶν.

> Thus she has spoken, to you *having learned*
> with clear *hermeneusis* the account that *appears* well.

But despite appearances, the chorus' words contain an untoward suggestion. It is more a matter of nuance than ambiguity to see in these words the suggestion that what a clear hermeneusis reveals is that her account, her *logos*, only *appears* to be auspicious, but is actually otherwise. And once her words are examined in the light of the prophecy, it is clear enough why the chorus would be making such a suggestion. At 600–01 she says,

> ὅπως δ᾽ ἄριστα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰδοῖον πόσιν
> σπεύσω πάλιν μολόντα δέξασθαι·

which is generally understood to mean, "I must *hasten* to receive my husband . . ." But it also means, "I must *hasten* my husband home to be received . . ." *in consonance with the hidden significance of ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ* (151) that referred to the hastening on of Agamemnon's sacrifice, which is exactly Clytemnestra's object. A few lines later her words again have a familiar ring (609–12):

> καὶ τἆλλ᾽ ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον
> οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου·
> οὐδ᾽ οἶδα τέρψιν, οὐδ᾽ ἐπίψογον φάτιν
> ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς.

> And things are just as he left them, and the *seal*
> has not been broken in the length of time:
> and I have known no pleasures, nor shameful rumor,
> of another man any more than I know of the
>   tempering[64] of *bronze.*

It is now quite clear that the σημαντήριον[65] is the *symbolon,* which is still in force, still just as Agamemnon left it on his departure for Troy. And

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64 This term, βαφάς, both here and in its other occurrences, is perhaps the most concealed enigma in the play, and this translation is little better than a guess. It is clear, however, that they are tied in with, and referring back to, the κρόκου βαφὰς (239) of Iphigeneia.

65 The term is derived from *sêma*. It is important in this regard to recall that first the lookout, as the instrument of Clytemnestra's *mechanê*, declares that he will give the *sêma*, σημαίνω

although βαφάς remains an unsolved enigma, the bronze, χαλκοῦ *will* succumb to a clear hermeneusis. Succumb that is to the προσ-βολαῖς[66] where, in a sense, a seal *is* broken, releasing, however, only a simulacrum of truth in the form of an anagrammatic trope on the name Κάλ-χας, as a certain bane, σίνος, *appears* in false bronze, πρέπει, though *strange-gleaming*, αἰνολαμπές, with a vengeance, κακοῦ δὲ χαλ-κοῦ (390).[67] At the extreme limit that the anagrammaticity of this trope occupies, there appears (according to that objective mode of appearance, πρέπει) for a last fleeting instance, the most brilliant possible illumination cast back on the enigma of the *symbola*, before *all reflexivity itself* vanishes in the false bronze. All reflexivity, that is, including that which even threatens to be lost in the *mise-en-abîme of Aeschylus' own rhetoric* so indisputably indicated in this fully prescient reference to the τρόπον, "trope," as naming the rhetorical figure per se. With this "bronze," the reflective tain disappears and, with it, the clear, if shattered, resolution of ambiguity,[68] before the image *per se*, the ὄρνιν (394) is released all together.[69] But there is one all-important image still to be considered, an image that was a *graphê*, or rather *only like* a *graphê*, in as much as it will be difficult to say *on what* it could have been written.

　　This is not, however, the first instance of such "grammaticity" in Aeschylus. Moreau's insight establishes a critical precedent in *The Seven*, εἰσόμεσθα . . . εἴ νιν κατάξει χρυσότευκτα γράμματα ἐπ᾽ ἀσπίδος φλύοντα σὺν φοίτῳ φρενῶν (659–60):[70] "La personification des lettres d'or, sujet du

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(26), and that Clytemnestra herself describes the *symbolon* of the signal fire as giving the *sêma*, σημαίνει (293).

66　The preposition προς- indicates the relationship to the terms προσ-εννέπω (162) and προσ-εικάσαι (163) and confirms that the issue here is once again that of a hermeneusis of adequation. It is moreover confirmed that the "burden," ἄχθος (165), of the "hymn" to Zeus here proves to be the futility of finding a *substantive* solution, ἄκος δὲ πᾶν μάταιον . . . When a solution is sought, all that appears is a *bane*, σίνος.

67　I am grateful to M. Detienne for his help in clarifying this point and for all his encouraging comments. For those who would still doubt the subtlety of Aeschylus' rhetoric, consider the way in which he has already precluded any doubt by prefiguring the phonetic turn on Καλ-χας with Χαλ-κίδος (190).

68　That is, of the sort of proto-dialectical ambiguities manifest in the prophecy, which provide for clear, if contradictory, resolution.

69　I will treat the free play of the released image, ὄρνις, which will take the form of the phantom of Helen, in a future manuscript.

70　He translates first: "Nous saurons . . . si, pour le ramener, il suffira de lettres d'or ciselées sur un bouclier, flux d'insolence d'un cœur en délire," and second, "Nous saurons si des lettres d'or le ramèneront sur son bouclier, perdent son sang à flots, dans les spasmes convulsifs de ses entrailles."

verbe κατάξει souligne la valeur magique des mots, qui deviennent des acteurs. Ce sont les mots inscrits sur le blason qui annoncent et peut-être provoqueront la mort."[71] Numinous and active as these gold-wrought *grammata* are, however, the cledonomancy[72] by which they operate, and by which the hero's body is *literally* strewn *over the letters*, has, in this earlier play, yet to work itself into the text beyond the strictly oral level to which the ambiguity is limited. It is not until the bronze upon which *symbola* were conventionally engraved[73] disappears in what may be a reference to the lead tablets of engraved "binding curses,"[74] that the *ana*grammatical trope on Calchas's name proves to be a step beyond the *oral* self-reflexivity of cledonomancy into the cledono*graphia* of the *symbola* of the prophecy.

It is not surprising that Calchas invoked Παιᾶνα in vain,[75] as the figuration of his dissemblance in the disfiguration of his name, trope *over* trope, reveals the cæsura of the objective order of the graphic *symbolon* and, with it, the fall of an epic "hero" on a tragic stage along with ἔπος per se, *both* in the terms of this cledonographia *and* on the most trenchant level of the Aeschylean text itself.[76] It is in the gulf between the orality of the prophecy and its transcription in *mute symbola* that the metrical obstacle to unlocking the ambiguity of ΣΠΕΥΔΟΜΕΝΑ is obviated and, thus, all hopes

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71 Moreau 1991.22.

72 Peradotto 1969b.2 explains: "It was felt that such an utterance might have the power of bringing about an effect, 'not indeed irrespective of its meaning, but other than the meaning of the intention of the person who carelessly uttered it' (Halliday) or, from another point of view, that a god makes of the speaker an instrument for presaging the future, much as he might use an inspired prophet of birds in flight."

73 See Gauthier 1972.33: "Dans plusieurs textes officiels, *gravés sur bronze* [emphasis added], le terme apparaît avec la signification de garant ou témoin. Ces textes ne sont pas postérieurs au milieu du Vᵉ siècle."

74 Peradotto 1969b.7, n.19: "The belief in the potency of language even applies to the written word. Closely related to the *hymnoi desmioi* are the *katadesmoi* and *katadeseis* . . . These 'binding curses' in written form, inscribed on *lead tablets* [emphasis added] or potsherds, have been discovered in many parts of the Mediterranean world, but the oldest examples come from Greece, most of them from Athens." Peradotto cites Guthrie 1950.273, who mentions an example of the use of such tablets in incapacitating "one's adversaries in a lawsuit." Note the importance of the written medium of the curse in *muting* its victim, "I bind Theagenes in tongue and soul, and the speech that he is preparing . . ."

75 And it would not be surprising if others, *subject* to the same graphophobia, despite what this strange-gleaming bane, σίνος, "reveals" in the name, will . . .

76 Segal 1992.337: "A la place du poète oral qui nous parle en personne de «la volonté de Zeus», nous avons le poète absent [and his *absent*, *invisible* text, like a *katadesis*, pinned down backstage—my additions] qui a tramé d'avance chaque détail. Et nous avons, parfois, le sentiment que l'on a comploté contre nous, que nous sommes les victimes d'un contrepoint calculé, entre surface et profondeur, apparence et réalité, paraître et être."

for the success of the chorus' homophonic, ὁμόφωνον (158), attempt to *put forward in epos*, προσεννέπειν, *any* name of God. For once the "logic," or *graphics*, of the *symbola* play themselves out, the chorus will find themselves subject to a sympathetic silence, οὔτ᾽ ἐννέπω (248), "I do not say," responding to the silence resulting from Iphigeneia's muting, ἀναύδῳ μένει (238), "held silent," when she, *not* willing to be sacrificed, wished in vain to put forward her pleas for mercy, *προσ-εννέπειν* θέλουσα (241). By force with a bit too much of a *brazen* ring, βίᾳ χαλινῶν (238), the counterforce of what would have been Iphigeneia's curse in ἔπος would have been checked had it been possible to overcome the more stunning *visual* impact that finally will "register" the brunt of the *symbolon* in the graphic register (239–40): ἔβαλλ᾽ ἕκαστον θυτήρων ἀπ᾽ ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτῳ,[77] "*She cast forth* upon each of the sacrificers piteous *missiles*[78] *from her eyes,"* and again with that all-too-objective clarity (241): πρέπουσά θ᾽ ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς, "*appearing as if in graphais."*

It is the optical theory of Aeschylus' Eleatic contemporary Empedocles that lends confirmation (fr. 415):[79]

ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε τις πρὸ ὁδὸν νοέων ὡπλίσσατο λύχνον,
χειμερίην διὰ νύκτα πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο
ἅψας, παντοίων ἀνέμων, λαμπτῆρας ἀμοργούς,
αἵ τ᾽ ἀνέμων μὲν πνεῦμα διασκιδνᾶσιν ἀέντων·
πῦρ δ᾽ ἔξω διαθρῶσκον ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν
λάμπεσκεν κατὰ βηλὸν ἀτειρέσιν ἀκτίνεσσιν·
ὡς δὲ τότ᾽ ἐν μήνιγξιν ἐελμένον ὠγύγιον πῦρ
λεπτῇσιν ⟨γ᾽⟩ ὀθόνῃσι λοχάζετο κύκλοπα κούρην·
αἱ δ᾽ ἕδατος μὲν βένθος ἀπέστεγον ἀμφιναέντος,
πῦρ δ᾽ ἔξω διαθρῶσκον ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν.[80]

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77 Φιλοίκτῳ echoes the pity of she whose force it is that ultimately lies behind these missiles, οἴκτῳ φὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις (134). The connection with Artemis is also confirmed in Iphigeneia's description as ἀγνᾷ at 245. It should be noted as well that this is the same pity associated with Cassandra. The chorus state that they pity her at 1069, ἐποικτίρω, and Cassandra states that they will pity her once she is dead, οἰκτίρας (1241).

78 Both ἔβαλλε and βέλει are from *ballein.*

79 This citation recognizes the improvements of J. Bollack's *Empédocle*, over the edition of Diels-Kranz 1934 [B84].

80 Note the resemblance of λαμπτῆρας and λάμπεσκεν to λαμπάδος (8) and especially φώς αἰνολαμπές (389); the less than obvious relationship between λοχάζετο and πρὸ λόχου (136); and the tantalizing suggestion in κούρην of such a κούρη as Iphigeneia.

As when a man, thinking to make an excursion through a stormy night, prepares a lantern, a flame of burning fire, fitting lantern-plates to keep out every sort of winds, and these plates disperse the breath of the blowing winds; but the *light leaps out through them*, in so far as it is finer, and *shines across the threshold* with unwearying beams: so at that time did the aboriginal Fire, confined in membranes and in fine tissues, *hide* itself in the round pupils; and these (*tissues*) were pierced throughout with marvelous passages. They kept out the deep reservoir of water surrounding the pupil, but *let the Fire through (from within) outwards*, since it was so much finer. (trans. Freeman 1957.61)

It is the repeated emphasis on the forceful outward movement of the fire of the gaze from within the eye, πῦρ δ᾿ ἔξω διαθρῶσκον, that bears directly upon another stunning ambiguity now to be unbridled. While line 248, τὰ δ᾿ ἔνθεν οὔτ᾿ εἶδον οὔτ᾿ ἐννέπω, is, on one level, the most powerful expression of the apotropaic gestures of the chorus that punctuated the prophecy of Calchas and that shared in expressing, to a certain degree, a tacit, if skeptical, complicity in the call for an homophonous prayer for the best, it was not finally possible to turn away, to avert the gaze from the graphic horror of the sacrifice. The ambiguity arises in the morphology of εἶδον, at once first person singular *and third person plural*, which *simultaneously reveals and conceals* the taboo event: "What happened next *they* / I did not see, and I do not say." When the phenomenological progress of the line is considered, particularly as it would have been performed, it is clear that initially εἶδον must be assigned to the *host at Aulis*, since the scene at Aulis has just been described, leading to the very brink of the σφαγή (the cutting of the throat of the sacrificial victim) at the hands of the assembled sacrificers. The reason they did not see is because *they were blinded*, having been struck by the stigmatizing shafts of Iphigeneia's active Empedoclean gaze, ἀπ᾿ ὄμματος βέλει, "missiles from the eyes," in a Gorgonic epiphany of the *graphê*. The revelation of the blinding impact of the *graphê* in the words of the chorus only "register," however, that which was already indicated in the one remaining enigma of Calchas' prophecy (131–33):

οἶον μή τις ἄτα θεόθεν κνεφά-
    ση προτυπὲν στόμιον μέγα Τροίας
στρατωθέν·

The significance is now clear, "Let not some delusion from the gods blind, having been struck[81] in advance, the great bit of Troy in the moment of their marshalling."

That the graphic impact of the image of the sacrifice operates at the etymological level of the *symbolon* is supported by the findings of Moreau (1976–77.78–89), who describes the role of the Gorgonic gaze in connection with Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon, arguing that she hypnotizes him at the entrance to the palace. There are telling echoes in Agamemnon's expression of his fears that reflect the Artemisian blow and logic of the *symbolon*, μή τις πρόσωθεν ὄμματος βάλοι φθόνος (947), "lest some rancor from afar *strike* [*ballein*] me." The events of the carpet scene are the counterpart, the θυσίαν ἑτέραν, "the other sacrifice," the recompense for Iphigeneia's sacrifice, her *symbolon*, that completes the pair of *symbola*.

Moreover, the dramaturgical significance of line 248 is profoundly important. The ambiguity of εἶδον (*they*/I did not see) represents quite accurately the blinding event. The poetics of the shift in number here are directly comparable to the shift in case at line 112 discussed above. There the violent appearance of the θούριος ὄρνις, "warlike bird," radically altered the previously assumed course of the syntax. The result was a violent reversal cast back *retroactively* on the Atridae. Though the syntactical shift was abrupt and did not quite grammatically result in a strictly ambiguous separate reading, the violence of the shift nevertheless destabilizes the force of κράτος[82] so that it takes on for a moment the *charge* of ambiguity. This is to be compared to the ambiguity attending this last moment in the long recollection of past images, in this last *fixed graphê*. Εἶδον registers dramaturgically the precise nature of the Gorgonic blinding. First, the blinding is revealed to the spectators, who, having been led to the very moment of the sacrifice by the descriptive *words of the chorus*, image by image, phrase by

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81 The instantaneity of the moment, with all of the force associated with the *symbolon*, is indicated in the aorists of both προτυπέν and στρατωθέν. The instantaneousness of the marshalling was also suggested in the chorus' anticipatory description of the forces, ξύμφρονα, which also may now more clearly be understood as yet another inflection on the etymological dimension of συμ-βαλεῖν.

82 It must also be recalled that κράτος itself stems from κρᾶναι, which has its own connotations of power *at once* rhetorical or mantic *and* military. That it is specifically Calchas' rhetorical κράτος that overcomes that of the Atridae is confirmed when, at line 249, it is stated that Calchas' skills did not go unaccomplished, τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι.

phrase, finally come themselves to that last *all-too-evident* and brilliant image emblazoned on their minds, ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς, "as if in *graphais*," an image, however, *that the audience never really sees* because they are specifically told οὔτ᾽ εἶδον, "*they*/I did not see." They are presented rather with the task of watching the blinding *of others,* in a moment where vicarious experience and ritual participation are abruptly shaken loose into true *objective* spectatorship. The spectators are blinded only to the degree to which the production of that last unspeakable *and* unseeable image has been revealed all along as having been dependent upon the *sym-bolic* relationship of *speech* and *image,* all along *vulnerable* to the disaesthesis registered here in οὔτ᾽ εἶδον οὔτ᾽ ἐννέπω, "*they*/I did not *see*, and I do not *say*." Possible only by virtue of all of the registers of drama, this is *the* tragic moment par excellence; a moment that reveals, *pace* Aristotle, that the essence of tragedy could never have been contained by any concept of catharsis, but rather can be approached only by an appreciation of the failure—the suspension—of ritual catharsis.[83]

Although the chorus here, now, on stage in the present moment, would like to leave this horrific moment of the past unsaid and unseen and turn their attention forward to what would have the appearance of being favorable signs, the brunt of the graphic *symbolon* has already registered its impact in the *strict separation of the ambiguity* indicating the blinding of the host, such that the retroactive apotropaic assignment of the first person singular will never alloy with the false base dropping away already into the "chthonian darkness" of the κνέφων. They, Agamemnon and the Argive host, did not see the *graphê* because the false metal of their minds would not take the print, but, with the προσβολαῖς of the *symbola*, showed "fixed black" instead, μελαμπαγής. But even if the *graphê* would not be written *in* their minds, nonetheless the *bane*, σίνος, would not disappear, instead showing relentlessly "all revealed," οὐκ ἐκρύφθη, a φῶς αἰνολαμπές, "a strange-gleaming *light* [φῶς]," "objectively apparent," πρέπει, as written *on* an unjust *man*, φῶτ᾽ ἄδικον (398),[84] designated by an indelible mark. An indelible mark written on the man the chorus saw depart (799–801):

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83 A full treatment of the inadequacy of Aristotle's *metaphor* of "catharsis" for a theory of tragedy—particularly in the *Eumenides*—will have to await another occasion.

84 Aeschylus is here playing on the similarity between the words φῶς, "light," and φώς, "man."

σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν
Ἑλένης ἕνεκ᾽, οὐκ ἐπικεύσω,
κάρτ᾽ *ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος*

But you at the time of the marshalling of the army
for the sake of Helen, I will not hide it,
were violently *written apart from the Muse*,[85]

but whose appearance upon his return they seem unable to believe (988–89):

πεύθομαι δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀμμάτων
νόστον, αὐτόμαρτυς ὤν·

Yet I have seen his homecoming confirmed with my own
    eyes,
having witnessed it myself.

For though the *graphê* is indelible, *it is only as good as that on which it is written*—as is expressed in an apothegm of Cassandra (1327–29):

εὐτυχοῦντα μέν
σκιᾷ τις ἂν πρέψειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχῇ,
βολαῖς ὑγρώσσων σπόγγος ὤλεσεν γραφήν

even when things are well,
one would be apparent as a mere shadow, but when
    things go badly,
the wetted sponge obliterates the *graphê* with its *blows*.

The impact of the graphic *symbolon* operates on two oblique axes. The first, which belongs to, and exposes the mysteries of, narrative itself, is that in which the *graphê*, isolated as image independent of speech, presents at once a moment of intensified illumination to be followed directly by a

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85 Though an awkward translation, this is exactly what the term (which appears nowhere else before Aeschylus, and only once in Euripides afterwards) signifies as a most literal indication of the cledonographic as apart from, ἀπο-μούσως, the orality of Muse-inspired poesis.

stunning blindness *and silence*. So the apotropaic statement of the chorus, οὔτ᾽ εἶδον οὔτ᾽ ἐννέπω refers not only to the moment of the sacrifice, but to the *entirety of the Trojan war* that is waged *hypnotically*, συμ-βαλεῖν, "thrown together in sleep," below the eastern horizon and that falls under the constellation of the sigetic,[86] disaesthetic, sublimity that governs until the *symbolon* will be reconstituted from its sundered components of αὐγὴν, "ray," and φάτιν, "report," having been passed in mute flame from hand to hand, in the significative speech of the first actor on stage, Clytemnestra, τέκμαρ τοιοῦτον σύμβολόν τέ σοι λέγω (315), "this is the sign and *symbolon I tell you*," thereby erupting back into the dialogue and *action* of the present. On the other hand, Agamemnon falls unredeemed as an *epic* hero, radiant with the strange gleaming light of that image that was like a *graphê* save for being wiped away. At the same time Aeschylus' *own written text*, the actual *fixed graphê* itself, is concealed behind the scene according to a poetics oddly reflective, αἰνολαμπές—according to a kind of Persean "anagram-maticity" beyond the tain and breaking the seal of the Gorgon's gaze—of the spectating audience upon whom is written metaphorically the transmutation of the corrupted sacrifice into the dramaturgical expiation—or suspended "catharsis"—of passively participatory, vicarious, and sympathetic experience. Finally, on that highest cosmic level of the lookout's speech, the *symbola* must be seen as having held sway—for the *technae* of Calchas did not go unaccomplished—as well as having been enregistered in the "meta-phoric" *graphê* that was the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, *and* the literal *graphê* that refers to the *technê* of writing peculiar to the textuality of tragedy; that literal *graphê* where the final, highest mark of textual self-reflexivity goes a decisive step beyond the orality of cledonomantic self-reflections, appearing rather in the very mute liminality of the written page confronting Aeschylus, confronting Aristophanes *with book in hand*, confronting the enlightened modern eye.

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86 I would like to thank P. Fenves for introducing me to W. Benjamin's theory of the sigetic sublimity of tragedy, i.e., the sublimity of silence. See the preface of Benjamin 1977.

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