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The Identity of Subject in Aeschylus, *Cho.* 32–36

Nina A. Almazova

St. Petersburg State University,
7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation; n.almazova@spbu.ru

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In the parodos of the *Choephoroi* by Aeschylus the chorus sings of a nightmare that made Clytemnestra send libations to the grave of Agamemnon in a vain attempt to pacify his wrath and escape vengeance. The subject of *Cho.* 32–36 is described as ὀρθόθριξ δόμων ὄνειρόμαντις, but the identity of the ὄνειρόμαντις is obscure. The text of the passage is not sound, so various emendations have been attempted which presuppose different interpretations of its subject. The proposal of F. Blass to delete Φοῖβος in v. 32 seems the most convincing. This word was probably an interpolation aimed at inserting an explicitly named subject into the text. However, Φοῖβος is most implausible as a subject, since Apollo has nothing to do with grim underworld divinities as well as with sending prophetic dreams. Fear would be semantically suitable, but it is rendered improbable by the words περὶ φόβῳ in v. 35: if inserted into the text, the noun φόβος would become both a subject and a secondary element of the same sentence. Several other candidates proposed so far, such as Clytemnestra, φοῖτος, οἶκτος, are also implausible. The dream of Clytemnestra as a subject suits the context perfectly, but it could be hardly called “an interpreter of dreams”. Yet Aeschylus is fond of rethinking the sense of compounds according to their etymological potential. The paper argues that ὄνειρόμαντις is used in the meaning ‘Dream the prophet’, i.e. ‘prophetic dream’.

Keywords: Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, Clytemnestra’s nightmare, Greek compounds, ὄνειρόμαντις.

Parodos, ἀντ. α':¹

	τορὸς γὰρ {Φοῖβος} ὀρθόθριξ δόμων	υ-υ-υ-υ-	2 ia
	ὄνειρόμαντις, ἐξ ὕπνου κότον πνέων,	υ-υ-υ-υ-υ-υ-	3 ia
	ἀωρόνυκτον ἀμβόαμα	υ-υ-υ-υ-υ	
35	μυχόθεν ἔλακε περὶ φόβω,	υυυυυυυυ-	4 ia
	γυναικείοισιν ἐν δώμασιν βαρὺς πίτων,	υ-- -υ- -υ-υ-υ-	ia ^Λ lia lec
	κριταὶ <δὲ> τῶνδ' ὄνειράτων	υ-υ-υ-υ-	2 ia
	θεόθεν ἔλακον ὑπέγγυοι	υυυυυυ-υ-	2 ia
39-40	μέμφεσθαι τοὺς γᾶς νέρθεν περιθύμω	-----υυ--	5 da
	τοῖς κτανοῦσι τ' ἐγκοτεῖν.	-υ-υ-υ-	lec

32 φοῖβος M : φόβος Σ (ubi Φοῖβος Papageorgios) : del. Blass : τορὸς δὲ Φοῖβος Lachmann : τορὸς γε Φοῖβος Tucker : τορὸς φόβος γὰρ D'Arnaud 237 : ὀρθόθριξ φόβος δόμων Pauw : τορὸς δὲ φοῖτος Hermann, iterum Bamberger : τορὸς γὰρ οἶκος Wilamowitz 1896

35 ἔλακε Σ M^s : ἔλαχε Σ M^t : ἔλασε Heyse (cf. 39 et 939 ἔλασε Pauw ex ἤλασε Σ : ἔλακε M) || περὶ φόβω M : περιφοβον vel περιφόβως Stanley : περὶ φόνω Bothe : παράφορον Herwerden : περὶ φόβος Bowen

36 γυναικείοισιν M : corr. Victorinus || πίτων M : corr. Blomfield ex Elmsleii praecepto

37 <δὲ> Portus : <τε> Porson

39 ἔλαχον M : corr. Turnebus

The chorus sings of a nightmare that made Clytemnestra send libations to the grave of Agamemnon in a vain attempt to pacify his wrath and escape vengeance. Later on (514–550) the audience, together with Orestes, will learn the details: the queen dreamed that she gave birth to a snake which suckled blood along with the milk from her breast.

Now, what person or power is the subject of 32–36?

The transmitted text is not sound: the antistrophe is two syllables longer than the strophe. It is possible to add the tenth, catalectic, iambus to the nine present in the strophe by reading παρηῆς φοινίους instead of παρηῆς φοίνισσ' in v. 24 (Stanley 1663; cf. contra Blass 1898, 181–182; 1906, 80). However, emendation of the antistrophe looks more promising, since it contains an obvious weak point: the word Φοῖβος — exactly two syllables long — does not fit the iambic metrical context (we need a vowel after γὰρ to scan it short). To keep it in the text, one has to change γὰρ to δέ (Lachmann 1819, 49) or γε (Tucker 1901, 16–17), but it is hardly worth the effort, since the sense is also questionable. Moreover, a rationale for the corruption is obvious, in that Φοῖβος could be an interpolated gloss (Murray 1937, 278) aimed at answering the same question that we are dealing with: who is the ὀρθόθριξ δόμων ὄνειρόμαντις?

However, this guess of the glossator is most implausible. It is the chthonic powers, first of all the dead Agamemnon himself, who are wrathful and must be appeased (cf. 39–41). To these very powers Electra and Orestes pray for help in a long scene at the king's tomb. Meanwhile Apollo, though he commanded Orestes to avenge the death of his father in a prophecy (a fact first mentioned later, in 269–297²), has nothing in common with grim

¹ Edition cited: West 1998, with an extended *apparatus criticus*.

² It is possible that the missing lines of the Prologue spoken by Orestes contained some reference to the command of Apollo (Winnington-Ingram 1933, 98), but Garvie (1970, 82) considers the possibility that the Prologue was not a long one and that we have most of it: "It is at least arguable that Apollo's command was not mentioned at this point, that he comes in only later when Orestes describes his oracle".

underworld divinities: see e.g. Stesich. fr. 271 Finglass and Eur. *Suppl.* 974b–976 (Plut. *De E apud Delphos* 394 b cites them to make this very point). The same contrast between Apollo and the realm of death is expressed in Aesch. *Ag.* 1074–1075, 1078–1079 and *Sept.* 854–860.³

It is true that Clytemnestra's attempt to appease the spirit of her husband turns out to be a mistake: it results in the meeting of Electra and Orestes and thus brings the retribution nearer instead of averting it. However, it is hardly possible to claim, with Verrall 1893, 6, that the prophets of the palace have mistaken Apollo for the chthonic powers in interpreting the dream. To leave such a mistake without an explicit comment would be alien to tragic poetics — indeed, on the contrary, the words θεόθεν ἔλακον ὑπέγγυοι (38) underline the truth of interpretation. Besides we can support the seers of Argos: the snake that appears in Clytemnestra's dream has obvious chthonic associations, and the Earth is regularly the source of dreams,⁴ whereas Apollo does not use them for warning.⁵

The claim (Müller 1836, 21, expanded by Verrall 1893, 32; 158) that φοῖβος is used not for Apollo, but generically for 'prophetic possession', is unfounded (such a meaning is not attested, while the etymological significance 'bright' must have been always perceivable) as well as implausible (the context implies personification, and what other person but Apollo could Φοῖβος mean?).

For all these reasons, Phoebus (even assuming that he was only implied and not named in the text) seems the least suitable candidate.

Neither is Clytemnestra a possible variant: it must have been she who screamed (ἀμβόαμα ἔλακε), but, even not counting the masculine τορός, πνέων, βαρύς, πίτνων, the queen could hardly be said to 'breath anger' or to 'fall gravely upon the women's chambers' (unless we imagine that Clytemnestra unleashed her fury upon her female slaves as she woke up).

According to the scholium (35c), the subject is Fear impersonated: ἀναλακεῖν καὶ βοῆσαι τὴν Κλυταιμῆστραν ἐποίησεν ὁ σαφῆς φόβος δι' ὄνειρων μαντευόμενος. Semantically this would be the most suitable variant proposed so far; cf. v. 929: ἡ κάρτα μάντις οὐξ ὄνειράτων φόβος.⁶ The adjectives τορός (cf. *Pr.* 181 διάτορος φόβος) and ὀρθόθριξ (cf. hair rising with terror e.g. in Aesch. *Sept.* 564; *Soph.* *OC* 1624–1625) suit it perfectly. It is possible that the scholiast has not just summarised the passage in a free paraphrase, but read the word φόβος in his text (cf. the scholium 35b cited in n. 8) — in this case φόβος

³ Cf. Garvie 1986, 57: "Apollo has nothing to do with the interpretation of dreams in the palace of Argos, or with the uttering of cries through Clytemnestra's mouth"; Rutherford 2001, 49: "Apollo had no part in the chthonic sphere". Rose 1958, 123–124 finds the assumption that ὄνειρόμαντις or anything else in the context meant Apollo so ridiculous that he refuses to believe someone could have ever proposed Φοῖβος as a gloss.

⁴ Cf. Eur. *Hec.* 70–71; *IT* 1263–1267; Aristoph. *Ran.* 1331–1332; see Kenner 1939, 450–451: "ein Heer von Träumen <...>, das irgendwo ganz im Westen oder unter der Erde, immer in der Nahe des Totenreichs liegt. Aus dem schattenhaften, geisterähnlichen Charakter der ὄνειροι erklärt es sich auch, wenn <...> dunkle, chthonische Gottheiten ihnen das Leben gegeben haben: die Nacht <...> oder die Erde <...> oder Erebus und Nacht"; Garvie 1970, 84: "Earth is the mother of all dreams, but this is a particularly appropriate one for her to send because it reveals her own anger to the living"; Garvie 1986, 59.

⁵ Cf. Klausen 1835, 5: "nullo modo vocem φοῖβος fert sensus. Neque enim ullus hic locus est adiectivo φοῖβος, neque potest esse sermo de Apolline, qui ex opinione Graecorum non mittit somnia, sed, si quid ei in his rebus agendum, interpretatur. De interpretatione autem in his versibus minime dicitur, sed postea demum".

⁶ The ms. gives this line to Orestes, but it may be plausibly assigned to Clytemnestra, see Garvie 1986, 301–302.

was either a genuine reading or an intrusive gloss (Bowen 1986, 36), whereas the transmitted Φοῖβος could be a mechanical scribal mistake, an emendation provoked by accumulation of prophetic vocabulary (Headlam–Thomson 1938, 164), or else an unskillful attempt at improving the metre (Klausen 1835, 5; Blass 1898, 180; 1906, 81). A series of interventions would allow us to insert this subject into the text: we should read τορὸς φόβος γὰρ ὀρθόθριξ δόμων with D’Arnaud or, still better, τορὸς γὰρ ὀρθόθριξ φόβος δόμων with Pauw in v. 32,⁷ and accordingly add two syllables to the strophe, as indicated above.

Yet the subject φόβος is rendered improbable by the words περὶ φόβῳ in v. 35: the same noun acts as a subject and a secondary element of the sentence.⁸ Attempting to avoid the tautology, Stanley (see Stanley–Butler 1812, 108) suggested περίφοβον or περιφόβως; Bothe 1805, 417 and Schütz 1823, 213 conjectured περὶ φόνῳ, Herwerden 1896, 39 παράφορον, but on its own account the expression περὶ φόβῳ is not suspicious (*pace* Page 1972, 202), given περὶ τάρβει in Aesch. *Pers.* 696, περὶ δειμάτι in Pind. *Pyth.* 5. 58, etc. (Groeneboom 1949, 108 n. 8). Attempts have been made (Conington 1857, 8; Paley 1879, 490; Headlam–Thomson 1938, 165; Rose 1958, 124) to legitimise such a slip by adducing analogous phrases: *Cypria* fr. 9, 2–6 Bernabé (= Athen. 8. 10, 334c–d) Νέμεσις ... ἐτείρετο ... νεμέσει; Soph. *Tr.* 964–967 ξένων βάσις ... φέρει ... βάσιν; Eur. *Herc.* 878–884 ὀλεῖς μανιάσιν λύσσαίς — βέβακεν ... Λύσσα; *IA* 764–775 Ἄρης ... πόλιν ... κυκλώσας ... ἄρει; in *Alc.* 50 Thanatos is demanded τοῖς μέλλουσι θάνατον ἀμβαλεῖν. However, in most cases the tautology may be plausibly avoided by means of textual criticism,⁹ and the rest are not equally grave.¹⁰ It proves a much more economic solution to do without φόβος in *Cho.* 32.

Bowen 1986, 36 tentatively proposed περὶ φόβος (περὶ adverbial) in v. 35, with Φοῖβος removed in v. 32. In this case, περὶ was wrongly taken as a preposition and provoked corruption of φόβος to φόβῳ. Hence the need to identify the subject; someone who saw that fear was an effective variant made a marginal note φόβος, which later found its way to v. 32. However, the position of φόβος so far away from τορὸς is suspicious, and adverbial περὶ is not attested in Aeschylus.¹¹

Hermann 1839, 52 = 1852, 31 and, independently, Bamberger 1840, 8 proposed τορὸς δὲ φοῖτος ὀρθόθριξ. Whatever meaning is implied, this conjecture is not convincing. Bamberger intended φοῖτος to mean ‘madness’, but it can hardly have this significance without φρενῶν (as in Aesch. *Sept.* 661), and Madness is an unsuitable source of a clear and true prophetic message. Paley 1879, 490 implausibly interpreted φοῖτος as “a ‘stalking

⁷ τορὸς γὰρ ὀρθόθριξ φόβος is the reading generally preferred before the emendation of Blass 1898; it is accepted e.g. by Blomfield 1834; Conington 1857; Weil 1860 = 1903; Dindorf 1880; Kirchhoff 1880; Sidgwick 1915; Headlam–Thomson 1938.

⁸ The tautology is considered intolerable by Hermann 1839, 51; Schütz 1823, 213; Bothe 1831, 150; Bamberger 1840, 8; Wilamowitz 1896, 158; Blass 1906, 81. The same opinion is suggested by the scholiast’s comment (35b): περὶ φόβῳ] περισσῶς τῷ φόβῳ, if it means “περὶ φόβῳ is added superfluously, given the subject φόβος above” (de Jongh 1856, 79; cf. Paley 1879, 490; contra Verrall 1893, 158).

⁹ *Cypria* fr. 9 Bernabé, v. 6: καὶ νεμέσει A : καὶ Νέμεσις Iunius, accepted by Meineke : καὶ ἡ μὲν Schweighauser (see Bernabé 1987, 50). Soph. *Tr.* 964: βάσις codd. : στάσις Meineke, accepted in the OCT edition (see Lloyd-Jones–Wilson 1990). In *IA* the text of the whole epode is unsound; 775: ἄρει (ei ex ω corr.?) L : δορι Hermann : ἔρκει Jacobs : λίνῳ vel βρόχῳ West (see Diggle 1994, 388); 773–783 secl. Hartung (see Stockert 1992, II, 424–425).

¹⁰ Eur. *Herc.* 878: the mss. reading, maintained by Wilamowitz 1895 and Lee 1988, is μανιάσιν Λύσσαίς, and anyway this passage is not a parallel, since Λύσσα does not appear as both the subject and the object of the same phrase. In *Alc.* 50 the god’s name Θάνατος is not mentioned nearby — it occurs only in v. 24.

¹¹ The only case mentioned in Italie 1964, 243 s.v. (*Sept.* 345) is the result of a conjecture.

nightly visitant' in the form of a dream", although the word is otherwise attested only in the meaning 'a repeated going or coming' (cf. LSJ s.v.) and not as a *nomen agentis*. Φοῖτος would have suited the story of Lady Macbeth rather than Clytemnestra.

Wilamowitz 1896, 158 conjectured τορὸς γὰρ οἶκτος ὀρθόθριξ. In its regular meaning 'pity, compassion' (Aesch. *Suppl.* 486 ms., *Pr.* 239) or 'lamentation, piteous wailing' (Aesch. *Sept.* 51; *Cho.* 411; *Suppl.* 59; 386), οἶκτος is an emotion out of place in this scene, where the anger of the dead and the fear of the murderer reign: even after Clytemnestra wakes she does not lament — she acts, and her household is far from compassionate. Wilamowitz claimed that Aeschylus used οἶκτος in the etymological meaning 'outcry' (attested, in his eyes, in *Suppl.* 59), as derived from οἶ. Yet in this case the expression οἶκτος ἀμβόαμα ἔλακε is tautological, and οἶκτος κότον πνέων pointless. Wilamowitz himself rejected this proposal in his edition of 1914.

None of these conjectures is accepted in the twentieth-century editions of the *Choeophori*, which for the most part follow F. Blass in deleting Φοῖβος.¹² Blass at first suggested that the subject implied was the dream of Clytemnestra.¹³ However, this version was later abandoned by its author and found no supporters — presumably on the ground that an "interpreter of dreams" could not itself be a dream. Blass argued later (1906, 81) that the power acting in this passage was the evil daemon of the house mentioned so often in the *Oresteia*. This is not impossible, but it should be noted that the daemon is not named here, unlike in other cases.¹⁴

Thus as regards the identity of the ὄνειρόμαντις, a definite solution has not been found,¹⁵ but the search for it has clearly indicated the problem: modern editors as well as ancient glossators proceed in their attempts from the feeling that the phrase is not clear without a subject indicated explicitly in the text.¹⁶

I believe that the subject is in fact named rather than hinted at in the text: it is the 'prophetic dream', ὄνειρόμαντις.

The word-building model of two nouns (in the nominative), one of which determines the other, is represented in Greek. Such compounds are called determinative appositive, e.g. μητρόπολις 'mother-state', σφυροπέλεκυς 'an ax used as a hammer' etc. (Schwyzer 1953, 453). If both parts are used on equal terms, such cases are classified as copulative compounds (Kühner–Blass 1892, 318).

¹² E.g. Wilamowitz 1914, Murray 1937, Untersteiner 1947, Groeneboom 1949, Page 1972, Garvie 1986, Mazon 1993, West 1998.

¹³ Blass 1898, 182: "Ὀνειρόμαντις δόμων ist nun Subject geworden, wozu τορὸς als Attribut passt; der ὄνειρόμαντις ist aber nichts als der personificirte weissagende Traum".

¹⁴ δαίμων: *Ag.* 1468; 1476; 1482; 1570; 1660. Ἐρινύς: *Ag.* 1119; 1190; 1433; *Cho.* 577; 651. Ἄτη: *Ag.* 1192; 1433; 1566; *Cho.* 1076. ἀλάστωρ: *Ag.* 1501; 1507. Ἄρης: *Ag.* 1511; *Eum.* 355. Ἄρά: *Cho.* 692. στάσις: *Ag.* 1117. φόνος: *Cho.* 806.

¹⁵ The comment of Tucker 1901, 17 looks like an attempt to accept all the explanations at once evoked by desperation: "The poet doubtless meant the figurative Φοῖβος to suggest the φόβος which was *literally* the Φοῖβος in this case. <...> δόμων ὄνειρόμαντις, i.e. not the universal oracle, Φοῖβος of Delphi, <...> but a prophetic possession sent by a tutelary *genius* of the house and taking the shape of a dream". As Mazon 1993, 81 n. 1 claimed that the "prophet" was Clytemnestra's remorse (the same in Casevits 1982, 70), he only provided an interpretation of Aeschylus' image in terms of modern psychology, rather than revealed its structure.

¹⁶ Cf. Garvie 1986, 57: "with Φοῖβος removed the identity of the ὄνειρόμαντις and the masculine participles are obscure".

Beside the passage of Aeschylus, the word *ὄνειρόμαντις* occurs in Phrynichus (*Praeparatio sophistica* p. 91, l. 7–8 De Borries) and in a magical papyrus of the third century AD (Preisendanz, *PMG* VII 795); the fragment of “The Lydians” by Magnes adduced by Pollux 7. 188 was cited as *ὄνειρομάντεσιν ἀναλύταις* in the *editio princeps* of 1502 based on a codex now lost, but all the extant mss. have *ὄνειροκρίτης* in various forms (see Bethe 1931, 103). Each time, it seems, the meaning is ‘interpreter of dreams’ (insofar as the context — or the lack of it — allows a safe understanding). Yet *-μαντις* compounds can also be appositive, as proved by *ιατρόμαντις*¹⁷ ‘a seer that is a physician at the same time’: Aesch. *Ag.* 1623, *Eum.* 62, *Suppl.* 263 (cf. Aristoph. *Plut.* 11 *ιατρὸς ὦν καὶ μάντις*).¹⁸

It has been noted long ago that Aeschylus is fond of rethinking the sense of words according to their etymological potential (see especially Schuursma 1932). Among examples of changing the usual meaning of compounds are: *θεοβλαβεῖν* ‘do harm to the gods’ instead of ‘be damaged by the gods’ (*Pers.* 831); *παγκρατῆς* ‘overcoming in every respect’ instead of ‘overcoming everyone’ (*Ag.* 1648); *πάμμαχος* ‘fighting with everyone’ instead of ‘fighting by all means, = *παγκρατιαστής*’ (*Ag.* 169); *πάγκοινος* ‘all together’ instead of ‘common to all’ (*Cho.* 458); *πάνοπλος* ‘of all arms’ instead of ‘in full armour’ (*Sept.* 59); *πολύανδρος* ‘numerous’ instead of ‘full of men’ (*Pers.* 533); *δίπαις* ‘of two children’ instead of ‘having two children’ (*Cho.* 334);¹⁹ *καλλίπαις* ‘beautiful child’ instead of ‘having beautiful children’ (*Ag.* 762).²⁰ An interesting case is the *harpax* *θηλυκτόνος*, which means ‘female killer’, though one would expect ‘killer of women’ (*Pr.* 861).²¹

Therefore, to interpret *ὄνειρόμαντις* in *Cho.* 32 as ‘a dream which acts as a prophet, i.e. has prophetic significance’ seems in accordance both with Greek semantics and Aeschylus’ poetical technique. As a subject the Dream is perfectly compatible with all the participles and the verb.²² Moreover, its impersonation as a prophet may be confirmed by v. 549–550 (Orestes speaking): *ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ’ ἐγὼ / κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοῦνειρον ἐννέπει τόδε*.²³

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¹⁷ *ιατρόμαντις* is classified as appositive in Schwyzer 1953, 453 and as copulative in Kühner–Blass 1892, 318.

¹⁸ For an overview of *-μαντις* compounds see Stolz 1904, 180–183.

¹⁹ Schuursma 1932, 121–126.

²⁰ Fraenkel 1950, II, 348–349.

²¹ Schuursma 1932, 126–127.

²² The Dream seems so evident a possibility that it occurred almost unconsciously to some scholars who read *φόβος* or *Φοῖβος*, as reflected in their comments, e.g. Paley 1879, 490: “Klausen [1835] objects that the dream itself could not be said *λακεῖν*, and gives *ἔλαχε* <...>. But *ὄνειρόμαντις* justifies *λακεῖν*, since the dream thereby assumes the character of a person”. Weir Smith 1926, 162: “‘Phoebus’ is used for a prophetic ‘possession’, which assails Clytaemestra as a nightmare <...> so that her vision is itself called an *ὄνειρόμαντις*”.

²³ I sincerely appreciate the language assistance of P. J. Finglass.

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Действующее лицо у Эсхила, *Cho.* 32–36

Нина Александровна Алмазова

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет,
Российская Федерация, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9; n.almazova@spbu.ru

В пародии «Хоэфор» Эсхила хор поет о ночном кошмаре, из-за которого Клитемнестра послала возлияния на могилу Агаменнона в тщетной попытке умиловить его дух и избежать возмездия. Действующее лицо фразы *Cho.* 32–36 описано как ὄρθοθριξ δόμων ὀνειρόμαντις, но кто такой ὀνειρόμαντις, остается неясным. Текст в этом месте нуждается в эмендации, и предлагались многочисленные варианты его исправления, позволяющие по-разному интерпретировать субъект фразы. Предложение Ф. Бласса атетировать Φοῖβος в ст. 32 представляется наиболее убедительным. Очевидно, это была интерполяция, цель которой — получить недвусмысленное указание в тексте на действующее лицо. Однако Φοῖβος на эту роль не подходит, поскольку Аполлон не имеет никакого отношения к зловещим хтоническим божествам и не посылает пророческих снов. Подходящим по смыслу было бы подлежащее «страх», однако оно неправдоподобно из-за слов περὶ φόβῳ в ст. 35: при внесении его в текст одно и то же существительное φόβος оказалось бы одновременно главным и второстепенным членом предложения. Другие предлагавшиеся варианты, такие как Клитемнестра, φοῖτος, οἶκτος, также неубедительны. В качестве действующего лица прекрасно подходит персонифицированный сон Клитемнестры, однако сон едва ли можно назвать «толкователем снов». Между тем известно, что Эсхил склонен переосмысливать композиты, придавая им необычные, но этимологически возможные значения. В статье высказывается предположение, что ὀνειρόμαντις здесь употребляется в значении «сон-пророк», т. е. «пророческий сон».

Ключевые слова: Эсхил, Хоэфоры, сон Клитемнестры, ὀνειρόμαντις, греческие композиции.