MOTIVATION IN THE PARODOS OF AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*

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THE MOTIVATION in saga for the sacrifice of Iphigenia prior to the Greeks' setting sail for Troy was petty enough: Agamemnon had boasted while hunting that he could outshoot even the archer-goddess Artemis: Ἀγαμέμνων ἐπὶ θήρας βαλὼν ἔλαφον ὑπερβάλλειν ἔφησε καὶ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν. The goddess was angered by his effrontery and sent contrary winds to delay the fleet's departure. These winds could only be stopped, according to the seer Calchas, if Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter Iphigenia. He complied.[1]

This is the summary Proclus gives of the motivation already embedded in the *Cypria,* an epic of course antecedent to the *Agamemnon.* Fraenkel says that, despite Proclus' inaccuracy on occasion, we can hardly doubt the substance of his summary here.[2] It was the version repeated by Sophocles (*El.* 566–72) and alluded to by Callimachus (*Dian.* 263).

Now Aeschylus omits the motive of Agamemnon's high-spirited boasting and substitutes the following sequence: after the fleet had gathered at Aulis, a portent appeared to the chiefs, close to their tents (116 ἵκταρ μελάθρων); two eagles appeared from the right hand (117 χερὸς ἐκ δοριπάλτου) and devoured a pregnant hare before their eyes. The priest Calchas interpreted the portent to mean the eventual downfall of Troy (126–27 χρόνῳ μὲν ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἅδε κέλευθος), but at the same time he saw danger looming near at hand (131 οἷον μή τις ἄγα θεόθεν . . .); for Artemis, he says, detests the meal of eagles, so fond is she of the young of all wild creatures (134–43). He prays that Artemis will not send contrary winds, thus hurrying on (151 σπευδομένα) a further sacrifice (that of Iphigenia, as we immediately realize). But Artemis (someone, anyway) *does* send contrary winds, Agamemnon *is* convinced of the need to sacrifice his daughter, and hence Iphigenia dies.

Where is the motivation here? Why is Artemis angry with Agamemnon this time, forcing him to kill his own daughter? In view of the considerable literature which has been devoted to this question, I would think it otiose to write more, were it not for my conviction that the

1. Proclus *Chrestom.* 1 (summary of *Cypria*).
2. *Aeschylus: "Agamemnon,"* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1950), p. 98.

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interpretation offered in such authoritative works as Fraenkel's commentary, or that of Denniston and Page,[3] was based on an actual error in the reading of certain crucial lines.

Taking Fraenkel first, we find the view that Aeschylus has suppressed the traditional motivation (as being too petty for his grand theme) and instead "elaborated the details of the sign whose unfavourable elements portended the disapproval of Artemis. This solution was facilitated by the fact that Aeschylus was writing not a coherent narrative but a retrospective song in a lofty strain. . . . Aeschylus might be confident that the power of his song would keep the hearers firmly in its grip and leave no room for idle speculation or curiosity about details."[4] Surely this is no more than saying Aeschylus was trying to pull wool over his audience's eyes, bemuse them with poetry lest they ask *why* Iphigenia had to die.

Denniston and Page are surely right to cavil at this "solution" by Aeschylus. But their understanding of the motivation is no less satisfactory: "Artemis was enraged *because eagles, sent by Zeus to be an encouraging portent, happened to devour a hare together with its unborn young; she therefore demanded a 'second sacrifice', the death of Iphigeneia, in return for the death of the hare and its young.* That is what is in the text; and, however crude and inadequate it may appear, in the text it remains, it cannot be removed. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia, with its terrible consequences to Agamemnon and others, is demanded by Artemis not because he has done or left undone anything, but because two eagles, sent by Zeus himself to encourage Agamemnon, have devoured a pregnant hare."[5] These authors leave the matter there, content apparently to point out a disquieting paradox. Particularly disquieting, as this is the first link in the chain of causation in the *Oresteia:* for Fraenkel a nonexistent link; for Denniston and Page a crude and unsatisfactory one.

Because such approaches are unsatisfying, H. Lloyd-Jones, for example, has suggested that Artemis is not angry because of the hare so much as what the pregnant hare symbolizes: Troy, in his view, full of people (129 δημιοπλη θῆ), just as the hare is big with young. He has argued that Artemis fights for the Trojans in the *Iliad* and that this is sufficient to make her anxious for Troy's fate in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon.*[6] There is undoubtedly truth in the view that the hare, victim of eagles which are explicitly equated with Agamemnon and Menelaus (123–24), symbolizes among other things the fate of a rich city lying defenselessly at the feet of looting conquerors; but there is a difficulty in that Artemis would in that case be exacting requital for a deed yet to be committed. Fraenkel regards this as an unbearable twisting of the legal maxim δράσαντι παθεῖν, to produce a hypothetical δράσοντι παθεῖν.[7] Moreover, as W. Whallon

3. *Aeschylus: "Agamemnon"* (Oxford, 1957), pp. xxiii–xxix.
4. *"Agamemnon,"* 2:99.
5. *"Agamemnon,"* p. xxv.
6. "The Guilt of Agamemnon," *CQ* 12 (1962):187–98.
7. *"Agamemnon,"* 2:97, n. 3.

has argued, the link between the Artemis of the *Iliad* and that of Aeschylus' play is tenuous; and anyway Artemis' support of the Trojans in the *Iliad* is hardly conspicuous, even if perhaps a bit stronger than what Whallon calls "a slight predilection towards Troy."[8]

Or one can take the line, with H. Neitzel, that Artemis never wanted Iphigenia to be sacrificed but was merely using the threat of this monstrous act as a way of deterring Agamemnon *from sailing at all.*[9] Whilst the poets were free to tamper with details of myth—for example, it was either contrary winds (Aeschylus), storm winds (Soph. *El.* 564), or a flat calm (Eur. *IA* 10–11, 813) which delayed the fleet—they could not alter basic outcomes, and the Greeks' expedition to Troy, and Troy's eventual capture, were among these basic data. It was never possible for Agamemnon to call off the whole venture, or even personally defect.[10] Moreover, Neitzel overrates Artemis' kindliness. He thinks a goddess who claimed the young of all species as her own simply could not demand the blood of the young virgin Iphigenia. This runs counter to the many instances of bloody sacrifice which are recorded for numerous cult centers of the goddess Artemis throughout Greece, on which I will elaborate below.[11]

The difficulty critics have had in answering the question why divine anger was directed at Agamemnon following the hare-portent stems in my view from a misreading of lines 154–55. Calchas has just called on Apollo to dissuade Artemis from sending adverse winds, thus precipitating another sacrifice (151 σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν), which he describes as ἄνομόν τιν' ἄδαιτον, / νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον, / οὐ δεισήνορα: one which is contrary to rite, an inborn causer of strife, one which is not δεισήνωρ (translation of which I omit at present). Why should Artemis do this? Calchas supplies his reason: μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος (154–55)—"For there remains a frightful, recurrent, treacherous Keeper of the House, a Wrath with a long memory, child-avenging."

Now these lines have without exception, to my knowledge, been applied to the situation *after* Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia. Δεισήνορα, properly of this second sacrifice, that of Iphigenia, described as a causer of quarrels, is translated "one which does not fear the husband" (=οὐ δέδιε τὸν ἄνδρα); that is, the quarrels which arise from Iphigenia's death *will not* fear the husband (Agamemnon, of course). Calchas is not only hinting at his anticipation of Iphigenia's sacrifice, but also at the attack

8. "Why Is Artemis Angry?" *AJP* 82 (1961):82. J. J. Peradotto, "The Omen of the Eagles and the ἦθος of Agamemnon," *Phoenix* 23 (1969):240–41, rallies other arguments against Lloyd-Jones on this point: that the Artemis of the *Iliad* would chiefly be remembered as a "bringer of death to women" rather than as a "loyal partisan of Troy"; that it is unsafe to argue from Homeric epic to Greek tragedy because the tragedians were at liberty to omit, or emphasize, elements from epic at will; and that Artemis' motivation in the *Agamemnon* is more profound than mere "political partisanship."

9. "Artemis und Agamemnon in der Parodos des Aischyleischen *Agamemnon*," *Hermes* 107 (1979): 10–32.

10. See esp. Denniston and Page, "*Agamemnon*," p. xxiv.

11. Page 118.

on Agamemnon which will result from the ghastly human sacrifice. Having taken this step, the commentators proceed to understand the crucial lines 154–55 as follows: for (after the sacrifice of Iphigenia) there remains a terrible, vengeful Housekeeper, who is more or less explicitly identified with, or parallel to, Clytemnestra, waiting at home and brooding on her child-avenging wrath.[12]

I object to this reading:

(1) Despite Fraenkel's contention that δεισήνορα is in apposition to τέκτονα,[13] not to θυσίαν, it is much more natural to take it as the last in a string of modifiers after θυσίαν ἑτέραν: (*a*) ἄνομόν τιν', (*b*) ἄδαιτον . . . τέκτονα σύμφυτον, (*c*) οὐ δεισήνορα. The sacrifice will be (*a*) counter to religious νόμος, or observance, (*b*) an inborn maker of quarrels without an accompanying sacrificial banquet, and (*c*) one which is not δεισήνωρ.

(2) Is it not incredible that Calchas should hint to Agamemnon's face that he will die as a result of a sacrifice which he, Calchas, was recommending? Agamemnon was certainly no denser than we are; he must have understood δεισήνορα differently. Or if he did take it to refer to a plot against his own person, he would have been considerably more circumspect in satisfying the condition laid down by Calchas, the θυσία ἑτέρα. The real issue here is whether Calchas' words are to be taken as narrative appropriate to the setting (a Greek army poised before setting sail for Troy) or as a piece of "Sophoclean" innuendo, suggesting to us, the audience, the possibility of Agamemnon's death later in the play, but leaving the victim himself in the dark. I am for the former, less sophisticated, reading.

(3) The words μίμνει . . . τεκνόποινος are an explanation of what precedes. This is plain from the γάρ. The interpretation I wish to reject makes them an explanation of the word δεισήνορα alone, not of the main burden of the previous statement: I pray to Apollo that Artemis will not delay the fleet, thus hastening on another (far worse) sacrifice: "for there remains a . . . child-avenging hate" (μῆνις τεκνόποινος). If we understand the words as an explanation of why evil will befall the fleet even before sailing, we have supplied the missing causal link which has caused all the trouble: why is there a danger that Artemis will delay the fleet and demand a horrendous sacrifice from Agamemnon before she will still the adverse winds? Because a μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος remains unrequited to plague the Atreidae. In what does Calchas perceive this lingering threat which is ready to strike again (154 παλίνορτος)? In the omen of eagles butchering a hare together with its young (136 αὐτότοκον). Can there be any doubt that Calchas is referring to the family curse of Atreus, who had butchered the children of his brother Thyestes and served them to the father as a meal? Agamemnon's guilt at

12. Even Whallon ("Why Is Artemis Angry?" p. 83), whose interpretation of the hare-portent itself comes as close to mine as any I have discovered, writes: "It is sensible to understand Clytemnestra as the treacherous Housekeeper in these lines."

13. *"Agamemnon,"* 2:92.

this stage was seen by Aeschylus as hereditary, due to neither petty boasting (the motive of the *Cypria*), nor political hybris,[14] nor the chance death of a hare and its unborn young,[15] nor sheer necessity.[16] It was a guilt totally in accord with Greek thinking before the sophistic enlightenment, whereby the cycle of bloodshed, blood-guilt, and further retaliatory bloodshed passed relentlessly down the line of a man's descendants, as rust eats its way progressively into metal once the initial breach in the protective coating has been made.

The reference to the family curse is still allusive in these two lines of Calchas' divination. By the end of the play it has become quite explicit through the clairvoyance of the other seer in the play, Cassandra. She senses the taint of blood-guilt the moment she enters Atreus' house and relates her sense of foreboding to the chorus. In line 1090 the fear is general, as she describes how the House of Atreus is cursed (μισόθεον), privy to many murders, stained with blood (1091–92). Then she hears the wailing voices of infants, and adds the detail that they are bewailing the "cooked flesh eaten by a father." Even if the chorus fail to comprehend immediately, we certainly catch the reference. Cassandra hears a positive choir of malevolent voices chanting in the house (1186–87 χορὸς σύμφθογγος οὐκ εὔφωνος), a choir which drinks blood to regain strength (1188–89), is difficult to evict, related to Erinyes (1190). They sing a song which goes back to the original mistake (1192 πρώταρχον ἄτην), Thyestes' adultery with Atreus' wife, for which the latter punished him with a meal of his own infant children's flesh.

Suddenly Cassandra brings her vision of the grisly banquet before the chorus' eyes: ὁρᾶτε τούσδε τοὺς δόμοις ἐφημένους νέους . . . ὧν πατὴρ ἐγεύσατο (1217–22). The chorus finally comprehends: "I understood [you to mean] Thyestes' meal of his children's meat, and shuddered" (1242–43).

Aeschylus' treatment of the theme of hereditary guilt in the *Agamemnon* follows a pattern ably demonstrated for images and motifs throughout the *Oresteia* by A. Lebeck. "The significance of a recurrent image unfolds in successive stages," she writes,

14. This is the view of Lloyd-Jones, "Guilt of Agamemnon," that Artemis is angry with Agamemnon for what the portent points to in the future: the unbridled massacre of Trojans and the looting of their city. B. Daube, *Zu den Rechtsproblemen in Aischylos' "Agamemnon"* (Zurich, 1938), pp. 147–50, had earlier proposed a similar view.

15. This is the naive reading of the portent, whereby the hare is made to do the duty of the stag which Agamemnon was said to have shot in the *Cypria*. The problem is that the hare was not killed by Agamemnon, but by eagles sent by Zeus as a sign, thus relieving Agamemnon of direct guilt. C. J. Blomfield, in his *Glossarium* on the *Agamemnon* (Leipzig, 1826), ad loc., put his finger on the difficulties caused by Aeschylus' innovation on epic: "hoc portentum non tam *causa* quam *signum* fuit sacrificii ab Atridis mox consummandi."

16. Denniston and Page, *"Agamemnon,"* p. xxiv and n. 4, write: "The sacrifice of Iphigeneia, once demanded by Artemis, is an absolute *necessity:* and *necessity* is the word by which Aeschylus describes Agamemnon's submission to the will of Artemis; what he bowed to was (it could not be more plainly stated) *compulsion,* ἀνάγκη." The question these authors answer less well is: What "necessity" compelled Artemis to demand the sacrifice in the first place?

keeping time with the action of the drama. The form which repetition or recurrence takes in the *Oresteia* is that of proleptic introduction and gradual development. The word "prolepsis" here denotes a brief initial statement of several major themes *en bloc*. The full development toward which each repetition builds may not occur for several hundred lines. . . . In its early occurrences the image is elliptical and enigmatic. It is a γρῖφος or riddle whose solution is strung out over the course of the individual drama or the entire trilogy. Significance increases with repetition; the image gains in clarity as the action moves to a climax. Prolepsis and gradual development of recurrent imagery, along with the corollary, movement from enigmatic utterance to clear statement, from riddle to solution, dominate the structure of the *Oresteia*.[17]

On this view—that the theme of the family curse which will finally be Agamemnon's undoing is present already, although in cryptic form, in the lines μίμνει γάρ . . . μῆνις τεκνόποινος—let us examine more closely the portent that Calchas so ambivalently interprets.

A pair of eagles appears from the right hand, the auspicious side (116), settles on a conspicuous perch (117 παμπρέπτοις ἐν ἕδραισιν), and eats a pregnant hare (λαγίναν, ἐρικύμονα φέρματι, γένναν: lit. "a [member of the] hare family, very big with burden"), thus robbing it, thwarting it, of remaining runnings (120 βλαβέντα λοισθίων δρόμων),[18] that is, of its remaining life.

Calchas confidently identifies the two differently marked eagles with the warlike sons of Atreus, who are said to diverge in their characters: δύο λήμασι δισσοὺς Ἀτρείδας (122–23). He sees the omen as a positive sign for the ultimate success of their venture (126 χρόνῳ μὲν ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἅδε κέλευθος), a symbol of Troy's total ruin (130 Μοῖρα λαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαιον). But something upsets him. "I only hope some divine anger does not darken the great assembled force (lit. 'bridle-bit of Troy'), deal it a preliminary blow. For . . ." (131–35): he goes on to explain how Artemis resents the eagles (135–36 ἐπίφθονος . . . πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρός) and loathes their meal (138 στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν).

Now Aeschylus' audience knew their *Iliad*. Most of them probably knew sizeable portions by heart. They would have recalled the similar portent in *Iliad* 2. 308–19, seen by the Greeks on the first occasion that their army assembled at Aulis. Here a snake was seen to emerge from underground and slither up a tree to where a sparrow and her eight chicks had their nest. First the snake devoured the children, one by one, before eating the mother bird, as the ninth in line. Calchas had on that occasion interpreted the sign to mean that the Greeks would besiege Troy nine years, and in the tenth complete the operation by sacking the city (328–29). There is no mention of anything sinister to the Greeks in this portent.

17. *The "Oresteia": A Study in Language and Structure* (Washington, D.C., 1971), pp. 1–2.

18. The masculine ending of the participle with feminine γέννα is unusual; H. Petersmann, "Nochmals zu Aeschylos *Agamemnon* 560 ff.: Der sprachliche Ausdruck und die Bedeutung von ἔνθηρος," in *Serta Indogermanica: Festschrift für Günter Neumann*, ed. J. Tischler (Innsbruck, 1982), pp. 262–63, has defended such rare usages in Aeschylus as archaisms found in traditional modes of speech. Fraenkel, *"Agamemnon,"* 2:73, also keeps βλαβέντα, whilst Denniston and Page, *"Agamemnon,"* p. 79, argue for βλάψαντε.

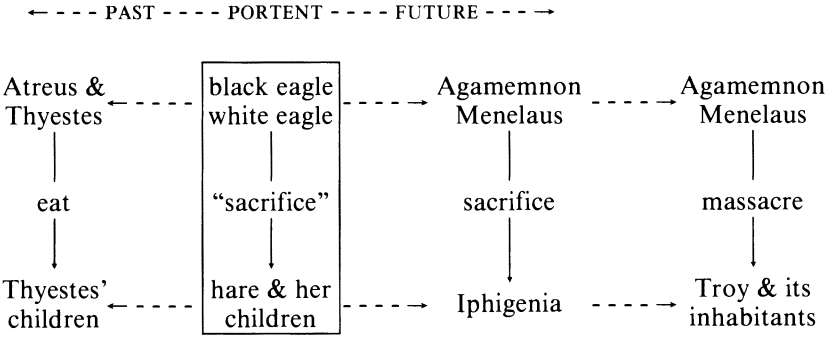
What has Aeschylus changed, such that the sign is no longer one of unequivocal promise, but contains an inbuilt germ of destruction (the αἴλινον of the refrain, the κατάμομφα side of the sign in 145)? He has preserved one essential feature, a predatory animal destroying its prey together with its young, but has changed the animal species concerned and the number of the aggressors. Now a pair of eagles eats a mother hare together with her—still unborn—young. The eagles are described as having different markings: one is black-, the other is white-tailed, a distinction which Calchas regards as significant, in that it parallels the character-distinction between Agamemnon and Menelaus. And we are given the undeniably nasty picture of the eagles hacking away at the young animals spilling from their mother's body. Whilst retaining the plausibility of the interpretation Calchas gives—that the allied kings will massacre Troy—has not Aeschylus led our thoughts—with those of Calchas—unwittingly back to the grisly scene which hangs, like a black cloud (131 κνεφάσῃ), over the Atreidae: the atrocity committed by their father Atreus, when he and his brother, one black and the other unwitting-white, sat over a supper of children? Let us call this nuance of the portent a sinister implication rather than the prime reference, which remains the omen of Troy's future fall. But past and present are linked in the art of prophecy, as we see in the epic formula (said, incidentally, of Calchas) ὃς ἤδη τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα (*Il.* 1. 70), and in Hesiod's claim that the Muses had made him an inspired singer ἵνα κλείοιμι τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα,/ καὶ μὲ κέλονθ' ὑμνεῖν μακάρων γένος αἰεν ἐόντων (*Theog.* 32–33).

We have then in the portent a reference forward to the sacking of Troy at some unspecified point in the future, and an echo of a crime committed in the past. These two parameters of violence are mediated by a third—more immediate and pressing—act of bloodshed, the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The θυσία ἑτέρα of line 151, pointing directly to Iphigenia, has as its antecedent the "sacrifice" of the hare family by the eagles (136–37 πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ . . . πτάκα θυομένοισιν; see schema, below). When Calchas speaks of an ἄγα θεόθεν in line 131, which will deal the host a blow before they have even commenced (134 προτυπέν), he is clearly thinking of its immediate manifestation in the form of Artemis' displeasure and Iphigenia's resulting death. Thus we can concur with Peradotto that "these three analogous events [sc. the "*cena Thyesteia,*" the murder of Iphigenia, and the murder of innocent youth at Troy] stand to the omen of the slaughtered hare as species to a kind of symbolic genus; the omen subsumes all three events, relating them one to another as cases of the slaughter of innocent youth in the pursuit and exercise of power";[19] or with Whallon, that "the devouring of the hare is most understandably seen as the sacrifice of Iphigenia, or the children of Thyestes told in other terms [he includes the sack of Troy a few lines

19. "The Omen of the Eagles," p. 246.

later]. . . . The general and perpetual significance [sc. of the portent] is that the family is endlessly accursed with the ritual of teknophagy."[20]

SCHEMA



This brings us back to our starting point: Calchas' foreboding that Artemis will send delaying winds, thus urging on "another sacrifice, one without law, without banquet, a natural provoker of quarrels, one which is not δεισήνωρ. For. . . ." Then follow the words of explanation that are, in my view, crucial: μίμνει γὰρ . . . μῆνις τεκνόποινος. What does οὐ δεισήνορα mean if not "husband-fearing," referring to Agamemnon?

The interpretation which makes μίμνει γὰρ κτλ. refer to a time after the as yet unrealized sacrifice of Iphigenia places heavy emphasis on the latter element of δεισ-ήνωρ: -ήνωρ refers to Clytemnestra's ἀνήρ, Agamemnon. But just as μῆνις τεκνόποινος cannot, in my opinion, be applied to Clytemnestra *at this stage* (she becomes its agent later in the play), so there is considerable doubt whether -ήνωρ is as specific as some commentators would like it to be.

If we compare other formations with -ήνωρ, or -άνωρ, we notice that -ήνωρ actually means ἄνδρες, "men" in the plural, or "man" generally, rather than a specific man. Virginity is described by Aeschylus (*PV* 898) as ἀστεργάνωρ, "without love of (any) man," that is, unwedded; the Amazons of *Prometheus Vinctus* 724, who are στυγήνωρ, hate men in general, no one in particular; the adjective πειθήνωρ in line 1639 of our play means "obedient" (to men in general); dolphins who are φιλήνωρ according to Pindar (frag. 236) favor the whole race of men, not a particular seaman. The list could easily be extended.[21] Only in a very few cases is the force of -ήνωρ specific, and then only because of the context: Helen is described by Stesichorus (26. 5) as λιπεσάνωρ, which only

20. "Why Is Artemis Angry?" pp. 81–82.

21. See J. Wackernagel, *Dehnungsgesetz der griechischen Composita* (Basel, 1889), pp. 40–41, for an extended list. I am grateful to A. Dihle, who supplied me with other examples in conjunction with this paper.

refers to Menelaus specifically because the story dictates that restricted reference.

Thus δεισήνωρ in our context is most naturally taken to mean "fearing man" in general, rather than "fearing (any particular) man," or still more specifically, "the husband," as Fraenkel and others require for their interpretation. A sacrifice which is described as οὐ δεισήνορα is one which is "fearless of men." It is an outrageous act, defying all conventional morality. When Aeschylus comes to describe the actual human sacrifice, he uses the words παντότολμον, "all-daring" (221), θρασύνει, "embolden" (222), ἔτλα, "dare" (224), as if Agamemnon's was an act of daring, requiring supreme resolution, the very opposite of δεισήνωρ, "faint-hearted." The lines in question should be translated, in my opinion: "a second sacrifice, one without rite, without banquet, a natural architect of strife, no respecter of human beings."

Before we proceed, let me summarize my conclusions thus far:

(1) Οὐ δεισήνορα (154) describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia, not Clytemnestra's projected quarrel with Agamemnon as a result of this sacrifice.

(2) The second part of the compound (-ήνωρ) refers to men generally, not to the "husband," Agamemnon.

(3) Μίμνει γὰρ . . . μῆνις τεκνόποινος (154–55) refers to the time of speaking and not to a projected future time. Calchas means a wrath which still remains to this day (the time of his prophecy) and not one which has yet to be conceived.

More remains to be said about the way in which Aeschylus links the theme of Artemis' wrath to the features of the portent itself and to Agamemnon's hereditary guilt. Calchas begins his reading of the portent by stating that Artemis "resents" the winged hounds sent by Zeus, the father, out of pity for the wretched creature being slaughtered together with its young (134 οἴκτῳ γὰρ ἐπίφθονος). She detests the eagles' meal (137). At this point Calchas attributes Artemis' reaction strictly to the facts of the portent. Then he goes on to elaborate: Artemis is so fond of the young of ravening lions, in fact of the young of all wild creatures, that she "demands to bring to fulfillment what these things symbolize" (144 τούτων αἰτεῖ ξύμβολα κρᾶναι). How will Artemis bring them to fulfillment? Calchas says he fears lest Artemis send counter-winds to delay the fleet (147–50) in her eagerness to obtain a second sacrifice (151). When Aeschylus comes to describe the denouement of this episode, the actual sacrifice of Iphigenia, he has the chorus say in expressive litotes, τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι (249), meaning that the girl did indeed die. The repetition of the verb κραίνω in this context assures us that this is the "fulfillment" of the portent which Artemis, according to Calchas, was eager for in lines 144–45.

Let me first dispose of a difficulty many modern critics have had when confronted with this description of the goddess Artemis: eagles butcher a pregnant hare; Artemis is said to be so fond of all young creatures that she demands another sacrifice; accordingly, Iphigenia, herself a fine young girl, is slaughtered to appease her. The apparent

illogicality of the goddess' behavior has led critics to read περ in line 140 as concessive in force, and to weaken αἰτεῖ in line 144 to αἰνεῖ.[22] This gives the sense: *although* Artemis dearly loves the young of all species of creature, *nevertheless* she consents that (someone) bring to fulfillment what the portent symbolizes.

I believe that this line of interpretation is weak in itself: it must assume that Artemis consented to the sacrifice of Iphigenia against her better will, instead of forcing it on the Greeks, as she did, by sending day after day of adverse winds. Moreover, the Artemis it supposes does not stand comparison with the Artemis of other cult centers. At Brauron a bear was said to have wandered into Artemis' precinct, where it was shot by Athenians. A plague followed the incident, which could only be allayed, according to Delphi, by sacrificing an Athenian girl annually to Artemis. This sacrifice was continued until one year Embarus dressed a goat up as his daughter and had it sacrificed, thus inaugurating the historical cult of Artemis Brauronia.[23] At Patrae Artemis Triclaria was sufficiently piqued by a case of adultery in her precinct that she first sent a plague on the people and then demanded an annual sacrifice of the township's most attractive boy and girl by way of appeasement.[24] The Artemis of the Meleager story in Homer (*Il.* 9. 533–40) was so offended by Oeneus' omission of a sacrifice to her that she sent a pestilence on his people in the form of a monstrous wild boar.[25] The following story was told about Artemis Condylea near Caphyae (Paus. 8. 23. 6–7): some children were playing in the precinct of the goddess; they found a rope and hanged the image of the goddess in play. When the Caphyans discovered the act, they stoned the children to death. Artemis showed her displeasure by sending a malady on the women, whose children were stillborn. Delphi told the community to offer hero-sacrifice to the wrongfully stoned children in order to appease the goddess.

It would be wrong to say that the call for Iphigenia's sacrifice was uncharacteristic of the Greek goddess Artemis. The examples above show that an apparently trivial incident was sufficient to stir her to acts of devastating vengeance. Whallon is correct to state that Artemis is "less ἀρτέμης than an ἄρταμος. That is certainly what she is in requiring the sacrifice of Iphigenia: a Butcher."[26]

22. I cannot understand Fraenkel's convoluted arguments (*"Agamemnon,"* 2:85–88) against αἰτεῖ in favor of αἰνεῖ, and agree with Denniston and Page, *"Agamemnon,"* p. 82, that "there is no difficulty in αἰτεῖ κρᾶναι, 'she begs to fulfil . . .'; aor. infin. after αἰτεῖ signifies the action for which permission is sought." I suspect that Fraenkel's objections to αἰτεῖ originate less from the grammatical difficulties he finds than from the sentiment it implies in Artemis: he quotes L. Campbell approvingly, "The Lovely Goddess, *although* so kind to the tender cubs . . . *consents* to ratify the . . . fulfilment of the sign. The omens are favourable, but not unmixed with bane" (my italics).

23. Schol. Ar. *Lys.* 645; Harp., s.v. ἀρκτεῦσαι; Eust., *Il.* p. 331. 26; Bekker *Anecd.* p. 444; *Suda*, s.v. Ἔμβαρος. I have discussed this ritual with reference to initiation generally, together with references to the secondary literature, in *Studies in the Use of Fire in Ancient Greek Religion* (New York, 1981), pp. 134–36.

24. Paus. 7. 18. 8–20. 2.

25. See also Furley, *Studies*, pp. 151–62.

26. "Why Is Artemis Angry?" p. 79.

Artemis was not angry with Agamemnon solely because of the pregnant hare's death. I have already observed that the language of the portent recalls the gruesome meal of Thyestes' children that was the beginning of Agamemnon's hereditary guilt. The elaboration of Artemis' sympathy with young creatures also draws her closer to one of the key images that Aeschylus uses when describing the unfolding of the family curse. Artemis is said to hold the young of ravening lions dear to her heart (141 δρόσοισι λεπτοῖς μαλερῶν λεόντων). Now the image of a gentle lion cub which grows to fierce maturity and attacks its own kin is used by Aeschylus to describe the hereditary curse of Atreus' family, as successive members grow up to do violence to their relatives: Atreus to Thyestes' children, Agamemnon to his daughter, Clytemnestra to Agamemnon, Orestes to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Lebeck writes: "The parable [sc. of the lion] is introduced with reference to Helen but, as the ode continues (750f), the chorus extend its significance to the action of the entire trilogy. It becomes a parable of the curse within the house of Atreus which causes parent to slay child and child parent. Moreover, imagery drawn from the lion parable is used to describe every figure in the *Oresteia* who acts as an instrument of the Erinys."[27] If we accept the premise that Aeschylus develops imagery systematically over the course of the play (and trilogy), we can infer that Artemis' favor to young lion cubs, mentioned in the parodos, indicates that her actions are part of the working out of the family curse.

The hare-portent, then, was not in itself enough to engender Artemis' anger against Agamemnon. How could he be held responsible for a sign sent to him by Zeus? I know of no other example in the history of Greek augury in which a portent actually *causes* a god or goddess to behave in a certain way. The augur's role was to divine the godhead's predisposition to act in a certain way from certain signs of his will. Now Calchas read in the hare-portent a clear indication of Artemis' displeasure. Which elements of the sign disturbed him?

We must first remember that Aulis, where the Greek host had mustered, looked to Artemis as its chief local divinity; Euripides states that the Greek army gathered at "the sacred grove and flowery meadows of Artemis, daughter of Zeus" (*IA* 1543–44). Sophocles narrates that the stag which Agamemnon was said to have shot at Aulis, thus causing the goddess' anger in the epic *Cypria,* died in Artemis' ἄλσος (*El.* 567). Pausanias visited the historical site, with its temple and two effigies of the goddess, one of the huntress type, and one of the "Eileithyia" type, bearing torches aloft (9. 19. 6). Thus there was no doubt in Calchas' or his lords' minds which goddess would be responsible for fair or ill winds.

The eagles of the portent were Zeus' birds. Aeschylus calls them the "winged hounds of the Father" (136), and "king of the birds of augury" (114). In Homer the appearance of an eagle was always taken as the

27. *The "Oresteia,"* p. 50.

surest sign of the will of Zeus.[28] Can we be more specific about the sacral connotations of the hare?

It is true that there are references to Artemis' attachment to hares. Xenophon says that hunters released immature hares caught in their snares "to Artemis" (*Cyn.* 5. 14). Callimachus, too, mentions Artemis' love of hare-hunting (*Dian.* 2). In an interesting story concerning the founding of the Laconian city of Beoeae, Pausanias tells how the appearance of a hare showed the founding fathers where Artemis wished the city to be (3. 22. 12). But perhaps the most interesting evidence comes from Brauron, the cult center which the ancients themselves connected with the Iphigenia story,[29] and which Peradotto in particular has investigated with respect to Aeschylus' text.[30] The cult of Artemis Brauronia at this site involved the initiation of young Athenian girls. Votive statuettes were turned up during excavations at the site, showing a young girl holding a hare in her arms.[31] It is difficult to avoid seeing in the hare a symbol of the girl's devotion to the goddess Artemis, in the manner of Eleusinian statuettes depicting the initiate with his χοιρίδιον, the little pig used in preliminary sacrifices.[32]

There is another facet of the hare-victim in the portent yet to be analyzed: her pregnancy. Aeschylus says that the eagles were sacrificing the hare (137 θυομένοισιν) and that Artemis demanded "another sacrifice" as repayment (151). Hence it is fair to collate the portent with instances of pregnant animal sacrifice in an attempt to grasp its meaning for the Greeks.

Such sacrifices were rare, tending to be the particular prerogative of Demeter. The normal victim of a Greek sacrifice had to be ἀβλαβής, "faultless," free from all abnormalities which might make it unacceptable as an offering to the god. There is an interesting inscription from Cos which appears to deal with precisely the problem of animals sold for sacrifice and found to be unfit for offering up to the god because they were pregnant.[33] Cornutus explains the suitability of pregnant victims for Demeter, however, as follows: "They [sc. Greek women] sacrifice pregnant swine to Demeter quite exclusively, thus encouraging the number of children, ease of conception, and the success of delivery" (*Theol. gr.* 28, p. 56 Long). In fact local Greek customs extended this rite, proper to the fertility goddess Demeter, to a number of local deities: Rhea, for example, on Cos; Ge at Marathon; Deaira likewise at Marathon.[34] Nilsson's contention, however, that these goddesses were analogous to Demeter within the local pantheon, and as such earned pregnant

28. E.g., *Il.* 12. 200–209; *Od.* 19. 536–53, 20. 242–46.

29. Schol. Ar. *Lys.* 645 οἱ δὲ τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἰφιγένειαν ἐν Βραυρῶνι φασίν, οὐκ ἐν Αὐλίδι. Εὐφορίων "Ἀγχίαλον Βραυρῶνα κενήριον Ἰφιγενείας."

30. "The Omen of the Eagles," pp. 244–48.

31. For an illustration and description, see Τὸ Ἔργον τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας κατὰ τὸ 1957 (Athens, 1958), p. 36, fig. 38.

32. See G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, 1961), p. 203; illustration of pig alone: fig. 66.

33. See. F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris, 1969), no. 154 B 36–44.

34. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées*, nos. 151 D 2 (Cos), 20 B 9 (Marathon), 20 B 11–12 (Marathon) Δαίρᾳ οἷς κύουσα.

victims, seems plausible enough.[35] A notable exception to the equation of pregnant victims with the cult of divinities primarily concerned with fertility is to be found in Pausanias' record of an annual sacrifice of a pregnant sheep to divinities whom the Athenians called the Semnai and the Sicyonians the Eumenides.[36]

Artemis was the conceptual opposite of Demeter in the Greek pantheon. If Demeter was the chief divinity of wives, as she is depicted in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae,* for example, Artemis was the goddess of unwed girls. In that sense Iphigenia was a particularly suitable offering to her; we recall also that the cult at Brauron centered on the initiation of young girls into the service of Artemis before they were eligible for marriage. I believe that we can say of the hare-portent that Calchas perceived it as being doubly obscene in the eyes of the local goddess Artemis: first, it involved the death of a hare, an animal most closely associated with her cult; second, the hare rent by the eagles was big with young, thus offending all norms regarding the animals thought proper to the cult of Artemis Ἀγνά. In short, the eagles gorging themselves were a sign of victory; their victim, the pregnant hare, was a sight deeply offensive to the goddess Artemis, and hence a warning to the Greeks of a storm brewing in that quarter (131 οἷον μή τις ἄγα θεόθεν κνεφάσῃ . . .).

It would be a mistake to try to find evidence in Aeschylus or elsewhere that Artemis had a direct hand in laying the curse on Atreus' house following his crime against Thyestes. Aeschylus has attempted to weld the mythical tradition of Iphigenia's death at Aulis to his conception of Agamemnon's hereditary guilt, using a portent which points as clearly as it can to Artemis' displeasure at the slaughter of young creatures: she is the divinity who unites by her common concern the meal of Thyestes' children, the feast of the mother hare and her babies, and the final ἄδαιτον sacrifice of Iphigenia. When Agamemnon commits this last, there is no more saving him: he has put on the halter of necessity (218 ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον). The only choices that Aeschylus hints he might ever have had to escape his fate were: (1) desertion (212 πῶς λιπόναυς γένωμαι;) and (2) rejecting Calchas' prophecy (186 μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων). I think we must admit that both of these offered scant hope of salvation.[37]

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35. *Geschichte der griechischen Religion,* vol. I (Munich, 1955), p. 151.
36. 2. 11. 4, near Titane.
37. I am grateful to A. Dihle of Heidelberg University and the two anonymous readers of *CP* whose comments and criticisms helped give this paper its final shape.