A Tale of Two Seers? Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Troades*

The subjects and settings of extant Greek tragedy are typically taken from the Greek mythic past, an "other" world "distant from the audience's own experiences" which facilitated the exploration of relevant, present-day matters in that distanced, other world (Goldhill 2000: 35; Rabinowitz 2008:79). In two of these in which the Trojan myth is the setting, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Troades*, Cassandra, the Trojan princess and servant of Apollo, plays a part, particularly as an agent of distance or displacement within the "other" world setting of both plays. In the plays, Cassandra is both interconnected with other characters by her status, her fate, and the use of imagery applied to her and to others. In the *Agamemnon,* for example, the use of animal imagery, particularly that of captured, sacrificial animals, connects Cassandra (βοός – cow, A. *Ag.*1298) with other victims such as Iphigenia (χίμαιρα –goat [232]). In *Troades*, Cassandra is connected with the other characters as she, the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, is a captured Trojan woman. Cassandra is also set apart and creates a further displacement or provides further distance within the plays because of her status as a seer or a servant of Apollo and as a seer who is cursed and not believed by others. As a divine intermediary, she not only is able to see and communicate past, present, and future, despite being unable to persuade others of the truth she communicates, but also picks up or provides verbal cues from and to other characters. Cassandra's words include imagery and themes, or motifs, which are used throughout each play. In the *Agamemnon,* Cassandra's words include legal, athletic, musical terminology, which allows Cassandra to indirectly pick up on what the chorus has already expressed but tries not to face. In the *Troades*, Cassandra's words about the fame of the Trojans as the direct result of the war are somewhat restated by Hecuba later in the play (E. *Tr.* 1242-45) and Cassandra's triumphal song of marriage is alluded to by Andromache (E. *Tr.* 778-79) ; Cassandra's words are used by other characters later in the play.

There is much scholarship on Cassandra, much of which examines Cassandra's role in particular or as part of a larger study within the *Agamemnon*, while some scholarship examines her role in *Troades*. Two scholars in particular, Sabina Mazzoldi and P.G. Mason, have examined Cassandra in both plays, tracing Cassandra in Greek literature from Homer up to Greek tragedy and beyond. Mason develops earlier sources upon which the tragedians might have based and modeled his own Cassandra and argues that both playwrights use Cassandra similarly as representation of the divine interacting with the human world (Mason 1959). Mazzoldi, also examining sources which include Cassandra from Homer to Hellenistic literature, uses a lexical approach to examine the two tragic Cassandras and focuses on the differences (*mantic vs. maenadic* vocabulary used for Cassandra for example) and argues that Euripides uses a different representation of her character, deterring from an Aeschylean representation or traditional model of Cassandra (Mazzoldi 2001). My paper takes these studies further and also limits the focus of study by looking at the two Cassandras as depicted only within the two tragedies. Through examination of the two Cassandra scenes within the context of these two plays themselves, such as the setting, plot, entrance and exit, interaction, connection with and distance from other characters, I argue that the similarities, but even more so the differences, between the two Cassandras in fact show how Cassandra is being used in the same manner by both playwrights to serve the same function; differences, such as the Aeschylean *mantic* or Euripidean *maenadic* vocabulary are more the result of a theatrical license of the playwright as opposed to a different Cassandra model, representation, or function. In both plays, Cassandra is connected to other characters but is also further distanced from them because of her ability to see and communicate the truth about past, present, and future, and because of her inability to be believed, both of which serve as additional levels of distance or displacement for the characters

and worlds of the plays, bringing the truth out in the open that other characters do not want to or cannot face themselves.

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