

Fathers, Sons and Forgiveness

KENNETH J. DOVER

Theseus in Eur. *Hipp.* 1257–60 says that when he heard how the curse he pronounced on his son had been fulfilled he rejoiced at the news through hatred (μίσει) of Hippolytus; but out of respect for the filial relationship which is of concern to the gods he is “neither gladdened¹ nor grieved” by what has happened. When Artemis has disclosed the truth of the matter, he abases himself in utter remorse (1325 ὀλοίμην). Artemis heaps excoriating reproaches on his intemperate failure to test the truth of Phaedra’s false accusation, but grants him forgiveness for that (1326 ἔτ’ ἐστὶ καὶ σοι τῶνδε συγγνώμης τυχεῖν) because the whole train of disaster was the work of Aphrodite in her pursuit of her vendetta against Hippolytus. Consoling Hippolytus, Artemis tells him (1435) “I advise you not to hate your father (πατέρα μὴ στυγεῖν).” Theseus has destroyed him ἄκων, i.e. under a misapprehension which acted as a constraint; it is only to be expected that mortals will go wrong when they are caught up in a train of god-given events; and it was Hippolytus’s μοῖρα to die as he is now dying. Artemis has no intention of forgiving Aphrodite (a goddess, after all, could not claim to have acted in ignorance of the facts), and she proclaims (1420–22) that she will kill “whatever mortal is dearest to Aphrodite”; the innocence of that next victim does not worry her, any more than Phaedra’s innocence worried Aphrodite.

According to the story told in Xen. *Cyr.* 3. 1. 38–40, the king of Armenia, father of Tigranes, executed a man who in his view was corrupting (διαφθείρειν) his son. Tigranes had greatly admired this man as καλὸς κάγαθός, and tells Cyrus, “When he was going to his execution, he said to me, ‘Do not be angry with your father (μὴ τι σὺ . . . χαλεπανθῆς τῷ πατρί) simply because he has condemned me to death. He does this not from ill-will (κακόνοια) but from ignorance (ἄγνοια), and all the wrong that people do from ignorance I regard as action under constraint

¹ By οὐθ’ ἠδομαι κτλ., coming so soon after ἠσθην, he must mean that conventional αἰδώς is strong enough to pull him away from ἠδονή, in the direction of λύπη, to a half-way point, but not beyond that. ἠσθην normally describes the speaker’s reaction at the time of utterance (e.g. Ar. *Nu.* 174, 1240), but νῦν δ’ requires the audience to re-interpret it as a true past tense.

(ἀκούσια).” Cyrus is impressed by so noble a sentiment. The king excuses himself by admitting that he resented (φοβονεῖν) his son’s mentor, believing that the man was usurping the respect (θαυμάζειν) which a son owes to his father. Cyrus concedes that the king’s fault was only human (ἀνθρώπινά μοι δοκεῖς ἀμαρτάνειν), and, turning to Tigranes, he commands him, “Forgive your father (συγγίγνωσκε τῷ πατρί).”

Consideration of the similarities and differences between these two passages affords a good basis for comparison of Greek and modern attitudes to forgiveness.

The most obvious difference between the passages is one of vocabulary. If learners of Greek who have approached the subject through Classical literature are asked, “What is the Greek for ‘forgive’?” they are likely to say, “συγγιγνώσκω.” A student of the New Testament could hardly fail to say, “ἀφήμι,” having in mind such famous texts as Lk 23. 34, “Father, forgive them . . .” (ἄφες αὐτοῖς κτλ.). Ἀφιέναι is, of course, attested in that sense from the fifth century onwards (e.g. Ar. Nu. 1425 f.), and is used in Attic law of a victim who, before dying, absolves his killer (Dem. 37. 59). The converse is not true, for συγγιγνώσκω and συγγνώμη are not at all favoured in Christian Greek. Unlike “forgive” and its equivalents in modern European languages, συγγιγνώσκω declares itself by its composition a verb of cognition. That much is clear from its usage by Herodotus and Thucydides in other senses, “concur” in general (i.e. “share someone else’s opinion”) and “admit” in particular (i.e. “share with one’s accuser the same assessment of one’s own action”). The *locus classicus* is Thuc. 2. 60. 4, “You blame me, who advised you to fight, and yourselves, οἱ ξυνέγνωτε.” The sense “forgive” arises from a recognition that people very commonly regard their own actions as justified or at least, even if they feel some shame and regret, as not deserving punishment. Σύγγνωθί μοι is an appeal for empathy, “Share my view of the matter.” That is not something which Christians oppressed by a sense of their own unworthiness would demand of God, but there is no theological reason why it should not be demanded of the Olympian gods. Justin *Dial.* 9. 1 συγγνώμη σοι . . . καὶ ἀφεθείη σοι combines a personal statement with a prayer; but the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6. 12 ἄφες . . . ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφῆκαμεν) and Mt 18. 21 ἀμαρτήσῃ εἰς ἐμέ . . . καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτῷ show that humans too can ἀφιέναι offences against themselves. The connotations of a word do not necessarily persist through its compounds, and it would be perilous to found an argument on an insistence that they do, but in the case of συγγιγνώσκω the other compounds of γιγνώσκω and the first hundred words beginning with συν- picked at random from the lexicon favour the argument from etymology.

The striking fact about συγγιγνώσκω and συγγνώμη is that the former is not attested before Simonides (*PMG* 542. 27 (Danae apologises to Zeus for venturing to voice the hope that her fortunes will change), and the latter not until Herodotus. Until Simonides, Greek of the archaic period

seems to have lacked a simple equivalent of our "forgive." The Attic law on manslaughter uses αἰδεῖσθαι (noun αἴδεις, Dem. 21. 43, Arist. *Ath.* 57. 3) of the permission given by the victim's family to the guilty man to return to Attica, and this is understandably translated "pardon," a term which has a legal colouring and is somewhat closer to "concede" or "waive" than to "forgive."² Pardon in accordance with legal requirements or social convention and pressure can still leave a powerful residue of ill-will. The Attic αἰδεῖσθαι seems to be a special application of the general sense of the word, behaviour towards another person as if that other person had precedence over oneself.

To infer from these lexical considerations that no one ever forgave anybody in the Greek world until the late archaic period would be no more intelligent than inferring, from the fact that English and German distinguish between conscience and consciousness, whereas French and Italian do not,³ that the phenomenon of conscience is confined to certain parts of Europe. The alternative inference, that early Greek poets chose (or happened) never to portray anyone demanding or receiving forgiveness, is demolished by observation: Achilles forgives Agamemnon in *Iliad* 19. Or is that the imposition of modern categories on an alien text? The question must be asked, but it need not be intimidating. To answer it, let us extricate ourselves for a while from the history of words and get into the history of experiences, which show much less diachronic change. We have all had the experience of forgiving and being forgiven. What is going on in us when we forgive, and what do we think is going on in other people when they forgive us?

If you have harmed me, and later I have the capacity and the opportunity to harm you but do not do so, then *prima facie* I have forgiven you. The qualification "*prima facie*" is necessary, because there are many practical reasons for abstaining from revenge on a given occasion, however implacable my desire for it may be. Perhaps I see and relish the prospect of an even better opportunity in the future; or, more often, abstention is a means to some other end, e.g. maintaining good relations with a friend of yours. The words "I forgive you" can be invested with an appearance of the performative character of "I promise," but the performance is not irrevocable; as the words constitute a statement about my feelings, to which you do not have direct access, the statement may be false and shown to be false by later events. It is true only if I no longer *wish* to harm you, no

² Cf. C. E. von Erffa, ΑΙΔΩΣ (= *Philologus* Suppl. 30. 2 [1937]) 105 f.; D. M. MacDowell, *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (Manchester 1963) 125 f.

³ Cf. E. V. Kohák in the preface to his translation (Evanston 1974) of Paul Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, xxxvi: "I have . . . rendered *la conscience* 'consciousness' even in expressions where 'awareness' would have been usual, reserving the term 'conscience' for the few passages where this specific meaning is indicated by the context." When lecturing in Italy on Greek moral values I had to discuss at some length with Italian friends the circumlocutions needed to resolve the ambiguities of *coscienza*.

matter how tempting and frequent the opportunities to do so. Then we can speak of “true” or “genuine” forgiveness.

Remission of anger, of hatred, of the desire to hurt, call it what we will, is the point at issue in the attempts of Agamemnon’s envoys to move Achilles in *Iliad* 9: 157 μεταλλάξαντι χόλοιο, 255 f. μεγαλήτορα θυμόν / ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων, 496 f. δάμασον θυμόν μέγαν, οὐδέ τι σε χρῆ / νηλεὲς ἦτορ ἔχειν, 675 χόλος δ’ ἔτ’ ἔχει μεγαλήτορα θυμόν, 678 οὐκ ἐθέλει σβέσσαι χόλον. When events have brought about Achilles’ reconciliation with Agamemnon, he uses similar terminology: 19. 67 f. ἐγὼ παύω χόλον, οὐδέ τι με χρῆ / ἀσκελέως αἰεὶ μενεαινέμεν. Not surprisingly, in classical prose also forgiveness is regularly contrasted with anger: *Lys.* 29. 5 (ὀργίζεσθαι), *Pl. Euthd.* 306c (χαλεπαίνειν), *Mnx.* 244b (ἀγανακτεῖν), *Phdr.* 257a (ὀργή), 269b (χαλεπαίνειν), *Rep.* 366c (ὀργίζεσθαι). *E. Hipp.* 1435 πατέρα μὴ στυγεῖν and *Xen. Cyr.* 3. 1. 38 μή τι . . . χαλεπανθῆς τῷ πατρὶ, compared above, come in this category.

Orestes, in his plea for help to Menelaus (*E. Or.* 642–79), “forgives” him for his part in the sacrifice of Iphigenia; I’m not asking you, he says, to kill Hermione in compensation; δεῖ γὰρ σ’ ἐμοῦ πράσσοντος ὡς πράσσω τὰ νῦν / πλεόν φέρεσθαι, κάμῃ συγγνώμην ἔχειν (660 f.). The words are harsh and wry. Orestes does not mean that he shares the γνώμη which Menelaus had about the sacrifice at Aulis, nor are we to imagine that he no longer resents it, only that it is pointless for the weak to hope for revenge on the strong. The strangeness of the “reason” for his “forgiveness,” the bitterness with which the words are charged, prompt us to ask what reasons the Greeks usually offer for forgiveness.

Most of the time, though not quite all the time, they are the same as we give nowadays.⁴ Ignorance and error; duress; poverty, alcohol, lust, provocation; weaknesses believed to be characteristic of the old, or the young, or the female; inherited temperament; loyalty to relations and friends; the mortal propensity to err. I may forgive you out of pity, if great misfortune befalls you before I have any opportunity for revenge; or you may buy my forgiveness by payment of compensation. It is easy to be cynical about compensation, but cynicism is misplaced. Your payment to me is your loss, and in so far as loss is a form of suffering, I have my revenge, my desire to harm you is satisfied, and I have no more desire to harm you. At the same time, generosity in giving is very commonly a manifestation of affection and equally commonly a cause of affection, so the payment restores us to friendship.⁵

⁴ For detailed examples see my *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford 1974) 133–60.

⁵ In 1988 a well-known singer received £1.25 million from a newspaper in an out-of-court settlement of a libel action he had brought against it. He then said, “I don’t bear *The Sun* any malice,” and a spokesman for the paper said, “We are delighted that *The Sun* and Elton have become friends again.”

There are however some differences between ancient and modern grounds for forgiveness. I cannot expect nowadays to be forgiven on the grounds that my wrongdoing was fated, a plea with which Gorgias plays (B 11. 6) in his defence of Helen; but it was never an entirely safe plea, for "My action was fated" invites the retort (as Clytaemnestra discovers in *A. Cho.* 910 f.), "So is my revenge." Nor can I plead that God compelled me to do wrong, though I might (especially if I were an evangelist caught in an embarrassing situation) say that I was tempted by the Devil, and I might even get some credit for being considered by the Devil a worthwhile target. A Greek might say that a god distorted his mind, destroying his better judgment (cf. Agamemnon in *Il.* 19. 86-94), but whether that is accepted as a reason for forgiveness depends on whether his adversary has independent grounds for forgiving.⁶ If he has none, he may suggest that the god's object was actually to put the victim in a situation from which punishment would inevitably follow, and that it is imprudent to thwart a god's purpose (cf. *And.* 1. 113, *Lys.* 6. 22). Theseus was forgiven by Artemis not because Aphrodite intervened directly in his mind (as she had done in Phaedra's), but because she created a situation in which he did wrong ἀνθρωπίνως. Diminished responsibility on grounds of mental illness, an important issue in modern thinking about crime and punishment, was not recognised in Greek penal codes, partly because the illness could be regarded as evidence of divine disfavour, and partly because Greek society generally treated risk to the community as deserving precedence over unfairness to an individual.

The variation "revenge . . . punishment . . ." in the previous paragraph is not unconscious, and it remains firmly within the field of τιμωρία, τιμωρεῖσθαι. There are occasions on which wrongdoing by an animal, slave, child, employee or subordinate incurs infliction of suffering without incurring at the same time the anger, hatred or even ill-will of the owner or superior who inflicts it; the suffering is treated as an ingredient of training and education and as a regrettable necessity for the deterrence of others.⁷ The Greeks denoted that by κολάζειν, κόλασις, and *Arist. Rhet.* 1269b12-14 defines κόλασις as inflicted τοῦ πάσχοντος ἔνεκα, τιμωρία as τοῦ ποιοῦντος ἔνεκα. Clement of Alexandria adopts the Aristotelian distinction in *Paed.* 1. 8 (p. 131. 8) and in asserting (*Str.* 7. 16 [p. 72. 20]) that God κολάζει but does not τιμωρεῖσθαι (a proposition not easily defended in an eschatological context). Yet he slips into looser usage in *Str.* 7. 12 (p. 74. 6) when he refers to the τιμωρία of malefactors, and 7. 10 (p. 41. 18) κολάσεως καὶ τιμωρίας ἀπάσης, ἅς ἐκ τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένομεν σωτήριον. Plato's Protagoras (*Prt.* 324a-c) appears at first sight to be drawing a clear distinction between μετὰ λόγου

⁶ See further my *Greek and the Greeks* (Oxford 1987) 88, 138 f.

⁷ The legendary flogging pedagogues who said "This hurts me more than it hurts you" are regarded with contempt because what they said was sometimes false; that does not preclude the possibility that it was sometimes true.

κολάζειν, infliction of suffering for the purpose of making the sufferer behave better in future, and ὡσπερ θηρίον ἀλογίστως τιμωρεῖσθαι, infliction τούτου ἔνεκα, ὅτι ἠδίκησεν. We might think that he is distinguishing between two genera of action by the criterion of intention.⁸ He continues, however: "This opinion is held by all those who τιμωροῦνται, whether in a private or a public capacity. All people τιμωροῦνται καὶ κολάζονται⁹ those whom they think guilty of wrongdoing, and your fellow-citizens, the Athenians, do it as much as anyone." The first part of this statement, "This opinion . . . capacity" is untrue, as we know from our own experience, but the statement as a whole shows that Protagoras's distinction is between two species of the genus τιμωρία, one μετὰ λόγου and the other ἀλόγιστος. Even that distinction does not count for much in the courts; the speaker of Lys. 6, who demands the death penalty for Andocides, urges the jury in 13 and 42-44 to κολάζειν wrongdoers, and in 15, 18, 53 to τιμωρεῖσθαι them. Modern usage, except on the plane of theory, is hardly more inclined to distinguish,¹⁰ and the reason for that is simple enough: From the receiving end, the distinction is not apparent. If I am sentenced to ten years in jail, how can it matter to me whether it is called "correction" or "revenge"? I may be told that I am "paying my debt to society," but a more concise term is avoided. The reason for its avoidance leads us directly to what is by far the most important difference between Greek and modern attitudes to forgiveness, the powerful role played in our moral thinking by the uncompromising command of Christ to forgive (Mt 18. 22) and his prohibition of retaliation (Mt 5. 38-47). Acknowledgement of religious duty causes Christian societies, whatever suffering they inflict on wrongdoers, to deny that it is revenge. Realisation that no society will last very long if it continues to forgive wrongdoing enables it to believe that κόλασις and ἄφεσις can somehow exist κατὰ ταῦτὸν καὶ πρὸς ταῦτὸν ἅμα. In individual cases, religious duty coupled with an un-hellenic belief in a great moral gulf between God and humanity can induce someone whose daughter has been killed by gunmen to say, "I forgive them, because I know that I too have need of forgiveness."

Greek gods do not command us to forgive on an extravagant scale, if at all. They themselves are not conspicuously forgiving, and we have some allusions to particular cases in which the criteria they apply to forgiveness are at best human, and at worst¹¹ heroic. The most straightforward case is

⁸ For a logical analysis of Protagoras's argument see C. C. W. Taylor's translation and commentary (Oxford 1976) 90-96.

⁹ The switch from the active voice (b2, b7) to the middle is unexpected; it is caused, I think, by the introduction of the public domain (δημοσίᾳ) into the context, for the state κολάζει but ὁ γραφόμενος κολάζεται.

¹⁰ I have heard a vengeful husband say, "I want her to suffer. I want to *punish* her."

¹¹ Cf. B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1964) 19-25 on the uncompromising disposition of the Sophoclean hero.

that of Pheretima, queen of Cyrene, who impaled round the walls of Barce those of its citizens whom she held most responsible for her son's murder, and for good measure cut off their wives' breasts and nailed the breasts too to the walls. Some time later she died of a horrible illness, so demonstrating, says Herodotus (4. 205) ὡς ἄρα ἀνθρώποισι αἱ λίην τιμωρίαί πρὸς θεῶν ἐπίφθονοι γίνονται. If she had been more discriminating in her vengeance, seasoning it with clemency (as Xenophon's Cyrus would have done) and abstaining from barbarous torture and offensive display, the gods would not have been moved to hostility. They reacted as humans do, and had the power to give expression to their reaction.

The second case, that of Herakles' murder of Iphitus, is more subtle. According to the speech of Lichas in *Soph. Tr.* 248–90, Iphitus's father Eurytus had grossly insulted Herakles; on a later occasion, therefore, Herakles distracted the attention of Iphitus when they were on top of a high tower, and pushed him over the edge. For this Zeus sentenced Herakles to a year's servitude under Omphale; "If," says Lichas (278–80) "he had requited Iphitus *openly*, Zeus would have forgiven him (Ζεὺς τὰν συνέγνω) his just victory (ξὺν δίκη χειρουμένῳ), for the gods too have no love of hybris." To a modern scholar, killing a young man because one has been treated hybristically by his father seems the act of a maniac; but there are cultures and sub-cultures today (e.g. in Lebanon, to say nothing of points much further west) in which it would be *de rigueur*, a salutary thought when we are tempted to contrast "ancient" and "modern" without qualification. Herakles is one of those tragic characters who do nothing by halves, and the gods of tragedy, while sharing human distaste for treacherous killing, are prepared to tolerate face-to-face revenge on a monstrous scale.

Yet Herakles would not have fared well before an Athenian jury.¹² There is abundant evidence that in the fourth century magnanimity, forgiveness, "niceness," very commonly designated ἐπιείκεια, were admired and respected, and they were a product of civilised society to which religious doctrine does not appear to have made any significant contribution. Arist. *EN* 1143a19–24 associates συγγνωμονικός and ἐπιεικής very closely. The Athenian speaker in *Pl. Lg.* 757e is notably uncomfortable about the necessary conflict between τὸ ἐπιεικὲς καὶ σύγγνωμον and strict justice, and Arist. *EN* 1137a31–38a3 wrestles with their interrelation, coming to the agreeable conclusion that ἐπιείκεια is δικαιοσύνη τις. I have explored ἐπιείκεια elsewhere,¹³ and draw attention now to two words, etymologically related to each other, one common and one rare, which are sometimes used with connotations of magnanimity: The common word is γενναῖος, the rarer word γεννάδας, which is confined to Aristophanes,

¹² Nor would Antigone, confronted by a prosecutor like Lycurgus.

¹³ *Greek Popular Morality* 61–63, 191.

two passages of Plato and one of Aristotle.¹⁴ Given their derivation from γέννα, they might have been used to imply pride, haughtiness and arrogance, but that is just what they do not imply, and this fact tells us much about Athenian attitudes to forgiveness.

The long-dead general Myronides is admiringly called γεννάδας in *Ar. Ec.* 304, but we do not know for what virtues, other than swift and resolute military action, he was remembered in tradition; in *Ach.* 1230 the victorious Dikaiopolis is hailed as ὦ γεννάδα; and one of the slaves in *Eq.* 240 f. prevents the Sausage-seller from running away in panic by saying ὦ γεννάδα / ἀλλαντοπῶλα, μὴ προδῶς τὰ πράγματα. Nothing so far to associate the word with magnanimity, but *Frogs* enlarges the field. In 179, when Xanthias has offered to carry all the luggage if no one else can be found to do so, Dionysus compliments him by saying χρηστός¹⁵ εἶ καὶ γεννάδας, and Xanthias earns the same compliment from the Janitor (640 "You really are γεννάδας ἀνήρ!") when he displays a willingness to submit to pain in the interests of fair play. 738–42, the opening of the conversation between Xanthias and the slave of Pluto, throws fresh light on the connotations of the word. "Your master," says the slave admiringly, "is γεννάδας ἀνήρ!" "Of course he is," says Xanthias, "he doesn't know how to do anything but drink and screw." Pluto's slave persists: "Fancy his not beating you up when it was proved that you'd been claiming to be the master, when you were a slave!" The slave calls Dionysus γεννάδας because he forgave Xanthias; Xanthias agrees, because, in his view, Dionysus's horizon is confined to drink and women, so naturally he's easy-going. The connotation "easy-going" and therefore "magnanimous" suits *Pl. Phdr.* 243c, where γεννάδας is coupled with πρῶος (which in turn is coupled with εὐκόλος in *Hp. Mi.* 364d), and *Arist. EN* 1100b32, on the man who endures great misfortunes εὐκόλως, not through insensitivity but because he is γεννάδας καὶ μεγαλόψυχος. The last occurrence of γεννάδας in *Frogs* is at 997, where the chorus appeals to Aeschylus to keep his temper in arguing against Euripides: ἀλλ' ὅπως ὦ γεννάδα / μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἀντιλέξεις. Just as ὦ γεννάδα addressed to the fleeing Sausage-seller was not an expression of a judgment on his character but an attempt to give him a certain character by addressing him as if he already possessed it—cf. "O most merciful king!" and the like, addressed to a

¹⁴ For the history of γεννάδας and its hypothetical prehistory see G. Björck, *Das Alpha Impurum und die tragische Kunstsprache* (Uppsala 1950) 51–54. LSJ boldly labels it "Doric," but it is not yet attested in any non-Attic text.

¹⁵ Χρηστός is often translated (even by people who should know better) "useful," for which the Greek is χρήσιμος; χρηστός is in fact the most general Attic word for "good," and the translation "useful" is appropriate only in such phrases as χρηστὰ διδάσκειν, χρηστὰ παραινεῖν, because a useful lesson or useful advice is the same as a good lesson or good advice. The translation of χρηστός as "noble" is also inappropriate except when a writer loyal to the upper class treats that class as if it had a monopoly of goodness. On the wide scope of χρηστός see my *The Greeks and their Legacy* (Oxford 1988) 10 f.

tyrant—so the chorus in *Frogs* hopes to induce in Aeschylus the behaviour of a γεννάδας ἀνήρ. That fits the only instance of ὁ γεννάδα in Plato, *Chrm.* 155d. Socrates is telling Critias of his encounter with the young and dazzlingly beautiful Charmides: “And then, ὁ γεννάδα, I saw inside his himation, and I was all afire, head over heels . . .” This is just the sort of context in which speakers elsewhere in Plato ask for forgiveness, e.g. *Euthd.* 286e “My question may be rather a bore, ἀλλὰ συγγίγνωσκε”; cf. *Smp.* 218b “That’s why I’ll tell you the whole story; you’ll forgive what I did then and what I’m saying now.” Socrates is afraid that his candid confession of erotic sensibility will embarrass Critias, and may bore him.

Γενναῖος too, a term of positive evaluation which requires a very wide range of translations to cover all the contexts in which we find it, may have the connotation “easy-going,” “magnanimous,” “laid-back,” as it does in Pl. *Rep.* 558c, a passage of caustic irony about the “marvellously agreeable” way in which a democratic state is run. Socrates refers to its συγγνώμη καὶ οὐδ’ ὅπωςτιοῦν μικρολογία (“total dismissal of mere details”) and its readiness to take on trust anyone in politics who asserts his goodwill to the city. Glaucon, going along with the irony, agrees: πάνυ γ’, ἔφη, γενναῖα.

This completes a full circle and brings us back to Hippolytus. Artemis’s recommendation that he should not “hate his father” is hardly needed, because Hippolytus has already made his freedom from hatred sufficiently clear in addressing Theseus as δυστάλας . . . τῆσδε συμφορᾶς¹⁶ (1407) and in saying that he mourns for his father more than for himself (1409). After Artemis’s exhortation, he takes the first step towards formal forgiveness, λῦω δὲ νεῖκος πατρί (1442), but in adding that he does this at Artemis’s behest he still leaves unresolved the issue which, it seems, most troubles Theseus at this moment. Attic law (Dem. 37. 59) provided that if the victim of homicide forgave (ἀφιέναι) the killer, there was no pollution, no angry ghost to appease, and therefore no punishment. Hippolytus makes the formal declaration which gives effect to this provision, σε τοῦδ’ ἐλευθερῶ φόνου (1449). Theseus is incredulous (1450 τί φῆς; ἀφίης αἵματός μ’ ἐλεύθερον;), and Hippolytus puts his declaration beyond question by calling on Artemis to witness it (1451). Then Theseus exclaims (1452) ὡς γενναῖος ἐκφαίνῃ πατρί.

Artemis is very far from issuing a divine injunction equivalent to “Bless them that curse you”; she is sorting out a situation in a heroic family in a way which will not conflict significantly with the existing corpus of Attic myth about Theseus. For the purpose, she treats Theseus’s fatal cursing of Hippolytus as if it were φόνος ἀκούσιος (which it is not, 887–90). Tigranes’ tutor chooses to treat the king’s sentence too as if it were

¹⁶ A defendant (or his sympathisers) may refer to a misdeed of his own as a συμφορά. If a prosecutor called it that, he would be as good as conceding the case; cf. D. M. MacDowell’s edition of Andocides, *On the Mysteries* (Oxford 1962) 126.

ἀκούσιος (which, again, it is not). Hippolytus and the tutor—and by implication Tigranes himself, whom we have previously heard pleading for his father's life and moving Cyrus to forgiveness of rebellion (*Cyr.* 3. 1. 7–37)—earn praise by forgiving a murderous (and unforgiving) injustice.

University of St. Andrews