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THE LAST BATH OF AGAMEMNON

Most of the work done on tracing persistent themes and images in the *Oresteia* has failed to take account of the associations of the theme or image for the original audience.[1] Some of these associations are with certain highly emotional rituals. In evoking the ritual the poet evokes also some at least of the emotion which generally accompanies its performance. I will take here as an example the association of the manner of Agamemnon's death, the fatal bath and the fatal robe, with the ritual of the funeral. This will I hope help to enrich our own emotional reaction to Aeschylus' presentation of this event, as well as to shed light on certain problematic passages.[2]

In Aeschylus Agamemnon is killed while being bathed by Clytemnestra. Fraenkel comments that 'the whole conception of Agamemnon's murder in the *Oresteia* rests on premises that are characteristically "Homeric". In the world of Epic, though not in Athens, women in high society do occasionally themselves attend a man in his bath'.[3] But in Homer Agamemnon was killed δειπνίσσας ὥς τίς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνηι, and his companions were killed like swine at a festive meal.[4] And this suggests that in the lost *Nostoi* the killing of Agamemnon was described in terms of a sacrifice of an animal. This version would have been highly appropriate to tragedy, in which killing is generally presented as sacrifice;[5] indeed, even the killing of Agamemnon in the bath in Aeschylus is described as a sacrifice (1118, 1433, 1504).

Furthermore, δειπνίσσας in Homer may be a trace of the version preserved in Hyginus[6] and Servius,[7] in which Agamemnon is killed while a participant in the sacrifice of animals. We might expect a sacrifice and consequent banquet to mark Agamemnon's return. Indeed, Clytemnestra in Aeschylus, on entering the palace to kill Agamemnon, says that she has to go in because there are sheep standing at the altar waiting to be sacrificed (1056–7; cf. 1310). This is the sacrifice to which she invites Kassandra, ἐπεί σ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀμηνίτως δόμοις | κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων, πολλῶν μέτα | δούλων σταθεῖσαν κτησίου βωμοῦ πέλας (1036–8), where the irony, missed by the commentators, is that the sacrificial victim too was sprinkled with the χέρνιβες:[8] the killing of Kassandra, as of Agamemnon, is presented as a sacrifice.[9]

[1] E.g. T. N. Gantz in 'The Fires of the Oresteia' (in *JHS* 97 [1977], 28–38) virtually ignores the mysteries (cf. G. Thomson, *The Oresteia*[2] (Prague, 1966), on *Ag.* 1 (cf. 20–1), 522, *Cho.* 935–71). Other typical treatments are e.g. J. J. Peradotto, 'Some Patterns of Nature Imagery', in *AJP* 85 (1964), 378–93; Anne Lebeck, *The Oresteia* (1971); O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977), 314 f.; C. W. Macleod, 'Clothing in the Oresteia' in *Maia* 27 (1975), 201–3.

[2] I would like to thank David and Su Braund, Margaret Alexiou, Peter Levi, Ewen Bowie, Pat Easterling, and Oliver Taplin for their comments on this paper.

[3] On *Ag.* 1382; that this is an anachronism in Aesch. is confirmed by R. Ginouvès in his comprehensive *Balaneutike* (Paris, 1962), 162 n. 4.

[4] *Od.* 11. 411–5 (and 4. 535); also S. *El.* 203; Sen. *Ag.* 875 ff.; Pausan. 2. 16. 6; Philostr. *Im.* 2. 10; Juv. 8. 217.

[5] W. Burkert in *GRBS* 7 (1966), 116.

[6] 117: Hyginus was familiar with material from lost epic (Rose's edition, p. ix).

[7] Servius auctus on V. *Aen.* 11. 267, where Ag. is killed *prima inter limina*: perhaps in V.'s source he was sacrificing there (cf. Pl. *Rep.* 328c); and it may be relevant that there is evidence that in 6th and 5th century Attica at least the body was laid out in the porch (cf. Dem. 43. 62; Phot. s.v. πρόθεσις; schol. Ar. *Lys.* 611; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 100?; J. Boardman in *ASBA* 50 [1955], 55–8), as sometimes also, especially after a violent death, in modern Greece (N. G. Polites, *Laographika Symmeikta* III [1931], 328).

[8] Cf. e.g. E. *IA* 675, 1513–8, *IT* 705. D. W. Lucas in *PCPS* 15 (1969), 60–8 sees the same allusion in ἐπισπένδειν νεκρῷ (Ag.'s) at *Ag.* 1395.

[9] *Ag.* 1118, 1297–8, 1433, 1504.

Our expectation then must be that Kassandra and Agamemnon are to be sacrificed while participating in the sacrifice, as perhaps in the epic version. In the same way in Euripides Aigisthos is sacrificed while sacrificing and so is Clytemnestra.[10]

Why then did Aeschylus abandon the version, traditional and highly apt for tragedy, of the killing (expressed perhaps as sacrifice) of Agamemnon at the banquet (perhaps while himself sacrificing)? The slightly greater degree of vulnerability, and perhaps of dishonour, attaching to a victim in the bath seems sufficient to explain neither the switch to this unusual and remarkable location nor the manner in which Aeschylus, whether or not he invented the version,[11] returns insistently throughout the trilogy to its details.[12] The bath, and the cloak thrown over the victim, acquire a notoriety which may make us take them for granted, but should in fact suggest a significance additional to convenience for the murderers and dishonour for the victim. Is there anything apt about this manner of Agamemnon's death?

In Homer the bathing, anointing, and dressing of living men by women is described in a manner almost identical to the bathing, anointing, and dressing by the women of the dead Hektor.[13] The Attic male of the fifth century B.C., on the other hand, was not apparently bathed by women during his life; but his corpse was washed and dressed by his female relatives.[14] Hence the ease with which Euripides envisages the bath that Clytemnestra gives the living Agamemnon as the washing of his corpse, λουτρὰ πανύστατα.[15] As elsewhere,[16] Euripides makes explicit what is powerfully implicit in Aeschylus. Consider the foreboding αἰνίγματα (*Ag.* 1112) uttered by Kassandra (1107 ff.):[17]

> ἰὼ τάλαινα, τόδε γὰρ τελεῖς;
> τὸν ὁμοδέμνιον πόσιν
> λουτροῖσι φαιδρύνασα, πῶς φράσω τέλος;
> τάχος γὰρ τόδ' ἔσται· προτείνει δὲ χεῖρ' ἐκ
> χερὸς ὀρέγματα.

προτείνει κτλ. has been taken to refer to the repeated blows of the murder. Certainly, one is reminded of the repeated self-inflicted blows of the mourning women at *Cho.* 426 (ἐπασσυτεροτριβῆ τὰ χερὸς ὀρέγματα). But the murder-blow (τύπτει) is first sensed by Kassandra at 1128. προτείνει κτλ., however sinister, must refer to the bath. Kassandra is horrified at the details of an apparently commonplace and innocent event, the bath, because she envisages it, however obscurely, as the washing of Agamemnon's corpse. The handling of the body (χεῖρ' ἐκ χερὸς) expresses the

[10] E. *El.* 839–41 (e.g. with τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω cf. e.g. Burkert in *GRBS* 7 [1966], 107), 1143, 1141, 1222 ff. The context of killing in tragic versions of this story tends to be grimly apt: e.g. A. *Cho.* 904 (cf. 571–6); S. *El.* 1401, 1495–6.

[11] More likely he did not, for the fatal bath is a theme of myth (Pelias, Minos and the daughters of Cocalus). Or was the 'bath' originally a coffin (G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek epic*[4], 210; cf. *Deuteronomy* 3. 11), or a σφαγεῖον (Duke in *CJ* 49 [1953–4], 327)? The origin of the theme is a separate question from Aeschylus' use of it, despite *Cho.* 999.

[12] *Ag.* 1109, 1115, 1126–9, 1382, 1492, 1540, 1580, 1611; *Cho.* 491–3, 981–4, 1011–3, 1071; *Eum.* 460–1, 633–5.

[13] *Il.* 24. 587–8; *Od.* 3. 464–5, 4. 49–50, 10. 364–5, etc. For the washing and dressing of the dead Sarpedon and of the dead Patroklos see *Il.* 16. 669, 18. 350.

[14] S. *Ant.* 901, *El.* 1139, *OC* 1602–3; E. *Pho.* 1319, 1667, *Tro.* 1150–2; Pl. *Phd.* 115a; Dem. 43. 62; cf. n. 21. For the persistence of this practice into present-day Greece see e.g. J. du Boulay in *Man* 17 (1982), 224.

[15] *El.* 157, *Or.* 367; cf. e.g. *Hec.* 611.

[16] See e.g. Thomson on A. *Cho.* 794–9; or with *Ag.* 1441–2 (see n. 34 below) cf. E. *Tro.* 445, 313, 357–8.

[17] The question mark after τελεῖς may be unnecessary. ὀρέγματα Hermann for ὀρεγμένα.

intimacy between husband and wife (*τὸν ὁμοδέμνιον . . . φαιδρύνασα*). But it is the handling of the body (*αὐτόχειρ, ἐν φίλαισι χερσίν*) that is stressed by Antigone and by Elektra[18] in the washing of the beloved corpse. Indeed, it is precisely because she has performed *αὐτόχειρ* the funeral washing and dressing, and poured libations at their tombs, that Antigone expects to come as *φίλη* to her father, mother and brother.[19] Aristotle recommended that tragic *πάθη* should be *ἐν φιλίαις*, such as when one member of a family kills another (*Poet.* 1453b19). It is a refinement of this principle that such an intimate and important expression of *φιλία* as the washing of the corpse should here in the *Agamemnon* become a means of expressing absolute hostility.

The bathed corpse in funeral ritual was adorned with its *κόσμος*: a crown (or headband) and a long garment.[20] Sometimes the washing and dressing was performed before death. Socrates bathed before drinking the hemlock 'to save the women the trouble'. Alcestis washed and dressed herself just before dying. And Oedipus, before his final disappearance, was washed and dressed by his daughters.[21] The washing and dressing of Agamemnon is different in two respects. Firstly, the death it precedes involves bloodshed. Consider the words of the chorus

1455 . . . *Ἑλένα,*
1459 *νῦν* [*δὲ*] *τελέαν πολύμναστον ἐπηνθίσω*
[*δι'*] *αἶμ' ἄνιπτον . . .*

now thou hast crowned thyself with the last and perfect garland unforgettable, blood not to be washed away.

This is the text and translation for which Fraenkel argues in his commentary, taking the blood to be Agamemnon's. My only disagreement is with the (traditional) translation 'not to be washed away'. In fact *ἄνιπτον* means 'unwashed'. The chorus have before their eyes the body of Agamemnon in its funeral robe (1492). The unwashed blood on the robe (cf. *Cho.* 1012 f.) is an anomaly, expressing the anomalous relationship between husband and wife: normally blood would be washed away in the funeral bath. And so the chorus are shocked into seeing the red blood as the flowers (1459 *ἐπηνθίσω*) of the consummating (*τελέαν*) funeral *στέφανος*, imagined also as a triumphal *στέφανος* for Helen. If the association of blood with the *στέφανος* was a *τόπος* of the lament for a violent death,[22] and so an idea already familiar to the audience, this would explain the briefness with which Aeschylus can allude to it here. Specific to this situation, though, is that the *στέφανος* of blood is presumably the only one that Agamemnon will receive. Not washed away, it is permanent and unforgettable.

Secondly, Agamemnon is of course unaware of his impending death. His bath, and the cloak thrown over him after it, not only precede his death, they help to bring it about. Similarly in the *Bacchae*, Pentheus is unaware that the maenadic *κόσμος* put

[18] S. *Ant.* 900, *El.* 1138 – both expressions in emphatic position; cf. e.g. E. *Med.* 1034, *Su.* 175, *Hec.* 50; S. *Aj.* 1410.

[19] *Ant.* 898–902; cf. also 73, 99, 524, and n. 35 below. Hence *φίλαι τε κοὐ φίλαι* at E. *El.* 1230–1, and even *φίλως* (deeply ironical) at A. *Ag.* 1581 (cf. 1491–2). Also cf. *ἀγαπᾶν, ἀγαπάζειν* of washing and dressing the dead (E. *Su.* 764, *Hel.* 937, *Pho.* 1327 with schol.).

[20] Previously unworn? See esp. *Od.* 2. 97–100; E. *Alc.* 160; M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), 27, 39.

[21] Pl. *Phd.* 115a; E. *Alc.* 159–61; S. *OC* 1602–3; cf. also *HF* 332–4, 526, 549, 702, *Hec.* 432; S. *Aj.* 654 *εἶμι πρός τε λουτρὰ* may well be ambiguous (cf. *Ant.* 1199 f.).

[22] See n. 32 below; cf. Bion 1. 35, 41, 66, 75; also E. *Cyc.* 517–8, *Tro.* 564–5, *Hec.* 126–7.

on him (*προσάψων*) by Dionysos is his funerary dress:[23] *κόσμον ὅνπερ εἰς Ἅιδου λαβὼν ἄπεισι* (*Ba.* 857–8). Much of the dramatic power of the subsequent 'robing scene' would have derived, for the original audience, from the funerary aspect of Pentheus' 'disguise'.[24] A similar horror attaches to the change of clothes in Seneca's version of the murder of Agamemnon, which may derive from Ion of Chios:[25] Kassandra envisages Clytemnestra telling Agamemnon to take off his oriental costume, and (882–3) 'induere potius coniugis fidae manu | textos amictus – horreo atque animo tremo, etc.'. And then 'mortifera vinctum perfidae tradit neci | induta vestis' (887–8).

Dionysos puts on Pentheus the *κόσμον ὅνπερ εἰς Ἅιδου λαβὼν ἄπεισι*. And the lethal crown sent by Medea to Jason's bride is called *τὸν Ἅιδα κόσμον* (E. *Med.* 980): that is to say, just as the unmarried were buried in wedding *κόσμος*,[26] so here the bridal crown is envisaged as a funerary one. In Euripides Herakles arrives to find his family dressed in their funerary attire, and says (*HF* 562) *οὐ ῥίψεθ' Ἅιδου τάσδε περιβολὰς κόμης . . .;* In all cases of a noun with the genitive of *Ἅιδης* the noun refers either to a feature of Hades (e.g. *δόμος*) or to something already associated with Hades (e.g. funerary *κόσμος*, song). And so an expression such as *Ἅιδου μητέρα* (transmitted at *Ag.* 1234) is corrupt.[27] Consider, on the other hand, the second stage of Kassandra's vision of Agamemnon's bath: *τί τόδε φαίνεται; ἢ δίκτυόν τί γ' Ἅιδου;* (*Ag.* 1114–5). Here the phrase *δίκτυον Ἅιδου* is above suspicion, partly because of course a net may be lethal, but also because this particular *δίκτυον* is in fact the robe thrown over Agamemnon after his bath. Made vulnerable by his funeral bath, Agamemnon is then trapped by his funeral robe. His dead body will later in the play be seen wrapped in it (1492, 1580), with the bath now acting as a bier.[28] Here, though, the body is still alive, and so the *κόσμος Ἅιδου* is a *δίκτυον Ἅιδου*.[29]

τί τόδε φαίνεται; The object is seen only dimly by Kassandra, and she senses its nature as 'a net of Hades'. Her next phrase, *ἀλλ' ἄρκυς ἡ ξύνευνος, ἡ ξυναιτία φόνου*, apparently identifies net and wife. But because the net is also the robe, this has puzzled the commentators,[30] some of whom have been driven to giving *ξύνευνος* a reference it has nowhere else, namely to a robe (e.g. 'vestis dormitoria' Schutz). Of course Kassandra is using riddling language (1112 *αἰνίγματα*) to express what is obscure even to her. It is obscure, but it is becoming clearer. *ἀλλά* (1116) introduces a clearer perception of the net. '*ἡ ξύνευνος* is the net.' What does this mean? The association of net with *εὐνή* might suggest that it is a robe, and indeed a robe for the dead man

[23] Seaford in *CQ* 31 (1981), 260–1.

[24] art. cit. n. 23, 258–61; Maenads in the underworld: e.g. *Arch. Anz.* 1950, 170–1; *CIL* III 686; headband of the dead (cf. *Ba.* 833): D. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (1971), 364.

[25] R. J. Tarrant, *Seneca Agamemnon* (Cambridge, 1976), 11.

[26] Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 5, 27, 39, 120.

[27] Despite the defences by Fraenkel and Denniston–Page. See Thomson *ad loc.*, who suggests *μαῖαν* (the largest of the crustaceans, which preyed on its own kind, and might be glossed *μητέρα*). There is much to be said also for *μαινάδ'* (Weil): cf. E., *Hec.* 1077, A. *Cho.* 698 *βακχείας κακῆς* (surely *about* Clyt.); Maenads occur in Hades (n. 24 above), are known as *θυιάδες* (e.g. A. *Sept.* 498: cf. *θύουσαν* here), and might tear apart their own kin. For vase paintings of a Dionysiac Clyt. see A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *Dramen des Aischylos auf Westgriechischen Vasen* (1978), 91, 99.

[28] *δροίτη* (1540) can mean both: cf. *Cho.* 999, *Eum.* 633; Parthen. fr. 44; etc.

[29] Similarly Night, from her stock of embroidered robes (*κόσμοι*), threw a net over Troy (*Ag.* 355–8).

[30] E.g. Fraenkel considers 'referring *ξύνευνος* to the use of the garment later for covering Agamemnon's dead body' as a possible 'solution of the puzzle', but rejects this as too far in the future. But the robe *is* the funerary one (and so *ξύνευνος*).

on his εὐνή,[31] here with the unusual role of trapping as well as covering him (ξυναιτία φόνου). This suspicion is confirmed at 1126–7. But ἡ ξύνευνος must also suggest the wife in her role as bedfellow. This ambiguity suggests a close association between bedfellow and bed-robe. To what purpose? In order to evoke and exploit an ambiguity inherent in this very association. A wife sleeps on a εὐνή with her living husband under a robe, and when he dies she puts a robe over his body on a εὐνή. Bed and robe play a central role in the intimate relationship between husband and wife not only in life but also in death. Their role in life is evoked here by the word ξύνευνος: the robe is put over her living husband by his bedfellow. But in fact its role is funerary, to trap as well as to cover her still living husband: ἄρκυς ἡ ξύνευνος, ἡ ξυναιτία φόνου.

It seems likely that here, as elsewhere in Aeschylus,[32] the brief and elliptical wording was easier for the audience than it is for us, because it evoked a commonplace: the association of death with marriage, of the tomb with the bridal chamber, of the grave or bier with the marriage-bed.[33] This association thrives on the practice of not using a special terminology (e.g. our 'shroud' or 'bier') to set apart the equipment of the funeral. The dead Adonis, for example, is to be placed in his *bed-robes* on Aphrodite's bed (Bion 1. 70–3). And εὐνή can mean 'bier' (e.g. E. *Su.* 766) or marriage-bed (see especially S. *Ant.* 1224). Later in the play it seems that Clytemnestra evokes this commonplace, bitterly, when she refers to the dead Kassandra, who is probably lying alongside the dead Agamemnon, as κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε . . . πιστὴ ξύνευνος.[34] Here at 1116 death and marriage are associated not, as is generally the context of the commonplace, because of death before marriage, but because the man is killed by his wife. A wife shares a man's εὐνή. She also dresses his beloved corpse, an act no less intimate than its washing. The Greeks killed at Troy had to forgo this: οὐ δάμαρτος ἐν χεροῖν | πέπλοις συνεστάλησαν.[35]

The third stage of Kassandra's vision (1125 ff.) has also puzzled the commentators:

> ἀᾶ, ἰδοὺ ἰδού. ἄπεχε τῆς βοὸς
> τὸν ταῦρον. ἐν πέπλοισιν
> μελαγκέρωι λαβοῦσα μηχανήιατι
> τύπτει. κτλ.

The previous hint that the net is a robe[36] is here confirmed. μελαγκέρωι is a variant in the M scholia, FG and (originally) M having the accusative. T. C. W. Stinton[37] has made a detailed case for reading μελαγκέρω (genitive), referring to 'Clytemnestra's

[31] εὐνή (or δροίτη, etc.: n. 28) as 'bier': e.g. E. *Su.* 766; *Il.* 18. 352–3; n. 40 below; Ag. also has a εὐνή below: A. *Cho.* 318; S. *El.* 436. The body in its robe might be covered by another robe (ἐπίβλημα), but this distinction plays no part here.

[32] See above, and n. 22; Thomson on *Cho.* 935–71; etc.

[33] See e.g. S. *Ant.* 891, 1224–5, 1236–41 (cf. A. *Ag.* 1440–2, *Cho.* 976!); *AP* 507a (attributed to Simonides); Bion 1. 70–3; etc. (see M. Alexiou and P. Dronke in *Studi Medievali* 12. 2 [1971], 825–41); for the present day see L. M. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Modern Greece* (1982), 74–91. For similar *syntax* cf. e.g. Ach. Tat. 1. 13 τάφος μέν σοι τέκνον ὁ θάλαμος (marriage-chamber).

[34] *Ag.* 1441–2; cf. *Cho.* 976; E. *Tro.* 445; S. *Ant.* 1240–1. And of course the bath was common to wedding and funeral.

[35] E. *Tro* 377–8 (cf. 390); cf. E. *El.* 1230–1 and n. 19 above; for the comforting prospect of this kind of attention see E. *Hec.* 430 ζῆι καὶ θανούσης ὅμμα συγκλήσει τὸ σόν.

[36] The robe is called πέπλος (here, *Eum.* 635) and φᾶρος (*Cho.* 1011–3, *Eum.* 634). πέπλος in Aesch. and Soph. (and also perhaps in Homer) refers only to barbarian, female, ceremonial, or solemn robes; in Eur. it is the regular word for the attire of the dead, besides being used for ordinary male and female dress. φᾶρος is a broad cloak worn by the living and the dead.

[37] in *PCPhS* 21 (1975), 82–95. W. Burkert (in *GRBS* 7 [1966], 120) refers to the bronze-age Vaphio cup, and to the possibility of Ag.'s death being connected with a ritual βουφονία.

cow-guise', with an (obscure) secondary reference to Death: 'taking him in robes, the (a, her) black-horned one's trap, she smites...'. If this is right, it coheres with our interpretation of the passage as a whole: μελαγκέρω μηχανήματι would restate the idea implicit in 1115 δίκτυον Ἅιδου (the κόσμος Ἅιδου in an active role), and develop the idea of the actual participation of Death,[38] to whom Clytemnestra is assimilated via τῆς βοός and μελαγκέρω (cf. e.g. 1500). Kassandra's vision passes from the bath to the net (robe), and then to the person wielding the robe.

After the murder the robe is called by Clytemnestra an ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον...πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν (1382). The latter phrase is of course one of several indications of the wealth of the household (e.g. 949). But this does not mean that it is not designed to associate the rich robe, as a funeral garment, with Πλούτων: cf. e.g. S. *OT* 30 Ἅιδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται. The choice of ἀμφίβληστρον (from all the words meaning net) seems designed to suggest ἀμφιβάλλειν, the verb used in Homer for dressing the guest after his bath (as Fraenkel points out), but also for dressing the corpse.[39] The sense of encompassment in ἀμφίβληστρον is strengthened by ἄπειρον: an effective net has for the victim no πέρας by which to make his escape.[40] Normally the dress of Greek males, in the fifth century at least, did not reach the feet. That is why the (funerary) maenadic πέπλοι of Pentheus are specified as ποδήρεις (*Ba.* 833; cf. 936–8). And as for the dead Patroklos, (*Il.* 18. 352–3) ἐν λεχέεσσι δὲ θέντες ἑανῶι λιτὶ κάλυψαν | ἐς πόδας ἐκ κεφαλῆς, καθύπερθε δὲ φάρεϊ λευκῶι. Representations survive of the robe or robes wrapped around hands and feet of the corpse, and sometimes even covering the head.[41] Like the net, the funeral robe encloses. A fragment (526) of Sophocles' *Polyxena*, χιτών σ' ἄπειρος ἐνδυτήριος κακῶν, almost certainly a prophecy of Agamemnon's death, seems to allude to funerary dress, because ἐνδυτήριος implies solemnity.[42] The σε was probably governed by e.g. ἀμμένει: compare Polymestor's prophecy of Agamemnon's death (E. *Hec.* 1281), φόνια λουτρά σ' ἀμμένει, in which φόνια λουτρά makes surface sense only by suggesting the funeral bath for the bloody corpse of the warrior; what it really means Agamemnon will of course discover too late.

The horror of the murderous funeral dress persists throughout the trilogy. Wrapped around the dead Agamemnon it is an ἀράχνης ὕφασμα and ὑφαντοὶ πέπλοι Ἐρινύων.[43] In the *Choephoroi*, when Elektra attempts to arouse her father by

[38] Cf. E. *Alc.* 74–6, *Med.* 1110 f.; Phrynich. fr. 3; A. fr. 255N², S. *Aj.* 854, *Phil.* 797; Aesop, *Fab.* 90H; Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 89. 4; *SEG* 1. 454. 2; etc.; cf. *Il.* 16. 853, *Od.* 11. 134–6.

[39] E.g. *Od.* 3. 467; *Il.* 24. 588. In Aesch. ἀμφιβάλλειν occurs elsewhere only of ζύγον (*Pers.* 50, 72) and in fr. 153 λεπτὸς δὲ σινδὼν ἀμφιβαλλέσθω χροί – probably of the dead Patroklos (cf. S. fr. 210. 67 σινδών of shroud). Cf. E. *El.* 1231–2 φάρεα τάδ' ἀμφιβάλλομεν on the dead Clyt.; Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 89. 4 Ἅιδης οἱ σκοτίας ἀμφέβαλεν πτέρυγας; *Fr. Trag. Adesp.* 127 (Hades) ὁ δ' ἀμφιβάλλει ταχύπους κέλευθον ἔρπων σκοτίαν.

[40] Cf. Ar. *Ph.* 207a2 ἄπειρος δακτύλιος; A. *PV* 1078 εἰς ἀπέραντον δίκτυον ἄτης; Ibycus fr. 287 *PMG* ἐς ἄπειρα δίκτυα Κύπριδος; and of the same robe: A. fr. 375 ἀμήχανον τέχνημα καὶ δυσέκδυτον, *Eum.* 634 ἀτέρμονι; E. *Or.* 25 ἀπείρωι περιβαλοῦσ' ὑφάσματι. For the later tradition of a χιτὼν ἀτράχηλος see Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 1392, also Beazley, *ARV*², 1652 (Vermeule in *AJA* 70 [1966], 1–22).

[41] E.g. Clay *Ekphora*, Kurtz–Boardman, op. cit. n. 24, plate 16, also plate 37; Beazley, *ABV*, 346, 7–8; E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (1979), fig. 8a (New York 27, 228); cf. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (1969), n. 97; κρύπτειν in E. *Hcld.* 561, *Tro.* 627, *Hipp.* 1456; E. *Hec.* 432; S. *El.* 1468–9.

[42] Cf. Pearson *ad loc.*, Easterling ad S. *Trach.* 674 τὸν ἐνδυτῆρα πέπλον. The robe in which the corpse was wrapped might be called an ἔνδυμα (Prott–Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, n. 97a).

[43] *Ag.* 1492, 1580 (παγαῖς Nauck); cf. e.g. Penelope weaving the shroud for her father-in-law, and Sen. *Ag.* 882–3 (quoted above).

reminding him that he was killed *αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν* (494), the point of the emphatically placed *βουλευτοῖσιν* is the hideous irony that the funeral *καλύμματα*[44] helped to *effect* the death. When the robe is displayed together with the bodies of Clytemnestra and Aigisthos, Orestes wonders whether he should call it a net or a shroud: *ἄγρευμα θηρός, ἢ νεκροῦ ποδένδυτον | δροίτης κατασκήνωμα.*[45] In *ποδένδυτον* are combined two characteristics of the attire of the dead: solemnity,[46] and the enclosure of the feet. The latter influences Orestes' decision to call the robe a net after all, for he continues *δίκτυον μὲν οὖν | ἄρκυν τ' ἂν εἴποις καὶ ποδιστῆρας πέπλους·* The *hapax legomenon ποδιστῆρας*[47] picks up *ποδένδυτον*: the robe was not just wrapped around Agamemnon's feet (*ποδένδυτον*), but because he was alive it actively entangled them (*ποδιστῆρας*), and that is why it is to be called a net.

Over the corpse of Agamemnon the chorus had asked who will bury him, who will lament him, and who will deliver the praise at the tomb (*ἐπιτύμβιος αἶνος*) with tears and with sincerity. Clytemnestra replied that she will bury him, without lamentation.[48] In the *Choephoroi* the great *ἐπιτύμβιος θρῆνος* (334–5), with its anger at the griefless, dishonourable funeral of Agamemnon (429–50), cannot repair the absence of Orestes from the *πρόθεσις* and *ἐκφορά* of the body itself (8–9):[49] *οὐ γὰρ παρὼν ὤιμωξα σὸν, πάτερ, μόρον, | οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφοραῖι νεκροῦ.* It is only at the end of the play, with his attention on the funeral robe, that Orestes declares (1014) *νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμώζω παρών.* The repeated emphatic *νῦν* means 'now at last',[50] *αἰνῶ* refers to the funeral *αἶνος*,[51] and *ἀποιμώζειν* elsewhere in Aeschylus means lamentation over the body itself[52] – as *παρών* here and at v. 8 suggests. But whereas the lament of Andromache, for example, takes the form of a direct address to the dead Hektor,[53] Orestes here cannot address the man himself. He addresses instead the *στέγαστρον ἀνδρὸς* (984): *νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμώζω παρών, | πατροκτόνον θ' ὕφασμα προσφωνῶν*[54] *τόδε | ἀλγῶ κτλ.* (1014–5). But the *ἄλγος* must be for more than his father: *ἀλγῶ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένος τε πᾶν* (1016); and any attempt to praise or lament is cut short by the onset of the Furies.

At this point another victim of her own funerary ritual deserves mention: Sophocles' Antigone. The cave in which she is to be imprisoned is called her tomb,[55] and her movement towards it is imagined as a funeral procession.[56] Uniquely, she takes part

[44] *καλύμματα* of funerary coverings: S. *El.* 1468.

[45] 998–9. *δροίτη* can mean bath or bier (n. 28 above). And cf. *Ag.* 1540, *Eum.* 633–5...*δροίτηι περῶντι λουτρὰ κἀπὶ τέρματι | φᾶρος παρεσκήνωσεν, ἐν δ' ἀτέρμονι | κόπτει πεδήσασ' ἄνδρα δαιδάλωι πέπλωι.* [46] See n. 42 above.

[47] It may be intended to suggest *ποδοστράβη*, a kind of hunting net: Thomson cites Xen. *Cyn.* 11. 11. And cf. *Ba.* 833.

[48] *Ag.* 1548–54 (the textual problem does not concern us here).

[49] For the distinction between lamentations over the body and at the tomb see Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 5–8. [50] See Thomson on *Ag.* 1475, *Cho.* 1014.

[51] Praise over the body: *Il.* 22. 749, 767; S. *Aj.* 923–4; Bion 1. 71; Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 34, 40, 122, 175, 182.

[52] *Ag.* 329, fr. 138. Although lamentation tended to be female, it did not exclude male close kin: Alexiou, op. cit. no. 20, 6.

[53] *Il.* 24. 725, cf. 748, 762; 23. 19; E. *Tro.* 1167; Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 106, 109 f., 140, 174–6, 182–4, etc.

[54] Cf. also 997 *τί νιν προσείπω κτλ.*, of the robe; such hesitancy expressed in the form of a question is characteristic of the lament: cf. e.g. *Ag.* 1489–91, and numerous examples in Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 161 ff., G. Thomson in *JHS* 73 (1953), 81–2. Cf. also the inversion of this device at E. *El.* 907 ff., where it is used by Elektra to express her *hatred* over the corpse of Aigisthos.

[55] S. *Ant.* 849, 888, 891, 920.

[56] 808 *νεάταν ὁδὸν*, 892, 920; cf. S. *Trach.* 874 *τὴν πανυστάτην ὁδῶν ἁπασῶν*; *Anth. Pal.* 7. 203; etc.

in this movement while still alive.[57] She will go to 'Hades' αὐτόνομος ζῶσα μόνη δὴ θνατῶν (821). Agamemnon too was a victim of part of his funerary ritual, and he was buried without the normal lamentation and praise. But Antigone also suffers the *awareness* of being buried ἄκλαυτος and ἄφιλος (876; cf. 881–2); and the chorus point out to her the absence of praise.[58] She is lamented only by herself. Some critics have been puzzled that she should lament so bitterly, given her earlier defiance of death. Antigone, it is felt, should be made of sterner stuff. Most recently, Winnington-Ingram has suggested that the change in Antigone is brought about by her discovery of *how* she is to die: 'the thought of being buried alive has always had a peculiar horror for the human mind'.[59] This misses the point. She laments because it is her funeral.[60]

What then of the lamentation and praise due to Agamemnon? Orestes was not present to utter them over his father's body. And Clytemnestra, who wrapped the body in its robe, uttered no praise or lament over it. But as Agamemnon entered the house to his death, she compared his presence there with the living root of a tree shading the house.[61] The use of a striking image as praise at the moment of arrival is appropriate,[62] but must of course have seemed to the audience deeply ironical. Comparison of the beloved dead to a tree is a commonplace of the Greek lament from Homer to the present day.[63] And the idea of the lost one as a *shading* tree is found in an early version of the lament of the virgin as well as in the modern lament.[64] Furthermore, the notion of *uprooting* occurs as early as Homer as an image of death, and in the lament of the chorus of Sophocles' *Elektra* for the royal house.[65] Despite the general thematic continuity of the ritual lament demonstrated in detail by Alexiou, we cannot infer that the specific comparison of the beloved to a shade-giving tree now uprooted by death was a theme of the ancient lament. Still, it seems not unlikely that Clytemnestra's emotional praise of Agamemnon would have been associated by the audience not only with his arrival but with his death, not only with the enkomion but with the lament.[66] In fact the formal and thematic similarities between the enkomion and the lament[67] are exploited by the dramatist, just as he exploits the similarities between bathing and dressing a man for a feast on the one hand and for his tomb on the other. Clytemnestra employs the funeral αἶνος, as well as the funeral bath and the funeral robes, on her living husband.

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[57] Stressed at 811, 821, 851, 888, 921. Both Kassandra (*Ag.* 1322–3) and Clytemnestra (*Cho.* 926) θρηνοῦσι for themselves (in a sense).

[58] 817, reading οὔκουν (not οὐκοῦν), Knox' case for which (*The Heroic Temper*, 176 f.) is supported by the point being made here – that had Antigone died in any normal way she would have had a funeral ἔπαινος.

[59] R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles, an Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1980), 139.

[60] Cf. e.g. *Ba.* 1302–29, Kadmos' praise of Pentheus, where, as at E. *El.* 907 ff., the commentators fail to mention the convention of praise over the dead body (cf. n. 50 above).

[61] *Ag.* 966–7. Thomson puts these lines after 971.

[62] See e.g. F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (1972), 22, 25–7.

[63] *Il.* 18. 55–7; Alexiou, op. cit. n. 20, 198–201. This does not mean of course that it cannot be employed on the living (e.g. *Od.* 6. 162 f.).

[64] Alexiou, 198, 204.

[65] *Il.* 14. 414–5; S. *El.* 764–5; cf. 3rd cent. A.D. inscription from Amorgos (*BCH* for 1891, 586–9); all from Alexiou 198–201.

[66] It should be added here that most of the images applied ἀπενθήτωι φρενί (895) by Clyt. to Ag. at the climax of her welcoming speech are found also in the modern lament: see esp. Alexiou 91–4, 123, 153, 188, 203. For the lament for the man still alive see *Il.* 6. 500, 18. 51, 24. 328.

[67] Thomson, art. cit. n. 54, and in *The First Philosophers*[2] (1961), 133–4; cf. e.g. the chorus' greeting at *Ag.* 785 ff. with their lament at 1490 ff.