2. Responses

Idealised supplication

Any act of supplication is intended to provoke a particular response. According to convention, the person supplicated was as constrained in his response as Aithra is literally constrained by the boughs of the suppliants. She cannot move from the altar where the suppliant boughs confine her (Euripides, Suppliants 32-36; 102-03); her son, after acceding to the demands of the suppliants, must ask them to move the branches so that he may lead his mother home (ibid., 359-61). Aithra is bound by the olive branches placed on the altar, bound to intercede on the suppliants' behalf; Theseus is bound to respond favourably to their request. In a supplication addressed directly to an individual, the intention is that that individual will react as does Aithra's son, as does Pausanias to the man pretending to beg for his life. Pausanias raises him from his position, thus signifying the granting of his request (Thucydides 1.133.1). Similarly, Admetos raises Themistokles from his suppliant position at the hearth (ibid., 1.137.1). Plutarch asserts that Themistokles' gesture has placed Admetos under a religious obligation to grant asylum (Plutarch, Themistokles 24.5). The chorus of suppliants begs Pelasgos to raise them from where they have seated themselves at the altar (Aiskhylos, Suppliants 323-24). Akhilleus takes Priamos' hand and raises him to his feet, asking him to sit on a chair, and giving him a meal and a place to sleep (Iliad 24.513-23; 601-76). In each case the request is acceded to.

The image of "raising" the suppliant from his lowly position is also significant. So strongly has the verb ἀνίστημι been identified with the image of raising the suppliant that it becomes used as a technical term for
the offering of succour to suppliants (e.g. Aiskhylos, *Suppliants* 323-24; Herodotus 5.71.2). Those to whom a supplication is made are intended to feel some responsibility for the safety of the suppliant; certainly the people of Kyme accept responsibility for the ongoing welfare of Paktyes. They save him from the Mytileneans, but are not in time to stop the Khians from surrendering him to the Persians (Herodotus 1.160.3). Demophon certainly feels such an obligation: faced with demands from Argos to give up the suppliants, he indicates that to yield to these threats would be shameful -

\[ \text{It would be shameful ...} \]

if ... I allow this altar to be plundered

by an alien man's violence (Euripides, *Children of Herakles* 242-44).

Appeals to the gods for asylum are intended to lead to a guarantee of safety from the people surrounding the temple, a "substitution of civil protection for the protection of the sanctuary". Therefore the safety the Danaids find at the shrine is temporary; Pelasgos, king of Argos, must agree to grant asylum before their long-term security can be assured. The outcome, it is to be inferred, cannot be taken for granted (Aiskhylos, *Suppliants* 354-58, 365-69); Pelasgos must consider the safety of his kingdom, as well as the religious imperatives. That the Danaids believe he

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3 Pelasgos comments on the indications of divine assent to the supplication (ibid., 3545-5), but still he hedges. Shortly, he gives a reason: because the Danaids have sought sanctuary not at his private hearth but at a public altar, it is the state which would suffer any adverse consequences. Therefore, the people should participate in any decision so touching
has a choice in the matter (despite his observation that ἐστὶν ἀνάγκη - "it is a matter of necessity", ibid., 440) is evidenced by their threat to pollute the shrine with their suicide (ibid., 465). Likewise, Demophon must confirm the protection granted to the children of Herakles by Zeus (Euripides, Children of Herakles 220-22). Theseus must be persuaded by Aithra to grant the suppliants' request (Euripides, Suppliants 265-70). According to the poets, Athens has an excellent record in granting asylum to exiles fleeing to her altars: Theseus (again!) grants Oidipous security, and the rights of a citizen (Sophokles, Oidipous at Kolonos 634-42). Perhaps it is not too cynical to infer fervent self-praise, especially when the suppliants themselves applaud extravagantly the justice of the leader of the people (e.g. Sophokles, Oidipous at Kolonos 642; Euripides, Children of Herakles 303-06, Suppliants 1181).4

**Supplication in the "real" world**

In real life, however, the situation was rather different. Frequently, the danger to the individual (or group) was posed by the civil authorities themselves; therefore, any confirmation by those authorities of the protection proffered by the gods was, at best, problematic. Pausanias, having successfully claimed the protection of the goddess to whose temple...
he had fled, is effectively killed by the ephors, as it is they who had wanted to punish him (Thucydides 1.134). Even more conspicuous is the gulf between the civil and the divine in the case of Kylon. His followers have claimed refuge in the temple, and this has been granted by the archons, who had earlier sought to effect their capture. However, this was to no avail; they are killed (ibid., 1.126; Herodotus 5.71.2; Plutarch, Solon 12.1). Probably the most grave example of this gulf is the story of the Kerkyraians. Defeated in a messy civil war, they seek refuge in the temple of Hera, but despite this they are killed or forced to suicide (Thucydides 3.81). When it is the civil authorities from whom the individual is fleeing, even the temple is usually poor protection.

In literature, religious ideals may win, and suppliants are often granted their requests. However, this is not always the case; some appeals are rejected. Nevertheless, the manner of the rejection can be of interest. The Trojan Adrestos is threatened with death by Menelaos; he catches the king by the knees, and begs to be ransomed. Homer states that Menelaos is on the point of agreeing to this (for, it may be inferred from the text, pecuniary reasons), when Agamemnon (who is coincidentally nearby) intervenes, and argues that Adrestos should die. Menelaos then breaks Adrestos' contact with him by pushing the suppliant away, and it is Agamemnon, not Menelaos, who dispatches the Trojan (Iliad 6.42-65). Menelaos, the man supplicated, could not take the suppliant's life, though he obviously acquiesces in the deed. A similar gesture is used by Herakles against the suppliant Amphitryon: he pushes his father back, but even in his madness, believing Amphitryon to be the father of Eurystheus, Herakles does not kill him. Instead, he aims his bow at his own sons (Euripides, Herakles 966-71). When later he does aim his bow at Amphitryon, Athene hurls a rock against his chest, which blow (not surprisingly) diverts
Herakles from his murderous rage (ibid., 1002-06). Athene thus saves Herakles from the guilt of murdering his father.\(^5\) For a man to kill his own sons (and, incidentally, his wife) is horrific, but it is a crime for which there is hope of purification (ibid., 1324-25). For the murder of a father, however unintentional, one infers, there would have been no possibility of cleansing. Aigisthos recalls that Thyestes was granted refuge by Atreus when he returned as a suppliant at the hearth; Atreus however took his revenge by killing Thyestes' children and serving them in a stew to their father (Aiskhylos, Agamemnon 1587-93). He thus complied with his undertaking not to harm his brother physically, yet satisfied his own longing for retaliation. It also illustrates the vulnerability of children: not only were Thyestes' children smaller and weaker than himself, their deaths at the hands (or orders) of their uncle may have constituted less of a pollution to Atreus than the murder of his brother would have been. Rather more peremptory is Akhilleus, when the fatally wounded Hektor, lying at his killer's feet, entreats Akhilleus by his life, his knees, his parents, to accept ransom for his body from the Trojans. Characteristically, Akhilleus refuses curtly (Iliad 22.344-54).

The Kylonians are induced to leave their refuge, with the promise of a trial, but they remain in contact with the statue via a length of thread. It is not until that thread breaks that they are killed; the justification is that the goddess has thereby refused their petition (Plutarch, Solon 12.1).\(^6\) Plutarch

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\(^5\) Justina Gregory argues that Euripides had two motives for emphasising Amphitryon's narrow escape from death: not only did he want to emphasise the extreme violence of Herakles' madness, but he also wanted to bring Amphitryon into the forefront, so as to give added emphasis to Herakles' later declaration (Herakles 1263-4) that he regards the old man as his true father (Justina Gregory, Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991], p. 152 n. 42).

\(^6\) Did any escape this massacre? According to Plutarch, a few supplicated the wives of the archons (Plutarch, Solon 12.1). This is a detail found neither in Herodotos nor Thucydides.
states that the thread broke of its own accord; is one being too sceptical to infer he may be referring to a surviving tradition that the rupture was assisted by human agency? Seaford makes the interesting suggestion that the physical proximity of the shrine of the Semnai (Furies), where the thread snapped (περὶ τὰς Σεμναί θεῶς - near [the shrine of] the Furies - Plutarch, Solon 12.1) to the lawcourts is more than coincidental in the events described: it is in effect the basis for the conflict between reciprocal violence (i.e. by the authority of the Furies) and the judicial process. The thread stretching from the temple of Aρ chi to the Areopagus, he contends, is the means by which the transition from supplication to trial was to be achieved. In his analysis, it not only provides the physical connection between the two, it seems to symbolise that transition. As the thread spontaneously (αὐτομάτως) breaks near the shrine of the Furies, it could be inferred that it is through their agency. Thus the killings are justified by the decision, not of Athene, but of the Furies.⁷ There is another tradition, perhaps to be preferred, which omits the thread. Both Thucydides and Herodotus claim that, after the men (including Kylon, according to Herodotus 5.71.2; excluding Kylon, according to Thucydides 1.126.9) have been persuaded to leave their sanctuary, with promises that their lives would be spared, they are killed (Herodotus 5.71.2), even those who, seeing what was happening, seek sanctuary ἐπὶ τῶν σεμνῶν θεῶν τοῖς βωμοῖς (upon the altars of the holy gods - Thucydides 1.126.11). The odium attached to this deed persisted; there was a belief that this was perpetrated, or at least ordered, by an Alkmeonid (Herodotus 5.71.2, Thucydides 1.127.1, Plutarch, Solon 12.1). This belief was used as a pretext on at least two occasions, during the political struggle between Isagoras and Kleisthenes


⁷ Seaford, Reciprocity, p. 96
(Constitution of the Athenians 20.1, 2), and in the prelude to the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 1.127.1). Certainly in practice there was a certain cynicism about adherence to the rules governing the rights of suppliants. In this case, and in the case of Pausanias (ibid., 1.134.2-3), the suppliant is guaranteed safety from attack, but not safety from starvation. The Kylonians are starved out; Pausanias is starved to the point of death. Though the plea for protection is not refused, though the suppliants are not touched, their deaths are still engineered by their enemies. This legalistic nicety may evade pollution, but death by starvation is unlikely to have been the suppliants’ goal in seeking refuge.

Of course, suppliants may be persuaded to leave the refuge of their own accord. That this decision may be induced by force seems irrelevant. Andromakhe is constrained to leave the altar and face certain death, by a threat to the life of her son (Euripides, Andromakhe 314-15). When Kreousa leaves her sanctuary in an excess of emotion at having recognised him as her son, Ion is ready to seize her (Euripides, Ion 1402-03). In certain circumstances, pleas for mercy are treated as if they had never been uttered. So Haimon, mad with grief, rushes on his father and attempts to kill him (Sophokles, Antigone 1231-34). Even though Kreon has begged him

Εξελθε, τέκνον, ικέσιος σε λίσσομαι

Come out, son, I a suppliant beseech you (ibid., 1230).

Haimon is, of course, temporarily out of his mind with grief, his eyes compared to those of a savage beast (ibid., 1231); but Herakles was likewise demented (out of his mind, or certainly not in control of it) when he, like the son of Kreon, was about to kill his own father. Herakles, however, is prevented by Athene from committing parricide (Euripides, Herakles 966-71; 1002-08). In one sense, Haimon does commit parricide: by his suicide, he kills the king's hopes for posterity (Sophokles, Antigone 1234-37). This
suicide, a grim parody of the intended marriage which would have ensured the continuation of Kreon's house, begins the collapse of that house. As Segal justly comments, this fall of the basic unit of the city suggests that the structure of the polis itself may fail. The analogy of Haimon and Antigone's deaths with their marriage is made explicit by Sophokles: not only were the two betrothed (ibid., 568), but Antigone refers to her rocky tomb as a νυμφεῖον (nuptial chamber - ibid., 891). The messenger who announces the death of Haimon to his mother also claims the tomb is κόρης

νυμφεῖον Ἄιδου κοῖλον

the hollow nuptial chamber of the bride of death (ibid., 1204-05).

After his death, his father sees that

κεῖται δὲ νεκρός περὶ νεκρό. τὰ νυμφικά
tέλη λαχῶν δείλαιος ἔν γ' Ἄιδου δόμοις.

he lies body beside body, the luckless man whose lot is the consummation of his marriage in the halls of Hades (ibid., 1240-41).

With his only surviving son and his wife dead, Kreon is condemned to a living death, a fate acknowledged by the messenger (ibid., 1167, 1170) and even himself (ibid., 1330-32).

Circumstances and not emotion may decide the issue. The Kerkyraians are unwilling to shelter the suppliant Themistokles, lest they endanger themselves by offending both Athens and Sparta, each too powerful to be ignored (Thucydides 1.136.1). Later, in 413, when Nikias and Demosthenes finally decide to evacuate the Athenian army from Sicily, the sick and wounded who are to be left behind beg in every way possible to be taken to safety. It is not stated whether any employ the actions usual in the

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ritual; one may with some confidence infer that they do.⁹ To no avail; they are left behind, though those fleeing carry with them feelings of guilt (ibid., 7.75.4). The exceptional circumstances do, of course, render this response understandable. Surely, however, any circumstances which give rise to such pleas might be considered exceptional.

Given that custom circumscribed the possible responses of the person supplicated, it is not surprising to find cases where an individual carefully avoids physical contact with a suppliant, and therefore the implicit obligation to respond favourably. The guileful Odysseus, faced with the doomed Polyxene, hides his hand under his clothes and turns away his face (Euripides, Hekabe 342-44). Well might he do so, for it is he who had persuaded the divided Akhaians that the sacrifice of Hekabe's daughter should take place, according to the report of the chorus (ibid., 130-40). Polyxene's comment on that gesture makes him look foolish.¹⁰ Hippolytos, righteous but wary, orders Phaidra's suppliant nurse not to touch his clothing (Euripides, Hippolytos 606).¹¹ Kreon is too slow to prevent Medeia's

⁹ That Thucydides does not describe the scene in greater detail, as he does other scenes of desperation, could be due to one of several reasons. He may not have known any more than the bare fact of their pleas. Secondly, the Athenians would have been forced to ignore any pleas that may have been made, whatever the ritual force. A simple omission leaves the embattled Athenians less morally culpable, and perhaps less likely to have been blamed by the relatives of those who were abandoned. Thirdly, and most likely, to include a full description of the men's entreaties must have interrupted the flow of the narrative.


¹¹ The most convincing interpretation of this passage is that he wants to avoid a formal supplication being made. It is in this way that Michael Halleran reads the verse (Euripides, Hippolytus. With Introduction, Translation and Commentary [Warminster, Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips, 1995], p. 201 on v. 606). One cannot concur with John Ferguson's view that Hippolytos, "frightened of sex", "can't bear to be touched even by an old woman" (Euripides, Hippolytus. Edited with Introduction, Commentary and Vocabulary [Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1984], p. 69 on v. 606). Certainly Hippolytos is vehement in his
making physical contact with him (Euripides, Medeia 338). Prior to this he has been steadfast in refusing her plea; now he gives way, against his better judgement, apparently because the supplication is stronger as a result of the physical contact between the two.\(^{12}\) Now Kreon cannot resort to his only alternative, the use of force, even against Medeia.

Even the noble Akhilleus, though he had with youthful enthusiasm offered his assistance to save Iphigeneia (Euripides, Iphigeneia at Aulis 932-34), is finally eager in his acceptance of Iphigeneia's decision to die (ibid., 1404-15; 1421-23).\(^{13}\) His offer, at least in the early stages of the play, appears to be sincere: certainly the other characters take his gesture denunciation of women (Euripides, Hippolytos 616-668), but that is a reaction to the nurse's disclosure of Phaidra's passion. Previously, he had merely held himself aloof from Aphrodite (ibid., 102, 113). Surely, if Hippolytos had displayed such hatred for women, the nurse would not have disclosed Phaidra's secret to him.

\(^{12}\) As Gould argues - op. cit., p. 86.

\(^{13}\) Her decision to die centres on her recognition that resistance is futile. She sees the force that is determined on her death, the army, as irresistible. So, as Siegel rightly argues, her change of mind is not inconsistent with her character, but is a piteous attempt to rationalise and ennoble the inevitable evil. After all, her father has abandoned her to her fate, and Akhilleus is helpless against the entire army (Herbert Siegel, "Self-delusion and the volte-face of Iphigeneia in Euripides' Iphigeneia at Aulis", Hermes CVIII [1980], pp. 310-11, 315, 320). The immediate precursor to her decision to die is Akhilleus' offer to die in her defence. Sansone's argument that it is this which triggers her change of mind (David Sansone, "Iphigeneia changes her mind", Illinois Classical Studies XVI [1991], p. 165) is not inconsistent with her recognising the inevitability of her fate. Were Akhilleus to carry out his undertaking and defend her against the entire army, the odds being emphasised by the hero himself, not only would she die in an undignified manner, but he too would be killed. Sansone, however, assumes that the change of mind occurred immediately before Iphigeneia's speech. This is implausible: surely it is more credible to see this decision gradually developing in her mind, the offer of Akhilleus' futile but heroic gesture only crystallising it into a firm resolution. This is not an idealisation of womanhood, a growth "to strength and womanhood under a stern duty" (pace E.M. Blaiklock, The Male Characters of Euripides. A Study in realism [Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1952], pp. 201. 206). It is a desperate rationalisation of the inescapable.
They may not believe that his actions will attain their goal, but there is no suggestion of doubt about his sincerity. He proffers his assistance, such as it is, because his honour has been besmirched by the unauthorised use of his name. If Agamemnon had asked his permission, Akhilleus would have gladly loaned his name to this deception (ibid., 961-63, 965-69). The only way he sees to make good his damaged honour is to help Klytaimestra and her daughter, or at least to say he will do so. His attitude is indeed in the heroic manner: his honour is all-important, and the preservation of his reputation is all that motivates his actions. No external moral values impel his actions. According to his values, he is compelled to act in this manner, defying his leaders by offering aid while knowing he cannot fulfil his promises. One cannot concur, as does Foley, with Roussel's assertion that here Akhilleus is acting as the κύριος of Iphigeneia, in anticipation of the fictitious marriage. The hero specifically denies such a claim:

οὐ τῶν γάμων ἑκατὶ - μυρία κέρα

θηρωι λέκτρον τούμον - ἐρητία τόδε

ἀλλ' ὑβριν ἡς ἡμᾶς ὑβρίο' Ἀγαμέμνον ἄναξ.

It is not for the sake of the marriage that I say this - there are countless young girls pursuing my marriage-bed eagerly: but King Agamemnon has wantonly insulted me: (ibid., 959-61).

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14 As Sansone rightly argues - op. cit., p. 164.
15 O'Con:nor-Visser, op. cit., p. 141 n. 11
16 P. Roussel, "Le rôle d'Achille dans L'Iphigénie à Aulis", Revue des Études Grecques XXVII (1915), p. 246; Helene P. Foley, Ritual Irony. Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 73. The argument that the purity of Akhilleus has been compromised by the supposed betrothal (Foley, loc. cit.) is a curious one. If this were the case, Iphigeneia's virginity would likewise be besmirched, thus rendering her unfit as a sacrifice. Yet nowhere, in her voluble defence of her daughter (Iphigeneia at Aulis 1146-1208), does Klytaiemestra advance this argument. It is surely not unreasonable to expect her to use any argument that may spare Iphigeneia's life.
His sincerity is palpable: he places too much stress on the need to avenge his outraged pride for this to be an irrelevance (see e.g. 936-37, 944, 968-69). It is not until there is no hope of saving her life, when the entire Greek army clamours for her death, that he refers to Iphigeneia as his intended bride (ibid., 1355-56). Later still, when she has decided that she will acquiesce in her impending death, when there is not even a remote chance of their marrying, he praises her as a most desirable bride (ibid., 1404-05). For the sake of this outraged pride, then, not in order to claim his "bride", does he offer assistance. However, these offers of assistance should she change her mind lack conviction: all his reasons for admiring her, enthusiastically emphasised, stem from her act of self-sacrifice. His assistance to this point has been confined to advice to Klytaimestra to persuade Agamemnon to relent (ibid., 1015), so that he may not be alienated from his leader (ibid., 1019-21). Vellacott rightly notes that he ought to realise that in order to achieve his stated objective of saving Iphigeneia, he needs to take decisive and immediate action.17 This, however, he fails to do: if he is to be seen as sincere in his protestations and advice, he is a singularly unintelligent hero. Klytaimestra's response -

\[\text{ός σωφρον' ἐπικας, δραστέων δ' ἵνα σοι δοκεῖ.}\]

\[\text{ἡν δ' αὖ τι μὴ πράσσομεν ὧν ἔγὼ θέλω.}\]

How you speak with discretion. What you think best must be done. But on the other hand if we do not accomplish any of what I wish...

(ibid., 1024-25)

- her scant praise of what he has said, her immediate concern with alternative plans should his go awry. underscores her recognition of the futility of this course of action.18 Even when she presses him, he gives no


18 Ibid.
commitment (ibid., 1028-32). The chorus certainly makes it clear that they do not believe he can or will save her: they describe her impending marriage with death (ibid., 1080-88). Their condemnation of impious and lawless men (ibid., 1089-97) makes no exception for Akhilleus.\(^{19}\) His later feeble defence of Iphigeneia is, by his own admission, overruled by the shouting of the army (ibid., 1346-57). It is therefore no surprise when this limp hero, faced with the immediate compulsion to make good his promise, when it is far too late to secure anything but his own death, grasps Iphigeneia’s decision to die with such relief. Now it is safe to heap on her head the previously withheld praise, in such a manner -

\[
\text{εύ γὰρ τὸδ’ εἰπας ἀξίως τε πατρίδος;}
\]
\[
\text{τὸ θεομαχεῖν γὰρ ἀπολιττοῦσ’ ὦ σου κρατεῖ.}
\]
\[
\text{ἐξελογίσω τὰ χρῆστα τὰναγκαῖς; τε}
\]

For you have said this well, and worthily of our homeland;
you have abandoned strife with the gods, which would prevail over you,
you have chosen for yourself that which is worthy and necessary (ibid., 1407-09)

- as to preclude her changing her mind, as he (for, one feels, the sake of appearances) attempts to persuade her to reconsider (ibid., 1410-15). While Akhilleus refrains from refusing Klytaimestra’s supplication of him, the effect is the same: though his pride is hurt by his name having been used without his approval, this hero, this "spoilt and braggart boy",\(^{20}\) is unwilling to defy his leaders or the rest of the army to save Iphigeneia, and his relief\(^{21}\)

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp. 44, 175

\(^{20}\) A neat description from Blaiklock, op. cit., p. 118.

\(^{21}\) The timing and nature of this effusion precludes its being motivated by “genuine eros for his bride” (pace Foley, op. cit., p. 75). It is a strange eros, that is dependent on and springs from the decision of the loved one to die! He has not been "transformed" by "his sudden admiration and love" (as Victor Castellani claims, in "Warlords and women in Euripides’
at having avoided the difficult decision whether to do this or break his promise to Klytaimestra is obvious in his exclamation:

ω λήμ ἄριστον, οὐκ ἔχω πρώς τοῦτ' ἔπι
λέγειν. ἐπεὶ οἱ τάδε δοκεῖ· γεννάξα γὰρ
φρονεῖς· τί γὰρ τάληθες οὐκ εἶποι τις ἄν;

Oh noblest spirit, I do not have anything to say on this subject hereafter, since this is your decision; for your purpose is noble: for who would not speak this truth? (ibid., 1421-23).

His honour is salvaged: he did not give up Iphigeneia to her killers, she chose death freely. Small wonder that he now praises her so effusively!

**Responses to suppliants at knees and at altars**

It is difficult to concur with Mikalson's assertion that, while the convention in Greek literature decreed that requests made by suppliants at an altar should be granted (after the personal safety of the supplicant was guaranteed), there was no certainty that those requests made by supplicating another person directly would receive acquiescence.\(^2\) He cites Gould in support of this argument, but Gould draws no such conclusion. He merely describes a selection of situations, with varied responses from the supplicated.\(^3\) Certainly their contact with an altar was no surety for the Kerkyraians (Thucydides 3.81.2), for Paktyles (Herodotus 1.157.3), nor for the anonymous supporter of Nikodromos (ibid., 6.91.2). Divine punishment for the perpetrators of such profanity there may have been (e.g. ibid., 6.92.1), but this would have been cold comfort for the victim. That the lesson had not been learned, despite Herodotos, is clear from the Kerkyraian episode. One explanation for the violence of events in Kerkyra

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\(^{2}\) Mikalson, *Honor Thy Gods*, p. 72, and p. 25” n. 7

\(^{3}\) Gould, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-82
may have been the gulf which, according to Starr, existed between the rich and the poor. This, he claims, sometimes gave rise to civil strife; it would hardly be surprising if *hoi polloi* forgot, or ignored, such aristocratic notions as the proper treatment of suppliants. Incidents such as those which occurred at Kerkyra, and the fates of Paktyes and the supporter of Nikodromos, are cases where there was a direct appeal to the deities, an appeal that was disallowed by the humans involved. In similar circumstances, an appeal to any person in a position powerful enough to grant safety to the suppliants would at the very least have been problematic; however, they fared no better than those who fled to a temple. The success rate of suppliants at the knees of the supplicated is not markedly dissimilar to that of those seeking refuge at an altar or hearth.

In literature, too, suppliants at an altar seem to fare no better than those supplicating their intended human benefactor. Lykos intends to burn the suppliant family of the absent Herakles as they cling to the altar of Zeus (Euripides, *Herakles* 242-46). He is prevented from doing this only by Megara's decision to die with dignity (ibid., 284-86, 327-31). One of Herakles' sons in vain seeks refuge at an altar (ibid., 984-94). Orestes, a suppliant in Apollon's shrine, fleeing from the Erinyes, is not automatically granted refuge; instead, he must undergo a trial, and be judged according to the merits of his case (Aiskhylos, *Eumenides* 81-83; 224; 433-34). Apollon is unable to persuade his suppliant's pursuers to relinquish the chase (ibid., 227). On the other hand, suppliants at the knees of their intended saviours can find success. Odysseus attains his objectives when he supplicates Hekabe and Nausikaa (Euripides, *Hekabe* 245-49; *Odyssey* 6.191-93). Thetis wins her point at the knees of Zeus (*Iliad* 1.524-27), as does Priamos...

when he supplicates Akhilleus (ibid., 24.476-80, 515-16). Neither suppliant faces an imminent death; each seeks a favour from the individual supplicated instead. In his comparison of the success rate of suppliants at altars and in personal supplications, Mikalson may have been influenced by Hekabe's words, when she protests to Akhilleus

οὐκ ἔχει θρόνον κατοφυγείν ὄλλον ἡ το σόν γόνυ

I have no other altar to flee to than your knee (Euripides, Iphigeneia at Aulis 911). Hekabe is being disingenuous: an altar would serve her purpose even less well than the hero. 25 In fact, the evidence would suggest that the Greeks saw a supplication of an individual as being no less forceful and binding than a supplication at an altar or shrine.

Conclusion

The response desired by any suppliant was to be raised by the person supplicated, for the request made by the suppliant to be granted. If the suppliant was either at the knees of the supplicated, or sitting at a hearth, then the action of raising was literal. Suppliants at a temple or other holy place wanted a guarantee of safety from the authorities in whose territory the holy site was situated. A guarantee of physical safety was, it seems, supposed to be the right of the suppliant: any who accepted suppliants accepted responsibility for their safety.

Not unnaturally, not all supplications proceeded according to the intention of the suppliant. Often, suppliants who took refuge in a temple were fleeing from the only people who could grant their safety. In practically all cases where suppliants were killed, however, some attempt is made to avoid the pollution consequent upon impiety by coercing the suppliants to abandon their supplication. Suppliants at one's knees may be

25 See above, p. 16.
pushed away, so that the physical contact is broken, and the supplication may be said to have been abandoned. They might be persuaded to leave the sacred area by promises or threats; they might be left in their refuge, but denied food. Such attempts to avoid censure were, however, usually unavailing. Even years later, the incident could be recalled, and used as evidence of ritual pollution.

Supplication was a gamble. Safety was not guaranteed merely by the suppliant's meticulous observance of the ritual, nor was there any marked difference in the success rate between supplications made at holy sites and those made at the knees of the supplicated. Could prospective suppliants make any predictions about their likely success before supplication took place?
3. Inviolability of suppliants

The suppliant, it is clear, is not totally inviolable under all circumstances. Of those who seek clemency or a favour at the knees of another, some are successful. Thetis wins her point (Iliad 1.518-28); however, this is not until Zeus has given non-verbal indications that he may refuse her request (ibid., 1.511-12). Also, this situation, though no doubt tense, is hardly fraught with such hysteria as between protagonists on a battlefield. There we see the outcome of such pleas as more problematic. Adrestos fails in his bid for life (ibid., 6.42-65); so too does Lykaon (ibid., 21.67-120) and the two sons of Antimakhos (ibid., 11.130-47). In a stirring passage, Hektor begs Akhilleus not to dishonour his body, but Akhilleus refuses (ibid., 22.337-43). In the calmer aftermath of fighting, Priamos' supplication of Akhilleus does succeed (ibid., 24.477-506; 560-61). After the battle of Plataia, the daughter of Heges-orides of Kos supplicates Pausanias successfully (Herodotus 9.76.1-3); she, however, can be regarded as only a bystander in the conflict, an accidental casualty of war. Her fate stirs no vengeful passions. At the hearth of Admetos, Themistokles successfully pleads his case, though Admetos had earlier vowed revenge (Thucydides 1.136.2, 1.137.1; Plutarch, Themistokles 24.1, 2). Again, this plea takes place well after the passions which prompted the vow have cooled, and probably Admetos' clemency is not totally altruistic. At the very least, it must have placed Themistokles in the king's debt.

Protection of the gods

Those who flee to the altars or statues of the gods effectively put themselves under the protection of those gods. Presumably this should make them inviolate; after all, who would want to offend the gods? For this
reason Demophon is prevented from ejecting Iolaos and the children of Herakles, through fear of Zeus at whose altar they are sitting (Euripides, Children of Herakles 238-39). Fear of the gods is the key to acquiescence. The herald to the sons of Aigyptos does not hold in awe the gods of Argos, οὐ γάρ μ' ἔθεψαν, οὐδ' ἔγνρασαν προφή.

For they did not rear me, nor did they bring me to old age by their nurture (of me - Aiskhylos, Suppliants 894).

As an alien, however, he could be depicted as an impious barbarian. Most tragic protagonists are at least Greek. One notes Apollon's anger that Aristodikos could remove from their nests around the god's temple sparrows and other birds (Herodotus 1.159.3) Danaos (hopefully) declares that κρείσσων ἰ πύργον βωμός (stronger than a tower is an altar - Aiskhylos, Suppliants 190). Zeus is said to revere the right of the suppliant (Aiskhylos, Eumenides 92), and his wrath falls on those who slight suppliants (Aiskhylos, Seven against Thebes 346, 385-86); to refuse a suppliant, especially at an altar, is to fail in reverence to the gods (Sophokles, Oidipous at Kolonos 1179-80). Indeed, any action taken against a suppliant will be seen by the gods, argues the threatened Andromakhe (Euripides, Andromakhe 253-60). To kill a person seeking sanctuary at an altar is not only contrary to civilised behaviour (Euripides, Ion 1255-56), it also incurs blood-guilt (1258-60). Even Apollon acknowledges that the fate of one who abandons a suppliant is δεινόν (fearful - Aiskhylos, Eumenides 233-34).  

1 A.J. Podlecki (Aeschylus, Eumenides [Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1989], p. 148) comments that in this passage the roles of gods and mortals are reversed. Wrath is the force employed by the Eumenides against erring humans; but here Apollon claims he is in awe of τοῦ προστρεπάον μήνις (Aiskhylos, Eumenides v. 234). That is, Orestes has appropriated the wrath of the Eumenides, and that wrath may fall on another god, Apollon, while that god acknowledges the rightness of Orestes' action. Sommerstein notes that this idea that the gods are responsible for humans is a radical one, unparalleled in tragedy. If they fail to carry out these obligations, they will suffer. Athene will be the object of wrath if she judges Orestes on her own authority: wrath from Orestes if the judgement is against
Precisely what the implicit punishment will be, or how it will fall, is not clear: comparison with Herodotos would suggest that the punishment would be expected to fall in the wrongdoer's lifetime, and probably to be (directly, at least!) of human agency (see Herodotus 6.92.1). There is no clear implication of the pursuit of justice beyond the grave, into an afterlife.²

However, it does not seem to be the case that the protection of the god meant a guarantee of safety. In fact, the very existence of sanctions (whether divine or not) indicates the fragility of the custom. Even among the divinities there are differences of opinion: the Furies upbraid Apollon for having granted sanctuary to a suppliant who had defied the old laws (Aiskhylos, Eumenides 150-53).³ Usually, in any action against suppliants there is an attempt to preserve appearances, and persuade the suppliants to leave their sanctuary. Thus the followers of Kylon (including Kylon? Thucydides 1.126.9; Herodotus 5.71.2) are persuaded to leave the statue of Athene, but are killed (Plutarch, Solon 12.1), as are some who fled to other altars to seek sanctuary for a second time (Thucydides 1.126.11). Plutarch him, wrath from the Athenians who will endure the vengeance of the Erinyes along with Orestes (ibid., 478-81). She attempts to persuade the Erinyes that it would be dishonourable for them, as divinities, to harm mortals (ibid., 824-25). In this play, of course, the gods are not punished for any harm done to humans: such an event, unlikely as it may be, is forestalled by the trial. It is only in the anarchic world of Aristophanes that the gods can, in practice rather than in theory, be held accountable to humans by humans for their actions (e.g. Aristophanes, Peace 103-06; Sommerstein, Aeschylus, Eumenides, pp. 24-25).

² That is, justice does not follow the wrongdoer himself beyond the grave, but it may fall on his heirs. Thucydides describes an occasion in historical times, when requital for a technical breach of supplication by an indirect ancestor of Perikles was demanded (Thucydides 1.127.1). Certainly, the demand was part of the pre-war fencing; but the very fact that it could be made would seem to indicate a general acceptance that the heirs bear some responsibility for the acts of their ancestors.

³ See excursus, "Apollon, Orestes and Klytaimestra: Aiskhylos, Eumenides 658-666" (pp. 87 - 89).
adds the justificatory detail of the snapped thread (Plutarch, *Solon* 12.1). Pausanias is starved almost to death (Thucydides 1.134.3); most of the Kerkyraian oligarchs who have taken refuge at altars in 427 are persuaded to leave the sanctuary, some even to stand trial (ibid., 3.79.1-81.5). Persuasion may take a fairly violent form: Menelaos threatens to kill Andromakhe's son before her eyes if she does not leave the shrine where she has sought refuge (Euripides, *Andromakhe* 314-15). However, removal by force is not ruled out, if the suppliant could not be persuaded to leave the sanctuary voluntarily (or under indirect coercion). The Danaids fear that they may be dragged off (Aiskhylos, *Suppliants* 423-25), even though they have sought shelter at the πῶγον ... τὸνδ' ἄγνισιν θεών (rocky hill ... of the assembled gods - ibid., 189), in the hope of securing the intercession of the Argives in their plight (ibid., 428-32); and in fact the threat that they may be forcibly removed from their refuge is later made explicit (ibid., 909-10, 924). Certain Kerkyraians are dragged from temples, or even butchered there; Thucydides considers this so outrageous that he expatiates at length on the breakdown of civilised behaviour this indicates, and on the manner in which the language was modified, even reversed, in order to conceal the real horror of events, thereby depicting the inversion of the values of the people (Thucydides 3.81, 82). Recklessness became courage, prudence cowardice; impulsiveness was regarded as reliable, caution untrustworthy. Any who plotted successfully were seen as clever, but those who detected plots still more intelligent (ibid., 3.82.4-5). The values that underpin any society - family ties, respect for justice - all had broken down, into anarchy (ibid., 3.82.6-8).

More problematic is the actual fate of the thug, Kleomenes of Astypalaia. Having been found guilty of foul play in a boxing match, he becomes enraged and kills about sixty children in a school. Pelted with
stones by the citizens, he takes refuge inside a chest standing in the temple of Athene. His pursuers tear the chest apart in order to reach him, but find it empty. They send envoys to Delphi to ask what had happened to him; the response is that he should be honoured as the last of the heroes, since he is no longer mortal (Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 6.9.6-8; Plutarch, *Romulus* 28.4-5). Could he be said to have been saved by the gods? Certainly his apotheosis would suggest that he had a right to safety, despite his guilt in the matter of murder.

To drag away a suppliant is said to be the action of a barbarian (Euripides, *Children of Herakles* 127-31). Despite this, the Khians do not hesitate to drag Paktyes of Lydia from the temple where he has sought refuge and surrender him to the Persians (Herodotus 1.160.3). When an anonymous supporter of Nikodromos who flees to the temple of Demeter Thesmophoros in Aigina cannot be dragged away, his hands are cut off (ibid., 6.91.2). According to Herodotos, the party that perpetrated this was defeated by the Athenians shortly after the event (ibid., 6.92.1). Herodotos points the moral explicitly: it is because they killed their captives (during which event the preceding atrocity took place) that the rich men of Aigina were cursed by the goddess, a curse which they were unable to expiate, and as a result were driven out of their island (ibid., 6.91.1). One of Herakles' unfortunate offspring is clubbed to death by his father, though the child is crouching at the base of the altar, clasping his father's knees and beard, and pleading for mercy (Euripides, *Herakles* 984-94). It should be noted that this crime, the enormity of which is emphasised by the range and number of the suppliant gestures used by the child, is committed while Herakles is temporarily insane; his later repentance is also underscored (ibid., 1136-62), and he is promised purification (ibid., 1342-45). Even more infamous is the intention of Lykos, when he threatens to burn down the altar, and so kill
those sheltering there (ibid., 240-46). Ephialtes, it may be noted, comes to no immediate harm when he seeks refuge at an altar (Constitution of the Athenians 25.1-4); of course, he is not in any danger at this time. One may infer that here the gesture of seeking sanctuary is an example of political manipulation, devised, presumably, by Ephialtes or his supporters (ibid., 25.3, 4). Apparently it is some time later that Ephialtes is murdered, for an unstated reason (ibid., 25.4). The fates of Paktyes of Lydia, of the supporter of Nikodromos, and the intended fate of the family of Herakles demonstrate that a suppliant, though technically safe, could be forcibly removed from sanctuary and killed, or even murdered while in refuge. To commit such an impiety was to attract opprobrium, even divine punishment; this however does not mean that such acts were unknown, in literature as well as in real life. The safety of the suppliant appears to have been an abstract concept rather than an absolute guarantee.

Those who harmed suppliants could be seen as having incurred the anger of the gods. Yet there is one case in which a people who succoured a suppliant are punished severely for giving this assistance. The Phaiekmans have been given a prophecy from Poseidon that the god, angered because of their practice of saving shipwrecked mariners and conveying them home,

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4 T.E. Rihll has postulated a plausible reason for Ephialtes' murder. It is suggested that Ephialtes sought to remove the right of veto over new magistrates (δωδεκάεις) from the Areopagus. This would certainly arouse passions among those who saw their privileges being curtailed (T.E. Rihll, "Democracy denied: why Ephialtes attacked the Areopagus", Journal of Hellenic Studies CXV [1995], pp. 87-98, esp. p. 97). If this was indeed Ephialtes' intention, it is easy to see that in an effort to circumvent opposition from the Areopagus at an attempt to decrease their power, Ephialtes may have staged a mock supplication in order to gain the support of the people. That Ephialtes and, one infers, his reforms were in some danger is affirmed by his murder; Sommerstein, citing Antiphon, argues that it was widely believed at the time that his murderers escaped justice (Sommerstein, op. cit., p. 27).
would one day destroy them (Odyssey 8.564-79). This prophecy they ignore: they carry Odysseus to Ithake (ibid., 13.116-19). Poseidon, angered at Odysseus' safe return, and that the Phaiekans have defied him, asks permission of Zeus to fulfil the prophecy (ibid., 13.128-38). Not only does Zeus give gracious permission; he also adds his own refinement, that the ship should be turned to stone, within sight of the watching Phaiekans (ibid., 13.140-45, 154-58). Zeus, the protector of suppliants, the very god who punishes those who transgress against suppliants, is thereby participating in the punishment of a people who give them succour. It could be argued that, in defying Poseidon's expressed wishes, the Phaiekans have committed hubris, but Zeus could overrule his brother if he wished. After all, Poseidon considered it expedient to ask permission before imposing punishment. Zeus' approval is scarcely grudging. One cannot escape the conclusion that the protection of Zeus is given capriciously.

Despite the absence of any guarantee of safety, the gods were seen as the final appeal for those who faced an immediate threat to life or well-being. If one could gain no satisfaction from humans, what else could one do but plead for divine intervention? Certainly, succour\(^5\) had still to be granted by mortals, but the involvement of the gods in the imprecation meant that their presumed wishes had to be taken into account. A suppliant could be seen as the self-given property of the god in whose temple refuge was sought; thus Kreousa gives herself to Apollon as his property, in an ironic echo of his having already appropriated her by force (Euripides, Ion 1285, 885-96).\(^6\) Therefore, any attempt to secure the suppliant through violence

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\(^5\) Assistance is demanded by the gods, but not forgiveness, as Dover astutely points out ("Fathers, sons and forgiveness", Illinois Classical Studies XVI [1991], p. 178). After all, the concept of sin is absent from the morality of the gods: actions which offend them are infringements of their concept of their own honour, and this obviously they cannot forgive.

\(^6\) See Burnett, op. cit., p. 121
was theft from the god.\textsuperscript{7} An individual who flouts the wishes of the gods, who offers violence to a suppliant and therefore to the gods themselves, could look forward to divine hostility.

\begin{quote}
\textit{μένει τοι Ζηνός Ἰκταῖων κότος}
\textit{δυσπαραθέλκων παθόντως οἴκτεις}
\end{quote}

Certainly the wrath of Zeus Protector of Suppliants awaits any not assuaged by the lamentations of the sufferer (Aiskhylos, \textit{Suppliants} 385-86).

This κότος could be expressed in the suffering of that individual, of members of his family, or even of his whole community. Of such breadth is the threat made by the Danaids against the king, when he does not seem eager to acquiesce in their request (ibid., 433-36). It seems irrelevant that the agent of this manifestation of divine displeasure may be human. Indeed, it has been justly observed that Zeus has shown reluctance to save the Danaids from their rapacious cousins by drowning the Aigyptids before they reach the Argive shores, as is the prayer of the suppliants (ibid., 29-39).\textsuperscript{8}

What may one infer as the will of Zeus in this supplication? The motivation for Pelasgos' and the Argives' succour of the Danaids is their fear of the wrath of Zeus, not the direct intervention of the god. Without the other two plays in the trilogy, one may only speculate on the intentions of Aiskhylos. However, the inaction of Zeus, despite the direct appeal of the suppliants and their emphasis on their divine ancestry, as well as the fact that the assistance they finally enjoy is granted solely by human intervention, suggests that the god is indifferent to the fate of his suppliants, whatever their desperation.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{7} As observed by Mikalson, \textit{Honor thy gods}, p. 73.
\end{flushright}
It is through the agency of humans that the slight to the gods is avenged when Aigisthos murders Agamemnon in retaliation for Atreus' violation of the sanctuary granted to his brother (and Aigisthos' father) Thyestes (Aiskhylos, Agamemnon 1577-82; 1603). Lykos, who is prepared to violate the sanctuary that the family of Herakles have claimed (Euripides, Herakles, 240-46, 716), is killed by Herakles (ibid., 753). The suppliant Megara, crouching at the altar of Zeus, intends the impiety of giving herself and her sons to Lykos; she fails to trust in the god to save his suppliants (ibid., 80-87, 284-86). She looks for aid only from human intervention - her decision to die with dignity is taken when the chorus of old men promises futile aid (ibid., 261-62, 275-78, 296). Her punishment for the impiety of failing to trust in divine assistance is death at the hands of the husband she had given up for dead, whom she had seen as her only salvation (ibid., 1000).

Athene exacts revenge on all Greeks for their failure to punish Aias for his violation of the sanctuary that Kassandra sought at the altar of the goddess, because they have failed to punish the malefactor (Euripides, Daughters of Troy 69-71). Aias, who

\[\text{οὐδ' ἔδεισε}
\]
\[\piάδα \Δίος \ πολέμω δότε[p]ραν\]

did not fear

the daughter of Zeus the giver of war (Alkaios 138 [298] vv. 22-23) ravishes Kassandra, despite her clinging to the statue of Athene and clutching its chin (ibid., vv. 8-10, 16-24). Alkaios has Athene responsible for the storm which (one supposes) claims the rapist's life (ibid., vv. 24-27). He makes no suggestion that she considers the lives of the other Greeks forfeit,

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9 Burnett sees her as the property of the god whose suppliant she is: Burnett, op. cit., p. 160.
or that she involves Poseidon in her revenge. Kirkwood comments that this attribution of the agency of revenge to Athene may have been an invention by Alkaios, to point out in a concise manner the direct moral consequences of Aias' action. Of course, the text is fragmentary: Poseidon's involvement may have appeared in a section now lost. Homer describes how Poseidon sought his death; even so, the Homeric Aias may have been spared, despite the enmity of Athene, if Poseidon himself had not been insulted by a new boast from the man (Odyssey 4.499-507). It is Euripides who involves the whole Akhaian army in Athene's revenge, and who dramatises the persuasion of Poseidon to be the agent of her revenge (Euripides, Daughters of Troy 69-91). The Akhaians did not seek to insult the goddess. On the contrary, they are so enraged at the *hubris* of Aias when he drags away not only the desperate suppliant but also the statue to which she is clinging that, on the advice of Odysseus, they determine to stone him. He escapes by seeking refuge at the very altar which he outraged (Sack of Ilium 1; Pausanias, Descriptions of Greece 10.26.3). This poses a problem for the Greeks: should they allow the man who has insulted Athene to go unpunished, or should they themselves violate her altar by dragging away a suppliant? Their fear of the latter deed brings down on them the dire punishment described by Euripides. Divinities, it seems, have no sympathy for human dilemma: the moment Aias takes refuge, the Akhaians are doomed.

Athene *φιλότιμος* is also affronted by the violation of the asylum claimed by the Kylonians and, presumably, permits the expulsion of the perpetrators, despite the alleged (and otherwise unattested) looting of her sanctuary (Σ. Aristophanes 445 - ὑλίτηρίων). A city that condones (or at

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least allows) the murder of citizens who have appealed to a god through the temple could be captured by another city (Herodotos 6.91.1, 2). The clear implication is that this military defeat was permitted by the gods for the violation of sanctuary; here, the sanction has been extended to the entire community, not just to the perpetrators of the impious act. In the same way, the odium of having caused the death of Pausanias, the property of the god in whose shrine he sought asylum, is attached to the whole Spartan community (Thucydides 1.126). Using the same reasoning, the Spartans believe that their entire community has been punished with an earthquake as a result of the killing of some Helot suppliants (ibid., 1.128.1-2). Here, of course, the gods are thought to have acted directly, not through human agents. Not only in poetry is it accepted that

χρόνος τοι κυρίω γένημα
θεον ἄτικων τις βροτῶν δώσει δίκην
surely in time and on the appointed day
any mortal not honouring the gods will suffer punishment (Aiskhylos, 
Suppliants 732-33).

The suppliant and the social context

Generally, the safety of the suppliant seems to depend on the circumstances necessitating the supplication, on the degree of tension inherent in the situation. Parker notes the difficulty in honouring pleas for mercy in times of war, and especially during protracted civil unrest. After all, the individual spared now may, either directly or indirectly, threaten the life of the person/s supplicated in the future. The failure to respond favourably to a suppliant, however, still provoked outrage. The reaction of

11 Burnett, op. cit., p. 160 n. 6
13 Parker, op. cit., pp. 184-85
Thucydides cannot have been unique. The use made of the respective fates of Kylon and Pausanias in the propaganda war before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War is instructive. These two events were long enough in the past for Thucydides to feel the need to remind his audience of the details, but the issue of violation of sanctuary was considered relevant enough to use for such purposes (Thucydides 1.127.1, 1.128.1).

The likelihood of success in any individual act of supplication depended to no small degree on the prior, and anticipated ongoing, relationship between the suppliant and supplicated. Thus Pausanias, when supplicated by the daughter of Hegetorides of Kos on the battlefield of Plataia, raises her and, at her request, sends her in safety to Aigina (Herodotus 9.76). Of course, she is the daughter of a ξεῖνος (ibid., 9.76.3), and this could be said to imply some relationship between them; but they have never seen each other before (she has to introduce herself to Pausanias, and knows him only because he is directing operations), and will probably never see each other again. It costs him nothing to fall in with her wishes. The relationship between Odysseus and Alkinoos is even more slight; they have previously had no contact, the Phaeakians having only heard of the exploits of Odysseus through song (Odyssey 8.73-82). That any contact between them in the future is extremely unlikely is acknowledged by Odysseus (ibid., 9.17-18). Thus, like Pausanias, Alkinoos does not have to conquer any personal dislike of the suppliant, no fear that such a dislike will develop; he can react charitably, in accordance with accepted conventions without such a fear. In both these cases, the suppliant is a stranger, and is, or may become, a guest-friend. As Douglas Cairns comments, the position of such a suppliant is stronger, as the individual

14 However, he must have had some apprehension for other consequences of his action. For further discussion, see below, pp. 120-27.
supplicated has no real motive for treating the stranger-suppliant harshly.\textsuperscript{15}

Not so fortunate is Klytaimestra, when first she supplicates Akhilleus (Euripides, \textit{Iphigeneia at Aulis} 900-16), then Iphigeneia entreats Agamemnon (ibid., 1214-52). To no avail: Agamemnon is bound by previous undertakings (ibid., 1258-68), and Iphigeneia dies, or appears to die (ibid., 1581-83). Equally bound (though not, apparently, so unwillingly) is Odysseus, when Hekabe entreats him in the strongest possible terms for the life of her daughter (Euripides, \textit{Hekabe} 275-95; 303). Their previous relationship, when Hekabe showed mercy to the suppliant Odysseus (ibid., 239-49),\textsuperscript{16} has availed her nothing. The debt Hekabe claims (ibid., 272-78),

\textsuperscript{15} Cairns, op. cit., p. 118

\textsuperscript{16} Homer does not mention any involvement of Hekabe in Odysseus' successful return from his spying mission into Troy. Instead, he has Helen claim that she recognised Odysseus, but did not identify him, while he was within the city (Homer, \textit{Odyssey} 4.250-55). Of course, each queen has her own motive for telling the story: Helen is relating this to Odysseus' son, in front of Menelaos, so it is understandable that she would wish to indicate that not only did she hope that the Trojans would be defeated, but she gave active assistance to the Greek efforts. (For a further discussion, see below, pp. 166-67). Hekabe, on the other hand, needs to demonstrate that Odysseus is in her debt. It is interesting to note that Odysseus does not deny Hekabe's allegation. Of course, there need not be consistency between the two texts: one may assume that each refers to the same incident, but there may have been a range of versions of that incident extant even at the time of the writing of the \textit{Hekabe}. Even if there were no, if the text of Homer was the only version available at that time, surely there was nothing to prevent Euripides from creating his own variant. The detail may have been invented by Euripides, according to Kitto (op. cit., p. 217 n. 3). This does not, however, diminish its dramatic power. Should one prefer Helen's story? Lillian Doherty points out that Homer suggests that Helen has embroidered the facts somewhat. Immediately after her attempt to prove her loyalty to the Greek cause through her description of the assistance she gave to Odysseus, Menelaos contradicts her assertion of fidelity by describing how she attempted to lure any Greek inside the wooden horse into betraying himself (\textit{Odyssey} 4.274-9; Lillian \textbf{Eileen} Doherty, "Sirens, muses and female narrators in the \textit{Odyssey}", Beth Cohen [ed.], \textit{The Distaff Side. Representing the Female in
the relationship that has linked them in the past, has less power than the future relationship between the protagonists, that of master and slave. Hekabe is destined to become the property of Odysseus (Euripides, *Daughters of Troy* 274-76), and what man is governed by his slave? So too are the unfortunate Kerkyraian suppliants doomed; there are at hand no authoritative, non-partisan individuals who could deliver judgement. Instead, the suppliants are dependent on the clemency of those who are themselves deeply involved in the city's political struggles, dependent on a group violently opposed to the aims of the suppliants, and that relationship between the protagonists determines the fate of the suppliants (Thucydides 3.81.2).

This was also the factor which decided the end of Pausanias. Those with the power to save him are the very individuals he has deceived, and whose future he has threatened by his actions. This relationship, not Pausanias' supplication and any rights he enjoys through asylum, determines his fate (ibid., 1.128.3; 1.131-4). The undoing of the supporters of Kylon mirrors that of Pausanias in many respects. Like Pausanias, Kylon has threatened the power of those very people who could determine the fate of his followers (and himself? Herodotus 5.71.2), so their death is inevitable (Thucydides 1.126.8-11; Herodotus 5.71.2). Idealism is not permitted to interfere with the vigorous practice of politics. It is a previous inimical relationship between Themistokles and Admetos which determines the manner of supplication which Themistokles uses (Plutarch, *Themistokles* 24.2-5). This unspecified slight which Admetos is thought to have suffered at Themistokles' hands probably does not compare in immediate emotional impact with the threats made by Pausanias, Kylon or the Kerkyraians;

*Homer's Odyssey* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995], p. 86. To her husband's claim Helen has no reply.
certainly Admetos is able to put it as de, and grant Themistokles safety. Perhaps Plutarch is right in suggesting that Themistokles' actions were planned by Admetos, so that he would have an excuse not to fulfil his vow of vengeance (ibid., 24.5); certainly, Themistokles is sufficiently confident in the outcome (or desperate) to approach Admetos. He is thereafter deeply in the debt of the king (a debt apparently unpaid, as Themistokles dies while in Persian territory). The emotional impact of the meeting between Priamos and Akhilleus threatens to destroy Akhilleus' good intentions; he warns Priamos not to anger him, or he may disobey the gods in the heat of the moment (Iliad 24.568-70). Though the two have not previously met, their relationship has been determined by the war between their forces, and the respective deaths of Patroklos, at Hektor's hands, and of Hektor at Akhilleus' hands. This relationship between supplicant and supplicated would suggest that the request made would be doomed to failure; however, under orders from Zeus (ibid., 24.133-40), Akhilleus acquiesces, but the situation remains volatile. A powerful constraint, therefore, on the success of supplicatory acts is the relationship, both that of the past and that which is anticipated for the future, between the protagonists. The suppliants who have the greatest chances of success are those who have no involvement with the individuals they are supplicating, either directly or indirectly. Generally, the less involvement that exists between the two, the more likely is the supplicatory act to bring about the result desired.

In the face of reluctance on the part of the supplicated, it is hardly surprising to find suppliants vigorously protesting the justice of their appeal. Iphigeneia, in her moving entreaty to her father, points out the injustice of her death, being a direct consequence of Helen's abduction (Euripides, Iphigeneia at Aulis 1236-37). Hekabe, too, vigorously protests against the iniquity of the proposed sacrifice, over the grave of Akhilleus, of
Polyxene, who had done him no harm (Euripides, Hekabe 264). Themistokles too is careful to emphasise how trivial was the slight he has done to Admetos, in comparison with the potential harm he would suffer as a consequence of Admetos' failure to succour him (Thucydides 1.136.4). Likewise, the Danaids contend that justice is on their side (Aiskhylos, Suppliants 343, 395, 406), that they ask that which is their right (ibid., 384). Oidipous, ordered out of the area by the citizens of Kolonos who are fearful of pollution, protests that his offences were unintentional, therefore his moral culpability lessened (Sophokles, Oidipous at Kolonos 270-74).17

**Euripides and supplication**

Of all the poets of the fifth century, it is Euripides who seems most interested in the question of supplication. Vellacott observes that for the first twenty-five years of his writing career, he seems not to have addressed the subject of war. However, after the commencement of the Peloponnesian War, when there was daily evidence of the conflict before the eyes of every Athenian, he began to write on themes connected with Troy or Thebes.18 Within the broad theme of warfare, many of his plays explore the morality of the acceptance or refusal of the pleas of the suppliant. The historical context of some of these plays is of interest. It was in 427 that Mytilene was defeated. Thucydides describes how, after the surrender, those who had been most active in favour of Sparta take refuge at the altars. Pakhes, the Athenian commander, raises them from the suppliant position, and promises them he will do them no harm. He then puts them on Tenedos in custody (Thucydides 3.28.3). Later, he sends these men along with some others to Athens (ibid., 3.35.1). Pakhes' clemency is not honoured: the

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17 Douglas Cairns (op. cit., p. 222 n. 19) right points out that Oidipous' peroration is a variant on suppliants' claims that justice is on their side.

18 Vellacott, op. cit., p. 17
Athenians put all these men to death (ibid., 3.50.1). It could of course be argued that Pakhes had spared them subject to the decision of the Athenian assembly, so his was provisional clemency (ibid., 3.28.3). The decision to execute these men is taken on the same day as the sentence of death on the entire adult male population of Mytilene, a ruling the Athenians regret - and rescind - on the following day (ibid., 3.36.4, 49.2). Perhaps one may be justified in suspecting that mixed with the obvious regret for the original decision is remorse at the execution order, now carried out, against the individuals previously held on Tenedos. More clearly shocking to contemporaries as a betrayal of suppliants is the case in the same year when the civil unrest in Kerkyra leads to the slaughter of suppliants, some on the very altars at which they had sought refuge (ibid., 3.75.1-81.5). These events so appalled Thucydides that he indulges in an emotional discussion of how this signalled the breakdown of the laws of humanity (ibid., 3.82, 84). That the events would have had a similar effect on some Athenians is only to be expected.

19 However, as Andreas Panagopoulos points out (Captives and Hostages in the Peloponnesian War [Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1989], p. 55), Pakhes did make the men captives when they had been suppliants, thus favouring Athenian interests over their own safety. His actions therefore, while strictly correct, were morally suspect. W. Robert Connor (Thucydides [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984] p. 81) notes Pakhes' "careful manipulation of language". Rhodes comments that, by sending them to Athens after having guaranteed their safety on Tenedos, he was in breach of the agreement outlined in Thucydides 3.28.1-2 (P.J. Rhodes, Thucydides. History III. Edited with Translation and Commentary [Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1994], p. 203 on 3.35.1).

20 If the latter passage was written by Thucydides! Gomme (A Historical Commentary on Thucydides: the Ten Years War, Vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1956], pp. 382-83) points out that, while it is a good imitation of the historian's style, it is generally accepted as spurious. Rhodes (Thucydides p. 239 on 3.84.1) finds it 'not blatantly unlike Thucydidean', but prefers to reject it, relying on the evidence of a scholiast and Dionysius. Of course, if it were added very early, fairly soon after the death of Thucydides, then perhaps it may be said to be indicative of the opinion of someone close to the events described. Even if this argument
Perhaps it is not a coincidence that Euripides' play Hekabe, which features two separate acts of supplication, with very different outcomes, was probably performed between 425 and 421, only a few years after these incidents. Supplication is a major theme: Michelini argues that this would have been emphasised visually by Hekabe spending much time in the performance on her knees. Euripides has Hekabe speak at length on what Odysseus owes to her (Euripides, Hekabe, 239-78). Vellacott sees a strong link between the decision to sacrifice Polyxene and that of the Athenian assembly on the fate of Mytilene. Each has been reached by an impersonal majority decision, so that each individual may avoid responsibility. This is cannot be considered valid, and 3.84 is regarded as an interpolation of unknown origin and date, then Thucydides' horror is still clearly displayed in such passages as 3.82.1,7; 3.83.2. Hornblower (Thucydides [London: Duckworth, 1987], p. 29) argues that the rhetorical style suggests that this passage was intended to be read aloud, perhaps at a symposion.

According to Collard, in his 1991 edition of the play (Euripides. Hecuba [Warminster, Wilts.: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1991], p. 35), this is the most likely range of dates for its performance. He considers the play was probably performed before 423. Hornblower (op. cit., p. 119) comments on the interest in the use of language demonstrated by both Thucydides and Euripides (e.g., in the Thucydidean discussion of the breakdown of language use during the Kerkyraian strife - 3.82.3-7, and the Euripidean analysis of θλοτίμια and ιοτυς - Phoenikian Maidens 531-57). (It is worth noting that the recognition of the harmful effects of θλοτίμια did not originate with Euripides: David Whitehead, in an examination of the use of the word "Competitive outlay and community profit: θλοτίμια in democratic Athens", Classical and Medieval Journal XXXIV 1983, pp. 57-58], states that even Herodotos criticises the concept, and that during the Peloponnnesian War there seems to be a widening appreciation that individual glory may lead to collective harm.) Hornblower attributes this interest in language not to direct influence, but to the influence on each of a common preoccupation of the time. The same argument surely could be applied to their mutual interest in responses to claims of sanctuary - that each was influenced, in both his choice of material and the way in which it was written, by contemporary opinion.

Ann Norris Michelini, op. cit., p. 174 and n. 167

Vellacott, op. cit., pp. 192-93
a tempting if tendentious interpretation, but stops short of compelling belief in the fate of Mytilene being the motivation for Euripides' treatment of his theme. Many verses are devoted to Hekabe's more successful supplication of Agamemnon (ibid., 737-863). Only a little later, his play Herakles was performed. In it, the audience saw Lykos planning to burn suppliants at an altar (Euripides, Herakles 240-46); they heard how the insane Herakles not only kills his sons, but even clubs to death one who not only sought refuge at an altar but also supplicated his father in person, using the most powerful words and gestures possible (ibid., 984-94). As the supplication of Lykos fails, Amphitryon denounces Zeus as having abandoned his suppliants, the relatives of his son (ibid., 339-41), at whose altar the suppliants sit (ibid., 47-48). They are rescued not by the god's direct intervention, but by the return of Herakles. Similarly, Herakles is succoured not by the gods (though his crime was inspired by a god, thus reducing his culpability, at least in human terms), but he is rescued from his despair by Theseus (ibid., 1236, 1322-23). Kuntz argues that this is a challenge to the view of divine justice held by the pious, that rescue should be human rather than divine in origin.25 In support of this, one could read Herakles' curse of the gods:

\[\alpha\omega\theta\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma\ \omega\ :\ \vartheta\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ ,\ \pi\rho\omega\ \delta\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\omega\\]

The god is unfeeling towards me, and I towards the gods (ibid., 1243). This outburst is understandable contextually, however, and is not necessarily the conclusion that Euripides would have wanted his audience to reach at the end of the performance. Certainly the fact that in each case succour is conferred by a human may be seen as a questioning of the concern felt by the gods for justice; however, despite the persuasions of Kuntz, it could also be argued that the prompt arrival of each rescuer is at the command of the gods. Certainly the chorus have no doubt that it is the

25 Kuntz, op. cit., p. 80
gods who, through the agency of Herakles, have struck down Lykos (ibid., 757-59). Regardless of who is considered the actual author of the rescue of Herakles' family, the emotional impact of the play remains. Euripides sees the repudiation of suppliants as impious, and an example to be scorned.

In his *Suppliants*, performed in 421, he has Adrastos and the Argive women come to Athens for their plea to be granted. Adrastos, in the face of Theseus' initial refusal, instructs the women to leave the boughs over the altar, as a mute testimony to Athens' refusal (Euripides, *Suppliants* 258-62), and, by implication, an unspoken condemnation of the city. Aithra objects to Theseus' decision, arguing passionately

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έχει γάρ καταψυγήν θηρ μεν πέτραν,
δούλος δὲ βιωμούς θεῶν, πόλις δὲ πρῶς πόλιν
ἐπτηξε χειμασθείσαι τῶν γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖς
οὐκ ἐστιν οὐδὲν διὰ τέλους εὐθομονοῦν
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for a wild beast has a rock as refuge, a slave the altars of the gods, a distressed city cowers against a city; for amongst mankind there is nothing which prospers forever (ibid., 267-70).

When Theseus relents, Adrastos pledges that they owe him like for like (1176-79). This play should be seen in the context of the recently completed alliance between Argos and Athens (Thucydides 5.43-47). It would seem that Euripides is probably celebrating this treaty, as well as demonstrating the antiquity of links between the two cities.²⁶

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It may be that the Andromakhe was performed soon after the fall of Mytilene and the civil war in Kerkyra. This play boasts an impassioned argument by Andromakhe that no matter what impiety Hermione may commit in order to kill her rival, the gods will know about it (Euripides, Andromakhe 253-60). Burnett notes that Hermione, unlike other villains, is a well-developed character, one for whom it is possible to feel some sympathy, despite her intentions towards Andromakhe. Euripides thus introduces the notion that "morals may be relative". It may even be that his Children of Herakles was performed in 427, after the bloodbath in Kerkyra and the execution of the Mytilenean suppliants. Here, Kopreus orders the chorus of Athenians (again) to send the suppliant offspring of the hero away from the altar, so that they may be killed. The chorus refuses, arguing that

\[
\text{δόθεν ἰκεσίαιν μεθείναι πόλει}
\]

\[
\xiένων προστροπάν
\]

It would be impious to send away from our city

the suppliant to strangers (Euripides, Children of Herakles 107-08).

Demophon, the son of Theseus, describes the attempt of Kopreus to drag the unfortunates away from the altar as the deeds of a barbarian (ibid., 130-31). Later, he explains that the main reason he will not surrender the suppliants is respect for Zeus, on whose altar they are sitting (ibid., 238-39).

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27 Burnett, op. cit., pp. 137-38
28 Ibid., p. 137
29 Although Wilkins, in his recent edition of the play, disagrees (Euripides, Heraclidae, With Introduction and Commentary [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], p. xxxiv). While observing that the word ἰκέτης occurs more often here than in all the other works of Euripides combined, he follows Zuntz (The Political Plays of Euripides [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1955], p. 88) in dating the performance to 430, before the first major invasion of the war. Zuntz stresses the almost lighthearted attitude to war which he perceives in the play. This he ascribes to the experiences of the poet and his audience: at this date the war had barely begun (ibid., p. 81).
and that it would be shameful for him to take this action (ibid., 256). Perhaps one may include the Ion, performed about ten years after Kerkyra. In this play, the chorus assures Kreousa that if she becomes a suppliant at the altar, no-one can lawfully kill her (Euripides, Ion 1255-56); should anyone kill a suppliant, s/he will incur blood-guilt, and suffer misfortune (ibid., 1258-60). It is surely not a coincidence that in each extant play performed, or probably performed, shortly after the horrifying incidents of 427, Euripides should have included a passionate plea for the rights of the suppliant. It is interesting to note, also, that his one play which contains the cynical use of supplication solely to take revenge, Medea, was performed during the first year of the Peloponnesian War. Medea supplicates Kreon, that he may allow her to stay for one more day, to allow her time to plan for the future (Euripides, Medea, 338-43); after he acquiesces, she reveals to the audience that her supplication had an ulterior motive (ibid., 368-69).30

30 It seems an overstatement to condemn Medea's actions as a perversion of supplication (as does Judith Mossman, Wild Justice. A Study of Euripides' Hecuba [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995], p. 181), or Medea herself as "a rampant individualist, ruthlessly declining to set aside one whit of self-interest to subscribe to the familial and civic codes which are the fabric of social living" (Emily A. McDermott, Euripides' Medea. The Incarnation of Disorder [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989], p. 110). Certainly, supplication is used as an instrument of her revenge; she acknowledges her intention to the chorus and the audience. However, her actions are consistent with her character, as analysed by Kreon (Euripides, Medea 282-89). She is also supplicating her declared enemy; Kreon ought to have expected deceit. In fact, he knows he was unwise to soften at her pleading (ibid., 350-51). Medea's supplication does indicate "the darker side of her nature" (Mossman, loc. cit.), but without that "darker side", Medea would not have achieved the revenge for which she thirsts, and there would have been no drama. Seeing this "perversion" on their stage does not appear to have corrupted the mind of the average Athenian concerning the respect due to a suppliant, if one may judge by Thucydides' outrage at the events in Kerkyra (Thucydides 3.82,84). Also, it would seem that Medea believes herself to be acting in accordance with justice, since she points out that Jason has betrayed her, though he once was her suppliant (Euripides, Medea 497); the "familial and civic codes" which McDermott cites as a standard for Medea's behaviour (loc. cit.) have
Euripides' Helen, probably performed shortly after the collapse of the Peace of Nikias, also contains a mendacious supplication (Euripides, Helen, 1237-38), but the actions performed by the suppliant were left incomplete by the poet. Helen supplicates Theoklymenos by his knees, but does not touch him; the king notes that she has her arms outstretched, but fails to attach any significance to this. It could be argued that to the audience this would have been significant, as Helen was not prevented by any physical restraint from completing the gesture. Also, she is seeking to escape from Egypt with Menelaos, a more commendable and morally justifiable motive than that of Medea.

Of course, it would be rash to assert that Euripides intended his plays to be a direct comment on current events in Athens. Aristophanes may claim that his plays are meant to advise the Athenian people in the current crisis (e.g. Aristophanes, Akharneian: 655-58), or that tragedies may be used for the same purpose (Aristophanes, Frogs 1420-23). Euripides makes no such overt claim (though he may well have argued, as does Zuntz, that "tragedy tells man how to live"). Indeed, the nature of the themes he uses, and the nature of the genre, preclude his giving overt advice to his audience. However, in his choice of myth, and in his treatment of it, he must have been influenced by concerns which he shared with the city. Possibly he consciously exploited both traditional myth and contemporary events to enhance the appeal of his works. Our knowledge of contemporary events is therefore already been set aside by Iason. Probably others (especially the other characters in the drama) would disagree. Thus, as Pucci observes, one may observe how "the whole play would act out a conflict between relative values". He, however, finds this interpretation limited (Pietro Pucci, The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980, pp. 87-88).

31 Zuntz, op. cit., p. 25

32 As argued by Willink, op. cit., p. xxvi.
derived to a large extent from Thucydides; as Michelini points out, both he and Euripides are from the same intellectual milieu, and have had their attitudes shaped by the same experiences.\textsuperscript{33} It would be surprising indeed if that which consumed the attention of Thucydides, which must have been of primary concern to every Athenian, did not affect Euripides, in the selection as well as the use of his subject matter.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Suppliants were not guaranteed safety under all circumstances. They were supposed to enjoy the protection of the gods; there are indications that many, especially those who sought refuge in a holy place, saw themselves as the property of the gods. Despite the promise that any who harmed them would incur blood-guilt, their supplication was often unsuccessful. However, not infrequently an attempt was made to preserve appearances, to pretend that the supplication had been abandoned, before the suppliant was killed.

The chances of survival for suppliants was greater if there was no relationship between them and those supplicated. Sometimes, suppliants were dependent for clemency on the very people who threatened them, who stood to gain from their deaths; in such cases, even temples and the threat of the displeasure of the gods granted little protection.

Euripides chose to feature supplication as a major or minor theme in many of his plays now extant. In many of the plays which were produced around the time of crucial events in the Peloponnesian War, events such as the execution of the Mytilenean suppliants, or the murder of suppliants in

\textsuperscript{33} Michelini, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30. See also the excellent analysis of similarities between Thucydides and his contemporaries, especially Euripides, in details of style and ideas, in John H. Finley, Jr., \textit{Three Essays on Thucydides} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 1-54. esp. 49-54.
Kerkyra, he explores the morality of positive and negative responses to suppliants.

Suppliants could not depend on physical security; they were dependent on those they supplicated for assistance, usually for their survival. However, they were often not without resources of their own, some threat they could use to persuade the supplicated to acquiesce to their request.
Excursus. Apollon, Orestes and Klytaimestra:
Aiskhylos, Eumenides 658-666

The conflict between Apollon and the Erinyes is more than a mere difference of opinion. The chorus expresses their outrage that Apollon, both young and male, should defy them. In his discussion of this passage, Hogan emphasises the god's youth, and sees the conflict between youth and age as an important theme in this play. Sommerstein observes that it is not only old and young gods, but old and new laws, that are in conflict in this play. The Erinyes vehemently uphold the old laws, as well as the old gods, but only incidentally. Aiskhylos, however, points out that the Erinyes are just as enraged that it should be a male who stands against them. As Podlecki observes, this theme is also important in the play. Apollon's vehement denial of the role of the mother in the begetting of the child (Aiskhylos, Eumenides 658-66 - already suggested by Orestes v. 606) indicates what importance Aiskhylos placed on the conflict between the sexes as a motif.

George Thomson asserts that Athene, in her decision in favour of Orestes (ibid., 734-43), is confirming the patrilineal inheritance of Attic law. Aiskhylos, he claims, makes the relationship between the sexes the major theme of the climax of this final play in the trilogy because "he regarded the subjugation of woman, quite correctly, as an indispensable condition of democracy". That he should claim this as Aiskhylos' contention may be valid (although it could be argued that this does not necessarily reflect the poet's own view); not so his apparent endorsement of that opinion. One

34 Hogan, op. cit., p. 155
35 Sommerstein, op. cit., p. 21
36 Podlecki, op. cit., p. 142. For a more extensive discussion of this theme in the Eumenides, see Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (London: Virago, 1979), pp. 112-15.
hopes he has been sloppy in his choice of words, and intended to say that inequity was the basis of Athenian democracy; otherwise, the only charitable explanation for this strange conclusion is that it is a remnant from the first edition of this work (published in 1941). Yet even then to identify orderly inheritance with patriarchy would demonstrate a lamentable deficit in his imagination. On the other hand, he interprets the dispute between the Erinyes and Apollon as symbolic of the development of homicide laws from tribal custom, from the primacy of kinship links through bloodlines.38 This is not implausible.

Keith Sidwell proposes a persuasive explanation for the pivotal role of Apollon's startling argument that the mother has no blood relationship with the child. He notes the very pertinent questions the Erinyes put to Apollon, touching Orestes' status with regard to the performance of ritual, should he inherit his father's position (ibid., 653-56). No matter what the justification, if Orestes is guilty of killing his mother, then he cannot carry out the rituals demanded of a king, and he is the rightful prey of the Erinyes. He has undoubtedly killed Klytaimestra; therefore, if Orestes is to return home, Apollon's argument that he had no blood ties to his victim must be accepted - as it is, by half the jury (ibid., 752-53).39 Apollon's denial of the blood-link between mother and child springs from the need to prove Orestes able to return to Argos to rule, and to forge through gratitude a lasting alliance between Athens and Argos (ibid., 289-91, 669-73, 762-64), which, claims Sidwell, is both a vital issue in contemporary politics and an important theme in the play.40 That Greeks did not take Apollon's assertions seriously is attested by Perikles' measure, enacted in 451, to limit citizenship to those

38 Ibid., p. 260
40 Ibid., pp. 47, 50-52
of Athenian descent on both sides of their families (Constitution of the Athenians 26.3). Based on a similar recognition of the relationship between mother and child are Spartan attempts to remove Perikles by demanding that the Athenians expel those cursed by the goddess over the deaths of the supporters of Kylon. Perikles was connected to those considered guilty on his mother's side (Thucydides 1.126.2, 1 127.1; Plutarch, Perikles 33.1). This distinction between legal reality and dramatic debate weakens Riane Eisler's otherwise appealing argument that Apollon's assertion rationalises "the shift from partnership to dominator norms".41 Certainly the argument does suggest an underlying contempt for women; however, the audience were not persuaded to deny the obvious. Sidwell's cogent interpretation of the trial is to be preferred.