Household Management in Three Family Tragedies:
Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Sophocles' *Electra*, and Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 2021

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Abstract

In this thesis, I read three tragedies from three fifth-century playwrights through the lens of household management. I describe the "science" of household management (*oikonomia*) through descriptions by Aristotle and Xenophon, then apply it to tragedy in three case studies. I examine major characters' performance of householding and some implications of those performances for understanding of the plays and their relation to their fifth-century contexts. I understand the place of the *oikos* (household) in Athenian society through S. C. Humphrey's anthropological framework of social articulation, and I use Emma Griffiths' paradigm of tragic potential as a guiding concept.

In Chapter One, I examine the impiety of Aeschylus' Agamemnon in his eponymous play. *Oikonomia* fits into Aeschylus' view of divine Justice (Δίκη). Agamemnon devalues those under him—his daughter, his wife, and his army—to extract more than he should, and the habit permits the curse of his house to overtake his favor with the gods. The sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia imperils him in public and in private, and his wife Clytemnestra convinces to reperform the failure of *oikonomia* in the Carpet Scene.

In Chapter Two, I argue that Sophocles uses *oikonomia* in *Electra* as a mechanism of conveying a more malleable form of justice. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus personally squander their claims to righteousness by degrading their household, while Orestes gains the ability to return and kill them through his practice of proper householding. I also extend Sophocles' method of expressing *oikonomia* through the treatment of enslaved household members to the other two playwrights, arguing that active management of enslaved characters is a key indicator of a householder's skill.

In Chapter Three, I argue that Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* shows a circumstance in which the *oikonomia* of both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra fails to change the outcome of Iphigenia's sacrifice. Iphigenia is forced to reassign herself into an offering to charm the Thracian winds, and Euripides questions the division between the spheres of public and private during particularly challenging times for the democratic *demos*. I conclude with a comparison of the plays and their use of household management.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee....ii
Abstract....iii
Acknowledgements....v
Introduction....1
Aims and Scope....1
Oikonomia in Contemporary Sources....3
Scholarship: The *Oikos* in Tragedy....7
Sources on the Texts....9
Methodology: Action and Potential....11
Chapter One: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*....13
Introduction....13
Householding Themes (1-782)....15
The Chorus Addresses Agamemnon (783-809)....20
Agamemnon's Entrance Speech (810-854)....24
Clytemnestra Addresses Agamemnon (855-913) – The Pathway of Purple....28
Agamemnon Responds (914-930); Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's Stichomythia (931-943)....34
Concession and Victory (944-957, 958-974)....37
Clytemnestra and Chorus Address Cassandra (1035-1071)....42
Cassandra and the Chorus (1072-1330)....45
Conclusion....47
Chapter Two: Sophocles' *Electra* (The Slaves)....48
Introduction: The Watchman, The Paedagogos, and the Old Man....48
Agamemnon's Watchman....49
Electra's Paedagogos....50
Iphigenia in Aulis' Old Man....58
Conclusion....61
Chapter Three: Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*....62
Introduction....62
Menelaus and Fraternal *Philia* ("I am exactly where you are now," εἰμὶ δ' οὖπερ εἶ σὺ νῦν, 480)....64
Achilles' Options....69
Clytemnestra ("You will bear witness that I was a blameless wife," συμμαρτυρήσεις ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἦ γυνή, 1158)....71
Iphigenia's Appeal and Reversal....79
Conclusion....85
Conclusion....87
Bibliography....89

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Introduction

Aims and Scope

Household management (*oikonomia*) is a fruitful lens through which to view tragic conflict in *Agamemnon*, *Electra*, and *Iphigenia* at Aulis and merits study as an organizing principle of Greek tragic composition. Certainly not every extant Greek tragedy, nor can I imagine every tragedy now lost, takes the organization of family life as its only or even primary concern; however, the prominence of private life and the (often imperiled) *oikos* in tragedy, relative to other literary genres, is difficult to overstate. I advocate for household management to be understood as a major component of the *oikos* theme in tragedy and to be considered a system of thought in the Classical period which influenced Athenian drama at every level. I present in this thesis, therefore, three cases studies that demonstrate the utility of household management as a method of explaining why the tragedies are as they are. My approach should not be understood as exclusionary toward other themes in the plays or theories of tragedy. In fact, my readings are often congruous with established readings. The *oikos* is such a fundamental unit of Athenian society, and so prevalent (explicitly and implicitly) in its literature, that there is no dearth of scholarship on the resonance of the *oikos* in tragedy. What I endeavor to do is to try a framework that has not yet, to my knowledge, been tried specifically or at length in modern scholarship, that of household management—that is, analysis focuses on the mechanisms by which characters negotiate their relationship to the *oikos*, the variable quality of management evident in characters' actions, and the variable results of their efforts, especially as they relate to a character's individual success or failure within their play.

Household management is a tool with which to poke at the texts. I do not tie household management explicitly to tragedy's purpose or proper meaning. It is tempting, of course, to devise a universally applicable paradigm, such as a directly proportional relationship

(approaching a moral code) between a character's skill in household management and their ultimate fortune. Such formula would in some cases be apt. I myself will argue that in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* poor management is instrumental in Agamemnon's doom (chapter one), and that in Sophocles' *Electra* good management wins the day for the Orestes (chapter two). But it seems to me that the playwrights depict acts of household management in their works with such regularity because of their dramatic adaptability and utility in communicating, in a common language of action, their own unique poetic agendas. Thus, Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* shows that neither Agamemnon's poor management nor Clytemnestra's canny householding is effective as a means of controlling their *oikos*, due to an unstoppable interpenetration between public and private spheres (chapter three).

In fifth-century Athens, the established adult male is expected to participate in *oikonomia* in conjunction with his public career. Simultaneously at the top of his familial hierarchy and subsumed into state institutions as one among many equal peers, he straddles the public and private spheres of Athenian society. There is significant encouragement for him to maintain this balancing act, since the *oikos* is "a social unit of fundamental importance" and "the only sound economic basis for a well-governed state."[1] But because the *oikos* is considered so vital to the overall health of Athenian society, it is a highly regulated structure both in practice and ideology. There is an elaborate body of laws, restrictions, and provisions concerning *oikos* membership, property, and succession. At the same time, a rigid social and religious ideology of "the family" as a private entity discourages legal recourse in favor of internal resolution and the maintenance of intra-familial harmony.[2] As kinship ties gradually lose emphasis in the public world and the

[1] S. C. Humphreys, *The Family, Women and Death: Comparative Studies, 2nd ed*. (London: Routledge, 1993): 4, 12. See also James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997): 183-4.
[2] Humphreys 1993: 4-5, 12.

oikos is "squeezed between the stronger claims of the individual and the polis," Athenian society siloes family matters into an increasingly private space.[3] Exchange, and its evaluative component, is especially prominent in family interactions, even though the family is depicted elsewhere as a place without need for a developed internal economy.[4] In the rest of this project, I examine how the playwrights use these concepts of management in their depiction of the conflict within the house of Atreus, and show that the tragedians work with a similar understanding of household leadership as a constant attempt to assimilate the conflicting needs of family, state, law, and self.

Oikonomia **in Contemporary Sources**

The first imperative is to determine what "household management" meant to contemporary Athenian figures. To contextualize acts of household management in tragedy, which are often non-normative and almost always exaggerated, it is essential to form a conception of relative normativity. This is not to suggest that there was a completely singular, prescriptive norm or that authors have agreed in every particularity, as I address below. Nevertheless, a survey of the literature on householding produces an outline of its idealized form.

First, I summarize pursuant discussions from the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*. His work is both observational and idealistically systematic—that is, when he writes of the household, he is writing about what he observes to be its most successful and logical dynamics, with the major caveat that nature tries to form beings ideally but often diverges from the mold (e.g., 1254b-1255a: Nature intends to make the minds and bodies of freemen and slaves suitable

[3] Davidson 1997: 183.
[4] Humphreys 1993: 74. Aristotle writes, "in the first partnership, that of the household, it is clear that there is no use for trade, not until the partnership is more numerous. For the people in these first partnerships shared everything" (ἐν μὲν οὖν τῇ πρώτῃ κοινωνίᾳ (τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐστὶν οἰκία) φανερὸν ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἔργον αὐτῆς , ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη πλειόνων τῆς κοινωνίας οὔσης. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνουν πάντων, *Pol*. 1.1257a)

to their differing occupations, but in reality there is a far from perfect correlation between status and fitness). He describes the household's origins and its normative relations, finally stressing the importance of these matters for the state.

For Aristotle, households are the building blocks of the state. They are composed of three smaller building blocks: the procreative, parental, and slaveholding partnerships. The procreative (man-woman) and slaveholding partnerships are the first natural partnerships and the origination of the *oikos* (1252a-b, cf. Hesiod *Works and Days* 405ff.) The three *oikos* relationships, taken together, require a particular sort of leadership, different than that required for political leadership, whether electoral, monarchical, or tyrannical (1259a). Thus, householding is properly its own science, *oikonomia*. Nevertheless, there are resemblances between the three partnerships and certain political systems that are helpful to think with. For instance, a husband manages his partnership with his wife politically (πολιτικῶς) as an elected official rules citizens. In marriage, however, the husband has no term limit, a dynamic justified by his "more authoritative" (ἡγεμονικώτερον) nature (1259b1). Term limits exists in the true political relation, in contrast, because elector and electee possess equal natures (ἐξ ἴσου, 1259a37-b4). The parental relationship resembles a monarchy. The father, by virtue of his superior, matured nature, has a pastoral duty not unlike a king's. The father-king ought to lead child-subjects on the path of excellence (1259b10). The relationship between a master and his slaves, lastly, is despotic (δεσποτικός) (1259a37). It exists for the master's benefit first and foremost. Slaves benefit only incidentally, insofar as slavery allows them to exercise their natural talent, which is following betters' directions. *Oikonomia* is a matter of matching proper leadership types to the respective, constituent relationships of the *oikos* in order to benefit the

unit overall. The ability to produce surplus guarantees the household's self-sufficiency, which preserves it so that it may be passed down to inheritors that will continue the *genos* (clan).

The householder is ideally a natural ruler (ἄρχον φύσει 1252a, see also 1254a-b), suitable to the tasks of leadership presented by the *oikos* as well as the demands of the *polis*. Man is a political animal by nature (πολιτικὸν ζῷον, 1253a) but his actual capacity to participate in *polis* affairs is inseparable from the running of his household. The household must function smoothly, as "a machine for drawing an income from," in John Davies' memorable phrasing, to provide the house-lord with the means for him to partake in political life.[5] Thus, each member of the *oikos* has a specific kind of virtue (ἀρετή), which is whatever quality commits them to the best service of their proper role (1259b-1260b). *Oikos* members' education in virtue, then, is a core concern not only for household management, but for the functioning of society as a whole. Those excluded from official political life do not completely lack influence in society, for "women make up one half of free people, and children become our partners in the government" (1260b19-20).[6]

I turn now to Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*, which deals with household roles from the perspective of the Athenian gentleman Ischomachus.[7] Upon entering their marriage, a husband and wife join their resources into a common unit (though they remain distinct) (7.13). The spouses then contribute to the household to the best of their abilities from their separate spheres: husbands enter public life and seek out household income; wives distribute income throughout the household as needed and manage expenses (3.15). A wife's role includes management of the

[5] *Wealth and the Power of Wealth in Classical Athens* (Salem, NH: The Ayer Company, 1984): 76.
[6] αἱ μὲν γὰρ γυναῖκες ἥμισυ μέρος τῶν ἐλευθέρων, ἐκ δὲ τῶν παίδων οἱ κοινωνοὶ γίνονται τῆς πολιτείας
[7] On the structure of the *Oikomoikos* and Xenophon's larger argument(s), see Sarah Pomeroy, *Xenophon*, Oeconomicus: *A Social History and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994): 5ff. On the figure of Ischomachus, see 259-64.

house's slaves (their activities inside and outside of the house as well as their health) and household production of textiles, food, etc. (7.35-7). She is also charged with the bearing and daily management of children. This is an essential task because children are "the best of allies and caretakes" (συμμάχων καὶ γηροβοσκῶν ὅτι βελτίστων) for both parents (7.12), as well as inheritors of the household's property. For her consistency in her labors, the wife will be rewarded by her husband with security. She will grow more honored (τιμιωτέρα) within the household every year of their continued partnership (7.42-3).

The partnership between a married couple is the basis of their household's success or failure.[8] As the household steward, a husband is responsible for maintaining a cooperative bond with his wife so together they can increase their estate. Therefore, if a husband fails to educate his wife or treats her wife poorly and the household suffers, he is ultimately responsible (3.10). The husband and wife's highly differentiated roles (based on differing natural aptitudes, as in *Politics*) require them to rely on one another to keep abreast of all the household duties (7.27-8). This system ideally precipitates trust between two people in separate spheres brought together for a common purpose, but it can also reliably create situations which bring them into conflict, as Ischomachus suggests when he jokes that he has "often been marked out" by his prosecuting wife "and sentenced to suffer or pay up" as a losing defendant.[9]

Differences in perspective are to be expected in treatments of a subject so ubiquitous and wide-ranging in its areas of influence. It also must be remembered that ancient authors rarely wrote in a purely personal voice. We are presented with a range of more or less ventriloquized voices which apprehend the issue from distinct ideological positions. Such differences are

[8] See Pomeroy 1994: 46ff.
[9] ἤδη δ', ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ διειλημμένως πολλάκις ἐκρίθην ὅ τι χρὴ παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι, 11.25.

instructive in their own way, revealing areas of debate which also arise repeatedly in the tragic scenes below. Most notable is the apparent disagreement between Aristotle and Xenophon about whether *oikos* leadership is essentially the same as political leadership.[10] Aristotle (or the author who voices the *Politics*) says those who argue that various types of leadership—political (πολιτικὸν), kingly (βασιλικὸν), householding (οἰκονομικὸν), and masterly (δεσποτικὸν)—are the same "do not argue nobly" (οὐ καλῶς λέγουσιν, 1252a5–15). In his *Memorabilia,* Xenophon's Socrates states, "whatever a man should control, given that he knows what he needs to do and has the strength to do it, he would be a good controller, whether he may control a chorus or a household or a city or an army" (*Mem*. 3.4.6). This question, of the applicability of the principles of leadership, will be raised in each of the case studies below.

Scholarship: The *Oikos* in Tragedy

The *oikos* has often been the subject of scholarship on tragedy. Here, I describe in broad strokes some arguments which have been made about the *oikos*' role in tragedy.

The physical *oikos* is often a part of the performance space, represented by the double-doored *skene* structure. In *Agamemnon* and *Electra*, the *skene* is made to represent the palace of Atreus. In *Iphigenia at Aulis* the action centers around Agamemnon's tent, which functions as a secondary or temporary *oikos*. One might argue that a military tent cannot really be called the physical *oikos* of Agamemnon, since it is not an inherited paternal property (or even a permanent structure), but characters treat it identically to one nonetheless, entering, exiting, and visiting it as expected. One feature the tent does not possess is a history of the violence which came before, an element that comes into play in the palace-sets of *Electra* and *Agamemnon*, where there is a strong sense that the halls have retained memories of previous generations. In *Electra*, Orestes

[10] See Roger Brock, *Greek Political Imagery: From Homer to Aristotle* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 25–43.

forces Clytemnestra into the palace so that she will die on the very spot where she murdered Agamemnon years before. In *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia*, the palace is fully haunted by victims and avengers of past violence, extending back to the crimes of Atreus. Oliver Taplin argues, in support of Wilamowitz who first suggested it, that the *Oresteia* was the first of Aeschylus' productions to make use of a *skene*. Taplin notes the many instances in which the *skene*-as-palace is "prominently and significantly used in the poetry and imagery of the plays," making full use of the innovation in set design.[11]

The *oikos* also has a life of its own separate from the physical structure. Structuralism has shaped discourse on Greek tragedy greatly. Claude Levi-Strauss' *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949) applied linguistic structuralism to anthropology and theorized that structures of kinship—in all cultures—are based on the exchange of women by men in a gifting culture, where men, who hold property, ritually exchange women to avoid incest. He also theorized, after Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, that culture itself is comprised of opposites, held in tension and constantly negotiated. Dialectic thinking has found a prominent place in classical scholarship. The *oikos*, an interior space populated by women and closed off from public affairs, forms a dialectic with the *polis*. *Oikos* and *polis*, private and public, nature and civilization, self and other ("Other") have been fruitful categories for thinking about the oppositions present in tragedy. Froma Zeitlin's *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (1996) famously applies the dialectic form to gender relations, arguing that "a whole series of antitheses

[11] Taplin 1977: 452-59 ("Appendix C: The Skene in Aeschylus") and throughout 276-332 ("*Agamemnon*").

takes form around the polarization of male and female roles."[12] As she argues, these binaries are mutually reinforcing. As female is to male, so *oikos* is to *polis*.[13]

These are not the final words on the physicality and symbolism of the *oikos*. Ruth Padel, for instance, combines the physical and symbolic to argue that the *skene* conceals a tripartite unknown space—at once the interior of the house, death itself (the house of Hades), and the hidden corners of the mind—that may be revealed upon the eccyclema.[14] But there has also been discussion about the degree to which the stage *oikos* can be construed as symbolic. The palace of Atreus in the *Oresteia* approaches the status of character in its own right.[15] David Wiles argues that "space can never be abstract or inanimate," and that the *oikos* set in the Oresteia "cannot be construed as a symbol for part of the self…because it has its own material and animate identity, as vividly rendered as any of the 'characters' played by masked actors."[16] Especially useful for this study has been a sociological perspective focusing on the articulation of the institutions of household and state in Attic life. S. C. Humphreys' incisive chapter, "*Oikos* and *Polis*" has been formative in my thinking about the ways in which the demands of the two institutions come into systemic conflict.[17]

Sources on the Texts

My approach is based in close reading of the texts, so the commentaries I use merit acknowledgement. For *Agamemnon*, I use Denniston and Page's 1957 edition of the Greek text and their commentary, along with Eduard Fraenkel's commentary. John Dewar Denniston died in

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[12] Zeitlin 1996: 111.
[13] See especially chapter three, "The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth and Mythmaking in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," pp. 87-119, first published 1978.
[14] Padel 1992.
[15] See John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962): 82ff.
[16] Wiles 1997: 168-69.
[17] *The Family, Women and Death* (London: Routledge, 1982), pp. 1-21.

May of 1949, leaving a draft of his commentary on the *Agamemnon* dated August 1947. His collaborator Denys Page writes in their preface, "It was known at that time that Professor Fraenkel's major edition of the play would be published before very long; and Denniston's intention was to wait, and to take Professor Fraenkel's work fully into consideration before making a final version of his own commentary."[18] Eduard Fraenkel's three-volume edition was published in 1950.[19] In five years, Page collated the two editions as he felt Denniston would have done, "reconsider[ing] everything afresh, from the first line to the last, in the light of the enormously extensive researches embodied in Professor Fraenkel's book; and … rewrit[ing] his own draft accordingly."[20] The commentaries of Denniston, Page, and Fraenkel remain touchstones of scholarship on the *Agamemnon*, though the three are not always in agreement, and I frequently make reference to both. I use Denniston and Page's Greek text, noting any personal emendations to the Greek.

For *Electra*, Richard Jebb's commentary is significant. The detail of his commentary is unmatched. Notes often take up a much larger area on the page than the text itself. Similarly detailed is the introduction (ix-lxvi), which provides a history of the extant sources on the Orestes myth, as well as an archaeologically-informed reconstruction of lost works (most prominently Stesichorus' *Oresteia* of the seventh or sixth century). Taken on its own, Jebb's introduction is an excellent summary of the use of the Orestes myth in Greek literature from Homer to Sophocles.

The text of Iphigenia in Aulis is notoriously corrupt. The two-volume translation and commentary by Christopher Collard and James Morwood has been invaluable, along with

[18] John Dewar Denniston and Denys Page, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957): iii.
[19] Eduard Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon.* 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).
[20] Denniston and Page 1957: iii.

reference to David Kovacs' Loeb translation with notes. Denys Page's *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy, studied with special reference to Euripides' Iphigeneia in Aulis* has been of great service in navigating the manuscript's complex transmission.

Methodology: Action and Potential

Poetics does not influence my study significantly, but any treatment of action and potential in tragedy should consider it as a source.[21] And, since another of Aristotle's works informs my conception of household management, it seems wise to consider his work on the theatre arts as well. I share the notion that plot is central, "for tragedy is the imitation not of men but of actions, of life" and of "fearful and piteous events," whose effect is strongest "when they come about logically one after another" and "appear to be by design."[22] I would call this a sense of poetic justice—that is, tragedy is not seen by Aristotle as faithfully representing an essentially chaotic world but a structured one. There is a relationship between a character's actions and his or her results or *telos*. This is the implicit understanding I have been working with in connecting householding with characterization.[23] Also relevant is Aristotle's view of morality in drama.

> As to the question whether anything that has been said or done is morally good or bad, this must be answered not merely by seeing whether what has actually been done or said is noble or base, but by taking into consideration also the man who did or said it, and seeing to whom he did or said it, and when and for whom and for what reason; for example, to secure a greater good or to avoid a greater evil.[24]

Combined with his argument in the *Politics* that virtue differs according to an individual's social role, I interpret this passage to mean that a character's status in the *oikos* should necessarily affect the audience's view of their actions.

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[21] On the importance of action, see Humphreys 1993: 18, Jones 1962.
[22] Aristotle *Poetics* 1450a17 ἡ γὰρ τραγῳδία μίμησίς ἐστιν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεων καὶ βίου 1452a2-4, 7 καὶ φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν… ὅταν γένηται παρὰ τὴν δόξαν δι᾽ ἄλληλα… ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες φαίνεται γεγονέναι
[23] Aristot. Poet. 1453a
[24] 1461a, trans. W. H. Fyfe.

A more formative source has been Emma Griffiths' *Children in Greek Tragedy: Pathos and Potential*. It is the germ of this thesis in the form of a paper wherein I applied Griffith's paradigm for the interpretation of child characters to the baby Orestes in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Griffiths points out a lack of scholarship centered on child characters in tragedy: "models of characterization which work for adult figures in tragedy have failed to account for the roles of children in the same framework."[25] Devoid of speech and action, child characters are often thought of as universal children, pathetic by nature for ancients and moderns alike. Griffiths addresses these gaps in her theory that the tragedians imbue child characters with pathos by calling on their potential, an "indefinite quality" which may render them both pathetic and dangerous in turn.[26] This indefinite potential is based in an understanding of the normative future roles of children and their place in familial and societal continuity. Her contention that "even the simplest expression of emotion forms part of more complex discourses of supplication, city pride, and family responsibility" has given me confidence in my approach of reading household management as a network of obligation overlying character interactions, sometimes quite subtly.[27]

Another major influence, sociologist S. C. Humphreys, addresses this matter from a historical-sociological perspective, using evidence from Greek law to probe tragedy for its reaction to underlying realities of Athenian society. Her work deals with social articulation, the functional overlap between disparate institutions and kin groups. This has been especially helpful in my reading of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, in which the tension between army and family (both natal and *oikos*-defined) is most emphasized. Humphreys argues that the preoccupations of tragedy

[25] Griffiths 2020: 6.
[26] Griffiths 2020: 7.
[27] Griffiths 2020: 9.

reveal sore spots in the Athenian social body, and I use this theory when examining contentious relations like those between wives and concubines and between brothers. Within the scope of the tragedies themselves, I argue simply that this preoccupation affects plot and structure in various ways.

At certain points I necessarily look outside of tragedy for reference to particular customs, popular discourses, and social patterns. Individual close readings employing conversational analysis and related methods have also been enlightening. Such contextualized close reading has been most useful for me in understanding the 'movement' of tragedy, the way plot develops and characters make decisions and undergo change.

Chapter One: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

Introduction

In *Agamemnon*, good household management reflects good character. In this chapter, I argue that Agamemnon's destruction can be viewed as a function of his poor householding. The focus of this chapter is the "Carpet Scene" (782-974), the centerpiece to which the first half of the *Agamemnon* slowly builds. The scene arrives at nearly the exact mid-point of the play and is the only time in the *Oresteia* when Agamemnon appears as a fully embodied (living) character.[28] Readings of Agamemnon's character diverge widely, but there are two major scholarly branches of interpretation, and each hinges on the Carpet Scene. Fraenkel rightly observes that "the reader's understanding of the whole play depends in great measure upon what he decides here," but admits that the text is opaque: "we must draw our inferences" about Agamemnon's decision

[28] Agamemnon retains a *disembodied* presence in the following two plays. See, for example, *Choephoroi* 980 where Orestes displays the bloodied cloth that was wound around Agamemnon to incapacitate him.

to walk across the garments "from the general picture of his personality…a risky undertaking."[29] The first major scholarly reading of Agamemnon's character, put forth by Fraenkel, is that he is "a great gentleman, possessed of moderation and self-control," who falls victim to mostly unfair external circumstances.[30] The second, put forth by Denniston and Page, is that "he is at the mercy of his own vanity and arrogance" and it is this *hybris* which dooms him.[31] I piece apart this scene, closely examining the depiction of Agamemnon's relationships to the chorus, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra, to argue that his householding in this scene encourages a critical perspective of his character.

Though my focus is on Agamemnon's arrival (783),[32] Aeschylus weaves images of household unrest throughout the earlier scenes, usually in the voice of the chorus. In the following section, I briefly account for the first half of the play's development of themes that will

[29] Fraenkel 1950: 431; 441.

[30] Fraenkel 1950: 441. See also John Symmons' note to line 922: "[Agamemnon's] piety, magnanimity, and modesty require no comment" (1824: 84); Henri Weil's *Études sur le drame antique*: "La vainqueur paraît enfin en personne ; il proclame sa victoire avec une grandeur exempte de présomption" (1897: 32); and William Sewell's introduction to his translation: "all that is seen of Agamemnon is noble, and calculated to inspire precisely that feeling of respect, which constitutes man an object of just and rightly tempered pity. His religious appeal to the gods; his acknowledgement of their hand in the just revenge which he had been enabled to take upon Troy; his conviction of the vanity of flattery, and of the treachery of man; his grateful recollection of Ulysses; his plans for future government; the cool and quiet distrust with which he listens to the elaborate over-strained professions of Clytemnestra, and rebukes her with a gentle irony; his rejection of her flatteries; his contempt and refusal of her ostentatious and extravagant honours; the humility with which he bears his victory; even his final concession to her request, of treading on her purple tapestries (a request not made without the hope of inducing him to commit what might seem a crime, as indicating pride, and so expose him to an 'envious eye' from heaven, and facilitate the execution of her vengeance); and, lastly, his care for Cassandra—all are delicate touches of a noble character, perhaps the most perfect exemplification, which we all possess, of Aristotle's "magnanimous man," embodied in poetry" (1846: xxxiv-xxxv). I include his corollary interpretations because this section presents alternative readings to several of them.

[31] Denniston and Page 1957: 151; Eugen Peterson, *Die Attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst*: "Ist denn aber nicht des eben Überhebung, sich als Vollstrecker des Götterwillens zu fühlen und hinzustellen, was Agamemnon gleich in den ersten Worten tut?" (1915: 31); Maurice Croiset, *Eschyle; Études sur L'Invention Dramatique dans Son Théatre*: "Faiblesse et vanité tout a la fois prévalent en lui. Il se défend mollement, il finit par se laisser faire, tout en blâme lui-même ce qu'il fait." (1965: 191); Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus*: "Clytemnestra's motive is a wish to make him offend both the gods and the people by his pride: his motive is that pride itself. He would not have walked on the tapestries if left to himself, but secretly he longs to do so" (1940: 218).

[32] The exact moment of his entrance is indeterminate, but I place it at line 783 when he is the subject of direct address by the chorus, as does Oliver Taplin (*Stagecraft* 1977: 302-4).

be highlighted in the Carpet Scene. I use Anne Lebeck's *The* Oresteia*: A Study in Language and Structure* as a guide to Aeschylus' dense, proleptic method of introducing themes via "words and images…whose full relevance cannot be grasped unless they are considered with reference to the whole."[33]

Householding Themes (1-782)

In *Agamemnon*'s prologue, the watchman states aloud that the household is not tended as well as it was in the past (18-19).[34] He is afraid of Clytemnestra (10-17) but leaps to inform her of the beacon signaling the army's return (25-30).

The chorus of old Argive men enters (40) and introduces the theme of sacrifice.[35] It sings of Agamemnon and Menelaus' partnership, "the steady team of the Atreides, honored by Zeus with twin thrones and twin scepters" (42-43).[36] In the Vulture Simile (48-59), they are likened to birds who, enraged by the loss of their chicks, leave their nest to seek revenge as resident aliens (57: μέτοικοι) in the sky.[37] The image of the chicks refers to Helen, "the woman of many men" (62: πολυάνορος γυναικὸς), but "children taken, parental cries of mourning as for a death, these suggest the theft of Iphigenia."[38]

The chorus then ruminate on the troubling events of ten years ago. An omen of two birds hunting down a pregnant hare (108-120: the Eagle Omen) attended the Greek army's departure.

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[33] Lebeck 1977: 7. On proleptic statement, see pp. 1-2. For a more comprehensive account of the themes introduced in lines 1-783, see pp. 7-51.
[34] See also Chapter Two: Sophocles' *Electra*.
[35] Lebeck 1977: 7.
[36] διθρόνου Διόθεν καὶ δισκήπτρου / τιμῆς ὀχυρὸν ζεῦγος Ἀτρειδᾶν
[37] See Carol Dougherty's article "These *Metoikoi*" (*AJP* 138.4) for further discussion of the term *metoikos* and the way Aeschylus may use it here "to pose important questions to which he will return…Are [the referents of the Vulture Simile] family members (*philoi*) or strangers (*xenoi*)? What is their relationship to the house (*oikos*)? Do they live within? Or have they moved and changed houses?" (582). See also Lebeck pp. 14-15 for echoes of the Vulture Simile in the imagery of *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*.
[38] Lebeck 1977: 8.

The seer Calchas interprets it as a revelation of Artemis' rage against the Atreides (122-139)[39] and realizes the condition she has set for the fleet's departure—the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia (146-152). Calchas foresees danger in the act, a "fearful, ever-present, house-keeping, deceitful, unforgetting wrath to avenge the child" which will rise against the perpetrator (154-155).[40] Adverse winds begin to wear down the army (192-204), however, and Agamemnon decides to order the sacrifice (205-217). The chorus is horrified by what follows and can bring itself to describe only the moments leading up to her death (228-249):

> Her entreaties and invocations of "Father" the war-loving chiefs counted for nothing, and for nothing her maiden's age. After the prayer, her father told the attendants to take her up in their arms sparing no effort, as if she were a goat above the altar, face down,[41] robes slipping down around her,[42] and to carefully hold back any utterance of her fair-prowed mouth that would act as curse to the house,
>
> by violence and the stifling force of a bridle. As she poured the saffron-dipped robes to the ground,[43] she struck each of the chiefs there with a pitiable dart of her eye, looking as though she was in a picture, trying to call out, since often she had sung in her father's rich-tabled hall and, still unravaged, lovingly honored the joyous paean of the third libation, poured by her dear father, with her own pure voice.
>
> What happened next, I did not see and do not tell. The arts of Calchas did not fail.[44]

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[39] Artemis' dispute with the Atreides is not made clear. See Stuart E. Lawrence's article "Artemis in the *Agamemnon*" (*AJP* 97.2) for a seriatim survey of scholarship on the issue. Though it remains "one of the most vexed questions of Aeschylean criticism," Lawrence prefers the view that "Zeus is angry at Agamemnon for his future sin of pride (which the god foresees), and so he engineers his punishment for it in advance through Artemis' reaction to the portent…Artemis' anger at the literal content of the portent is employed by Zeus in order to create Agamemnon's dilemma" (97, 110). The sin of pride, meaning arrogance before the gods, can also be rightly named the sin of impiety.

[40] φοβερὰ παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος

[41] They position her facing downwards, throat toward the altar stone, so that her blood will flow down onto it when the knife is drawn against her neck. Cf. a sixth-century amphora similarly depicting the sacrifice of Polyxena (British Museum, No. 1897,0727.2).

[42] I follow Fraenkel's reading of παντὶ θυμῷ (233: lit. "with every spirit," trans. "sparing no effort") as part of Agamemnon's command to the attendants (Vol. II, 134), *contra* Denniston and Page (89-90), who read παντὶ θυμῷ as a description of Iphigenia, fallen to the ground in supplication.

[43] This description of her robes hitting the ground, after they have fallen around her body (231: "robes slipping down around her"), suggests the possibility that she is naked at the time of her death. As she looks wildly around at the "war-loving chiefs" (230), once known to her as her fathers' friends, and they look back at her, observing the sacrifice, the sexual nature of her misappropriated consumption becomes apparent. Nicole Loraux names it "the double satisfaction of transgressing in imagination the taboo of *phonos* [murder] and of dreaming about virgins' blood" (1991: 33).

[44] λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρῴους
παρ᾽ οὐδὲν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον

Clytemnestra appears and announces the Greeks' victory at Troy (264-267). The chorus does not immediately believe her and questions whether she is reporting a womanly dream (274) or rumor (276), but when she describes her relay system of beacons and gives a detailed account of Troy's destruction (281-350: the Beacon Speech), it commends her for speaking as if she were a wise man (351).

Now provisionally relieved, the chorus sings praise to the gods (355-402). It frames the Argive victory as Paris' (i.e. Alexander) punishment for "trampling underfoot the grace of things not to be touched" (371-2: ἀθίκτων χάρις / πατοῖθ'). Such an evil kind of man, it reasons, cannot hide (387-393), "since he is like a child chasing after a winged bird, inflicting on his city an unbearable brand" (393-395).[45]

ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς·
φράσεν δ' ἀόζοις πατὴρ μετ' εὐχὰν
δίκαν χιμαίρας ὕπερθε βωμοῦ
πέπλοισι περιπετῆ παντὶ θυμῷ
προνωπῆ λαβεῖν ἀέρ-
δην, στόματός τε καλλιπρῴ-
ρου φυλακᾷ κατασχεῖν
φθόγγον ἀραῖον οἴκοις,

βίᾳ χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδῳ μένει·
κρόκου βαφὰς δ' ἐς πέδον χέουσα
ἔβαλλ' ἕκαστον θυτή-
ρων ἀπ' ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτῳ,
πρέπουσά θ' ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς, προσεννέπειν
θέλουσ', ἐπεὶ πολλάκις
πατρὸς κατ' ἀνδρῶνας εὐτραπέζους
ἔμελψεν, ἀγνᾷ δ' ἀταύρωτος αὐδᾷ πατρὸς
φίλου τριτόσπονδον εὔποτμον παι-
ῶνα φίλως ἐτίμα.

τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω·
τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι·

[45] ἐπεὶ / διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν, / πόλει πρόστριμμ' ἄφερτον ἐνθείς. The recurrence of bird imagery, which previously has referred to Agamemnon (cf. the Vulture Simile and the Eagle Omen), as well as the following account of the sufferings he has inflicted upon Argos, surely criticize Agamemnon alongside Alexander (whether consciously or unconsciously).
Cf. also *Iliad* 15.360-366 (in which Apollo tears down the Achaeans' walls like a child destroying a sandcastle) for parallel use of a child simile in emphasizing thoughtlessness/indifference at destruction.

The chorus now also reveals growing dissatisfaction in Argos. "Ares the gold-changer of bodies […] sends back from Ilium to their loved ones a heavy dust, […] freighting fine jars of ash instead of men" (437-444).[46] In Argos, "someone snarls it under their breath—*all because of someone else's wife*—and grief charged with envy stirs against the Atreides avengers" (447-450).[47] The chorus becomes more anxious for the brothers (459-460), "for the gods do not ignore those who spill much blood" (461-462).[48]

The old Argives begin to doubt Clytemnestra again (475-487) until she alerts them to the arrival of an army herald (489-500). He announces Agamemnon's imminent return (518-521) and Troy's defeat (522-537). Clytemnestra mocks the chorus for its stubborn reluctance to believe her (587-597) and sends the herald back to Agamemnon with a message (605-614):

> [Tell him], the darling of the city, to come as swiftly he can, so that he may find upon his return a faithful wife waiting at home, just as he left her, a watchdog of the house kindly toward his friends and warlike against his enemies, and in everything else just the same, with his seal in no way corrupted during this length of time. I have not known delight nor any scandalous rumor from another man, any more than I know of dipping bronze. A boast of this sort, filled with truth, is not shameful for a noble wife to proclaim.[49]

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[46] ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ᾽ Ἄρης σωμάτων
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς
πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον ἀν-
τήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτους.

[47] ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναι- / κός: τάδε σῖγά τις βαῦ- / ζει, φθονερὸν δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἄλγος ἔρ- / πει προδίκοις Ἀτρείδαις.

[48] τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ / ἄσκοποι θεοί

[49] ἥκειν ὅπως τάχιστ᾽ ἐράσμιον πόλει·
γυναῖκα πιστὴν δ᾽ ἐν δόμοις εὕροι μολὼν
οἵανπερ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα
ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμίαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον
οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου·
οὐδ᾽ οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ᾽ ἐπίψογον φάτιν
ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς.
τοιόσδ᾽ ὁ κόμπος τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων
οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν.

The chorus' comment (seems to) cast doubt on her claims (615-616):

> She spoke thus for your understanding—for piercing interpreters, a fair-sounding speech.[50]

Quickly, however, it asks after Menelaus (617-619), whom the herald admits is currently missing after a storm blew his ship away from the fleet (620-680).

The herald leaves, and the chorus' anxiety mounts around the destruction of Troy and the theme of hereditary guilt in the second stasimon (681-781).[51] It is preoccupied with images of Helen (682-698) and the curse of her marriage (699: κῆδος, meaning both "marriage connection" and "sorrow") (699-716). In the Lion Cub Parable (717-736), it compares Helen to a harmless cub grown into "a god-sent priest of delusion, reared within the house" (735-736).[52]

This thought leads to the subject of Agamemnon's guilt (750-781). On the one hand, some say that when "the happiness of a man is complete" (751-752: μέγαν τελε- / σθέντα φωτὸς ὄλβον) it breeds in turn "an insatiable woe" (756: ἀκόρεστον οἰζύν). The chorus, on the other, think "it is the ungodly *act* that begets further deeds after itself, formed in its own image, while it

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[50] αὕτη μὲν οὕτως εἶπε μανθάνοντί σοι / τοροῖσιν ἑρμηνεῦσιν εὐπρεπῶς λόγον.
These lines are difficult. Denniston and Page think "the general sense indicated is a contrast between what the Herald understands and what the 'clear interpreters' understand," but qualify, "it is not possible to offer more than a makeshift text and translation here" (127). Fraenkel is undeterred. "The many misunderstandings of this passage need not detain us long…Obviously the first meaning intended in our current passage is that of a suitable, seemly speech. But we may be allowed to surmise that a secondary meaning is also intended in this sentence so packed with innuendo, and to find here as an undertone that sense of the 'speciosum', the deceptively convincing" (307-8). Denniston and Page doubt this on grounds that it is "unsuitably outspoken" (127) for the chorus, and a "straight" reading of the passage has its merits. The chorus might be thought of as simply, perhaps in embarrassment, confirming to the herald that Clytemnestra's speech had a "seemly" (εὐπρεπῆ) intention *despite* its startling directness. This is consistent with their previous misogynistic distrust and reinterpretation of her speech acts (274, 276, 475-487). But there is also resonance in the possibility of deliberate ambiguity in εὐπρεπῶς (lit. well-appearing, with the sematic range of both "seemly" and "good only in appearance"). Fraenkel argues that the chorus cannot speak freely of Clytemnestra's infidelity (which they know or strongly suspect) and so try to warn the herald that she is lying through safely ambiguous language (307-9). Their extensive, veiled warning to Agamemnon himself (783-809) supports this reading. Further, their forced subtlety would strongly recall the watchman's lament over his own gag order: "If the house itself had a voice, it might speak most clearly" (37-8: οἶκος δ᾽ αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι, / σαφέστατ᾽ ἂν λέξειεν).

[51] Lebeck 1977: 47. See pp. 47-51 for her full discussion of the second stasimon.

[52] ἐκ θεοῦ δ᾽ ἱερεύς τις ἄ- / τας δόμοις προσεθρέφθη.

is always the fortune of righteous household to have fair children" (758-762).[53] The old men are trying to assure themselves that Agamemnon's crime has not doomed the entire house, but fall quickly into more fearful thoughts. Old hubris (763-764: ὕβρις παλαιὰ) does tend to breed new hubris (764-766: νεάζουσαν ὕβριν), a "black Delusion under the roof, resembling her parents" (769-771: μελαί- / νας μελάθροισιν Ἄτας, εἰδομένας τοκεῦσιν). And certainly Justice (772: Δίκα) "leaves with averted eyes those gilded shrines attended by fouled hands" (776-778),[54] "without paying honor to the power of wealth falsely-stamped with praise" (779-780).[55]

At the close of the antistrophe (781), Agamemnon arrives.

The Chorus Addresses Agamemnon (783-809)

Agamemnon's appearance takes place entirely in his slow procession toward the palace. He is stopped twice, with each obstruction illustrating a feature of his character.[56]

The chorus of old Argives is the first to address Agamemnon as he enters the scene riding in his chariot. At once, focus is on the politics of the interaction, as they try to warn their king about the dangerous dissent growing in his household and city.

> Come forth, king! Conqueror of Troy, son of Atreus. How could I address you, how would I pay my respects, without overshooting or falling short of the perfect measure of goodwill?[57]

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[53] τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον
μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,
σφετέρᾳ δ᾽ εἰκότα γέννᾳ·
οἴκων δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ εὐθυδίκων
καλλίπαις πότμος αἰεί.

[54] τὰ χρυσόπαστα δ᾽ ἕδεθλα σὺν / πίνῳ χερῶν παλιντρόποις / ὄμμασι λιποῦσ᾽,

[55] δύναμιν οὐ σέβουσα πλού- / του παράσημον αἴνῳ

[56] These are subtly planned exchanges which have been analyzed by various methods. My approach is informed by Philippides 1984 and Gasti 2015, who both track the swiftly shifting deictics of the scene, and Van Emde Boas 2017, who uses Conversation Analysis on the stichomythia of 931-44.

[57] ἄγε δή, βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ᾽, / Ἀτρέως γένεθλον, / πῶς σε προσείπω; πῶς σε σεβίζω / μήθ᾽ ὑπεράρας μήθ᾽ ὑποκάμψας / καιρὸν χάριτος; 783-87.

As they call him onto the scene (783: ἄγε δή) the issue emerges: how (785: πῶς; πῶς;) to interact with this man who courts disaster but holds a position that demands public respect? They decide on a show of "high courage" here and attempt to warn Agamemnon, with a "conciliatory and respectful attitude," that all is not well (788-798):[58]

> Many mortals, when they overstep what is just, put more importance in the way things appear than in the way they are. Every one of them is prepared, though unbitten by grief, to groan with the unfortunate; every one of them ready to share in celebrations and force on a matching smile. But even when a mortal makes his eyes overflow with kind intentions and bland affection, he cannot slip past a good judge of the herd.[59]

The threat is of deception through performative friendship. Clytemnestra seems a likely object—the queen soon groans and rejoices in apparent sympathy with her husband while privately pursuing his murder. Further, the chorus has (perhaps) recently implicated her in front of the army herald (615-616). But the chorus imply a multiplicity of deceptive actors. "Many mortals" (788: πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν), overstep justice, "every one of them ready" (791: πᾶς τις ἕτοιμος) to put on a false smile. The chorus soften their concern with a sureness that "a good judge of the herd" (προβατογνώμων, lit. "herd-knower," 795) will always discern the treacherous before they cause harm. The language of animal evaluation appears throughout the play as political

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[58] Denniston and Page 1957: 138; Fraenkel 1950: 364.

[59] I have emended σεβίζω to the aorist subjunctive σεβίξω in line 785, following Fraenkel.

πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι
προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες.
τῷ δυσπραγοῦντι δ᾽ ἐπιστενάχειν
πᾶς τις ἕτοιμος: δῆγμα δὲ λύπης
οὐδὲν ἐφ᾽ ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται:
καὶ ξυγχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς
ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι.
ὅστις δ᾽ ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ᾽ εὔφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὑδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.

metaphor, and here as elsewhere it illustrates the relation between the ruler and ruled.[60] The ideal ruler is like the wise master of an estate, a gentleman farmer who owns land and the flocks which populate it and generate revenue (Arist. *Pol*. 1.1258b, Xen. *Oik*. 5). His skill is in forward-thinking evaluation of worth and risk. These are also the tenets of good householding. The chorus' assurance thus functions as a suggestion for their addressee. They advise him that such managerial discernment is needed, right now.

They go on to give the reasons for the potential treachery, this time couched in the past tense, allowing them to avoid attribution to anyone except their own past selves, now disclosed as a matter of complete honesty (in contrast to the deception of "many mortals") (799-806):

> To me, back then, when you were preparing an army for Helen's sake (I will not hide it from you), you were drawn very crudely, since you were not managing the tiller of your mind well and you were reaping courage for the dying men from sacrifices. But now, from the very depths of my soul, I am not unfriendly but kind toward those ending a labor well.[61]

They confirm it is a matter of evaluation. The army was prepared for Helen's sake, one woman for many men's lives. It is a hard deal to accept, and even, they suggest, an objective error in judgement. So is Iphigenia's death, the foremost of the "sacrifices" (803: θυσιῶν) through which Agamemnon emboldened his army. The metaphor of Agamemnon "drawn very crudely" (801: κάρτ᾽ ἀπομούσως…γεγραμμένος, lit. "scratched [onto a surface] in a way far from the Muses) is

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[60] John Heath, "Disentangling the Beast: Humans and Other Animals in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*" (*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 119, 1999). See also chapter three, "The Shepherd of the People," in Roger Brock's *Greek Political Imagery from Homer to Aristotle* (Bloomsbury, 2013), with specific reference to this passage on p. 45.

[61] σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν
Ἑλένης ἕνεκ᾽, οὐ γάρ σ᾽ ἐπικεύσω,
κάρτ᾽ ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος,
οὐδ᾽ εὖ πραπίδων οἴακα νέμων
θράσος ἐκ θυσιῶν
ἀνδράσι θνήσκουσι κομίζων·
νῦν δ᾽ οὐκ ἀπ᾽ ἄκρας φρενὸς οὐδ᾽ ἀφίλως
εὔφρων πόνον εὖ τελέσασιν <ἐγώ>·
The text is corrupt here. There is no surviving verb in the final sentence (805-806), hence Denniston and Page's addition of ἐγώ with an implied εἰμί.

suggestive in the way they remember him, burned into their minds as the image of Iphigenia as she was raised above the altar, "looking like she was a picture" (242: πρέπουσά θ᾽ ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς, lit. "as if she was depicted in scratched strokes"). The chorus passes the image quickly and stresses how sincerely relieved it is that the Argives have ended the war and that survivors are returning (805-806). The great labor (806: πόνον) has ended well, and all is well that ends well. The hopeful thought contains an implicit weariness, however, as πόνος ("labor," but also "toil," "distress") connotes exhausting effort, both for the army and the chorus themselves, long burdened by anxiety while the Atreides were away from home.[62]

The old Argives finish their greeting on a note of warning which is, for the third time, dampened by reassurance. This is their clearest statement to Agamemnon, and it takes the direct second person future, "you will know" (807: γνώσῃ) (807-809):

> You will know in time, by thorough inquiry, those of the citizens who stayed in the city in a just manner and those who did so inappropriately.[63]

With Aeschylean compression, they express the two allegations facing Agamemnon from his wife and his people. The phrase "stayed in the city" (809: πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα) is notable. The verb οἰκουρέω (lit. "to keep watch over a household") alludes to Clytemnestra's inappropriate behavior as leader of the royal household, with the object of the city (809: πόλιν) suggesting similar dereliction of her duty as "sole guardian of the Apian land" (256-567: Ἀπίας γαίας μονόφρουρος). But the proper subject of οἰκουροῦντα, delayed to the end of the sentence while one thinks of Clytemnestra, is "citizens" (πολῖται).[64] Agamemnon is a tyrant, whose management of his household affects the entire city. His family life is inseparable from this public life. As

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[62] Cf. the watchman's prayer for deliverance from his own long labors of watch duty (1: τῶνδ᾽ ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων).
[63] γνώσῃ δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος / τόν τε δικαίως καὶ τὸν ἀκαίρως / πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν.
[64] Fraenkel insists that οἰκουρέω "is used in a depreciatory sense of the 'stay-at-home' in contrast to those who do their duty in the field as soldiers…a clear hint at Aegisthus" (369). I prefer to read the expression as more multipurpose in its applications, as most of the chorus' speech acts have held layered meanings.

such, the Argive citizen body can be thought of as "keeping house" for their king in a manner similar to Clytemnestra. Because he has earned the enmity of both his wife and people, Agamemnon must take caution in both the palace halls and the city streets.

Agamemnon's Entrance Speech (810-854)

Agamemnon's response to the chorus, in the form of his tripartite entrance speech, shows that their concerns have been noted but are not in any sense alarming to him.[65] First are his programmatic statements of homecoming, replete with praise to the gods and details of his conquest (810-828):

> First, it is right to address Argos and its native gods, my partners in the journey home and in the justice I meted out on Priam's city. For the gods heard claims not put to language,[66] and they cast their man-felling, Ilium-destroying votes into the bloodstained ballot box, a unanimous verdict. Only the hope of a hand approached the opposing box, and it was not filled. Even now the captured city is marked out by smoke. Ruin's storm clouds live, while dying ash sends forth fat blasts of wealth. One must repay the gods for this outcome with well-remembered gratitude, since we did indeed fence them in with cruel snares, and, for the sake of a woman, the Argive beast ground the city to dust; the brood of the horse, a shield-bearing people, leapt in a rush at the setting of the Pleiades; the lion, eater of raw flesh, overleapt the ramparts and licked its fill of tyrant's blood.[67]

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[65] Critics read Agamemnon's speech as variously as his character. In Paley's view, Agamemnon's "address [is] one of ill-concealed pride and affected thankfulness to the gods," which proceeds in a "dull and sententious" manner (85, 142). In Fraenkel's view, Agamemnon begins with "a full and proper expression of gratitude" and continues in a similar manner, giving no hint we are meant to view him in "an unfavourable light" (374).

[66] "Claims not put to language" (813: δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης) is ironically appropriate as a description of the unvoiced jabs flying between the chorus, Clytemnestra, and Agamemnon.

[67] πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταιτίους
νόστου δικαίων θ᾽ ὧν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν
Πριάμου: δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ
κλύοντες ἀνδροθνῆτας Ἰλιοφθόρους
ἐς αἱματηρὸν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως
ψήφους ἔθεντο· τῷ δ᾽ ἐναντίῳ κύτει
ἐλπὶς προσῄει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῳ.
καπνῷ δ᾽ ἁλοῦσα νῦν ἔτ᾽ εὔσημος πόλις·
ἄτης θύελλαι ζῶσι, δυσθνῄσκουσα δὲ
σποδὸς προπέμπει πίονας πλούτου πνοάς.
τούτων θεοῖσι χρὴ πολύμνηστον χάριν
τίνειν, ἐπείπερ κἀρπαγὰς ὑπερκόπους
ἐφραξάμεσθα, καὶ γυναικὸς οὕνεκα

He, like the chorus and the Argive people, cites Helen as the war's justification and reward (823, cf. 62, 448-9). For those in Argos, the exchange is a source of regret—a great price paid in human lives for the repossession of a single woman. For Agamemnon, the same exchange is a source of pride—great payment extracted from the Trojans for their brief term with the same woman. This is Agamemnon overshooting his public goodwill and presenting a fundamentally different evaluation of the Trojan war from that of his advisors and citizens. It is becoming a pattern for him to privilege the rewards of glory over its wages (Iphigenia, his men), even when presented with his community's disapproval.

But he has heard the chorus and responds to them directly (829-837):

> To the gods I have spun out this prelude. That which is in your mind, I have remembered since hearing it. I agree with you, and you have me as your advocate. For it is inborn to few men to honor a prosperous friend without envy. While the malignant poison lurks in his heart, it doubles the burden of his sickness. He both is oppressed by his own pains and groans seeing strangers' happiness.[68]

Rather than immediately reaffirming his commitment to the common weal, he attributes his people's unhappiness to envy of his successes. This is a clever spin of the chorus' announcement. Agamemnon describes envy (833: φθόνος) as a naturally arising (832: συγγενής, lit. "born with") force, one that is part and parcel of living in community with others. The depiction of the

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πόλιν διημάθυνεν Ἀργεῖον δάκος,
ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδηφόρος λεώς,
πήδημ᾽ ὀρούσας ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν·
ὑπερθορὼν δὲ πύργον ὠμηστὴς λέων
ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ.

[68] θεοῖς μὲν ἐξέτεινα φροίμιον τόδε·
τὰ δ᾽ ἐς τὸ σὸν φρόνημα, μέμνημαι κλύων
καὶ φημὶ ταὐτὰ καὶ συνήγορόν μ᾽ ἔχεις·
παύροις γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἐστι συγγενὲς τόδε
φίλον τὸν εὐτυχοῦντ᾽ ἄνευ φθόνου σέβειν·
δύσφρων γὰρ ἰὸς καρδίαν προσήμενος
ἄχθος διπλοίζει τῷ πεπαμένῳ νόσον·
τοῖς τ᾽ αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ πήμασιν βαρύνεται
καὶ τὸν θυραῖον ὄλβον εἰσορῶν στένει·

problem removes his culpability in the matter. It is no longer one requiring any direct, reparative action on his part.

As further proof of his ability to weather mankind's natural envy, Agamemnon compares the Argives' envy to that of the Greek commanders—"an ominously proud and self-satisfied explanation for unpopularity," in W. B. Stanford's words (838-844):[69]

> I can say with confidence, for I understand quite well the mirror of community, that those who appear to be gentle-spirited toward me are an insubstantial mass of shadows. Only Odysseus, the very man who sailed against his will, was my ready trace-horse once he was yoked. I don't know whether he's alive or dead.[70]

The phrase "mirror of community" is elusive.[71] It is best understood to mean something like "the mere appearance" of community. Stanford argues convincingly that Agamemnon refers to the expected flattery of court life, in which courtiers reflect back to their ruler merely a complimentary impression of himself. Stanford cites *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*,[72] in which Plutarch also employs a mirror analogy to the same effect: "One can see that he [κόλαξ: the flatterer] is not at all constant, loving neither himself nor his own passion, hating and rejoicing and grieving in turn, and like a mirror he takes up the likeness of alien passions and ways of living and causes."[73] This is similarly associated with shadowiness: "I do not need a

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[69] W. B. Stanford, "'The Looking-Glass of Society' in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 838–40" (*The Classical Review* 4.2, 1954): 84.

[70] εἰδὼς λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν, εὖ γὰρ ἐξεπίσταμαι
ὁμιλίας κάτοπτρον, εἴδωλον σκιᾶς,
δοκοῦντας εἶναι κάρτα πρευμενεῖς ἐμοί·
μόνος δ᾽ Ὀδυσσεύς, ὅσπερ οὐχ ἑκὼν ἔπλει,
ζευχθεὶς ἑτοῖμος ἦν ἐμοὶ σειραφόρος·
εἴτ᾽ οὖν θανόντος εἴτε καὶ ζῶντος πέρι
λέγω.

[71] For a discussion of ancient Greek and Roman mirrors and their presence in literature, see Willard McCarty, "The Shape of the Mirror: Metaphorical Catoptrics in Classical Literature" (*Arethusa*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1989).

[72] Πῶς ἄν τις διακρίνειε τὸν κόλακα τοῦ φίλοῦ / Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur

[73] ὄψεται γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐδαμοῦ βέβαιον οὐδ᾽ ἴδιον οὐδ᾽ οἰκείῳ πάθει φιλοῦντα καὶ μισοῦντα καὶ χαίροντα καὶ λυπούμενον, ἀλλὰ δίκην κατόπτρου παθῶν ὀθνείων καὶ βίων καὶ κινημάτων εἰκόνας ἀναδεχόμενον, Plut. *Adulator* 53a.

friend who matches my movements and gestures, for my shadow does that better."[74] Agamemnon's claim that he understands the mechanics of flattery adds little to his defense, but it does provide his audience with rather *un*flattering comparative material. Agamemnon has not spent the last ten years with the Greek fleet in united determination to bring Helen home—rather, internal divisions created an atmosphere of distrust much like that circulating the city. Perhaps the problem is Agamemnon, despite his denial. His companionship with Odysseus is also suspicious. As Stanford argues, Aeschylus carries a typical fifth-century view of Odysseus as a "specious deceiver" and "villain": "It is hardly a good sign that the only companion whom Agamemnon thought to be his true friend in the end was the person most suspected of deceitfulness and flattery among the heroes at Troy."[75] Even when Agamemnon praises Odysseus' loyalty, he admits the man went to war against his will and had to be "yoked" (842: ζευχθεὶς) before becoming useful. The language of animal breaking is degrading in reference to a fellow king and shows that Agamemnon struggles to inspire obedience except by compulsion.[76] Agamemnon's need to "yoke" Odysseus is a mark of his mediocrity.[77] Further, he admits that he has no idea whether Odysseus is now alive or dead, which deflates any hope among listeners that excellent service to the king might be rewarded with a measure of security. Agamemnon's

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[74] οὐ δέομαι φίλου συμμεθισταμένου καὶ συνεπινεύοντος γὰρ σκιὰ ταῦτα ποιεῖ μᾶλλον, ibid.

[75] Stanford 1954: 83-4. Stanford has published extensively on Odysseus's treatment in Greek and later literature. See his seven-part article series "Studies in the Characterization of Ulysses" (*Hermathena* 73-81, 1949-53), particularly parts one, "The Denigration of Odysseus" (*Hermathena* 73, 1949), and two, "Reasons for the Denigration of Odysseus" (*Hermathena* 74, 1949); see alternatively his volume *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Blackwell, 1954).

[76] Cf. Aegisthus's promise: "Whomever is not obedient, I will yoke heavily, and he shall be no barley-fed colt of a trace-horse. Hateful hunger, housemate to shadow, will see him softened" (1639-42). As despotic leaders, both Aegisthus and Agamemnon default to punishment as a means of securing obedience.

[77] Cf. Xen. *Oikonomikos.* Xenophon's Socrates argues that "the most important proof of excellent leadership" (μέγα τεκμήριον ἄρχοντος ἀρετῆς) is a leader's ability to inspire willing obedience (4.19). This can be accomplished by good management, a system of rewards and punishments that incentivize service (5.14-17). In the military sphere, a "truly great" general "has many followers of like mind" and "can do great deeds by his will rather than his strength" (21.8), while a subpar one will "make their men unwilling to work and to take risks," both "disinclined and unwilling to obey, except under compulsion" (21.4).

response to the chorus is so far unsuccessful, as his speech communicates his despotic tendencies via his poor grasp of leadership principles. Once more, he has revealed a pattern of problematic evaluation and lack of foresight.

To conclude his entrance speech, Agamemnon expresses his intention to enter the palace (851-854):

> And now, passing under my roof into the halls of my hearth and home, I will first greet the gods, those who sent me forth and brought me back again; and, since victory has been with me until now, let it stay by my side![78]

He may have sidestepped the chorus and their political warnings, but when he tries to enter the domestic sphere of the palace, Clytemnestra appears in the threshold to present another obstacle.[79]

Clytemnestra Addresses Agamemnon (855-913) – The Pathway of Purple

Clytemnestra's speech is decidedly public, which makes its bold content all the more surprising (855-857): "Citizen men, this august assembly of Argives, I will not be ashamed to speak of my man-loving ways to you."[80] It is unclear whether her address to the "citizen men" is to be thought of as addressing a massed audience of Argives, perhaps represented by the audience (more directly engaging the audience in the work of judging this "case"). Though she speaks to the city, the content of her words is distinctly private, dealing only with her own

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[78] νῦν δ᾽ ἐς μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐφεστίους
ἐλθὼν θεοῖσι πρῶτα δεξιώσομαι,
οἵπερ πρόσω πέμψαντες ἤγαγον πάλιν·
νίκη δ᾽, ἐπείπερ ἕσπετ᾽, ἐμπέδως μένοι.

[79] Taplin 1977: 307. "Attention moves to the house, and the lord's position in his house. Before he is able to move towards the doorway Clytemnestra is standing in it. She blocks the way, she occupies the threshold: Clytemnestra controls the way into the house, and Agamemnon can only leave his temporary transport and enter the house on her conditions."

[80] ἄνδρες πολῖται, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,
οὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι τοὺς φιλάνορας τρόπους
λέξαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

experiences and those of her husband. In this way, she purposefully entrenches Agamemnon in his self-centered position. She explains her forthrightness as the remainder of a long period of suffering, from which regular decorum faded long ago (857-860): "In time, alarm dies away for humans. Untaught by others, I shall speak of my own sorry life, lived as long as this man was at Ilium."[81]

Clytemnestra focuses first on her vulnerability to reports of Agamemnon's death (861-873), but in such a dissonantly playful tone that though the manuscript appears sound, Denniston and Page deliver it "with a note of strongest disapproval and suspicion"[82]:

> The first matter. It is a lonely, terrible evil for a wife to sit waiting in the house without her man, listening to many malignant reports—now one coming in, now another, bearing an even more terrible calamity—ringing throughout the house. If this man sustained as many injuries as rumor inundated the house with, he now has more punctures to count than a net does. If he died as the stories multiplied, he would be three-bodied Geryon the second, a great weight overhead (for I do not speak of what is below), boasting a threefold cloak of earth, having died once in each form. On account of such malignant reports as these, others had to loosen many overhead nooses from my throat as I was held by force.[83]

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[81] ἐν χρόνῳ δ᾽ ἀποφθίνει
τὸ τάρβος ἀνθρώποισιν· οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα
μαθοῦσ᾽, ἐμαυτῆς δύσφορον λέξω βίον
τοσόνδ᾽ ὅσονπερ οὗτος ἦν ὑπ᾽ Ἰλίῳ.

[82] Denniston and Page 1957: 145.

[83] τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἧσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν,
πολλὰς κλύουσαν κληδόνας παλιγκότους,
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἥκειν, τὸν δ᾽ ἐπεσφέρειν κακοῦ
κάκιον ἄλλο πῆμα, λάσκοντας δόμοις·
καὶ τραυμάτων μὲν εἰ τόσων ἐτύγχανεν
ἀνὴρ ὅδ᾽, ὡς πρὸς οἶκον ὠχετεύετο
φάτις, τέτρηται δικτύου πλέω λέγειν·
εἰ δ᾽ ἦν τεθνηκὼς, ὡς ἐπλήθυον λόγοι,
τρισώματός τἂν Γηρυὼν ὁ δεύτερος
πολλὴν ἄνωθεν, τὴν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγω,
χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν ἐξηύχει λαβών,
ἅπαξ ἑκάστῳ κατθανὼν μορφώματι.
τοιῶνδ᾽ ἕκατι κληδόνων παλιγκότων
πολλὰς ἄνωθεν ἀρτάνας ἐμῆς δέρης
ἔλυσαν ἄλλοι πρὸς βίαν λελημμένης.

In Clytemnestra's attempted suicides there are echoes of Iphigenia's last moments. Mother and daughter face death while hoisted from the ground, from a noose "overhead" (875: ἄνωθεν) or a knife "above the altar" (232: ὕπερθε βωμοῦ). Clytemnestra targets her throat (875: ἐμῆς δέρης), just as the sacrificial knife seeks Iphigenia's as she is held face down (234: προνωπῆ) above the altar. Clytemnestra's choking nooses (875: ἀρτάνας) mimic the "stifling force of a bridle" (238: χαλινῶν τ᾽ ἀναύδῳ μένει) placed on Iphigenia. Neither are left alone; both are subject to physical violence. Others (876: ἄλλοι) loosen Clytemnestra's ropes, holding her by force (876: πρὸς βίαν λελημμένης) as they rescue her, while Iphigenia's father instructs his attendants (231: φράσεν δ᾽ ἀόζοις πατὴρ) to take hold of her (234: λαβεῖν [ἦν]) by force (238: βίᾳ). One might explain such similarities as merely symptoms of a highly developed male taste for images of feminine suffering in tragedy. Loraux has profitably described such contours in the genre, which prefers women to meet death weightlessly, violently, and through the throat.[84] But the density of this allusion and the similar allusions which follow it suggest an intentional echo of Iphigenia's death. She continues (877-886):

> It is indeed for these reasons that our child does not stand here, for me and you the guardian of our pledges, as is right: Orestes. Do not marvel at this. For our kindly spear-friend is bringing him up, Strophius the Phocian, while advising me about my two-sided calamity, both of the danger you were in at Ilium, and that mob-voiced anarchy might overthrow the Council, since it is something natural for mortals to kick the fallen all the harder. Such a plea certainly carries no trick.[85]

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[84] Loraux 1991.

[85] ἐκ τῶνδέ τοι παῖς ἐνθάδ᾽ οὐ παραστατεῖ,
ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,
ὡς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης· μηδὲ θαυμάσῃς τόδε·
τρέφει γὰρ αὐτὸν εὐμενὴς δορύξενος,
Στροφίος ὁ Φωκεύς, ἀμφίλεκτα πήματα
ἐμοὶ προφωνῶν, τόν θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ἰλίῳ σέθεν
κίνδυνον, εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία
βουλὴν καταρρίψειεν, ὥς τι σύγγονον
βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον·
τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει.

Until she names their son, it is unclear whether she is talking about Iphigenia or Orestes, and, following the chorus' allusion to Iphigenia (803) as well as Clytemnestra's potential reference above, it is Iphigenia's absence that is most glaring.[86] If we are to think of Iphigenia here, the phrase "guardian of our pledges" (878: κύριος πιστωμάτων) is especially apt for a first child, whose birth would cement a marriage legally and, hopefully, emotionally for the parents.[87] For Clytemnestra, Iphigenia's death was the breaking of these bonds and the effective death of her marriage union. Since Agamemnon has acted against the procreative goal of their partnership, he is an enemy, merely approaching in the form of an ally.[88]

She also advertises the distrust between Agamemnon and his people by openly stating the threat of anarchy (883: ἀναρχία). Taking a leaf from Agamemnon's political playbook, she attributes potential mob rule to a natural (884: σύγγονον) human impulse "to kick the fallen all the harder" (885: τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον), presumably referring to herself and the Argive government in its weakened state.

Clytemnestra returns to the theme of her suffering (887-894) and its resolution through her husband's return (895-905) before presenting him with a unique treasure (905-913):

> Now, dear head-man, step out of your chariot, but do not place your foot upon the ground, o lord, ravager of Ilium. Women, what is the delay? I have instructed you in your end, to strew the steps of his path with spread cloths. Quickly, let his passage be covered in purple, so that Justice may lead him into a home he could not have

[86] Mitchell-Boyask 2006: 281-2. See Winnington-Ingram 1983: 105, n. 25, on *kyrios* as plausibly feminine, also Fraenkel on gender neutral terms adding suspense. This verbal tactic is used elsewhere, e.g. at 1255, when Cassandra says she knows Greek all too well for the chorus to believe she is warning them about a male killer.
[87] Cf. Lysias 1.6: "When I, Athenians, decided to marry, and brought a wife into my house, for some time I was disposed neither to vex her nor to leave her too free to do just as she pleased; I kept a watch on her as far as possible, with such observation of her as was reasonable. But when a child was born to me, thence-forward I began to trust her, and placed all my affairs in her hands, presuming that we were now in perfect intimacy" (trans. Lamb).
[88] Cf. Mitchell-Boyask 2006: 277. "The death of Iphigenia cripples the marriage of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, and Orestes's absence is a sign, as Clytemnestra herself implies (877-79), that their union has been severed."

> hoped to see. Regarding other matters, meditation unconquered by sleep shall justly arrange what is fated with the help of the gods.[89]

As Clytemnestra calls for his path to be spread with purple cloth, focus shifts from Agamemnon's troubling political management to his relationship with his household. Through the proposed exchange of this cloth, Agamemnon is presented with a householding dilemma: is he willing to repeatedly compromise his *oikos*' corporate health and consume its substance for his own benefit?

The significance of the cloth is manifold. As Clytemnestra calls to her domestic servants to carry out the cloth, the object crosses the threshold between the domestic and public spheres, and its expensive and labor-intensive qualities are displayed to the public. It is a length of colorfully decorated, purple fabric.[90] Its color and value make Agamemnon's step upon it a potential act of *hybris*, but this is not its sole purpose. Lynda McNeil identifies it as a bridal cloth, both "a nuptial robe and a coverlet for the marriage bed."[91] She suggests the cloth is a product of the royal house, woven by Clytemnestra and her attendants. Melissa Mueller, however, takes Agamemnon's reference to "silver-bought webs" (ἀργυρωνήτους…ὑφάς) as an indication that the cloth was purchased already-made. The scene becomes an "ostentatious

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[89] νῦν δέ μοι, φίλον κάρα,
ἔκβαιν᾽ ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μὴ χαμαὶ τιθεὶς
τὸν σὸν πόδ᾽, ὦναξ, Ἰλίου πορθήτορα.
δμῳαί, τί μέλλεθ᾽, αἷς ἐπέσταλται τέλος
πέδον κελεύθου στρωννύναι πετάσμασιν;
εὐθὺς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος,
ἐς δῶμ᾽ ἄελπτον ὡς ἂν ἡγῆται Δίκη.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνῳ νικωμένη
θήσει δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς θείμαρμένα.

[90] The cloths are described variously as "spreads" (πετάσμασιν), "purples" (πορφύρας), a "purple-covered pathway" (πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος), a "laid-out garment" (εἵμασι στρώσασ᾽), "many-colored fineries" (ποικίλοις… κάλλεσιν), and "sea-works" (ἁλουργέσιν). The "sea-worked" color is achieved with a dye crushed from the *murex*, a type of omnivorous marine snail. Each snail contains a small amount of clear mucus that turns a deep purple color when exposed to air; thousands are used to dye a full piece of cloth. On the production of this dye, see Brendan Burke, *From Minos to Midas: Ancient Cloth Production in the Aegean and in Anatolia* (Oxford; Oakville: Oxbow Books, 2010).

[91] McNeil 2005: 2-5.

display of money-bought finery.[92] Either way, Clytemnestra invites comparison to another royal product, Iphigenia, "most beloved of my birth pains," (1417-18: φιλτάτην ἐμοὶ ὠδῖν[α]).[93] By asking Agamemnon to walk across the cloth, she invites him to show, in a most public and dramatic manner, that his decision to kill Iphigenia was not the product of exceptional circumstances, but the outcome of his repeated willingness to devalue their household and her contributions to it. This challenges the chorus' more forgiving framing of the sacrifice, in which Agamemnon was nearly out of his mind: he first "put on the yoke of necessity…and *thereafter* changed his mind to plot the all-daring deed."[94] Clytemnestra's pathway of purple implies otherwise. Agamemnon will not be bound by necessity to damage the cloth, and yet she anticipates, rightly, that he will.

Finally, Clytemnestra invokes Justice (911: Δίκη) to lead Agamemnon into the palace, as a groom might lead (911: ἠγῆται) a bride into her new home; in Agamemnon's case, it is a home "unhoped for" (911: δῶμ᾽ ἄελπτον), ostensibly because of the dangers he faced while away, but in Clytemnestra's private meaning alluding to her new order within the *oikos*.

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[92] Melissa Mueller, *Objects as Actors: Props and the Poetics of Performance in Greek Tragedy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015): 50-51.

[93] There are further interpretations of the cloth's significance. It may symbolize the marriage bed of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and by extension their union and familial harmony (McNeil 2005: 9). It also recalls the supposed wedding of Iphigenia (McNeil 2005: 11) and can be read as a remainder of the wealth that should have been transferred along with her (Morrell 1996: 160). The marriage associations are strengthened by evidence that garments used for marriage, childbirth, and dead in childbirth were dedicated to Artemis (Morrell 1996: 157). The cloth also represents Clytemnestra's "female authority" and "the economic power of the woman's sphere of activity." Its destruction is Clytemnestra's riposte to Agamemnon, highlighting the "competitive polarity of the intra- and extra-domestic spheres", and so is a form of boast: "Aeschylus uses the overwhelming abundance of the clothing and their mode of presentation to depict Clytaemnestra as uncontrolled and destructive… [she] offers her triumphant husband the sea itself." (Morrell 1996: 141, 149, 164).

[94] ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον…τόθεν / τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω, 218-221.

Agamemnon Responds (914-930); Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's Stichomythia (931-943)

Though Agamemnon does not yet understand the full scope of his wife's enmity, he is displeased by her aggressive speech, citing its excessive length (916)[95] and impropriety, coming from a woman and a member of his own house (916-917). He initially refuses to walk upon the cloth with three objections: such ostentatious comfort is more fitting for a woman (918) or a barbarian (919) than for a Greek man; better yet, the cloth should be reserved for the gods, since for a mortal it is "a path liable to envy" (921: ἐπίφθονον πόρον); finally, "the report of a footrag and a fine cloth cry out differently" (923-924),[96] that is, his conspicuous consumption will be widely unpopular with the citizens. These are all strong reasons, staked in his image as a pious Greek man and leader. The maxims with which he concludes approach a pastiche of this Solon-esque persona (927-930):

> And thinking well is the greatest gift of the gods; one must deem happy only the life ended in dear wellbeing. If I act as I have done thus far, I am in good courage.[97]

Clytemnestra is not dissuaded.[98] She proceeds to walk him through his objections one by one, showing him how he does not, in fact, wish to act according to any of these principles (931-943):

> C. Now tell me this, in your true opinion.
> A. My opinion! Be assured I will not hide it.
> C. You would do this if, in fear, you had vowed it before the gods?
> A. If someone with knowledge declared it the solution.

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[95] She continues to outdo him in this respect. When he concedes in 14 lines, she accepts victory in 16. Her line count in the play as a whole dwarfs his.

[96] χωρὶς ποδοψήστρων τε καὶ τῶν ποικίλων / κληδὼν ἀυτεῖ

[97] καὶ τὸ μὴ κακῶς φρονεῖν
θεοῦ μέγιστον δῶρον· ὀλβίσαι δὲ χρὴ
βίον τελευτήσαντ᾽ ἐν εὐεστοῖ φίλῃ.
εἰ πάντα δ᾽ ὡς πράσσοιμ᾽ ἄν, εὐθαρσὴς ἐγώ.

[98] « Surtout, elle fait honte a Agamemnon de paraitre redouter le blâme public, comme s'il reconnaissait a d'autres le droit de le juger » Croiset 1965: 191.

As she recalls, he has already consumed things of great worth under the aegis of divine mandate. This was his primary reasoning in the deliberations at Aulis, for "disobedience [to the goddess] means a heavy heart" (206).[99] As in Aulis, he relies on the divine knowledge of a seer like Calchas, "someone with knowledge" about the divine. Next, she leverages his rivalry with Priam and his pride to overpower his pretensions of Hellenic moderation, piety, and humbleness, without letting him forget his willingness (943: ἑκών) to change course.

> C. What does it seem to you that Priam would do if he had accomplished what you have?
> A. It seems to me he surely would have walked upon the cloths.
> C. Then do not be ashamed now in respect to human blame.
> A. But a rumor uttered in the people's voice has great strength.
> C. Only he who is unenviable is not envied.
> A. It is surely not for a woman to long for battle.
> C. Among your blessings, it is seemly to be defeated.
> A. You truly value victory in this contest?
> C. Obey—but give this authority to me willingly.[100]

Clytemnestra clearly means for the cloth "sacrifice" to recontextualize the murder of her daughter. Three times she has alluded to the sacrifice at Aulis (speaking of her suicide attempts, 875-6; the guardian of their pledges, 877-9; and in their stichomythia, 933-4, 943), and her current proposition bears key similarities to it. In both instances, Agamemnon recognizes that his

[99] βαρεῖα μὲν κὴρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι
[100] Κ. καὶ μὴν τόδ᾽ εἰπὲ μὴ παρὰ γνώμην ἐμοί.
Ἀ. γνώμην μὲν ἴσθι μὴ διαφθεροῦντ᾽ ἐμέ.
Κ. ηὔξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ᾽ ἔρδειν τάδε;
Ἀ. εἴπερ τις εἰδώς γ᾽ εὖ τόδ᾽ ἐξεῖπον τέλος.
Κ. τί δ᾽ ἂν δοκεῖ σοι Πρίαμος, εἰ τάδ᾽ ἤνυσεν;
Ἀ. ἐν ποικίλοις ἂν κάρτα μοι βῆναι δοκεῖ.
Κ. μή νυν τὸν ἀνθρώπειον αἰδεσθῇς ψόγον.
Ἀ. φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει.
Κ. ὁ δ᾽ ἀφθόνητός γ᾽ οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει.
Ἀ. οὔτοι γυναικός ἐστιν ἱμείρειν μάχης.
Κ. τοῖς δ᾽ ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει.
Ἀ. ἦ καὶ σὺ νίκην τήνδε δήριος τίεις;
Κ. πιθοῦ, †κράτος μέντοι πάρες γ᾽† ἑκὼν ἐμοί.

actions are ill-advised.[101] It is "a heavy burden to dye a father's hands with streams of maiden gore" (207-10) and "a great shame to harm the house by ruining wealth and silver-bought webs underfoot" (948-9).[102] In both instances, he knowingly undervalues something so precious as to be almost sacred. Back then, he agreed for his daughter, "treasure of his house" (208: δόμων ἄγαλμα,) to be hoisted for sacrifice "as if she were a goat above the altar" (232: δίκαν χιμαίρας ὕπερθε βωμοῦ,); and now, Clytemnestra knows he will agree for "fine cloths of many colors" (923: ποικίλοις… κάλλεσιν) to be used as his "footrag" (926: ποδόψηστρον). In the first instance, he perhaps has the yoke of necessity,[103] but in the second, he is rather easily convinced by his conversation with Clytemnestra.[104]

She demonstrates, as Agamemnon helpfully began to do on his own, that her husband has a distinct lack of skill in managing the precious materials with which is entrusted as a father, household leader, and head of state. A father should treat his children as free people, not slaves or animals.[105] A householder should not selfishly consume luxury items. A king should not partake in such *hybris*, flirting with intentional impiety. After his performance here, Clytemnestra has all the evidence she needs as his judge, jury, and executioner.

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[101] "Aeschylus presents an Agamemnon who expends wealth for no communal purpose and who cannot even match the fearless generosity to which Pindaric rhetoric lays claim." Gregory Crane, "Politics of Consumption and Generosity in the Carpet Scene of the *Agamemnon*" *(Classical Philology* 88.2, 1993): 135.

[102] βαρεῖα δ[ε]…μιαίνων παρθενοσφάγοισιν / ῥείθροις πατρῴους χέρας.
πολλὴ γὰρ αἰδὼς δωματοφθορεῖν ποσὶν / φθείροντα πλοῦτον ἀργυρωνήτους θ᾽ ὑφάς.

[103] To be less charitable, however, Agamemnon arguably made his decision *before* donning the yoke of necessity, see 220ff.

[104] "Great gentleman" interpreters explain the rather damning outcome in various ways. Fraenkel, for instance, offers two reasons for Agamemnon's concession, both of which I find unconvincing: "one, though not the most important, reason why Agamemnon gives way is his reluctance to get the better of a woman"; the other is that "he is tired to the utmost, worn out by the unceasing struggle, overpowered by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (441-2).

[105] Cf. *Politics* 1.1259a39-40: "For one rules both his wife and his children as [though they were] free persons" (καὶ γὰρ γυναικὸς ἄρχει καὶ τέκνων, ὡς ἐλευθέρων μὲν ἀμφοῖν); and 1.1259b19-20: "It is clear therefore that there should be more householding effort dedicated to human beings than the ownership of inanimate objects, and [more] to the excellence of these [beings] than the excellence of one's possessions, which we call wealth, and more to free persons than to slaves" (φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι πλείων ἡ σπουδὴ τῆς οἰκονομίας περὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἢ περὶ τὴν τῶν ἀψύχων κτῆσιν, καὶ περὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τούτων ἢ περὶ τὴν τῆς κτήσεως, ὃν καλοῦμεν πλοῦτον, καὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων μᾶλλον ἢ δούλων).

Concession and Victory (944-957, 958-974)

Of course, Agamemnon concedes. Before he enters the palace, he makes a final, short concession speech which at last brings attention to the silent figure of Cassandra. Several scholars have described the ways Cassandra makes an "ambiguous tableau" in this scene with potentially bridal overtones.[106] Taplin suggests that she makes her entrance on the same chariot as Agamemnon: "The audience is meant to notice Cassandra, and to notice that she is with Agamemnon. She is not explained, but she becomes yet one more element wrong in the homecoming, a disquieting presence seen out of the corner of the eye."[107] Robin Mitchell-Boyask adds that Aeschylus no doubt exploits the convenient overlap between Greek bridal and oracular garb to suggest the image of Cassandra as a bride.[108] Paula Debnar argues that he similarly capitalizes upon the similarity between the Greek marriage ceremony, which is styled as a ritual abduction, and the ritual incorporation of a war captive into their slaveholder's home: both rites include sacrifices, hearth rituals, and "the *katachysmata*, in which Athenians poured nuts, dates, coins, figs, and dried fruit—symbols of the household's prosperity—over a newcomer's head."[109]

By returning home with a bridal candidate in his entourage, Agamemnon adds the irritant of an extra-marital relationship to the already-tense situation. As Cynthia Patterson has shown,

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[106] Debnar 2010: 134.
[107] Taplin 1997: 306.
[108] Robin Mitchell-Boyask, "The Marriage of Cassandra and the 'Oresteia': Text, Image, Performance" (*Transactions of the American Philological Association* Vol. 136, No. 2, 2006). Mitchell-Boyask argues that Cassandra's appearance and words cast her as a bride of Apollo. "The presence of Apollo, the eternal unmarried ephebe, as an agent of sexual aggression against young women in tragic drama is clearly a negative paradigm" (272). I suggest this corrective message complements the negative depiction of Agamemnon's attempt to take Cassandra into his home as a kind of second wife.
[109] Paula Debnar, "The Sexual Status of Aeschylus' Cassandra" (*Classical Philology* 105.2, 2010): 134. See also Richard Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding" (*Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107, 1987) for a similar argument.

extra-marital relations are a point of difficulty in Aeschylus' time.[110] In earlier, Homeric poetry, extra-marital relationships do not generally pose a problem for inheritance or intra-familial hierarchy.[111] In fifth-century Athens, although there remains no widely attested prohibition on husbands' activities,[112] extra-marital relationships increasingly present issues for the *oikos* system of inheritance. The eligibility of a man's children for citizenship was usually based in his legal marriage to another citizen. This legal reality, as Cynthia Patterson notes, leads to the conception of potentially reproductive partnerships through the status of potential children:

> The emphasis of Greek family terminology is on the product rather than the state of marriage, as is evident also from Aristotle's observation that there was no single word in Greek for the relationship (or 'yoking together') of husband and wife. Athenians made do with the verb συνοικεῖν ('cohabit,' 'share an *oikos*'), or to be more specific they added παιδοποιεῖσθαι, 'produce children (for an *oikos*)'.[113]

Relations between a married man and a παλλακή (concubine) were therefore of concern to the Attic state, which, through its increasing litigation, openly encouraged economic and legal continuity among citizens first and foremost.[114] Soon after Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (458) was Perikles' Citizenship Law of 451, which officially (for a time) barred children of non-citizen mothers from becoming citizens themselves. In the following century, there remains both suspicion of non-citizen women and, clearly, a desire for their companionship. In Isaeus' *On the Estate of Philoctemon*, for instance, a man (Euctemon) who disrupts the sanctioned pathway of inheritance by placing his concubine (Acte) over his wife is depicted as foolish and gullible. In the speaker's depiction, Acte manipulates Euctemon into alienating himself from his *oikos* and committing the alleged crime: fraudulent registry of his and Acte's non-citizen children as his

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[110] Cynthia B. Patterson, "Those Athenian Bastards" (*Classical Antiquity* 9.1, 1990).
[111] Patterson 1990: 47-50; Helene Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton University Press, 2001): 88.
[112] Personal or "good conduct" clauses are attested later in Hellenistic and Roman marriage contracts. See, e.g., Humphreys' discussion (1993: 46-7) with notes and bibliography.
[113] Patterson, 1990: 40-49.
[114] See: Demosthenes, *Against Neaira,* esp. 13, 17, 93, 112-14, 122.

inheritors. Here, the blurring of *oikos* boundaries threatens rightful citizen heirs with disenfranchisement.

The tragedians play out similar conflicts between personal affection and legal status but handle them somewhat differently. Helene Foley argues that tragedy's idealized concubines are an alluring reaction against the contemporary pressure for a man's wedded partner to take precedence over non-wedded companions (or, to marry a citizen woman and produce citizen children). In comparison to the dangers posed by tragic wives, "the tragic concubine often sets herself apart…through the perfection with which she enacts the role of marital partner (from the male perspective)."[115] This seems to me quite fitting in the case of Cassandra. Cassandra is captured during the sacking of Troy and given to Agamemnon, not freely by her father, but as an enslaved concubine, a "gift of the army" (955: στρατοῦ δώρημ[α]). She is not, legally speaking, anyone's marital partner.[116] Indeed, as a slave and the only survivor of her genos, Cassandra is more permanently vulnerable than if she were in fact Agamemnon's bride.[117] Clytemnestra, for instance, is free and retains links to her natal family. She theoretically has recourse to her own royal family and their resources if necessary.[118] And, once she is incorporated as mistress of her husband's *oikos*, she is in a position of considerable authority. In contrast, a slave is an unalloyed possession of her slaveholders' *oikos* and severed from her pre-existing social network. Cassandra's status prevents her from holding Agamemnon to any reciprocal standard of behavior toward herself or her potential children. From his perspective, his treatment of her can be motivated by his desire alone; he may συνοικεῖν and παιδοποιεῖσθαι with her as a matter of

[115] Foley 2001: 90.
[116] But she has more than one non-legal "partner" (see Debnar 2010 and Mitchell-Boyask 2006).
[117] For Cassandra, the yoke of slavery and the yoke of "marriage" by Agamemnon are truly merged. "Waiting for the domestication of marriage, the young girl is readily compared to an unbroken mare or a heifer who has not felt the yoke" (Loraux 1991: 36).
[118] This is explicit in Euripides' *IA*.

interest rather than duty. In this sense, Cassandra's allure for Agamemnon seems to rest partially in her non-wedded vulnerability. Despite this, he presents her to his home as a virginal figure replete with bridal signifiers.

I align this reading with Humphrey's similar view that the idealization of tragic concubines is the product of a householding citizen's desire for de-articulation of marriage's double function as political-economic partnership and intimate relationship. The concubine, as an alternative to the wife, "dramatises tensions between the family as a structure of rights…and the family as a web of ties of affection."[119] Once a marriage is de-articulated into a "love triangle," the wife can, on the one hand, take on all the undesirable impersonality of marriage, which exists because of and within obligations to the *oikos* and *polis*.[120] The concubine can, on the other hand, hold all the enjoyment of male-female relations as an intimate partner that does not arrive by means of negotiation and bring with her ongoing commitments to citizen men of equal status.[121] Cassandra is one of these idealized concubines (explaining her surprising affection toward Agamemnon; she serves as "feminine corrective"[122]) and Aeschylus employs her to exacerbate the rift between the legal spouses Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. If Aeschylus has a didactic aim, it is to illuminate how *not* to carry on an extra-marital relationship. The concubine allows

[119] Humphreys 1993: 62-4.
[120] Adding insult to injury Debnar points out that Clytemnestra, standing at the entrance of the palace, bears a situational resemblance to the mother of the groom as depicted in wedding vases, standing at the entrance of the household to greet the newlyweds (2010: 134).
[121] It is convenient for Agamemnon that Cassandra is a war captive. Agamemnon's possession of Cassandra is based in recognition of his military heroism, and so her very presence is a balm to his ego. Furthermore, she is born and educated in a royal house, on par with Agamemnon's and even more fabulously wealthy, but her enslavement strips her of her legal rights and frees Agamemnon to take from her father's city as much "dowry" (booty) as he can fit on his ship. He has no obligation to share this with her or treat her well—anyone to whom she could report him is ash. He can thus possess a woman who "feels" like a partner of equal social status in a relationship which was "not contracted by socially equal partners" (Patterson 1990: 41).
[122] See Doyle 2008.

the rejection of familial responsibility, but this is a habit which dooms Agamemnon and results in his concubine's murder.

Agamemnon shows Cassandra to be a threat to Clytemnestra, and his manner of introducing her into the household intensifies this effect. He singles Cassandra out as a partner in his entourage and makes known the high esteem in which he holds his new concubine (950-955). Just before stepping onto the cloth pathway, Agamemnon pointedly asks his wife to receive her into the house kindly. But his motivation is personal. His sympathy for her reduction in status—"for no one bears the yoke of slavery willingly" (953)[123]—is at once juxtaposed to his casual attitude toward slaves generally: "Someone take off my shoes quickly, slaves to my footfalls" (944-45).[124] Agamemnon is neither an abolitionist nor, based on his characterization elsewhere, a particularly careful slaveholder. His entreaty to Clytemnestra is motivated by his infatuation. The king's open pride in his concubine—"this woman, a blossom chosen from much wealth, a gift of the army, has accompanied me" (954-5)—affirms her implicit comparison with his noble wife standing in the doorway and echoes the Agamemnon of the *Iliad* who compares Chryseis favorably to his wife (*Il*. 1.110f., mentioned by Clytemnestra *Ag*. 1439).[125] Racanana Meridor has even suggested that at this moment, when Agamemnon is poised to step onto the cloth, he places a condition on his submission to Clytemnestra: it will 'buy' Clytemnestra's good treatment of Cassandra.[126] In every way, Cassandra is treated as his personal possession rather than a household possession.

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[123] ἑκὼν γὰρ οὐδεὶς δουλίῳ χρῆται ζυγῷ.
[124] ὑπαί τις ἀρβύλας / λύοι τάχος, πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός.
[125] αὕτη δὲ πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐξαίρετον / ἄνθος, στρατοῦ δώρημ᾽, ἐμοὶ ξυνέσπετο. "Blossom" echoes the chorus' description of the army's strength (192 ff.), which begins to disintegrate under Artemis' unfavorable winds.
[126] Racanana Merridor, "Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 944-57: Why Does Agamemnon Give In?" (Classical Philology Vol. 82, No. 1, 1987).

Clytemnestra and Chorus Address Cassandra (1035-1071)

Cassandra's silence is the hinge for Clytemnestra's sudden turn to openly poor management. When Clytemnestra first addresses Cassandra, her speech is ostensibly welcoming, as if she were preparing her for a smooth integration into the household. She assures Cassandra that her new masters have a moderate style of management, particularly because they are a family of hereditary wealth, and so have long been acquainted with the science of managing people—unlike those excessively cruel masters "who have reaped well beyond their expectations" (1044).[127] And yet, Clytemnestra's emphasis on Cassandra's recent enslavement makes clear the difference in their positions within the household, and Clytemnestra performs her wifely duty while putting her rival firmly in her place. In response to Agamemnon's possessiveness, Clytemnestra tries to put her under the umbrella of the household wealth, over which she represents herself as having total control. Her purpose is to re-position Cassandra as a household possession rather than one belonging specifically to Agamemnon. But Cassandra never acknowledges or even notices her position as a household possession and won't play along.

When Cassandra does not move, Clytemnestra reveals herself to be precisely the kind of cruel mistress she has just described. She is impatient and soon tells the chorus that Cassandra will have to be broken like a filly on a bloody bit (1067). She will not wait because *she* now has a sudden fortune to which she must attend, Agamemnon: "Sacrifices of the central hearth already stand prepared for slaughter, as before now, it was beyond expectation to have this blessing" (1057-58).[128] Her personal vendetta now openly takes precedence over salvaging the household's

[127] οἳ δ᾽ οὔποτ᾽ ἐλπίσαντες ἤμησαν καλῶς

[128] τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἑστίας μεσομφάλου / ἕστηκεν ἤδη μῆλα πρὸς σφαγὰς πάρος, / ὡς οὔποτ᾽ ἐλπίσασι τήνδ᾽ ἕξειν χάριν. Clytemnestra has been labeled "expectant" since the prologue (11) and refers to Agamemnon's homecoming as "beyond expectation" twice before: at 266 to the chorus, "you will learn a piece of news better even than your

success, which signals her own frightening, despotic nature and unsuitability to rule. All these are capped off by her explicit condemnation of Cassandra over her corpse, which Sommerstein describes as "unparalleled in tragedy."[129]

The second function of Cassandra is that her death signals Clytemnestra's ascension to her husband's level of perverted household management. Clytemnestra immediately senses a strain upon the family order when Agamemnon presents Cassandra. Debnar suggest that this is presented visually. Clytemnestra, standing at the entrance of the palace, bears a situational resemblance to a groom's mother in wedding vases, who stands at the entrance of the household to greet the newlyweds.[130] Clytemnestra's momentary recasting points to the family structure's inability to comfortably contain two wife-like figures: as Agamemnon leads in Cassandra, he displaces Clytemnestra. Based on the way she repeatedly notes Cassandra's newly enslaved status while inviting her over the house's threshold (1035-46), Clytemnestra views Cassandra as a possible rival for her position of authority in the household. In the year of the *Oresteia* (458), sons born of a citizen father and non-citizen mother could acquire citizenship when they came of age, and presumably *anchisteia* (right to inherit).[131] In other words, based on Athenian family law before Perikles' citizenship law of 451, Cassandra's children may have had a shot at the household wealth if they were favored by Agamemnon. In the context of the narrative, Clytemnestra may not fear an actual loss of influence in the house since she plans to dispatch Agamemnon as soon as possible, but the implication is nevertheless insulting.

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expectation," and 910-11, "At once let there be a pathway of purple into the house he could not expect to see again, so that Justice may lead him in." Each time she speaks ironically, alluding to the murder she expects and they do not.
[129] Sommerstein 2008: 175n to l. 306.
[130] Paula Debnar, 2010: 135.
[131] R. K. Walters, "Perikles' Citizenship Law" (*Classical Antiquity* Vol. 2, No. 2, 1983).

The manner of their arrival also undercuts the point she has just made with her sacrifice of cloth about her own intra-*oikos* authority. As Kenneth Scott Morrell observes, Clytemnestra's pathway of purple matched Agamemnon's previous jettisoning of their household's precious wealth, creating a "competitive polarity of the intra- and extra-domestic spheres." Agamemnon's introduction of a newly enslaved woman, however, presents his wife with "an addition to the productive capacity of his *oikos*" that runs counter to Clytemnestra's attempt to show that he is a wastrel.[132] This produces a reaction which subverts the ideal wife's attitude toward a new female slave.[133] Furthermore, Cassandra's bride-like appearance may confuse the specific allegory of Clytemnestra's cloth sacrifice.[134] As I argued above, Clytemnestra draws a parallel between Agamemnon's journey across the cloth and Iphigenia's sacrifice. Cassandra's presence complicates this reading due to her own resemblance to Iphigenia. She crowds into the signs which are supposed to evoke Iphigenia. For instance, Mitchell-Boyask reads Cassandra into the Clytemnestra's reference to "the guardian of our pledges" (878) which really refers to Orestes but has been read as a veiled reference to Iphigenia.[135] If Clytemnestra means to suggest (as I think she does) that Agamemnon treated the noble virgin of his house as an object, Cassandra's presence and apparent loyalty to Agamemnon are an unplanned reduplication of this tendency. I suggest that this unwitting wrench in Clytemnestra's careful place-setting may both goad her anger and bring back the painful memory of her daughter departing in bridal garb.

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[132] Kenneth Scott Morrell, "The Fabric of Persuasion: Clytaemnestra, Agamemnon, and the Sea of Garments" (*The Classical Journal*, Vol. 92, No. 2, 1996): 149, 146.
[133] Cf. Xen. *Oik*. 7.41: "It is delightful to teach spinning to a maid who had no knowledge of it when you received her, and to double her worth to you: to take in hand a girl who is ignorant of housekeeping and service, and after teaching her and making her trustworthy and serviceable to find her worth any amount" (trans. E.C. Marchant).
[134] This is dependent on the production. See, for example, the National Theatre's performance, in which Cassandra enters in a cage pulled behind Agamemnon's chariot—here, the emphasis is on her status as a prisoner rather than implication as a bride.
[135] Mitchell-Boyask 2006: 282.

Cassandra and the Chorus (1072-1330)

Though (or because) Apollo prevents her from being understood by other characters, Cassandra's voice, when it finally emerges, is crystal clear. There is a curse of endless violence on the house of Atreus and Clytemnestra's trap is closing around Agamemnon in its latest iteration; all of it is despicable; Orestes is the house's only hope for the future. Cassandra is the one who finally names the curse on the House of Atreus and Clytemnestra's murderous intent, and she describes Agamemnon's murder as it occurs offstage. She also recenters the theme of endless violence. She verbalizes the horror that has hovered over the play: dead children and Furies plague the house. Cassandra, arrested by Apollo's possession and the sacking of her city, maintains loyalty to her father's family and functions as a mouthpiece for the desecrated family. She focuses on Clytemnestra's non-normativity and pivots the audience from their judgement of Agamemnon's familial actions toward the state of the house. Cassandra refocuses the audience away from Clytemnestra's version of events to a more normative one, positioning them for the next two plays in which favor shifts back toward Agamemnon as a "paternal ancestor."

Cassandra's words with the chorus reassert her identification with the dead Iphigenia and allow her to speak in the "corrective" capacity described by Debnar. She also shows that Clytemnestra now mirrors Agamemnon's behavior.[136] The chorus, frightened at Cassandra's prophecies, call the blood trickling through them "yellow-dyed" (1121: κροκοβαφής) like Iphigenia's "yellow-dyed robe" (239: κρόκου βαφὰς) which flows to the ground as she is lifted above the altar. Cassandra's language picks up on this bridal image and she declares that her prophecy "will no longer stand looking out from behind a veil, like a newlywed bride" (1178-

[136] At 340ff., Clytemnestra had hoped the army would not take what they should not from Troy. If one understands this to include Cassandra, the queen's statement shows an understanding of Cassandra as a victim of circumstance, like her own daughter. By the time of Cassandra's appearance, however, this potential for pity is closed. Clytemnestra sees Cassandra as complicit with Agamemnon's offenses and so treats her like a sacrificial animal.

79).[137] Like Iphigenia, she is a young woman headed to untimely death. Unlike Iphigenia, who is gagged to prevent curses against her killers, Cassandra goes to her death mourning her natal family (1277ff., 1305) and decrying the way Clytemnestra acts against her normative role.

Cassandra reviles both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and she lays out the barbs the chorus will use against them later, and the children will use in acts two and three. Clytemnestra's actions are juxtaposed with normative harmony between spouses. She is "bathing the husband with whom you share a bed" (1108-09: τὸν ὁμοδέμνιον πόσιν / λούτροισι φαιδρύνασα) and "the snare is she the bed-mate, she the co-causer of murder" (1116-17: ἄρκυς ἡ ξύνευνος, ἡ ξυναιτία / φόνου). Putting aside the issue of whether he deserves to die, Agamemnon's is "a death merits stoning" (1118: θύματος λευσίμου, cf. 1615-6) because of its dishonorable mechanism. Cassandra also notes the gender abnormality involved in a woman killing a man: "keep the bull from the cow" (1125-6), "the female who murders a male, terrible creature" (1231-36), and includes her association with Aegisthus, a "two-footed lioness and cowardly lion" (1258).

Finally, Cassandra prophesies the scope of the house's curse. She sees the invisible ghosts of the house's past victims (1095-97) and the Furies on the roof (1184). The Furies' "terrible chorus" calls back to the watchman who whistles a little tune that turns into a wail. Like the watchman, Cassandra locates the disease within the house itself. In answer to her question, "Where have you led me, to what kind of house?" (1087: ἆ, ποῖ ποτ᾽ ἤγαγες με; πρὸς ποίαν στέγην;), she answers herself: "to a house full of crimes and kin-murders" (1090-92: αὐτοφόνα). Cassandra pivots to Orestes' return, and the audience is now looking forward to the next two

[137] καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ᾽ ἐκ καλυμμάτων / ἔσται δεδορκὼς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην.

plays. A new evil is being planned that will be unbearable to his loved ones, and help (Orestes) is far away (1101-04) but will come to avenge the murders (1280).

Conclusion

It is difficult to overstate the significance of household management as a theme in *Agamemnon*, such that nearly every passage can be found to add to the general picture which emerges of a cursed house and its long-delayed counterstrike against its child-killing leader. The lady of the house works against its corporate interests at every turn in order to entrap her husband. When Clytemnestra comes onstage with the corpses, she says Agamemnon has been treated justly based on his treatment of their family, stating (plainly, at last) that her contention with him comes down to his devaluing exchange of the daughter they shared. "He cared no more for her death than for the death of a beast, one out of the many sheep in his fleecy flocks. He sacrificed his own child, my most beloved labor, as a charm for the Thracian winds."[138]

As his successor, though, she is no better. Agamemnon walks into his death because of repeated decisions to privilege individual success over group responsibility; Clytemnestra seals her fate by privileging her pursuit of revenge over the family's continuance. She crudely calls Cassandra a "lover" (1446: φιλήτωρ; the word has an active sexual connotation), a woman she has killed for selfish gain, "an added treat for my pleasure" (1447).[139] Going further than her husband, she calls out the sexual pleasure she derives from it, and Clytemnestra never regains the power she has before the murders.[140]

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[138] ὃς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὡσπερεὶ βοτοῦ μόρον / μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν / ἔθυσεν αὑτοῦ παῖδα, φιλτάτην ἐμοὶ / ὠδῖν', ἐπῳδὸν Θρῃκίων ἀημάτων, Aesch. *Ag*. 1415-18.
[139] παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆς, 1447.
[140] See Simon Pulleyn, "Erotic Undertones in the Language of Clytemnestra" (The Classical Quarterly, Vol. 47, No. 2, 1997, pp. 565-567).

Compounding her decline, her chosen partner Aegisthus is too quick to anger to ever make a viable leader. He is a despot like Agamemnon, wishing to sit at the head of the family corporation (unproblematic in itself) for his own benefit (problematic). Clytemnestra is resubordinated to the *oikos* structure. In the *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*, she loses her canniness (and her life) while Orestes is shown to be the better option (cf. Sophocles, *Electra* and its despotic portrayal of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra with contrasting portrayal of Orestes).

Their decisions are suicidal and show an inability to evaluate worth and consequence. The curse of Atreus emerges through individual failures to uphold familial propriety; demented household management is the human activity through which Disaster enters the house.

Chapter Two: Sophocles' *Electra* (The Slaves)

Introduction: The Watchman, The Paedagogos, and the Old Man

For Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the health of Atreus' *oikos* depends largely on the quality of its leaders' management—proper management produces good outcomes for the house and poor management does the opposite. Here, I compare the roles of three characters, one each from the *Agamemnon*, *Electra*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, to show that all three plays share essentially the same construction of ideal and non-ideal household management.[141] Management of enslaved members of the *oikos* is ideally guided by slaveholders' understanding of how to incentivize their willing and continuous compliance. Reckless or absent-minded treatment, on the one hand, harms enslaved characters and erodes their willingness to comply, causing them to pray for deliverance (Watchman) or turn to an alternative household authority (Old Man). Vocal affection and praise, on the other hand, cultivates a positive master-slave relationship and

[141] For my discussion of what constitutes good household management, see the Introduction (pp.4-8). On the utility of unnamed characters for the poets' differing agendas, see Florence Yoon, *The Use of Anonymous Characters in Greek Tragedy: The Shaping of Heroes* (Brill, 2012), pp. 3-4.

provides an emotional impetus for diligent ongoing service (Paedagogos).[142] *Electra* receives the most in-depth treatment, with an expanded comparison of Orestes' treatment of the Paedagogos to Clytemnestra treatment of Electra.

Agamemnon's Watchman

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* begins with a prologue that illustrates the way Clytemnestra has begun to appropriate the house's resources. A lone Watchman (φύλαξ) appears and asks the gods for release from his prolonged, miserable watch duty.[143] The misery of his character communicates the household's suffering under its divided management. Clytemnestra has put him into a dangerous position. She has ordered him to keep a lookout for Agamemnon's beacon but not kept it fully secret that something sinister will be waiting for him at home. The Watchman is compelled to obey the mistress of the house, "for thus commands the woman's hoping, man-planning heart."[144] His "fear [that] stands watch against sleep" suggests he is under

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[142] See Xen. *Oikonomikos*: Socrates argues that "the most important proof of excellent leadership" (μέγα τεκμήριον ἄρχοντος ἀρετῆς) is a leader's ability to inspire willing obedience (4.19). This can be accomplished by good management; that is, a system of rewards and punishments that incentivize service (5.14-17). In the military sphere, for example, a "truly great" general "has many followers of like mind" and "can do great deeds by his will rather than his strength" (21.8), while a subpar one will "make their men unwilling to work and to take risks," both "disinclined and unwilling to obey, except under compulsion" (21.4).

[143] Aeschylus' Watchman alludes to the lookout (σκοπός) of *Odyssey* IV in a manner that suggests Clytemnestra's disloyalty. The *Odyssey*'s Watchman keeps watch for one year and is paid two talents of gold for it by Aegisthus (IV.524-29), suggesting the possibility that Aeschylus' Watchman is also being paid for his service. Is this what makes him willing (ἑκὼν, 38) to speak to "those who know"? The writer of the *Agamemnon*'s ancient hypothesis writes, "Clytemnestra stationed a lookout *for pay* so that she might learn of the beacon" (σκοπὸν ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ μισθῷ Κλυταιμνήστρα, ἵνα τηροίη τὸν πυρσόν, in Klausen Vol. I, 1863, p. 3). The writer is notoriously inaccurate, however, and Fraenkel calls him "rather a stupid man" (Vol. II, 370). A differently minded scholiast separates the two Watchmen: "the prologue-speaker is Agamemnon's servant, *not* stationed by Aegisthus" (ibid.). Modern scholars have largely noted the allusion but been conservative regarding its influence on *Agamemnon*'s plot. Klausen, for example, states any payment is "an invention of the philologist" because "the man is a guard, a slave of the sons of Atreus, impelled to do what the queen commands; there is no need for payment" (*inventum grammatici. Custos ille est servus Atridarum, agendum est ei quod iubet regina, mercede non opus*, ibid.). Others, however, argue that even the implication of payment casts the Watchman's contradictory excitement and fear in a new light. Cristina Pace argues that the Watchman's "reasoning [for celebrating] does not lack a certain venality…He lives in a condition that corrupts his integrity, at least in part…the condition of someone who, after the king's departure, must adapt to a new situation" (2013: 29). The Watchman's ambiguous loyalty is a sign of poor household management. Whether or not the Watchman is paid and by whom, his divided loyalties are a key point of his speech.

[144] ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ / γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ, 10-11.

threat to do so.[145] But still he shows reluctance to be a knowing accomplice in her plans. When the beacon appears, he is momentarily torn. He seems eager to see Agamemnon—"May I take the house-lord's own hand in mine when he comes home!"—but straightaway reminds himself that he must be silent.[146] "As to the rest, I keep quiet. A great ox stands upon my tongue…I speak willingly to those who know, but to those who don't, I forget."[147] His dilemma demonstrates to the audience that Clytemnestra is tipping the household's husband-in-charge hierarchy, and thus implies the civil war brewing within the *oikos*.[148] The Watchman also explicitly calls attention to the *oikos* and its management. He bemoans "the disaster of this house, not managed for the best as it was before," establishing the thematic significance of household management in the trilogy.[149] Further, his veiled statement "Give the house itself a voice and you would have the truest account" presages the ghost children (1096) and Furies (1190) which later appear to Cassandra as metaphysical manifestations of the crimes committed within the house.[150] The Watchman thus foreshadows revelations about both past crises in the household and the current one that is taking place under Clytemnestra's non-normative rule.

***Electra*'s Paedagogos**

In *Electra*, Sophocles provides more straightforward instances of poor and skilled householding which he explicitly links to the play's concept of justice. Orestes' positive

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[145] φόβος γὰρ ἀνθ' ὕπνου παραστατεῖ, 14.
[146] γένοιτο δ' οὖν μολόντος εὐφιλῆ χέρα / ἄνακτος οἴκων τῇδε βαστάσαι χερί, 34-5.
[147] γένοιτο δ' οὖν μολόντος εὐφιλῆ χέρα / ἄνακτος οἴκων τῇδε βαστάσαι χερί. / τὰ δ' ἄλλα σιγῶ: βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσσῃ μέγας / βέβηκεν […] ἐκὼν ἐγὼ / μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ κοὐ μαθοῦσι λήθομαι, 34-9.
[148] Re: appropriation, Clytemnestra misuses the domestic Watchman as a soldier, forcing him to endure a soldier's discomforts in isolation as her agent against Agamemnon. See Metzger 2008: 9 and Paley 1879: 374.
[149] κλαίω τότ' οἴκου τοῦδε συμφορὰν στένων / οὐχ ὡς τὰ πρόσθ' ἄριστα διαπονουμένου, 18-19.
[150] οἶκος δ' αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι, / σαφέστατ' ἂν λέξειεν (Aesch. *Ag*. 37-38). It is arguable that the Watchman was placed on the stage (in front of the palace) rather than on the *skene* (on the roof of the palace). See Metzger's article "Clytemnestra's Watchman on the Roof" (originally published in *Eranos* Vol. 103, No. 1, pp. 38–47 in 2005, with a corrected post-print in 2008). As a counterpoint, see Taplin, p. 277: "The roof is the best place for the Watchman to keep his look out [and] this staging would immediately introduce the place that the house is to have in the drama as a physical entity."

management of the Paedagogos (παιδαγωγός) proves his worthiness to retake the House of Atreus, while Clytemnestra's abusive management earns her the punishment of matricide.

First, I examine Orestes' portrayal as a fledgling household manager. Sophocles adapts the herald Talthybius, young Orestes' savior in some versions of the Oresteia, into the Paedagogus, who functions similarly but here, as his former caretaker, has a more direct and affectionate connection with the adult Orestes.[151] Orestes' demonstration of positive management makes some sense from the playwright's perspective: the *Electra* covers the Orestes cycle's "happy" ending, and Sophocles de-emphasizes the idea of reciprocal violence in order to tell a single-arc story of his heroic triumph over the wicked Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.[152] To show that Orestes is more fit than his mother and uncle-cum-step-father to rule the royal house and the kingdom, Sophocles makes him mild-mannered and moderate toward his servant, who is trusty but occasionally cantankerous.[153] Their dynamic is helpful in lending sympathy to Orestes, whose acts of violence in this play Sophocles portrays as "simply laudable," rather than inherently problematic, as they are in other treatments.[154] Orestes praises his Paedagogos, encourages his candor, and takes his advice. Consequently, the Paedagogus helps enormously in getting Orestes and Pylades into the palace.

Sophocles introduces Orestes' positive relationship to the Paedagogos at the beginning of the play. The Paedagogos delivers the prologue, in which he describes his, Orestes, and Pylades'

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[151] Jebb 1894: xvii, and see n2 for primary source references.
[152] Compare to *Choephoroi*, which illustrates primarily Clytemnestra and Aegisthus' despotic treatment of the household (with Orestes' fitness to rule moderately proven in the *Eumenides* by his submission to the Athenian legal system). Euripides' *Electra* is similar to Sophocles', since Orestes' kind treatment of the Old Man ensures his assistance getting into the palace, and his cry that he does not intend harm to his servants stops them from killing him after he kills Aegisthus.
[153] For an opposing view which sees the Paedagogus as a malevolent influence on Orestes, see André P. M. H. Lardinois, "Dubious Advice: The Paedagogus in Sophocles' Electra" (in *Land of Dreams: Greek and Latin Studies in Honour of A.H.M. Kessels*; Brill, 2006).
[154] Jebb 1894: xxxii.

surroundings and summarizes the relevant parts of the Atreid family feud. Then, Orestes lays out the contents of Apollo's oracle and the group's current plan, but not before taking a moment to appreciate the old man.

> Most beloved of manservants, how clear to me your trustiness is. How like a well-bred horse you are, who does not lose his nerve in dire straits but pricks up his ears, even when swaybacked with age. Just the same, you urge us on and put yourself on the front line. So, with this in mind, I shall go over our plans, and you listen closely, and if I do not hit the mark in some way, you set me straight.[155]

Orestes' request for corrections will be key going forward, since he has set them all onto a path that requires precise timing, while also, for his part, being prone to distraction (understandably, given the coup's unique emotional stakes).[156] Following this request, there are several instances in which the Paedagogos obliges and pulls Orestes out of rabbit holes and back into the work of usurping the throne.

The first case arrives just after Orestes has finished his initial speech, in a seeming proof of concept—Orestes begins his speech with praise and the invitation to correct him, and an opportunity for the Paedagogos to do so arises as soon as Orestes has finished speaking.[157] Electra cries out,

> [El] Io, I am unfortunate, unfortunate!
> [Paed] What's that, child? I thought I heard the low moan of one of the serving girls from inside the doors.

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[155] ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὥς μοι σαφῆ / σημεῖα φαίνεις ἐσθλὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγώς. / ὥσπερ γὰρ ἵππος εὐγενής, κἂν ᾖ γέρων, / ἐν τοῖσι δεινοῖς θυμὸν οὐκ ἀπώλεσεν, / ἀλλ᾽ ὀρθὸν οὖς ἵστησιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ σὺ / ἡμᾶς τ᾽ ὀτρύνεις καὐτὸς ἐν πρώτοις ἔπει. / τοιγὰρ τὰ μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δὲ / ὀξεῖαν ἀκοὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις διδούς, / εἰ μή τι καιροῦ τυγχάνω, μεθάρμοσον, 23-31.

[156] The idea of *kairos*, an opportunity or precise moment in linear time, arises several times for the planners (Orestes, the Paedagogos, and Pylades). On time in this play, see Helen Gasti, *The Dialectic of Time in Sophocles'* Electra (*H διαλεκτική του χρόνου στην Ηλέκτρα του Σοφοκλή*) (Ioannina: Ioannina UP, 2003). On time in tragedy more generally, see Jacqueline de Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy* (Cornell, 1968).

[157] I use the traditional line assignments. It is undeniably awkward that Orestes shifts so quickly from being eager to leave the scene (76) to unsure whether to stay or go (80-1). F. H. Sandbach's suggestion, that the lines be reassigned so that it is the Paedagogos asking Orestes "Do you want for us to stay?" and Orestes deferring to Loxias' commands, is attractive.

> [Or] Can it be the unfortunate Electra? Do you want for us to stay here and listen to her wails?
> [Paed] Not in the least. Before all else, let us attempt the words of Loxias and make our beginning from these, the libations we will pour for your father. For they will bring us victory and power over our doings.[158]

With Orestes refocused, they exit in the nick of time. Their departure at this moment prevents Electra (who enters at 86) from discovering them prematurely and sends Orestes to place a lock of his hair at Agamemnon's grave, which will function as a token of recognition for Chrysothemis. Orestes' lack of fixity of purpose is a reminder that it is quite a young man who has returned to Argos. His need for the Paedagogos' guidance, and his acknowledgment of this need, adds a humility to his coming-of-age journey that distinguishes it from, say, the despotic rise of Aegisthus.

Further examples occur late in the play. During the scene of sibling recognition (1098-1325), Orestes attempts to shift Electra's focus toward the attack. "Forget any superfluous words…Your story would close the opportunity time gives us."[159] Electra nevertheless slides into rumination on her love for Orestes and hatred for their mother. Soon, the Paedagogus gives Orestes a reason to cut off Electra—"I advise silence, since I hear someone inside coming out through the passageway!"[160] The Paedagogus emerges and berates the siblings.[161]

> Oh, most dull and lacking in wits! Do you care nothing for your lives already, or there is just no sense in you, that you cannot perceive you are not to one side of these great dangers but in the midst of them? If I had not done everything right and kept watch for so long, your doings would be in the house before your bodies. I call for caution now as we proceed. So bring to an end your prolonged exchange and

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[158] [Ἠλ] ἰώ μοί μοι δύστηνος.
[Παιδ] καὶ μὴν θυρῶν ἔδοξα προσπόλων τινὸς / ὑποστενούσης ἔνδον αἰσθέσθαι, τέκνον.
[Ὀρ] ἆρ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ δύστηνος Ἠλέκτρα: θέλεις / μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ κἀπακούσωμεν γόων;
[Παιδ] ἥκιστα: μηδὲν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ Λοξίου / πειρώμεθ᾽ ἔρδειν κἀπὸ τῶνδ᾽ ἀρχηγετεῖν, / πατρὸς χέοντες λουτρά: ταῦτα γὰρ φέρει / νίκην τ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν καὶ κράτος τῶν δρωμένων, 77-85.
[159] τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες / […] / χρόνου γὰρ ἄν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείργοι λόγος, 1288, 1292.
[160] σιγᾶν ἐπῄνεσ᾽ ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἐξόδῳ κλύω τῶν ἔνδοθεν χωροῦντος, 1322.
[161] Cf. the slave Palaestrio rushing his slaveholder in Plautus, *Braggart Soldier* 1137-99 (Act IV Scene 4).

> this insatiable shouting for joy. In matters such as these, the events to come are dire, and we are reaching the critical moment.[162]

Orestes, in seeming agreement, confirms that the plan has worked so far. But he is tempted off track again by the thought of how his mother and Aegisthus reacted to the news of his death. "Do they rejoice, then, at this news? Or, what did they say?"[163] The Paedagogos, keeping an eye on the time, tells him not to worry about it right now. "I would tell you, if everything was over, but as it stands now, everything concerning them is in good order, even that which isn't good."[164] Electra asks who this old man is. When she recognizes him as the Paedagogus, Orestes' rescuer, she begins to praise him effusively. Again, he again cuts her speech short to pivot back toward the matters at hand.

> That is enough for now, I think, since it will take the passing of many nights and just as many days to tell the story of what went on between then and now, Electra, and reveal everything to you clearly.
>
> [To Orestes and Pylades] But to you two standing by me, I say that now is the time to act. Now, Clytemnestra is alone, now, there is no man in the house. Think how, if you hesitate, you will have to fight not only them but others with greater skill and greater numbers.[165]

As the Paedagogos implies, Orestes is still young and untested. His rushing is a matter of practicality that leads to their ultimate success. Since the old slave has Orestes' faith, the team can act quickly on his intelligence and depend on his sense of timing. This time sense works both ways, also telling the Paedagogos when to stretch out language, as in his speech announcing

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[162] ὦ πλεῖστα μῶροι καὶ φρενῶν τητώμενοι, / πότερα παρ᾽ οὐδὲν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθ᾽ ἔτι / ἢ νοῦς ἔνεστιν οὔτις ὑμὶν ἐγγενής, / ὅτ᾽ οὐ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν αὐτοῖσιν κακοῖς / τοῖσιν μεγίστοις ὄντες οὐ γιγνώσκετε; / ἀλλ᾽ εἰ σταθμοῖσι τοῖσδε μὴ 'κύρουν ἐγὼ / πάλαι φυλάσσων, ἦν ἂν ὑμὶν ἐν δόμοις / τὰ δρώμεν᾽ ὑμῶν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ σώματα: / νῦν δ᾽ εὐλάβειαν τῶνδε προυθέμην ἐγώ. / καὶ νῦν ἀπαλλαχθέντε τῶν μακρῶν λόγων / καὶ τῆς ἁπλήστου τῆσδε σὺν χαρᾷ βοῆς / εἴσω παρέλθεθ᾽, ὡς τὸ μὲν μέλλειν κακὸν / ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἔστ᾽, ἀπηλλάχθαι δ᾽ ἀκμή, 1326-38.

[163] χαίρουσιν οὖν τούτοισιν; ἢ τίνες λόγοι; 1343

[164] τελουμένων εἴποιμ᾽ ἄν: ὡς δὲ νῦν ἔχει, / καλῶς τὰ κείνων πάντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ καλῶς, 1344-5.

[165] ἀρκεῖν δοκεῖ μοι: τοὺς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους / πολλαὶ κυκλοῦνται νύκτες ἡμέραι τ᾽ ἴσαι, / αἳ ταῦτά σοι δείξουσιν, Ἠλέκτρα, σαφῆ. / σφῷν δ᾽ ἐννέπω γε τοῖν παρεστώτοιν ὅτι / νῦν καιρὸς ἔρδειν: νῦν Κλυταιμνήστρα μόνη, / νῦν οὔτις ἀνδρῶν ἔνδον: εἰ δ᾽ ἐφέξετον, / φροντίζεθ᾽ ὡς τούτοις τε καὶ σοφωτέροις / ἄλλοισι τούτων πλείοσιν μαχούμενοι, 1364-71.

Orestes' death to Clytemnestra (680-763). Here, when Orestes and Pylades need time to pour libations at Agamemnon's tomb and return to the house, he takes his time weaving a detailed story of the fatal chariot ride. "I will tell all" (τὸ πᾶν φράσω, 680) he begins, and delivers a perfectly-formed, perfectly-timed messenger speech.[166] Under the Paedagogos' watch, Orestes learns to take similar control over the passage of time. The Paedagogos practically pushes Orestes and Pylades into the palace to slay Clytemnestra (above, 1364-71). Once his mother is dead, however, and the team has only one leg left in their race to the throne, there is a change in the young man.[167] No longer tentative, he is the one to brush aside Aegisthus' attempts to distract (1493-4, 1497-8) or provoke (1500) him, and ends the play at the precise moment of his success—"now, in this onrush, fulfilled."[168] Orestes' characterization as a good household manager, through his admirable reliance on his Paedagogos' strength as he builds his own, proves his worthiness to be king and facilitates his victory.

Sophocles shows Clytemnestra's contrasting villainy in the way she hoards the Atreides' wealth while abusing her children and supporting Aegisthus' despotic rule. The slaughter of Iphigenia is still the basis of her claim to justice (525-551):

> Your father, nothing else, is always your excuse, because I killed him. I did, I know it well. And I do not deny it because Justice took him, not I alone. You should have assisted, if you had been thinking clearly, since your father, that man whom you bewail endlessly, dared alone among the Hellenes to sacrifice your sister, your own blood, to the gods—though he, who merely planted the seed, had not borne an equal share of the agony I felt when I gave birth to her.

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[166] C.W. Marshall describes the speech's uniquely self-conscious tendencies, "a messenger speech 'how-to', if you will" ("How to Write a Messenger Speech [Sophocles, *Electra* 680–763]," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 49.87, p. 203).

[167] For a much fuller examination of the chariot race as metaphor for Orestes' journey, see Leslie Diane Myrick, "The Way Up and Down: Tracehorse and Turning Imagery in the Orestes Plays" (*The Classical Journal*, Vol. 89, No. 2, pp. 131-148, 1994).

[168] τῇ νῦν ὁρμῇ τελεωθέν, 1510. Jebb notes that the word τελεωθέν (from τελειόω, "to make perfect or complete") "is applied to those who attain maturity in body and mind" (203).

> Now, do educate me. For whose sake, out of respect for whom, did he sacrifice my daughter? Will you say, perhaps, for the Argives? But they had no share in her, no right to murder my girl. And if he murdered my child on behalf of his brother Menelaus, did he not expect to pay reparations to me for it? Did Menelaus not have two children of his own whom it would have been more fitting to sacrifice, offspring of a father and mother for whose sake the fleet sailed? Or did Hades have some yearning to feast on my children rather than hers? Or did longing for the children born from me simply fall away within their all-destructive father, but remain within him for Menelaus'? Is that not the mark of an unthinking, evil father? So it seems to me, even if I reason against your judgement. And our dead girl would agree if she had a voice. I am not melancholy about the past. If I seem wrong-headed to you, ensure your deliberations are fair before you blame those around you.[169]

Iphigenia's death is many years past, however, and since then Clytemnestra has taken Agamemnon's place as ruler and made many of the same damaging leadership choices. It is her current behavior that tips the scales of justice firmly against her and makes *Electra* a play about loyalty and resistance to oppression rather than (following in the *Oresteia*'s footsteps) a play

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[169] πατὴρ γάρ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, σοὶ πρόσχημ᾽ ἀεὶ
ὡς ἐξ ἐμοῦ τέθνηκεν. ἐξ ἐμοῦ· καλῶς
ἔξοιδα· τῶνδ᾽ ἄρνησις οὐκ ἔνεστί μοι·
ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἶλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,
ᾗ χρῆν σ᾽ ἀρήγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ᾽ ἐτύγχανες.
ἐπεὶ πατὴρ οὗτος σὸς, ὃν θρηνεῖς ἀεί,
τὴν σὴν ὅμαιμον μοῦνος Ἑλλήνων ἔτλη
θῦσαι θεοῖσιν, οὐκ ἴσον καμὼν ἐμοὶ
λύπης, ὅς ἔσπειρ᾽, ὥσπερ ἡ τίκτουσ᾽ ἐγώ.
εἶεν, δίδαξον δή με, τοῦ χάριν, τίνων
ἔθυσεν αὐτήν; πότερον Ἀργείων ἐρεῖς;
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μετῆν αὐτοῖσι τήν γ᾽ ἐμὴν κτανεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντ᾽ ἀδελφοῦ δῆτα Μενέλεω κτανὼν
τἄμ᾽ οὐκ ἔμελλε τῶνδέ μοι δώσειν δίκην;
πότερον ἐκείνῳ παῖδες οὐκ ἦσαν διπλοῖ,
οὓς τῆσδε μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἦν θνῄσκειν, πατρὸς
καὶ μητρὸς ὄντας, ἧς ὁ πλοῦς ὅδ᾽ ἦν χάριν;
ἢ τῶν ἐμῶν Ἅιδης τιν᾽ ἵμερον τέκνων
ἢ τῶν ἐκείνης ἔσχε δαίσασθαι πλέον;
ἢ τῷ πανώλει πατρὶ τῶν μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ
παίδων πόθος παρεῖτο, Μενέλεω δ᾽ ἐνῆν;
οὐ ταῦτ᾽ ἀβούλου καὶ κακοῦ γνώμην πατρός;
δοκῶ μέν, εἰ καὶ σῆς δίχα γνώμης λέγω.
φαίη δ᾽ ἂν ἡ θανοῦσά γ᾽, εἰ φωνὴν λάβοι.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ εἰμὶ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
δύσθυμος· εἰ δὲ σοὶ δοκῶ φρονεῖν κακῶς,
γνώμην δικαίαν σχοῦσα τοὺς πέλας ψέγε.

about the conflict between two opposing yet equally articulated views of justice. In Jebb's words, "It suited this aim to concentrate the sympathies of the spectators against Clytaemnestra as well as Aegisthus. And nothing could be more effective for that purpose than to show how their long oppression had failed to break down the heroic constancy of Electra."[170] Thus, Clytemnestra must be oppressive in the extreme.

She reveals her despotism at several points. Unlike her counterpart in *Agamemnon*, who states, "having a small share of the wealth is sufficient for me, if it takes away the murderous madness of these halls," Sophocles' Clytemnestra jealously guards the riches she commands (648ff.).[171] She allows Aegisthus to exercise political power in Argos, though he seems to rule with brute force rather than skill. His excitement at having Orestes' corpse for display (1458ff.) is particularly suggestive. Within the household, Clytemnestra keeps Electra in poor conditions and performing menial labor (185, 262, 378, and 1192ff.), making the same category error as Agamemnon in the treatment of their children. As Agamemnon gave Iphigenia "the fate of a beast" (*Ag*. 1415: βοτοῦ μόρον) rather than a daughter, so Clytemnestra controls Electra with the discipline of a slaveholder (*El*. 1192: δουλεύω βίᾳ) rather than a mother. She and Aegisthus (perhaps) even plan to murder Electra (378) to get rid of her irritating mourning, totally undermining Clytemnestra's defense of her maternal revenge. Further, she replicates the disarticulated situation which Agamemnon created by bringing Cassandra to live in the palace. She has married a second man, Aegisthus, and had children by him (585ff.) whom she now prefers over her surviving children by Agamemnon. The couple's goal is now to prune his branch

[170] Jebb 1894: xxxii.
[171] κτεάνων τε μέρος
βαιὸν ἐχούσῃ πᾶν ἀπόχρη μοι
μανίας μελάθρων
ἀλληλοφόνους ἀφελούσῃ, 1573-6.

from the family tree by prohibiting Chrysothemis and Electra from marrying and having children (164, 185ff.). As Electra says to her sister, "For Aegisthus is not such an unthinking man as to permit you or me to propagate our line, clearly a danger to him."[172] All these behaviors make Clytemnestra into "a mother in name, but no mother in actions."[173]

Iphigenia in Aulis' Old Man

Iphigenia at Aulis marks a return to poor management. There is a slave called Old Man (1 ff.), once loyal to Agamemnon, whose poor treatment leads him to shift his loyalty toward Clytemnestra at a key moment.[174] Initially, the Old Man performs loyally for the king. Besides his work carrying letters for Agamemnon, he acts as a kindly elder and offers him advice when he is upset. "Atreus did not father you for every good thing, Agamemnon. You must rejoice and sorrow both, for you were born mortal, and even if you wish it were otherwise the gods' plans are set."[175]

But Agamemnon does not reciprocally defend the Old Man from harm. He sends him to catch Clytemnestra and Iphigenia on the way to Aulis with a letter-tablet explaining that the wedding is postponed and ordering them not to come to the camp (115-23). This is unproblematic. But then Menelaus intercepts the Old Man and forcefully (βίᾳ, 315, 319) wrestles the letter from him. This is out of bounds.[176] To come between a slaveholder and slave violates

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[172] οὐ γὰρ ὧδ᾽ ἄβουλός ἐστ᾽ ἀνὴρ
Αἴγισθος ὥστε σόν ποτ᾽ ἢ κἀμὸν γένος
βλαστεῖν ἐᾶσαι, πημονὴν αὑτῷ σαφῆ, 964-6.
[173] μήτηρ καλεῖται, μητρὶ δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ, 1194.
[174] Like the *Agamemnon*'s Watchman, the Old Man's status is both unambiguous (he is a slave of the *oikos*) and yet somehow ambiguous (as the *oikos* splits internally, who has the greater claim to him?). He entered the *oikos* with Clytemnestra as her personal attendant and a part of her dowry. As he says to Agamemnon, "[I am] a good and loyal man…Tyndareus sent me back then with your wife, as dowry and trusty bridal attendant" (45-8), and it is this long service that shows him to be "a good and trusty man" (45).
[175] οὐκ ἐπὶ πᾶσίν σ᾽ ἐφύτευσ᾽ ἀγαθοῖς, / Ἀγάμεμνον, Ἀτρεύς. δεῖ δέ σε χαίρειν / καὶ λυπεῖσθαι· θνητὸς γὰρ ἔφυς. / κἂν μὴ σὺ θέλῃς, τὰ θεῶν οὕτω / βουλόμεν᾽ ἔσται, 29-33.
[176] Possibly illegal, see Ps. Xen. Const. Ath. 1.10 (except, see Dem. 53.16).

the idealized insularity of the master-slave relation as given by Aristotle. If an attempted justification for Athens' slave system is that it benefits both master and slave by providing mutual security within the shared *oikos*, a baseline of protection for the enslaved is ideologically useful for the perpetuation of the slave system. Menelaus' interception thus constitutes an unjust attack on Agamemnon's *oikos*.[177] Agamemnon hears his slave's shouts—"Master, we are being wronged!"[178] The first-person plural suggests the Old Man conceives of himself and Agamemnon in Aristotelian fashion, that is, as a unit. Agamemnon comes out of his tent to ask, "Hey! What's this uproar at my gates and clash of voices?"[179] Menelaus speaks first. "My account, not this man's, has more right to be shared."[180] Agamemnon engages with his brother—"But why have you come into strife with this man, Menelaus, and why are you pulling him along by force?"[181]— and lets the Old Man slip away silently as they continue to argue. The letter is not sent. Agamemnon's inattentiveness allows Menelaus to eclipse the slave's narrative and claim no wrongdoing in the transgression. Further, Agamemnon's lack of immediate support communicates to the Old Man that Agamemnon does not consider this slave "part of the master, a living yet separate part of the body," nor is their relation one of mutual "cooperation and friendship between slave and master, merited by their natural inclinations."[182] Estranged from his householder, the Old Man is left to make his own decisions about how to proceed.[183]

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[177] Cf. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884): "The original meaning of the word 'family' (*familia*) is not that compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present-day philistine; among the Romans it did not at first even refer to the married pair and their children, but only to the slaves" (94ff.)

[178] ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ἀδικούμεσθα, 314.

[179] ἔα· τίς ποτ᾽ ἐν πύλαισι θόρυβος καὶ λόγων ἀκοσμία; 317.

[180] οὑμὸς οὐχ ὁ τοῦδε μῦθος κυριώτερος λέγειν, 318.

[181] σὺ δὲ τί τῷδ᾽ ἐς ἔριν ἀφῖξαι, Μενέλεως, βίᾳ τ᾽ ἄγεις; 319.

[182] τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ συμφέρει τῷ μέρει καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ, καὶ σώματι καὶ ψυχῇ, ὁ δὲ δοῦλος μέρος τι τοῦ δεσπότου, οἷον ἔμψυχόν τι τοῦ σώματος κεχωρισμένον δὲ μέρος: διὸ καὶ συμφέρον ἐστί τι καὶ φιλία δούλῳ καὶ δεσπότῃ πρὸς ἀλλήλους τοῖς φύσει τούτων ἠξιωμένοις, Arist. *Pol*. 1.1255b10-15.

[183] Agamemnon asks another man, Menelaus, to help him keep the sacrifice from Clytemnestra (538-41), but he should have asked the Old Man, the only other member *of his oikos* who knows the plan.

The Old Man reemerges (855-95) to expose Agamemnon's plan to Clytemnestra and Achilles. Agamemnon has agreed to sacrifice his daughter to Artemis so the expedition can leave Aulis. To convince Clytemnestra to send Iphigenia, he has written her a previous letter explaining that Achilles, one of the commanders, is unwilling to sail before marrying Iphigenia. Achilles is unaware of this. Agamemnon tries and fails to renege in the second letter, stolen by Menelaus. Agamemnon thus reverts to his original plan and hopes to keep the sacrifice from secret from his wife and Achilles until it is too late for them to prevent it. When Achilles runs into Clytemnestra outside Agamemnon's tent, however, the two soon realize that they have been deceived. The Old Man enters to explain the situation, motivated in part by his loyalty towards Clytemnestra and distrust for Agamemnon. He identifies himself to Achilles as belonging "to this woman here, her standing before the house, a gift from her father Tyndareus."[184] He is at pains to make sure that Clytemnestra knows who he is.

> [OM] You know me, surely, as one who is kindly toward you and your children?
> [Cly.] I know you are an old servant of my house.
> [OM] And that lord Agamemnon took me as part of your dowry.
> [Cly.] You came to Argos with me and have been mine ever since.[185]

"I am kindly toward *you*," he says, "less so toward your husband."[186] Euripides makes it explicit that Agamemnon's unwise treatment exposes him to this leak from within the *oikos*. Allowing his brother to intercede in his dealing with the slave violates their expected master-slave relation, and so the Old Man dedicates his efforts instead to Clytemnestra. Thus, much like Iphigenia (and, in fact, Clytemnestra), the Old Man is under Agamemnon's legal authority but has formed a

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[184] τῆσδε τῆς πάροιθεν οἴκων, Τυνδάρεω δόντος πατρός, 860. See Harrison 1968: 46n3 on chattel slaves as dowry.
[185] [Πρ] οἶσθα δῆτά μ', ὅστις ὤν σοι καὶ τέκνοις εὔνους ἔφυν; [Κλ] οἶδά σ' ὄντ' ἐγὼ παλαιὸν δωμάτων ἐμῶν / [Πρ] μ' ἐν ταῖς σαῖσι φερναῖς ἔλαβεν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ; / [Κλ] ἦλθες εἰς Ἄργος μεθ' ἡμῶν κἀμὸς ἦσθ' ἀεί ποτε, 868-70.
[186] καὶ σοὶ μὲν εὔνους εἰμί, σῷ δ' ἧσσον πόσει, 871.

more powerful alignment elsewhere in the wake of his offensive actions.[187] Prefiguring Clytemnestra's own shift in loyalty, the Old Man is faithful to Agamemnon only as far as the latter proves their interests and values are the same. His shift in loyalty is blood in the water signalling Agamemnon's loss of control in his household. As much as the king tries to maintain both his command over the army and harmony in his household, he cannot handle two calamities at once, a fact which pushes those around him (Menelaus, the Old Man, Clytemnestra, Achilles, Iphigenia) to seek out alternatives to his authority.[188] Upon seeing the household harmony at a breaking point, the Old Man throws his lot in with Clytemnestra after confirming his membership in *her oikos* and her dedication to the bonds of *philia*. And he is right to do so, since Agamemnon's preference for Menelaus foreshadows how he will later side against his *oikos* and *philoi* in favor of his political duties.

Conclusion

Enslaved members of the household are useful for the playwright: they allow them to clearly show the effects of noble characters' management on their household, and so demonstrate important themes that will be relevant later in the plays. Aeschylus's Watchman signals the covertness of the household's distress, Sophocles' Paedagogos embodies the necessary decisiveness of the avengers, and Euripides' Old Man reaches for the philial spirit which Agamemnon pushes aside repeatedly. Enslaved characters also show how the household

[187] Iphigenia and the Old Man were played by the same actor, which has led some scholars to suggest their roles can be read as complementary. Damen (1989: 330) suggests the characters form a dyad around the sacrifice as "victim and would-be rescuer," Gamel (1999: 322) that the shared actor more generally "underlines the similarities…between Iphigenia and other marginal characters" (322). Certainly, the two share a similar trajectory, from trustful of Agamemnon to disabused of his willingness to protect them. Further consideration of role division falls beyond the scope of this project.

[188] Webster 1967: "Euripides saw the story as the resultant of a number of forces which might be of unequal power but were none of them negligible. The slave, loyal or disloyal, may have the minimum authority but [give] a decisive push to the action" (287).

responds to management and affects its leaders in turn.[189] Aeschylus' household is under strain; Euripides' begins to actually break down. The Watchman is in a state of psychological distress yet keeps to his duty, resulting in Clytemnestra's successful plot. The Old Man instead follows his instinct, and he takes decisive action against Agamemnon, leading to the partial failure of his plot. The Paedagogos and Orestes have the most mutually beneficial relationship of the three, and they work toward the same goal. As Orestes grows into a kingly head of house during *Electra*, his relationship to the Paedagogos demonstrates the way he will lead his house after taking the throne. Relationships with enslaved members of the *oikos* are a major component of household management, and they see increasing stage time in the fifth century in the tragedy's evolution from Aeschylus to Euripides.

Chapter Three: Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*

Introduction

In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, household management as a metaphor for political life works on two levels; first, the *polis* is squandering its young generation of soldiers as Agamemnon squanders his child; second, the *oikos* itself is losing autonomy within the *polis*, as Agamemnon loses his control over his household to the army. His attempts to reconcile the two spheres fail miserably and problematize the concept of the *oikos* as a closed system as the state is forced to self-cannibalize its own constituent parts in the pursuit of external glory. Euripides is particularly interested in the power of true affection as a counterweight to this desire, and he puts forward an ideal of family love (*philia*) as its own organizing principle that works fluidly through natural feeling and selfless compassion rather than institutional networks of obligation. It is what moves Agamemnon try to cancel the sacrifice at dawn, and then returns throughout the day as

[189] As Florence Yoon (2012: 3-4) points out, the playwrights often introduce original, low-status characters to their base myths because such characters can be useful in fleshing out their unique takes on the source myth.

Menelaus, then the Old Man, Clytemnestra, and Achilles work against Iphigenia's death. It is finally employed by Iphigenia to rationalize her murder. In this play, *philia* is the light of Greece, not better management.[190]

Throughout this chapter, I use the term "articulation" when discussing how characters navigate networks of obligation. To analogize social life to the human body, social contexts (institutions, kin groups, modes of production, etc.) connect at joints where they intersect. Articulation is smooth when an individual can move between contexts easily, and their commitments to one group do not interfere with their commitments to another. Articulation is difficult when the opposite is true, and the individual cannot successfully fulfil their obligations in multiple contexts. I borrow the term from the anthropologist and classicist S. C. Humphreys, whose work connects Greek economic history with the study of kinship in a manner that has been especially useful in structuring this chapter.[191]

This chapter deals with the troubled articulation of Agamemnon's *oikos* through four social relations. First, Menelaus is an opposing force in the army and Agamemnon's younger brother, consideration of which fact eventually cures him of his desire for the sacrifice. Second, Achilles is another fellow commander who initially relates to Agamemnon only politically but is given the option to form a familial bond with Agamemnon by marrying Iphigenia. Because he is a man and a demigod, both are viable options for him; his options for articulation are open and foreclosed only by Iphigenia's request. The flexibility of Menelaus' and Achilles' relationships to Agamemnon contrasts the inflexibility of his relationships with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia. The

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[190] In agreement, see Marianne McDonald, "Iphigenia's *Philia*: Motivation in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*" (Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica 34.1, pp. 69-84, 1990); T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (Methuen & Co., 1967): 289.

[191] See especially S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (Routledge, 1978) chapters six and seven, and *The Family, Women and Death: Comparative Studies* (Routledge, 1993) chapters one through four.

women have no alternative way to relate to Agamemnon than through their familial relation, and their skills and potential within the private sphere are given little power in the men's camp. They are forced to respond to their circumstances non-normatively. The audience brought their knowledge of the complete Orestes cycle to the theatre, and would no doubt have in mind Clytemnestra's canonical actions after the events of *Iphigenia*: she usurps and assassinates her husband, which is so non-domestically political that she is regularly described with masculine terms.[192] Iphigenia decides to commit fully to her desired political function in Aulis so that she can maintain some semblance of a reciprocal relation with her father, Achilles, and the rest of the army; because she is a child and woman, she can only do this by fulfilling Calchas' prophecy and dying in the way of an animal.

Menelaus and Fraternal *Philia* ("I am exactly where you are now," εἰμὶ δ' οὗπερ εἶ σὺ νῦν, 480)

Menelaus desires to relate to Agamemnon both through their familial and political relations, but ultimately allows his *philia* for his older brother to overpower his desire for revenge in the political-martial sphere.

The close relationship between Agamemnon and Menelaus is well-known from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,[193] and in Aeschylus's *Oresteia* the chorus praise them as "the two-throned authority of the Achaeans, the single-minded command of Hellas' youth."[194] In many ways, they are ideal brothers with a strong bond of mutual care. Euripides is aware of this ideal and uses it elsewhere.

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[192] Perhaps most famously, the Watchman fears "the man-planning heart of a woman" (11) in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*.
[193] See Walter Donlan, "Homer's Agamemnon" (*The Classical World*, 65.4, 1971), esp. pp. 113-14, where he argues that "Agamemnon appears in his most sympathetic light" in Iliad X, when his "brotherly affection for Menelaus" is highlighted.
[194] 109-11: Ἀχαι- / ῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας / ξύμφρονα ταγάν.

Castor and Pollux, for example, appear as the *di ex machina* in his *Electra* and *Helen*, providing divine commentary in both about familial justice which is reinforced by their own identification as brothers. The brother bond is not particular to Euripides, however. It appears across Athenian sources. Grave inscriptions indicate brothers were sometimes buried together,[195] and legal speechwriters stress on the one hand their clients' diligent respect for their brothers' families, and on the other their opponents' disrespect for kinship bonds.[196]

Menelaus and Agamemnon also fight in the tradition of brothers.[197] Menelaus, Agamemnon, and the rest of the Greeks have assembled at Aulis because Menelaus wants his wife back. Helen's father allowed her to choose which of her suitors she would marry, sending her "wherever the loving winds of Aphrodite may carry" (69).[198] Now, the winds of Aphrodite have carried her off a second time, and Menelaus cannot stand the invasion of his *oikos*. Perhaps out of embarrassment, he encourages Panhellenic appropriation of his loss. He frames Agamemnon's indecision as treachery which he threatens to report to "all the Danaans" (324: Δαναοῖς πᾶσι). He rejects obligation to his older brother—"I am not your slave" (330: σὸς δὲ δοῦλος οὐκ ἔφυν)[199]—and says his motivation is mostly "for sorely distressed Greece" (370: Ἑλλάδος… ταλαιπώρου). Agamemnon, likewise, puts distance between his affairs and Menelaus': "Is this not outrageous?

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[195] For example, IG I³ 1231: "An inscription to Philoitios and Ktesias; and / loving Dexsandrides made me, a memorial to his brother and to the other man here" (Φιλοιτίο καὶ Κτεσίο τὸ σε̃μα· καὶ / <–> μ' ἐποίεσεν φίλος Δεχ[σ]ανδρίδ̣ε[ς] / ἀδελφο̃<ι> *h*αυτο̃ μνε̃μα κἀκένοι τάδε). In Pfohl (ed.), *Greek Poems on Stones. Vol. I* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), inscription number 78. See also 74 and 107 (and compare to 143 from Thessaly and 187 from the Hellespont).

[196] Humphreys 1993: 9; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Hackett, 1974): 375-77.

[197] For an account of Menelaus and Agamemnon's occasional animosity in the epic tradition, see Benjamin Sammon, "The Quarrel of Agamemnon & Menelaus" (*Mnemosyne* 67, 2014).

[198] ὅποι πνοαὶ φέροιεν Ἀφροδίτης φίλαι. The phrase "loving (*philai*) winds of Aphrodite" contains two key types of love, *philia* and *eros*: Menelaus' marriage has roots in both. As the play progresses, *philia* and *eros* develop as competing themes.

[199] Characters frequently describe themselves as "enslaved" (δουλεύειν) by powerful social pressures (e.g., Agamemnon to Menelaus, "we [noble-born men] are slaves to the masses," 449; Clytemnestra to Achilles "I must be a slave to you," 1033).

Will I not be permitted to manage my own household?" (331: οὐχὶ δεινά; τὸν ἐμὸν οἰκεῖν οἶκον οὐκ ἐάσομαι;). They attack each other as hypocritical household managers. Menelaus points out how, when presented with the idea of sacrificing his daughter, Agamemnon was initially delighted by the solution and agreed "willingly, without being forced – don't try to claim otherwise" (360-1: ἑκών, / οὐ βίᾳ – μὴ τοῦτο λέξῃς), while Agamemnon alleges that Helen's disappearance was Menelaus' own fault, the sign of his weak husbandry—"you led [her] badly" (383-4: κακῶς / ἦρχες).

Their conflict has a contemporary naturalism. In the fifth century, lateral kinship ties (i.e. siblings and first cousins) evidence a dissonance between social expectation and legal responsibility. The relative lack of institutional scaffolding for lateral kin relations lends itself to what Humphreys calls "the optionality of kinship, outside the nuclear family" and a resulting reliance on the *ideology* of kinship, rather than any structural obligation, as a social glue.[200] Legal cases which disavow familial conflict nevertheless show the high frequency of clashes between lateral kin. Structurally, male siblings begin life in a shared paternal *oikos* but, if aiming to succeed in public life, they must establish their own, legally distinct *oikoi.*[201] Once grown, brothers are legally distinguished from their father and one or more can take over, then inherit, his *oikos* and associated property.[202] Hesiod advises fathers to have a single son to avoid the dilution of the family's wealth and (perhaps from experience) the inevitable feuds between siblings to gain as much as possible from their paternal estate.[203] After this division of properties,

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[200] Humphreys 1978: 199.
[201] This is broadly true until the fourth century, when philosophically-inclined men began to defend the moral validity of an *apragmos*, "uninvolved," lifestyle dedicated to mental development.
[202] Douglas M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978): 91-93. In intestate succession, the *oikos* passes entirely to the eldest son. If he chooses to write a will, the head of the *oikos* may divide the *oikos*' wealth between his children, with the ancestral property often still transferred to the eldest son.
[203] "There should be only a single son to preserve his father's household, for thus wealth is increased in his halls." μουνογενὴς δὲ πάις εἴη πατρώιον οἶκον / φερβέμεν ὣς γὰρ πλοῦτος ἀέξεται ἐν μεγάροισιν, *Works and Days* 376-7.

which could go quite poorly, brothers have few official obligations to one another "as brothers."[204] In the not infrequent case of familial conflict that was raised to the courts, it was not taboo to admit impassible conflicts between brothers (e.g. Isaeus 7). The brotherly relation, once it has grown out of the structural bounds of the *oikos*, consequently becomes largely vestigial, even though the expectation of closeness remains. This is the state in which Euripides finds Agamemnon and Menelaus, who are experiencing a rather non-anomalous conflict, despite their anomalous situation, as Agamemnon notes: "Tumult between brothers often arises from erotic matters and greed for the house."[205]

Their resolution comes through Menelaus' realization that his brotherly relation of *philia* has overpowered his *eros* for Helen. *Philia* for his brother and niece cures him of the Greeks' sick desire, though his personal concession is tragically ineffective at stopping Iphigenia's sacrifice: as the Old Man later explains, Menelaus took the tablet from his hands so that it never reached Clytemnestra (895). In this isolated instance between the two brothers, though, Menelaus' subjective experience makes all the difference.

His shift happens in two parts. First, Menelaus must face his complicity in Iphigenia's murder. As he threatens to storm away from Agamemnon, a messenger enters and announces that Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, and Orestes have arrived in Aulis. Then he addresses the commanders

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Hesiod also expresses nostalgia for an idealized past brotherhood. "[In this Iron Age] the father will not be of like mind with his children, nor his children with him, nor the guest with his host or friend with friend, nor will brothers be dear to one another, as they were before." οὐδὲ πατὴρ παίδεσσιν ὁμοίιος οὐδέ τι παῖδες, / οὐδὲ ξεῖνος ξεινοδόκῳ καὶ ἑταῖρος ἑταίρῳ, / οὐδὲ κασίγνητος φίλος ἔσσεται, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ, ibid.182-4. On this topic, see Lilah Grace Canevaro, "Fraternal Conflict in Hesiod's *Works and Days*," in *Conflict and Consensus in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[204] There are some obligations for brothers, but they do not generally apply to married brothers who are both living: an *unmarried* brother is obliged to marry his brother's widow (and so keep their property within the *genos*), and a man is expected to seek justice for a *murdered* brother in the courts.

[205] ταραχὴ δ' ἀδελφῶν διά τ' ἔρωτα γίγνεται / πλεονεξίαν τε δωμάτων, 508-9. He says this after Menelaus has apologized, giving it the effect of both rubbing in Menelaus' previous wrongness and excusing them both, to some degree, for falling into an (Iron) age-old conflict.

personally. “So up! to all these tasks” (345: ἀλλ’ εἶα τἀπὶ τοισίδ’) he exhorts them, and in three imperatives draws Menelaus into the midst of the sham wedding preparations. The messenger aims his first directive at Agamemnon: “Bring out the barley-baskets!” (345: ἐξάρχου κανᾶ); the second includes Menelaus: “Wreathe your heads!” (346: στεφανοῦσθε κρᾶτα); the third is for Menelaus only: “And you, lord Menelaus, ready the hymn!” (346-7: καὶ σύ, Μενέλεως ἄναξ, / ὑμέναιον εὐτρέπιζε). The messenger takes for granted that the bride’s uncle will be among the chorus of relatives in the wedding procession, and in his ignorance of the sacrifice confronts Menelaus with his complicity in his niece’s murder.[206]

The second part of the change comes when Menelaus is moved by Agamemnon’s reaction to the messenger’s speech. Agamemnon dismisses the messenger, and once he is gone cries out:

> Well! What will I say to my wife? How will I receive her? How can I meet her eyes? She destroyed me, on top of the evils which surround me, by coming uncalled. But it is reasonable that she came with her daughter, to make her most beloved girl a bride and give her away in marriage—where she will discover I have become evil. And moreover, the poor maiden—why do I say maiden? Hades, it seems, will take her to wife soon. I think she will plead, “O father, will you slay me? May you yourself enter such a marriage, and whoever is a friend to you.” Nearby Orestes will cry out, unintelligible though he comprehends, for he is still an infant.[207]

Proximity to Agamemnon’s anguish moves Menelaus. He is more measured than furious now, taking Agamemnon’s hand and calling him “brother” (471-2) before sharing his change of heart: “I advise you not to kill your child […] Disband the expedition, send it far from Aulis.”[208] It was a moment of *pathos* that convinced him, he explains. “I was senseless and naïve until I saw the

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[206] Cf. A. *Ag*. 707-8: “the wedding hymn, which then came to the kinsmen to sing.”

[207] εἶέν· τί φήσω πρὸς δάμαρτα τὴν ἐμήν; / πῶς δέξομαί νιν; ποῖον ὄμμα συμβαλῶ; / καὶ γάρ μ’ ἀπώλεσ’ ἐπὶ κακοῖς ἅ μοι πάρα / ἐλθοῦσ’ ἄκλητος. εἰκότως δ’ ἅμ’ ἔσπετο / θυγατρὶ νυμφεύσουσα καὶ τὰ φίλτατα / δώσουσ’, ἵν’ ἡμᾶς ὄντας εὑρήσει κακούς. / τὴν δ’ αὖ τάλαιναν παρθένον – τί παρθένον; / Ἅιδης νιν, ὡς ἔοικε, νυμφεύσει τάχα – / ὡς ᾧκτισ’· οἶμαι γάρ νιν ἱκετεύσειν τάδε· / “Ὦ πάτερ, ἀποκτενεῖς με; τοιούτους γάμους / γήμειας αὐτὸς χὥστις ἐστί σοι φίλος.” / παρὼν δ’ Ὀρέστης ἐγγὺς ἀναβοήσεται / οὐ συνετὰ συνετῶς· ἔτι γάρ ἐστι νήπιος, 454-66.

[208] σοι παραινῶ μήτ’ ἀποκτεῖναι τέκνον, 481.
ἴτω στρατεία διαλυθεῖσ’ ἐξ Αὐλίδος, 495.

matter up close and understood the kind of thing it is to kill your child."[209] His sympathy for Agamemnon overwhelms his *eros* for Helen and war: "I—you—when I saw you shedding tears from your eyes, I felt pity, I let a tear fall with you, and I departed from what I said before; I am not a threat to you. I am exactly where you are now."[210] He also feels for Iphigenia: "And besides that, mercy came to me for the suffering girl, through my consideration of our kinship, she about to be sacrificed for the sake of my marriage."[211] Unexpected *philia* has won out against his self-centered desire.

This is an appealing moment for two generally unappealing characters, and its nobility is enhanced by the overwhelming odds the brothers face. *Philia* fills in for obligation and reasserts harmonious familial order where *eros* had raged. Menelaus describes how his sense of identification with Agamemnon bridges the gap between their differences: "I have felt reasonably. Affection for my brother, sprung from the same source as me, changed my mind."[212] He allows his subordinate familial position to reshape his competitive political one in a decision of the heart which soon contrasts with the irreparably broken relationship between Agamemnon and his *oikos.*

Achilles' Options

Achilles is the most openly articulated character in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. He is a fellow commander to the Atreides, called to Aulis with his Myrmidons from Phthia. His involvement in

[209] ἄφρων νέος τ' ἦ, πρὶν τὰ πράγματ' ἐγγύθεν / σκοπῶν ἐσεῖδον οἷον ἦν κτείνειν τέκνα, 489-90.
[210] ἐγώ σ' ἀπ' ὄσσων ἐκβαλόντ' ἰδὼν δάκρυ / ᾤκτιρα καὐτὸς ἀνταφῆκά σοι πάλιν / καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν ἐξαφίσταμαι λόγων, / οὐκ ἐς σὲ δεινός, εἰμὶ δ' οὖπερ εἶ σὺ νῦν, 477-480.
[211] ἄλλως τέ μ' ἔλεος τῆς ταλαιπώρου κόρης / ἐσῆλθε, συγγένειαν ἐννοουμένῳ, / ἣ τῶν ἐμῶν ἕκατι θύεσθαι γάμων / μέλλει, 491-94.
[212] εἰκὸς πέπονθα· τὸν ὁμόθεν πεφυκότα / στέργων μετέπεσον, 501-2.

the drama begins when Agamemnon uses his name to lend credence to his summons for Iphigenia (98-103):

> I sent a letter to my wife on the leaves of a tablet, telling her to send our daughter to be wed to Achilles, and I greatly admired the man's worth and said that he would not agree to sail with the Achaeans unless he has a wife from us in Phthia.[213]

This is a hasty pretense, and when Achilles finds out his name has been used without his permission, he is offended. But he remains calm; he has an option to turn the Atreides' offense back upon them and form a familial bond with Agamemnon's *oikos* anyway. Clytemnestra turns to her would-be son-in-law as soon as she understands the plot against them (896ff.). She mediates the relationship between Achilles and Iphigenia and, as Katherine Wasdin points out, "colludes to make him act as her fiancé, behind Agamemnon's back and contrary to his wishes."[214] Achilles is an inverse of Agamemnon, open to the possibilities of *oikos* and army but not forced to choose between them. He is, as in the epics, somewhat of a free agent because of his godlike abilities and proud nature.[215] He first comes to Agamemnon's tent advocating for himself, because "on the one hand, there are those of us who sit idle here on the headlands, unmarried, having left behind empty households, and on the other hand, those that have wives without children/and children."[216] He takes up the role of Iphigenia's protector, mostly because the Atreides have disrespected him, but also through Clytemnestra's suggestion that it is in his

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[213] κἀν δέλτου πτυχαῖς
γράψας ἔπεμψα πρὸς δάμαρτα τὴν ἐμὴν
πέμπειν Ἀχιλλεῖ θυγατέρ' ὡς γαμουμένην,
τό τ' ἀξίωμα τἀνδρὸς ἐκγαυρούμενος,
συμπλεῖν τ' Ἀχαιοῖς οὕνεκ' οὐ θέλοι λέγων,
εἰ μὴ παρ' ἡμῶν εἶσιν ἐς Φθίαν λέχος·

[214] Katherine Wasdin, "Concealed Kypris in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*" (*The Classical Quarterly* Vol. 70, No. 1, pp. 43–50, 2020): 48.

[215] Who else can say truthfully, "as for the Atreides, if they lead nobly, I will obey them, and if they lead ignobly, I will not obey them. Here and in Troy I will present my free nature, and I will glorify Ares with my spear as much as I can" (928-31)?

[216] οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν, ὄντες ἄζυγες γάμων, / οἴκους ἐκλιπόντες ἐνθάδε / θάσσουσ' ἐπ' ἀκταῖς, οἱ δ' ἔχοντες εὔνιδας / καὶ παῖδας, 805-8.

own political interest: “You will meet with reproach if you do not protect her, for even if you did not marry her, you were still called the unfortunate girl’s dear husband.”[217] He slots easily into the position of ideal son-in-law and vows to protect Iphigenia and her family despite opposition from his Myrmidons.

But Agamemnon’s demented arrangement of events makes the marriage unviable from Iphigenia’s perspective, since it would mean a bitter alienation from her father and almost certainly death of many Greeks. She asks Achilles not to defend her, because of her own *philia* for Achilles (or hidden *kypris*, as Wasdin suggests) and for her father. When she resigns herself to death for the expedition, Achilles is impressed by her nobility (1411: γενναία) and asks her directly to enter his *oikos* instead of Hades’, leaving the possibility open by placing his arms by the altar (1426). His measured response is ultimately unsuccessful against the Greek army’s mob mentality, but his relationship with Iphigenia and her mother communicates all the more strongly what is lost when familial ties are devalued in the pursuit of glory as a nation.

Clytemnestra (“You will bear witness that I was a blameless wife,” συμμαρτυρήσεις ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἦ γυνή, 1158)

Clytemnestra manages her *oikos* well, but it does not save her. She begins in a normative position as the queen of Argos and successful mistress of its royal household. Her familial obligations and personal motivations are fully synthesized. She experiences no conflict of obligation and feeling until she realizes what Agamemnon is planning. At the close of the play Clytemnestra has been forced into a corner, stripped of her daughter and her domestic authority. This is Euripides’ origin story for the man-minded, axe-wielding villainess of Greek myth.

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[217] σοὶ δ’ ὄνειδος ἵξεται, / ὅστις οὐκ ἤμυνας· εἰ γὰρ μὴ γάμοισιν ἐζύγης, / ἀλλ’ ἐκλήθης γοῦν ταλαίνης παρθένου φίλος πόσις, 906-8.

Clytemnestra is a model householder. She understands how to run her husband's *oikos* and navigate her familial obligations to him and her children. She works toward appropriate private goals but does what she believes is best moment-to-moment given the information available to her. For example, she follows Agamemnon's directive to send Iphigenia to Aulis, but does not let her come alone as he requested. Similarly, when he suggests she leave before the wedding, she rejects him outright: "No, by the Argive Mistress! Go handle things outside but leave domestic matters to *me*" (739-40).[218] Perhaps the best demonstration of her domestic skill is in her programmatic entrance and speech. She is confident in her commands and excited for her daughter's upcoming nuptials. After accepting the chorus' welcome, she swiftly oversees the unpacking of their chariot, the elegant dismount of Iphigenia, herself, and the baby Orestes, and the arrangement of a pleasing family tableau to greet Agamemnon's arrival (607-634):

> I take this as a good omen, the seemliness and kindness of your words. I have great hope that I am here as the bride-bringer to an excellent wedding. [*to male attendants*] Convey from the chariot these dowry gifts I am carrying and put them inside. And you, my child, quit our filly-drawn carriage and place your delicate limbs safely upon the ground. [*to female attendants*] You girls, receive her in your arms and convey her from the chariot. And someone give me the support of their hand, so that I may leave my carriage seat properly. You other girls, stand at the head of the filly team, since the eye of a young horse is skittish and untamed.[219] And as he is still an infant, take this child, Agamemnon's son, Orestes. Are you sleeping, child, tired by our carriage ride? Wake up for your sister's wedding, which is a success for you as well, little noble, since you will gain a connection to a man just as fine, the godlike son of Nereus' girl. Come sit by my feet, child. Stand next to your mother, Iphigenia, to show these foreign women how blessed I am, and from here greet your dear father. My most revered lord Agamemnon! We have come at your behest, obedient to you.[220]

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[218] μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν Ἀργείαν θεάν. / ἐλθὼν δὲ τἄξω πρᾶσσε, τἀν δόμοις δ' ἐγώ.

[219] Clytemnestra's watchful and well-reasoned attitude towards the young chariot horses matches her parenting style. Cf. Aesch. *Ag*. 842 and 1640 (discussion pp. XX) and Soph. *El.* 25 (discussion pp. XX) where the trace-horse works as a metaphor for one's leadership style.

[220] ὄρνιθα μὲν τόνδ' αἴσιον ποιούμεθα,
τὸ σόν τε χρηστὸν καὶ λόγων εὐφημίαν·
ἐλπίδα δ' ἔχω τιν' ὡς ἐπ' ἐσθλοῖσιν γάμοις
πάρειμι νυμφαγωγός. ἀλλ' ὀχημάτων
ἔξω πορεύεθ' ἅς φέρω φερνὰς κόρῃ

Her efficiency is impressive: there are 10 imperatives in 26 lines, and she addresses three groups of attendants, the chorus, both of her children, and her husband.

Her speech brings out several aspects of her familial relations. Her first concern is Iphigenia's dowry (φερνή), which indicates the legitimacy of her marriage arrangement, demonstrates her family's prosperity, and will function as a means of support in her new household (as, e.g., the Old Man has for Clytemnestra).[221] When the travelers are out of the chariot, Clytemnestra forms them into a tableau of the family's fortune—healthy royal children surround the queen, the eldest on the cusp of marriage, the youngest a newborn baby boy. Their age range communicates Clytemnestra's long-term success at child-rearing, and the presence of both a girl (to give in marriage) and a boy (to inherit the *oikos* and royal seat) shows that the family has strong options for future alliance and succession. There is another logic in bringing along Orestes, Agamemnon's only son, heir, and prince of Mycenae. The visit reminds Agamemnon of his son's political visibility and fledgling connections (he will soon have

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καὶ πέμπετ' ἐς μέλαθρον εὐλαβούμενοι.
σὺ δ', ὦ τέκνον μοι, λεῖπε πωλικοὺς ὄχους,
ἁβρὸν τιθεῖσα κῶλον ἀσφαλῶς χαμαί.
ὑμεῖς δὲ νεάνιδές νιν ἀγκάλαις ἔπι
δέξασθε καὶ πορεύσατ' ἐξ ὀχημάτων.
κἀμοὶ χερός τις ἐνδότω στηρίγματα,
θάκους ἀπήνης ὡς ἂν ἐκλίπω καλῶς.
αἱ δ' ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν στῆτε πωλικῶν ζυγῶν·
φοβερὸν γὰρ ἀπαράμυθον ὄμμα πωλικόν.
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε, τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος γόνον,
λάζυσθ', Ὀρέστην· ἔτι γάρ ἐστι νήπιος.
τέκνον, καθεύδεις, πωλικῷ δαμεὶς ὄχῳ;
ἔγειρ' ἀδελφῆς ἐφ' ὑμέναιον εὐτυχῶς·
ἀνδρὸς γὰρ ἀγαθοῦ κῆδος αὐτὸς ἐσθλὸς ὢν
λήψῃ, κόρης Νηρῇδος ἰσοθέου γένους.
†ἑξῆς κάθησο δεῦρό μου ποδός, τέκνον·
πρὸς μητέρ', Ἰφιγένεια, μακαρίαν δέ με
ξέναισι ταῖσδε πλησία σταθεῖσα θές,
καὶ δεῦρο δὴ πατέρα πρόσειπε σὸν φίλον.†
ὦ σέβας ἐμοὶ μέγιστον, Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ,
ἥκομεν, ἐφετμαῖς οὐκ ἀπιστοῦσαι σέθεν.

[221] On the dowry, see Harrison 1968: 45-60.

Achilles as a brother-in-law, and he is betrothed to Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen). It may also spark a paternal affection that will fortify Agamemnon's commitment to the family (so that, e.g., he is not tempted to usurp his wife with a Chryseis or Cassandra).[222]

On top of her good track record, Clytemnestra is a master of adapting appearances to suit circumstances. In declaring, "We have come at your behest, obedient to you" (634), she makes it seem as if Agamemnon had sent for her to come with Iphigenia, when, according to him, Clytemnestra has explicitly come unsummoned (457: ἄκλητος). Iphigenia asks to run ahead to greet her father, and Clytemnestra allows her. She's easy, even doting, on her children; affection within the family strengthens its bonds. She's also kind to Agamemnon. To comfort him in what she believes is a bout of pre-wedding sentimentality, she admits she will miss their daughter too, though custom (694: νόμος) will eventually lessen the feeling. The separation of marriage is necessary. It is how Greek girls become women, and how a Greek princess reaches her sociopolitical potential. When Clytemnestra she asks Agamemnon about Achilles, she seems to know the answers to her questions about his family and education. In asking them, however, she performs her due diligence as mother of the bride and emphasizes the groom's desirability.[223] She relies on her thorough understanding of custom (νόμος), a word which appears as both a balm to her anticipated separation from Iphigenia (694) and a shield to Agamemnon's intrusion into the ceremony (734). Custom is her watchword, and her adherence to the principles of family

[222] The bringing of Orestes reminds me of the amphidromia (ἀμφιδρόμια, "carried it around the hearth"), the post-partum ritual in which a newborn is named and/or recognized by its father (?)). The father-son visit communicates, "you *will* recognize this child, now and in the future."

[223] This way of handling information is a lesson passed to Iphigenia, who uses a similar form of questioning when she asks her father whether she will go on her intended "voyage" (πλοῦς, 667) with her mother or alone. When he replies "alone" (μόνη, 669), she confirms (what she believes to be) her marriage, exclaiming, "Oh! Then you are settling me in another house, Father?" (οὔ πού μ᾽ ἐς ἄλλα δώματ᾽ οἰκίζεις, πάτερ; 670).

management emphasize that the clash between herself and Agamemnon's army is one that represents the *oikos* system butting heads with contemporary politics.

When the Old Man uncovers Agamemnon's betrayal, Clytemnestra beseeches Achilles for protection. This first emergency solution appeals to the same familial order with which Clytemnestra is familiar, and it may be her only avenue within the army camp. She is a lone wife among the assembled Greek soldiers, and she can seek help only through this tenuous in-law bond based in a lie.

Her attempts to break down Agamemnon are ineffective, though she has several well-reasoned arguments. As before, she sets the scene carefully (1115-1121):

> You speak well with your words, but I do not know how I can put your deeds to words and speak well of them. Come outside, daughter—for you have learned exactly what your father intends—come holding Orestes under your robe, your child brother. Look, she is here in obedience to you. Everything else, I will speak on her behalf and my own.[224]

The two children form a tableau of supplication that impresses itself upon Agamemnon during her long speech. First, she argues that she has held up her end of their marriage deal: despite the murder of her first husband and child, and her brothers' willingness to avenge her, she has been an obedient daughter, a chaste wife and a skilled household mistress (1146-56):

> Listen now. I will uncover my meaning and no longer speak in obscure riddles. To start, I will make this first reproach this against you. You married me against my will and took me by force, after you killed my husband before you, Tantalus. You dashed my newborn against the ground, tearing him violently from my breast, as was your right. Two of Zeus' sons, my brothers marched against you on their

[224] τοῖς ὀνόμασιν μὲν εὖ λέγεις, τὰ δ᾽ ἔργα σου
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπως χρή μ᾽ ὀνομάσασαν εὖ λέγειν.
χώρει δέ, θύγατερ, ἐκτός — οἶσθα γὰρ πατρὸς
πάντως ἃ μέλλει — χὑπὸ τοῖς πέπλοις ἄγε
λαβοῦσ᾽ Ὀρέστην, σὸν κασίγνητον, τέκνον.
ἰδοὺ πάρεστιν ἥδε πειθαρχοῦσά σοι.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐγὼ πρὸ τῆσδε κἀμαυτῆς φράσω.

> gleaming horses. But once you became a suppliant, my old father Tyndareus shielded you, and you possessed my bed again.[225]

Clytemnestra's first husband and son are Euripidean innovations which stress the agonizing labor of Clytemnestra's assimilation into Agamemnon's *oikos*.[226] Their children now make a visual parallel (perhaps strengthened by physical resemblance) to a past Clytemnestra and her slaughtered newborn (βρέφος). Agamemnon has the chance to spare Iphigenia, so like the young Clytemnestra he pursued, and her future as another's wife and a mother to her own children. As Clytemnestra says, she has given Agamemnon four children of his own (1157-65):

> Once I became reconciled to you personally and to your household, you will bear witness that I was a blameless wife. I was sexually restrained and strengthened your home, so that you would rejoice on entering and feel fortunate going out the door. It is a rare catch for a man to have such a wife, but not a rare thing to have an unserviceable woman. I bore you this boy after three daughters, and now you are recklessly robbing me of one.[227]

She contrasts her sexual exclusivity with Helen's infidelity, insisting that the exchange of their blameless daughter for a relative's unfaithful wife is a bad deal (1166-1170). She tries

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[225] In line 1151, I follow the L manuscript, rejecting Jacob's emendation (βρέφος τε τοὐμὸν ζῶν προσούδισας πέδῳ).
ἄκουε δή νυν: ἀνακαλύψω γὰρ λόγους,
κοὐκέτι παρῳδοῖς χρησόμεσθ᾽ αἰνίγμασιν.
πρῶτον μέν, ἵνα σοι πρῶτα τοῦτ᾽ ὀνειδίσω,
ἔγημας ἄκουσάν με κἄλαβες βίᾳ,
τὸν πρόσθεν ἄνδρα Τάνταλον κατακτανών:
βρέφος τε τοὐμὸν σῷ προσούδισας πάλῳ,
μαστῶν βιαίως τῶν ἐμῶν ἀποσπάσας.
καὶ τὼ Διός σε παῖδ᾽, ἐμὼ δὲ συγγόνω,
ἵπποισι μαρμαίροντ᾽ ἐπεστρατευσάτην:
πατὴρ δὲ πρέσβυς Τυνδάρεώς σ᾽ ἐρρύσατο
ἱκέτην γενόμενον, τἀμὰ δ᾽ ἔσχες αὖ λέχη.

[226] See Froma I. Zeitlin, "Clytemnestra's First Marriage: Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*" in The Soul of Tragedy: Essays on Athenian Drama (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[227] οὖ σοι καταλλαχθεῖσα περὶ σὲ καὶ δόμους
συμμαρτυρήσεις ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἦ γυνή,
ἥς τ᾽ Ἀφροδίτην σωφρονοῦσα καὶ τὸ σὸν
μέλαθρον αὔξουσ᾽, ὥστε σ᾽ εἰσιόντα τε
χαίρειν θύραζέ τ᾽ ἐξιόντ᾽ εὐδαιμονεῖν.
σπάνιον δὲ θήρευμ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τοιαύτην λαβεῖν
δάμαρτα: φλαύραν δ᾽ οὐ σπάνις γυναῖκ᾽ ἔχειν.
τίκτω δ᾽ ἐπὶ τρισὶ παρθένοισι παῖδά σοι
τόνδ᾽, ὧν μιᾶς σὺ τλημόνως μ᾽ ἀποστερεῖς.

threatening Agamemnon outright (1171-82) with "the reception which he deserves" (1182: δέξιν ἥν σε δέξασθαι χρεών) and utters the famous lines, "Do not, by the gods, force me to become an evil woman toward you, and don't be thus yourself" (1183-84).[228] She piles on further attacks. His impiety will disgust the gods (1185-90), and his violence will terrify his remaining children (1191-95):

> When you come back to Argos, will you fall before your children? You do not have the right. And will any of your children look at you, since you might kill any of them within arm's reach? Have you come to these conclusions already through reasoning, or do you care only to wield your solitary scepter and command the army?[229]

The sacrifice is not only an exchange of one child, but Agamemnon's irreversible commitment to exchange his private life for his lonely public one. Finally, Clytemnestra shows herself more creative in this arena too: why did he not explore other options for the sacrifice, either selecting a victim by lot or suggesting Menelaus' sacrifice of one member of his *oikos* to regain another (1196-1205)? She concludes with a challenge (1206-1208): tell me I am incorrect and kill our child or admit the logic in my words and spare her.

Though she cannot move him, Clytemnestra exposes the artificiality of their familial harmony. Her frame of reference was the custom of the contemporary *oikos*, in which her proper performance in the domestic sphere should buy her material security; this is what women are told to incentivize their willing participation in the private household system. When loyalty does not buy her security in this crisis, however, Clytemnestra does not have access to any institutions which can come to her defense. All she can do for now to stop the sacrifice is communicate to

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[228] μὴ δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν μήτ' ἀναγκάσῃς ἐμὲ / κακὴν γενέσθαι περὶ σὲ μήτ' αὐτὸς γένῃ

[229] ἥκων δ' ἂν Ἄργος προσπέσοις τέκνοισι σοῖς;
ἀλλ' οὐ θέμις σοι. τίς δὲ καὶ προσβλέψεται
παίδων σ', ἵν' αὐτῶν προσέμενος κτάνῃς τινά;
ταῦτ' ἦλθες ἤδη διὰ λόγων, ἢ σκῆπτρά σοι
μόνον διαφέρειν καὶ στρατηλατεῖν μέλει;

her husband that if he does this, he will have no more material security when he returns than she does. This is how Euripides explains Clytemnestra's transition from the normative to the subversive. He is particularly sympathetic to her strong management skills, affection for her children, and the value she places on her conception of reciprocal labor. Clytemnestra becomes an "evil woman" toward Agamemnon because she chooses not to accept the murder of her child and has no other options besides a turn to non-normative means. After the events of this play, she famously carries out her entrance into the public sphere (i.e. the events depicted in *Agamemnon*), violently murdering her husband and appropriating his political and householding power for herself.

The Athenian citizen audience of *Iphigenia* would have been able to hear in Clytemnestra's arguments a familiar discourse on the costs of war. At the play's performance in 405, Athens was limping into the final years of the Peloponnesian War, in which the *demos* had voted at key points to pursue the war aggressively. The Sicilian Expedition ten years earlier had ended in humiliating and costly defeat (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 6-7); more recently, the *demos* voted to execute six of their generals for their perceived failure to save many of their men from shipwreck after the Battle of Arginusae (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 13.101.1- 103.2.; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.6.34-.7.35). To say that Euripides analogizes the Trojan War to the Peloponnesian War or gloss the play as call for Athens' surrender would be overly simplistic. In T. B. L. Webster's measured view, "The ancient picture of a crowd-shy Euripides writing his plays in a cave by the sea accords ill with the attempts by modern scholars to find allusions to recent political and military events in every play;" however, "what is clear is that Euripides hates war and particularly aggressive war."[230] In *Iphigenia*, the army's *eros* to sail against Troy is a

[230] Webster 1967: 28.

characterized as this kind of particularly aggressive force. It is a "sickness" (νόσος) that exerts an unseen but keenly felt pressure on each character. Popular will overrides Agamemnon's autonomy as a household manager and jeopardizes his ability to control the dispensation of his *oikos*; the *demos*' quick decision-making outstrips the networks of obligation that ideally function as balancing forces between the *oikos* and its larger community.[231]

Iphigenia's Appeal and Reversal

Unlike Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides presents Iphigenia's tragic reckoning with death in her own words. When she first learns about her father's betrayal, she is unwilling to go quietly, but once she exhausts her options of appeal and escape, she changes course to meet death willingly: Iphigenia advocates for her own devaluation with a combination of her father's Panhellenic rhetoric and a proto-Aristotelian view of the hierarchy of institutions. Agamemnon's abandonment forces this young member of his *oikos* to fend for herself and part from her well-loved former life. She enters the political sphere with a ringing endorsement of the Trojan war, though she is ultimately motivated by the noble value of *philia*.

As in Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides' Iphigenia at first clings to her life.[232] She believed wholeheartedly that her future was bright, so her pain at realizing Agamemnon's betrayal is profound. As Clytemnestra reports, "My poor child is in tears, uttering many wailing tones, having heard of the death her father plots" (1100-02).[233] Iphigenia is nevertheless highly

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[231] See further Horst-Deiter Blume, "Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*: War and Human Sacrifice" and Andreas Markantonatos, "Leadership in Action: Wise Policy and Firm Resolve in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*" in Crisis on Stage: Tragedy and Comedy in Late Fifth-Century Athens (De Gruyter, 2012); and Helene P. Foley, "The *Iphigenia at Aulis*," in *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Cornell University Press, 1985), especially pp. 101-2.
[232] Cf. Aesch. *Agamemnon* 228-249, in which the chorus' describe of Iphigenia's struggle and silenced appeals; Soph. *Electra* 548, "our dead girl would agree, if she had a voice" with Clytemnestra's objections to the sacrifice.
[233] ἐν δακρύοισι δ' ἡ τάλαινα παῖς ἐμή,
πολλὰς ἱεῖσα μεταβολὰς ὀδυρμάτων,
θάνατον ἀκούσασ' ὃν πατὴρ βουλεύεται.

motivated to avoid death. After her mother speaks on her behalf, Iphigenia appeals to Agamemnon directly.

Iphigenia's speech uses every persuasive tactic of which she can conceive. In the absence of a supernatural power like Orpheus' (1211-14), she uses her visible anguish as a first form of appeal: "I will use the skill I do possess, my tears. For I am well able in those" (1214-15).[234] She leverages the sympathy of their shared flesh and blood (1216-17), her young age (1218), her love of life and fear of death (1218-19), and their bond as first-time father and first child (1220-22). She begs him to remember their relation within the domestic sphere and reminds him of the game they made of imagining their futures together (1223-32):

> You would say to me, "Will I see you happy in a man's home, child, living and blooming in a way worthy of my daughter?" And I, hanging upon the beard I now hold in my hand, would say back, "And what will I see of you? Will I welcome an old man into my home with loving hospitality, Father, and with my own caregiving pay you back for raising me?" I remember these conversations, but you have forgotten them and are prepared to kill me.[235]

She capitalizes on the pathetic potential available to her as a child character with an intimate, dependent relationship to her parents and an expected future role in their lives.[236] She also calls on the past, invoking Agamemnon's paternal ancestors (1233) and Clytemnestra's unrequited labors, first of giving birth to her, now of losing her (1234-35). She challenges the arbitrariness

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[234] νῦν δέ, τἀπ' ἐμοὶ σοφά,
δάκρυα παρέξω· ταῦτα γὰρ δυναίμεθ' ἄν.

[235] λόγος δ' ὁ μὲν σὸς ἦν ὅδ'· " Ἆρά σ', ὦ τέκνον,
εὐδαίμον' ἀνδρὸς ἐν δόμοισιν ὄψομαι,
ζῶσάν τε καὶ θάλλουσαν ἀξίως ἐμοῦ;"
οὑμὸς δ' ὅδ' ἦν αὖ περὶ σὸν ἐξαρτωμένης
γένειον, οὗ νῦν ἀντιλάζυμαι χερί·
"Τί δ' ἆρ' ἐγὼ σέ; πρέσβυν ἆρ' ἐσδέξομαι
ἐμῶν φίλαισιν ὑποδοχαῖς δόμων, πάτερ,
πόνων τιθηνοὺς ἀποδιδοῦσά σοι τροφάς;"
τούτων ἐγὼ μὲν τῶν λόγων μνήμην ἔχω,
σὺ δ' ἐπιλέλησαι, καί μ' ἀποκτεῖναι θέλεις.

[236] See Emma Griffiths, *Children in Greek Tragedy: Pathos and Potential* (Oxford UP, 2020), especially pp. 5-8 for her definition of potential and pp. 94-96 for her discussion of this passage.

of *her* sacrifice for Alexander and Helen's actions (1236-37) and her father's forced coldness towards her; she demands that he meet her gaze and give her a final kiss, a "memorial" to hold onto as she dies (1240: μνημεῖον) (1238-40). She finally turns to her baby brother as a "small ally" (1241: μικρὸς ἐπίκουρος)[237]—perhaps if Agamemnon's adolescent daughter does not move him, his infant son will (1241-48):

> Brother, though you are a small ally to your loved ones, weep with me anyway, and beseech our father not to kill your sister. Even in infants there may be a sense of evil. Look, he silently begs you, Father. Have mercy on me and show compassion for my life. Please, by your beard we entreat you – two loved ones, he a fledgling, I a grown up.[238]

She is completely certain that it is right to desire life, for, she concludes, life is sweet, death is nothing; to pray for death is madness; and living badly is better than dying nobly (1249-52).

Agamemnon refuses: Menelaus' loss has grown beyond itself into a political cause with overwhelming support from the army. The movement has a sexually jealous, populist, and nationalist character, reflecting (as above) Euripides' negative view of war aggression (1263-75):

> Some Aphrodite inflames the Greek army to sail as quickly as possible against the land of the barbarians and stop the rape of Hellenic beds. They will kill my maidens in Argos and you and me if I undo the goddess' prophecy. I have not been enslaved by Menelaus, and I have not gone with his plan. It is for Hellas; for Hellas it is necessary, whether I wish it or not, to sacrifice you. I am subordinated to this cause. It is necessary for it to free, child, as much as is in your power and mine, and the Greeks' beds, since they are Greek, must not be violently stripped by barbarians.

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[237] Griffiths writes, "Iphigeneia bolsters her claim to the relational status as 'child of Agamemnon' with an appeal to her previous status as dependent child, reinforced by the physical presence of the infant Orestes. While Iphigeneia's own status is problematized by the discourse of gender and sexuality, and the competing claims of philia advanced by Menelaos, the appeal to childhood is an important extra line of attack" (Ibid.: 96).

[238] ἀδελφέ, μικρὸς μὲν σύ γ' ἐπίκουρος φίλοις,
ὅμως δὲ συνδάκρυσον, ἱκέτευσον πατρὸς
τὴν σὴν ἀδελφὴν μὴ θανεῖν· αἴσθημά τοι
κἀν νηπίοις γε τῶν κακῶν ἐγγίγνεται.
ἰδού, σιωπῶν λίσσεταί σ' ὅδ', ὦ πάτερ.
ἀλλ' αἴδεσαί με καὶ κατοίκτιρον βίον.
ναί, πρὸς γενείου σ' ἀντόμεσθα δύο φίλω·
ὁ μὲν νεοσσός ἐστιν, ἡ δ' ηὐξημένη.

He leaves, and she curses her father until Achilles returns, in his moment of bodily sacrifice appearing magnificently selfless.[239] An emerging *philia* changes Iphigenia's mind.

Iphigenia's conversion to willing self-sacrifice is "the major difficulty for interpreters of the play."[240] Aristotle famously considers her switch an inconsistency in character (*Poetics* 1454a32–33), but since then a great number of readers have argued that Iphigenia's reversal has some internal logic. I take the view that Iphigenia is motivated by *philia* for both Agamemnon and Achilles. Katherine Wasdin's work on concealed *kypris* and Marianne McDonald's on Iphigenia's *philia* are its primary inspirations. When Iphigenia decides to dedicate her body to all of Greece, she seems to buy into the nationalistic rhetoric of Menelaus and Agamemnon. She replicates her father's language. As Agamemnon defended himself, "It is necessary for [Greece] to be free as much as is in your power, child, and mine, so that the marriage beds of Greek men are not stripped forcefully by barbarians,"[241] so Iphigenia explains to her mother, "It is right for Greeks to rule over barbarians, mother, but not barbarians over Greeks; for slavery is their lot, but the Greeks are free."[242] Why though does Iphigenia allows herself to inhale the "sickness" of Greece (411, 1403) in this manner? McDonald argues that she acts as a *philos* to her male connections according to Aristotle's definition of the term in his *Nichomachean* (1168b) and *Eudemian Ethics* (1240a). The *philos* ("dear one," applicable to both family members and friends) displays sympathetic joy for the wellbeing of their *philoi* and is willing to suffer pain for their sake. The word *philia* does not itself appear in *Iphigenia*, but the kinship term *philos* is used extensively and often forms compounds with its objects: marriage-loving (392: *philogamos*),

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[239] See e.g. Smith 1979, "Iphigenia in Love."
[240] Foley, 1985: 67.
[241] ἐλευθέραν γὰρ δεῖ νιν ὅσον ἐν σοί, τέκνον, / κἀμοὶ γενέσθαι, μηδὲ βαρβάρων ὕπο / Ἕλληνας ὄντας λέκτρα συλᾶσθαι βίᾳ. 1273-5.
[242] βαρβάρων δ' Ἕλληνας ἄρχειν εἰκός, ἀλλ' οὐ βαρβάρους / μῆτερ, Ἑλλήνων· τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλον, οἱ δ' ἐλεύθεροι, 1400-1.

father-loving (638: *philopator*). "This suggests contingency and action orientation, paralleling the fact that Iphigenia is not sacrificing herself primarily for an ideal, but rather as an act contingent on her philial relation with her father."[243]

McDonald argues that Iphigenia's teachability is an important function of her *philia*.[244] Her faithful love toward Agamemnon makes her trust in the reasons he provides for her sacrifice. Though the audience might receive her repetition of his words ironically, she sincerely believes that following her father's instruction is the correct path: "Iphigenia is well instructed by a father she loves, and she makes his goal her goal."[245] Similarly, Achilles' example of defending the defenseless teaches Iphigenia to do what she can to protect her loved ones. I believe platonic *philia* is a large part of the equation, especially in her respect for Agamemnon's dilemma. But I also find convincing the argument that Iphigenia is "in love."[246]

Katherine Wasdin argues that Euripides weaves the theme of *concealed* Kypris (569-70: Κύπριν κρυπτάν, another name for Aphrodite) throughout the play. The concept contextualizes Iphigenia's emerging feelings for Achilles and fits them into her post-reversal reasoning.[247] On the one hand, I have referred to Aphrodite as the patron of the mad army. The Greeks are following their *eros* toward war and glory for themselves, and Agamemnon names "some mad Aphrodite" (1263: μέμηνε δ' Ἀφροδίτη τις) as the master of the soldiers and himself. On the

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[243] McDonald 1990: 75.
[244] To the following examples of Agamemnon and Achilles' influence on Iphigenia, I would add Clytemnestra. Iphigenia's methods of communication appear to be learned from her mother. At 668-70, right after the family's arrival, Iphigenia coyly reconfirms her marriage by asking Agamemnon if she will make her next "journey" alone or with her mother. When Iphigenia goes into the tent, Clytemnestra also draws information from Agamemnon and reconfirms the groom's good pedigree by peppering him with questions about Achilles' background and education (695-715). Cf. also mother and daughter's similar methods of appeal to Agamemnon from 1146-1252.
[245] McDonald: 77.
[246] For an overview of the those who have argued this, see John Carrington Gilbert, *Change of Mind in Greek Tragedy* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995): 237-39.
[247] Katherin Wasdin, "Concealed *Kypris* in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*" (*The Classical Quarterly* 70.1, pp. 43–50, 2020).

other hand, hidden desire is the province of the chorus made up of newlywed Calchian women. In the first stasimon, the chorus claims, "It is a great thing to pursue excellence, for women through concealed Kypris, and for men, well, their manifold, internal order ennobles the city" (568-72).[248] As Wasdin shows, the idea of "concealed" (κρυπτάν) desire—not simply private and domestic—is "almost universally extramarital" and so "makes a confusing recommendation for female virtue." The women's identification as newlyweds, however, give them some perspective in marital matters. While tempted by the attractive heroes in the camp (164–302), they recognize the dangers of unrestrained *eros* of the kind which purportedly led Helen after Paris and sparked the expedition (543–89). All of this contextualizes Achilles' presence as a potential marriage partner. Clytemnestra does her utmost to codify their marriage alliance as a form of security outside of Agamemnon's knowledge and control, and it is obvious that the young people find much to admire in one another.[249] I suggest that Iphigenia decides to acquiesce to the sacrifice not only through *philia* to her father, but also to Achilles, a "creative act in response to emotional ties," in McDonald's words.[250] Though her feelings for Achilles are essentially erotic, she chooses not to pursue them openly in the way of the Greek soldiers, but to raise them into *philia* by privileging his future over her own and treating him as if he was her husband and *philos* (cf. Alcestis). By capitalizing on the similarities between sacrifice and marriage, best elaborated by Foley, Iphigenia attempts to transfigure her perverse situation into one which benefits both her father and betrothed, *as if* she had truly come for that purpose. She claim it as such (1398-99):

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[248] μέγα τι θηρεύειν ἀρετάν,
γυναιξὶ μὲν κατὰ Κύ-
πριν κρυπτάν, ἐν ἀνδράσι δ' αὖ
κόσμος ἐνὼν ὁ μυριοπλη-
θὴς μείζω πόλιν αὔξει.
[249] Wasdin 2020: 43-49.
[250] McDonald 1990: 84.

"These events shall be my memorial for a long time to come, and they shall be my children and my marriage and my glory."[251]

What is perhaps most tragic about Iphigenia's political apotheosis is that privileging these men above herself does not ultimately benefit either party. Just as Athens' shipments of young men to the battlefield did not ensure their success in the Peloponnesian War, Iphigenia's sacrifice of her body does not prevent the deaths of Agamemnon, Achilles, and countless Greeks. In her father's case, the very injustice of her death—the knowledge within her mother that Iphigenia was *not supposed* to be forced to self-destruct—is Clytemnestra and Aegisthus' claim to justice in later sources.

Conclusion

The *Iphigenia at Aulis* examines a perversion of household norms, and in doing so Euripides questions the teleology of the *polis* and its aims, which Aristotle will set out in the *Politics*. Euripides showcases the paradox that occurs when a group's political goals fly in the face of its own popular morality. Written near the end of the Peloponnesian War in 405, the play aligns with Euripides' general distaste for militaristic ambition.

Agamemnon is the central embodiment of this political hypocrisy in the figure of the bumbling tyrant. "There is one universal law applicable to all tyrants, absolute monarchs, and despots, enlightened or otherwise, and that is that they need not obey the prevailing rules of their society regarding marriage and the family."[252] His vacillations force the members of his household to make choices for him and against him, and at the close of the play Agamemnon's *oikos* is deeply fractured. But it is not only Agamemnon who causes the breakdown. As Webster

[251] ταῦτα γὰρ μνημεῖά μου / διὰ μακροῦ καὶ παῖδες οὗτοι καὶ γάμοι καὶ δόξ' ἐμή.
[252] Finley 1968, 76.

observes, "the clearest mark of late Euripides"—and in fact *Iphigenia in Aulis* was one of his final compositions—"is the increase in the number of people who affect the action, people both in the family circle and beyond it."[253] Rather, Euripides questions the integrity of any contemporary *oikos* when it competes with public interests, something which social historians like Humphreys have pointed out as a source of change within Athenian society during this period.

This play makes a fruitful comparator with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, which is distinctly about Agamemnon's personal failures to maintain control. There is the hope, realized in the last play of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, that someone better (Orestes) can be a "light" for Argos and balance *oikos* and *polis* for mutual success. Euripides' play similarly presents *philia* as a source of such "light," but maintains that this alone cannot balance the scales. The play ends on a discordant note, with the promise of a future revenge instead of a future light. It is perhaps unsurprising that the *Oresteia* won in 458 and received the distinction of city-sponsored reproductions in Athens' following years of growth, while *Iphigenia in Aulis* (produced posthumously and likely written outside of Athens) won in 405 but had little in the way of immediate afterlife, as 405 was to be the last Dionysia before Athens' surrender reduced the scale of the festival significantly.[254]

[253] Weber 1967: 287.
[254] On the Dionysia in the years of Athens' defeat and early recovery, see Johanna Hanink, "The Great Dionysia and the End of the Peloponnesian War" (*Classical Antiquity* 33.2, pp. 319–346, 2014).

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the role of household management in three tragedies of the fifth century from its three major extant playwrights. I have used the principles of *oikonomia* set out in the fourth century by Aristotle and Xenophon but focused largely on the relationship of householders to the action of their plays rather than their adherence to an abstract ideology. It became clear that this approach was useful for evaluating the plays as dramatic units with their own internal logics and for appreciating the differences between the three playwrights' use of the household social system in their own programs of symbolism and meaning. Webster seems to me entirely correct in his description of their relationship to one another:

> Aeschylus so represents the traditional story that the human characters show the operation of divine law, and his plays essentially exemplify the view of Hesiod and Solon that Zeus is just. Sophocles is more concerned to show what kind of characters make the traditional story come true, but his religious position is not far from Aeschylus and he has no doubt that oracles are always proved right. It is far more difficult to define Euripides' religious position, and here, if anywhere, what one is tempted to say on the basis of one play will be found contradicted in another. We can only look carefully and always ask in whose mouth and in what context the words are put.[255]

Aeschylus represents Agamemnon's egocentric relationship to power, both over his kingdom and his household, as the hybristic mechanism through which Zeus' law of retribution comes to fruition. Sophocles is less interested in the grand movements of fate than in the characteristics Orestes must demonstrate to take his place at the head of the family. Euripides is, as Anne Carson describes him, ever the "dark clown:"[256] his interest is in the human motivations which surge over and around the institutions of *oikos* and *polis*. Unintentionally, the three form a rough triangle of interests between the divine, the practical, and the subjective, as well as a general timeline of Athens' transition from a period of growth to contraction.

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[255] Webster 1967: 290.
[256] Carson 2010: 178.

There is more to be said about the intersections between the family, economy, and power in ancient Greek drama, as well as the technical aspects of its communication. What I have shown thus far is that household managers attempt the impossible on a daily basis: to control the productive capacity of human beings large and small, across several generations, and their ability to control and access material wealth.

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