Beflowered with Beauty: The Imagery of *Ag.* 659-60

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> If then in Sophocles the play is concentrated in the figures themselves, and in Euripides is to be retrieved from flashes of poetry and questions far flung and unanswered, Aeschylus makes these little dramas ... tremendous by stretching every phrase to the utmost, by sending them floating forth in metaphors, by bidding them rise up and stalk eyeless and majestic through the scene. To understand him it is not so necessary to understand Greek as to understand poetry.
>
> Virginia Woolf[1]

This paper concerns one notoriously perplexing image from among Aeschylus' seemingly infinite repertoire of deeply felt and poetically considered word pictures. It occurs in *Agamemnon* during a lengthy exchange between the chorus of Argive elders and a herald, one of those returning with Agamemnon from Troy, in which the travails of the ships bearing the victors across the sea are recounted. The herald's language is overwrought, reflecting the sensationalism of the tale he has been fortunate enough to live to tell. Asked what he knows of the fate of Menelaus, the herald recalls the storm that laid waste the entire Greek fleet, sparing, it seems, only the ship on which he happened to be. At 659-60 he describes its aftermath with the vividness of the historical present tense: ὁρῶμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς / ἀνδρῶν Ἀχαιῶν ναυτικοῖς τ' ἐρειπίοις ('we see the Aegean sea beflowered with the corpses of Achaean men and the debris of their ships').[2] The image under consideration is, more narrowly, ἀνθοῦν ... νεκροῖς. Denniston and Page translate '*blossoming* with corpses' and, without further ado, call it an 'exceptionally incongruous metaphor'.[3] With somewhat more reservation, Sidgwick translates 'flowering with dead' and considers the image 'another audacious metaphor', but, in the comment that follows, he too reveals that he is baffled by it: 'ἀνθέω is more familiarly used in Greek metaphorically than "flower" with us'.[4]

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1 'On not knowing Greek', *The Common Reader*, 1925, 39-59 (48-49); thanks are due to my student, Eduardo Escobar, who drew my attention to this essay. I must also thank Brian Swann, who read and commented upon the manuscript at various stages, as well as *SCI*'s anonymous readers and editor Deborah Gera for helpful comments and criticisms, which have been incorporated throughout.

2 Unless otherwise noted, the *OCT* edition of D. Page, *Aeschyli Septem quae Supersunt Tragoediae*, 1972, is the adopted text. Fragments are cited from the edition of S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (*TrFG*), 3, 1985. On the frequent use of the historical present in messenger speeches in Euripides, see I.J.F. de Jong, *Narrative in Drama*, 1991, 38-45, who notes (38, n. 96) that it is also common in A.; her summary of the dramatic rationale for the use of the present by messengers (45) is equally applicable to A.

3 J.D. Denniston and D. Page, *Aeschylus Agamemnon*, 1957, 130.

4 A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus Agamemnon*, 1905, 38.

Stanford found *Ag.* 659-60 no less than 'apocalyptic',[5] considering it to be 'so sardonic an image'[6] that he felt compelled to argue that ἀνθέω cannot mean here what it usually means, 'flower', with ἄνθος connoting a 'flower of the field', as the equation of a thing of beauty with blood and corpses would be offensive, tasteless, and improbable, a sign of a cynicism 'only fit for a disillusioned modern *fin de siècle*'.[7] Stanford argues instead that Aeschylus was thinking of the 'original basic meaning' of ἄνθος, in his view, 'something like *that which rises to the surface*'.[8] In this instance it would be the bodies and the detritus, which is intelligible enough, given the range of the term's connotative meanings, but such a reading would seem to belie many, if not the majority, of its metaphorical appearances in Greek literature, as we shall see below, or else render them not metaphors at all (which is not out of the question). Later, however, Stanford softens his view somewhat by retreating from his earlier argument that ἀνθέω at *Ag.* 659 was, as he now puts it, 'intended in a medical sense', but he is still befuddled by the image, calling attention this time to its 'grimness' and its 'heraldic humour', a particularly mordant variety which he sees as characteristic of heralds' speeches in general in Aeschylus.[9]

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5 W.B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 1936, 112. The full citation is as follows: 'Indeed the truth is that we have become very fond of the interpretation ἄνθος = a *flower* in our reading of Greek poetry and we have come to think of its frequent use by the Greek poets as typical of their admiration for τὸ καλόν... So we welcome and cull the word gladly whenever we find it in the spring meadows of Theocritus and his predecessors. Then on one apocalyptic day is felt the full force of the image in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (659)'. Portions of Stanford's argument are reiterated in his brief discussion of the etymology of ἄνθος in '*In Lexicographos*: Another heresy', *G&R* 5, 1936, 155-59 (156-57).

6 W.B. Stanford, *Aeschylus in His Style*, 1942, 95, n. 5.

7 Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (n. 5), 112-13; so too H.J. Rose, *A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus II*, 1958, 51: '"Flowering" in Gk. has not the associations of prettiness it has in English'.

8 *Greek Metaphor* (n. 5), 113-14; cf. '*In Lexicographos*' (n. 5), 156-57, where Stanford concludes that, rather than the 'deliberately hideous metaphor' that it at first seems, the word is being used 'κατὰ τὸ ἔτυμον', and is to be taken literally, 'the corpses were like a *scum* on the surface of the water'... — grim realism indeed, but not cynical as in 'like a *blossom*'. For an overview of the semantic range of ἄνθος and cognates, see E.K. Borthwick, 'The "Flower of the Argives" and a neglected meaning of ΄ΑΝΘΟΣ', *JHS* 96, 1976, 1-7 (6); see also B. Snell and H. Erbse, *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (*LfgrE*), 1955-, s. vv. ἀνθέω, ἄνθος.

9 Stanford (n. 6), 95, n. 5, citing, among other things, 'the neighbouring bucolic metaphors' which 'seem to be against this view'; Stanford explains his notion of 'heraldic humour' on 114-25. On the compound ἐξανθεῖν, used of the sea at E. *IT* 300, as a 'medical term' indicating 'eruption, efflorescence' (cf. *LSJ*, s.v. i. 2,3), see Denniston and Page (n. 3), 130, who note, however, that it 'conveys an entirely different image' from that of *Ag.* 659; and J.M. Aitchison, 'Homeric ἄνθος', *Glotta* 41, 1963, 271-78 (274-75). However, there is some disagreement about whether ἀνθέω itself is used with medical connotations. M.L. West, 'Tragica III', *BICS* 26, 1979, 104-117 (111-12) (correcting R.D. Dawe, *Studies on the Text of Sophocles III*, 1978, 95-96, on S. *Tr.* 1088-89, on which see further below) observes that such a meaning is given in *LSJ* not for ἀνθέω, but rather for ἐξανθέω. *LSJ*, s.v. ἀνθέω, ii. 4, has '*to be at the height or pitch*' of something, including 'of a disease', in a metaphorical sense; of the examples cited, only Hp. *Epid.* 1.25 has a chance of being considered technically medical, although not necessarily so, since it is paired with another, virtually

Verrall, who prints the somewhat more cumbersome genitives, ναυτικῶν τ' ἐρειπίων, of the manuscripts rather than Auratus' commonly accepted correction to the dative, treats the phrase at some length.[10] He believes that both of the genitives (ἀνδρῶν and ἐρειπίων) as well as the dative νεκροῖς are meant to be taken with ἀνθοῦν, 'to which they are related as to a verb of fullness'.[11] Verrall further suggests, however, that νεκροῖς is more closely allied with the verb 'in the manner which we might indicate by a compound', thus translating the entire passage: 'we saw the Aegaean [sic] main corpse-beflowered with Achaean men and wreckage of the ships'. The intention of the poet here, in Verrall's somewhat tortured conclusion, is 'to suggest in a vague poetical way that both men and ships were "dead"'.[12]

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synonymous, common term for these kinds of circumstances, ἀκμάζει (W.H.S. Jones, *Hippocrates I*, 1923, 182). Aitchison (loc. cit.) cites only one occasion, also from the Hippocratic corpus, in which ἄνθος is used as a medical term, Hp. *Coac.* 416, προσώπου ἄνθη (as the text is cited in *TLG*), which he translates 'breaking out, rash, eruption'.

10 A.W. Verrall, *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, 1889, 82, ad loc. vv. 664, 664-65, the source of the quotations from Verrall which follow. Rose (n. 7), 51, also prefers the genitives, as does C.J. Blomfield, *Aeschyli Agamemnon*, 1839 [1823], who, following an earlier scholar, suggests that 'ἐρειπίων referatur ad ἀνθοῦν, quod cum genitivo strui potest'. Verrall considers Auratus' emendation 'obvious, but much too obvious', continuing: 'The superficial difficulty of the genitives would have kept them out, if they were not genuine'. I am sympathetic with Verrall's argument; however, since most modern editors of the play consider Auratus' emendation of *Ag.* 660 to be a 'correction' of the text, I am following the consensus. In the end the differences between Verrall's and other interpretations of the meaning are slight, and do not affect the present argument.

11 Cf. G. Hermann, *Aeschyli Tragoediae II*, 1852, 422, ad loc. v. 637: 'Florere dicitur quod abundat aliqua re'.

12 Verrall (n. 10) goes completely astray when he deduces that 'the sea is the plain or field which in the morning is seen to have broken out in flowers after the rain'. This is, of course, a lovely image, but it nonetheless appears too unseemly, by any standard, for a characterization of a shipwreck, although it is quoted with approval by M. Platnauer, *Euripides Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1960, 86-87, in reference to E. *IT* 300, discussed below. Earlier, F.A. Paley, *The Tragedies of Aeschylus I-II*, 1861, 373, ad loc. v. 642, had also envisioned an idyllic, meadow-like scene without commenting on the irony involved: 'The metaphor is from a field spotted over with flowers'. He compares, perhaps not entirely felicitously, Lucr. 5. 1442, a line printed variously by editors, but whose intended imagery is unproblematic: Iam mare velivolis florebat puppibus ('At the time, the sea blossomed with ships winged with sails'); so too J.D. Duff, *T. Lucreti Cari. De Rerum Natura, Liber Quintus*, 1967, 114, whose text I follow, compares our passage, with the following caveat: 'a bold metaphor, but less bold than a similar one in Aesch. *Agam.* 659'. Borthwick (n. 8), 5, aptly characterizes Paley's commentary on *Ag.* 659 as 'over-simplifying the breadth of poetic imagination'. A scholiast, however, had come to much the same conclusion, but was careful to emphasize the anomaly of the idea of the sea-as-land and the disturbing chromatic contrasts that such a scene must have presented in real life: ἀνθοῦν εἶπε τὸ πέλαγος ἐν τοῖς νεκροῖς ἐπειδὴ τὸ μέν ἐστι μέλαν, λευκὰ δὲ τὰ σώματα. ὥσπερ οὖν ἡ γῆ ἀστράπτει τοῖς ἄνθεσι καὶ ὡραΐζεται, οὕτω καὶ τὸ πέλαγος διηνθισμένον ἐδόκει τοῖς λευκοῖς σώμασιν (O.L. Smith, *Scholia Graeca in Aeschylum quae Exstant Omnia I*, 1976, 153, ad loc.). For a 'sea-as-land' metaphor not unlike that of *Ag.* 659-60, compare πόντιον ἅλσος for 'the sea' at A. *Pers.* 103.

The phrase seems to defeat even Fraenkel, who, in an uncharacteristically brief note, defers to a comment by Wilamowitz, and that, not even on our play. At *Persae* 420 Wilamowitz, it seems, had once replaced πλήθουσα with ἀνθοῦσα, a conjecture (apparently following a suggestion of Headlam) which he later abandoned, in order to explain lines 418-21, a passage to which *Ag.* 659-60 is sometimes compared.[13] The passage reads as follows: ὑπτιοῦτο δὲ / σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν ἰδεῖν / ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φόνου βροτῶν· / ἀκταὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' ἐπλήθυον ('and the hulls of our ships were overturned, and the sea was no longer to be seen, as it was full of debris and the slaughter of men; for the shores and the reefs were full of corpses'). In this case, as he does on occasion, Aeschylus helpfully supplies an additional line in plainer language in order to clarify a potentially obscure image, something, however, that he does not do at *Ag.* 659-60.[14] In his note Fraenkel translates Wilamowitz' explanation: 'the ἀτρύγετος θάλασσα blooms like a meadow, but the grassblades ["flowers" would be more correct (Fraenkel's comment, not mine)] are the wrecks of ships'; for himself, Fraenkel adds only: '[Wilamowitz'] remark applies to *Ag.* 659'.[15] We are on more solid ground here, at least. The Homeric epithet ἀτρύγετος ('barren') for the sea does not actually appear in either Aeschylean passage, but, in the context, it virtually begs to be inferred in order to bring out the full and sinister irony of the *adynaton* of the sea's 'blossoming'. Hence, Thomson and Headlam also turn to *Pers.* 420 to make the same point, but without feeling the need to interpolate: 'here [*Ag.* 659-60] πλήθουσα has been heightened to ἀνθοῦν: the sea is naturally unharvested (ἀτρύγετος) but now it is in blossom with a crop of corpses'.[16]

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13 E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus Agamemnon II*, 1962 [1950], 324; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechisches Lesebuch I. Text*, 1965 [1902], 61, and *II. Erläuterungen*, 1966 [1902], 36; the conjecture does not appear in the text or apparatus of *Pers.* in Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, 1914. It is attributed to W. Headlam (*CR* 12, 1898, 190) by R.D. Dawe, *Repertory of Conjectures on Aeschylus*, 1965, and M.L. West, *Aeschyli Tragoediae cum Incerti Poetae Prometheo*, 1990, both ad loc. In justifying the conjecture, Headlam (*loc. cit.*) compares both *Ag.* 664 (= 659?) and E. *IT* 292 (= 300?), to be discussed below, as well as a line of Nicephorus (a Byzantine rhetor) in a piece on the Theban saga: νεκρῶν ἅπαν τὸ πεδίον ἀνθεῖ (C. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci I*, 1968 [1832-36], 495).

14 On this tendency of the poet's, see Stanford (n. 6), 101-02; T.G. Rosenmeyer, *The Art of Aeschylus*, 1982, 107-08; cf. Ar. *Ra.* 1152 ff., on A.'s habit of 'saying the same thing twice'.

15 Fraenkel (n. 13), 324; the German reads: 'Die ἀτρύγετος θάλασσα blüht wie eine Wiese; aber die Grashalme sind Schiffstrümmer und der Purpur der Anemone ist Blut' (Wilamowitz 1966 [n. 13], 36). Wilamowitz offers no further justification for his alteration of the text. However, A.M. Michelini, *Tradition and Dramatic Form in the Persians of Aeschylus*, 1982, 92-97, argues that the multiple occurrences of the term πλῆθος and related verbal forms in this messenger speech (which bothered Headlam enough to inspire the emendation cited in n. 13, above) and throughout the play are significant; in the sense of 'teeming', the term does at times seem close to being a synonym for ἄνθος et al., although Michelini, herself, does not draw that conclusion. Consequently, while she does not mention Wilamowitz' revision at line 420, her discussion nonetheless begins to make a case for the possible interchangeability of these terms in *Pers.* Compare Rose (n. 7), 51: 'The corpses and wreckage were as thick on the surface as flowers in a meadow'.

16 G. Thomson, *The Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1966 [1938], 59.

While *Agamemnon*'s commentators have struggled with the imagery of vv. 659-60, a few who have been less directly concerned with explicating the lines seem to have happened upon their significance without effort. Borthwick, in an important article on an overlooked meaning of ἄνθος, observes 'the double meaning [i.e., "froth or spume of the sea' and "youth"] which enlivens the image [at *Ag.* 659-60]', while Cropp, in a commentary on Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, in his note on *IT* 300, references *Ag.* 659 as an image of 'the Aegean sea "blooming" ... with the flower of the Greek army now drowned'.[17] Closest to what I regard to be the truest reckoning of ἀνθοῦν in this passage is Fagles, in his Penguin translation of *Agamemnon*, where he renders the lines: 'I see the Aegean heaving into a great bloom of corpses ... Greeks, the pick of a generation scattered through the wrecks and broken spars'.[18] Each of these writers, in my view, has intuitively grasped the underlying message of the passage, its emphasis on the idealized youth of the dead warriors; however, occupied with other matters, none was in a position to explore further the metaphorical possibilities of this rich Aeschylean image, as I aim to do now, with particular emphasis on its *visual* import.

The use of ἀνθέω for metaphorical purposes is in itself unremarkable. Of the figurative resonance of ἄνθος, Earp, who, with Stanford, remains one of the few modern scholars to attempt to quantify the ingredients of an ancient author's style, notes that it is used so frequently in poetry for 'the prime' or 'flower' of something that, 'unless the metaphor is further developed or applied in an unusual way, it is hardly felt'.[19] Looking instead for instances in which Aeschylus 'uses a familiar metaphor in a new way', Earp goes on to include *Ag.* 659 in his lists of Aeschylean metaphors, which suggests that for him it qualifies as one of the exceptional usages of ἀνθέω.[20] We should indeed expect more from a poet who, to a far greater degree than the other great playwrights, 'does his serious thinking in images'.[21] Aeschylus' fondness for condensed imagery is well-known

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17 Borthwick (n. 8), 5, 7; M.J. Cropp, *Euripides Iphigenia in Tauris*, 2000, 195.

18 R. Fagles, *Aeschylus The Oresteia*, 1984, 128.

19 F.R. Earp, *The Style of Aeschylus*, 1948, 103; cf. H.J. Rose, *A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus I*, 1957, 92, apropos of the term's appearance at *Pers.* 59: 'Almost too common a metaphor to need annotation'. Regarding stylistic analysis, I am, in general, less sympathetic with the more sweeping approach of Rosenmeyer (n. 14), esp. 77-108, who seeks to debunk many of the commonly held assumptions regarding the difficulty and allusiveness of A.'s style. The most purely quantitative approach to the 'stylometry' of A. is that of M. Griffith, *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound*, 1977, which on the whole, aside from tabulations of poeticized language, tallying such items as compound adjectives and rare vocabulary (147-89, with appendices F-K) that serve to strengthen the traditional perceptions of A.'s style, does not focus on imagery as such and has therefore been less useful for the present study.

20 Earp (n. 19), 136.

21 Earp (n. 19), 173, who continues: 'He does not need an inviting subject for a picture, such, for instance, as the Sacrifice of Iphigenia; he creates pictures incidentally and almost unconsciously'. Cf., e.g., R.P. Winnington-Ingram, 'Aeschylus', *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature I, pt 2: Greek Drama*, edd. P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox, 1989, 29-43 (38): 'Not only in smaller matters of semantics and syntax did he strain normal usage but in metaphor, where he has no peer except Pindar, his combination of images seems sometimes to strain figurative language almost to breaking point'. The opening quotation

and warrants only a brief reminder. While it is true that his style has been considered 'architectural', from antiquity onwards,[22] to my ear, it is one of the most painterly of poetic styles. This is a verbal impasto that is achieved primarily through complex and multivalent words and phrases compressed one upon the other, an approach to coloring and vivifying language and meaning that requires the listener/reader to envision images overlaid upon images, as the ancient painter layered color upon color in increasingly transparent washes, while allowing the integrity of each hue to persist beneath the other, and yet all to be perceived as simultaneously dependent upon one another.[23] But beyond the simile, a familiarity with the ways of the painter may help the faint of heart to penetrate a verbal morass that is in essence pictorial. Aeschylus is, of course, capable of describing something in unadorned language, but, as Earp explains, 'as soon as any special significance or emotion is attached to the thing described, he prefers to convey it by an image of some kind'.[24] *Ag.* 659-60 certainly qualifies as such an occasion.

The emotional tenor of the lines may be a direct correlative of a personal acquaintance with the disaster that is war. While Euripides is more often viewed, correctly or incorrectly, as an anti-war poet, Aeschylus' attitude toward war cannot be so easily summarized but is perhaps more deeply felt, being that he was, or so we are told, a veteran of Marathon and possibly other major battles against the Persians, both land and sea (Paus. 1.14.5; *Vita* 4 and 11).[25] True, he may have been pilloried by Aristophanes in *Frogs* (1012 ff.) for taking special pride in his belligerent characters, but the evidence from his extant work presents a far more complex picture. According to Earp, Aeschylus, 'though certainly no pacifist', keenly felt the horrors of war and handles them with remarkable lucidity in his plays, a sentiment which has been expressed by many others, including Winnington-Ingram: 'When he wrote of war, he wrote as one who knew its glory and its misery'.[26] Stanford, too, noting with some surprise the relative rarity of 'images from war and arms' in the works of a man whose epitaph, according to the an-

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from Woolf might also be cited as evidence of the long established tradition of regarding A. as a poet of images almost without peer.

22 The analogy begins in antiquity; a schol. at Ar. *Pax* 749 (D. Holwerda, *Scholia In Aristophanem. Pars II, Fasc. II*, 1982, 116) claims that the comedian Pherecrates, in his Κραπαταλοί (*PCG* VII, fr. 100), has A. say: 'Having built up (ἐξοικοδομήσας) a great art (τέχνην μεγάλην), I handed it over to them'. Aristophanes takes up the idea at *Ra.* 1004, where A. is addressed as the first among the Greeks to raise up (πυργώσας) lofty verses, and at *Pax* 749, where he has the chorus praise his *own* style of comic poetry in similar terminology. Stanford (n. 6), 139, evidently inspired by the ancient sources, speaks of the 'Cyclopean architectural quality' of A.'s writing.

23 According to Arist., *De Sensu* 3. 440a 8-10, this glazing technique was particularly effective when the painter wanted to depict an object seen under water or through haze; for discussion of this passage, S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 2002, 124, 182.

24 Earp (n. 19), 173. In an insightful article, G. Ferrari, 'Figures in the text: Metaphors and riddles in the Agamemnon', *CPh* 92, 1997, 1-45, analyzes in depth the multiple visual dimensions of several key images of *Ag.*; she does not, however, discuss the passage in question.

25 Admittedly, caution must be exercised when using the *Lives* as evidence (J. Fairweather, 'Fiction in the biographies of ancient writers', *Ancient Society* 5, 1974, 231-75). The testimony of Pausanias, however, is more difficult to dismiss out of hand.

26 Earp (n. 19), 163; Winnington-Ingram (n. 21), 29.

cient sources, referred to his military service and not his career as a playwright, observes: 'When he does describe war directly he consistently emphasizes its sad and sordid aspects, its sufferings and its frustrations'.[27] Similar sentiments have been voiced more recently by Leahy and Rosenmeyer, among others.[28] With these basic tenets in mind — that Aeschylus' use of this common metaphor is not straightforward, that he delights in complex pictures, that he has an emotional investment in the imagery of war — and without disallowing the essential correctness of the interpretations and translations just reviewed, I would like to delve deeper into the use of the participle ἀνθοῦν at *Ag.* 659-60.

A clue as to how we are to interpret the lines may be provided in the preceding choral song, the first stasimon of the play.[29] At line 454 Aeschylus chooses a curious adjective to characterize the corpses of the Greek war dead who occupy Trojan tombs: εὔμορφοι. The expression has confounded many commentators, resulting in its being, as Fraenkel notes, 'unreasonably challenged by earlier critics, and misinterpreted by others'.[30] In all honesty I do not understand the confusion; the image seems straightforward enough as a reference to the Homeric beauty-in-youthful-death. Fraenkel himself suggests (following up on ideas of others) that it should be taken to mean 'something like "transfigured", "glorified", "verklärt"', by virtue alone, it seems, of the men having died heroes, rather than as a reference to the beauty-in-death that I understand by the term. If I may say so, a dimension of spirituality seems to have made its way into Fraenkel's thinking on this matter. While not exactly disavowing it, he appears to downplay the inference of the scholia that the term is meant to allude to the youthful beauty of those who die young: τὸ δὲ εὔμορφοι πρὸς πλείονα οἶκτον προσέθηκεν (452b) and εὔμορφοι] ὄντες· ἔτι ζῶντες δηλονότι (454a).[31] Paley suggests: '"in their (natural) beauty," i.e., unburnt, and therefore contrasted with the ghastly forms on the pyre', while Rose offers: 'As their friends remember them, with perhaps an implication of the contrast with the hideousness of the corpse by the time it was found and covered up', comparing A.E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, XXXV. 11: 'Lovely lads and dead and rotten'.[32]

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27 Stanford (n. 6), 88.

28 D.M. Leahy, 'The representation of the Trojan War in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*', *AJP* 95, 1974, 1-23 (21): '... Aeschylus works to demolish [the glamorous view of the Trojan war] by concentrating the attention of his audience on those aspects of warfare which they had been encouraged to discount; and by making these things — hunger, weariness, cold, hard lying, vermin, shipwreck, death, bereavement — the sum total of his description of what the Trojan War was really like, he summons up the strongest possible emotional reaction against Agamemnon for what he has caused his people to suffer'. Rosenmeyer (n. 14), 171: 'The Aeschylean chorus hates war. Far from having a fixed opinion about the rights and wrongs of the Trojan War, it dwells on the viciousness of all war'.

29 Of which Denniston and Page (n. 3), 112 have said: 'It is questionable whether there is anything in Greek Tragedy equal to this passage (385-474) in beauty and pathos'.

30 Including, among the earliest, Blomfield (n. 10), ad loc. v. 441. Fraenkel (n. 13), 233, with references, conveniently summarizes the scholarly literature on the varying interpretations. For a list of emendations to the εὔμορφοι of the ms. tradition, see the apparatus of West (n. 13), ad loc.

31 Fraenkel (n. 13), 233, n. 2; schol. text: Smith (n. 12), 137, ad loc.

32 Paley (n. 12), 358, ad loc. v. 441; Rose (n. 7), 37.

Compounds in Aeschylus must be verbally, as well as visually, unpacked, as it were, into their full expressive potential, and this we shall now do with εὔμορφος.[33] It is an obvious truism that external physical beauty was paramount among the qualities prized in human beings in Archaic and Classical Greece. At *Il.* 13. 484 Homer uses what would become a common metaphor to articulate the peak of physical perfection that youth bestows on a warrior when he says of Aeneas: καὶ δ' ἔχει ἥβης ἄνθος ('and he also has the flower of youth').[34] Death on the battlefield, far from altering the equation of youth, beauty, and strength, as might be expected when soldiers routinely bit the dust and mingled theirs with the battlefield's gore (and all of this only a prelude to the various desecrations brought about by dogs, birds, and the sun), apparently only enhanced it. While εὔμορφος is not actually found in Homer, it nonetheless perfectly encapsulates the epic fiction of beauty at death,[35] and this, I would argue, was Aeschylus' intention in adopting the term. Perhaps under the influence of both poets, but with characteristically greater wordiness, Euripides, too, reflects upon the paradox of bodily beauty in a dead warrior at *Supplices* 782-83: ἐμοὶ δὲ παίδων μὲν εἰσιδεῖν μέλη / πικρόν, καλὸν θέαμα δ' εἴπερ ὄψομαι ('to look upon the limbs of sons is a bitter thing for me [the chorus], but a beautiful sight nonetheless if indeed I see it'). Moreover, by the time we encounter it in line 454 of *Agamemnon*, εὔμορφος is fresh from a slightly earlier and equally startling occurrence. In line 416, another passage which has engendered much discussion, as the chorus sing sympathetically of the desertion of Menelaus by his wife, they refer rather enigmatically to εὐμόρφων δὲ κολοσσῶν; here the term has been taken to refer polysemously to well-crafted statues of a well-formed Helen which, it seems, served as decorative fixtures in the family home.[36] The association of beauty, the death of young

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33 Earp (n. 19), 168, observes that, in A., 'each epithet often suggests a fresh idea which might have been expanded into a line or more'. Earp does not list εὔμορφοι among his compounds, but I see no reason not to treat it as such. Griffith (n. 19), while he does not itemize compounds or 'Eigenwörter' in *Ag.*, as he does for some other plays, does state that he considers adjectives with the prefix εὐ- to be compounds (328, n. 6).

34 R.B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate*, 1998 [1951], 232, associates the phrase ἥβης ἄνθος with the growing of hair on chin and pubes, which, timed to coincide with the cutting and sacrificing of the hair of the head, signifies budding sexuality and oncoming generative power; cf. *Od.* 11.320. Thus, Aitchison (n. 9), 272, interprets the passage to mean 'a youth on the verge of manhood'. According to *LfgrE* (n. 8), s.v. ἄνθος, col. 876, the sense 'jugendliche Schönheit von Knaben u. Mädchen' is posthomeric; admittedly, it is 'youth' not 'beauty' *per se* that is characterized as a flowering at *Il.* 13.484, and strength is singled out for mention (ὅ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον); however, I think it fair to say that elsewhere in Homer and throughout Greek thought the concepts of youth and beauty are inseparable, as they must also be here. The Homeric occurrences of ἄνθος and its cognates are conveniently collected in Aitchison (op. cit.).

35 A subject which has received much scholarly attention of late; e.g., J.-P. Vernant, 'A "beautiful death" and the disfigured corpse in Homeric epic', and '*Panta kala*: From Homer to Simonides', *Mortals and Immortals. Collected Essays*, ed. F.I. Zeitlin, 1991, 50-74, 84-91, as well as my own 'Homeric in Death: The Case of the Anavysos Kouros', forthcoming in a *BICS* suppl.

36 M. Stieber, 'A note on A. *Ag.* 410-28 and E. *Alc.* 347-56', *Mnemosyne* 52, 1999, 150-58, with further references, to which add Blomfield (n. 10), 226, ad loc. v. 406; and, contra,

men, and the destruction of ships and cities with Helen culminates in the famous choral lyric to follow, which puns directly on the etymology of her name: ἑλένας ἕλανδρος ἑλέπτολις ('Hell for ships, Hell for men, Hell for cities', *Ag.* 689-90).[37]

From Homer onwards, flowers and flowering are metaphorically associated with youth, beauty, prowess, and other transient conditions. In addition to ἄνθος and various synonyms, the verbs ἀνθέω, ἀνθίζω, λωτίζομαι, and compounds are all used in these ways; θάλλω ('to bloom') and related nouns are also used for comparable purposes. Examples include *Il.* 13. 484, discussed above; *h. Merc.* 375; Hes. *Th.* 988; *Op.* 227; fr. 132; Tyrt. 10. 28; Simon. 20. 5; Pi. *P.* IV, 158; S. fr. 724 (*Phryg.*); E. *Hel.* 1593; *El.* 15, 944; *Ph.* 88; *IA* 792; *Tr.* 809; *Su.* 449; *HF* 876, along with the Aeschylean instances to be treated shortly. In Pindar (e.g., *O.* I, 15; II, 7; III, 4; V, 1; VIII, 75; *P.* IV, 188; *N.* VIII, 9, etc.), ἄωτον, ἄωτος function similarly.[38] At E. *Hec.* 1210, as a way of referring to the period represented by the height of Hector's prowess and of Troy's greatness, Hector's spear is said to have 'flowered' (ἤνθει), a metaphor which seamlessly equates the prime of youth with the 'floruit' of a man's military effectiveness; compare Pi. *P.* I. 68, where the fame of the Dorian's spears 'flourished' (ἄνθησεν); *O.* XIII. 23, where Ares himself 'flourishes' (ἀνθεῖ) among the deadly spears of young men (νέων ἀνδρῶν), and the similar sentiment at E. *Heracl.* 740-42, where Iolaus recalls the day when his fighting arm was 'young' (ἡβήσαντα) and he and Heracles together sacked Sparta.

Dumortier puts it well when he states that, in Greek poetry, 'la métaphore de ἄνθος' is used 'pour désigner ce qu'il y a de plus frais, de plus beau et de plus fragile: jeunes guerriers tombés sur les champs de bataille, heure fugitive de l'adolescence'.[39] The flower persists as a perfect and obvious symbol of *vanitas* throughout western literature and art, an idea which may be said to reach the peak of its fruition, so to speak, in Dutch still-life painting of the seventeenth century. Floral metaphors are also suitable for alluding to the pinnacle or the best of something ('floruit', for instance), whether the finest specimen of a given type or the prime of life, whether to that life or to the possessor's immanent, premature death, and often to both at once. Archaic grave monuments which show a young person, male or female, holding a flower are able to convey the same message by visual means alone, and suggest that the flower, which inevitably withers all too soon, served equally well as a symbol of youth and as a metaphor for youthful death.[40] In

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Rose (n. 7), 35. That Helen is an ἄγαλμα πλούτου at *Ag.* 741 may or may not be relevant to this issue; Iphigenia is a δόμων ἄγαλμα at *Ag.* 208. On the other hand, D. Steiner, 'Eyeless in Argos; a reading of *Agamemnon* 416-19', *JHS* 115, 1995, 175-82, argues that these statues, with their closed eyes and fixed, immovable stances, are meant to represent all that is *unlike* the living Helen, thereby making them repellent to her husband.

37 My translation is derived from Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (n. 5), 147.

38 For discussion of the latter, see R.A. Raman, 'Homeric ἄωτος and Pindaric ἄωτος. A semantic problem', *Glotta* 53, 1975, 195-207, and Borthwick (n. 8), 1, with n. 2, who wonders whether Pi. *N.* VIII, 9 or A. *Ag.* 197-98 (see below) represents the earliest occurrence of the 'rather commonplace and "dead" metaphor of the "flower of the host"'.

39 J. Dumortier, *Les images dans la poésie d'Eschyle*, 1975, 126; in general, on metaphors in A. drawn from the life cycles of plants, see Dumortier 125-34.

40 Compare Dumortier (n. 39), 126: 'En son éphémère splendeur, et son fragil éclat, une fleur évoque à la fois les idées de mort et de beauté'; D.J. Conacher, 'Aeschylus' *Persae*: A literary commentary', *Serta Turyniana. Studies in Greek Literature and Palaeography in Honor*

these monuments the image — in this case a simple gesture borrowed from life — and the message become one; no further verbal intervention is needed.[41] Phrasikleia (Athens *NM* 4889), a rare example of a substantially preserved monumental funerary kore, holds a lotus prominently at her breast and is lavishly bedecked with a lotus crown and lotiform jewelry.[42] More numerous are grave stelai which show figures in relief holding objects, often flowers or, alternatively, pomegranates; both are, fittingly, also symbols of the goddess Persephone, herself eternally youthful. One of the most well-known and best preserved of these, the so-called Brother/Sister stele from Attica (New York *MMA* 11. 185, with a fragment in Berlin, SM A7), shows a youth holding a pomegranate and a younger girl holding a flower; an inscription confirms that it is the youth who is deceased.[43] Another Attic stele (Louvre *MND* 1863) shows an incised and painted male figure holding a painted flower, while a youth holds a flower in a late Archaic grave stele from Amorgos in the Cyclades — to mention just a few extant examples.[44] With these monuments as models it is easy to imagine that the now missing stele which once belonged to the preserved block of a base (Athens *EM* 10641) that carries an inscription which compels the viewer to, 'as you behold this monument [of K..., dead child of Menesaichmos], take pity on one so beautiful, though dead' (μνῆμ' ἐσορῶν οἴκτιρ', ὃς καλὸς ὢν ἔθανε), similarly might have featured a lovely youth in relief holding a flower.[45] In short it is clear that the peculiar cruelty of death in one's prime was, in the

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of Alexander Turyn, edd. J.L. Heller and J.K. Newman, 1974, 143-168 (150), apropos of *Pers.* 59-60 (τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας / οἴχεται ἀνδρῶν): '... a pretty phrase for the departed youth of Persia but bloom suggests fading, blossoms suggest picking, and οἴχεται can be used of one who makes the last departure'. Beautiful young deities, such as Hyacinthus and Narcissus, who meet premature, but still divine, ends which result in a forfeiture of their anthropomorphic status and an eternity spent as flowers, represent intriguing mutations of the theme. On deities whose epithets incorporate ἄνθος and derivatives, see Aitchison (n. 9), 275-276.

41 Suggesting an interesting analogy: Rosenmeyer (n. 14), 131 observes: 'It is characteristic of Aeschylus's art that there is often little distinction made between the figurative and the real'.

42 N. Kaltsas, 'Die Kore und der Kuros aus Myrrhinous', *AntPl* 28, 2002, 7-40, with illustrations.

43 G.M.A. Richter, *The Archaic Gravestones of Attica*, 1988 [1961], no. 37, with figs 99, 107-109.

44 Richter (n. 43), no. 57, with figs 138-39; P. Zapheiropoulou, 'A grave stele from Amorgos', *AAA* 6, 1973, 351-355.

45 *IG* I^3 1277; L.H. Jeffery, 'The inscribed gravestones of Archaic Attica', *ABSA* 57, 1962, 115-153 (no. 67), dates it to 'c. 500?'. I have not examined the base in person; it is illustrated in M. Collignon, *Les statues funéraires dans l'art grec*, 1911, 35, fig. 13, who would restore a statue rather than a stele, based on the dimensions of the hollow of the bedding, which can just be made out in the illustration and do appear rather too square for a stele (33-34). Though I print the *IG* text of the inscription, I find the reading of the second line offered by P. Friedländer and H.B. Hoffleit, *Epigrammata. Greek Inscriptions in Verse From the Beginnings to the Persian Wars*, 1948, no. 81, more persuasive: ὡς καλὸς ὢν ἔθανε, noting that 'ὅς is possible, but the beauty would be lost'. If this is correct, it is tempting to take ὡς καλός as an exclamatory reference to the image itself: 'How beautiful he was when he died!'. For a different assessment, P.A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, 1983, no. 68.

Late Archaic/Early Classical period, felt to be perfectly contained in the formula, verbal or visual, of a youth in association with a flower or bud. A crushed flower, after all, whether witnessed or to be inferred, as perhaps in representations like those just mentioned, leaves the saddest of impressions.

Before we proceed further, it might be useful to review the occurrences of ἄνθος-based cognates used with abstract, or metaphorical, force in Aeschylus. In *Agamemnon* itself there are several examples to hand. Cassandra is a 'flower picked out from many possessions' (αὕτη δὲ πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐξαίρετον / ἄνθος) at 954-55; as if to underscore the significance of her youth and beauty, ἄνθος is enjambed. She will, it should be noted, be dead by the end of the play. At *Ag.* 197-98 the 'flower of the Argives' (ἄνθος Ἀργείων), that is, the host of young, virile, Greek warriors, are worn down at Aulis, awaiting the winds to carry their ships to Troy; the bodies of some of these very youths will float in the sea ten years later. This fairly straightforward utilization of flower-based language to allude to the 'fairest, choicest, best' of a given lot is, to judge from the evidence, both verbal and visual, especially appropriate and most commonly applied in the cases of about-to-be or already dead young people, especially warriors. It is featured in varied contexts at *Pers.* 59-60, 252, 925;[46] *PV* 420; *Su.* 663 (along with ἄωτον at 666)[47]; fr. 100 (*Kares*), and fr. 415a (perhaps). More complex and ultimately more interesting are those occasions that embrace more expansively the paradoxical, darker implications of the floral metaphor. It happens that the flower, as an idea and as an image, with its brief lifespan, is able to suggest with one deceptively enchanting gesture the illusory space between height and depth, beauty and violence, pinnacle and destruction. It is therefore through no misuse or misappropriation of the metaphor that things other than youth and beauty can flower, too, ugly and despicable things.[48] It is left to the

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46 At *Pers.* 920 κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν functions in much the same way.

47 Raman (n. 38), 196, n. 5, urges us to resist the temptation to regard the two terms as synonymous here precisely because of their close juxtaposition, but his explanation — that ἄωτος is used 'in its Pindaric abstract sense of "the prime"' while ἄνθος is 'flower' in a metaphorical sense — strikes me as an exercise in hair-splitting. I am in general convinced by Raman's overall argument that neither of these terms has as its primary meaning 'flower', in a literal sense, but rather should be associated semantically with '"that which grows" or "comes to, is on the surface"' (204), in the case of ἄωτος, the nap on cloth which literally rises to the top, an image which lends itself naturally to the qualitative overtones that it accrues over time (cf. Borthwick [n. 8], who independently arrived at a similar semantic argument for ἄνθος); a flower, of course, also happens by nature to rise to the top, but neither author finds this relevant. Since the term and its cognates are routinely used of actual flowers in A.'s day and indeed on occasion by A. himself (*Pers.* 618; fr. 374; the occurrences of ἐπανθίζω discussed below might also be included), I suspect that the image of a flower is most likely to have been the first to be summoned before the mind's eye in the majority of the literary situations mentioned in this study in which this language occurs, although I cannot prove it.

48 Cf. *LSJ*, s.v. ἄνθος, ii. 2. These notions are not limited to the language of A., of course. At S. *Tr.* 1089 a tormented and dying Heracles rails against the pestilence that consumes him, having 'burst into flower' (ἤνθηκεν), as it rushes over his body. Earlier in the same play, the hero had cursed having to witness the 'blossoming' of madness, as well (μανίας ἄνθος, *Tr.* 999). The explanations offered by M. Davies, *Sophocles Trachiniae*, 1991, 243, 228, 'it is at its height' for *Tr.* 1089, and 'equivalent to ἀκμή' for 999, in my view, miss too much of the

listener/reader to intuit the Baudelairian decadence which scents such imagery. At *Ch.* 1009 the chorus bewail the deaths of Clytemnestra and her accomplice in murder, Aegisthus, but in the same breath predict new woes for the 'survivor', Orestes, using the flower metaphor: μίμνοντι δὲ καὶ πάθος ἀνθεῖ ('but for the one remaining, suffering also begins to bloom').[49] Helen is a δηξίθυμον ἔρωτος ἄνθος ('heart-stinging flower of desire') at *Ag.* 743, an acknowledgment of her deeply problematic beauty. The infinitive ἀπανθίσαι at *Ag.* 1662, if sound (it is obelized by Page and its precise syntax and meaning have eluded commentators), used by Aegisthus of the 'vain speech' of the elders who have accused him of cowardice and treachery, might also be cited in support of Aeschylus' tendency to gravitate toward the darker recesses of this poetic trope. The same might be said of Electra's invitation to the chorus at *Ch.* 150-51: ὑμᾶς δὲ κωκυτοῖς ἐπανθίζειν νόμος, / παιᾶνα τοῦ θανόντος ἐξαυδωμένας ('It is proper for you to crown [the dead] with lamentations, while giving voice to a paian for the dead'); of the chorus' lament at *Th.* 951-52: ἰὼ πολλοῖς ἐπανθίσαντες / πόνοισι γενεάν ('Alas for having crowned your race with many difficulties'); and of the choral diatribe against an absent Helen at *Ag.* 1459-60: νῦν †δὲ τελείαν πολύμναστον ἐπηνθίσω† / δι' αἷμ' ἄνιπτον ('And now you have crowned [your career] with a memorable end on account of blood that is not be washed away'),[50] even though ἐπανθίζω ('to crown'), since crowns are usually made of foliate material, may be said to harbor more literal and consequently less metaphorical signification than ἀνθέω and its other compounds. At *PV* 7 ἄνθος is used of the antagonist's master stroke, the fateful theft of fire for mortals which has instigated his punishment, while in this same play, at line 23, the term refers to the blooming, healthy flesh of Prometheus which will soon be desiccated, scorched, and ravished by exposure. Finally, 'hybris' flowers (ἐξανθοῦσ') at *Pers.* 821, with predictably dire consequences.[51] This necessarily brief examination suffices to allow for the general conclusion that

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force of the metaphor. For the debates in the scholarship on the language of these passages, see Davies, ad loc., in both cases. Dawe (n. 9), 95-96, had erroneously argued that ἀνθέω here had the medical force 'of ulcers breaking out' and consequently that 'Heracles' skin is behaving as the ground did when Deianeira spilled some of the drug onto it' (a reference to *Tr.* 693-704). He was corrected by West (n. 9, with discussion), who points out that, at any rate, 'the subject is not Heracles' skin but his affliction', thereby fully embracing the macabre effect of the image, as I see it. Aitchison (n. 9) 273-74, associates the five occurrences of Homeric words ending in –ήνοθε(ν) with ἄνθος, including *Il.* 11.266, which describes a festering wound of Agamemnon: ὄφρα οἱ αἷμ' ἔτι θερμὸν ἀνήνοθεν ἐξ ὠτειλῆς. See also Lucian, *Nigr.* 16, a flowering (ἀνθεῖ) of coarse desires.

49 A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus Choephoroi*, rev. ed. 1952, 75, following the same pattern which we have seen with Ag. 659, calls this 'a violent metaphor in English, but in Greek more natural'.

50 Obelized by Page, but not by G. Murray in the earlier *OCT* edition (*Aeschyli Septem quae Supersunt Tragoediae*, 1957).

51 It is interesting that ms. Q has ἀνθοῦσ' (apparatus of Wilamowitz 1914 [n. 13]; R. D. Dawe, *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus*, 1964, 334, ad loc.), which would suggest another example of A.'s preference for the simple verb form over the compounds for more potent poetic effects. G. Ferrari, 'The Ilioupersis in Athens', *HSCP* 100, 2000, 119-150 (147-48) compares the *Pers.* passage with *Ag.* 659-60, concluding that 'Similarly, in the Agamemnon the corpses strewn over the sea are the flowering of *hubris*, producing blooms of *ate*'.

Aeschylus used ἄνθος and derivatives more often in lugubrious or sinister circumstances than otherwise, and suggests that similarly dark undertones should be sought in his employment of the metaphor at *Ag.* 659-60.

With verbal and visual images like those just overviewed in mind, the association of flowering with death seems entirely congruous, and the ἀνθοῦν of *Ag.* 659-60 shall have acquired multiple new layers of expressive potential, to which we may now turn. The literary association of flowers with youth prematurely dead in war is timeless: John McCrae's famous World War I poem, 'In Flanders Fields', and Pete Seeger's folksong, 'Where have all the flowers gone', come immediately to mind. Yet, while there is an unmistakable sense of renewal and natural cyclicality in both modern examples, there is none of that in the ancient. In a transferred epithet, it is the sea that is beflowered with the corpses of young men, a perfectly comprehensible way of describing the horrific sight of floating bodies of warriors still visibly in possession of 'the flower' of their youths, and thus, beautifully dead in a Homeric way. Nor does the fact that these dead will likely go unburied deny them beauty-in-death status, although audience foreknowledge of this most dreaded of mortal fates certainly does contribute to the unseemliness of the sight. Admittedly, the dead of *Ag.* 659-60 are ten years older than when they departed, putting them, however, at a still youthful 28-35 or 40; moreover, as is well-known, poetic license allows Homer's champions to be impervious to the passage of time.[52] Furthermore, as Loraux points out, 'la représentation de la classe militaire comme jeunesse au sens large du terme est fréquemment à l'oeuvre chez les tragiques athéniens'.[53] Real life eulogists, reaching for language to match the solemnity of the situation, appropriate poetic diction. Pericles, in a famous line attributed to him twice by Aristotle (*Rh.* 3. 10. 7; cf. 1. 7. 34) and generally thought to be from a funeral oration over the Athenian dead from the Samian war of 440 B. C., declares that: τὴν νεότητα τὴν ἀπολομένην ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὕτως ἠφανίσθαι ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, ὥσπερ εἴ τις τὸ ἔαρ ἐκ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐξέλοι ('the youth [in abstract sense] lost in the war has disappeared from the city, just as if someone seized the spring from the year').[54] Likewise, Thucydides is careful to note

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52 As J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, 1980, 123, observes, the Homeric warrior is 'thought of, at his death, as being younger than we seem to find him elsewhere, or than ten years of campaign at Troy would realistically have made him'. According to Griffin (121-31), this exercise in poetic license regarding the reality of aging is necessary in order to sustain classic Homeric motifs such as the 'short life' of the hero, the 'young husband slain', the 'young widowed wife' still capable of bearing children (and thereby a prime target for war booty), as well as the 'orphaned young child' and the 'bereaved parents'. Cf. N. Loraux, 'HBH et ANΔPEIA: Deux versions de la mort du combattant athénien', *Ancient Society* 6, 1975, 1-31 (22-23): 'Dans la version héroïque … le trépas s'accomplit sous le signe de ἥβη; même si la jeunesse n'avait pas été explicitement accordée au guerrier'.

53 Loraux (n. 32), 13, with n. 47, who explains that, in general, the quality of youth is dominant among E.'s warriors, while maturity characterizes those of S.; on the other hand, and significantly for the present discussion, throughout the works of A. there is a tension, according to Loraux, between warriors as ἄνδρες and as νέοι.

54 Text of F.J. Parsons, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, 1836. For Pericles' funeral oration over the Samian war dead, see Plu. *Per.* 8, and, for the attribution, W.W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus II*, 1912, 198. Apropos of Hdt. 7.162.2, where the same simile is attributed to Gelon of Syracuse, How and Wells (ad loc.) conclude that H. probably bor-

(e.g., 3.98.4; 7.64.1; 8.1.2) that the war dead are 'in their prime' (ἡλικία) and (at 3.98.4) 'the best' (βέλτιστοι), hence, difficult or impossible to replace; when, at 4.133.1, they are called the ἄνθος of the Thespians, the offhanded, prosaic delivery is somewhat jarring, suggesting that the metaphor may have lost some of its potency as it made its way into the hands of the historian.[55] Pericles' line may indeed have raised the standard for eliciting pathos on the *topos*, at least in prose, and Thucydides' rather awkward embrace of the more standard metaphor suggests that he may either be emulating Pericles or adopting the archaic tone of an actual epitaph. In *Agamemnon,* however, the power of ἄνθος as a metaphor is evidently intact, particularly as it is used in an unexpected way. As belated casualties of war, these deaths take on an added poignancy, since these were men who had survived the hostilities at Troy, had hopes of returning home to their loved ones and former lives, but were stripped of their ψυχαί nonetheless in far less glorious circumstances. Helen, destroyer of men and ships, yet manages to effect a fatal outcome for the survivors of a ten-year long war on foreign soil that was waged on her behalf even as she wings her own way all too safely home, having been successfully reunited with her husband. As if to underscore the irony, Helen, the cause of the war, will be called a δηξίθυμον ἔρωτος ἄνθος ('heart-stinging flower of desire') at *Ag.* 743, an antidote to Homer's καὶ δ' ἔχει ἥβης ἄνθος, and a pointed reminder of why the sea flowered at *Ag.* 659-60. If one flower caused the war, many flowers died in it. A Trojan city has been left in ruins, and Greek cities will be even further bereft of their male inhabitants, as more men die on ships on their way home. The image of a sea full of randomly floating bodies of youthful citizens and ship parts thus traverses the full linguistic spectrum of Helen's *nomen omen.* Chaos is her legacy (*Ag.* 403-06); sailing home, she leaves even more chaos in her wake.

The use of ἀνθοῦν of the sea at *Ag.* 659-60 brings before the mind's eye another sensate phenomenon associated with the mere mention of 'flower': color — in this case, the color of blood. It may be useful to compare a similar locution adopted by Euripides in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, a play with a pronounced relationship with the earlier Aeschylean trilogy,[56] and a passage that has been used to explicate *Ag.* 659-60 in commentaries from at least as far back as Blomfield's.[57] Having landed, along with Pylades, on the beach

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rowed it from Pericles. Loraux (n. 32), 9 ff., who treats the metaphor at length, points to Homeric and Pindaric comparisons between the lives of humans and the growth of vegetation, and the death of a warrior and the demise of a flower or a tree (11, with n. 38).

55 J. Classen and J. Steup, *Thukydides, IV: Viertes Buch*, 1963 [1900], 261-62, claim that ἄνθος used in this metaphorical sense is otherwise unattested in Classical prose; I owe the reference to J. Walsh. Cf. the ἁλικίαν who are cast into the sea during a naval battle off Cumae at Pi. *P.* I. 73-74.

56 Cropp (n. 17) 36, 40; R. Caldwell, 'Tragedy romanticized: The Iphigenia Taurica', *CJ* 70, 1974-75, 23-40.

57 Blomfield (n. 10), 244, ad loc. v. 642; Stanford, 'In Lexicographos' (n. 5), 157, calls *IT* 300 an 'echo' of *Ag.* 659; this, even though E. uses the compound ἐξανθέω, which is more natural in circumstances such as these (see also n. 9, above). Indeed it may be said that, had A. used the compound at *Ag.* 659, commentators would have been less puzzled by the image. In his pre-*LSJ* glossary entry on ἀνθέω, Blomfield (loc. cit.) is able to cite only *IT* 310 (= 300) along with other uses of the compound, which in the end do not help much with ἀνθέω itself: in one of the letters of fishermen by Alciphron (1.1.1): τοῦ ὕδατος δὲ ἀφρὸς

near the Symplegades, a maddened Orestes has mistaken a herd of cattle for his tormentors, the Erinyes; he begins to slash away at them, to the consternation of their herdsman, who reports the scene, and their blood spills into the sea: ὥσθ' αἱματηρὸν πέλαγος ἐξανθεῖν ἁλός ('so as for the surface of the sea to burst into bloody bloom', *IT* 300). Platnauer sensibly deduces that 'ἐξανθεῖν should be taken not of foam but of colour', adding that, though the language is similar, it has nothing in common with the metaphor at *Ag.* 659.[58] In a more recent commentary on *IT*, Cropp notes that the metaphor is similarly deployed at *Ag.* 659, but he does not suggest that there is influence.[59] Denniston and Page, too, in their commentary on *Agamemnon*, mention the Euripidean passage, but likewise appear to disassociate it from *Ag.* 659-60.[60] These scholars are undoubtedly correct to compare the two passages and to point out their essential dissimilarities, as well. Yet I am not so ready to dismiss the possibility of a direct connection. Given Euripides' propensity to imitate Aeschylus, it would not be out of character for the younger playwright to borrow and adapt a vivid Aeschylean image for his own purpose, whether one whose full implications he did not completely comprehend or simply with which he did not concern himself. Euripides' simile at *Supp.* 447-49 between a tyrant's peremptory action of wiping out (ἀφαιρῇ κἀπολωτίζῃ) the noble and daring youth of a city and the cropping of the fresh spring growth of a meadow demonstrates the playwright's interest in this category of imagery, and may help to inform the *IT* passage. However, for the sea to flower still seems too rare an image for Euripides to have arrived at by pure coincidence. If one accepts the notion that Euripides seized upon Aeschylus' arcane image as a way to describe the abnormal circumstances of the staining of the sea waters with blood, it follows that this should also be part of our own interpretation of the *Agamemnon* passage. But whereas the more literal and often more verbose Euripides adds αἱματηρόν to make clear that his reference is to color and only to color, Aeschylus leaves the metaphor boldly bare so that multiple allusions and references, including but not limited to those being suggested in this paper, may occur simultaneously to the listener/reader.

Blood, moreover, is not the only unnatural tint that the sea acquires during the aftermath of a shipwreck, as we learn from another complex Aeschylean word picture from *Persae* which seems to prefigure the imagery summoned by the language of *Ag.* 659-60.[61] At *Pers.* 274-77, lines which have engendered vastly different translations and interpretations, the chorus respond to the messenger: ὀτοτοτοῖ, φίλων / πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἁλιβαφῆ / κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι / πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν ('Alas! You speak of the dead bodies of our loved ones, drowned in the sea, borne on the waves and

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ἐξηνθήκει (F.H. Fobes, *The Letters of Alciphron, Aelian and Philostratus*, 1949, 38); and in a passage from Lucian, probably *DMort* 416 (M.D. Macleod, *Lucian VII*, 1961, 30) where ἐξηνθηκώς is used in a medical sense; see also Luc. *VH*, 2.30.

58 Platnauer (n. 12), 86-87, citing comparanda for ἄνθος so used; on the other hand, the translation of Cropp (n. 17), 91, 'so that the sea-swell bloomed with a blood-red foam', preserves both senses.

59 Cropp (n. 17), 195.

60 Denniston and Page (n. 3), 130.

61 As Conacher (n. 40), 150, n. 12, observes, 'many anticipations of the *Agamemnon* are to be noted in the *Persae* ...'. For an extensive examination of the connections between the two plays, see Ferrari (n. 51), esp. 143-50.

tossed to and fro, as they float on their unfurled double-folded cloaks').[62] Page obelizes ἐν διπλάκεσσιν as 'non intellegitur'; however, Flintoff argues convincingly for their soundness.[63] The most commonly cited authority for the meaning 'double-folded cloak' is *Od.* 19. 241-2: καὶ δίπλακα δῶκα / καλὴν πορφυρέην. Yet the phrase πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν has seemed incongruous to many editors and commentators, leading to emendation and daggers and to conclusions like that of Sidgwick: 'corrupt', since 'it could only mean "in their wandering (i.e. washed hither and thither) cloaks", which is impossible'.[64] Even more vexed was Housman, who found '*in vagrant cloaks*' an 'absurd expression' and 'a detail such as διπλάκεσσιν' to be 'somewhat trivial and beside the mark', with the result that he proposed a radical alteration of the text.[65] Likewise, Broadhead is 'not convinced that διπλάκεσσιν is sound' and, finding a detail such as 'wandering cloaks' unlikely and even absurd in a messenger's speech, prefers an alternative interpretation based upon various emendations proposed by others which suggest an image of the *locality* of the bodies being tossed about in the waters of the strait.[66]
Such a degree of discomfiture with an image that seems, to my ear, quintessentially Aeschylean, is hard to fathom.[67]

The preferred text of modern editions such as Page's, which I print, incorporates the correction, πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἁλιβαφῆ, by Prien.[68] But if the ἁλίδονα μέλεα πολυβαφῆ of the manuscript tradition is printed, as in Sidgwick's 1902 *OCT* edition, the image has

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62 In my translation of Page's text I combine ἁλιβαφῆ with a predicative κατθανόντα to get 'drowned in the sea', while φέρεσθαι and πλαγκτοῖς do double duty, taken together to lead to 'float' and separately, in their syntactically normal senses, as well, with φέρεσθαι serving as infinitive with accusative subject in indirect statement and πλαγκτοῖς in its proper role as modifier of διπλάκεσσιν and giving the sense 'unfurled' (this way, the men can both be in their cloaks and on them).

63 E. Flintoff, 'ΔΙΠΛΑΚΕΣΣΙΝ at Aeschylus' *Persians* 277', *Mnemosyne* 27, 1974, 231-37; cf. P. Groeneboom, *Aeschylus' Persae*, 1966, 125-26, who notes (apparatus, ad loc.) one emendation by Wilamowitz and adds: 'alii aliter, frustra omnes', and Paley (n. 12), 187, ad loc. v. 279, who regards as 'perhaps on the whole both the simplest and safest meaning' the conclusion of Hermann (n. 11), 186, ad loc. v. 272: '"Videtur Aeschylus πλαγκτοὺς δίπλακας amplas Persarum vestes dicere, quae in mari nantibus [misquoted as "natantibus" by Rose (n. 19), 111, ad loc.] mortuis late expansae huc illuc ferebantur"'.

64 A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus Persae*, 1964 [1903], 19.

65 A.E. Housman, 'On certain corruptions in the *Persae* of Aeschylus', *AJP* 9, 1888, 317-25 (320-21), repr. in *The Classical Papers of A.E. Housman I*, ed. J. Diggle and F.R.D. Goodyear, 1972, 14-21 (16-17).

66 H.D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus*, 1960, 100-01, who conveniently summarizes earlier scholarship; cf. scholia which interpret διπλάκεσσιν as the twin 'πλαξί' of the sea and of the land, i.e., of Salamis and Plataea (G. Dindorf, *Aeschylus, Tragoediae Superstites et Deperditarum Fragmenta, III*, 1962 [1851]), 78, 446, ad locc.).

67 Cf. M. Anderson, 'The imagery of The Persians', *G&R* 19, 1972, 166-74 (171): 'the words offer such a startling and yet appropriate image of the ruined Persian splendour that I am reluctant to reject them'; and Rose (n. 19), 111, who adds that 'Aesch. probably is giving utterance to what he himself saw after the battle'.

68 *RhM* 7, 1850, 229.

the potential to be even more dazzling.[69] Recognizing Aeschylus' fondness for the transferred epithet, πολυβαφῆ ('much-dipped') has been construed with διπλάκεσσιν to suggest the intensely dyed and many-colored fabric of Persian dress.[70] In the latter case, the idea of oriental-style garments whose many colors were attained by flower-based dyes (cf. the δίπλαξ that Andromache weaves at *Il.* 22. 440-41) as well as the picturesque effect of the colorful cloaks floating decoratively on the sea can be seen to presage the rather more pathetic imagery of *Agamemnon*, where the dead are now Greeks and the 'flowers' are the youths themselves.[71] Xenophon (*Cyr.* 6.4.1) has the entire Persian army — having donned 'many fine tunics, corselets and helmets' and similarly adorned their

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69 Prien (n. 68), loc. cit. had justified his emendation on the grounds that the mss. reading was unmetrical and that ἁλίδονα 'is no word'; but *LSJ* (although not *TLG*) accepts it as a *hapax* at *Pers.* 275. Here I follow Sidgwick (n. 64), 19, in accepting μέλεα, a gloss found in a late ms., to correct the unmetrical σώματα of the mss. (for further information on this ms. and the textual crux at *Pers.* 275, see Broadhead [n. 66], 99-100). This change would seem to be more economical than Prien's emendation, since σώματα and μέλεα are virtually synonyms in this context, and it has the virtue of preserving the original image intact. For additional emendations along similar lines, see the apparatus of West (n. 13), ad loc., who prints ἁλίδονα †σώματα πολυβαφῆ†. Paley (n. 12), apparently undeterred, prints the phrase without daggers.

70 W. Headlam, 'Metaphor, with a note on transference of epithets', *CR* 16, 1902, 434-42 (435), followed by Stanford (n. 6), 135. Headlam observes of the admittedly somewhat convoluted syntax: '... this is one of those pictorial descriptions; their [the chorus'] imagination shows them dead and mangled limbs tossed on the waves adrift in many-coloured garments; and the scattered way in which they jot the details in conveys the impression more effectively than if it were more accurately phrased'. Broadhead (n. 66), 100, however, who rejects the notion of cloaks altogether, observes, without providing a reference, that Headlam 'later abandoned this view in favour of "water-logged"'. Scholia at πολυβαφῆ have 'ὑπὸ τοῦ αἵματος' (Dindorf [n. 66], 77, 446, ad locc.); respecting this, Paley (n. 12), 187, ad loc. 276, associates πολυβαφῆ with the bodies and understands 'frequently immersed', while allowing for the possibility that 'the poet may have had in view the same idea as in 319', where Matallus at his death has his full, bushy beard dyed red with blood: ἀμείβων χρῶτα πορφυρᾷ βαφῇ (*Pers.* 317). On the specifics of Persian dress and its adoption, adaptation, and imitation by Greeks at different periods of their history, see M.C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC*, 1997, 153-187.

71 Flintoff (n. 63), in a strong defense of the dramatic efficacy of this passage's imagery, reviews the role of clothing at crucial moments in A.'s plays; cf. Ferrari (n. 24), 3-12. R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*, 1994, 339 n. 31, in a discussion of the 'rare word', δίπλαξ, in Homer, where it appears most often with funerary significance, compares 'the suspected A. *Pers.* 276-7' and offers thereby this interpretation of the passage: 'The Persians' enfolding robes have become (enfolding) funeral robes, and their only funeral procession is to be carried (φέρεσθαι) by the sea which tosses around their robes'. That the unburied status of the Persians' bodies was a dramatic concern for A. is underscored in the list of the enemy dead enumerated by the messenger at *Pers.* 302-330, in which the undignified, watery final destinations of many of the soldiers' bodies are highly individualized, as if to draw attention to the differences between the more fortunate dead who are buried properly on land and those whose ultimate fates are left to the vagaries of the sea's motions. Cf. E. *Tr.* 89-91, where various sea-girt topographies are itemized as repositories for the Achaean dead by Poseidon, the perpetrator of the future disaster.

horses — resplendent in their bronze (χαλκῷ) and 'flowering in purple' (ἤνθει δὲ φοινικίσι), the latter, in the plural, a likely reference to the dominant color of their dyed and decorated tunics.[72] Aeschylus himself had drawn his audience's attention to the variety of weaponry deployed with the Persian army at *Pers.* 269: τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῆ, an image colorful enough at face value but which could also allude to the men's multicolored tunics as contributing their share to the striking visual impression of the host. Not incidentally, the idea of floating both in and on garments reflects an important aspect of real-life death at sea. A woolen garment could serve to increase the flotation time of the corpse, since wool holds air, thus permitting a broader time frame for the possibility of retrieval.[73] In addition, as Aeschylus seems to know, those likeliest to be in any sort of substantial garment at all included the higher ranking marines, hoplites, and officers serving on deck rather than those below deck, that is, the oarsmen, who probably would have worn only a loincloth on account of the heat.[74] The herald who narrates the tale of the shipwreck in *Agamemnon* describes vividly and at some length the miserable conditions endured by the masses of sailors below, among which he counted himself (vv. 551-67), none of whom would likely be identified as the 'flower' of an army.[75] It makes sense, then, that Homeric heroes or the best of the lot, in Persian terms — the ones showcased in both Aeschylean images — would not be naked aboard ship. At *Ag.* 659-60, while the hues and decorative patterns of Greek garments cannot have matched those of the Persians in *Persae*, their unanticipated presence on an otherwise drab surface of the sea would nonetheless turn a scene of horror into a spectacle of surprising color, guaranteed to confound the senses, not to mention the emotions, of the observer.[76] By *Pers.* 419-20 the waters are completely hidden from sight, clogged as they are by the bodies and the debris. In a choral passage already mentioned, at *Ag.* 197-98, where the 'flower of the Argives' are characterized as having been worn down at Aulis by the unwanted delay and the undesired leisure time produced by calm winds, the metaphor is

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72 Pace J.J. Owen, *The Cyropaedia of Xenophon*, 1846, 484, who glosses ἤνθει as 'nitebat', citing others who assume similarly that it refers to their bronze armor.

73 B.S. Strauss, 'Perspectives on the death of fifth-century Athenian seaman', *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, ed. H. van Wees, 2000, 261-83 (269).

74 Strauss (n. 73), 263-64, 270.

75 De Jong (n. 2,) 64 n. 5, observing that the Euripidean messenger may be 'a servant, soldier, sailor, farmer or herdsman', adds that 'Aeschylean and Sophoclean messengers belong to the same social class'. Though the herald would most likely have come from the ranks of the lowly oarsmen, he reports democratically on the vision before him. Commanders, champions, hoplites, and seamen would have been present on the returning ship, all vulnerable to the same indecorous fate irrespective of social status. (For the sea as the paradigm of audacity, cf. E. *Hipp.* 304-05.) On the erratic flotation of drowned bodies at the whim of the waves, see S. Georgoudi, 'La mer, la mort et le discours des epigrammes funéraires', *AION (archeol)* 10, 1988, 53-61 (56), who compares (n. 17) the sentiments of Hecuba at E. *Tr.* 691-96, and wonders whether the phenomenon is the inspiration for Archil. fr. 213 (West): ψυχὰς ἔχοντες κυμάτων ἐν ἀγκάλαις.

76 So the sea-soaked robes of the dead Polydorus 'announce' (ἀγγέλλουσι) themselves to Agamemnon as Trojan as opposed to Argive in E. *Hec.* 733-35. In another colorful image, Odysseus' companions float like seabirds (κορώνῃσιν) on the waves as they are carried away from their destroyed ship (*Od.* 12.418-19).

that of carded wool (τρίβῳ κατέξαινον).[77] For the audience, visualizing the activity of carding wool is proleptic, for it anticipates the shredded garments of the drowned host of *Ag.* 659-60, as I am interpreting the passage.[78] But the nude body might also be shredded like cloth: *AP* 7. 404. 4, a funerary epigram for a drowning victim, refers to his absent, 'sea-carded' (ἀλίξαντον) body.[79]

May I suggest yet another layer of meaning which may be gleaned from the image. Garments treated with a purple/red dye obtained from either seaweed or mollusks ('purple' fishery) are sometimes referred to as dyed with 'the flowers of the sea' (as at *AP* 6. 206. 4). It is, of course, with just such expensive textiles strewn before his feet that Agamemnon's way into his house will be colored a hubristic 'purple' (*Ag.* 910, 957) in anticipation of the bloodletting soon to take place therein.[80] By means of allusive language, alone, the imagery of *Ag.* 659-60 may thus be tied into the central, defining moment — for many, the climax — of the entire play. If so, this would be in keeping with Aeschylus' tendency to reiterate important themes and images throughout his

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77 Cf., e.g., E. *Med.* 1030, *Ph.* 1145; S. *Aj.* 728; Ar. *Ach.* 320; for extended discussion of wool-carding and related metaphors for 'wearing down' or 'leaving in tatters', see Borthwick (n. 8), 1 n. 4, 2-3, 7. If Borthwick is correct in proposing a new lexical meaning, i.e., the nap on cloth, for ἄνθος at *Ag.* 197-98 and elsewhere in Greek literature, this would lend support to my contention that the *clothing* of the dead warriors is one of the multiple visual images intended by the participle's appearance at *Ag.* 659-60. Although Borthwick observes, as I do, a connection between *Ag.* 197-98 and our passage, pointing to, among other similarities, the prominent role of Thracian πνοαί in both scenes (5, with n. 38), he does not tie the connection to a literal reference to clothing, preferring to emphasize the metaphorical overtones of the image in terms of his newly proposed lexical meaning.

78 Employing language not dissimilar to that of *Ag.* 659-60, S.'s image of Ajax, having recovered his senses, gazing at the sea (my metaphor) of slaughtered sheep about him and collapsing ἐν δ' ἐρειπίοις / νεκρῶν ἐρειφθείς ('ruined among the ruins of the corpses ...', *Aj.* 308-09), summons up a comparable picture of the chaos of mass carnage; the identical expression (ἐν ... ἐρειπίοις) used of peploi at E. *Tr.* 1025, where it does suggest tattered or shredded garments, might also be adduced. Scholia at *Pers.* 425 (θραύμασίν τ' ἐρειπίων) note that the term is normally used of the ruins of houses (Dindorf [n. 66], 458-59, ad loc.). At *Pers.* 1017 Xerxes descends from his chariot with his richly decorated garments in tatters, having rent them in the queen's dream at v. 199 and in actuality at v. 468 (Anderson [n. 67], 173-74).

79 On the shredding of the body by the sea, see Georgoudi (n. 75), 55, 61, who provides the reference.

80 Rosenmeyer (n. 14), 61, cautions, unnecessarily, I believe, against the common assumption that the color of these textiles was purple (= a mix of red and blue), since the Greek words used to describe the dye obtained from the murex shell was 'widely felt to resemble the color of blood'. This is based on the false notion that there is a distinction. Purple, as opposed to violet, even in modern terms, has more of red than blue, and blood certainly has a bluish tinge; cf. O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*[2], 2003 [1978], 81: 'The dye of *porphyra* gave its name to a colour adjective in the dark range of brown-red-purple'. On purple as the 'color with an affinity for death', see Artem. *On.* 1.77 (R.A. Pack, *Artemidori Daldiani Onirocriticon Libri V*, 1963, 83-84); as R.J. White, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1975, 79 n. 85, points out, death itself is described as πορφύρεος on three occasions in the *Iliad* (5.83; 16.334; 20.477).

plays.[81] The image of a 'flowering' sea, a deadly sea, in fact, clotted with the youthful bodies of warriors and stained with their blood, its surface unnaturally transformed into a colorful panorama of floating garments, warns us in advance of the source of the dye for the fateful cloaks on which the king will walk to his doom. Clytemnestra is careful to remind Agamemnon of the dye's source as she attempts to entice him over the brink in the famous lines: ἔστιν θάλασσα, τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει;/ τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον / κηκῖδα παγκαίνιστον, εἱμάτων βαφάς ('There is the sea — and who will dry it up? — nurturing an ever-replenished ooze of intense purple that is equal to silver for the dying of clothes', *Ag.* 958-60). Her words stir a memory of a sea that had also generated unexpected color at *Ag.* 659-60, and that that color was as terrifying to behold as are now the strewn garments to a hesitant and intuitively apprehensive king. For just like the men in the sea, the textiles are out of place, not where they belong, and they augur a death as inglorious and anticlimactic as those of the drowned warriors. For the dead men, there is irony in the fact that some of their garments were likely dyed with the purple of the very sea to which they would be returned, which itself would be transformed into a kind of Flanders Fields whose blood-red poppies, that is, the ephemera of death-marking, would be the actual bodies of the Argives' flower.

These last observations have begun to point in the direction of the *Realien* behind Aeschylus' imagery, which we shall briefly consider before closing. In addition to his service at Marathon and possibly Plataea, Aeschylus is said, in the ancient sources for the playwright's life noted above, to have participated in two sea battles, Artemision and Salamis.[82] If these reports are true, it seems clear, then, that he would have been personally familiar with the particular fates of men who lost their lives at sea, that he would have known, for instance, what the aftermath of a shipwreck looked like and what were the stages through which a drowned corpse successively passed.[83] As it is, the habit of

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81 Cf., e.g., Headlam (n. 70), 436; Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (n. 5), 145. One of the best discussions of how Aeschylean imagery works is A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia. A Study in Language and Structure*, 1971, who opens her study with the following observation: 'The images of the Oresteia are not isolated units which can be examined separately. Each one is part of a larger whole: a system of kindred imagery' (1). On correspondences of motif and imagery that serve to unify the plays of the Oresteia trilogy, see also Rosenmeyer (n. 14), 336-68. On the recurring image/theme of crimson dye in *Ag.*, see Rosenmeyer (op. cit.), 107, 137, Stanford (n. 6), 96-100, esp. 100; see also Ferrari (n. 24), 3-12, on the significance of cloth and the multiple occasions for imagery it provides throughout the play.

82 Leahy (n. 28), 3-4 suggests that there is a similarity between the herald's account of the storm at sea in *Ag.* and 'what the men who fought at Artemisium remembered and afterwards told Herodotus', citing 8.12.1. Leahy's argument is that the realism of A.'s account is iconoclastic in that it has more in common with contemporary military history than with the idealized versions of the Trojan war that were popular in art and literature of the day and with which the original audience would have been accustomed: 'The cumulative effect of the contemporary realism in the play is thus to present the war in an antiheroic, disillusioned tone, which robs even victory of its glamour' (8).

83 For a vivid litany of the multiple morbidities a drowning victim faced, focusing especially on their coverage in funerary epigrams of the *AP*, see Georgoudi (n. 75), 55 and passim. As Georgoudi points out (53, n. 1), the perception of death at sea as possibly the most undignified, horrible, and dreaded of ends is at least as old as Homer and Hesiod (e.g., allusive by context at *Il.* 21.281 [= *Od.* 5.312]: νῦν δέ με λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἵμαρτο ἁλῶναι [for the

intertwining 'debris' and 'men' (νεκροῖς... ναυτικοῖς τ' ἐρειπίοις, in our passage), which lends such taut intensity to Aeschylus' images, emulates real, visibly evident conditions surrounding death at sea, whether the cause was natural, as at *Ag.* 659-60, or ramming by an enemy ship. Those dead or alive found either among or on broken parts of the destroyed vessel would be likeliest to be rescued and identified.[84] It is also true that, on occasion, the slough of corpses and living men clinging desperately to ship parts offered one final opportunity for the victorious forces to sail through the debris in order to dispatch or capture more of the enemy, as happened at the battle of Sybota in 433 B.C. (Thuc. 1.50), where the Corinthians unwittingly killed some friendly forces in the process.

An interest in the special pathos of death at sea is not to be taken for granted in a fifth-century Athenian. Strauss points out that the seaman is strikingly absent from Classical Attic funerary art.[85] He compares Thucydides' decidedly preferential treatment of the hoplite over the sailor, as evidenced, among other things, by this famously meticulous historian's neglecting to record the precise number of dead in a sea battle, only the number of ships lost, even though these figures would likely have been available to him; in Strauss' formulation, 'Thucydides seems to have been tone deaf to the sound of oars'.[86] The reasons for this bias are complex and likely politically based, as Strauss concludes, and need not occupy us here. Potentially relevant to the present purposes, however, is the fact that Thucydides' frequent shorthand references to the visual appearance of the detritus of naval battle, as, for example, at 1.50.3 (πρὸς τὰ ναυάγια καὶ τοὺς νεκρούς), 1.51.4 (διὰ τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ναυαγίων), repeatedly at 1.54.1-2 (τά τε ναυάγια καὶ νεκροὺς ἀνείλοντο [of the Corcyreans], καὶ ναυάγια πλεῖστα καὶ νεκροὺς προσκομίσασθαι [of the Corinthians], ἀνελόμενοι τὰ κατὰ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ναυάγια καὶ νεκρούς [of the Athenians]), echo, in an almost formulaic way, the language of Aeschylus. Here too, corpses and debris are yoked together, in verbal emulation of their physical intermingling, and stand virtually alone as a description of the aftermath of a shipwreck. This apparent reticence to describe more elaborately is noteworthy, coming from a writer who was renowned for the *enargeia* of his scenes.[87] It is not out of the question that Aeschy-

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sentiment, compare *Aen.* 1.94-101]; explicit at *Op.* 687: δεινὸν δ' ἐστὶ θανεῖν μετὰ κύμασιν). Some scholia at *Il.* 21.281 associate the term λευγαλέῳ with a watery end; others disagree (H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera) V*, 1977, 189-90 ad loc.). At E. *Hel.* 1209 Helen describes the supposed death of her husband Menelaus as οἰκτρόταθ', ὑγροῖσιν ἐν κλυδωνίοις ἁλός. As if to certify this perception as an absolute, mere death alone is characterized as the 'wave of Hades' (κῦμ' Ἅιδα) overcoming all at Pi. *N.* 7.30-31; compare *Ag.* 667: "Αιδην πόντιον (Georgourdi 54).

84 Strauss (n. 73), 269, 271, who does not, however, adduce the Aeschylean passages discussed here, except in passing (n. 19). On the myriad difficulties associated with the retrieval of the dead at sea, see Strauss 269-73.

85 Strauss (n. 73), 262.

86 Strauss (n. 73), 273-75 (quotation, 275).

87 Compare S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides, I: Books I-III*, 1991, 93, apropos of Thucydides' (1.50) rather clinical description of the aftermath of the battle of Sybota: 'This is detached and chilling prose of a peculiarly soldierly sort'. 'Soldierly' is a curious choice of words in the context of a sea battle; one wonders whether Hornblower has in mind T.'s

lus, with his stockpile of poetic images to render tragic the loss of life at sea, could have served both as a model and a source for Thucydides.[88] Raaflaub makes clear that the navy figured prominently in the private lives of post-Persian war Athenians, from an economic point of view: 'Naval warfare required huge investments in time, manpower, and money'. As Raaflaub points out, casualty figures for naval battles could be 'astronomical'; a single military siege could cost more than the Parthenon and its statue together.[89] It is tempting to associate the exorbitant costs of the naval management and warfare related to empire in these years with Aeschylus' apparent interest in death at sea, although I hesitate to correlate the two too closely. However, in a forceful argument, Rosenbloom makes explicit connections between Athens' naval power in the fifth century and Aeschylus' dramas, starting from the credible assumption that 'The fleet was a source of anxiety to Aeschylus both as a citizen and as a poet'; one might add, to Thucydides, as well. In the figure of Agamemnon, according to Rosenbloom, Aeschylus 'condenses and presents in analogical form the character of Athenian naval hegemony...'.[90] It would seem natural for Thucydides, who, in his representation of history, is often credited with the skills of a tragedian, to make use of his predecessor's imagery. The literary styles of the two writers, it will be remembered, were likened in antiquity (D.H. [*Comp.* 22]).

Along with the evocation of everyday realities of death on the sea, *Ag.* 659-60 may also incorporate a less direct invitation for the audience to visualize, as they listen, the future graves of the dead lucky enough to be retrieved.[91] By this I mean actual archaic grave monuments like those mentioned above, whose form would yet have been familiar to many members of Aeschylus' original audience of 458 B.C. and to the playwright himself (born ca. 525 B.C.) even though the type had gone out of fashion sometime since.[92] For there can be found in the aforementioned first stasimon which precedes the

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bias toward the hoplite, a suspicion which is reinforced when Hornblower contrasts Th. 3.98.4, a particularly detailed description of a land battle.

88 Both, to be sure, may be indebted to Homer: compare *Od.* 12.67-68: ἀλλά θ' ὁμοῦ πίνακάς τε νεῶν καὶ σώματα φωτῶν / κύμαθ' ἁλὸς φορέουσι πυρός τ' ὀλοοῖο θύελλαι.

89 K.A. Raaflaub, 'The transformation of Athens in the fifth century', *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, edd. D. Boedeker and K.A. Raaflaub, 1998, 15-41 (17-18).

90 D. Rosenbloom, 'Myth, history, and hegemony in Aeschylus', *History, Tragedy, Theory. Dialogues on Athenian Drama*, ed. B. Goff, 1995, 91-130 (esp. 95-98, 104-14); quotations are from 97, 106.

91 For the unretrieved, these would be cenotaphs; there would be no final 'resting', since the sea 'hides' the body; see Georgoudi (n. 75), 57-60, who disputes (58 n. 26) the sentiments of Helen in E. *Hel.* 1065-66, 1244-45 that the drowning victim would be denied even the most basic of funerary rites, burial. The author explains that the misleading statements were part of the extended web of deception that Helen and Menelaus were weaving against an unwitting barbarian, Theoclymenus.

92 A useful overview, with bibliography, of the problems connected with the so-called 'post aliquanto' funerary legislation described by Cicero, which is usually evinced as responsible for the decline of lavish, archaic-style funerary monuments by the early fifth century B.C., may be found in A.R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Legibus*, 2004, 414-24. For a recent reconsideration of this vexed issue, see K. Stears, 'The times they are a'changing: Developments in fifth-century funerary sculpture', *The Epigraphy of Death*, ed. G.J. Oliver, 2000, 25-58.

passage under current consideration, specifically, in lines 433-55, a noticeable concentration of only slightly veiled language about burials, graves, and grave markers. The multiple allusions to funerary imagery get underway when we are told by the chorus that, 'instead of the men' (ἀντὶ δὲ φωτῶν), 'vessels and ash' (τεύχη καὶ σποδός, read: 'vessels containing ash', i.e., funerary urns carrying their cremated remains) arrive at the home of each of the dead (434-36).[93] Aeschylus then helpfully develops the image for us: Ares, the 'gold-changer in bodies' (437), apparently makes things easy for himself when he is on the battlefield. He sends the dead straight from the pyre in the more compact and manageable form of dust (ψῆγμα, 442, a colorful term, appropriate for the context, as it is more commonly used of gold dust), whose weight can be deemed heavy (βαρύ, 441), it would seem, only in terms of the quantity of tears it may be expected to elicit (δυσδάκρυτον, 442) from the φίλοι.[94] Here, however, in the explanatory passage, the ashes of the dead become, simply and memorably, ἀντήνορος (443), an apparent

93 The argumentation presented by Fraenkel (n. 13), 226-27, has, it seems to me, convincingly disposed of the theory that τεύχη should refer to 'armor', even though the question is left open (227). For the sentiment, compare S. *El.* 1158-59; E. *Supp.* 1129-30; E. *Hel.* 399; Prop. 3.12.13-14. For the practice: Patroklos' cremated remains are laid in a χρυσέην φιάλην at *Il.* 23.252-53 (cf. 243); Hector's are placed in a χρυσείην λάρνακα at *Il.* 24.795; while those of Achilles are laid in a χρύσεον ἀμφιφορῆα made by Hephaistos at *Od.* 24.74; compare also *Il.* 7.334-35 (which are, however, cut by Aristarchus), and Th. 6.71. Both Homer and A. are aware of the early Iron age custom of using urns as caskets. That much seems obvious. On the other hand, whether and to what degree A.'s portrayal betrays signs of an anachronistic model of military funeral practices, specifically, the so-called 'patrios nomos', described by Thucydides at 2.34 and commonly thought, despite the epithet, to have been introduced at Athens only as recently as 464 (F. Jacoby, 'PATRIOS NOMOS: State burial in Athens and the public cemetery in the Kerameikos', *JHS* 64, 1944, 37-66), has been debated, but does not affect the present argument. Leahy (n. 28) 4-5, who outlines the issues involved and refers to earlier literature on both sides of the argument, suspects that there is a 'deliberate reminder of the contemporary Athenian custom of bringing home the cremated remains of those killed in overseas campaigns for a public funeral', but wisely does not press the allusion. There is no reference to a *public* ritual in the *Ag.* passage, nor is it suggestive of anything other than individual burial, in contrast to the commonality that characterizes the Athenian custom. Furthermore, wooden (κυπαρισσίνας) coffins are used in the Athenian ritual, whereas A. has the remains in metal containers, on the epic model, it seems.

94 The ash may also be deemed 'heavy' on account of its being ἀντήνορος (443), i.e., the literal and notional equivalent of the dead man's body. On the concept of 'heavy dust' (βαρὺ ψῆγμα), Fraenkel (n. 13), 230, has the most succinct commentary: 'nothing, I am afraid, can be done to help those fanatics of logic who would remove or at least suspect this magnificent oxymoron'. For some reason δυσδάκρυτον has not been enlisted to explain the image, despite, the lead of Euripides. Cf. Paley (n. 12), 357-58, ad loc. vv. 426-30, who, in rejecting conjectures by those who have been bothered by βαρύ, compares E. *Supp.* 1125 (βάρος μὲν οὐκ ἀβριθὲς ἀλγέων ὕπο) and 1127-30 (δάκρυα φέρεις φίλαι / ματρὶ τῶν ὀλωλότων / σποδοῦ τε πλῆθος ὀλίγον ἀντὶ σωμάτων / εὐδοκίμων δή ποτ' ἐν Μυκήναις), lines which echo a number of the distinctive images of *Ag.* 437-55, and suspects that E. might have been influenced by the passage; I could not agree more. Sidgwick (n. 4), 30, compares S. *El.* 1142: σμικρὸς προσήκεις ὄγκος ἐν σμικρῷ κύτει.

coinage by Aeschylus,[95] and εὐθέτου ('readily stowed', 444)[96] in the burial urns (λέβητας, 444)[97] which will likely stand over their graves, in a manner unmistakably reminiscent of the prevailing custom of Geometric and Orientalizing Athens. A brief description of a typical funeral follows, with eulogies suggestive of actual funerary epitaphs in the Archaic style (445-47).[98] Finally, the dead themselves are evoked in all their Homeric beauty (εὔμορφοι, 454),[99] and, in an clever play on the traditional use of κατέχω ('possess') for what the earth does to the body in a grave, they are described, with either surprising assertiveness or supreme irony, as possessors of, even as they are possessed by, the Trojan earth that covers them: οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τεῖχος θήκας Ἰλιάδος γᾶς εὔμορφοι κατέχουσιν, ἐχθρὰ δ' ἔχοντας ἔκρυψεν (loosely: 'and there, around the walls, the beautiful dead possess Trojan tombs, [and possessors they remain,] even as the dirt of their enemy's earth has concealed them', 452-55).[100] Also worth mentioning in this context is *Ag.* 1537-40. There, the chorus of Argive elders bewail the ignominious circumstances of the death of their lord, wishing that they had died before witnessing it: ἰὼ γᾶ γᾶ, εἴθε μ' ἐδέξω / πρὶν τόνδ' ἐπιδεῖν ἀργυροτοίχου / δροίτας κατέχοντα

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95 According to Fraenkel (n. 13), 230, who calls *Ag.* 443 a 'more powerfully compressed phrase [than 434-35] ... in which the idea of ἀμείβεσθαι is contained' (228). It has been argued that ἀντήνωρ is inspired by a Homeric personal name; for the literature, see Fraenkel 230.

96 There is some controversy over whether the epithet is meant to be taken with the ashes or with the vessels. I prefer the former, following the εὐθέτου of the manuscripts as printed by Page in his *OCT* edition, as it further underscores the miniscule nature of the ashes compared with the living man; cf. Verrall (n. 10), 51; Denniston and Page (n. 3), 110. However, Sidgwick (n. 4), 30 (cf. West [n. 13] and Murray [n. 50], both ad loc.) prefers Auratus' emendation εὐθέτους, believing it 'a more natural phrase, and better applied to λέβης', and translating: 'well-ordered'. Blomfield (n. 10), also printing εὐθέτους, attributing it to 'Stanl. Bigot', glosses (229, ad loc. v. 431): 'Facile disponendus; habilis'. Paley (n. 12), 358, ad loc. v. 430, also attributes εὐθέτους to Stanley, but rejects it in favor of the genitive, since 'the epithet is far more appropriate to the carefully-packed dust than to the urns containing it'.

97 A scholiast considers these τὰ ἀγγεῖα καταχρηστικῶς (Smith [n. 12], 136, ad loc.).

98 Rosenmeyer (n. 14), 100, also detects a dramatic change in style at v. 445: 'Suddenly the language turns simple, even plain, the syntax orderly, sharp. The gnarled compression of the grand lyric mode gives way to a brittleness — a nervous clarity that is of quite another world'. He misses, however, the connection with real-life epitaphs. Instead, he explains that 'in spite of the vast difference in style, the two lyric voices are one. Both the complex style [which precedes] and the brittle style [of 445 ff.] are dedicated to the proposition that reality is made up of incompatibilities, of refractory data of experience, emotion, and speech'.

99 Fraenkel (n. 13), 233 n. 2, in his discussion of εὔμορφοι (n. 33), points to a notation on *Ag.* 454 by E. Petersen (*Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst*, 1915, 642) that accords well with the present argument: 'Aeschylus stellt sich Grabreliefs, wie vor den Toren Athens, vor'.

100 Cf. A. *Th.* 731-32; *Supp.* 25. On the irony inherent in this use of κατέχω, see Sidgwick (n. 4), 31, and, for a fuller treatment, A. Henrichs, 'The tomb of Aias and the prospect of hero cult in Sophokles', *ClAnt* 12, 1993, 165-80 (174). As Verrall (n. 10), 52, always the rationalist, is careful to point out, these last sentiments could be applied 'only of course to the dead buried, not burnt'. Even Verrall, I think, would have to admit, however, that the poetic power of the sentiments is unaffected by the inconsistency.

χάμευναν ('Alas, O earth, earth, if only you had received me before I had to look upon this man possessing a pallet-bed in the form of a silver-walled tub as a grave'). While no word for grave actually appears, the presence of κατέχω is sufficient to convey the image. In this case the sumptuous walls of the royal bathtub in which Agamemnon met his death elide with the *periboloi* of the shaft grave or tholos tomb in which a Bronze age ruler would find his last resting place. Thus, while the monumental categories suggested by Aeschylus' language are archaeologically somewhat inconsistent and potentially anachronistic — urns for the cremated are characteristic of the eighth and seventh centuries, while epitaphs would more typically be found with *kouroi* and relief *stelai* over inhumed remains in the sixth century — the message is not at all unclear: the fifth-century audience were invited to imagine, in any visual terms they knew or preferred, the physical reality of the dead warriors' tombs. This vision might be informed by either the heroic past and the contemporary, civic present or both; it does not matter.[101] We must be careful not to expect an absolute correspondence between the funerary practices which are alluded to in Aeschylus' poetic characterizations of the Bronze age and those of his own time. To draw such correspondences with too great precision is as risky as attempting to correlate contemporary political developments too directly with material in Greek tragedy.

This brief exegesis cannot lay claim to having explored definitively the literary and dramatic implications of a single Aeschylean image that reverberates throughout the great, craggy, mountain of a play that it graces, an image so exceptional that, if my hunches are correct, it had resonance among a younger generation, including an impressionable Euripides as well as, and more improbably, Thucydides. I have not attempted to pursue all of the issues which the present interpretation of these lines raises, including the full range of likely responses among the fifth-century Athenian audience who first heard the play, what it might reflect about contemporary funerary practices or about the organization and staffing of the Athenian navy of mid-century, and how it might relate in a larger sense to the performed trilogy. Indeed, constraints of space do not permit the exhaustive analysis of funerary imagery in *Agamemnon* that could serve to strengthen my hypotheses about the two lines under consideration. Rather, the more modest aim of these remarks has been to broaden the possibilities of interpretation of *Ag.* 659-60 to the end of rendering a problematic metaphor potentially less so.

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101 N. 93, above.