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It's Not What You Say: Unspoken Allusions in Greek Tragedy?

Allusions, once treated as the private preserve of Alexandrian and Augustan poets and their exegetes, have begun in recent years to find their proper place in other texts – Greek epic, lyric and tragedy among them[1]. The standard model for considering these allusions has been very much – either implicitly or explicitly – *literary*. Under this model, allusions were to specific texts, and precise lexical correspondence between texts typically was the trigger for establishing the allusion, a potentially intricate literary interchange.

But this standard model, while extremely useful, also raises questions, specifically when applied to Greek tragedy. Tragedy, as we all know, was meant to be performed, and the plays from the fifth century were put on before an audience that was in many ways still part of an oral culture[2]. The Athenian book trade was in its infancy, and the vast majority of those familiar with earlier works knew them because they had heard them in a public setting, not read them in private. Tragedy does in fact allude lexically to specific texts, but not all allusions in tragedy conform to this model[3]. We must remember that tragedy, like

1. See, e.g., L. Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis: Allusion and Interpretation in the Iliad*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992; L. Rissman, *Love as War: Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho*, Hain 1983; and Garner 1990.

2. The issues of orality and literacy in ancient Greece remain problematic. For recent studies on these matters, see W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1989, esp. 45-115, and R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge 1992.

3. The most striking example I know of such «literary» allusion in tragedy is the precise verbal and numerical correspondences between the opening speeches of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oedipus delivers a 13-line speech at the start of each play; each speech opens with an address to τέκνα/τέκνον, followed by the interrogative τίς (τίνας/τίνας... τίς); each speech has a structural break after line eight, with the ninth line starting with ἀλλά followed by a vocative. The total reversal of Oedipus' situation – the king coming to aid suppliants has become the suppliant; the vigorous king addressing the old priest is now himself old and blind – is underscored by these remarkably precise verbal and numerical correspondences. (On these connections and other, broader ones between these two plays, see B. Seidensticker, *Beziehungen zwischen den beiden*

virtually all early Greek literature, is heavily tradition-based. That is, for its stories and treatments it drew on earlier works. The alleged advantages of this were made famous by the comic poet Antiphanes, in a fragment from his Ποίησις[4]. Unlike their comic counterparts, tragedians did not have to worry about coming up with new names and plots, and could rely on the audience knowing the characters in their plays.

> Say «Oedipus» and the audience knows everything.... If a comic character, say a Chremes or a Pheidon, leaves out something, he's hissed off stage. But that's perfectly all right for a Peleus or a Teucer.

But we all know that Greek tragedians were not inert imitators of traditional tales but were actively engaged in reshaping these earlier myths. The question of the limits to this reshaping is a fascinating one, and it impinges partly on my paper. My more direct focus, however, is the extent to which an allusion can be delimited. By this I mean, how can an author refer to only *part* of another tradition or text, while denying or – and this is more problematic still – even ignoring another part. Are there, as the elliptical title of my talk asks, unspoken allusions in Greek tragedy?

I will explore three texts from Greek tragedy. In the first one, the allusion, a precise reference to another text (but a different myth), in some ways is non-problematic. I choose it in part for this reason – to establish a base-line of sorts for the next two – and in part because some of its echoes have not been fully appreciated. The next two pick up more directly the notion of «unspoken allusion».

According to Athenaeus, Aeschylus called his tragedies «slices from the great banquets of Homer»[5]. So let's begin with a morsel that smacks of a famous dish from these banquets. In Aeschylus' *Choephori*, Clytemnestra pleads with her son not to kill her (896-8):

> ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἴδεσαι, τέκνον,
> μαστόν, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἅμα
> οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα.

Oidipusdramen des Sophokles, «Hermes» 100, 1972, 255-74.) The implications for such precise echoes in a performance medium, where they are rare, are worth pondering.

4. Fr. 189 K-A.

5. τεμάχη... τῶν Ὁμήρου μεγάλων δείπνων (8, 347e).

> Stop, son, and revere this breast,
> child, at which at which you often drowsily
> drew nourishing milk with your gums.

This is an extraordinary dramatic moment (not even in Euripides is such a situation common): a mother pleads with her son to spare her life; the son hesitates, appealing to his long-silent companion; Pylades then (surprisingly) breaks his silence and urges on the murder, advice which Orestes accepts. Response to this scene is enriched by its echo of Homer. In the *Iliad*, Hecuba pleads with Hector not to stand outside the walls waiting for Achilles (22, 79-89):

> μήτηρ δ' αὖθ' ἑτέρωθεν ὀδύρετο δάκρυ χέουσα,
> κόλπον ἀνιεμένη, ἑτέρηφι δὲ μαζὸν ἀνέσχε·
> καί μιν δάκρυ χέουσ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· 80
> «Ἕκτορ, τέκνον ἐμόν, τάδ' τ' αἴδεο καί μ' ἐλέησον
> αὐτήν, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον·
> τῶν μνῆσαι, φίλε τέκνον, ἄμυνε δὲ δήιον ἄνδρα
> τείχεος ἐντὸς ἐών, μηδὲ πρόμος ἵστασο τούτῳ,
> σχέτλιος· εἴ περ γάρ σε κατακτάνῃ, οὔ σ' ἔτ' ἔγωγε 85
> κλαύσομαι ἐν λεχέεσσι, φίλον θάλος, ὃν τέκον αὐτή,
> οὐδ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος· ἄνευθε δέ σε μέγα νῶιν
> Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ κύνες ταχέες κατέδονται.»

> And his mother wailed now, standing beside Priam,
> weeping freely, loosing her robes with one hand
> and holding out her bare breast with the other,
> her words pouring forth in a flight of grief and tears:
> «Hector, my child! Look – have some respect for *this*!
> Pity your mother too, if I ever gave you the breast
> to soothe your troubles, remember it now, dear boy –
> beat back that savage man from safe inside the walls!
> Don't go forth, a champion pitted against him –
> merciless, brutal man. If he kills you now,
> how can I ever mourn you on your deathbed? –
> dear branch in bloom, dear child I brought to birth! –
> Neither I nor your wife, that warm, generous woman...
> Now far beyond our reach, now by the Argive ships
> the rushing dogs will tear you, bolt your flesh!»
> (trans. R. Fagles)

The reminiscences of this Homeric passage in Clytemnestra's speech are multiple, precise and evocative[6]:

6. On these connections, cf. Garner 1990, 39-40. Oddly, Garvie in his commentary ad loc. is circumspect about the allusion here.

1) a mother appeals to her son concerning a life;
2) the appeal is through the mother's breast, the special bond between mother and child;
3) this appeal is marked by the deictic ὅδε (τόνδε and τάδε);
4) the appeal is based on *aidos* (αἴδεσαι/αἴδεο)[7].

The Homeric passage, vividly called to mind, highlights the vastly different situations: Hecuba appeals to her son to save *his* life, a life which he is willing to risk in order to protect his family and city. Clytemnestra pleads that her son spare *her own* life, which he threatens in an act of vengeance for his father's murder. Priam, Hector's father, stands alongside his wife, having already pleaded with their son to save his life. Orestes' father, Agamemnon, is not by his wife's side – for he is the victim of her earlier violence, the violence that Orestes seeks to avenge.

The Aeschylean appropriation of this Homeric scene works in a further, and subtler way. Hecuba explains that Hector should respect her breast, which she held out to him (ἐπέσχον). Clytemnestra's first word to *her* son is to hold himself back (ἐπίσχες), the only time the word is used in this sense in Aeschylus[8]. The word which in the Homeric context suggested maternal nurturing is now manipulated in aid of desperate maternal persuasion.

Another Aeschylean adaptation also merits attention: Hecuba describes her breast with a single adjective, the Homeric hapax λαθικηδής («care-banishing»). Aeschylus ignores this diction, but elaborates its sense with a relative clause which occupies nearly two of Clytemnestra's three lines πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἅμα / οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα («[this breast] at which you often drowsily / drew nourishing milk with your gums,» 897-8.) This elaboration, especially when contrasted with its Homeric model, lays stress on the act of nursing, which plays an important thematic role within the trilogy[9]. Most strikingly it recalls Clytemnestra's terrifying dream, which led her to send the libations to Agamemnon's tomb at the play's beginning. She

7. On Clytemnestra's appeal to *aidos*, see D. Cairns, *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature*, Oxford 1993, 200-2.

8. This connection is noted by A. Sommerstein, *Notes on the Oresteia*, «Bull. Inst. Class. Stud.» 27, 1980, 75 n. 33, although he does not refer to the unique Aeschylean usage here.

9. On these echoes, see esp. B. Knox, *The Lion in the House* in *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater*, Baltimore and London 1979, 34-6.

dreamed, Electra reports (527 ff.), that she gave suck to a serpent which drew blood along with its milk:

ὥστ' ἐν γάλακτι θρόμβον αἵματος σπάσαι.

This dream, as predicted by Orestes (549-50), now comes to painful fulfillment. This emphasis on nursing has further echoes. The Nurse Cilissa, when she laments the reportedly dead Orestes, refers to her nursing and caring for the infant Orestes (748ff.), a recollection that both undercuts Clytemnestra's role as mother and connects to this recurrent motif. Clytemnestra's appeal to her breast recalls also the second stasimon of the *Agamemnon*, where the Argive elders sing of a breast-loving (φιλόμαστον, 719) lion cub, nurtured (the root τρεφ- appears four times in this song) in the house to grow up to be a priest of Ruin (ἱερεὺς Ἄτας, 735-6). This Homeric model, then, not only provides an allusive backdrop for the scene in the *Choephori*, but also serves to highlight aspects of the latter scene that reverberate within Aeschylus' trilogy.

This first allusion, impressive as it is, operates the way many others do – the look «back» juxtaposes two texts with which the viewer/reader engages, reading the primary text in part through the secondary one brought forth by the allusion. Because Aeschylus alludes to a *different* tale, he can draw on this earlier text without needing to assert the primacy of *his* telling of the tale. Allusions to other versions of the *same* myth, however, pose pointed questions of authority and authorial control. I turn now to two examples where this is the case and where the allusion is consequently more problematic.

Sophocles' *Trachiniae* concludes with a grim commentary on the events of the play (whoever delivers it[10]): κοὐδὲν τούτων ὅ τι μὴ Ζεύς («And none of these things is not Zeus»). Zeus, the chorus suggested at the end of the parodos, takes care of his children[11]. Now, at the end of the drama, Deianeira is dead, having unwittingly caused her husband's mortal pain, while Heracles himself is in his death throes and orchestrating his own end and the future for Iole. Zeus has not, it seems, taken very good care of his children, or at least not of his most famous mortal child. Or has he? Is there in this play a reference to Heracles' future

10. The play's final four lines are assigned to Hyllus (**Zg** and **T**) and to the chorus (P. Oxy. 3688, **K** and **Ta**), and also split between these two (the rest of the mss.). On the issue of attribution, see most recently H. Lloyd-Jones and N. Wilson, *Sophoclea*, Oxford 1990, 177-8.

11. ἐπεὶ τίς ὧδε / τέκνοισι Ζῆν' ἄβουλον εἶδε; (139-40).

apotheosis? If so, the extreme bleakness of the ending might be lightened by the prospects of Heracles' divinization and life on Olympus. In addition to the issue of authorial control of one's narrative – and allusions – we must also address questions of mythological fixity.

First we will consider briefly the play itself and its alleged allusions to this apotheosis, and then look at the evidence for this part of the myth prior to the (admittedly problematic) date of our play[12]. Near the end of the play (starting at 1174ff.), Heracles makes his son Hyllus swear an oath that he will carry out his father's requests. After a reluctant Hyllus does so, Heracles explains that he wants him to construct a pyre on the peak of Mt. Oeta and burn his body there. Hyllus recoils from actually setting the pyre ablaze, but agrees to the rest of Heracles' request (and his following one – that he marry Iole). In the anapests which bring the play to a close as a moribund Heracles is carried off stage, Hyllus reproaches the gods for allowing such suffering and remarks «what will happen no one can see,/ but the present is pitiful for us and disgraceful for them [the gods]» (τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλοντ' οὐδεὶς ἐφορᾷ, / τὰ δὲ νῦν ἑστῶτ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν, / αἰσχρὰ δ' ἐκείνοις, 1270-2). This agnoetic reference to the future leaves open several possibilities.

The *Iliad* unequivocally refers to Heracles' death (18, 117-9), while other early hexameter passages expressing ambivalence about it (Hom. *Od.* 11, 601-4 and Hes. fr. 25, 25-8 MW) are unlikely to be pre-sixth-century[13]. His Attic cult as a divinity dates from the sixth century[14], and starting with the mid-sixth century, vase paintings frequently depict Heracles' apotheosis, although not in connection with the pyre[15]. Several passages in Pindar seem to establish his apotheosis as standard by the fifth century[16]. In literary sources either Philoctetes or his father Poeas was typically the one who set the pyre ablaze[17], so Hyllus' refusal to do so and its acceptance by Heracles leaves room for

12. There is no certain date for *Trach.* and little on which to base one's speculations. A useful survey of the issue is provided by P. E. Easterling, ed., *Sophocles: Trachiniae*, Cambridge 1982, 19-23.

13. See M. L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue*, Oxford 1985, 130 and 134.

14. *RE* suppl. 3.924.

15. See F. Brommer, *Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensagen*³, Marburg 1973, 159-69.

16. *Nem.* 1, 69-72; *Nem.* 10, 17; *Isth.* 4, 73-8.

17. On this aspect of the myth, see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, Baltimore and London 1993, 59.

that part of the tale[18]. The specific link, however, between the pyre on Oeta[19] and the apotheosis is not found until relatively late. Two fragmentary mid-fifth-century vases seem to suggest this link[20], but the Attic *pelike* clearly showing Heracles rising above a pyre dates from near the end of the century (ca. 410)[21]. A passage in Euripides' *Heraclidae* 910-6 (ca. 430) *might* make this connection, but this is not the only interpretation of the passage[22]. In other words, a mid-fifth-century association between Heracles' pyre on Oeta and his apotheosis was indeed possible, but a reference to the former did not necessarily or automatically imply the latter[23].

Aristotle (*Poetics* 1453b 23 ff.) rightly recognizes that each myth has certain bare necessities which are needed if the story is going to hold together. He explains that the poet cannot undo the received stories, giving as examples of mythological necessities Clytemnestra being killed by Orestes and Eriphyle being killed by Alcmeon; rather the poet, says Aristotle, must take these traditional stories and use them well. If the apotheosis from the pyre was not an *inflexible* part of the myth by the mid-fifth century (and I think that it was not), we must still wonder whether at the time of *Trachiniae*'s production, the mention of a pyre on Oeta was likely to evoke thoughts of the consequent apotheosis.

It would have been easy, of course, to make an *explicit* reference to this event. The play refers to several prophecies, the full significance of which becomes clear only in the course of the drama. Heracles, when he learns of the Centaur Nessus' involve-

18. As noted, e.g., by H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*², Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983, 128 with n. 150.

19. For speculation on the origin of this cult on Oeta, see M. Nilsson, *Der Flammentod des Herakles auf dem Oite*, «Archiv. f. Religionswiss.» 21, 1922, 310-6 = *Opuscula Selecta*, Lund 1951, vol. 1, 348-54. On Heracles' apotheosis, see Stinton 1987=1990, 493-507.

20. See J. D. Beazley, *Etruscan Vase Painting*, Oxford 1947, 103-4.

21. *LIMC* 2.1 s.v. Athena no. 533.

22. See J. Wilkins, ed., *Euripides: Heraclidae*, Oxford 1993, ad loc.

23. Stinton 1987=1990, 502, concludes hesitatingly that «it is far more likely than not that mention of the pyre would not have suggested apotheosis to Sophocles' audience.» See, however, P. Holt, *The End of the Trachiniai and the Fate of Herakles*, «Journ. Hell. Stud.» 109, 1989, 69-80, who maintains that for fifth-century Athenians Heracles' «exaltation» (heroization or divinization) would have been assumed. In general on Sophoclean endings, including this one, see D. Roberts, *Sophoclean Endings: Another Story*, «Arethusa» 21, 1988, 177-96.

ment with his poisoned robe, realizes the truth of an earlier prophecy that he would die at the hands of no one living, and accordingly, accepts and prepares for his death (1143ff.). When he goes on to explain how this prophecy dovetails with yet another one about the end of his toils (1159ff.), a further reference to a future apotheosis would have been unobtrusive[24]. But Sophocles does not do this. And it would have been equally easy to avoid any reference at all to the future. The references to the pyre on Mt. Oeta were not required by the myth or the internal logic of the play[25].

P. E. Easterling, who has offered perhaps the most judicious treatment of this issue, holds that this is an example of an ironic allusion to events outside the play[26]. The play's leitmotif of the limitations of human knowledge is given a final twist here, as the characters show no awareness of what is in store for Heracles. The play's opening maxim, «No man knows his luck 'til he's dead»[27], achieves its final resonance in this exodus, as the pain and despair that the mortals experience are emphasized.

While accepting much of Easterling's reading, I would emphasize that the allusion to the apotheosis is double-edged and open-ended more than ironic: Sophocles points to an aspect of the myth which he *doesn't* specifically accept – or reject. How one is to reconcile this aspect of the myth to what has been presented on stage is left open. Sophocles can assert his own version of the story, but his oblique reference to another tale – one of apotheosis – offers another and very different reading of the story that he does tell. Opening up the reference to another ending of this myth raises questions about it. Can the playwright control his allusion?

We end where we began – with a passage from Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, this time from the parodos of his *Agamemnon*. Our discussion here is complicated not only by the issues of mythological fixity, but also by those of narrativity – raised by the dense, elliptical and abrupt ways in which Aeschylus presents his story. (We will, of course, have to pass over many issues in our brief discussion of this marvelously rich song.)

24. Cf. Linforth 1952, 265.

25. See, e.g., Linforth 1952, esp. 259.

26. P. E. Easterling, *The End of the Trachiniae*, «Ill. Class. Stud.» 6, 1981, 64-9. For an opposing view, i.e. that there is no allusion here, see the thoughtful remarks of Stinton 1986=1990, 479-88.

27. Ezra Pound's lively rendition of this commonplace Greek belief.

The events at Aulis were related as early as the *Cypria*, as we learn from Proclus' summary[28].

> καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ἠθροισμένου τοῦ στόλου ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἀγαμέμνων ἐπὶ θηρῶν βαλὼν ἔλαφον ὑπερβάλλειν ἔφησε καὶ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν. μηνίσασα δὲ ἡ θεὸς ἐπέσχεν αὐτοὺς τοῦ πλοῦ χειμῶνας ἐπιπέμπουσα. Κάλχαντος δὲ εἰπόντος τὴν τῆς θεοῦ μῆνιν καὶ Ἰφιγένειαν κελεύσαντος θύειν τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι, ὡς ἐπὶ γάμον αὐτὴν Ἀχιλλεῖ μεταπεμψάμενοι θύειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν. Ἄρτεμις δὲ αὐτὴν ἐξαρπάσασα εἰς Ταύρους μετακομίζει καὶ ἀθάνατον ποιεῖ, ἔλαφον δὲ ἀντὶ τῆς κόρης παρίστησι τῷ βωμῷ.

> When the expedition had gathered for a second time at Aulis, Agamemnon shot a deer while he was hunting and said that he surpassed even Artemis. The goddess was angry at this and sent storms to keep them from sailing. After Calchas explained the goddess's anger and bid them to sacrifice Iphigenia to Artemis, they sent for her on the pretext of a marriage to Achilles and tried to sacrifice her. But Artemis snatched her away, sent her to live among the Taurians and made her immortal, and she put a deer instead of the girl on the altar.

The narrative in the *Cypria*, however refracted through the lens of Proclus, would, I venture to claim, contrast sharply with Aeschylus' masterpiece of indirection and implication. Let's look briefly at the playwright's sequential presentation of events:

1) omen at Aulis of eagles devouring a pregnant rabbit (107-20);
2) interpretation of omen by the prophet to mean the (eventual) capture of Troy (126-30);
3) the prophet's fear that this may lead to trouble for the expedition, since Artemis «is angry at the winged hounds of her father that sacrifice the wretched hare» and «she loathes the feast of eagles» (131-8)[29];
4) the prophet's prayer to Apollo that the god not allow his sister (Artemis) to send ruinous winds and bring about a second sacrifice, one that would work ruin in the house (146-55)[30];
5) after a three-stanza prayer disrupting their narrative (the so-

28. The text is cited from M. Davies, ed., *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Göttingen 1988, 55-63.

29. οἴκτῳ γὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὰ / πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρὸς / αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισιν· / στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν. (134-8)

30. σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν ἄνομόν τιν' ἄδαιτον, / νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον οὐ δεισ- / ήνορα· μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος. (150-5)

called «hymn to Zeus», 160-83), the chorus return to events at Aulis, where bad weather now keeps the fleet from sailing (184 ff.);

6) Agamemnon is said to blame no prophet (186) while the prophet is said to propose a remedy more grievous than the storm, laying the blame on Artemis (198-202);

7) following this mantic utterance, Agamemnon engages in famous deliberation and decides to sacrifice his daughter (205-27);

8) the preparation for the sacrifice is described, with a vivid description of the sacrificial Iphigenia (228-46);

9) conclusion: «And what happened next I did not see, nor do I relate it;/ but the arts of Calchas are not unfulfilled» (τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω· τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι, 248-9).

Virtually all communication is incomplete, requiring supplementation[31]. This is especially true of lyric narrative, and few pieces of lyric are as narratively lacunose as this one and few as mythologically tendentious.

Artemis' role at Aulis was, I suspect, too ingrained in the tradition to be ignored[32]. But Aeschylus does not say *why* she was angry, and the typical formulation of this often asked question can never be answered, because Aeschylus does not tell us[33]. Or, rather, anger at Agamemnon has been transmuted to anger at feasting eagles. One story (that of Agamemnon's clear offense against Artemis) is suppressed but the resulting narrative is unduly compressed, and this compression does not allow the suppressed tale to be effaced. In other words, through this narrative

31. This summary of the chorus's presentation of events is, of course, itself incomplete.

32. In the Hesiodic *Ehoiai* (fr. 23(a), 13-30 WM), we are told that Iphimede, who is the equivalent of Iphigenia, is killed, but this narrative is then «corrected»: it was only her *eidolon* that was killed; Iphimede herself was rescued by Artemis and made immortal. It is possible, as suggested by F. Solmsen, *The Sacrifice of Agamemnon's Daughter in Hesiod's Ehoeae*, «Amer. Journ. Philol.» 102, 1981, 353-8, that the rescue by Artemis is a later addition. For our purposes what is essential is that it is pre-Aeschylean, which it certainly is. Stesichorus, frag. 215 Davies also agrees with these in making Iphigenia immortal. Pindar's brief treatment of this story (*P.* 11, 17-25), on the other hand, makes no reference to Iphigenia's rescue, and it likely pre-dates Aeschylus. Its date, however, is disputed; see C. M. Bowra, *Pindar*, Oxford 1964, 402-5, for a summary of the evidence.

33. There is a considerable bibliography on this topic; see the convenient summary of opinions in D. J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Oresteia: A Literary Commentary*, Toronto 1987, 76-83.

compression the other version of the tale is indirectly recalled. Greater weight then falls on the more morally complex situation that *is* related, instead of the predictable and easily understood «tit for tat» dynamics of the older tale.

The chorus say of Agamemnon's response that he blamed no prophet (μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων, 186). This detail is not needed for narrative continuity or dramatic coherence, and it raises questions about Agamemnon's (pre)disposition to take the action he does, especially when this narrative is set against the Homeric one it echoes – a scene from *Iliad* I. There Homer reports Agamemnon's fierce response to Calchas on another occasion – a very comparable occasion, in fact, when the same prophet explains that the cause of the plight afflicting the gathered Greeks is the anger of Apollo, Artemis' brother (*Il.* 1, 101-8):

> But among them rose
> the fighting son of Atreus, lord of the far-flung kingdoms,
> Agamemnon – furious, his dark heart filled to the brim,
> blazing with anger now, his eyes like searing fire.
> And with a sudden, killing look he wheeled on Calchas first:
> «Seer of misery! Never a word that works to my advantage!
> Always misery warms your heart, your prophecies –
> never a word of profit said or brought to pass».
> (trans. R. Fagles)

In Aeschylus' account, the remedy proposed by Calchas is never specified. That Artemis required the blood of *Iphigenia* is *not* expressed; it is at most implied, or perhaps inferred. While it might be unfair to say that Agamemnon jumped to conclusions, it is fair to acknowledge that Aeschylus omits this crucial detail and sequentially moves from «grievous remedy» to paternal contemplation of filicide. An audience familiar with the tale of sacrifice might readily supply what the *Cypria* in fact did – Artemis' demand for Iphigenia's blood – but Aeschylus suppresses this and focuses instead on Agamemnon's ready acquiescence and subsequent dilemma.

In the world of Aeschylus' play, did this sacrifice take place? If it took place, was it effective? The answer to the second question might be inferred from the success at Troy, already rejoiced at by the watchman, but we are not told so in this song. The first question is more difficult to answer. As far as we can tell, many, if not all, pre-Aeschylean versions of this aspect of the myth included Iphigenia's rescue and/or immortalization. Our narrative, having painted a most piteous picture of the gagged Iphigenia, held up above the altar like a goat, darting glances at her mur-

derer(s), leaves off there. The conclusion, «And what happened next I did not see, nor do I relate it;/ but the arts of Calchas are not unfulfilled,» is open to various interpretations. The success of Calchas' arts might refer to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the end of the bad weather, the Greek success at Troy, or all or several of these things[34]. What the chorus did not see (and do not tell) is even less clear. It might refer simply to the events *after* Aulis[35]. At the start of the song's central triad they claim the authority to sing about the omen at Aulis (104ff.); here they conclude their story with the omen's immediate consequences. Perhaps, as Sidgwick suggests, «the sacrifice itself could not have been more impressively told than by this terrible hint»[36]. But Aeschylus does not relate the actual sacrifice or even say (at this point) that it occurred; something like «We cannot bear to sing the shedding of the maiden's blood» could have sufficed to accomplish Sidgwick's point.

This narrative gap leaves open another possibility. The playwright's silence about the actual sacrifice allows him to hint at a long and powerful tradition – one in which Iphigenia is rescued and/or immortalized. As viewers and readers of *Agamemnon* we are reminded of this version, which Aeschylus does *not* follow. As in the case of the improbable reason for Artemis' anger and Agamemnon's lack of blame for any prophet, another tradition is brought to mind, only to be eschewed, or, if you will, relegated to a footnote. It is not so much that the audience is asked to imagine that Iphigenia was not, in the world of Aeschylus' play, really killed and instead lives on in the Crimea while Clytemnestra wields her blade; rather, it will be more aware of the choice that Aeschylus did make – one with no rescue, no immortality. The brutal and irremediable fact of filial murder (in the questionable guise of sacrifice) is highlighted by the allusion to the road not taken.

The pre-existing body of myths provided a wealth of material for the Athenian tragedians. In composing their dramas they shaped their own tales while constantly aware of other ones. Their texts allow us to see how the playwrights negotiated their strategies of dealing with, acknowledging, and distancing them-

34. As S. Goldhill, ***Language, Sexuality, Narrative: The Oresteia***, Cambridge 1984, 31, observes, «the double negative (οὐκ ἄκραντα) seems to distance the language even farther from a direct statement of the event».

35. In his commentary, Fraenkel 1950, vol. 2, 141 n. 2, disagrees with attempts to separate «the events that followed the sacrifice» from «the *consequences* of the sacrifice» in the phrase τὰ δ᾽ ἔνθεν. «I fancy the expression includes both.»

36. Sidgwick, ed., *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*, Oxford 1905, on 247.

selves from these earlier tales and treatments. Some of their allusions are clear and precise; others, I have tried to suggest, are «unspoken» and more problematic. In our readings of Greek tragedies we must pay attention not only to what they say, but also to what they don't say[37].

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37. It is a pleasure to recall the occasion of this paper's genesis, the «Allusion and the Limits of Interpretability» colloquium at the University of Washington in April 1995, and I here record my gratitude to all the participants and especially to my co-organizer of the colloquium, Stephen Hinds. This paper was improved by the lively discussion at the colloquium itself and also by those who offered helpful critiques of subsequent drafts – Mary Whitlock Blundell, Erin Halleran, Stephen Hinds, and Patricia Rosenmeyer.

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