

LECYTHIA AND THE JUSTICE OF ZEUS IN AESCHYLUS' *ORESTEIA*

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RECENTLY WILLIAM SCOTT HAS SUGGESTED (36–38 and *passim*) that in the lyric odes of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* two meters have important thematic functions: the trochaic colon called the lecythion (– ∪ – x – ∪ –)¹ is associated with the just order of the universe maintained by Zeus, while iambic rhythm is associated with the sequence of sin and punishment. Although to my mind, at least, the thematic significance of the latter remains questionable, Aeschylus' emphatic use of lecythia (not often a dominant or even prominent rhythm in tragic lyric systems) is indeed remarkable, and plausibly significant for the development of ideas and attitudes throughout the trilogy. Unlike Professor Scott, however, who even among the lecythia of the Zeus Hymn emphasizes Aeschylus' optimism and mankind's hope for betterment, I would like to suggest that lecythia in the *Oresteia* typically accompany manifestations or threats of a conspicuously harsh divine justice characterized by violence, human suffering, and death. Indeed for the greater

The following abbreviations for metrical terms are used in this article: lec = lecythion; cho = choriamb; ia = iambic metron; dac = dactyl; ba = bacchius; ithy = ithyphallic; cr = cretic; pher = pherecratean; sp = spondee; do = dochmiac; mol = molossus. The following works are referred to by the author's or editor's name or the short title indicated: N. B. Booth, "Zeus *Hypsistos Megistos*: An Argument for Enclitic *πov* in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 182," *CQ* NS 26 (1976) 220–228; D. J. Conacher, "Comments on an Interpretation of Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 182–183," *Phoenix* 30 (1976) 328–336; A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama*² (Cambridge 1968), cited as Dale *LMGD*²; A. M. Dale, *Metrical Analyses of Tragic Choruses*, Fasc. 3 (London 1983, *BICS* Supp. 21.3), cited as Dale *Analyses* 3; J. D. Denniston and D. Page, eds., *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957); E. R. Dodds, "Morals and Politics in the *Oresteia*," in *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford 1973) 45–63, reprinted from *PCPS* 186 (1960) 19–31; E. Fraenkel, ed., *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* 1–3 (Oxford 1950); A. F. Garvie, ed., *Aeschylus: Choephoroi* (Oxford 1986); A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Structure* (Washington 1971); C. MacLeod, "Politics and the *Oresteia*," *JHS* 102 (1982) 122–144 (reprinted in his *Collected Essays* [Oxford 1983] 20–40); W. Scott, *Musical Design in Aeschylean Theater* (Hanover and London 1984); P. Smith, *On the Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1980, *American Classical Studies* 5); O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977); G. Thomson, *Greek Lyric Metre*² (Cambridge 1961); M. L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford 1982); R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1983); E. Wüst, "Erinys," *RE* Supp. 8 (1956) 82–166.

¹The lecythion owes its name to the mischievous tag *ληκῦθιον ἀπώλεσεν* applied by the Aristophanic Aeschylus to various Euripidean prologues at *Frogs* 1208 ff. In Aeschylus (as in tragedy generally) the medial anceps is almost exclusively short; long anceps is much more common in comic lecythia. See Dale *LMGD*² 88; West 100. Scholars dispute whether the lecythion is properly reckoned an iambic, trochaic, or iambo-trochaic measure: see below, 6, with nn. 16 and 17.

part of the trilogy we can draw no distinction between Zeus' justice and the punishment of sin, because until the joyous finale of *Eumenides* they are one and the same. In *Agamemnon* lecythia mark the deaths of Iphigeneia at Aulis, of Greeks and Trojans alike before Ilium, and of Agamemnon at the hands of Clytemnestra. Lecythia are relatively scarce in *Choephoroe*, but their greatest concentrations anticipate Orestes' matricide and the continuation of the family curse. In *Eumenides* the choral use of lecythia underscores the relationship between Zeus and the Furies, which though previously cooperative is disrupted by Orestes' murder of Clytemnestra—an act defended by the Olympians but abhorrent to the Erinyes. When their conflict is resolved and the goddesses agree to accept a seat of honor in the city of Zeus' daughter Athena, they sing lecythia that celebrate not only the Furies' participation in a system of government authorized by Zeus but also a newly positive representation of Zeus' justice as a force that dispenses rewards and blessings as well as punishment.

The first appearance of lecythia in the *Oresteia* is a memorable one that colors our perception of the meter in all its subsequent appearances. The magnificent parodos of *Agamemnon* opens with a long passage of marching anapaests. Once settled in the orchestra, the Argive elders recall the massing of the Greek forces at Aulis, the grisly omen of the hare and the eagles, and Calchas' prophecy of victory, tempered by fear of Artemis' wrath; they sing in resounding dactylic meter, which evokes both memories of the epic tradition and the rhythmic pronouncement of oracles (Scott 35). At line 160 the chorus abruptly breaks off its account of the gathering at Aulis to ponder the nature of Zeus' sovereignty in the so-called "Hymn to Zeus:"²

160	Ζεὺς ὅστις ποτ' ἔστιν, εἰ τόδ' αὖ- τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ, τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω· οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος	[στρ. β	sp lec lec lec lec lec
165	πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως· οὐδ' ὅστις πάροιθεν ἦν μέγας, παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,		5 dac lec
170	οὐδέ λέγεται πρὶν ὦν· ὅς δ' ἔπειτ' ἔφυ, τρια- κτῆρος οἷχεται τυχών· Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινύκια κλάζων	[ἀντ. β	
175	τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν,		

²Text and colometry, unless otherwise noted, are those of D. Page's Oxford text (1972); I have abandoned Page's use of lunate sigmas, and iota subscripts are written as such. I note only those textual problems that significantly affect the meter of passages under discussion.

	τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοῦς ὁδώ-	[στρ. γ	lec
	σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος		lec
	θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν·		lec
	στάζει δ' ἔν γ' ὕπνῳ πρὸ καρδίας		sp lec
180	μνησιπτήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ' ἄ-		3 cr
	κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν·		lec
	δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις		lec
	βίαιος σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.		ba lec
	καὶ τόθ' ἡγεμὼν ὁ πρέ-		
185	σβυς νεῶν Ἀχαιικῶν,	[ἀντ. γ	
	μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων,		
	ἐμπαίοις τύχαισι συμπνέων,		
	εὖτ' ἀπλοῖα κεναγγεῖ βαρύ-		
	νοντ' Ἀχαιικός λεώς,		
190	Χαλκίδος πέραν ἔχων		
	παλιρρόχθους ἐν Αὐλίδος τόποις·		(160–191)

The change of rhythm, reflecting the change of topic, is aurally striking, and was doubtless reinforced in production by distinctive music and dance figures (Scott 37). Note the emphasis with which Aeschylus establishes the lecythion as the rhythmic keynote of these stanzas.³ After the opening colon, in which a spondee precedes the lecythion, there follow four consecutive, unresolved lecythia, a dactylic colon whose rhythmic variation signals imminent closure,⁴ and a final lecythion. The pattern is repeated in the antistrophe, and the second system opens with another three consecutive, unresolved lecythia. In this context the trimeter length sp lec (179) serves as a variation on a firmly established theme, while the falling start and blunt end of the cretic trimeter (180) make it especially compatible with the lecythion. If I am right to accept Schroeder's division of 182–183, two more lecythia precede a rising trimeter that first anticipates (183), then effects (191) the transition to the iambic rhythm of the following stanzas.⁵ Although A. M. Dale is perhaps correct in theory to emphasize the ambiguous iambo-trochaic nature of the lecythion (*LMGD*² 95), the more common

³Dale (*LMGD*² 95) notes that in Aeschylus the lecythion “often gives the key-movement of a stanza—a falling start with blunt end, with occasional variations of trimeter length or interludes of cretic (– ~ – or ~ ~ –), the cretic being the shortest unit of such movement.”

⁴Dale *LMGD*² 39, n. 1, 84; West 100.

⁵I am indebted to Professor Thomas Cole for this point and the reference to O. Schroeder, *Aeschyli Cantica*² (Leipzig 1916) 55. Page prints βίαιος as the last word of 182, but the bacchius is an unambiguously (syncopated) iambic measure that makes better rhythmic sense in the clausula. Schroeder's colometry also enhances the echo of παλιρρόχθους ἐν Αὐλίδος τόποις (191) in παλιμμήκη χρόνον τιθεῖσαι (196), since both compound adjectives stand at the beginning of a metrical unit.

analysis of Ag. 160–191 and similar lines in the trilogy as trochaic⁶ rightly emphasizes the pointed rhythmic contrast that Aeschylus draws between these passages and straightforward iambic lyrics (the transitional 183 = 191 notwithstanding).⁷ Isolated lecythia that occur in such iambic contexts (e.g., 198) demonstrate the usefulness of Dale's insight, for they are likely to represent syncopated iambic dimeters ($\Lambda - \sim - x - \sim -$); by the same token, trimeter lengths in iambic contexts that appear to "incorporate" lecythia (e.g., 241 lec ba, 242 ia lec) presumably represent syncopated iambic trimeters. Thus, in recognizing that Aeschylus forcefully establishes trochaic measures, especially lecythia, as the cadence of Zeus' justice in the Hymn, we must reject Scott's assumption that "iambic" lecythia recall the falling rhythms of the Hymn and their thematic associations.⁸

The nature of those associations is complex, for the elders judge Zeus' rule over mankind to be beneficial but harsh. In fact (*pace* Scott) the severity of Zeus' rule is the most prominent feature of its description in lines 176–183: the god's henchmen are $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\varsigma$, $\pi\eta\mu\alpha$, $\pi\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$, and $\beta\acute{\iota}\alpha$.⁹ This emphasis is well suited to the context of the Hymn, which follows the omen of the eagles and precedes the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The chorus struggles to understand the paradoxical conjunction of Zeus' justice visited upon Troy and the brutal, sacrilegious murder of an innocent young girl by her father, the commander-in-chief of the Greek forces (Winnington-Ingram 158). If Smith (26–29) is correct in thinking Paris the primary referent of the second strophe, the elders apparently surmise that Zeus himself sanctioned the murder in order to expedite the punishment of Paris, who had violated hospitality laws sacred to Zeus. As the chorus interprets the traumatic events of the war in retrospect, therefore, Paris was forced to learn from painful experience a lesson that he should have known beforehand¹⁰—namely, that men are

⁶So Wilamowitz, *Aischylos: Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 166, n. 2; Fraenkel 2.59; Denniston-Page 226; D. Korzeniewski, *Griechische Metrik* (Darmstadt 1968) 110. Note that West (99) apparently considers Ag. 176–183 iambic, and shows a marked general tendency toward iambic analysis of passages that many other scholars regard as trochaic.

⁷Smith 29; Scott 36–37.

⁸See below, nn. 16, 42.

⁹The harshness of Zeus' rule as represented in the Hymn is duly acknowledged by Fraenkel (2.111) and, more recently, by N. B. Booth and M. Ewans, "Agamemnon at Aulis: A Study in the *Oresteia*," *Ramus* 4 (1975) 17–32. Scott betrays a different emphasis: he regards the Hymn as "a basic statement of Aeschylus' optimistic outlook" in which the lecythion is established as the rhythm of "the beneficial kingship of Zeus and mankind's hope for betterment through his favor" (37).

¹⁰As Smith demonstrates (21–26), the proverbial phrase $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\iota \mu\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\varsigma$ expresses the homely wisdom that unpleasant experience teaches a fool what he should have realized in the first place. Like $\phi\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$ (176) and $\mu\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\varsigma$ (177) before it, $\sigma\omega\phi\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$ (181) indicates common sense, especially as manifested in self-restraint. In Aeschylus the term can have more or less ominous implications, according to context; in the present instance (as at Ag. 1425, 1620) the suggestion of violent coercion is unmistakable. See Conacher 332–333.

utterly subservient to Zeus and pay dearly for offenses against his justice. Amid the manifest, ghastly violence of Aulis and Troy the elders also claim to find evidence of divine favor, δαίμονων χάρις (182)—or so they conjecture (πov¹¹); the present context and subsequent usage of χάρις in the play suggest that they refer to Zeus' support for the aggrieved Atreidae in their war of retribution.¹² Nonetheless, the prevailing mood remains one of anguish: the final image of absolute divine authority over mankind exercised like a helmsman's over his crew (182–183) completes a forbidding picture of Zeus as “a stern and violent overlord,” to quote Fraenkel's apt description (2.11).

Two metrical devices in 160–191 keep the death of Iphigeneia before our minds as part of the process that is the justice of Zeus. First, the penultimate dactylic pentameter in the first strophic pair (165 = 174) is a rhythmic reminiscence of the situation at Aulis as previously described by the chorus.¹³ Far more striking, however, is the sudden shift at line 184, in the middle of a strophic system dominated by lecythia, from general reflections on the justice of Zeus back to Aulis and the account of Iphigeneia's murder. The metrical distinction that Aeschylus had drawn so emphatically between Aulis (dactyls) and the sovereignty of Zeus (lecythia) is no longer maintained, and the continued drumming of lecythia in 184–191 serves the same purpose as the phrase καὶ τόθ' (184)—namely, to mark the close connection between the special case (the killing of Iphigeneia) and the general law that subsumes it (the justice of Zeus).¹⁴ In other words, the continuation of the rhythm serves to anchor the Hymn securely in its bloody context, and should discourage what has been a common tendency to treat the Hymn as a self-contained theological digression. Finally, it is possible that the playwright's very choice of rhythm for the Hymn reflects the formidable nature of Zeus' rule, since elsewhere in Aeschylus the lecythion appears consistently in songs with connotations of foreboding and suspense.¹⁵

¹¹The attempt to defend interrogative ποῦ (MV) by M. Pope, “Merciful Heavens? A Question in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*,” *JHS* 94 (1974) 100–113, is convincingly refuted by Conacher and Booth.

¹²At 581–582 the herald describes the capture of Troy as accomplished by the favor of Zeus, καὶ χάρις τιμήσεται / Διὸς τὰδ' ἐκπράξασα; since δαίμονων (182) is the equivalent of a reference to Zeus, as Fraenkel and others have seen, the parallel is remarkably close. The same cannot be said of 354 χάρις γὰρ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος εἴργασται πόνων: with πόνων, χάρις means a return for labors (LSJ s.v. III.1a).

¹³Fraenkel 2.59; Scott 28.

¹⁴On the function of καὶ τόθ' see Fraenkel's note on line 184.

¹⁵Thomson (89, 97, 99, 116, 128, 130–131) attributes these ominous emotional associations to the trochaic rhythms of *Persae* and *Supplices* as well as the *Oresteia*. At *Persae* 115–119 = 120–125 (four consecutive lecs and augmented clausula cr lec) the chorus fearfully envisions the ritual lament of Persian women for Xerxes' fallen soldiers. In *Supp.* lecythia accompany the Danaids' threats of suicide (154–161 = 162–167, 792–799 = 800–807) and thus cast an ominous shadow upon the chorus' final lyric utterance (1062–1067 = 1068–1073), a prayer that Zeus deliver them from marriage to their Egyptian cousins. Unlike Thomson, J. Rash, *Meter and Language in the Lyrics of the Suppliants of Aeschylus* (New York 1981) 85–90, 169–171,

With the possible exception of one brief run lecythia are no factor in the first stasimon (355–488), where the chorus gives its reaction to Clytemnestra's news that Troy has fallen. Although the initial jubilation at Zeus' punishment of Paris gradually gives way to lament for the Greek dead and troubling evidence of human and divine resentment of the Atreidae, the rhythm of the ode is remarkably stable: the basic meter is iambic, and all three strophic pairs share a metrically identical four-line aeolic coda (381–384, 416–419, 452–455). In this context, the lecythia at lines 410–413 = 427–430 (410 ia lec, 411 ia lec, 412 ia cr lec?, 413 lec?) surely represent syncopated iambic rhythm.¹⁶ Nonetheless, if Page and other editors are correct to print three consecutive, unresolved lecythia at 442–444 = 461–463,¹⁷ a brief but significant departure from rising iambic may be indicated, and with it the suggestion that Zeus' justice underlies Greek suffering in the past and yet to come. It is remarkable that at the outset of the ode, when the chorus joyously celebrates the triumph of Zeus' justice over Paris, lecythia are nowhere in evidence. The focus of the song shifts from Paris' crime to Menelaus' grief for an undeserving Helen, and thence, as the chorus strongly implies (427–428), to real woe: the lament of Greek women¹⁸ whose hus-

195–199, 203, emphasizes the thematic association of lecythia with death, an association that he does not believe extends beyond the play or (most likely) the trilogy as a whole. Rash expressly rejects "the view that the various metrical types of Greek verse have 'innate' thematic or emotional connotations" (20).

In the *Oresteia* associations of anxiety are especially appropriate not only for the Zeus Hymn but also for the third stasimon of *Ag.* (below, 9 f.), sung as the king enters the palace on Clytemnestra's terms; the second stasimon of *Cho.* (below, 13 f.), sung while Orestes stalks Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in the palace; and the second stasimon of *Eum.* (below, 15 ff.), in which the Furies predict dire consequences if the outcome of the trial, soon to be announced, favors Orestes. It remains questionable, however, whether suspense is indicated by the rhythm itself or rather by the theme associated with that rhythm, the fearsome justice of Zeus.

To judge from his extant plays at least Sophocles does not use lecythia in the strong Aeschylean manner, but in Euripides' *Phoen.* clusters of lecythia accompany choral fears of imminent war (239–249 = 250–260) and recur, significantly, after the fateful failure of negotiations between Eteocles and Polynices (638–689); their rhythm may also suggest anxiety at *IA* 231–303, 1475–1499 (Iphigeneia proceeding to her death), and even at *Cyc.* 608–623 (Murray's colometry), where the intrigue to blind Polyphemus is cause for concern. Conversely, notable concentrations of lecythia in *Helen* (191–252) express sorrow for past misfortune rather than fear for the future.

In many of the above passages (Aeschylean as well as Euripidean) it is the prospect of death that generates tension; however, the general absence of trochaic rhythms from formal laments in Greek tragedy undermines the case for lecythia as a rhythm of death and lament.

¹⁶Despite Scott, who considers these and similar lines in the epode "departures from the basic iambic rhythm" (45). As noted in the text, however, his description of 442–444 as such may well be correct.

¹⁷Lecythia are also printed in the editions of (e.g.) Hermann (Leipzig 1852), Wecklein (Berlin 1885), Wilamowitz (Berlin 1914), and Mazon (Paris 1965). Fraenkel prints the lines as two syncopated iambic trimeters, the second beginning with σποδοῦ.

¹⁸Understanding πένθεια (429–430), with Murray, as "female mourner:" see Denniston-Page's note on lines 429 f.

bands, sons, and brothers died at Troy. The horror of death in war is vividly conveyed by the image of Ares “the gold-changer of bodies” (437), who gives back dust (ashes) in return for live men. The Triclinian scholiast suggested a connection between Ares “holding his scales in the battle of the spear” (ταλαντούχος ἐν μάχῃ δορός, 439) and the motif of the Homeric Zeus weighing the fates of heroes on the battlefield,¹⁹ and the rhythm of 442–445 may also indicate an association or identification between the most powerful Greek god and the most violent:

442 ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον ἀντ-
 ήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
 ζων λέβητας εὐθέτου.

These are painfully climactic lines that complete the image of Ares the gold-changer, stuffing burial urns full of ashes that once were Greek men. The brutal justice of Zeus that took Iphigeneia’s life at Aulis also took the lives of many men at Troy.

The antistrophe (456–474) looks to the future, and leads to the uncomfortable conclusion (nowhere directly stated by the elders) that human and divine φθόνος threatens Agamemnon the sacker of cities (πτολιπόρθης, 472). The mass killing at Troy displeases both Olympian and chthonic gods:

461 τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ
 ἄσκοποι θεοί, κελαι-
 ναί δ’ Ἐρινύες χρόνῳ

In the lines that follow the Erinyes are said to “rub out” (465) the life of the man who is fortunate but unjust (as Agamemnon has been). The presence of Zeus, suggested, as I believe, in the meter of 461–463, becomes explicit in 469–470, βάλλεται γὰρ ὄσσοις Διόθεν κεραυνός.²⁰ We must acknowledge, therefore—at this stage of the trilogy, and despite subsequent developments in *Eumenides*—an alliance between Olympian and chthonic powers. By joint effort these powers will destroy Agamemnon, just as by joint effort, through the agency of Agamemnon, they destroyed Ilium: for Zeus Xenios had sent the Atreidae against Paris as an embodiment of ὑπερόποιον . . . Ἐρινύν (55–62).²¹

There can be no questioning the prominence of lecythia at the opening of

¹⁹Cf. Homer *Il.* 22.209–213. In his note on line 438 Fraenkel dismisses the scholiast’s observation (εὐληπται δὲ τὸ νόημα τῷ Αἰσχύλῳ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ τὸν Δία Ὀμηρικῆς ζυγοσπατήσεως) as “a case of misapplied acumen,” but there is no reason why the scales of Ares cannot allude to Homer as well as to a detail of everyday life.

²⁰Page reads οἴκους (Weil) for ὄσσοις of the mss.

²¹Cf. Winnington-Ingram 160: “One is tempted to say, with only slight exaggeration, that, in *Agamemnon*, from 60 ff. onward, every reference to Erinyes is associated, textually, with Zeus, every reference to Zeus with Erinyes.” The two are explicitly linked again in 748–749, where the agent and means of Trojan destruction are identified: πομπῇ Διὸς ξενίου / νυμφόκλαυτος Ἐρινύς.

the second stasimon (681–781), which follows the announcement of good tidings and bad by the messenger from Troy. The welcome news that Agamemnon returns victorious in the wake of Troy's fall is tempered by his brother's misfortune: a storm at sea scattered the Greek fleet as it sailed home, and Menelaus is among the missing, possibly dead. Like the first stasimon, the episode progresses from jubilation at Agamemnon's triumph to sorrow for Greek suffering. Even the victors lost at Troy, and the elders ponder the source of the catastrophe, using a riddling style characteristic of Aeschylus that defers Helen's name until the very last (681–687):²²

	τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ὦδ'	lec
	ἔς τὸ πᾶν ἔτητύμως,	lec
	μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὁρώμεν προνοί-	lec cr
	αισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου	lec
685	γλώσσαν ἐν τύχῃ νέμων,	lec
	τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-	cho ia
	κῆ θ' Ἑλέαν;	cho

The question is never answered, but the metrical reminiscence of the Hymn perhaps suggests that Zeus himself named Helen.²³ At any rate, the rhythm serves to underscore the role that Helen, the destroyer of ships, men, and cities (689–690), plays in the execution of Zeus' justice. The corresponding lines of the antistrophe (699 ff.) make the connection explicit as they focus on Trojan suffering. We are reminded that Paris dishonored the table of hospitality sacred to Zeus, and Helen brought a κῆδος ὀρθώνυμον to Ilium: both “a connection by marriage” and “mourning”²⁴ (the adjective recalls Helen's “true naming” in the strophe). Aeschylus then demonstrates the double meaning of κῆδος by noting a literal change of tune, for the wedding hymn that greeted Helen's arrival in Troy soon became a dirge (705–711). In the meantime the chorus' own song has also undergone a change: the opening flurry of lecythia gives way to ionic,²⁵ aeolic, and iambic rhythms that dominate the ode as a whole. The consecutive pair of lecythia (723–724) in the otherwise aeolic lion-cub parable are perhaps too few to be significant,

²²See Fraenkel 2.328 (cf. 2.9).

²³As implied by Scott (53), if I understand him correctly. Although the assertion by Fraenkel 2.330 that “πρόνοια τοῦ πεπρωμένου belong only to a god or a daimon” is not strictly true (witness Cassandra), the added detail of invisibility (683) strongly suggests a divine being. H. Lloyd-Jones, tr. and ed., *Agamemnon by Aeschylus* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1970) 54, notes the description of human dead as the “unseeing” or “unseen,” and offers (unconvincingly, to my mind) “a person now dead” as the source of Helen's name.

²⁴M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974) 10–14, argues that at a primitive stage of Greek society relations by marriage were responsible for conducting certain formalities of funeral ritual and lament, responsibilities later discharged by strangers who were hired or compelled to mourn and tend the corpse.

²⁵The ionic rhythms of 689–695, with their associations of Eastern luxury (cf. ἀβροτύμων 690), are well suited to Helen: see Dale *LMGD*² 130; Thomson 55–56.

but the lines of the antistrophe at least bear a striking thematic similarity to previous passages of lecythia. The description of the havoc wreaked by the lion cub as ἄμαχον ἄλγος οἰκέταις, / μέγα σῖνος πολυκτόνον (733–734) applies not only to the slaughter that Helen brought upon her Trojan household (cf. 699–716) but also to Agamemnon's crimes at Aulis and Troy.²⁶ The adjective πολυκτόνος recalls the chorus' implicit inclusion of the victorious general among mass killers (τῶν πολυκτόνων, 461), and his preliminary murder of Iphigeneia might aptly be described as "grief irresistible for the family."²⁷

The lecythion is a far more persistent and threatening presence in the third stasimon, which follows the ominous carpet scene—Clytemnestra's victory by persuasion, foreshadowing her victory by force to come.²⁸ The crimes for which Agamemnon deserves divine punishment stand menacingly in the foreground of this scene.²⁹ Agamemnon's first words, in which he gives credit and thanks to the gods who participated in his victory (810–829), include a vivid description of the total destruction of Troy. The expensive tapestries that Clytemnestra would have him trample both celebrate his victory and recall Aulis, where Agamemnon previously wasted the wealth of his household by murdering Iphigeneia (described in Agamemnon's own words as a δόμων ἄγαλμα, 208).³⁰ The scene reaches a chilling climax as Agamemnon enters the palace over blood-red fabric and Clytemnestra offers a veiled prayer for his death to Zeus τέλειος (973–974). The chorus voices its anxiety in a familiar, frightening rhythm that again evokes Aulis, Troy, and Zeus' lethal justice:

975	τίπτε μοι τόδ' ἐμπέδως	lec
	δεῖμα προστατήριον	lec
	καρδίας τερασκόπον ποτᾶται;	lec ba
	μαντιπολεῖ δ' ἀκέλευστος ἄμισθος αἰοιδά,	5 dac
980	οὐδ' ἀποπτύσαι δίκαν	lec
	δυσκρίτων ὄνειράτων	lec
	θάρσος εὐπειθές ἔ-	2 cr
	ζει φρενὸς φίλον θρόνον.	lec

It is not merely the rhythm that recalls past events with sinister implications for the present. Lines 984–987, though beset by corruption, certainly in-

²⁶For these and other applications of the parable see B. M. W. Knox, "The Lion in the House," *CP* 47 (1952) 17–25 (20–21 on Agamemnon).

²⁷In this context οἰκέταις surely includes more than slaves alone. In his note on line 733 Fraenkel observes the natural progression from οἶκος (732) to οἰκέταις as "inhabitants of the house, members of the household."

²⁸This aspect is emphasized at Winnington-Ingram 106–107 and Taplin 312–313.

²⁹For the trampling of the tapestries as symbolic and resumptive of Agamemnon's previous impieties see especially Lebeck 74–79.

³⁰Winnington-Ingram 92. The "economic" aspect of the carpet scene—the wasting of household wealth—is emphasized exclusively by J. Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1962) 82–96; Taplin integrates it into an admirably well-rounded discussion (313–314).

clude a reference to the expedition's sailing for Troy, and perhaps to its departure from Aulis as well.³¹ It seems plausible, therefore, that the imagery of prophecy in the first strophe (τερασκόπου, 978; μαντιπολεῖ, 979) not only anticipates the mantic frenzy of Cassandra that will soon be enacted on stage but also underscores the final fulfilment of Calchas' far-reaching vision: μῖμνει γὰρ φοβερά παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος (154–155). Of course the elders do not share the insight of Calchas or Cassandra, but sing all unwitting the dirge of the Erinys (θρήνον Ἐρινύος, 991), unaccompanied by the lyre. We note again, therefore, the common interest in the punishment of crime shared by the Fury and Zeus, whose attendance is confirmed by the emphatic restatement of lecythia at the end of the second (final) system: a string of seven consecutive lecythia is interrupted only by a long dactylic line in penultimate position (1008–1017 = 1025–1034), after the manner of the Zeus Hymn. Thus, as Agamemnon walks over the tapestries into the palace to the accompaniment of this striking and portentous rhythm, the audience surely senses (despite the confusion of the chorus) that the king will not survive his reception, and perhaps even anticipates his death cries;³² first, however, we must share Cassandra's tortured vision of his murder, and her knowledge of its place in the house's long history of internecine violence.

To this point lecythia have played a conspicuous role in the lyric portions of *Agamemnon*; for the rest of the play, by contrast, lecythia are conspicuously absent. In the Cassandra scene we find a single lecythion (1101 = 1108, both with resolutions) in an iambo-dochmiac context; in the *post mortem* confrontation between Clytemnestra and the chorus three apparently trochaic lines (1452–1454 = 1472–1474), including a lecythion and the colon cr lec, may serve to focus attention briefly on Clytemnestra as the agent (and next victim?) of Zeus' justice.³³ Scott traces the virtual disappearance of lecythia to the traumatic effects of Agamemnon's death on the elders, who "must now discard their belief in progress through suffering

³¹Fraenkel (on lines 983 ff.) accepts Casaubon's ξὺν ἐμβολαῖς (984) for ξυνεμβόλοις of the mss and understands, with Ahrens, a reference to hauling in the mooring ropes when the fleet at last set sail from Aulis; others (e.g., Denniston-Page on lines 984–987) understand a reference to casting the cables into the sand on arrival at Troy.

³²Taplin argues that the audience would share the chorus' confusion at the king's ominous entry into the palace, and "would not know what to expect next" (316–317).

³³(δαμέντος)

φύλακος εὐμενεστάτου	lec	
πολλά τλάντος γυναικὸς διαί;	3 cr	
πρὸς γυναικὸς δ' ἀπέφθισεν βίον.	cr lec	(1452–1454)

The emphasis on the murderess is marked. The antistrophe (1472–1474) describes either the daimon or Clytemnestra herself as settling like a raven, the bird of death (Fraenkel 3.700), on Agamemnon's corpse and singing a song (ὕμνον: cf. the ominous songs of the Erinys at 1119, 1191). Dale (*Analyses* 3, 17) takes the lines to be iambic.

under the guidance of Zeus" (72). But is the king's death inconsistent with the justice of Zeus as the chorus has previously described it? Do the elders even believe that this is the case? Agamemnon's death causes the same confusion and consternation that the elders felt at the death of Iphigeneia. Once again they find it difficult to believe, but inevitable, that Zeus is the ultimate cause of the king's murder, as of all things.³⁴ At length, and reluctantly, they concede that Clytemnestra's defense of her deed is not without foundation,³⁵ and make a pronouncement whose substance surely recalls the Zeus Hymn: μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς / παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γάρ (1563–1564).³⁶ Despite their obvious distress at Agamemnon's death, therefore, the elders continue to recognize the same law of retributive justice enforced by Zeus. The disappearance of lecythia, I suggest, reflects Aeschylus' metrical strategy rather than the disillusionment of the chorus. As we have seen, lecythia accompany the "theoretical" description of Zeus' justice in the Hymn and its execution at Aulis, Troy, and the royal palace at Argos. Agamemnon's deeds at Aulis and Troy, though undertaken to exact vengeance for Paris' crime, were themselves criminal; so too Clytemnestra, having killed the king as an agent of justice, must become its victim in her turn. Lecythia that continue to function as they have so far in the trilogy might now be expected to foreshadow the next stage in this cycle of bloody justice, the confrontation between Clytemnestra and Orestes that stands at the center of *Choephoroe*.

By comparison with the odes of *Agamemnon*, the lecythion maintains a low profile throughout *Choephoroe*, whose lyrics are predominantly iambic. A few lecythia are scattered throughout the parodos and kommos, most often in iambic contexts;³⁷ not until the first stasimon, slightly more than halfway through the play, do lecythia and similar trochaic measures emerge as a distinct, meaningful movement. This rhythmic development is surely no coincidence, for the first stasimon marks an important division in the structure of the play: the focus of the action shifts from Agamemnon's tomb,

34

ὡς ἱή, διαὶ Διὸς
 παναιτίου πανεργέτα·
 τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται;
 τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντόν ἐστιν; (1485–1488)

³⁵The critical admission comes in lines 1560–1561: ὄνειδος ἤκει τόδ' ἄντ' ὄνειδους, / δύσ-μαχα δ' ἐστὶ κρίναι. Fraenkel (3.736) rightly explains: "The words of the indignant mother have not been spoken in vain: the Elders are forced to admit in veiled, yet unmistakable, terms that it is not possible for them any longer to throw all the blame on Clytemnestra and that they find themselves faced with an insoluble dilemma."

³⁶Cf. Fraenkel on line 1563: "The agreement with the Zeus-hymn in the parodos is here particularly noticeable (παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα)."

³⁷In the predominantly iambic parodos: 27 lec, 31 lec (clausular, a common function of the lecythion in Aeschylean iambs: Dale *LMGD*² 83), 46–47 lec 68 ba sp lec?, 69 lec? (clausular), 80 ia lec. In the kommos note 393 lec (clausular), 405 ba lec, 407–408 ia lec, 456–458 ia lec.

where the recognition scene and the great kommos have taken place, to the door of the palace, where Orestes' intended victims reside.³⁸ In his last speech before the ode (554–584) Orestes elaborates his plan for avenging Agamemnon's murder, and the falling rhythm of the first strophic pair³⁹ strengthens the impression that retribution is at hand:

585	πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ τρέφει	2 cr
	δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχῃ,	lec
	πόντιαί τ' ἀγκάλαι κνωδάλων	3 cr
	ἀνταίων βροτοῖσι πλή-	mol ia
	θοῦσι· βλάπτουσι καὶ πεδαίχμοι	cr lec
590	λαμπάδες πεδάοροι	lec
	πανὰ τε καὶ πεδοβάμονα· κἀνεμόεντ' ἄν	5 dac
	αἰγίδων φράσαι κότον.	lec

We have already observed the common association of cretic elements and cola with lecythia. Note that line 588, though analyzed as mol ia (in response with 597 παντόλμους ἔρωτας, ᾗ-), is in any event very similar to the lecythion; and the distinctive clausular sequence echoes those of the Zeus Hymn (164–166, lec/5 dac/lec) and the third stasimon of *Agamemnon* (1014–1016, lec/8 dac/lec).⁴⁰ Taken as a whole the ode is a priamel comparing Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon with the murder of male relatives by Althaea (son), Scylla (father), and the Lemnian women (husbands);⁴¹ the first system of the ode is itself a priamel that identifies human emotion, especially female passion (θηλυκρατῆς ἀπέρωτος ἔρωτος, 600), as the greatest terror on earth. What is metrically striking about the ode is the gradual disappearance of lecythia and similar rhythms after the first system. The second system (603–612 = 613–622), which cites the crimes of Althaea and Scylla in separate stanzas, shifts from a combination of lecythia, cretics, and spondees (through 607) to aeolic movement; the third system (623–630 = 631–638), the climactic comparison between Clytemnestra's crime and the ultimate outrage of the Lemnian slaughter, is apparently (despite Scott) iambic;⁴² and so too the fourth (639–645 = 646–652), which anticipates the

³⁸Taplin 338–349; Garvie xli–xlvi.

³⁹Classified under the heading “iambic” in Dale *Analyses* 3, 190–191, but similar to the kind of stanza that she describes as iambo-trochaic in *LMGD*² 95. Note that the text of 588–594 is sufficiently uncertain to merit Page's cautionary description *lectio dubia*.

⁴⁰Cf. also *Cho.* 30–31 (in an iambic context, however).

⁴¹The peculiar structure of the priamel as transmitted in M and the imprecise parallels aduced by the chorus have generated much scholarly discussion; see the balanced assessment (with bibliography) by Garvie (201–203).

⁴²Scott claims that “the predominant meter is the lecythion, but there is a noticeable presence of the iambic meter; out of eight lines there are five lecythia, each introduced by an iambic metron” (97–98). The stanza in question contains one lecythion (625) and five lines (623–624, 626, 628–629) of the sequence ~ - ~ - - ~ - ~ - -. Scott offers no justification (and I know of none) for literally analyzing this colon as partly iambic and partly trochaic, an iambic metron

punishment of Clytemnestra's sin by the joint activity of Zeus, Orestes, and the Erinyes. How then to explain the disappearance of lecythia that might have served, appropriately, to stress the imminent punishment of a specially heinous crime? I suggest that Aeschylus defers persistent use of lecythia and other trochaic rhythms until the confrontation between mother and son is indeed imminent—in other words, until the second stasimon. For despite the chorus' emphasis on Clytemnestra in the first stasimon, before the ode Orestes himself anticipates a preliminary bout with Aegisthus (571–578), and after it he announces to the slave-boy his preference for seeing the man of the house (664–667). When (in a master stroke of irony) Clytemnestra appears at the door, there is still no mother-son confrontation, because both remain in disguise: Orestes as a stranger from Daulis, Clytemnestra as a self-effacing woman incapable of deliberation without the master of the house (672–673, 716–718) and as a loving mother more concerned about her child's welfare than her own.⁴³

The profound textual corruption of the second stasimon (783–837), a choral prayer to Zeus and other gods for the success of Orestes' intrigue, makes the analysis of its meter especially difficult and frustrating, since so much must remain conjectural. Most scholars would grant, perhaps, that despite the many textual problems, the predominantly trochaic character of the three strophes and antistrophes is beyond reasonable doubt;⁴⁴ and that the steady recurrence of lecythia is relatively certain, at least by such standards as their setting permits. The mesodes that separate each strophe from its antistrophe feature double- and triple-short movement, especially ionic rhythm. In the first triad the chorus prays (ostensibly) that Zeus will restore Orestes to his rightful position of authority in the Atreid house:

	νῦν παραιτουμένα μοι, πάτερ	3 cr
	Ζεῦ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων,	lec
785	δὸς ἥτύχας τυχεῖν δέ μου	2 cr ⁴⁵
	κυρίως σωφροσυνεῦ†	lec

followed by an aurally isolable trochaic dimeter catalectic; as West (99–100) and Dale (*Analyses* 3, 191) have seen, the lines are syncopated iambic trimeters (ia cr ia) identical to those in the kommos (456–458) described by Scott himself as “very close to the iambic trimeter” (88).

⁴³While we need not assume that Clytemnestra's reaction to the reported death of her son is utterly false, she will soon be shown to be less a mother to Orestes than the nurse Kilissa. Garvie (on lines 691–699) concludes that Aeschylus leaves open the question of Clytemnestra's sincerity in grieving for Orestes. In any event Clytemnestra's highest priority is revealed when she realizes that her son has come home alive—and calls for a man-killing axe (889).

⁴⁴Advocates of trochaic analysis include Thomson (128) and H. Lloyd-Jones, tr. and ed., *The Libation-Bearers by Aeschylus* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1970) 53; Dale (*Analyses* 3, 195) describes the opening of the first strophe as “apparently much syncopated iambs,” and favors iambic analysis of the second system also.

⁴⁵The colometry given for 785–786 is derived from the corresponding lines of the antistrophe (796–797).

μαιομένοις ἰδεῖν.

διὰ δίκας ἅπαν ἔπος ἔλακον·

Ζεῦ, σὺ νιν φυλάσσεις.

do

cr do

ithy

Note that the clausular ithyphallic functions as a catalectic lecythion. Despite the brief appearance of dochmiacs, which are often found in the company of iambs, the use of falling rhythms previously associated with the justice of Zeus is entirely appropriate, in view of the addressee and the nature of the request; the meter may even suggest—as the words of the chorus do not—the violence whereby restitution will be achieved.⁴⁶ In subsequent systems, moreover—by contrast with the first stasimon—the general trochaic movement and the presence of lecythia are maintained, despite the apparent introduction of single iambic lines at 806 (ia lec) and 824 (2 ia). The text offered by Page (with due caution) includes three independent lecythia in both the second (800, 802, 804) and third (820, 821, 826) strophic pairs.⁴⁷ Rhythmic anticipation of the dramatic climax is especially appropriate in the third and last antistrophe (831–837), as the chorus casts in heightened, mythical terms the impending duel between mother and son; and since the justice of Zeus has so far proved to be a recurrent process whereby the pursuer is pursued in turn, the rhythm may also subvert the hopes for final deliverance voiced by the chorus in the strophe (819–826).

In any event the chorus' hopes are dashed shortly after the matricide by Orestes' vision of the Furies: the jubilant dochmiacs of the third stasimon (935–972)⁴⁸ fade to anapaests of grief (1007–1009, 1018–1020). Before the cycle of familial bloodshed can end, and despite the protection offered by Apollo, Orestes must face the charges brought against him by the avenging spirits of his dead mother, who now appear, visible to all, as the chorus of *Eumenides*. We recall that in the earlier plays the Erinyes served as agents of Zeus' deadly justice; they attended Agamemnon's punishment of Paris, Clytemnestra's punishment of Agamemnon, Orestes' punishment of Clytemnestra.⁴⁹ In marked contrast, from the outset of *Eumenides* Aeschylus emphasizes the conflict occasioned by the matricide between the Furies, female gods of an older generation, and the younger generation of male gods

⁴⁶Garvie notes on lines 785–787 that “the prayer is altogether too tame for an occasion in which extreme violence is demanded.”

⁴⁷The lecythia are surprisingly secure by the standards of the ode, but the responson of 800 οἷ τ' ἔσωθε δωμάτων with 812 ξυλλάβοι δ' ἐνδίκως (shorter by a syllable) is suspect, and there is little to choose between shortening 800 (ἔσω, Hermann) and lengthening 812 (ξυλλάβοιτο, Weil). See Garvie on lines 800–802.

⁴⁸The single lecythion in this ode (944 ὑπὸ δυοῖν μισατόρου) will hardly have been recognizable as such to an audience without written texts: its first six syllables are identical in quantity to the dochmiacs that begin the previous two lines.

⁴⁹The Erinyes at Troy: Ag. 59 (the Erinyes likened to avenging Atreidae), 749; as threat to Agamemnon: Ag. 462–463, 991, 1119, 1190 (with general reference to the Atreid house), 1433; as threat to Clytemnestra: *Cho.* 402, 577, 651. See Winnington-Ingram 154–164.

ruled by Zeus. Also emphasized early in the play are the horrifying, violent, literally bloodthirsty aspects of the Furies: comparing Orestes to a sacrificial beast fattened for the slaughter, they threaten to devour him alive by sucking the blood from his limbs.⁵⁰ They make these threats in the name of justice (εὐθυδίκαιοι δ' οἰόμεθ' εἶναι, 312), and bitterly criticize Apollo for his unjust defense of the matricide; Apollo, the spokesman of Zeus the ultimate guarantor of Dike, levels the same charge of injustice against the goddesses for pursuing Orestes.⁵¹ The unprecedented dispute over the merits of Orestes is reflected in the Furies' use of lecythia, the meter of Zeus' justice, in their Binding Song (the first stasimon, 307–396). The first strophic pair (321–327 = 334–340) has a slow trochaic rhythm built on lecythia and cretic cola;⁵² the repetition of lecythia is most prominent, however, at the end of the haunting first ephymnion (328–333 = 341–346):

	ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ	2 paeonic
	τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,	2 paeonic
330	παραφορά φρενοδαλῆς,	pher
	ῥυμος ἐξ Ἑρινύων	lec
	δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-	lec
	μικτος, αὖνὰ βροτοῖς.	lec

The lecythia call to mind above all a specific earlier use of the rhythm by the Argive elders, who described their song of fear for Agamemnon as “the dirge of the Erinyes,” unaccompanied by the lyre (Ag. 990–992, above, 10). Now, in a progression that is typical of the trilogy (Lebeck 131–133), Aeschylus has transformed image into stage action, and the Erinyes themselves sing a song without the lyre for Agamemnon's avenging son—a song of death over “the one who has been sacrificed” (τεθυμένῳ, 328). In the earlier passage lecythia anticipated the death of Agamemnon in accordance with the justice of Zeus τέλειος (Ag. 973–974); in the Binding Song, lecythia anticipate a death that the chorus envisions as already having happened in defiance of Zeus' will. The use of lecythia underscores the fact that Orestes' death is consistent with the justice of Zeus as first outlined in the Hymn and as it has since operated in the trilogy. In defending Orestes the Olympians appear to deviate from fundamental principles of Zeus' rule.

In the later systems of the Binding Song lecythia yield to forceful statements of dactylic, paeonic, and iambic rhythms. But lecythia return in extraordinary numbers and concentration in the second stasimon (490–565),

⁵⁰Lines 299–306 (cf. 244–253, 264–268). The horrible appearance of the Furies and their natural capacity for evil are emphasized at 46–59, 67–73, 125, 179–197.

⁵¹The Furies call Apollo a thief (149) and wonder (154) τί τῶνδ' ἐρεῖ τις δικαίως ἔχειν; Cf. 163 (the Olympians defend Orestes) κρατοῦντες τὸ πᾶν δίκας πλεόν. Apollo responds with 221 οὐ φημ' Ὀρέστην σ' ἐνδίκως ἀνδρηλατεῖν.

⁵²The lecythion is less prominent in Page's colometry than in Dale's, *Analyses* 3, 196, which offers lecythia as the first, third, and last cola.

which follows judicial preliminaries conducted by Athena and her announcement that Orestes will be tried before a tribunal of Athenian citizens. Here we note a crucial development for the resolution of divine conflict and of the trilogy as a whole—the perceptible broadening of the Furies’ concept of justice,⁵³ which in the early stages of *Eumenides* has been restricted (as nowhere else in ancient testimony⁵⁴) to persecuting only the murderers of kin. In the first system (490–498 = 499–507), composed primarily of lecythia and cretic cola, the Furies voice their concern that Orestes, if acquitted, will inspire future generations of children to maltreat their parents as he has Clytemnestra. The goddesses warn that in such a chaotic world, where even filial piety is lacking, they will be a source of doom rather than of righteous, restraining anger. The second strophe continues to emphasize the workings of justice within the family, but the antistrophe betrays a broader scope that includes, significantly, civic justice (508–516, 517–525):

	μηδέ τις κυκλησκέτω	[στρ. β	lec
	ξυμφορᾷ τετυμμένος		lec
510	τοῦτ’ ἔπος θροοῦμενος,		lec
	“ὦ Δίκαι,		cr
	ὦ θρόνοι τ’ Ἑρινύων.”		lec
	ταῦτά τις τάχ’ ἂν πατήρ		lec
	ἢ τεκοῦσα νεοπαθῆς		lec
515	οἶκτον οἰκτίσαιτ’, ἐπει-		lec
	δὴ πίτνει δόμος Δίκας.		lec
	ἔσθ’ ὅπου τὸ δεινὸν εὖ	[ἀντ. β	
	καὶ φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον		
	δεῖ μένειν κατήμενον·		
520	ξυμφέρει		
	σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει.		
	τίς δέ μηδὲν ἐν †φάει†		
	καρδίαν ἀνατρέφων		
	ἢ πόλις βροτός θ’ ὁμοί-		
525	ως ἔτ’ ἂν σέβοι Δίκαν;		

The metrical purity of this system is striking: eight lecythia surround a single cretic, comprising the most extensive and intensive use of the lecythion since the Zeus Hymn. Of course the lawlessness described in the strophe stands in pointed contrast to the Hymn: the Furies believe that the acquittal of Ores-

⁵³Lebeck 145, 148, who overemphasizes the anticipation of this development earlier in the play, especially in the Binding Song: so Winnington-Ingram 165, n. 36; Taplin 391, n. 4.

⁵⁴Wüst 104, 106, 117. As Winnington-Ingram notes (165), this narrowing of the Erinyes’ sphere of interest serves to sharpen the contrast between the goddesses and Apollo, heighten the dramatic tension, and prepare a sequel in which the Olympian and chthonic worlds, inseparable previously in the trilogy, once again converge.

tes and its consequences would make a mockery of Zeus' rough justice (πίτνει δόμος Δίκας, 516). This rhythmic indication of divine conflict also sets the stage, however, for eventual reconciliation between the gods of heaven and earth; for in the antistrophe the Furies make statements that clearly recall the principles and even the language of the Zeus Hymn:⁵⁵ the concepts of beneficial fear (τὸ δεινὸν εὖ) and forced wisdom (σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει) echo the law of πάθει μάθος, Zeus' imposition of σωφροσύνη upon mankind, and the violent dispensation of χάρις. Although they have divergent views of the matricide, Zeus and the Furies share the conviction that discipline fosters the respect for Dike that is necessary for the survival and success of individuals and their societies. The explicit mention of civic justice (πόλις, 524) reflects the importance of Athens and her government in the finale of the trilogy; presently Athena echoes the Furies' views on discipline as she explains the importance of the Areopagus to her citizens.⁵⁶

Finally, for all their common ground there is an important difference in tone between the Furies' pronouncement and the Zeus Hymn. While the Argive elders groped to find an explanation for Iphigeneia's death and speculated hopefully that divine favor somehow manifested itself in brutality, the goddesses express their perception of the universe with a confidence and clarity befitting their divine status. While the elders struggled to see beyond human suffering and subjugation to divinity, the Furies serenely assert the benefits (ξυμφέρει, 520) of discipline for men, both as individuals and as members of the polis.⁵⁷

The lecythia of 508–525 fade quickly, however, supplemented by dactylic and iambic rhythms in the third system (526–537 = 538–549), utterly routed by iambic in the fourth (550–557 = 558–565). Despite the continued emphasis in these stanzas on positive aspects of the Furies, who advise the Areopagites-to-be that moderation and above all respect for Dike lead to happiness,⁵⁸ their transition from blood-sucking, chthonic vampires into

⁵⁵Lebeck 148; Winnington-Ingram 165 with n. 38. Scott (125–126) surprisingly fails to observe the specific association of lecythia with Zeus that he has emphasized from the outset; now he describes lecythia merely as “the meter of order.”

⁵⁶In 696–699 Athena summarizes for her citizens the wisdom of the Furies:

τὸ μὴτ' ἀναρχὸν μῆτε δεσποτούμενον
ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν
καὶ μὴ τὸ δεινὸν πᾶν πόλεως ἕξω βαλεῖν·
τίς γὰρ δεδουκῶς μὴδὲν ἐνδίκος βροτῶν;

696–697 echo the beginning of the third strophe (526–530), 698–699 the second antistrophe (517–525).

⁵⁷Looking back from this ode to the Zeus Hymn, MacLeod similarly observes that “what was there only a dimly hopeful speculation is now achieved” (136).

⁵⁸The emphasis on ὄλβος (previously of no apparent interest to the Furies) is striking: see 536–537, 550–551, 563–565.

reverend goddesses enjoying Olympian recognition is by no means a smooth one. The case of Orestes remains to be adjudicated, and when Athena's vote for acquittal carries the day, the aggrieved goddesses threaten to destroy the land and the people of Athens—to turn Zeus' law of retribution against his own daughter, as a pair of lecythia in the Furies' iambo-dochmiac lament (778–793 = 808–823) may suggest.⁵⁹ But Persuasion (Πειθώ), which earlier in the trilogy precipitated the downfalls of Paris, Agamemnon, Aegisthus, and Clytemnestra, at last serves a constructive purpose: Athena persuades the Furies to relinquish their anger and accept a place of honor in the religious life of her people.⁶⁰ And behind Athena stands, as she herself repeatedly points out, the authority of her sole parent, Zeus. In trying to assuage the anger of the Furies she cites first of all the clear testimony of Zeus (797) that Orestes should be acquitted; when the goddesses are unmoved, Athena makes a brief, thinly veiled threat of punishment by Zeus' thunderbolt (826–828), though only as a last resort (829); she also claims Zeus as her source of wisdom (850). Finally, when the Furies have calmed their wrath, Athena attributes the victory to Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος, “Zeus of the assembly,” closely linked with Πειθώ as a source of Athena's rhetorical skills (973, cf. 970).

The goddesses associated to this point in the trilogy with suffering, destruction, and blight are now fully revealed as sources of fertility and bounty, manifesting the paradoxical dualism that is characteristic of Greek chthonic deities.⁶¹ As previous scholarship has amply demonstrated, not only the goddesses but words, images, and themes that have been ominous hitherto are transformed in the finale into their auspicious equivalents.⁶² Of greatest significance, perhaps, is the emergence of a new dimension to the *lex talionis* whose enforcement Zeus has overseen since the outset of the trilogy. Until Orestes' acquittal evil had always answered evil: sin is punished, the doer suffers. What Athena offers the Furies, by contrast, is a positive conception of “like for like”—good in return for good, the benefactor benefits (Lebeck 59–66):

τοιαῦθ' ἐλέσθαι σοι πάρεστιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
 εὐ δρῶσαν, εὐ πάσχουσαν, εὐ τιμωμένην
 χῶρας μετασχεῖν τῇσδε θεοφιλεστάτης. (867–869)

In their subsequent prayer to avert stasis the goddesses deprecate revenge

⁵⁹The line captures perfectly the retributive ethos that has characterized lecythia since the Zeus Hymn: ἴὸν ἴὸν ἀντιπενθῇ μεθεῖσα καρδίας (782).

⁶⁰R. G. A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1982) 105–114; T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Art of Aeschylus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1982) 350–353.

⁶¹Cf. Wüst 114, “Als chthonische Gottheiten haben die E. zwei einander entgegengesetzte Funktionen, eine lichte, segensreiche und eine finstere, unheilbringende;” W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 200–201.

⁶²Lebeck 131–33; MacLeod 136–138; Winington-Ingram 166.

among citizens and murder in retaliation for murder (981–983); they hope for a mutual exchange of joys rather than sorrows (χάρματα δ' ἀντιδιδόειν / κοινοφιλεῖ διανοίῃ, 984–985). Presently Athena assures her citizens that the goddesses will return their kindness (note the juxtaposed adjectives in 992, below) and help them keep Athens on the straight path of justice:

τάσδε γὰρ εὐφρονας εὐφρονες αἶει
μέγα τιμώντες καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλιν
ὀρθοδίκαιον
πρέψετε πάντως διάγοντες. (992–995)

Aeschylus' last uses of lecythia underscore both the central role that Zeus has assumed in the finale and the broadening of Zeus' Dike beyond the merely punitive. In the odes of blessing sung by the Eumenides (as we may now aptly call them) the lecythion is a recurrent rhythm: prominent in the first ode (916–926 = 938–947), which though primarily trochaic includes two iambic lines;⁶³ less emphatic but emphatically placed at the beginning and end of the second ode (956–967 = 976–987);⁶⁴ and building to a remarkable crescendo in the third ode, the goddesses' final, jubilant song (996–1002 = 1014–1020):

	〈χαίρετε〉 χαίρετ' ἐν αἰσιμίαισι πλούτου,	praxilleian
	χαίρετ', ἀστικός λεώς,	lec
	ἔκταρ ἤμενοι Διὸς	lec
	παρθένου φίλας φίλοι,	lec
1000	σωφρονούντες ἐν χρόνῳ.	lec
	Παλλάδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς	lec
	ὄντας ἄζεται πατήρ.	lec
1015	χαίρετε, χαίρετε δ' αὖθις, ἐπανδιπλοῖζω,	
	πάντες οἱ κατὰ πόλιν	
	δαίμονές τε καὶ βροτοὶ	
	Παλλάδος πόλιν νέμον-	
	τες, μετοικίαν δ' ἐμήν	
1020	εὖσεβούντες οὔτι μέμ-	
	ψεσθε συμφορὰς βίου.	

In a rhythm that (as the context surely indicates) now signals their reconciliation with Zeus, the Furies celebrate newly harmonious relations between men and gods, Olympian (strophe) and chthonic (antistrophe) alike. The mutually harmful relationship that once existed between man and god has

⁶³919 2 ia, 924 3 ia. Dale, who champions the rhythmic ambiguity of the lecythion, describes this stanza (with slightly different colometry) as typically Aeschylean iambo-trochaic (*LMGD*² 95).

⁶⁴Remarkably, the trochaic cola (976–979, 986–987) surround a core of dactylic and (as it appears) iambic movement: see Dale *LMGD*² 105–106.

now become mutually beneficial. The strophe represents both a reminiscence and a remaking of the Zeus Hymn. We have here the last appearance of lecythia in the *Oresteia*, as the Zeus Hymn was the first. As the Hymn was preceded by dactyls relating the mournful story of Agamemnon's dilemma at Aulis, the present song is followed by dactyls sung in a strikingly different mood—the celebratory processional hymn escorting the Eumenides to their new place of worship in Athens.⁶⁵ Zeus himself, like the Furies, has undergone a startling metamorphosis, or has at any rate revealed a new aspect of his sovereignty. When the Argive elders turned to Zeus for enlightenment, they envisioned a god who imposed σωφροσύνη upon suffering humanity, a formidable helmsman seated high above his wretched crew (Ag. 182–183⁶⁶). But through the intercession of his daughter Pallas the Athenians now sit near him (998), in a place of honor, and the humanizing term πατήρ (deferred for emphasis, 1002) makes the god seem particularly accessible. We recall that the context of the Zeus Hymn was the marshalling of the fleet at Aulis, where Zeus' omen of Greek victory enraged his virgin daughter, Artemis, and resulted in Agamemnon's killing his own daughter, Iphigeneia. Now, with Zeus and the virgin Athena collaborating in the protection of Athens, familial and sexual harmony is restored on Olympus. But Zeus' new intimacy with mortals is even more remarkable, and finds remarkable expression in the statement that Zeus regards the Athenians with reverence: ἄζεται, a verb cognate with ἅγιος that often expresses the feelings of awe and respect that men have for gods.⁶⁷ The verb indicates, therefore, a reversal of the traditional relationship between god and man portrayed in the Zeus Hymn;⁶⁸ it reflects the increased stature that human beings (specifically, the citizens of Athens) have attained by the end of the trilogy. The Athenians, now described with a highly significant verb as σωφροσύντες ἐν χρόνῳ, are trusted to regulate and restrain themselves under the watchful eye of the Areopagus, a human institution informed by divine principles sacred to Zeus and the Furies alike.⁶⁹ What is conspicuously, significantly absent is the divine coercion to moderation—after the fact, by punishment of sin

⁶⁵Scott notes the framing of the trilogy by dactyls and the "sense of closure and resolution" achieved by their final appearance (35).

⁶⁶Cf. also *Eum.* 517–519 (above, 16), of the place where τὸ δεινόν is seated (καθήμενον) as an overseer of men's minds.

⁶⁷Cf. (e.g.) *Eum.* 389, where the goddesses who have recently pronounced themselves σμεναί (383) ask, τίς οὖν τὰδ' οὐχ ἄζεται τε καὶ δέδοικεν βροτῶν . . . ;

⁶⁸Cf. Lebeck on Zeus' σέβας towards suppliants (*Eum.* 92–93): "σέβω is often used of men worshipping god, but rarely denotes the reverence felt by god for man. To speak of Zeus' reverential awe toward suppliants reverses the normal relation between them" (139).

⁶⁹Scott notes the new degree of human independence and responsibility exercised through the Areopagus (145).

—once lamented by the Argive elders.⁷⁰ Only fools learn through suffering (above, 4 f., with note 10), and the Athenians are no fools.

Soon the goddesses are escorted offstage to begin their residence as aliens in their new home—their μετοικία, an institution that manifests the pan-Hellenic importance and appeal of a thriving mid-fifth-century Athens. Recent political developments in Athens also leave their mark on the latter stages of *Eumenides*: hence the Argive treaty proclaimed by Orestes and the jurisdiction granted the Areopagus in Orestes' trial for murder.⁷¹ Indeed, Aeschylus even plays the prophet by making predictions of Athenian greatness in the utterances of Pallas and the Eumenides; these predictions, which are strongly idealizing, appear not to reflect Athenian realities of 458, but to anticipate hopefully the future growth of the city in years to come.⁷² The ancient mythological horror of the Atreid house culminates, remarkably, in celebration of Athenian achievement and potential. As the trilogy ends and the Eumenides depart in procession, therefore, we can only marvel at the dynamism of Aeschylus' dramatic vision—at the distance in space, time, mood, and thought that separates the end of the *Oresteia* from its beginning. Four important indices of the long, strange journey that we have travelled are beneficent Furies, an intimate father Zeus, mortals worthy of his reverence, and lecythia of joy.⁷³

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⁷⁰M. Gagarin (*Aeschylean Drama* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976] 83) suggests that this final use of σωφρονεῖν demonstrates "the positive aspect (discipline, moderation) of a virtue whose negative side (obedience) has hitherto been stressed." Dodds sees the enlightened Athenians as the final term in a sequence that began in the Zeus Hymn: "πάθει μάθος no longer illustrated in the life-history of individuals, but writ large in the destiny of a whole people and ushering in a new age of understanding" (61–62).

⁷¹For a helpful summary of views on Aeschylus' supposed attitude toward the curtailment of Areopagite power and the Argive alliance see A. J. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1966) 80–100. MacLeod, however, demonstrates that Aeschylus' representations of the Areopagus and the alliance primarily serve an artistic rather than a political program: their links with *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroe* signal a reversal of the social disorder that characterizes the earlier plays.

⁷²Dodds 62; MacLeod 132, 144; A. L. Brown, "The Erinyes in the *Oresteia*: Real Life, the Supernatural, and the Stage," *JHS* 103 (1983) 13–34, at 34.

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