

not in fact, and his subsequent attitude at least equivocal. The same is implied in the only passage, except that already cited from the *Agamemnon*, in which the sending of Orestes to Phocis is described. Clytaemnestra is pleading with Orestes for her life¹:

Cl. Hast thou no respect for a parent's curse, my child?

Or. Not for a mother who cast me into misery.

Cl. I never cast thee away. I sent thee to the house of our ally.

Or. It was a two-fold sale of me, of me, a freeman's child!

Cl. And what then was the price that I am thought to have got?

Or. For shame! Who should know it better than thou?

To us, who have not the story, this brief and allusive account is naturally unintelligible; but it is hard to suppose that the phrase *διχῶς ἐπράθην*, *it was a two-fold sale of me*, following as it does immediately upon a reference to the character of Strophius, can have any meaning, except that the transference of Orestes from Clytaemnestra to him was a bargain *corrupt on both sides*, in which both parties sought their apparent interest; and this is in fact the only supposition consistent with the rest of the story. Beyond this we can but conjecture, but there does not seem to be much room for mistake. The *data* are these: that Clytaemnestra and Strophius between them transferred Orestes from Argos to Phocis, before the return and murder of Agamemnon, and thereby saved his life: that nevertheless the transaction was wholly sordid and selfish, neither proving any kindness nor deserving any gratitude. Now why and when was it the interest of Clytaemnestra, as Orestes implies, for the sake of her relations with Aegisthus, to part with the control of her son? So far as I can see, there is but one possible answer to this question. It never was for the true and ultimate interest either of Aegisthus or the queen; it was a thing to which they never would have consented unless under compulsion. But it was a thing absolutely necessary for their immediate interest, as things stood shortly before the king's return, if at that time some one, who was in a position to act as a friend of the family, threatened to raise a scandal, and demanded the possession of the heir as the price of his quiescence. To the security of the adulterers it was essential that their relations should remain a pretended secret up to the king's death or return. And it was in the power of Strophius, or any

Orestes and Pylades, after the event, in the strongest manner; but this belongs to the treatment of the subject adopted by Euripides, and must not be transferred to Aeschylus. So far as Aeschylus shows,

there is no hint that he was concerned at all in the matter, either beforehand or afterwards.

¹ *Cho.* *vv.* 911—916.