Latris No Longer: Rereading Cassandra's Appeal to Apollo at Euripides' *Troades* 450

Before departing the tragic stage for the ship of Agamemnon, Euripides' Cassandra makes a final, pointed allusion to the god whom she has served: intensifying the image of her naked corpse being portioned out by animals beside the miserable tomb of her 'husband,' she reminds us that in life she was "Apollo's servant" (*ἡ Ἀπόλλωνος λάτρις*). This term links her to both the enslaved Hecuba (422, 490) and the Greek lackey Talthybius (424, 707). Generally derogatory (Biehl 1989, 203n424), *λάτρις,* 'hired servant,' is used in Euripides and elsewhere for service to mortals (Thgn. 302; Soph. *Trach.* 70; Eur. *Hec.* 609) and to gods (Simon. 179.9; Eur. *HF.* 823, *Ion* 1343, *Phoen.* 221). The latter appears less ignominious, and often commentators have read the appellation *Ἀπόλλωνος λάτρις* to stress the contrast between degrading forms of servitude (to men or kings) and Cassandra's sacred office, impiously disregarded by Agamemnon and in her postmortem treatment (Biehl, 209n448; Scodel 1979, 109). Yet her deliberate phrasing also implies awareness of a shared relationship to power, to the frameworks of domination and submission with which the play is deeply concerned.

In this paper I consider Cassandra's use of *λάτρις* as a possible means to reorient and critique her relationship with Apollo. In one respect he is the "most beloved of the gods" to her (451), an expression often taken as sincere and untainted by the history of antagonism staged by Aeschylus (Kovacs 2018, 169n253-4; Lee 1997, 151n451; Mueller-Goldingen 1996, 49). In another, he is an aloof master whose authority simultaneously elicits and circumscribes her actions and her speech, both of which we find turn on a gleeful irreverence for the traditional conclusions of power (it was in fact the Trojans, she argues, who 'won' the war). Taking cues from her penchant for sardonic irony and subversive Dionysism (Goff 2013, 52; Mazzoldi 2001, 230-6), I propose that she plays upon the ambivalent valence of the term *λάτρις*—signaled by the comparable positions of Hecuba and Talthybius—to displace Apollo's primacy within her dramatic performance and distance herself from her earlier servile position. This rhetorically allows for the assertion of her own paradoxical

freedom that will occupy her final lines onstage (458-61), and for her departure as one who will soon enter Hades victorious (*νικηφόρος*, 460), a hero and avenger of Troy.

The first part of the paper examines instances of the term *λάτρις* in Archaic and Classical literature and extant interpretations of its role in Cassandra's speech. The second discusses the difficulties involved in reading her relation to Apollo in the *Troades* and proposes a method informed by Cassandra's conscious use of parody and performance as an avenue to address them. These theatrical elements stress her present kinship with Dionysus over her earlier contract with Apollo, and the additive complications of her association with diverse other deities (Hymen, Hecate, Artemis, the Erinyes) on a secure master-servant dynamic with Apollo are widespread. She appears to reckon with his failure to guarantee the fair treatment of her corpse (compare his intervention at *Il.* 24.18-54), subjugate his agency in shaping future events to her own (Pillinger 2019, 90), and choose to end their relationship on her own terms (Doherty-Bone 2022, 160-4). This delicate friction is intensified by her choice to dramatically assume masks discordant with that of a servant to Apollo (Werner 2002, 128-9): Dionysian actor, monstrous Fury, Homeric hero. It seems that only by distancing herself from her divine master is she thus able to, as previously recognized, escape from contemporary logics of feminine victimization and become the triumphant slayer of Agamemnon and sacker of the House of Atreus (Mazzoldi, 236-43; Pillinger, 99). It is a gesture whose impact lingers on after she has left the stage—and Apollo's raiment—behind, a *latris* no longer.

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