

AESCHYLUS AGAM. 141: ΑΕΙΠΤΟΙΣ – ΑΑΙΠΤΟΙΣ IN CONTEXT

From the beginning of his *Agamemnon* and with unrivalled aptitude Aeschylus starts sowing the major motifs of his play which slowly but inevitably bear fruit. By means of ambiguous and pregnant expressions, of *oxymora* and a bewitching interlacing of imagery our poet weaves a net of enchantment. Dark premonitions resulting from the interplay of hope and fear, sacrifices that subtly and constantly turn into corrupted sacrifices¹ set the background. The seer interprets the omen which is a forewarning of victory and calamity at the same time, while hostile Artemis is presented as seeking revenge for the δειπνον αἰετῶν (109-38). In such a climate in which the chorus and the audience forebode the impending disaster hidden behind the overt blessings are verses 140-45 (D. Page, *OCT*) introduced:

τόσον περ εὐφρων ἂ καλὰ²
δρόσοις ἀέπτοις μαλερῶν λεόντων
πάντων τ' ἀγρονόμων φιλομάστοις
θηρῶν ὀβριχάλοισι τερπνά,
τούτων αἰτεῖ ξύμβολα κρᾶναι,
δεξιὰ μὲν κατάμομφα δὲ φάσματα.

These verses, which constitute part of a flashback of the chorus upon the interpretation of the eagle omen by Calchas, are sealed with the fear of the seer (150-55) lest Artemis

τεύξει σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν ἄνομόν τιν' ἄδαιτον,
νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον, οὐ δει-
σήνορα· μίμνει γὰρ φοβερά παλίνορτος
οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος.

The present study intends to explore the plausibility of the inter-

1. See F. Zeitlin, «The Motif of the Corrupted Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*», *TAPA* 96 (1965) 463-508; id., «Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery in the *Oresteia* (Ag. 1235-37)», *TAPA* 97 (1966) 645-53.

2. M. L. West, *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, Stuttgart 1990, p. 198, adopts Badham's emendation: Ἐκάτα.

pretations of the adjective *ἄεπτος* proposed so far, always in view of the context of the specific play and of the career of the pertinent lion imagery in the framework of the trilogy.

The adjective *ἄεπτος* occurs three times in Aeschylus; *Suppl.* 908, διωλόμεσθ' ἄεπτ', ἄναξ, πάσχομεν; fr. 213 (*Proteus*), ἄεπτοι (*vel* ἄαπτοι?)³; and *Agam.* 141, δρόσοις ἄέπτοις μαλερῶν λεόντων. The *Scholia Agam. ad loc.* explain our adjective as follows: ἀέ{λ}πτοις δὲ τοῖς ἐπεσθαι τοῖς γονεῦσι (μὴ) δυναμένοις M. Despite the presence of λ (*quasi* < ἄ [priv.] + ἔλπομαι), the scholiast of the *codex Mediceus* connects the adjective with ἄ (priv.) + ἔπομαι. In Triclinius' 141b: ἄέπτοισι] τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις πτῆναι, one discerns the derivation from ἄ (priv.) + πέτομαι, an etymology confirmed ib., 141c. μαλερῶν] τῶν φθαρτικῶν πετεινῶν. Triclinius' explanation, unique in its approach and without imitators, presumably rests on the reading of something like ἀπτῆσι, which would affect the present metrical structure of the verse. The reading ὄντων (MV, om. FTr) was restored into λεόντων by modern scholars with the help of *Etym. Magn.* 377.39 (= *Etym. Gen.* B)⁴.

The etymological and concomitant semasiological viewing of the adjective *ἄεπτος* has been indissolubly connected with that of the Homeric *ἄαπτος*⁵ ever since the grammarians and the scholiasts of the *Iliad*. The fullest and most detailed reference figures in Herodian: ἀάπτους {χειρας}: οὕτως ψιλῶς προενεκτέον. οὕτως δὲ καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος. ἤκουε δὲ τὰς δεινὰς καὶ ἀπτοήτους. ὁ δὲ Ζηνόδοτος... καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς τὰς ἰσχυράς δὲ μετελάμβανεν. ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἀριστοφάνους Γλώσσαις (fr. 59, p. 212 N.) διὰ τοῦ ἐγγράπτο «ἀέπτους». εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ ἀπροσπελάστους ἀποδιδόασιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄψασθαι, ὧν οὐδεὶς ἂν ἄψαιτο δι' ἰσχύν. ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ παρὰ τὸ ἰάπτω γεγενῆσθαι, ὃ σημαίνει τὸ διαφθεῖρω καὶ βλάπτω ... καὶ μέσον αὐτοῦ κατ' ἑλλειψιν τοῦ α ... ἀπὸ δὲ τούτου τοῦ ἰάπτω τὸ ἀϊάπτους ἦν, καὶ κατ' ἑλλειψιν τοῦ ι ἀάπτους, ἥτοι

3. *TrGF*, ed. S. Radt, Göttingen 1985, 3: 333. See Hesychius α. 1357 L. ἄε{λ}πτοι [corr. Arhens]· δεινοί. καὶ ἄαπτοι. Αἰσχύλος Πρωτεῖ (fr. 213); ib., α. 1379 L. ἄεπτον· ἰσχυρόν, ἀοίκητον (Abresch ἄθικτον); ib., α. 22 L., ἀάπτους· ἀπροσπελάστους, ὧν οὐ δύναται τις ἄψασθαι ἢ ἀπτοήτους.

4. Ἐρση γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ δρόσος· καὶ Αἰσχύλος ἐν Ἀγαμέμνονι τοὺς σκύμνους (τοὺς σκύλλους *cod.*) τῶν λεόντων δρόσους κέκληκε μεταφράζων τοῦτο.

5. The adjective *ἄαπτος* figures in Homer always in relation to *χεῖρες* (*Il.* 1. 567, 7. 309, 8. 450, 11. 169, 12. 166, 13. 49, 77, 318, 16. 244, 17. 638, 20. 503; *Od.* 11. 502, 22. 70, 248); see also Hes. *Theog.* 649, *Op.* 148, *Sc.* 75, 446; see *Scholia vetera in Hesiodi Opera et Dies, rec. A.* Pertusi, Milano 1955, p. 60, 148b.1, <ἄαπτοι> ἀκράτητοι. 147bis. 1 ἄαπτοι. ἀκράτητοι, ἢ ἄφοβοι. ἄπτως γὰρ ὁ ἄφοβος, Αἰολικῶς μικρογραφεῖται. Tzetz. 147 quat. 1, καὶ χεῖρες ἄαπτοι. ἡγουν ἄφαστοι. *ad Theog.* 649, ἀάπτους. ἀπροσπελάστους, ἰσχυράς, πολεμικάς BM. Tzetz. *ad Op.* 147, p. 131, 19 G. (unavailable to me). Phot. 3. 25, ἄαπτον, ἀπέραντον. See also M. L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony*, Oxford 1966, *ad* 649, «Its meaning [of ἄεπτος] and etymology are unknown». In Opp. *Hal.* 5. 35, 52, 97, 629, of a marine creature; cf. *Scholia in Theocritum, Nicandrum et Oppianum*, ed. Fr. Dübner, Paris 1849, *ad* 5. 35, χλούνης· ἄγριος χοῖρος. ἄαπτοι· ἀπροσπέλαστοι.

τὰς μὴ δυναμένας διαφθαρήναι καὶ βλαβῆναι, ἢ κατ' ἐπίτασιν τὰς ἄγαν δυναμένας βλάψαι καὶ διαφθεῖραι⁶.

Two parameters are established on the evidence of the above scholium, which has been organized according to the aspiration of the second compound of the word. First, Aristophanes replaces the form ἄαπτος by ἀέπτος, although his motivation in so doing is unknown. He might have changed the vowels simply for reasons of euphony, in which case the sounds α/ε would be interchangeable⁷ and the two forms equivalent from both the etymological and the semasiological point of view; or he might have meant a different etymology and meaning. It is worth noting that our sources (with the exception of Eustathius) do not specify *how* Aristophanes etymologized the words. The formulation of Herodian suggests that «it is some others», and presumably not Aristophanes, who derive ἄαπτος from ἀ (priv.) + ἄπτομαι. Second, the etymology of these adjectives is multifarious and complex. Both the organizational principle according to the breathing and the range of the etymologies suggested herein recur and are further enriched in other more or less ancient sources⁸. Philoxenus, followed by Apion, e.g., juxtaposes two etymologies, ⟨ἀ (intens.) + ἄπτομαι and ἀ (priv.) + ἄπτομαι⁹, while Eustathius derives the Aristophanic ἀέπτος either

6. *Scholia Graeca in Iliadem*, ed. H. Erbse, Berlin 1969, 1: 151, ad 1. 567b.¹ A; *sim.* b.² bT; cf. c. ἀάπτους: αἱ πᾶσαι «ἀέπτους» ἔχουσιν T. See *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, ed. G. Dindorf, Oxford 1855, ad loc. See also *Sch. Il.* 13. 318b.¹ (Erbse, 4: 46) <ἀάπτους> 'Ἀρίσταρχος «ἀέπτους», ἄλλοι δὲ ἀάπτους διὰ τοῦ α T. Cf. K. Lehrs, *De Aristarchi Studiis Homericis*, Lipsiae 1882, p. 301 n. 221: «Sch. N 318 pro 'Ἀρίσταρχος lege 'Ἀριστοφάνης».

7. So does Hesychius when he explains ἀε(λ)πτος as ἄαπτος (α 1357 L.), and associates ἄαπτος: <ἀ (priv.) + ἄπτομαι (α 22 L.).

8. See Ap. Soph. 1. 20, ἀάπτους· οἱ μὲν δασύνοντες τὴν δευτέραν ἀποδιδόασιν ἀπροσπελάστους, ὧν οὐκ ἂν τις ἄφαίτο, οἱ δὲ φιλῶς ἀναγινώσκοντες ἀπότητους, ἔνιοι δὲ ἀνεκφεύκτους ἢ χαλεπάς, ἵν' ἢ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον <α> (add. Toup.) ἐπεκτεταμένον, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον συγκεκομμένον. *Suda* α. 5. 1-5 (Adler), ἄαπτος: ἀβλαβής. Ἡρωδιανός φησι περὶ τοῦ ἄαπτος, ὅτι γίγνεται ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰάπτω τὸ βλάπτω, καὶ μετὰ τοῦ στερητικοῦ α καὶ κατ' ἑλλειψιν τοῦ ι ἄαπτος, ὃν οὐδεὶς δύναται βλάψαι. ἢ οὐχὶ κατὰ στέρησιν ἐκληπτέον τὸ α, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐπίτασιν, ἵν' ἢ ὁ μέγας δυνάμενος βλάπτειν. ὥστε τὸ μὲν πρῶτον δηλοῖ πάθος, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον ἐνέργειαν. λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἄαπτος κατὰ στέρησιν ὁ ἄφραυτος. The derivation of ἀπτοεπής is also considered here: *Sch. Il.* 8. 209a. (Erbse, 2: 342) καθαπτομένη τοῖς ἔπαισιν ... καὶ ἴσως ἦν παρὰ τὸ πτοεῖσθαι, ἢ ἄγαν πτοῦσα, ἢ παρὰ τὸ ἀπτόν, τὸ ἰσχυρόν, ὥστε εἶναι δεινοεπὲς A. b. ἀπτομένη ἢ ἀάπτους λόγους λέγουσα· ἢ ἀπτόητε bT; see ib., *test.* and *Etym. Magn.* 133. 42-47. See also n. 9.

9. Philoxenus fr. 413, *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker (SGLG)*, vol. 2, *Die Fragmente des Grammatikers Philoxenos*, ed. Chr. Theodoridis, Berlin, New York 1976, p. 283, παρὰ τὸ ἄπτω ἀπτοὺς καὶ ἀάπτους, ἡγουν τὰς ἄγαν ἀπτομένας. ἢ ὧν οὐκ ἂν τις ἄφαίτο, οἶονεὶ ἀπροσίτους, ἀπροσπελάστους... οὕτω Φιλόξενος. Cf. Apion fr. 1, *SGLG*, vol. 3, *Apions Γλῶσσαι Ὀμηρικαί*, ed. S. Neitzel, Berlin, New York 1977, pp. 213-14, καὶ «χεῖρας ἀάπτους» (A 567) μεγάλας ἀπροσπελάστους, ὧν οὐκ ἄφαίτο τις. εἰ δὲ φιλωθείη, τὰς ἀπότητους ... οἱ δὲ φιλοῦντες †ἀπράκτους† ... 'Ἀπίων δὲ δασύνει· βούλεται γὰρ ἀποδιδοῖν ἀπροσπελάστους, ὧν οὐκ ἂν τις ἄφαίτο, ἢ τὰς πολλοῖς προσπελάζουσας. ἀπράκτους: *vix sanum* Theodoridis, *Photii Patriarchae Lexicon*, Berlin,

from the root $\text{F}\epsilon\pi\text{-}$ ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\sigma$) or the verb $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ¹⁰ introducing his etymology with $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}$, «as if» (*LSJ*). The Scholia D, usually but incorrectly attributed to Didymus, provide a similar etymology although without specifying the source of it¹¹.

To sum up, our ancient and Byzantine commentators and lexicographers provide us with the following etymological options for the adjective $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$ and $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$:

- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\pi\tau\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (intens.) + $\pi\tau\omicron\acute{\epsilon}\omega$
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (intens.) + $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\acute{\iota}\alpha\pi\tau\omega$ (in passive sense)
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (intens.) + $\acute{\iota}\alpha\pi\tau\omega$ (in active sense)
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\text{F}\epsilon\pi\text{-}$ ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\sigma$)
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\sigma\mu\alpha\iota$
- $\acute{\alpha}$ (priv.) + $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$

Modern scholars side with one or other of the above options often enriching our etymological chart with new possibilities as will be shown in the following selective survey, the purpose of which is to outline and evaluate the general trends on this subject.

W. Leaf, on the assumption that $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ - $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ in their double sense («laying hands to» and «joining oneself to») correspond with the Sanskrit root sak' , from which he derives also $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\omega$ - $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\sigma\mu\alpha\iota$, considers the two forms ($\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$ and the Aristophanic $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$) «virtually identical both in origin and meaning» and renders «not to be handled or dealt with»¹². According

New York 1982, 1: 8. See also *Sym. Etym.* 3, *Etym. Magn. auct.* 5 and *Etym. Magn.* 1. 35.

10. Eust., *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, ed. M. van der Valk, 4 vols., Leiden 1971, 1: 230, 150. 14, $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omicron\iota$ αἱ δεινὰ καὶ ἀπτόητοι κατὰ Ἀρίσταρχον ... ἢ ἄπ᾽απτοὶ κατὰ Ἐλλειψιν τοῦ ι, ὅς οὐ δύναται τις ἰάψαι, ὃ ἐστὶ βλάψαι, ἢ κατὰ ἐπίτασιν αἱ πολλὰ ἰάπτειν δυνάμεναι. Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ ἐν ταῖς Γλώσσαις, ὡς φασιν οἱ παλαιοί, ἄεπτους γράφει διὰ τοῦ ε ὀϊονεῖ ἀρρήτους, ὅς οὐ δύναται τις εἰπεῖν, ἢ δυσπαρακολουθήτους, αἷς οὐ δύναται τις ἔπεσθαι. καὶ ἄλλως δὲ χεῖρες ἄπ᾽απτοὶ αἱ ἀπροσπέλαστοι, ὧν οὐκ ἂν ἄψαιτό τις. For the confusion between $\epsilon\acute{\rho}\omega$ and $\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ à propos of ἐάφθῃ see Erbse: 3: 503-05 ad *Il.* 13.543 α¹-α⁴ cum app. crit.

11. Δίδυμος, *Σχόλια παλαιὰ τε καὶ πάνυ ὠφέλιμα εἰς τὴν Ὀμήρου Ἰλιάδα καὶ εἰς τὴν Ὀδύσσεια*, ed. Fr. Asulanus, Venetiis 1521-28, p. 36 ad loc., ἀάπτους. ἀπροσίτους. ἀπροσπελάστους διὰ μέγεθος. πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἀέπτους, ἢ ἢ ἀρρήτους, ἢ αἷς οὐ δύναται τις ἔπεσθαι.

12. W. Leaf, «Ἐπειν and ἔπεσθαι», *JPh* 14 (1885) 231-51, esp. 248-50, «ruthless, ἀμήχανος»; similarly A. W. Verrall, *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, London, New York 1889, pp. 15-16, «rough, uncouth, from the stem $\epsilon\acute{\pi}\text{-}$ » this is fleetingly mentioned by J. Wackernagel, «Conjecture greche et latine», *SIFC* 5 (1927) 27-28, «Si dovrà invece pensare a ἔπειν, che non ha niente a che fare con ἔπεσθαι?», and endorsed by P. Groeneboom, *Aeschylus' Agamemnon*, Amsterdam 1944, pp. 147-48, who records Pauw's reading ἀέφθοισι, «roribus incocctis, h. e. qui radiis solis non sint cocti, h. e. matutinis» (ib., p. 148 n. 1).

to H. L. Ahrens, on the other hand, both ἄεπτος and ἄσπετος are derived from the verb ἔπω and qualify things «ἀπροσέλαστα, ἀπρόσιτα» and, consequently, «δεινὰ» and «ἰσχυρά». Considering next the ἄεπτος of *Agam.* 141 and of the phrase «ἀέπτους χεῖρας» [*sic*] a synonym of δεινός, Ahrens translates «die argen jungen wilder löwen», because of their «argmüthigen natur»¹³.

Bechtel uses the latter part of Eustathius' etymology for the Aristophanic ἄεπτος «οἶονεῖ ἀρρήτους, ἄς οὐ δύναται τις εἰπεῖν», and argues that ἄεπτος (a synonym of ἄσπετος) was the original form of the adjective, the evolution of which looks as follows: ἀΐεπτος > ἄεπτος > ἄπτος, and, with διέκτασις, ἄαπτος¹⁴.

In his monumental edition of the *Agamemnon* E. Fraenkel chooses the reading ἄεπτος and the etymology implied by the *codex Mediceus*, τοῖς ἔπεισθαι τοῖς γονεῦσι μὴ δυναμένοις, because it is in harmony with the facts¹⁵ as

13. H. L. Ahrens, «Studien zum Agamemnon des Aeschylus», *Philologus* Suppl. 1 (1860) 281-87, esp. 285-86. Valuable is Ahrens' survey of older views on this matter.

14. F. Bechtel, *Lexilogus zu Homer*, Halle 1914, pp. 1-2, «die χεῖρες ἄαπτοι sind Hände, deren Größe man nicht aussprechen kann»; similarly J. Wackernagel, «Die epische Zerdehnung», *BB 4* (1878) 283-84. Cf. the criticism of H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3 vols., Heidelberg 1960, 1: 2 s.v. ἄαπτος, «wenig überzeugend», and 1: 25 s.v. ἄεπτος «unsicherer Bedeutung ... Herkunft unsicher». P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Paris 1968, 1: 2, s.v. ἄαπτος, argues that, if Aristophanes is correct, then the ἄαπτος should have been a variation due to the popular etymology, the original form being ἄεπτος = «indicible», as proposed by Wackernagel and Bechtel. This claim, continues Chantraine, is undermined by the fact that there is no other example of *Ψεπτος, whether as a simple word or in a compound, despite the ἀ-Ψεπτο-Ψεπής on which this theory rests; the Homeric singers derived both ἄαπτος and ἀπτοεπής < ἄπτομαι; see ib., s.v. ἄεπτος: there must have existed two adjectives of this form, (a) < ἀΐεπτος, «indicible», and (b) < ἔπομαι = Sch. *Agam.* 141, which could be authentic if it were a word coined by Aeschylus; id., *Grammaire Homérique*, 2 vols., Paris 1958, 1: 32 § 15: the group -α(Ψ)ε- normally appears uncontracted in Homer (despite some exceptions); ib., p. 82 with n. 1: the διέκτασις has been tried in this case, but the reading ἄαπτος < ἄπτω has been established under the influence of ἀπτοεπής. See also *Lfgre* s.v. ἄαπτος B. «Möglicherweise ursprünglich 'unaussprechlich (groß, stark)'... die hom. Dichter mit ἄπτομαι in Verbindung brachten». *LSJ* s.v. ἄεπτος: < ἔπομαι, II. ἔπος = ἄρρητος v. l. of ἄαπτος. H. Vos, «Ἀλιταῖω, ἡλιτόμηρος und ἀπτοεπής», *Glotta* 34 (1955) 287-95, esp. 292-95, derives ἄαπτος - ἄεπτος < ἄπτομαι on the model of ἀασίφων - ἀεσίφων, but, on the assumption that the etymology attested in Eustathius may have played a role in Aeschylus' time, he suggests an oxymoron in *Agam.* 141: Aeschylus uses the word δρόσοι (~ ἔρσαι *Od.* 9. 222), «Er korrigiert dieses poetische Bild mit ἄεπτοι: Tautröpfchen, aber diesmal unaussprechlich große» (p. 294 with n. 2). For J. Bollack, *L'Agamemnon d'Eschyle*, ed. by J. Bollack and P. Judet de La Combe, *Agamemnon 1*, prem. part., *Cahiers de Philologie* 6 (1982) 165-67, ἄεπτος: «terrible» (= ἄρρητος) on the grounds that «elle [Artemis] n'aime pas les lionceaux dans leur faiblesse, mais pour la force vierge»; next to μαλερῶν, the adjective evokes the terrible nature of the whelps (p. 167).

15. Arist. *Hist. Anim.* 6. 31, 579b7, τίται δὲ καὶ ὁ λέων πάνυ μικρὰ οὕτως ὥστε δίμηνα ὄντα μόλις βαδίζειν. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 8. 45, *semestres vix ingredi posse nec nisi bimenstres moveri*.

much as it is with the context¹⁶. On the contrary, J. D. Denniston και D. Page identify the two forms when they write, «Perhaps ἀέπτους here = Epic ἀάπτους, 'not to be touched'»¹⁷.

The above survey has shown two things. First, the extent and nature of the controversy among ancient and modern commentators over the identification of the two adjectives and their respective etymology and meaning, and second, the fact that three etymological alternatives prevail not merely because of their frequency, but basically on account of their suitability: ἀ (priv.) + Φεπ- (εἰπεῖν, ἔπος), ἀ (priv.) + ἔπομαι and ἀ (priv.) + ἄπτομαι. These three should be weighed against the background of our passage and the entire play as well.

The first alternative, ἀ (priv.) + Φεπ- (εἰπεῖν, ἔπος), no matter how aptly it describes the situation in the *Suppl.* 908, ἄφατα, δεινά, not to be spoken of, terrible¹⁸, is found wanting when associated with the lion cubs: it may have a proleptic sense and, as Vos suggests, it may be an oxymoron, but, despite Aeschylus' proclivity to such figures, this view is rather inapplicable in this case. First, because the emphasis on destruction has been shifted to the fierce parents, μαλερῶν, and second, because this very

16. E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus Agamemnon*, 3 vols., Oxford 1950, 2: 83-84, «The helplessness of the young animals sets the loving care of the goddess in its true light». See also L. Campbell, *The Oresteia of Aeschylus*, London 1893, p. 7, «the tender cubs»; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Tragödien*, 8th ed., *Aischylos Agamemnon*, Berlin 1919, vol. 2: 56, «die hilflosen Jungen»; W. Headlam, *Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, ed. by A. C. Pearson, Cambridge 1910, p. 53, «young dew dropping weak and small»; P. Mazon, *Eschyle, Les Belles Lettres*, Paris 1962, 2: 15, «les faibles fruits des lions farouches»; H. Lloyd-Jones, *Agamemnon by Aeschylus*, N. Jersey 1970, p. 23, «the helpless young of savage lions»; D. Young, *Aeschylus: The Oresteia*, Norman 1974, p. 7, «the infant cubs». H. J. Rose, *A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus*, Amsterdam 1958, 2 vols., 2: 15, approves of Fraenkel with some reservations. Cf. the objections of H. Neitzel, «ἄεπτος oder ἄαπτος? Zur Interpretation von Aischylos, 'Agamemnon' 140-145», *Glotta* 56 (1978) 213.

17. J. D. Denniston - D. Page, *Aeschylus Agamemnon*, Oxford 1957, pp. 81-82, «the lions are fierce (μαλερῶν), and even their cubs are dangerous, not to be handled; the goddess delimits in the young of all animals, even the most dangerous». So also Neitzel, pp. 212-21, esp. 216, 221, «unberührbar, nicht anfaßbar, unangreifbar, unantastbar»; this etymology gives «einen prägnanten Sinn» by contrast to that proposed by Wackernagel («Congettura greche e latine»), and Leaf (< ἔπω), since «'nicht zu behandeln' ist wenig prägnant (worin besteht die 'Behandlung' der Löwenjungen?)»; cf. Bollack, p. 167: Neitzel's approach is not in unison with Artemis' concerns, «elle ne protège pas la protection, mais la jeune vie, tendre ou violente».

18. See H. F. Johansen and E. W. Whittle, *Aeschylus. The Suppliants*, 3 vols., Kobenhavn 1980, 3: 229, «ἄεπτ': perhaps 'outrage' ... It may be etymologically connected with ἔπειν or ἔπος ... either 'unmanageable' or 'unspeakable'. The possibly different meaning of the ἄεπτος in the *Suppl.* and the *Agam.* has created a further perplexity; see among others Chantraine, *Dict. étym.*, s.v., and Bollack, p. 166. The situation in the *Proteus* is undetermined; whether or not the φῶκαι are herein qualified, as Ahrens has proposed (p. 286), Hesychius (α 1357 L.) recognizes here an instance of δεινότης.

passage motivates Artemis' interference by her love and care for all tender and, most significantly, helpless animals which are incapable of protecting themselves. Her function would be superfluous if the whelps were capable of displaying their ferociousness right from infancy. Besides, such an explicit and pleonastic reference to the terrible nature of the lions at this point in the play would destroy the magic quality of the poetry of Aeschylus, who is fond of gradually illuminating the meaning of his images by accumulating new telling details in every recurrence of them¹⁹. The weight of an «unaussprechlich groß» for a lion cub is, consequently, rather unwelcome in such a context which aims at properly motivating Artemis' involvement²⁰.

The second option, ἀ (priv.) + ἔπομαι would definitely agree with the nature of the lion cubs. Yet, the lion image is of cardinal importance in the *Agamemnon*, and the way it recurs in the play renders the interpretation after ἔπομαι rather unsuccessful, since it blunts the sinister forewarnings and the importance of this oracular passage. For similar reasons the otherwise plausible and suitable ἔπω is to be considered unsatisfactory: «not to be handled or dealt with» is colorless and rather weak in view of the role reserved in the play for the lion image, while Leaf's gloss, «ruthless, ἀμήχανος», makes explicit part of what the poet meant only to insinuate at this stage.

The third alternative, ἄεπτος = ἄαπτος (ἀ (priv.) + ἄπτομαι, is fleetingly and tersely mentioned by Denniston-Page, but elaborated by Neitzel, who rests on the assumption that, first, Aristophanes had replaced all the Homeric and probably also all the Aeschylean occurrences of ἄαπτος with ἄεπτος, and second, that Aeschylus and his audience were aware of this etymology that had been in circulation since the Homeric bards²¹. Though tempting, these suppositions cannot be proven. Indicative of our uncertainty on this matter is the skepticism of W. J. Slater, who would not use fr. 418 (= 59, p. 212 N.) as an evidence for Aristophanes' reading of *Il.* 1. 567 or 13. 318, on the grounds that «he may have listed the word ἄεπτος only in connection with Aeschylus or he may have suggested reading it in Homer for the mss ἀάπτους»²². Of course, the critical question is, why

19. See A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia. A Study in Language and Structure*, Washington, D.C., 1971, pp. 1-2, 4-5, 52 (on *prolepsis*). Cf., however, the redefinitions of T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Art of Aeschylus*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1982, pp. 136-37.

20. For the skepticism of Chantraine and Frisk about the viability of this alternative from the linguistic point of view see supra n. 14.

21. So Neitzel, pp. 214-16.

22. See *Aristophanis Byzantii Fragmenta*, ed. W. J. Slater in *SGLG*, vol. 6, Berlin, New York 1986, on fr. 418 (LIX p. 212 N.) ἄεπτος.

Aristophanes, whose editorial «judgements were more influenced by study of the use of words» and had «compiled an important lexicographical work which identified earlier and later meanings of words»²³, should have made such a suggestion for Homer. It is rather unlikely that his emendation was accidental or subjective²⁴. If the vowel change were merely a dissimilatory remedy for the hiatus resulting from the concurrence of two -αα- sounds, this would imply that he equated the two forms both etymologically and semasiologically. This hypothesis is tempting on the instructive evidence of the ἀσσίφρων - ἀεσίφρων example²⁵. The vowel dissimilation would render the reduction of ἄεπτος to Φεπ-, Φειπεῖν, unnecessary, or, at least, not mandatory. However, despite the convenience and plausibility of this assumption and its presumable corroboration in Hesychius (see supra n. 7), we must repeat that this etymology of ἄεπτος (<ἄ [priv.] + ἄπτομαι) cannot be safely confirmed for either Aristophanes (see the prohibiting force of «εἰσὶ δὲ οὔ» of Herodian), or Aeschylus. Nevertheless, the merit of the foregoing reflection lies in the suggestion that this specific etymological alternative presumably figuring in the form ἄεπτος²⁶ for reasons of euphony, could very well be an unobtrusive and viable option for our *Agam.* 141 from both the linguistic and especially the conceptual

23. See *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. by G. A. Kennedy, Cambridge 1989, pp. 206-07.

24. See M. van der Valk, *Textual Criticism of the Odyssey*, Leiden 1949, p. 104 n. 1, the emendation of Aristophanes «does not go back to 'old' manuscripts, but is ... a subjective emendation».

25. The Homeric codd. attest ἀσσίφρων and the indirect evidence ἀεσίφρων. For the proposed etymologies see *Lfgre* s.v.: (a) < ἄάω + φρήν, i.e., φρεσὶν ἀσθεῖς, φρενοβλαβής, βλαψίφρων, βλαβεσίφρων; (b) < ἄεσα (ἄω, ἰαύω) + φρήν, i.e., κοιμώμενος τὰς φρένας; (c) < ἄημι (ἄω) + φρήν, i.e., ἀνεμώλια φρονῶν, κούφας ἔχων τὰς φρένας; (d) ἀείρω + φρήν, and (e) «aor. *ἄFέσαι 'shädigen'?». See *Sch. Hom. Il.* 20. 183, Erbse 5: 31 *cum test.*; ib., 5: 458 ad 23. 603b.¹ *cum test.*; *Sch. Hom. Od.* 15. 470, 21. 302 (Dind.). The confusion of the α/ε sounds regardless of the assumed derivation is well-illustrated. Cf. also *LSJ* s.v. ἄσαι-φόρος, ἄσαι-φρονία, ἄσαι-φροσύνη. According to Frisk, s.v. ἀεσίφρων; Chantraine, *Dict. étym.*, s.v. ἄάω; M. Leumann, *Homerische Wörter*, Basel 1950, pp. 215 n. 10, 228 n. 22, and Vos, p. 293, the original form was ἀσσίφρων replaced in all mss. by ἀεσίφρων, under the influence of false etymology (< ἄεσα), as Vos and Bechtel, p. 14, say. Suggestive of dissimilation seems to be the view of P. Buttmann, *Lexilogus*, 2 vols, Berlin 1825, 1: 224-25, the grammarians derived ἀεσίφρων < ἄῆναι («wehen») and < ἄέσαι («schlafen») in an effort to lend it legitimacy. The exact grammatical form is ἀσσίφρων, «aber das zweite α ging in ε über, weil das Ohr an solche Formen wie ἀλφεσίβιος, ταμεσίχροος, φαεσίμβροτος, gewöhnt war». Cf., however, Bechtel, p. 14.

26. For another equation of the two forms on the etymological and semasiological level by Leaf see supra n. 12. Lehrs, p. 141, refers to the Aristophanic ἄεπτος in a cryptic manner as if to suggest that both ἄαπτος and ἄεπτος go back to the Aristarchean ἀπτότης (ἀάπτους = δεινὰς καὶ ἀπτόητους) on the assumption that «id simul eo effectum, quod cum tota antiquitate hoc modo vocabula decurtari posse putavit». If this is so, then Lehrs also seems to equate the two forms in both meaning and etymology, even if < ἄ (priv.) + πτοομαι.

point of view. This etymology may have in fact served as a vehicle for Aeschylus' ethico-philosophical enunciation, as the following investigation of the text itself and especially of the way Aeschylus handles his lion imagery will hopefully suggest.

The lion makes its debut in *Agam.* 141. Although the lion is not explicitly connected with Iphigeneia here, this assumption is supported by a number of reasons: the lion is the royal emblem of the Atreidae - Tantalidae²⁷, or a symbol for the savage members of this family; both parents of Iphigeneia are leonine figures and her lioness mother will eventually avenge her sacrifice²⁸. The impressive ambiguity of the passage (134-36) strengthens this possibility²⁹. In a context where Artemis' wrath against the winged dogs of her father, namely, the eagles, is set out, the phrase αὐτότοχον πρὸ λόχου μογεράν πτάχα θυομένοισι (136) can mean either «because they sacrifice a wretched trembling hare with its young before their birth»³⁰, or, «because they sacrifice their very own wretched cowering child on behalf of [or, in front of] the army»³¹. As an offspring of a vulture, eagle, dog and soon a lion father (and a lioness mother) Iphigeneia shares the parental nature: she can very appropriately be thought of as a lion cub.

Yet, if the lion cub here stands for Iphigeneia and if Artemis is, as she is said to, so kind and well-disposed towards the lion cubs and the young ones of other animals (*Agam.* 140-43), the inevitable question is why Artemis so urgently presses the sacrifice of a δρόσος. In such a scheme the goddess would contradict herself and her feelings. The role and motives of

27. Headlam, p. 184, «The lion, which is common on Lydian coins ... was probably the badge of the Lydian dynasty of Pelops. That seems to be the reason why the term is applied to various members of that family ... so it appears here [v. 147 in his ed.] to mean Iphigeneia»; so also W. B. Stanford, *Aeschylus in his Style*, Dublin 1942, p. 90, *et al.*: see Fraenkel, 3: 562 *ad* 1224. W. Whallon, *Problems and Spectacle. Studies in the Oresteia*, Heidelberg 1980, p. 41, «the lion —less restricted to Agamemnon, or to any single event— is a clan totem and timeless».

28. See the excellent study of B. M. W. Knox, «The Lion in the House», *CPh* 47 (1952) 17-25; A. Y. Campbell, *Agamemnon*, London 1940, p. 77, also recognizes the relevance of the lion symbol to the members of this family. Neitzel, pp. 218-21, focuses on the revenge of the lioness mother and argues that Artemis demands this sacrifice out of love for both the Trojans and Iphigeneia: this is a means to reconcile the opponents.

29. See W. B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature*, New York - London 1939, pp. 143 and 144 with n. 1, «an astonishing feat of amphibological dexterity occurs in l. 137 [= 136 Page, West]». P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne*, 2 vols., Paris 1972, 1986, 1: 141, 142 with n. 36 = «Chasse et sacrifice dans l'Orestie d'Eschyle», *PP* 24 (1969) 408 with n. 31, fully endorses this view.

30. In accordance with the *Sch. in Agam.* v. 137 (= 136 P., W.) αὐτότοχον] σὺν αὐτῷ τῷ τόχῳ M; *sim. Sch. Tricl.* 137a.

31. Here I slightly paraphrase Stanford's alternative translations.

Artemis, part of the complex issue of compulsion and free will, have been attacked in various and often conflicting ways³². Whether Artemis acts on her own and demands the sacrifice of Iphigeneia with the purpose of saving both the maiden and Troy (Neitzel); or she is the instrument of Zeus and Moira (Bergson); or she does not desire to cause the death of Iphigeneia, but she merely «creates a situation» for Agamemnon in which he, suffering no external coercion, discloses his *ethos* (Peradotto), there remains the incongruity of an εὐφρων - τεπνά Artemis who demands the sacrifice of a δρόσος. This stumbling block can possibly be overcome even partially if the particle περ (Agam. 140) is taken not as intensive of τόσον in the sense of «being [sc. Artemis], as she is, so well-disposed to all young animals, she demands fulfilment of what this act [the eagle apparition] portends»³³, but as concessive περ, in the sense of «although she is kind and pleasant»³⁴. This would render the passage smoother: despite her kindness and love towards all kinds of young ones, the goddess, infuriated by the outrageous atrocities of the Atreidae presently foreshadowed by the eagle omen, applies the *lex talionis* and exacts punishment of the chiefs by demanding the sacrifice of their own lion cub.

Iphigeneia undoubtedly belongs to a family often characterized in leonine metaphors. In his arrogance and tragic ignorance of the divine grudge that exacts punishment for the excessive death dealt at Troy, Agamemnon broods over it in an ambiguous and ominous language: the city was turned to dust by the Argive beast, the ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδοφόρος λεώς, ... ὑπερ-θορῶν δὲ πύργον ὠμηστής λέων / ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ (827-28). The «young ones of the horse», unlike those of the lion (717-49), are «born» mature and show their criminal nature right at «birth», whereas it remains unspecified whether the lion that «licked his fill of the blood of

32. See A. Lesky, «Decision and Responsibility in the Tragedy of Aeschylus», *JHS* 86 (1966) 78-85; id., *Göttliche und menschliche Motivation im homerischen Epos*, Heidelberg 1961, esp. pp. 50-52; id., *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*, Göttingen 1972, pp. 162-68; Fraenkel, 2: 96-99; Denniston - Page, Intro. pp. XX-XXIX; H. Lloyd-Jones, «The Guilt of Agamemnon», *CQ* 12 (1962) 187-99; W. Whallon, «Why is Artemis angry?», *AJP* 82 (1961) 78-68; J. J. Peradotto, «The Omen of the Eagles and the ἦθος of Agamemnon», *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 237-63; J. Fontenrose, «Gods and Men in the Oresteia», *TAPA* 102 (1971) 71-109; Neitzel, «ἄεπτος oder ἄαπτος», pp. 218-21; id., «Artemis und Agamemnon in der Parodos des aischyleischen 'Agamemnon'», *Hermes* 107 (1979) 10-32; L. Bergson, «Nochmals Artemis und Agamemnon», *Hermes* 110 (1982) 117-45, *et alii*.

33. So Denniston-Page, p. 81, who add, «περ in τόσον περ is likely to be intensive, not concessive» and refer to J. D. Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1934, pp. 481ff. However, see *Greek Particles*, p. 484, «(6) The sense of climax often carries with it a concessive tone»; ib., p. 485, the A. Ag. 140 is listed as an example of this use.

34. See also Fraenkel, 1: 99, «The Fair One, kindly though she be towards...».

princes» (transl. Fraenkel) is the host or / and Agamemnon himself. Yet, the latter is rendered plausible in view of the first person plural he uses in this description, of his status and his characterization in lion terms by Cassandra³⁵. In Cassandra's vision the lion Agamemnon appears as «noble» (so Fraenkel, Knox *et al.*), while Clytaemestra as a most unnatural and horrid two-footed lioness, who sleeps with a wolf, αὔτη δίπους λέαινα συγχοιμωμένη / λύκωι, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσίαι (1258-59). Cassandra also describes Aegisthus as a cowardly, degenerated lion, ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον οἰκουρόν (1224-25). Three gradations of kindred lions coming into grips with each other figure in these passages: the first is εὐγενής, «high-bred» (*LSJ*), namely, of pure breed; the second surpasses the boundaries of the species and enters the realm of monsters, while the third is contemplated as a reduced, non-valiant type³⁶ whose weaponry consists in seducing the lioness wife of the pure-bred lion and in ἄπτεσθαι of his foe (1608) in an explicitly debased manner: by συνάπτειν μηχανὴν δυσβουλίας (1609), and by being τοῦδε τοῦ φόνου ῥαφεύς (1604, see also 1634-35). The context itself suggests that the lion is not simply used metaphorically of the strong and martial Agamemnon³⁷, but of the bloodthirsty, criminal and vindictive nature of the major characters of this myth³⁸.

35. For H. Mielke, *Die Bildersprache des Aischylos*, Breslau 1932, p. 87, the lion is the wooden horse and the Greek warriors. So also J. Dumortier, *Les Images dans la poésie d'Eschyle*, Paris 1935, pp. 81, 150; for Knox, p. 19, Cassandra's speech (v. 1259) is instrumental for the identification of this lion with Agamemnon. See B. H. Fowler, «Aeschylus' Imagery», *C & M* 28 (1967) 37, «the lion here is the Argive host ... Other uses of the lion symbol suggest that this lion is meant to stand primarily for Agamemnon himself». E. Petrounias, *Funktion und Thematik der Bilder bei Aischylos, Hypomnemata* (Heft 48), Göttingen 1976, p. 146, emphatically identifies this lion with Agamemnon.

36. On the problems arising from v. 1224 see Fraenkel, 3: 559-60. Denniston-Page, p. 181 *ad loc.* consider the phrase «a cowardly lion» so unlikely that they suspect corruption; but if the text is sound, they stress «that the lion symbolizes savagery ... not as a rule courage». Petrounias, p. 146, discerns an oxymoron here in the sense of «Der Löwe, der keiner ist; der Unlöwe». However, the obstacles found in vv. 1224 and 1259 can be overcome if placed in perspective: the ethography of Aegisthus moves in an escalating manner; the valorless lion, a member of the Pelopid family, grows, or rather degenerates, into a wolf, who is a coward and acts by stealth. Instructive for these traits of the wolfish character might be *Sch. Hom. II.* 10. 23d (Erbse, 3: 8), Δόλωνα δὲ ὡς δειλὸν καὶ ἐπὶ λαθρίδιον πρᾶξιν ὁρμῶντα λυκέαν [ἐνδύει]. See also Arist. *Hist. Anim.* 1. 488b, and *Aristophanis Historiae Animalium Epitome*, ed. S. P. Lambros, Berlin 1885-1903, Suppl. I, p. 5, A 25.

37. So Neitzel, p. 218. According to Dumortier, p. 75, «Agamemnon (1259) est le lion redoutable et magnifique».

38. See Mielke, p. 87, «Als Verkörperung der Mordgier gilt dem Dichter der Löwe». See also Knox, *passim* and Petrounias, pp. 143-45 à propos of the lion parable. A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus Choephoroi*, Oxford 1986, p. 306, «for Aeschylus the lion is a symbol of savagery rather than nobility or bravery [so Stanford, *Aeschylus in his Style*, p. 89]» ~ Denniston-Page, *ad v.* 1224. Rosenmeyer, p. 140, argues that «Aeschylean beast terms are inescapably dero-

The lion cycle rounds up in the *Choephoroi* 937-38, ἔμολε δ' ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος / διπλοῦς λέων, διπλοῦς Ἄρης. The «double lion», variously explained³⁹, has been anticipated in the *Agamemnon*: Orestes will avenge the death of two people, his father and his mistress, by killing two people, his mother and her lover (1279-81, 1317-19, 1646-48). Most significantly, this will happen because ὁμώμοται γὰρ ὄρκος ἐκ θεῶν μέγας, / ἄξειν νιν ὑπτίασμα χειμένου πατρός (*Agam.* 1290-91). This distich, the syntactical ambiguity of which is notorious, if combined with the phrase τὸν ζῶντα καίνειν τοὺς τεθνηκότας (*Choe.* 886), can possibly yield another alternative: the phrase «double lion» might simultaneously insinuate the pair of father and son, who are united at last and have joined forces to put an end to the cycle of injustice that originated with the violation of the Priamidae: Δίκη ἔμολε to the house of both (*Choe.* 935-38). Equally ambiguous is the famous Stesichorean dream of Clytaemestra, τᾷ δὲ δράκων ἐδόκησε μολεῖν χάρα βεβροτωμένος ἄκρον / ἐκ δ' ἄρα τοῦ βασιλεὺς Πλεισθενίδας ἐφάνη (*PMGF* 219). If the serpent symbolizes Agamemnon, who is the Pleisthenid king? Scholars oscillate between Agamemnon and Orestes⁴⁰, although such a distinction is, in my opinion, unnecessary here, if we take into account first the genealogical line in its archaic unbroken continuity and, second, the concept of deferred Justice: the «double lion» of the *Choe.* as well as the complex of the *PMGF* 219 might be explained in its interracial scope as a fusion of both father and son, ancestor and offspring.

Finally, the lion image is fleetingly touched upon in the *Eumenides* 193-94: with repugnance Apollo ousts the Erinyes on the grounds that λέοντος ἄντρον αἵματορρόφου οἰκεῖν τοιαύτας εἰκός. The phrase might be a metaphorical way of speaking or can suggest the blood lapping leonine Tan-

gatory. Lions, wolves, snakes ... are rarely appreciated for the majesty of their attack».

39. Primarily as Orestes and Electra or Pylades: so, e.g., Fowler, pp. 57-58, cf., ib., p. 66; Whallon, pp. 40-41 *et al.* For a comprehensive survey of the pertinent theories see Garvie, pp. 305-06, who leans favorably towards the view that «the double lion is Orestes himself, as the double killer of the two usurpers», or «Clytaemestra and Orestes, both avengers in their turn». Cf. Vidal-Naquet, «Chasse et sacrifice dans l'Orestie d'Eschyle», p. 422, «personnage double, chasseur et guerrier, serpent et lion»; Dumortier, p. 151, «le double meurtrier».

40. See J. Vürtheim, *Stesichoros' Fragmente und Biographie*, Leiden 1919, pp. 52-53, the Pleisthenid king is neither Agamemnon nor Orestes, but a figure which «trägt die Gesichtszüge, die Gestalt, des alten Geschlechts» and will become a king. See also C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1961, p. 117. Garvie, pp. XIX-XX, refers both lines to Agamemnon himself, and so does A. Neschke, «L'Orestie de Stésichore et la tradition littéraire du mythe des Atrides avant Eschyle», *AC* 55 (1986) 295-96 with n. 40. For a different approach, in which the Pleisthenid is identified with Orestes, see G. Devereux, *Dream in Greek Tragedy. An Ethno-Psycho-Analytical Study*, Oxford 1976, ch. 5, pp. 171-76.

talidae⁴¹. In view of the Apolline misogyny and the subsequent condemnation of the world of women in general and of this family in particular, it is also likely that the lion here stands for the two sisters who have constantly been compared and identified with lions and the Erinyes in the *Agamemnon*. The murderous and leonine female world is soon to be denounced, while its daemonic counterpart is to be converted into «Eumenides» and incorporated into a new cosmic order to the benefit of the Athenian city.

The above outline suggests that the lion in the *Oresteia* stands for blood and murder. The grown-up lions are murderers, θῦται, who eventually become θύματα, with the exception of Orestes, who is redeemed through divine dispensation. Iphigeneia is a lion cub sacrificed before reaching maturity. She thus becomes a victim before she turns into a victimizer⁴². Until then this ἀταύρωτος maiden of the παρθένειος αἰών (229-30, 245) is described as a sacrificial victim characterized in terms of domestic animal and vegetable imagery. She is raised above the altar δίκαν χιμαίρας (232) upon the bidding of her father, who, ὥσπερὶ βοτοῦ μόρον, / μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόχοις νομεύμασιν, / ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα (1415-17), while she is called a «sprout» by her mother, ἐμὸν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἔρνος ἀερθέν (1525). Despite the overall diffused picture of innocence, suffering and gentleness (see also 1555-59), Iphigeneia is linked with the lion image and its malignant connotations as early as *Agam.* 141-45: the sacrifice of the δρόσος Iphigeneia will eventually be avenged, μίμνει γὰρ φοβερά παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεχνόποινος (154-55). This distich is of cardinal importance in that it blends the past with the present and the future of this family: it anticipates the long due punishment for the Θυέστεια δεῖπνα and the imminent sacrifice of Iphigeneia⁴³.

However, the most impressive connection of Iphigeneia with the lion image occurs in the famous lion parable of the second stasimon (717-49). Although this passage refers explicitly to Helen, it suits all characters of

41. So Whallon, p. 40. See Knox, p. 24, the cave is the house of Pelops, which they have inhabited for generations. A. J. Podlecki, *Aeschylus Eumenides*, Warminster 1989, p. 145, «Lions stalk the house of Atreus». A. H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus Eumenides*, Cambridge 1989, p. 116, *ad loc.*, «throughout the *Oresteia* the lion has been an ambivalent symbol, now of a beast of nobility and fierce power (*Ag.* 1259, *Ch.* 938), now a murderous creature revelling in bloodshed (*Ag.* 727ff., 827f., 1224, 1258). Here ... it is degraded to the level of a fiend that like the Erinyes, is fit only for the darkness (note ἄντρον)».

42. Cf. Petrounias, p. 157, «Iphigeneia hatte bei Opferungen mitgewirkt und wurde dann selber geopfert»; see *ib.*, pp. 157-59 on the sacrifice motif in relation to Iphigeneia.

43. Whallon, «Why is Artemis angry?», p. 83 with n. 19, adds the maiming of Pelops in this picture.

this myth⁴⁴ including Iphigeneia, as is suggested by various verbal echoes: Iphigeneia is a τέκνον, δόμων ἄγαλμα (208); she is προτέλεια ναῶν (227), source of joy for the house and especially her father, πατὴρ / φίλου τριτόσπονδον εὐποτμον παι-/ῶνα φίλως ἐτίμα (243-47). Her young age is stressed (παρθενοσφάγοισιν, παρθενίου θ' αἵματος, αἰῶνα παρθένειον, ἀγναῖ αὐδαῖ ἀταύρωτος, 209, 215, 229, 245) and set against the maturity of the fatal woman (γυναικοποιῶν πολέμων, 225-26; cf. πολυάνορος ἀμφί γυναικός, 62). The lion cub of the parable is similiary ἐν βιότου προτελείοις / ἄμερον, εὐφλόπαιδα, / καὶ γεραροῖς ἐπίχαρτον (720-22), νεοτρόφου τέκνου δίκαν (724), yet deprived of milk, ἀγάλακτον, though φιλόμαστον. This tender creature χρονισθεῖς δ' ἀπέδειξεν ἦθος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων: it became μέγα σῖνος πολυκτόνον / ἐκ θεοῦ δ' ἱερεὺς τις Ἄ-/τας δόμοις προσεθρέφθη (734-36).

The lion parable contains the sperms of the ensuing ethography and plot uncoiling, since it is strewn with key words, concepts and crossreferences which permeate the entire trilogy. Helen, the principal figure in this parable, starts her career as a gentle delight of wealth, as soft arrow of the eyes, as heart-stinging —δηξίθυμον— blossom of love (741-43) and ends up as νυμφόκλαυτος Ἑρινός (749) as much for the Priamidae (744-47) as for the Greeks (403-55, 1455-61). Helen, originally an ὀρτάλιχος of the vultures, reveals her *ethos* as well as that of her sister with whom she is eventually identified. The pair of the two male Tantalidae described in the beginning of this play in terms of unison and equality of power and spirit (with the exception of δύο λήμασι δισσοῦς, 123)⁴⁵ is at the end set against a more deadly female pair: κράτος (τ') ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν / καρδιόδηκτον (1470-71)⁴⁶. The two lionesses have prevailed, while Clytaemestra, the two-footed lioness, has fastened herself with the family curse by revenging her lion cub. Iphigeneia, on the other hand, has become a lion as much for her father as for her mother; through her death she has bound them with the hereditary sin. Against this background of culminated horror we are now called upon to interpret the adjective ἄεπτος.

The chorus is explicit: Agamemnon undoubtedly put on the yoke of Ananke and at the same time he changed his mind and took decisions of

44. So Knox, pp. 17, 19, 21-23; Petrounias, p. 144 (with the exception of Cassandra); Peradotto, pp. 256-57, associates the lion parable with Agamemnon's predatory and teknophorous *ethos* in particular, which he has inherited from his father.

45. *Agam.* 43-44, διθρόνου Διόθεν καὶ δισκήπτρου / τιμῆς ὀχυρὸν ζεῦγος Ἀτρειδᾶν; 104, κράτος αἷσιον ἀνδρῶν; 109-10, διθρονον κράτος ... ξύμφορα ταγάν; 1468-69, διφυί-/οισι Τανταλιδαισιν. For a character and fate differentiation of the two brothers in correlation with the eagle color see Peradotto, pp. 261-63.

46. Cf., however, Fraenkel, 1: 181, «I cannot understand this passage»; see also Denniston-Page, *ad loc.* «a remarkable quantity of irrelevant detail».

utmost boldness: he committed the παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων· ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτῆρ γενέ-/σθαι θυγατρός (218-27). Divine compulsion and personal volition have brought Agamemnon to the point of the utmost implication: by deciding to lay violent hands upon his own δρόσος, he commits his first personal sin and triggers the fulfilment of the hovering family curse (224). The importance of the first sin is emphasized also in the case of Thyestes, who «trampled on his brother's bed» (1193) and so committed the πρώταρχον ἄτην (1192). In this context the career of the «hands» as well as of the words that denote «touching» is relevant and meaningful. Two phrases in the lion parable, in particular, ἐν ἀγκάλαις (723) and ποτὶ χεῖρα σαίνων (725-26), gradually reveal their pregnant and sinister meaning. The «hands», used in an auspicious and friendly manner in the beginning (34-35, 116), become the symbol of unjust enrichment, of wealth amassed πίνωι χερῶν (777), sooner or later to be punished by Dike; they are ironically used by Clytaemestra of a god-driven and eloquent prophetess (1060-61), and they finally attain their malignant connotations turning into emblems of violence⁴⁷. The two major lion figures of this play exploit the potential of χεῖρες at its maximum. Agamemnon killed his δρόσος daughter defiling his hands in her blood, μαιίνων παρθενοςφάγοισιν ῥεῖθροις πατρώϊους χέρας (209-10) only to be treated similarly: Clytaemestra, after the fashion of the χρονισθεῖς lion cub, becomes an ἰέρεια Ἄτης, and exacts punishment for the virgin daughter once torn away from her like the ἀγάλακτον, yet, ominously, φιλόμαστον lion whelp: προτείνει δὲ χεῖρ' ἐκ χερὸς ὀρεγομένα (1110). At last in Clytaemestra's imagination Iphigeneia and her hands regain their original well-disposed nature: she is reunited with her father and throws her «hands» in love about him (1555-59). For Clytaemestra this is a token of the completion of the blood cycle. Alas, this family is run by real lions; there is no place yet for such a utopian and wishful thinking: another lion is being reared destined to θριγκῶσαι ἄτας φίλοις (1283).

In their turn, the gods disdain to care about such mortals ὅσοις ἀθίκτων χάρις / πατοῖθ' (369-72), and «touch» things with motivations often misunderstood by the mortals (661-63): the gods save Agamemnon's ship only to inflict him later with a paradigmatic punishment; the gods are moved by the grief and mourning of people, πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἥπαρ (432). Aegisthus uses a similar verb when boasting, καὶ τοῦδε τάνδρὸς ἡψάμην θυραῖος ὦν, πᾶσαν συνάψας μηχανὴν δυσβουλίας (1608-09). In a comparable context is used the verb ἄπτω of Orestes, who, τοιάνδε πάλην μόνος ὦν

47. *Agam.* 209-10, 424, 816-17, 1110, 1219-20, 1356-57, 1404-05, 1423, 1581-82, 1594.

ἔφεδρος / διανοῖς μέλλει ... ἄφειν (*Choe.* 866-68). The impious «touching» of what one ought not to, and its repercussions are, in my opinion, implied by ἄεπτος, which serves as an allusive programmatic forewarning. The madness of «touching» the human δρόσος is πρωτοπήμων for Agamemnon: it binds him with the Μῆνις that lurks at home and will soon be aroused again to punish the sacrifice of the dew drops of this race; the κῶμος of the kindred Erinyes never abandons this house (1186-90); Μοῖρα is δεμνιοτήρης (1449). The δρόσος must remain untouched, consequently, another ἄθικτον, if the chain of inherited guilt and punishment is to be broken at some point.

Finally, this interpretation, which embraces the past and future of this family, should be viewed as an integral part of the comprehensive ethico-philosophical reflection of Aeschylus. Dissociating himself from the old notion that τίχτει γὰρ κόρος ὕβριν, whence people suffer ἄλγεα πολλά (ἄτην)⁴⁸, our poet with distinct pride, δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων εἰμί (756-57), introduces his own theory that τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον / μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίχτει, / σφετέραι δ' εἰκότα γένναι (758-60). The old hybris is wont to give birth a new hybris, to a series of evils, ἄτας, εἰδομένας τοκεῦσιν (763-71). In the light of this philosophy of Aeschylus we may at last decipher the cosmic meaning of his desperate plea in the parodos of his *Agamemnon*. As Helen was named προνοί-/αἰσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου (683-84), that is, anticipating destiny, so was Iphigeneia in a proleptic manner: her telling characterization as δρόσος ἄεπτος serves as a forewarning, the sinister import of which will be perceived in time. Do not touch the dew drops, the chorus seems to say, keep your hands off this new δυσσεβὲς ἔργον, because you will reap a harvest of identical nature (σφετέραι δ' εἰκότα γένναι, εἰδομένας τοκεῦσιν, 760, 771). It is exactly in this framework of the Aeschylean thought that the transformation of the ἔρνος, μῆλον, χίμαιρα into a δρόσος λεόντων finds its final justification and the prophecy comes true: the impious deed operates like the lion whelp who χρονισθεὶς δ' ἀπέδειξεν ἡ-/θος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων (727-28)⁴⁹.

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48. See Hes. *Op.* 214-16; Solon 4. 7-10; 6. 3-4, 13. 7-25, 72-76 W.; Thgn 229-31; Pi. *Ol.* 1. 55-57; *Pyth.* 2. 26-29 Mae.; cf., Pi. *Ol.* 13. 10-11; Hdt. 8. 77. Denniston-Page, p. 136 *ad loc.*, find that «the opinion which the Chorus here advances [757-62] ... was not in fact novel at all». Cf., D. J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Oresteia*, Toronto, Buffalo, London 1987, pp. 28-29.

49. Similarly Knox, pp. 18, 22, «The lioncub image is thus associated with the process of the reappearance of evil from generation to generation which is the central problem of the trilogy». See also Lebeck, pp. 47-51.