SACRIFICE, POLITICS AND ANIMAL IMAGERY IN THE ORESTEIA*

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Summary: In this paper I explore how sacrifice and politics, two central aspects of the *Oresteia*, are presented through animal imagery and how they are indissolubly linked. In the first section I discuss how the animal imagery attributed to Cassandra constructs a semantic parallelism between her and Iphigenia, the two of them being the only innocent victims in the bloody circle of this trilogy. In the second section I examine how animals are linked to governments and how the quantitative, temporal, and spatial arrangement of animal imagery reveals their sequence.

Animal imagery is a significant aspect of the *Oresteia*, both stylistically important and thematically meaningful.[1] It appears in the first lines of the *Agamemnon* (ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην, 3) but we soon realise its symbolic intention.[2] The omen of the eagles (49-57) and the fable of the lion cub (717-31) are the most polyvalent and discussed images of the trilogy; at first glance, both refer to the abduction of Helen and its consequences,

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1 See Fowler 1967: 29-39, 56-58, and 68-69 for the three tragedies, respectively. A useful but incomplete catalogue, including only apparent allusions, is Earp 1948: 104. For a complete catalogue, see Appendix.

2 In that first occasion, the animal metaphor has no special semiology, except (perhaps) for 'triggering pre-existing associations between κυνός and δίκη(ν), and of preparing the way for their further development in the trilogy', Wilson 2006: 193. ἄγκαθεν only reoccurs in *Eum.* 80, but this is too far to claim a connection and it clearly has a different meaning (holding 'in the arms' instead of standing 'on the elbows'). Rose 1958 ad loc. maintains that the actor is not actually bending on his elbows like a dog, but this is based on misreading ἄγκαθεν as a form of ἀνέκαθεν (after Mazon).

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but many more layers are readable, so that all characters can be involved.[3] In discussing the omen of the eagles in particular, Ferrari articulates how to deal with such complex imagery: 'Instead of trying to reconcile at all costs the opening metaphor with what follows, or take refuge in a broad notion of polysemy [...] a cunning mind, on the other hand, would realise that the true meaning of the utterance lies beneath the surface. The awareness that there is a hidden story in which the troubling elements fit to perfection is the first step towards understanding'.[4]

From a quantitative perspective, the number of lines occupied by animal imagery is over 7% of the *Agamemnon*, and 2% of the *Choephori* and of the *Eumenides* (a proportion which is still higher than in Aeschylus' other tragedies). Within this imagery, the eagle and the lion prevail in the first play (50% of relevant lines), the snake in the second (40%), whereas the *Eumenides* has more balanced references. The animals cited, domestic and wild, represent all parts of the natural space (from the sea and land to the sky), almost all animal classes (with the exception of amphibians) and all sizes, putting a whole ecosystem before us. The vast majority of the animal references appear in similes, metaphors, personifications, proverbial expressions and passages superficially referring to actual animals but having a symbolic purpose (dreams, fables or adages). Thus, the animal imagery metonymically presents, or better organises, the abstract concepts of the trilogy: revenge, sacrifice, antagonism, cannibalism, punishment etc. Only a few literal uses exist, almost all of which are located in the end of the *Eumenides*, signifying the definitive separation of the human and bestial element, from the domination of the civic law.[5]

3 Knox 1952 and Peradotto 1969 remain the most illuminating readings on the lion-cub and eagle images, respectively. Van Dijk 1997: 171-76 and Erp Taalman Kip 1996: 122-23 and 136 n. 2 alone deny the polysemy of each of these images, the former on textual grounds (saying that the fable of the lion-cub can only refer to Helen and illustrate, more abstractly, the vicious circle of impiety) and the latter on grounds of dramatic economy (saying that the audience does not know yet the role of Iphigenia's sacrifice to correlate it with the omen of the eagles).

4 Ferrari 1997: 30.

5 For the assimilation of human and bestial element in the trilogy, see Peradotto 1969: 264; Rosenmeyer 1982: 138-41; Moreau 1985: 61-99, 267-91; Heath 1999b.

In their symbolic usage, there is no one-to-one analogy between animals and characters. The same character 'transforms' itself, i.e. is attached to properties of different animals throughout individual plays and the trilogy as a whole. In the first tragedy for instance, 'Agamemnon is a vulture (*Ag.* 49), eagle (112-37), hound (135, 896), horse (218), bull (1126), and lion (1259; cf. 824 ff.). Clytemnestra, as one might expect, displays tremendous versatility:[6] a watchdog and bitch (607, 1093, 1228; cf. *Ch.* 420), cow (1125), serpent (1233), lioness (1258), crow (1472-74), spider (1492), and hen (1671). Even a minor character like Aegisthus changes from lion (1224) to wolf (1259) to cock (1671) only to end up a decapitated serpent (*Ch.* 1046-47)'.[7] Conversely, an animal can stand to symbolise for many characters, with the dog being attached to most of them (the watchman, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Cassandra, Chorus, Electra, Erinyes).[8]

In this paper, advocating the symbolic dimensions of the animal imagery in the *Oresteia*, I will discuss how sacrifice and politics, two central aspects of the trilogy, are presented through animals and how they are indissolubly linked.

SACRIFICE[9]

The *Oresteia* is full of deaths, all of which are violent. Agamemnon's murder by Clytemnestra (with Aegisthus' support) and Aegisthus' and Clytemnestra's murder by Orestes are all motivated by revenge. The victims

6 That this versatility is 'tremendous' might seem an overstatement given that Agamemnon is resembled to almost the same number of animals, and given that he remains on stage for a short time. However, 'tremendous' should be understood here in terms of intensity rather than number: the tradition of comparing women to animals entailed fixed types of women (Semonides 7) or static hybrids (Sirens, Chimaera, Lamia, Harpies, Echidna etc.), but here we have the dynamic compilation of the worst qualities of all animals.

7 Heath 1999b: 30.

8 For a catalogue, by animal, see Thumiger 2008. Especially for the dog, see Raeburn & Thomas 2011: lxvi-lxix and Saayman 1993.

9 For an overall discussion on the imagery of sacrifice, see Zeitlin 1965 and Lebeck 1971: 32-36, 60-3.

in each case are guilty of dreadful deeds, so their murders seem somehow vindicated: Clytemnestra kills in the name of her daughter Iphigenia (*Ag.* 1432-36, 1521-29), Aegisthus in the name of his father Thyestes (*Ag.* 1578-86), and Orestes in the name of his father Agamemnon (*Ch.* 435-38). In contrast to this complexity, which causes both disgust and sympathy for the killers, the only unquestionably unfair and pitiful murders are Iphigenia's and Cassandra's, for both victims are innocent (indeed, the only innocents in this bloody circle).[10] Because of that very innocence and the fact that their murders are described in religious terms, as will be shown, these deaths are differentiated from all the others: they are sacrifices. In the following sections I am discussing how the animal imagery attributed to Cassandra constructs a semantic parallelism between her and Iphigenia.

a. Reversing the mythical background (nightingale)

Shortly before Cassandra is sacrificed, the chorus sarcastically attaches to her the mythological nightingale simile. Procne was transformed by the gods into a nightingale, crying for her son Itys, whom she had killed as a revenge on her husband Tereus for raping her sister Philomela.

ΧΟ. φρενομανής τις εἶ θεοφόρητος, ἀμ- 1140
φὶ δ' αὐτᾶς θροεῖς
νόμον ἄνομον οἷά τις ξουθὰ
ἀκόρετος βοᾶς, φεῦ, ταλαίναις φρεσὶν
Ἴτυν Ἴτυν στένουσ' ἀμφιθαλῆ κακοῖς
ἀηδὼν μόρον.

Cassandra is now accused of selfishly and ostentatiously crying for herself. The hapax legomenon φρενομανής, the rare θεοφόρητος and the oxymoron νόμον ἄνομον fit the mythic context, but also the offensive intentions of the chorus. Beyond the accumulation of insults (φρενομανής,

10 Zeitlin 1966: 29: 'Iphigenia was one motive for Clytemnestra's action. Cassandra was another. But Cassandra, like Iphigenia, was Agamemnon's victim. She was also the victim of Apollo, of Paris and Troy, of the entire war'. One could add Thyestes' eating his children (*Ag.* 1242-43, *Ch.* 1068-69), but his action was unconscious.

θεοφόρητος, ἀκόρετος etc.), the repetition of Ἴτυν and the alliteration of φ parody her lamentation. Cassandra, in turn, objects to the comparison, for there is no magical escape for her, as there was for Procne.

ΚΑ. ἰὼ ἰὼ λιγείας βίος ἀηδόνος· 1146
περέβαλον γάρ οἱ πτεροφόρον δέμας
θεοὶ γλυκύν τ᾽ αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·
ἐμοὶ δὲ μίμνει σχισμὸς ἀμφήκει δορί.

κλαυμάτων ἄτερ seems unsuitable for Procne's fortune, for her song as a nightingale was regarded to be a lament for Itys. One option would be to understand κλαύματα as troubles or misfortunes (LSJ *II*); indeed, in this sense, Procne gains a bird-life without further troubles. But in a context about Procne, κλαύματα is inevitably perceived as weeping. Given that, we could say that Cassandra here undermines the myth, saying that the bird is not actually crying, in order to emphasise her own very real, very human lament. Alternatively, 'she views the [nightingale's] lifetime of song as "sweet" precisely because it is alive. However lugubrious this song may be its sound implies the ongoing fact of living'.[11] In either case, ἐμοὶ δέ must bring a striking antithesis, and for that purpose Procne's tragedy has to be blunt. Cassandra's fortune is what Procne's would have been, had not she been transfigured: σχισμός, and indeed with δορί.[12] Therefore, Cassandra is not a fake Procne, as the chorus implies, but another Procne; one with a worse ending.

The inescapability from murder also characterises Iphigenia. Cassandra does not escape murder by being transfigured into a nightingale by the gods as Procne did; and Iphigenia (in Aeschylus' version) did not escape sacrifice by being replaced by a deer by Artemis.[13] Thus, in both cases, the poet reverses the mythic tradition to construct a tragic

11 Nooter 2017: 142.

12 Terus hunted his wife with an ἀκόντιον (Ar. *Lys.* 564). A relevant detail would probably exist in Sophocles' lost tragedy *Tereus*, on which see Dobrov 2001: 110-17; Hourmouziades 1986; Stähler 2000; Fitzpatrick 2001; Hofmann 2006; Luppe 2007; Coo 2013; Finglass 2016. Later sources speak of an axe (Apollod. 3.14.8), which also has a parallelism with ἀμφήκει δορί (two-edged weapons). Aeschylus uses Procne's myth in *Supp.* 58-67 as well (with no reference to the weapon).

13 That version was already known (Hes. fr.23a, Stesich. fr. 215 P., *Cypria*).

paraprosdokian for his characters: there is no miraculous salvation for them.

b. Linking the characters (cattle)

That Cassandra becomes an alter ego of Iphigenia through animal imagery clearly emerges through comparing the following passages, which describe their murders:

For Iphigenia

ΧΟ φράσεν δ' ἀόζοις πατὴρ μετ' εὐχὰν
δίκαν χιμαίρας ὕπερθε βωμοῦ
πέπλοισι περιπετῆ παντὶ θυμῷ
προνωπῆ λαβεῖν ἀέρδην,
στόματός τε καλλιπρῴ-
ρου φυλακᾷ κατασχεῖν
φθόγγον ἀραῖον οἴκοις,
βίᾳ χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδῳ μένει,
[...]
ΚΛ. οὐδὲν τότ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐναντίον φέρων,
ὃς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὡσπερεὶ βοτοῦ μόρον,
μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,
ἔθυσεν αὑτοῦ παῖδα...

For Cassandra

ΚΑ. ἐπεύχομαι δὲ καιρίας πληγῆς τυχεῖν,
ὡς ἀσφάδαστος, αἱμάτων εὐθνησίμων
ἀπορρυέντων, ὄμμα συμβάλω τόδε.
ΧΟ. ὦ πολλὰ μὲν τάλαινα, πολλὰ δ' αὖ σοφὴ
γύναι, μακρὰν ἔτεινας. εἰ δ' ἐτητύμως
μόρον τὸν αὑτῆς οἶσθα, πῶς θεηλάτου
βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς;

The parallels are striking: the animals, though different (χιμαίρας,[14] βοτοῦ ~ βοός), are equally domestic and sacrificial; both must remain silent (φυλακᾷ, βίᾳ χαλινῶν, ἀναύδῳ ~ μακρὰν ἔτεινας); the place of murder is the same, an altar (ὕπερθε βωμοῦ ~ πρὸς βωμόν); the killing method is the same, slaughter (ἔθυσεν ~ πληγῆς, αἱμάτων εὐθνησίμων ἀποῤῥυέντων); there is involvement of a divine element in the procedure (μετ' εὐχάν ~ θεηλάτου); in the core of the similes, the verbal structure is similar (δίκαν χιμαίρας ὕπερθε βωμοῦ ~ βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμόν). All these converge to turn both murders to sacrificial rituals: they are sacrifices organised by Agamemnon and Clytemnestra respectively, and executed with most reverence on their part. And as humans have replaced animals in these rituals, sacredness becomes shamelessness.

c. Justification of the link (swan)

After having killed Agamemnon and Cassandra, Clytemnestra compares the latter to a swan:

κεῖται γυναικὸς τῆσδ' ὁ λυμαντήριος,
Χρυσηίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ,
ἥ τ' αἰχμάλωτος ἥδε καὶ τερασκόπος
καὶ κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε, θεσφατηλόγος,
πιστὴ ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων
ἰσοτριβής· ἄτιμα δ' οὐκ ἐπραξάτην,
ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὕτως, ἡ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκην
τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον
κεῖται φιλήτωρ τοῦδ'· ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν
εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῇ.

14 Raeburn & Thomas 2011: 93: 'The passage probably evoked two related Attic cults of Artemis, at Brauron and Mounychia. The latter's foundation-myth involves a goat being substituted for a daughter who is about to be sacrificed'.

The swan fits Cassandra in many ways. Firstly, for its link with Apollo, which is already testified to in Pindar and Bacchylides.[15] Cassandra reveals she flirted with Apollo in order to learn prophesy: μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῷδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει ... ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην (1202-8).[16] Secondly, for its prophetic mourning; this is the earliest testimony in Greek literature of the concept of the swan's song before its death.[17] Cassandra also forecasts her murder (κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν, 1260) in a way that resembles a song: τὰ δ' ἐπίφοβα δυσφάτῳ κλαγγᾷ | μελοτυπεῖς ὁμοῦ τ' ὀρθίοις ἐν νόμοις (1052-53). Thirdly, for its admittedly enchanting beauty: it is even comparable to Helen's beauty (Eur. *Or.* 1386); as for Cassandra, already in Homer she is Πριάμοιο θυγατρῶν εἶδος ἀρίστην (*Il.* 13.365). Therefore, on multiple levels, the correlation of the woman with this bird is clear.

What surprises here is the use of the swan simile by Clytemnestra; from her perspective, how is it justified that her enemy is compared to such a beautiful bird? The progression of Clytemnestra's emotions, as reflected in her speech, is telling: until 1403 she is upset and angry, because she is thinking of her husband's adultery. Her anger is expressed through an accumulation of invectives, compound words and ribaldry (λυμαντήριος, αἰχμάλωτος, τερασκόπος, κοινόλεκτρος, θεσφατηλόγος, ξύνευνος). But abruptly (ἄτιμα δ' οὐκ ἐπραξάτην) she reverts to the present: both Agamemnon and his 'mistress' are dead, as she desired. From now on we have neither insults nor irony;[18] in serenity, she treats her

15 Pind. *Pae.* 3.10-14; Bacchyl. *Dithyr.* 16.5-7; *Hom. Hymn* 21.1. Also see: τοιάδε κύκνοι ... πτεροῖς κρέκοντες ἴακχον Ἀπόλλω (Ar. *Av.* 769-72); ἀλλ' ἅτε οἶμαι τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὄντες, μαντικοί τέ εἰσι καὶ προειδότες τὰ ἐν Ἅιδου ἀγαθὰ ᾄδουσι (Pl. *Phd.* 85b). For Apollo and the swan, see Krappe 1942 and Ahí 1982.

16 The version in Apollod. 3.12.5 is roughly the same.

17 The concept must probably be ascribed to a previous written (but lost) or oral tradition, rather than be considered as Aeschylus' invention. Harris 2012 argues in favour of the oral tradition.

18 As for φιλήτωρ in 1446, I doubt that this is supposed to be an insult about Cassandra being the dominant partner and Agamemnon unmanly, as per Raeburn & Thomas 2011 and Sommerstein 2008 n. 308 ad loc. φιλήτωρ is an extremely rare word (attested only here and once in Aristotle, in the classical era) and its only association with the active sexual role is made by Strabo, who claims to cite Ephorus, who spoke about how the Cretans used the word – i.e. nothing reliable or relevant.

enemies – now victims– with tenderness (note the alliteration of λ). Cassandra thus becomes a swan in her eyes, a pleasant image, just because she is a swan's corpse. The sexual atmosphere (γυναικός, μείλιγμα, κοινόλεκτρος, ξύνευνος, ἰσοτριβής) shockingly becomes necrophiliac; death and pleasure become inextricable. The view of the two corpses is explicitly linked with orgasm for the killer (εὐνῆς παροψώνημα, χλιδῇ).[19] Therefore, the swan-simile and the whole tenderness are anything but the poet's voice, expressing sympathy for Cassandra.[20] It is the murderer's voice which, with gruesome calmness, rejoices in lyric and erotic terms over the corpses.

An explanation of her reaction, and a partial justification of her deed, has been prepared earlier, expressed also in terms of beauty and tenderness. Clytemnestra essentially gets revenge for her daughter's sacrifice. Iphigenia has been described in movingly affectionate words by the chorus (στόματός τε καλλιπρῴρου, 235; πρέπουσα τὼς ἐν γραφαῖς, 242) and by her mother (φιλτάτην ἐμοὶ ὠδῖν', 1417). Thus, Cassandra's beautiful swan-corpse becomes for Clytemnestra the repayment for her daughter's lost beauty. And the mourning of the mistress-swan is the repayment for the laudable song of the virgin Iphigenia:

ΧΟ. ἔμελψεν, ἁγνᾷ δ' ἀταύρωτος αὐδᾷ πατρὸς 245
φίλου τριτόσπονδον εὔποτμον
παιῶνα φίλως ἐτίμα.

Back in the happy days, Iphigenia used to sing the *paean* – a genre associated with Apollo – for the entertainment of her father. Now Cassandra is singing a swan song – which is also associated with Apollo – for the entertainment of Clytemnestra. The *paean* is a genre that 'hovers between triumph and disaster, anxiety and jubilation, expressing man's dependence on the gods and his hopes and fears regarding their beneficence'[21] and thus becomes appropriate as a background music for Iphigenia's fate: what used to be a celebratory song back then is now recalled

19 See Rutherford 2014: 306 n. 71.

20 That alternative is articulated, but not accepted, by Fraenkel.

21 Swift 2010: 63.

as a requiem.[22] And what *is* actually a requiem, the swan song, now sounds like a celebratory ode to the ears of Clytemnestra, who thus claims back her right to the sound of happiness.

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In the *Eumenides*, where murders are over, there are two actual sacrifices: Orestes' purification sacrifice on his way from Delphi to Athens (235-39, 445-52) and Athena's celebratory sacrifice in the exodus (1007). Their function is discussed in the end.

POLITICS

There is no doubt that the political element is more evident and explicit in the *Eumenides*. Yet it is anything but absent in the preceding tragedies. In fact, it is this gradual preparation that enables a coherent political interpretation, which suggests 'that the political developments of the last play are not something "stitched on the outside" of the trilogy'.[23] The *Oresteia* can be read as a constitutional progression, from the fall of kingship to the rise of democracy: Agamemnon, the hereditary ruler, is forcibly overthrown by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; popular discontent rises until Orestes, whom the people support, comes to liberate them from the tyrants, but again, by unlawful means; in this crisis, a legislator (Athena) comes to establish a democratic state. In this section I will discuss how the animal imagery contributes to the construction of this political progression throughout the trilogy. Specifically, I examine how

22 See Rutherford 2014: 49.

23 Dodds 1960: 247. However, he focuses on the politics of Aeschylus' time, obscuring his point. Macleod 1982: 132 responds that a wider treatment of politics will 'do much to bridge the apparent gap between the *Eumenides* and the other plays. For if in the *Eumenides* Athens is above all an ideal presentation of human society which pointedly reverses the social disorder of the *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi*, then the unity of the trilogy is in essence vindicated'. For politics in the *Oresteia*, also see Dover 1957; Podlecki 1966: 63-100; Cole 1977; Calder 1981; Sommerstein 1989: 25-32; Sommerstein 1993; Schaps 1993; Bowie 1993; Meier 1993: 102-37; Griffith 1995; Goldhill 2000.

animals are linked to governments and how the quantitative, temporal, and spatial arrangement of animal imagery reveals their sequence.

a. Kingship

Agamemnon is mostly likened to an eagle (49-57, 111-19, 138) and a lion (827, 1224, 1258-59), because these animals are regarded as the kings of the animal kingdom, the aerial and the terrestrial respectively.[24] They also bear connotations of strength, wealth, and divinity, which supplement the royal metaphor: the eagle is linked to Zeus (the latter transformed the legendary king of Attica, Periphas, into an eagle);[25] the lion is linked to the demi-god Hercules and was the emblem of the Lydian dynasty of Pelops.[26] By extension, these animals stand for kingship generally.

The first extensive animal images of the trilogy, the vulture simile (49-59) and the corresponding omen of the eagles (111-38), expressly refer to Agamemnon and Menelaus (123-24):

μεγάλ' ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη,
τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν οἵτ' ἐκπατίοις
ἄλγεσι παίδων ὕπατοι λεχέων
στροφοδινοῦνται
πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,
δεμνιοτήρη
πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες·
ὕπατος δ' ἀίων ἤ τις Ἀπόλλων
ἢ Πὰν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον
γόον ὀξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων,
.....

24 εὕδει δ' ἀνὰ σκάπτῳ Διὸς αἰετός, [...] ἀρχὸς οἰωνῶν (Pind. *Pyth.* 1. 6–7; cf. *Isthm.* 6. 50); βασιλεύς ἐστι τῶν πτηνῶν ὁ ἀετός (*Vita Aes.* G 91.6); λέων τὸ ἀλκιμώτατον τῶν θηρίων ἐστί (Cornutus *Nat. D.* 63.20); λέων ὢν ὁ τῶν ζῴων βασιλεὺς (Ael. *NA* 3.1); ἄναξ δ' ὁ λέων (Aesop 338.3 Chambry).

25 Ant.Lib. *Met.* 6; Ov. *Met.* 7.400. See Cook 1925: 1122.

26 Φόβος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος τῇ ἀσπίδι ἔπεστιν, ἔχων τὴν κεφαλὴν λέοντος (Paus. 5.19.4). See Knox 1952: 20.

ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας
ξύμφρονα ταγάν, 110
πέμπει ξὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι
θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αἶαν,
οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νε-
ῶν, ὁ κελαινὸς ὅ τ᾽ ἐξόπιν ἀργᾶς, ...

... βοσκομένω λαγίναν ... 118

... Ἄρτεμις ... 134
στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν. 137

As for the difference of the two bird species (αἰγυπιῶν ~ αἰετῶν), the poet manages to make it rather unnoticeable, moving from one to the other gradually: the vulture (49) develops into a warlike bird (112), then king of birds (113) and finally an eagle (138).[27] I thus take for granted the unity of the images, regarding the vulture as a metonymy for the eagle, or vice versa. What is important in this complex, for our purpose, is the kinglike qualities of the eagles coming forward: their divinity is implied with ὕπατοι, 'highest, uppermost', an epithet attached to Zeus,[28] and (here) to Apollo and Pan as well, and with μετοίκων, 'co-residents of gods'. Their strength is given both as an acoustic image (ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες, γόον ὀξυβόαν) and by their mauling of the hare. Agamemnon especially is the κελαινός one (μελανάετος), whom Aristotle describes as the strongest and 'hare-killer'.[29] Finally, the birds' royalty is directly expressed by the striking chiasmus οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νεῶν. Thus, their linking to the kings is more than a typical stylistic option, since in that case a short simile would be enough; it is a metonymic description of kingship.

27 The vulture simile is modelled on *Od.* 16.216-18 (Odysseus and Telemachus crying louder than οἰωνοί. ωῆναι ἢ αἰνυπιοὶ ναυψώνυχες whose children have been abducted from their nests). Αἰγυπιοί cannot be consistently identified with a modern species: Raeburn & Thomas 2011: 73. See also Finglass 2011 ad 169-170; Arnott 2007: 2-4 (on *aietos*) and 6-7 (on *aigypion*).

28 *Il.* 19.258; *Od.* 1.45.

29 *HA* 8(9).32.618b.26-31.

The lion imagery, in turn, illuminates the contrast of kingship with the forthcoming tyranny. With this meaning, it first emerges in 825-28, where Agamemnon compares the Greek army (led by himself) to a lion,[30] eating raw flesh, which jumped over and sucked the tyrannical blood of Troy:[31]

ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδηφόρος λεώς, 825
πήδημ᾽ ὀρούσας ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν·
ὑπερθορὼν δὲ πύργον ὠμηστὴς λέων
ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ.

The significance of this image is that it expressly establishes a political status for the lion metaphor (specifically the lion's supremacy over tyranny), which will be exploited later, with reference to interior politics. This exploitation comes when Cassandra, prophesying Agamemnon's and her own murder, vividly describes Clytemnestra's adultery with a lion love-triangle:

ἐκ τῶνδε ποινάς φημι βουλεύειν τινὰ
λέοντ᾽ ἄναλκιν ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον
οἰκουρόν, οἴμοι, τῷ μολόντι δεσπότῃ 1225
ἐμῷ·
.....
αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη
λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσίᾳ,

30 Agamemnon is already known as a lion from *Il.* 11.113-19.

31 It is well known that τύραννος means an absolute ruler without necessarily entailing negative connotations, but within the network of references in the play (e.g. 1355, 1365) the hostile tone is clear; Fraenkel ad loc. Moreover, the very form of the adjective in this passage (-ικός, first attested here) may have been chosen precisely to denote deviation from a proper kind of ruling. Seaford 2003: 100-1: 'Aegisthus' and Clytemnestra's tyrannical coup involves in fact all three of our tyrannical practices: killing family, power through money, and the abuse (or perversion) of ritual'. For the blood-drinking imagery, see Fowler 1991: 99: 'The power of the juxtaposition of the creatures and the blood throughout the *Oresteia* lies in the fact that it is not completely metaphorical. The human beings who drink blood do, almost literally, become their own Erinyes'.

κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν· 1260

Aegisthus is firstly called a cowardly lion (almost an oxymoron), roaming in bed (instead of the wild), and guarding the house (a feminine or servile role).[32] The proper lion is Agamemnon, whose juxtaposition with the fake one is striking (λύκῳ, λέοντος). That Aegisthus 'suddenly' becomes a wolf is not some negligence of the poet, but a more accurate retelling; in other words, calling him a lion was just a euphemism, which no longer stands, after the comparison with the real lion.[33] Note that Clytemnestra is also a paradoxical beast, a two-footed lioness.[34] It is crucial here that political terms invade this bestial comparison: the lion Agamemnon is δεσπότης and εὐγενῆς, a king in other words. Then what is Aegisthus? The conclusion of this 'visual argument' is precise: Aegisthus is no more a true king than he is a true lion. And if we recall the 'lion *vs* tyrant' motif from before, what he actually is becomes clear. Indeed, not much later, he is expressly called a tyrant:

ΧΟ. ὁρᾶν πάρεστι· φροιμιάζονται γὰρ ὡς
τυραννίδος σημεῖα πράσσοντες πόλει. 1355
...
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνεκτόν, ἀλλὰ κατθανεῖν κρατεῖ·
πεπαιτέρα γὰρ μοῖρα τῆς τυραννίδος. 1365

32 Cf. 1625-26. On the cowardly lion, see also West 2003. In the light of the lion-cub fable in 717-33, Aegisthus' being compared to a lion is telling; though primarily referring to Helen, the fable can also be applied to Aegisthus: saved as an infant and raised up inside the Atreus' house, he now wreaks vengeance on Agamemnon.

33 Not perceiving it as a comparison, Denniston & Page (ad loc.) were deceived: '[it] is most unexpected, particularly since the same metaphor is applied to Agamemnon in 1259; and the phrase as a whole, "a cowardly lion", is so unlikely that corruption of the text may well be supposed here'.

34 For the crescendo in Cassandra's description of Clytemnestra in bestial terms, in 1235-37, see Zeitlin 1966.

b. Uprising

The overthrow of Agamemnon is repeated once more early in the *Choephori*, again through an animal metaphor.

OP. Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, θεωρὸς τῶνδε πραγμάτων γενοῦ, 246
ἰδοῦ δὲ γένναν εὖνιν αἰετοῦ πατρὸς
θανόντος ἐν πλεκταῖσι καὶ σπειράμασιν
δεινῆς ἐχίδνης·

The link with the former play emerges from the comparison of Agamemnon to an eagle. What is introduced now is the snake imagery: the snake-Clytemnestra attacks πλεκταῖσι καὶ σπειράμασιν the eagle-Agamemnon.[35] A political reading of the passage is already promoted by the polysemy of πράγματα (246), which apart from 'things' or 'sufferings' also means 'the state-affairs', 'the government'.[36] Indeed, in the course of the play, the snake simile explicitly receives political connotations, denoting Clytemnestra and Aegisthus' tyranny:

OP. ἴδεσθε χώρας τὴν διπλῆν τυραννίδα 973
πατροκτόνους τε δωμάτων πορθήτορας·
.....
ΧΟ. ἠλευθέρωσας πᾶσαν Ἀργείων πόλιν 1046
δυοῖν δρακόντοιν εὐπετῶς τεμὼν κάρα.

If the *Agamemnon* presents the tyrannical overthrowing of the King, in the *Choephoroi* the operation of this lawless deviation is described. The snake imagery (which is the dominant imagery in this play)[37] illuminates how tyranny works, that is, with recurring seditions through murder and

35 It was known that eagles ate snakes (*Il.* 12.200-7, Arist. *HA* 609a4-5) but also that snakes devoured eggs and fledglings from the eagles' nests.

36 Mostly in historiography and oratory, but also cf. *Pers.* 714; Eur. *IA* 366; *Supp.* 749; Ar. *Lys.* 32; *Eccl.* 552. In *Eum.* πρᾶγμα in singular means 'a legal case' (470, 575, 630).

37 On the snake imagery, see Whallon 1958; Dumortier 1975: 88-100; Petrounias 1976: 162–73; Sancassano 1997: 159-84; Heath 1999a.

popular usurpation; and as Greek history itself shows, the 'successor' tyrant was often the former's kin. Thus, it is essential to accept that 'The killing of Agamemnon and of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are both acts of *stasis*... The king's death is pitiful and fearful because it represents the inversion or destruction of so many social values. The same applies, though on a smaller scale, to the death of Clytemnestra. She is, though her husband's murderer and a usurper, still the mother killed by her son'.[38] Although Orestes cannot be called a tyrant, his means are equally unlawful and for that reason he turns out to be a snake, just like Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.

The conflict among kin through the snake imagery emerges in Clytemnestra's dream and its fulfilment:

ΧΟ. τεκεῖν δράκοντ᾽ ἔδοξεν, ὡς αὐτὴ λέγει ... 527
ἐν σπαργάνοισι παιδὸς ὁρμίσαι δίκην ... 529
αὐτὴ προσέσχε μαστὸν ἐν τὠνείρατι ... 531
ὥστ᾽ ἐν γάλακτι θρόμβον αἵματος σπάσαι. 533

ΟΡ. ... κρίνω δέ τοί νιν ὥστε συγκόλλως ἔχειν.
εἰ γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν χῶρον ἐκλιπὼν ἐμοὶ
οὖφις †επᾶσα σπαργανηπλείζετο†
καὶ μαστὸν ἀμφέχασκ᾽ ἐμὸν θρεπτήριον, 545
θρόμβῳ τ᾽ ἔμειξεν αἵματος φίλον γάλα,
ἡ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ τάρβει τῷδ᾽ ἐπώμωξεν πάθει,
δεῖ τοί νιν, ὡς ἔθρεψεν ἔκπαγλον τέρας,
θανεῖν βιαίως· ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ᾽ ἐγὼ
κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοὔνειρον ἐννέπει τόδε. 550

The hapax ἐκδρακοντωθείς is momentous: now Orestes 'transforms himself into a snake, victim of a snake, and snake-killer'.[39] It is important that Orestes himself perceives Clytemnestra as a snake (δεινῆς ἐχίδνης, 249; μύραινά γ᾽ εἴτ᾽ ἔχιδν᾽ ἔφυ, 994) and that he identifies himself with the

38 Macleod 1982: 130, 142.
39 Heath 1999b: 30.

snake of the dream, since 'the matricidal act requires him to shed something of his humanity'.[40] At the same time, the passage emphasises the kinship (τεκεῖν, παιδός, μαστὸν θρεπτήριον, φίλον γάλα etc.) between him and Clytemnestra, or better, between the two snakes. Whereas in the Agamemnon we had eagles eating hares, or lions eating sheep, we now have a snake killing another snake. This cannibalistic conception classifies tyranny (which is clearly indicated by θανεῖν βιαίως) as doubly unnatural: among the inhuman polities, this is the most corrupt.[41] From Clytemnestra's perspective, only after Aegisthus' murder does she understand her dream; tragically, it was not a dream but a prophesy, and the snake was Orestes: οἳ ᾽γώ, τεκοῦσα τόνδ᾽ ὄφιν ἐθρεψάμην (928).[42]

c. The road towards Democracy

The final stage of this evolutionary course is the gradual foundation of democratic institutions, represented by Athena; for this purpose, it is essential that in the *Eumenides*, alone among Greek tragedies, Athens lacks

40 Rutherford 2014: 1.

41 'King snakes' are indeed cannibalistic. Goldhill 1990: 106–8 notes that in folklore the female viper was said to destroy the male in copulation, and that the children eat their way out of the womb in revenge.

42 For O'Neill 1998, the latter occurrence of the snake imagery is an extension of 896-98 (Clytemnestra exposes her breast to Orestes but fails to persuade him) and a reworking of *Il.* 22.82-83 (the same with Hecuba and Hector) with its continuation in 22.92-93 (Hector lurking like a snake against Achilles). Therefore, he argues, the Homeric intertext foreshadows Orestes' forthcoming attack. I find this fourfold linking somewhat unconvincing; first, because as O'Neill admits, there are big differences on the level of characterisation (Hecuba worries about her son, whereas Clytemnestra about herself; Hector enjoys normal relationships with his family); second, because a three-party scheme (Hecuba – Hector – Achilles) can hardly fit into a two-party scheme (Clytemnestra – Orestes – Clytemnestra) without confusion; third and most important, a lurking snake is dangerous anyway – why does it have to be a Homeric one?

a king.[43] Only Athena is called ἄνασσα (288, 443), which is a rather stereotypical address to goddesses,[44] and only before the establishment of the civil court (482). Many scholars avoid using the term democracy for what Aeschylus presents in this play (neither does he), probably for its oddity within the mythological setting of tragedy as a genre; even though they acknowledge that this is what he propagandises/idealises, instead they use vague politic terms, such as εὐνομία or ideal society.[45] It is noteworthy that not only the judicial power of a supreme court emerges in this new polity, but also election procedures (487) and legislative power assigned to citizens (693).[46] Not an accomplished democracy yet (despite some anachronistic references to the post-Ephialtean Areopagus and the

43 Dodds 1960: 247. Sommerstein 1989 ad 288: 'The function which would naturally be the king's (and which in Aeschylus' own time belonged to the βασιλεύς) of organising and presiding over a homicide trial is assumed by Athena herself.'

44 *Od*. 3.380, 6.175.

45 E.g. Zeitlin 1965: 508: 'the triumph of good persuasion, true justice, love, light, healing, and propitious sacrifice'; Podlecki 1966: 78: 'the new and higher morality of the *polis*'; Macleod 1982: 132: 'an ideal representation of human society... ideal city... goodness achieved'; Winnington-Ingram 1983: 164: 'a triumph of good over evil'; Sommerstein 1989: 183: 'a new kind of Justice'; Goldhill 1986: 30: 'the triumph of the established civic discourse'; Griffith 1995: 64: 'an idealized triumph of legal process over vendetta and blood-feud, the instantiation of a new kind of divine justice on earth, or the crude reassertion of male domination in the home, in the city, and on Mount Olympus'. For Heath 1999b: 17-18 with n. 2, the end of the trilogy marks 'the rise of the polis' as opposed to 'the pre-polis arena', but only in a footnote does he explain that in his study the term polis 'refers to the mature polis, the functioning, democratic institutions that a contemporary of Aeschylus would associate with Athens'.

46 When Athena says κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα (487), it is not a personal, despotic decision but a democratic election, for Athena stands metonymically for the Athenians; Areopagus' judges were the outgoing, elected ἄρχοντες, coming from the higher financial classes – hence βέλτατα. Of course, after 487 BC, the archons where selected by lot rather than election (Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 43.5), but the trilogy is set in a mythological past. Whether Aeschylus wanted to oppose to this reformation is not clear, but we should remember that the *Oresteia* was written thirty years later. Sommerstein (ad loc.) rejects any political significance in these lines.

Argive alliance), this phase of the trilogy represents the phase of the *diallaktai*, and especially of Solon.[47] Athena declares the direction of this government: τὸ μήτ' ἄναρχον μήτε δεσποτούμενον ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν (696-97).

Moving to the animal presentation of this political transition, in the *Eumenides* no animal prevails as an image overall or is symbolically linked to democracy, in contrast to the preceding tragedies and polities. This is not to say that the political aspect of the animal imagery-system now collapses; it is exactly this discrepancy that completes this 'system', through antithesis. Firstly, the distribution of the animal imagery in this tragedy is telling: the majority of bestial images are gathered in the first third of the play, whereas they become rarer after Athena's entrance. Secondly, what changes with Athena is the function of the imagery: it was symbolic in the first half, usually attached to Orestes (111, 246: fawn, 147: beast, 326: hare) and the Erinyes (128: snake, 131, 246: hound, 197: hated flock), but now animals are used literally, and metaphors and similes almost disappear. The only example of metaphorical use of animal imagery in the later part of the Eumenides is when Athena denounces a potential civil war, comparing it to fighting cocks. 'Cockfight gave expression to oligarchic aspirations and democratic fears by translating a competition between equals into a vivid demonstration of domination and enslavement'.[48] This simile is doubly appropriate here, because the bird is domestic (like civil war is internal) and rather seedy-looking (οὐκ ἔρως):[49]

> μήτ' †ἐξελοῦσ'† ὡς καρδίαν ἀλεκτόρων
> ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἀστοῖσιν ἱδρύσῃς Ἄρη
> ἐμφύλιόν τε καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους θρασύν.
> θυραῖος ἔστω πόλεμος, οὐ μόλις παρών,

47 As a 'mediator', Solon introduced some 'most democratic' reforms (*Ath. Pol.* 9.1) and refused to become a tyrant (Solon fr. 34; *Ath. Pol.* 6.3; Plut. *Sol.* 15.1). Similar to the *diallaktēs* is the title *aisymnētēs*, traditionally ascribed to Pittacus. For Aristotle, this is a kind of monarchy that resembles tyranny in being despotic, but kingship in being elective and constitutional (*Pol.* 1285a, 29-30). See McGlew 1993: 79-81, 94-96.

48 Csapo 1993: 26-27.

49 Cf. Pind. *Ol.* 12.14-15.

ἐν ᾧ τις ἔσται δεινὸς εὐκλείας ἔρως·
ἐνοικίου δ' ὄρνιθος οὐ λέγω μάχην. 865

In all other cases, in the later part of the *Eumenides*, animals are just animals. So it is in Orestes' purification sacrifice, σφαγαὶ καθαιμάξωσι νεοθήλου βοτοῦ (450), in Athena's wishes for her citizens' prosperity, καρπόν τε γαίας καὶ βοτῶν ἐπίρρυτον (907) and μῆλὰ εὐθενοῦντα (943), and of course, in her celebratory offerings (1006). In fact, it is here only in the trilogy that animals refer to real animals.[50] This stylistic shift in the animal imagery, from density to rarity and from symbolism to literalism, is meaningful for a political reading: no animal stands for democracy or for its personification, Athena, because in contrast to kingship and uprising, this constitution alone preserves human coexistence. And as a parenthetical warning for the future, civil war within democracy is characterised in the same terms (i.e. in bestial terms) as kingship and tyranny.

Other scholars interpret this shift as a movement from vendetta to law courts, from lawlessness to δίκη, from amorality to morality, from matriarchy to patriarchy, or from pre-polis to polis, rather than from kingship to democracy.[51] Especially the connection of the animal imagery with δίκη might seem inevitable, given the similes κυνὸς δίκην, δίκαν χιμαίρας, βοὸς δίκην, κύκνου δίκη, λαγὼ δίκην etc.[52] The specific

50 For Dolgert 2012, the *Oresteia* does not show (to us moderns) a progression from brutality to civilization, because sacrificing animals is no less problematic or political than sacrificing people. He clarifies that the problem is with 'contemporary theorists' who are 'explicitly praising the Greek tragedies in light of their use of the Greek ritual of blood sacrifice' (269). Indeed, we cannot ascribe such animal-rights concerns to the ancient Greeks – and therefore I confine this interpretation to the footnotes. Nevertheless, his argument still contains a fallacy, that 'the Furies *themselves* are sacrificed' (269), a reading which is only based on 'textual polyvalence' and 'textual ambiguity' (277-78) and no serious classicist, to my knowledge, has proposed – Dolgert himself is a political scientist.

51 See above at footnote 45, for the conclusion of *Eum*. in general; and for the progression of the animal imagery in particular, see Peradotto 1969: 246 n. 32; Heath 1999b: 42-43; Macleod 1982: 138 (on natural imagery, more generally).

52 Introducing comparisons with δίκην ('like', 'in the manner of') is decidedly Aeschylean and overwhelmingly represented in the *Oresteia*, in which ten of the twenty-four comparisons of this form involve animals (Wilson 2006: 188-90). Wilson argues

political reading which I propose here – only as an additional interpretation – is promoted by the fact that the temporal arrangement of the imagery throughout the trilogy is historically consistent: the polities/animals in the trilogy succeed each other in a linear progression that reflects the evolution of Athenian history. Thus, after the fall of Agamemnon/kingship, the lion disappears; there is no reference to it in the *Choephori* and only a random one (non-symbolic) in the *Eumenides*.[53] In the same way, the snake imagery/uprising which prevails in the *Choephori* is fading away in the *Eumenides.* The narrative of the plays is explanatory: kingship (Agamemnon, lion, eagle) is located in the first tragedy and is set in the past, brought up by the chorus as a flashback; uprising (Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, Orestes, snakes) emerges at the end of the *Agamemnon* and is developed in the second tragedy, which is set in the present; democracy (Athena, non-animal) is gradually established in the *Eumenides* and is set in the future (ἔσται δὲ καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν Αἰγέως στρατῷ | αἰεὶ δικαστῶν τοῦτο βουλευτήριον. 683-4). The link with the theme of sacrifice now becomes evident. Iphigenia's sacrifice is located in the past (narrated as a flashback) and executed by Agamemnon: she is the victim of kingship. Cassandra's sacrifice is located in the present and executed by Clytemnestra: she is the victim of tyranny. Eventually, Athena's offerings are a holy sacrifice for the future, which closes definitely a circle of shameless murders; σφαγίων τῶνδ' (1006) is an emphatic formalisation of the establishment of normality, of democracy. Exploiting artfully the animal imagery and the theme of sacrifice in the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus offers a poetic expression of the historic evolution of governments and praises democracy. The other option is a bestial society, or a human jungle.

that, even though the δίκην-similes decrease in the course of the trilogy and thus contribute to the general progress from bestial to human justice, the remembrance of the initial use of δίκη(ν) undermines the happy end. This is a compelling argument, but its verbal premises are rather weak: the connection between the adverbial δίκην and δίκη as justice seems like a pun conceived in English – 'just like a dog' and '*just* like a dog'. I am more inclined towards Garvie 1986 ad 195: 'it is going too far to connect this with the general δίκη-motif of the trilogy'. For the ambiguities of δίκη in the trilogy, see Goldhill 1986: 33-56.

53 λέοντος ἄντρον αἱματορρόφου | οἰκεῖν τοιαύτας εἰκός (*Eum.* 193-94), said by Apollo for the Erinyes.

This animalistic conception of political progress can be seen in dialogue with the tale of Prometheus and Epimetheus in Plato's *Protagoras*. There, the human being, alone among all other species, has been given the *political virtue* (comprising *shame* and *justice*) in order to live in security and prosperity. This is presented as the final of three stages of development (322b-c), just like in the *Oresteia*: first, 'there were no cities; so they [humans] begun to be destroyed by the wild beasts'; subsequently, 'when they came together, they treated each other with injustice, not possessing the art of running a city, so they scattered and began to be destroyed once again'; finally, 'Zeus... sent Hermes bringing conscience and justice to mankind, to be the principles of organization of cities and the bonds of friendship'.[54] One can easily see some correspondence between these three stages and the kingship–tyranny–democracy pattern of the *Oresteia*, such as: (a) the disastrous consequences of the first two conditions and the rightfulness of the third one; (b) the self-destructive nature of the second condition where humans destroy each other; (c) the intervention of the gods for the establishment of the rightful; and (d) the need to separate humans from animals. Of course, it is hard to argue for a direct influence between the two texts, given their temporal distance (the *Oresteia* was composed in 458 and *Protagoras* in the 380s with a dramatic date in the 430s) and their individual political focus (pre-civic to civic organisation in the *Protagoras* and different forms of civic organisation in the *Oresteia*). However, given the prevalence of animal imagery in political philosophy in general, as also exemplified by Aristotle's statement ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον, it becomes evident that Aeschylus' political imagery has intentional philosophical reflections.

54 Trans. Taylor 1976.

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APPENDIX

L= literalism, M= metaphor, S= simile, SL = symbolic literalism (dreams, fables etc.), PE= proverbial expression

Agamemnon

Lines	Speaker	Greek Text (Page 1972)	Translation (Sommerstein 2008)	Trope	Refers to
2-3	Watch-man	ἦν κοιμώμενος στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,	*I've spent my nights on the Atreidae's roof,* *resting on my elbows like a dog*	S	Himself
36-37	Watch-man	βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσσῃ μέγας / βέβηκεν·	*a great ox has stepped upon my tongue*	PE	
48-57	Chorus	μεγάλ' ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη, τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν οἵτ' ἐκπατίοις ἄλγεσι παίδων ὕπατοι λεχέων στροφοδινοῦνται πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι, δεμνιοτήρη πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες· ὕπατος δ' ἀίων ἤ τις Ἀπόλλων ἢ Πὰν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον γόον ὀξυβόαν...	*uttering from their hearts a great cry for war,* *like birds of prey* *who, crazed by grief for their children,* *wheel around high above their eyries,* *having seen the toil of watching over* *their nestlings' beds go for nothing;* *and some Apollo on high,* *or Pan, or Zeus, hearing the loud shrill* *wailing cries of the birds...*	S	Atreidae, for Helen
111-19	Chorus	πέμπει ξὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ' ἐπ' αἶαν, οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νε- ῶν, ὁ κελαινὸς ὅ τ' ἐξόπιν ἀργᾶς, φανέντες ἴ- κταρ μελάθρων χερὸς ἐκ δοριπάλτου παμπρέπτοις ἐν ἕδραισιν, βοσκομένω λαγίναν, ἐρικύμονα φέρματι γένναν,	*(they) were sped with avenging spear and hand* *to the Teucrian land by a fierce warlike bird of omen,* *the king of birds appearing to the kings of ships,* *one black, one white in the hind parts, near the house,* *on the side of the spear-wielding hand,* *settling where they were conspicuous to all,* *eating a scion of the hare tribe, pregnant with many offspring,*	SL	Agamemnon & Menelaus against Troy
124	Chorus	ἐδάη λαγοδαίτας	*(he) recognized [...] the feasters of the hare.*	SL	Agam & Menel
132	Calchas	στόμιον μέγα Τροίας	*the great curb of Troy* [see Raeburn & Thomas 2011 ad loc.]	M	The Greek army

134-38	Chorus (Calchas' words)	οἴκτῳ γὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὰ πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρὸς αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισιν· στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν.	*For holy Artemis, out of pity, bears a grudge against the winged hounds of her Father who slaughtered the wretched hare, litter and all, bifore it could give birth; she loathes the eagles' feast.*	SL	Atreidae killing Trojans/ Iphigenia
140-3	Chorus (Calchas' words)	τόσον περ εὔφρων ἁ καλὰ δρόσοις ἀέπτοις μαλερῶν λεόντων πάντων τ' ἀγρονόμων φιλομάστοις θηρῶν ὀβρικάλοισι τερπνά	*So very kindly disposed is the Fair One to the unfledged seed of fiery lions, and so delightsome to the suckling whelps of all beasts that roam the wild.*	SL	Iphigenia
157	Chorus	ἀπ' ὀρνίθων ὁδίων	*by the birds seen by the way*	L	
232	Chorus	δίκαν χιμαίρας	*like a yearling goat*	S	Iphigenia
394	Chorus	διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν,	*he is a boy chasing a bird on the wing*	PE	Paris
449	Chorus	τάδε σῖγά τις βαΰζει	*That is what they are snarling, under their breath*	M	The Argives
563	Herald	χειμῶνα δ' εἰ λέγοι τις οἰωνοκτόνον,	*And if one were to mention the unendurable cold of winter that killed the birds,*	L	
607	Clytem	δωμάτων κύνα	*A watchdog of the house*	M	Himself
655-57	Herald	αἱ δὲ κεροτυπούμεναι βίᾳ [...] ᾠχονθ' ἅφαντοι ποιμένος κακοῦ στρόβῳ	*They were savagely gashed and disappeared unseen, whirled about by a perverse shepherd.*	M	Greek ships & Poseidon
717-31	Chorus	ἔθρεψεν δὲ λέοντος ἶ- νιν δόμοις ἀγάλακτον οὕ- τως ἀνὴρ φιλόμαστον, ἐν βιότου προτελείοις ἄμερον, εὐφιλόπαιδα, καὶ γεραροῖς ἐπίχαρτον· πολέα δ' ἔσχ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις νεοτρόφου τέκνου δίκαν, φαιδρωπὸς ποτὶ χεῖρα σαί- νων τε γαστρὸς ἀνάγκαις. χρονισθεὶς δ' ἀπέδειξεν ἦ- θος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων· χάριν γὰρ τροφεῦσιν ἀμείβων μηλοφόνοισι σὺν ἄταις δαῖτ' ἀκέλευστος ἔτευξεν·	*Just so a man once* *reared in his home an infant lion,* *fond of the nipple but deprived of its milk,* *in its undeveloped time of life* *tame, well loved by children* *and a delight to the old:* *it was much in his arms* *like a young suckling baby,* *gazing bright-eyed at his hand* *and fawning when hunger pressed it.* *But in time it displayed the character inherited* *from its parents; it returned thanks to its nurturers* *by making, with destructive slaughter of sheep,* *a feast, unbidden.*	LS	Paris-Helen (and Clytemnestra-Agamemnon, Orestes-Clytemnestra, Aegisthus-Agamemnon)
795	Chorus	ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,	*But whoever is a good judge of his flock...*	M	Anyone/ themselves

824-25	Agam	πόλιν διημάθυνεν Ἀργεῖον δάκος, ἵππου νεοσσός,	*A city has been ground into dust by the Argive beast, the offspring of the Horse*	M+L	Greek army Trojan horse
827	Agam	ὠμηστὴς λέων	*A lion, eater of the raw flesh*	M	Greek army
892-93	Clytem	λεπταῖς ὑπαὶ κώνωπος ἐξηγειρόμην ῥιπαῖσι θωύσσοντος	*I kept being awakened by the light buzz of a trumpeting mosquito*	L	
896	Clytem	λέγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἄνδρα τόνδε τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα,	*I shall speak of this man as the watchdog of his homestead*	M	Agamemnon
1050-51	Clytem	ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην ἀγνῶτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,	*Well, unless she has some unintelligible barbarian language, like the swallows do, ...*	PE	Cassandra
1057	Clytem	ἕστηκεν ἤδη μῆλα †πρὸς σφαγὰς† πυρός	*The sheep are already standing, ready for slaughter*	L/M?	Sheep/Agam?
1063	Chorus	τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νεαιρέτου.	*She has the manner of a wild beast just trapped.*	S	Cassandra
1066-67	Chorus	χαλινὸν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἐξαφρίζεσθαι μένος.	*she doesn't yet know how to bear the bridle not till she's foamed out her rage in blood.*	M	Cassandra
1093	Chorus	ἔοικεν εὔρις ἡ ξένη κυνὸς δίκην	*The foreign woman seems to be as keen-scented as a hound*	S	Cassamdra
1125-28	Cassandra	ἄπεχε τῆς βοὸς τὸν ταῦρον· ἐν πέπλοισιν μελαγκέρῳ λαβοῦσα μηχανήματι τύπτει·	*Keep the bull away from the cow! She traps him in the robe, the black-horned contrivance, and strikes.*	M	Agamemnon & Clytemnestra
1142-48	Chorus Cassandra	... οἷά τις ξουθὰ ἀκόρετος βοᾶς, φεῦ, ταλαίναις φρεσὶν Ἴτυν Ἴτυν στένουσ᾽ ἀμφιθαλῆ κακοῖς ἀηδὼν μόρον. ἰὼ ἰὼ λιγείας βίος ἀηδόνος· περέβαλον γάρ οἱ πτεροφόρον δέμας θεοὶ γλυκύν τ᾽ αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·	*...like a vibrant-throated bird wailing insatiably, alas, with a heart fond of grieving, the nightingale lamenting "Itys, Itys!" for a death in which both parents did evil.* *Ió ió, the life of the clear-voiced nightingale! The gods have clothed her with a feathered form and given her a pleasant life with no cause to grieve;*	S	Cassandra for Agamemnon
1224	Cassandra	λέοντ᾽ ἄναλκιν ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον	*a cowardly [lion]*	M	Aegisthus
1228-29	Cassandra	οὐκ οἶδεν οἵα γλῶσσα μισητῆς κυνός, λέξασα κἀκτείνασα φαιδρόνους δίκην,	*He does not know what kind of bite comes after the fawning tongue of that hateful bitch and the cheerful inclination of her ear.*	S	Clytemnestra
1233	Cassandra	ἀμφίσβαιναν ἢ Σκύλλαν τινὰ	*An amphisbaena, or some Scylla*	S	Clytemnestra
1245	Chorus	τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀκούσας ἐκ δρόμου πεσὼν τρέχω.	*I am running, having fallen out of the chase (= I'm running like a hound that's lost the scent).*	M	Chorus

1258-59	Cassandra	αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσίᾳ,	*This is the two-footed lioness, sleeping with a wolf while the noble lion was away,*	M	Clytem, Aegist, Agam
1297-98	Chorus	πῶς θελάτου βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς;	*How comes it that you are walking boldly towards it like an ox driven by god to the altar?*	S	Cassandra
1310	Chorus	τόδ' ὄζει θυμάτων ἐφεστίων.	*That's the smell of sacrifices at the hearth.*	L/M?	Sheep/Agam?
1316	Cassandra	οὗτοι δυσοίζω θάμνον ὡς ὄρνις φόβῳ,	*I am not shying away out of my empty terror, as a bird does from a bush*	S	Herself
1382	Clytem	ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,	*an endless net, as one does for fish*	S	Agamemnon
1415-16	Clytem	ὡσπερεὶ βοτοῦ μόρον, μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,	*treating her death as if it were the death of one beast out of large flocks of well-fleeced sheep*	S	Iphigenia
1444-45	Clytem	ἡ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκην τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον	*she, after singing, swan-like, her final dirge of death,*	S	Cassandra
1473	Chorus	δίκαν / κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεῖσ' ἐκνόμως ὕμνον ὑμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται < >.	*In the manner of a loathsome raven, it glories* *in tunelessly singing a song <of joy>*	S	Daimon/ Clytemnestra
1492, 1516	Chorus	κεῖσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῷδ'	*Here you lie in this spider's web*	M	Clytemnestra
1631-32	Aegisthus	σὺ δ' ἐξορίνας νηπίοις ὑλάγμασιν ἄξῃ· κρατηθεὶς δ' ἡμερώτερος φανῇ.	*if you anger me with your childish barkings you'll be led off under arrest—and once under control, you'll show yourself a bit tamer!*	M	Chorus
1639-41	Aegisthus	τὸν δὲ μὴ πειθάνορα ζεύξω βαρείαις, οὗ τι μὴ σειραφόρον κριθῶντα πῶλον,	*Anyone who will not obey his master I will yoke with heavy straps—he certainly won't be a young trace-horse high on barley;*	M	Chorus
1660	Clytem	δαίμονος χηλῇ βαρείᾳ δυστυχῶς πεπληγμένοι.	*wretchedly struck by the heavy talon of the evil spirit.*	M	The Argives
1671-72	Chorus Clytem	κόμπασον θαρσῶν, ἀλέκτωρ ὥστε θηλείας πέλας. μὴ προτιμήσῃς ματαίων τῶνδ' ὑλαγμάτων·	*Brag away confidently, like a cock standing next to his hen!* *Don't take any notice of these empty barkings.*	S M	Aegisthus Chorus

Choephori

Lines	Speaker	Greek Text (Page 1972)	Translation (Sommerstein 2008)	Trope	Refers to
247	Orestes	ἰδοῦ δὲ γένναν εὖνιν αἰετοῦ πατρὸς	*Behold the orphan brood of the eagle father*	M	Agamemnon
249	Orestes	δεινῆς ἐχίδνης	*fearsome viper*	M	Clytemnestra
250-51	Orestes	οὐ γὰρ ἐντελεῖς θήραν πατρῴαν προσφέρειν σκηνήμασιν.	*for they are not yet full-grown so as to be able to bring home to the nest the prey their father hunted.*	M	Himself & Electra
256	Orestes	νεοσσοὺς τούσδ' ἀποφθείρας	*if you allow us nestlings to perish*		
[275]277	Orestes	ἀποχρημάτοισι ζημίαις ταυρούμενον	[enraged like a bull by the loss of my possessions]	M	Orestes
421-22	Electra	λύκος γὰρ ὥστ' ὠμόφρων ἄσαντος ἐκ ματρός ἐστι θυμός.	*for like a savage-hearted wolf, we have a rage,caused by our mother, that is past fawning.*	S	Herself
446	Nurse	μυχῷ δ' ἄφερκτος πολυσινοῦς κυνὸς δίκαν	*shut up in the bowels of the house, like a dangerous dog*	S	Herself
501	Electra	ἰδὼν νεοσσοὺς τούσδ' ἐφημένους τάφῳ	*see these nestlings perched on your tomb*	M	Herself & Orestes
527	Chorus	τεκεῖν δράκοντ' ἔδοξεν	*she imagined she gave birth to a snake*	SL	Orestes
544	Orestes	οὔφις †επᾶσα σπαργανηπλείζετο†	*the snake[...]found a welcoming home in my swaddling clothes*		
549	Orestes	ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ' ἐγὼ	*I become the serpent*		
601	Chorus	κνωδάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν	*both among beasts and among men*	SL	Anyone
621	Chorus	ἁ κυνόφρων	*the woman with a bitch's heart!*	M	Skyla
753-54	Cilissa	τὸ μὴ φρονοῦν γὰρ ὡσπερεὶ βοτὸν τρέφειν ἀνάγκη,	*A child without intelligence must be reared like an animal*	S	Orestes
794-95	Chorus	πῶλον εὖνιν ζυγέντ' ἐν ἅρμασιν	*the orphaned colt yoked to the chariot*	M	Orestes
924-25	Cytem. Orestes	φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας. τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς δὲ πῶς φύγω παρεὶς τάδε;	*Beware your mother's wrathful hounds!* *But how am I to escape my fathers', if I fail to do this?*	M	Erinyes
928	Clytem	οἳ 'γώ, τεκοῦσα τόνδ' ὄφιν ἐθρεψάμην·	*Ah me, this is the snake I bore and nourished!*	M	Orestes
937-38	Chorus	ἔμολε δ' ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος διπλοῦς λέων, διπλοῦς Ἄρης.	*and now to the house of Agamemnon there has come a twofold lion, a twofold spirit of violence*	M	Orestes & Pylades
962	Chorus	μέγα τ' ἀφῃρέθη ψάλιον οἴκων	*the great curb has been taken away from the house*	M	Aegisthus & Clyt
994	Orestes	μύραινά γ' εἴτ' ἔχιδν' ἔφυ,	*if she were a morsy-eel or a viper*	SL	Clytemnestra
1047	Chorus	δυοῖν δρακόντοιν εὐπετῶς τεμὼν κάρα.	*deftly cutting off the heads of that pair of serpents*	M	Aegisthus & Clyt
1050	Orestes	πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν	*thickly wreathed with serpents*	L	Erinyes
1054	Orestes	σαφῶς γὰρ αἵδε μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνες.	*these are plainly my mother's wrathful hounds!*	M	Erinyes

Eumenides

Lines	Speaker	Greek Text (Page 1972)	Translation (Sommerstein 2008)	Trope	Refers to
23	Pythia	φίλορνις	*loved by birds*	L	Parnassus
26	Pythia	λαγὼ δίκην Πενθεῖ καταρράψας μόρον.	*netted Pentheus in death like a hare*	S	Pentheus
69-70	Apollo	αἷς οὐ μείγνυται θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε	*with whom no god ever holds any intercourse, nor man nor beast either*	SL	Anyone
111-13	Ghost of Clytem	ὁ δ' ἐξαλύξας οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην, καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων ὥρουσεν, ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα.	*and he has got away, escaped like a hunted fawn, and done it, moreover, by jumping lightly right out of the net, making big mocking eyes at you.*	S	Orestes
128	Ghost of Clytem	δεινῆς δρακαίνης ἐξεκήραναν μένος.	*sapped the strength of the fearsome serpent!*	M	Erinyes/Herself
131	Ghost of Clytem	ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, κλαγγαίνεις δ' ἅπερ κύων μέριμναν οὔποτ' ἐκλείπων φόνου.	*You are chasing a beast in your dreams, and giving tongue like a hound who can never desist from thinking of blood.*	S	Erinyes
147	Chorus	ἐξ ἀρκύων πέπτωκεν, οἴχεται δ' ὁ θήρ·	*He's slipped out of the net – the beast is gone!*	M	Orestes
181	Apollo	πτηνὸν ἀργηστὴν ὄφιν	*a winged flashing snake*	M	Apollo's arrow
193	Apollo	λέοντος ἄντρον αἱματορρόφου	*in the den of some blood-swilling lion*	L	
196-97	Apollo	χωρεῖτ' ἄνευ βοτῆρος αἰπολούμεναι· ποίμνης τοιαύτης δ' οὔτις εὐφιλὴς θεῶν.	*Off you go, and wander like a herd with no herdsman! None of the gods is friendly to a flock like you.*	M	Erinyes
246	Chorus	τετραυματισμένον γὰρ ὡς κύων νεβρὸν	*Like a hound on the trail of a wounded fawn*	S	Orestes
283	Orestes	καθαρμοῖς ἠλάθη χοιροκτόνοις	*it was expelled by means of the purification-sacrifice of a young pig.*	L	
325-26	Chorus	τόνδ' ἀφαιρούμενος / πτῶκα	*snatching away from me this hare*	M	Orestes
450	Orestes	σφαγαὶ καθαιμάξωσι νεοθηλοῦς βοτοῦ	*the slaughter of a young sucking beast*	L	
452	Orestes	καὶ βοτοῖσι καὶ ῥυτοῖς πόροις	*both by animal victims and by flowing streams.*	L	
644	Apollo	ὦ παντομισῆ κνώδαλα, στύγη θεῶν,	*You utterly loathsome beasts, hated by the gods!*	M	Erinyes
660	Apollo	τίκτει δ' ὁ θρῴσκων	*The parent is he who mounts* [see Sommerstein 1989 ad loc.]	SL	Any man
861	Athena	ὡς καρδίαν ἀλεκτόρων	*the hearts [...] of fighting-cocks*	S	Athenians
866	Athena	ἐνοικίου δ' ὄρνιθος οὐ λέγω μάχην.	*I make no account of the fighting of a cock on its own midden.*	M	Athenians
907	Athena	καρπόν τε γαίας καὶ βοτῶν ἐπίρρυτον	*and for the fruitfulness of the citizens' land and livestock to thrive in abundance*	L	
943-5	Chorus	μῆλά τ' εὐθενοῦντα Πὰν ξὺν διπλοῖσιν ἐμβρύοις	*may their flocks flourish, and may Pan* *rear them to bear twin young*	L	

		τρέφοι χρόνῳ τεταγμένῳ·	*at the appointed time;*		
1001	Chorus	Παλλάδος δ’ ὑπὸ πτεροῖς	*under the wings of Pallas*	M	Athena
1006	Athena	σφαγίων τῶνδ’	*these solemn sacrifices*	L	