

## THE FUNERAL OF ASTYANAX IN EURIPIDES' *TROADES*\*

### I

THE penultimate scene of Euripides' *Troades*, lines 1123–1250, presents the dressing of a child's corpse for burial. Even as the body is being carried away for interment, firebrands are seen on the heights of Troy (1256–9). All that remains is the commencement of the final burning of the city while the remaining Trojan captives are ordered off for embarkation and exile. The end of the play, therefore, enacts the annihilation of a city and its total abandonment; in such a context the funeral which immediately precedes surely makes a crucial contribution to the significance of the play and deserves close study.<sup>1</sup>

The ancient Greeks were sensitive to the need for respect for the dead in peace and war, as is shown by the obligation to provide a funeral and to tend the grave, as well as by the practice of surrendering the dead on battlefields. The issue of burial figures strikingly in serious literature, being a major focus of epic and tragedy: in the last third of the *Iliad* questions of how a corpse is treated and whether it will be buried are supremely important, while in tragedy burial is the major concern of three plays, *Ajax*, *Antigone* and Euripides' *Supplikes*, apart from numerous less central treatments elsewhere. The Athenians must have been deeply concerned with the proprieties of burial and were practised in responding to them in their literary and dramatic experience.<sup>2</sup>

In *Troades* the importance of the funeral suggested by its placing near the end of the action is anticipated by the very striking reference to tombs in Poseidon's reflection as he leaves the stage at the end of the prologue: 'That man is a fool who sacks cities, and while bringing to desolation temples and tombs, the sanctuaries of the dead, himself perishes later' (95–7). Precise text and interpretation may be uncertain, but what is undeniable is the emphasis laid on the tombs, achieved by their mention alongside the temples of the gods to which they are given similar status: ἱερὰ τῶν κεκμηκότων (96). Coming in a moralizing *sententia* at the conclusion of the prologue, it is hard not to feel that this is the first appearance of a theme which will play an important part later.<sup>3</sup>

In preparation for the analysis of the funeral we should look at the scene where Astyanax appears with his mother, for there are connections between the two scenes: in particular, the treatment of the dead Polyxena, which is significantly different from that which Astyanax will receive. Interesting aspects of Euripides' dramaturgy are seen in the way the child is portrayed and in the use made of the pity felt by Astyanax's closest kin as a means of generating compassion which transcends the personal.

To take this last point first, early in the play Euripides has presented the pain of Hecuba and the Chorus as chiefly a response to their own situations and not as a feeling of sympathy for the

\* We would like to express our gratitude to the anonymous referees of *JHS* for their helpful criticism and suggestions in connection with this article.

<sup>1</sup> Our treatment of this theme naturally touches on many aspects of the play which have been discussed in recent work: note, in particular, two books devoted to the play, the full commentary of Biehl (1989), and the monograph of Croally (1994), with a special interest in the play as a social product and literary artefact.

<sup>2</sup> For Greek funerals in general, see Garland (1985); the treatment of enemy dead after battles is discussed on pp. 101–3. On the theme of heroic death in epic and its influence on later ideas and funerary practice, see Loraux (1986) and Vernant (1991) 50–74. Burial or treatment of the dead plays a minor part in Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus*, Euripides, *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Hecuba*, *Electra*, *Heracles and Helen*. Burial was evidently an important issue in the life of the *polis*: see Griffin (1998) 58.

<sup>3</sup> That special importance is attached to Poseidon's statement is suggested also by Euripidean practice, which, as Dunn (1993) 108 points out, tends to put such sententious remarks into the authoritative mouth of the *deus* at the end of the play.

whole community; see Hecuba's emphasis on her physical degradation (114–18) and, in the parodos, the Chorus' overriding concern at the prospect of slavery. In her lament after the departure of Cassandra, Hecuba is concerned almost entirely with her own predicament and not with that of the other Trojans: not one of all her sons and daughters remains to help her (503–4). In the ensuing ode the Chorus shift from anxiety over their own individual fates towards sympathy for the community, thus initiating a change of mood in Hecuba and colouring the whole drama. The ode's opening subject is Troy, named at verses 511 and 515, while it finishes with the virtually equivalent periphrasis 'the native land of the Phrygians' (567); the total involvement of the community is a repeated keynote (527–32); the Chorus blend with the city: 'I will sing a song to Troy, how I was captured by the spear and perished' (δοριάλωτος, 517). The contrast with the lyrics of the parodos, filled with concern for their destination as slaves, is marked.

In tune with this new emphasis, this ode contains the first mention of Trojan children in a context of suffering: when the city is invaded, children cling in terror to their mothers' clothes (βρέφη δὲ φίλια περὶ πέπλους ἔβαλλε ματρὶ χεῖρας ἐπτοημένους, 557–9). This picture of children and mothers together differs markedly from the earlier picture of the Scamander echoing with the wailing of women (28–9), for it introduces the factor of children and thus prepares for their greater prominence in the fall of Troy, as at verses 1089–99, where the Chorus sing of a crowd of children at the city gates bewailing the separation from their mothers: τέκνων δὲ πλῆθος ἐν πύλαις δάκρυσιν... βοᾷ Μᾶτερ, ὦμοι, μόναν δὴ μ' Ἀχαιοὶ κομίζουσι σέθεν ἀπ' ὀμμάτων κυανέαν ἐπὶ ναῦν... Before that ode is reached we shall see Astyanax torn from his mother for a fate worse than separation, and immediately after the ode his funeral follows. This sequence has the appearance of a deliberate build-up, with the presence of children reserved until they can be introduced to the required effect. A similar desire not to dissipate the dramatic impact of the scenes involving Astyanax may be supposed to have determined that, while the Chorus are married and address their dead husbands (1081, 1308–9), nowhere do they address their children; in some collective sense the children at the gates can be seen as theirs, but the visualization of the children as a crowd shows that they are not thought of by the Chorus individually as their own, and it is striking that they do not express grief for them directly, but leave Hecuba and Andromache a monopoly of maternal suffering. In this way the generation among the members of the community of a sense of grief at each other's suffering is mediated by the pity felt for the boy, in which that sense of grief finds its most powerful expression.

## II

Andromache's arrival must be something of a surprise, and still more surprising is the arrival of little Astyanax with his mother, for though she was mentioned at verses 272–4, Astyanax was not, nor has any more explicit reference been made to him than might be implied in the general description of fearful children (557–9).<sup>4</sup> Mother and son arrive as a united pair, she carrying him upon her breast as they are transported on a Greek wagon down to the ships. Their unity is

<sup>4</sup> The Greek decision to kill Astyanax is held back from the audience until the middle of the play, and the funeral scene itself comes as a further surprise. Mention of particular names in the prologue, Helen (35), Hecuba (37), Polyxena (40) and Cassandra (42), since their bearers do figure prominently in the play, may be taken to direct the expectations of the audience; the one prominent absentee is Andromache. Hecuba immediately becomes the focus of the action, and our expectations about Cassandra and Polyxena are reinforced when Hecuba questions Talthebius about them, as well as about herself, with either extended questioning or elaborated answer (246–92). She also asks about Andromache (272–3), here first mentioned in the play, but there is no elaboration of the answer (274), the emphasis being on the other three. The effect of the omission of Andromache from the prologue is finely discussed by Meridor (1989), who points out that, e.g. in the *Little Iliad*, both Priam and Astyanax are killed by Neoptolemus,

significant, for Andromache, who when first mentioned was described only as Hector's wife, is now seen as both wife and mother. However, this unity will soon be ruptured, because she has been selected to become the wife of Neoptolemus. At the end of the scene, the separation of the two roles of wife and mother is expressed physically, as she remains on the vehicle to depart for her new marriage, while the child is taken from her to walk to his death. The mode of transport might evoke a bride's journey to her new home.<sup>5</sup> Further, Andromache, as if degraded to the status of a piece of booty, is seated among the weapons of Hector and Phrygian spoils (πάρεδρος χαλκείοις Ἐκτορος ὄπλοις σκύλοις τε Φρυγῶν, 573–5), a tableau which links her firmly with her original marriage and also prepares for the symbolism of the funeral speech in which Hecuba meditates on the marks of Hector on his shield, as if the shield almost stands for the dead Hector himself. On a more practical level, the mention of Hector's weapons among the spoil will dispose of any awkwardness felt later at the salvaging of the shield to serve as a coffin; we will recall where the shield last was, and indeed an effective staging would display it prominently upon the cart. Andromache has lost her husband and will soon be separated from his shield; she will also lose her son, but he will be united in burial with this shield whose availability is explicable and which is so closely associated with his father's memory. The extended description of the spoils picks up the mention of Phrygian booty at verse 18 and looks forward to verses 1136–42 and to Hecuba's subsequent address to the shield at the funeral.

After a lyric lament shared with Hecuba, in which both women mourn for the city as well their own losses (577–607), Andromache brings the theme of Polyxena to the awaited conclusion, for she tells Hecuba of her death (622).<sup>6</sup> But she adds a detail which looks forward: she saw her and covered the body with clothes and mourned her (ἔκρυψα πέπλοις κάπεκοψάμην νεκρόν, 627). This action does not amount to burial, but she performs due funeral rites of dressing and mourning, actions which Euripides wishes to impress upon our minds, because this, a woman's task at a funeral,<sup>7</sup> is what we shall see Hecuba do for Astyanax. We might have expected a longer lament for Polyxena than Hecuba utters, but her sorrow for her own daughter is overtaken by the anguish of Andromache for her son, whose death-sentence, although no doubt suspected by an audience familiar with his fate in epic, falls like a thunderbolt upon the women, so that, when Andromache cannot bury the child herself but has Hecuba do it for her, we may feel behind Hecuba's grief for the boy the expression of her unassuaged sorrow for Polyxena, the boy's body becoming the focus of emotions which she might have spent on burying her daughter. Here again Euripides widens the range of persons for whom grief is felt, merging personal loss with pity for others and ultimately compassion for the whole community.

But it is dramatically appropriate that Polyxena is not properly buried by either the Greeks or Andromache. It is not said that her body had been exposed, but extreme Greek neglect at least is implied by the words 'I concealed the corpse with clothing', a neglect the more remarkable because in *Hecuba* the Greeks themselves had given her a considerable pyre; the opposite treat-

as is Polyxena in *Hecuba*; but the killer of Priam and Polyxena is not named in *Troades*, so as to avoid giving the audience forebodings when Andromache and her son appear *en route* for Neoptolemus' ship. Thus the audience can embrace Hecuba's picture of a future for Troy through the survival of the child (p. 35). It is true that there is no tradition of Astyanax surviving the sack, so the audience must feel pity rather than fully sharing the delusion, yet Euripides has done much to make the brutal decision a blow to the audience as well as to the two women.

<sup>5</sup> For this suggestion, see Seaford (1987) 130, who discusses weddings in tragedy. On features of the wedding ceremony, see Oakley and Sinos (1993).

<sup>6</sup> The role of Polyxena in *Hecuba* and *Troades* is discussed by Petersmann (1977); for the relevance of this announcement to the theme of widening emotion, cf. Meridor (1989) 34: the loss of Cassandra and now Polyxena makes Hecuba realize that her interests are not to be understood in terms of her personal fortunes. Only after Polyxena's death has been explored does Hecuba show awareness of 'Hector's child in Andromache's arms and the significance of his survival for the family and Troy'.

<sup>7</sup> For women's participation in funeral rites, see Garland (1985) 28–30.

ment here is attributable to the dramatist's different intentions. No one who died at the sack is stated to have been buried, and widespread exposure as carrion is implied at verses 599–600, *cf.* 1084–5, 1312–13. Astyanax alone will be interred, and the single funeral and burial of the little boy must substitute for all the burials that ought to have been carried out but were not, so as to be almost the very funeral of Troy itself. No other funeral must be allowed to reduce this significance. Thus it is that, while the theme of Polyxena is completed in this scene, at the same time it looks forward to the funeral of Astyanax and to the sacral recognition of the end of the city.

In the ensuing scene Andromache's reaction to Talthylbius' news that her son is to die expresses three main aspects of Euripides' treatment of the relationship of parent and child.<sup>8</sup> At the simplest level, there is great pathos generated by the child's ignorance of what is going on, his innocence of any responsibility for what is happening to him, and his total inability to help himself. When she hears the news, it seems that the child in her arms is too young to understand but cries with a vague sense of fear and clings closer (749–50; *cf.* 557–9). Her child is innocent and the barbarity of his death forces from her a repudiation of the tradition of Helen's birth from Zeus: the ruin brought upon Troy must derive from some evil, impersonal origin. The sequence of ideas from verses 764 to 773 suggests that, for Andromache, the murder of her innocent child epitomizes the entire destruction of Troy—an instance of the way Euripides invests the child with an almost symbolic value.

Secondly, Euripides has the mother experience the physical presence of her child most sharply at the moment when she is about to be parted from him. The harrowing directness measures the agony of the loss by intensifying the awareness of the child as tangible. The ensuing separation is nothing less than a tearing apart: 'O baby in my arms, so dear to your mother; oh the sweet smell of your skin ... cling to your mother, wrap your arms around my back, join your mouth to mine' (757–63). After abusing the Greeks and Helen, she relinquishes him to the soldiers: 'Take him, throw him down, eat his flesh' (774–5).<sup>9</sup> The child is then gently but firmly detached from his mother, the visible enactment of the undoing of all that physical closeness both of language and embrace (782–3).<sup>10</sup>

The third point is that the child is a creature whose political and social being is as yet incomplete, and he exists as it were in transition from past to future. He bears the marks of his inheritance from his parents and his life is oriented towards a future which, in accordance with the norms of ordinary expectations, awaits him. For his elders he is correspondingly the focus of expectations which are woven into the fabric of their lives. But it is precisely because of his possible heroic aspirations that he is to be killed (723); the appalling gap between the helpless child and this assessment of his political future is measured in Andromache's first words to him: he has been valued to excess (περισσὰ τιμηθεῖς τέκνον, 740). His inheritance, for all its greatness, has let him down: his father's nobility will be the cause of his death (744). She sees her own life as deeply involved in assumptions about the future of which this child is the centre: her marriage has turned out to be disastrous (δυστυχῆ, 745) in that its proper aims have been distorted, for she came to Hector's house to bear a son who would be king of Asia, but bore one to be butchered by the Greeks (745–8). His death makes all her care and labour pointless (758–60). But the most poignant recognition of ruptured expectations occurs in verses 752–3: Hector will not seize his famous spear and rise from the earth to save him. The vigorous detail

<sup>8</sup> The role of children in Euripides is discussed by Devrient (1904), Kassel (1954), Sifakis (1979) and Fantham (1986).

<sup>9</sup> Intense hatred is expressed in terms of a desire to eat an enemy at *Il.* 4.35, 22.347, 24.212–13; *cf.* Andromache's description of Menelaus and Hermione as vultures in *Andr.* 74–5.

<sup>10</sup> For the staging envisaged here, see Halleran (1985) 97–8.

'seize' (ἀρπάσας) and the epithet 'famous' (κλεινόν),<sup>11</sup> so conventional and yet so evocative of the absolute trust of those whom Hector once protected, eloquently express the recognition of what has vanished, the security on which she (for the word 'Hector' instead of 'father' shows that the mother's point of view, not the child's, is taken) could once rely, taking for granted the presence of a powerful husband so quick to defend his family and so effective, too, as all the world well knew. For so much we learn from these details of language. But what was so important and so indubitable had, incredibly, gone. And now Andromache must suffer as a mother the personal agony at the loss of her child, whose political future Hecuba urged her to consider (702–5) and whose political prospects the Greeks will now cut short.<sup>12</sup> This third aspect of the presentation of the child, which will be brought out most effectively after his death in connection with his funeral, is of great importance dramatically, for the sense of incompleteness in his being and of the rupture of norms in his death allows the child to figure as a token of Troy, and the misery of his extinction will help us to feel in the funeral scene that the fate of the whole city is somehow being evoked.

After the promise of burial and a lament as a reward for Andromache's submission (737–8), the audience must expect that the child will be buried. This, with the pattern of Polyxena in mind, may mean no more than a brief report, and since Andromache is going to the ships, if we ask ourselves about it at all, we might assume that it will be she who performs the ritual. As the parties leave, the mother on the carriage in one direction and the child walking (*cf.* βαίνε, 783) in the other, Hecuba says that all she can do for him is beat her head and breast as she is doing (τάδε πλῆγματα, 793–4); we are not encouraged to think that Hecuba will have any further part in the child's funeral. As a final comment on this scene, one should note that Hecuba regards herself as united with Andromache in the loss of the child (συλώμεθα ... μητῆρ κάγώ, 790–2), and that her regret is for the city as well as for him (οἷ 'γὼ πόλεως, οἴμοι δὲ σέθεν, 795–6). This extreme expression of grief at the end of an episode is to be contrasted with the similar but self-absorbed cries at the end of an episode at lines 505–10. The extension of Hecuba's personal focus of suffering is well advanced.

The shift towards a sense of universal rather than individual loss is reflected in the second stasimon where the seashores are said to ring with cries as a bird cries for its children, with some women calling for husbands, others their children and others their aged mothers (826–32). This should be contrasted with the self-focused cries with which the Scamander rings (28–9) and looks forward to the crowd of children crying for their mothers at the gates (1089–95), already discussed in connection with verses 557–9. The sense of tears for the losses of whole families transcends the grief of individuals, and the tragedy to which the natural environment responds is conceived in a new way, as if the whole community were women being torn from three generations of their families; and indeed it is likely that all the survivors of the sack are female. Even

<sup>11</sup> For the vigorous movement implied by the verb ἀρπάζω, *cf.* *Hipp.* 1220, *Phoen.* 1404, 1456; for the epic associations of the adjective κλεινός, see Lee (1986).

<sup>12</sup> Euripides' version of the death of Astyanax underlines this irony. In epic the child is thrown from a tower by Neoptolemus (*Ilias Parva* 19.4 Allen), or killed by Odysseus (*Chrestomathia*) by being thrown from the wall (*Iliu Persis* 2 Allen). No motive is recorded, though fear of eventual revenge would be an appropriate heroic consideration: *cf.* the proverb 'He is a fool who kills the father and leaves the children' ascribed to Stasinus (*Cypria* 25 Allen). At *Il.* 24.734–8 Andromache envisages the possibility that her son might be thrown from a tower by one of the Greeks, but the motive that she gives is revenge 'in anger at the death of a brother or father or son, for very many were the Greeks who bit the ground at the hands of Hector' ('Ἐκτορος ἐν παλάμησιν). Thus the mode of his death in epic is fairly securely established; the suppression of personal revenge as a motive in favour of political expediency and a decision of the whole army stresses the boy's potential future and hence the unrealized nature of his existence. For discussion of his death as represented in art, see Morris (1995) and Anderson (1997), and for a survey of the Astyanax myth as a whole with later developments, see Kern (1918).

the children who cry at the gates are girls (μόναυ, 1091). As if to point the contrast with the doom-laden city, the ode ends with a curse upon Helen and Menelaus on the voyage home (1100–17).

We have now reached the point where the chief implications of the play's opening have been worked out, and this is underlined by the ode's reflection of themes raised in the prologue. Poseidon explained his departure by reference to the discontinuation of religious worship here lamented by the Chorus, and as the prologue ended with the danger to the Greek fleet at sea, so does the ode. The funeral scene which follows immediately may therefore be thought to match and illumine by enactment Poseidon's parting reflection about the desolation brought upon tombs, the sanctuaries of the dead.

### III

The boy's body is brought back by Talthybius from the direction of the ships, and with him is brought a shield (1136–7); Andromache, we are told, was unable to perform the burial rites herself, such was the haste in which her master Neoptolemus had to set sail (1145–6), but she had obtained permission for him to be buried by Hecuba along with the shield of his father Hector. That the boy would be buried the audience must have anticipated, and by Andromache if by anyone, as suggested above, but that the body should be brought on stage must be quite unimagined. Yet with the surprise comes the entirely convincing explanation: she was not allowed time, her ship must go at once; the long-awaited embarkation had suddenly started. And we can see that Hecuba is the right substitute, for Andromache did for her daughter a similar service to that which she now asks from Hecuba.<sup>13</sup>

An even greater surprise must be the sight of the shield, but its presence is not felt to be artificial, for the ground has been well prepared (18, 573–4) and its availability is economically accounted for by the single ship of Neoptolemus' fleet remaining to set sail loaded with the rest of his spoils (1123–5). Yet the demands upon our imagination are not so easily satisfied. What does it mean to have the shield buried with the boy? Let us deal with this issue at the point at which Euripides starts, namely what the shield means to Andromache. For it is her idea that the shield should serve the boy in place of a coffin: the infinitive *θάψαι* (1142) shows that this is part of her request.

Andromache shrinks from the thought of seeing the shield in her new house and in the bedroom where she will become Neoptolemus' bride (1138–9). Weapons could be furniture, at least in heroic bedrooms: a Trojan soldier lies in his bedroom and his javelin hangs on a peg (*Hec.* 919–20), and in the bedroom of Iphigeneia as a girl was kept the spear with which Pelops slew Oinomaos (*IT* 823–6), so there is nothing implausible in the prospect from which she recoils. The shield is described by Talthybius as a 'terror of the Greeks' (1136) to identify it as the weapon of the Trojan warrior whom above all others they feared, as if he remembers its effectiveness with a shudder. Shields might identify their owners, and since Hector was a defensive warrior but a great destroyer, as Andromache proudly announced in lines 610–11, the shield is imaginatively convincing as a symbol of the fear which Hector created. For Andromache the shield seems so close to Hector as almost to stand for him, and we may feel that the burial of Hector's son together with his shield signals for her the end of her former marriage; while for the audience it prepares for the way in which Hecuba will see her own son Hector in his shield. And with sympathetic insight Euripides has Andromache obtain this form of burial as a request from her new husband through a display of that amenability which was her great virtue and

<sup>13</sup> See Anderson (1997) 162, 167, on the relationship between the burial of the child by Hecuba and the tending of Polyxena's corpse by Andromache.

downfall (657–8) and which Hecuba had urged her to employ in order to ensure the child's future for Troy's sake (699–705). That attempt was futile; Andromache is now successful, but only in so far as to achieve the union of her son and husband in the grave.

The body, already washed in the river Scamander, which must be thought of as lying between the ships and the prison camp, is brought in and presumably passed by Talthybius into the hands of Hecuba, in accordance with Andromache's wishes (1142–3). It would be most effective to have the boy and shield separate at this point and have him placed in the shield at verse 1192, when this is mentioned as the only part of his patrimony which he will inherit.<sup>14</sup> Talthybius goes off to have the grave dug; he will save time thereby, as he did in washing the corpse, for the movement towards the ships is gathering pace (1153–5). Furthermore, it would be dramatically inept to have a Greek, however sympathetic, intruding upon the ultimate expression of Trojan grief.

With the shield on the ground beside her, Hecuba addresses the dead boy in her arms. Her speech forms a ring-composition, starting with the shield (1156–7) and moving on to abuse of the Greeks for such a murder (1158–66); she goes on to reflect on the boy's frustrated future expectations (1167–72) and contemplates his body, dealing in turn with head, hands and mouth (1173–86); she then ponders the waste of all her care spent on him (1187–8) before abusing the Greeks (1188–91) and addressing the shield (1194–9), in which she has by now placed the body. The speech is full of a sense of a frustrated past and a future prospect cut short. In the contrast lies the pathos; her words are haunted by ghosts of what can never happen but which alone makes life meaningful. Hecuba then turns, with an address to her companions (1200), to the formal adornment of the corpse for burial.

Her theme at verses 1158–66 takes up with scathing rhetoric the idea which Andromache had put so sorrowfully, that such a little child could be killed because he posed a future threat (*cf.* 740–4). He died in a way which did not even merit the consolation of a warrior's death fighting for his country (1168). The sentiment by its apparent conventionality forces to the surface the sadness of the incompleteness of the child's life. If he had grown up, married, been king—if, but in fact he had no more than a glimpse of the future due to him and now has lost even that. Because of this rupture in the proper sequence of things on which Hecuba relies to make sense of her world, his death, like Andromache's marriage, seems *δυστυχής* (1167, *cf.* 745); the tremendous force of this word, in which the sense of failure gives precision to the notion of misery and misfortune, is insisted upon by the participle *τυχών* in the next verse.

But the most powerful evocation of this aspect of the child's fate comes when Hecuba remembers how the little fellow would come dashing up to her and prattle away confidently: “Mother”, you said, “I will cut a great lock of hair for you and lead bands of my companions to your funeral, and speak a loving farewell” (1182–4). The particular incident which she recalls is not picked at random. That the young should bury the old is a fundamental Greek articulation of right order in life, so that when Hecuba remembers her grandson assuring her that he will do what is right and proper at her funeral, we are presented with the norm in a context of its subversion. But surely the child's ignorance has its contribution to make here too, for the commonplace is remembered as the words of the child himself, one really too young to understand the full import of his own chatter. Part of the pathos of these lines lies in our recognition of Hecuba's awareness that the child will never mature enough to feel the reality of the sentiments whose outward expression he can proclaim so manfully. An experienced adult knows the gap

<sup>14</sup> Alternatively the boy could be brought in on the shield like some Spartan warrior. A point in favour of this arrangement is Hecuba's directive to the attendants to put the shield down (1156) before she concerns herself with the child. On the other hand, the manner in which the Chorus announces the arrival of the boy's body (1119–21) favours the separate entry, because the body might be more visible this way than it would be in the shield. Either staging would accommodate our account of the funeral.

between words and a child's understanding of their import, and knows that one day the child must come to realize the grief which funeral ritual channels but by which his present chatter is untouched. The tragedy of the present situation is that Hecuba sees that Astyanax will never come to this realization. As with his prospects of marriage and kingship, the child's awareness is merely inchoate, and even that has now been obliterated.

This beautiful effect can be achieved because the child's age is variable between scenes.<sup>15</sup> A child who, as is implied at verse 749, is scarcely old enough to grasp the very direct threat made against his life, would hardly be able to say what Hecuba remembers him saying now. Dramatic considerations dictate that the child be of different ages in his two scenes. Andromache's monologue expresses her own reaction to Talthibi's news and nothing must distract attention from her response. Since both Talthibi and she herself refer in the plainest possible terms to the child's death, the simplest way to avoid giving prominence to the child's reaction or lack of it is to make him too young to do more than feel an uncomprehending fear. Hecuba too can be explicit because the child is dead. However, Euripides wants to make different points now, and without offence he has Hecuba remember her grandson as slightly older and capable of a partial grasp which the earlier scene would not tolerate.

It was suggested above (p. 19) that the token funeral for Polyxena leads into the funeral of Astyanax in such a way that we may feel that Hecuba laments for her own daughter as well as for her grandson, and that this movement adds wider, almost symbolic value to the present funeral. A further widening of reference is felt when Hecuba looks at the broken little body and sees it still wearing, as it were, the prints of the mother's kisses, and sees how the hands resemble those of the boy's father: 'Hands, how sweet a likeness you have to your father's, but how limp and out of joint you lie before me' (1178–9). Here we have the aspects of the tangibility and the relational nature of childhood, but these are complicated by additional factors, for the child's father was Hector, Hecuba's own son. The similarity of hands is primarily that between the young and old,<sup>16</sup> but it may also suggest this same father's hands when he too was small. It is not that Hecuba travels back a generation in her reveries and confuses Hector and Astyanax, for she is very clear about the identity of the boy. The address 'mother' at verse 1182 could properly be used in speaking to a grandmother, and the nurture and sleep which Hecuba recalls at verses 1187–8, though directly appropriate to a mother, could also apply to a grandmother, for old women were relied upon as nurses.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the situation and the language may prompt the audience to feel the mysterious presence of Hector<sup>18</sup> as the old woman ponders over her dead grandson.

The influence of Hector will be felt still more powerfully in the sequel, but for the moment let us notice another nuance. The hands of the child, demonstrating by their likeness the continuity of the family, are said to be 'limp and out of joint' (ἐν ἄρθροις ἐκλυτοί, 1179). Perhaps they are to be contrasted with the vigorous clutching hands of frightened children at

<sup>15</sup> Such variations are discussed by Kassel (1954) 54–5 and Fantham (1986) 279.

<sup>16</sup> For this interpretation, see Kassel (1954) 55, who compares *Od.* 4.149, where Menelaus sees a similarity to Odysseus in Telemachus' hands and feet, and *HF* 131, where the flashing eyes of Heracles' children resemble his own.

<sup>17</sup> So Demeter, disguised as an old woman, gets employment at Eleusis as a nurse to the royal baby and looks after it at night (*Hymn to Demeter* 219–32). Any older person might be respectfully or affectionately addressed as 'father' or 'mother'; cf. Dickey (1996) 78–81.

<sup>18</sup> For a somewhat different way of relating Astyanax and Hector by means of the shield, see Poole (1976) 280: 'Astyanax's little body is at the centre of this play. But the space that he occupies belongs to Hector, and it is the essential vacancy of this space, the space of the full heroic presence, that is figured through the image of Hector's shield, that serves as Astyanax's bier.'



verse 559 or of Astyanax himself at verse 750,<sup>19</sup> and it is not difficult to see them as symbolic of the disruption of the entire life of the child. But the hands, childish though they are, resemble Hector's and on Hector's active hands depended the security of Troy.<sup>20</sup> In these dislocated hands we may see gathered, only to be snapped, the regularities maintained by the ongoing community which was the whole city.

As Hecuba turns to the shield of Hector, she reflects that this much at least the boy will inherit from his father (1192–3); and it is at this point that she will put the body in the shield. After she has uttered her reflections over the shield, she dresses the body within its curve with such adornments as can be found. Then with the Chorus she utters a lament over the child and watches him borne away upon the shield for interment. The unsurpassed bleakness of the scene is the product of one of Euripides' richest poetic ideas, the burial of a child in a shield.

A survey of contemporary Greek realities in connection with children, burials and shields offers little to guide our response to Euripides. The shield seems from verses 1156, 1193 and 1196 to be best visualized as a contemporary hoplite shield, round, faced with bronze and equipped with an interior support-band or *porpax* for the arm. Such 'Argive' shields<sup>21</sup> have a diameter of about three feet and, being deeply hollowed, would form perfectly adequate containers for a child. It is not clear whether in the real world a child ever would be buried in a shield, although child burials display a considerable degree of improvisation in replacing the standard wooden coffins or clay tubs by single pots, a tent of tiles, or broad, convex individual tiles as covers.<sup>22</sup> Such improvisations would have made the choice of a shield instead of a coffin or enclosure of stones (1141), breathtaking though it is, appear not implausible. But although the improvisation rings true, and the domestic and private atmosphere of some of Hecuba's comments is in harmony with late fifth-century developments in funerary art and epitaphs,<sup>23</sup> the full meaning of the shield-burial is not to be found in contemporary funerary practices; we must look elsewhere.

One association of children and shields that may have been available to Euripides relates to the bearing from the battlefield of dead soldiers, particularly Spartans, on a shield. According to a scholion on Thucydides 2.39.1, a forecast of this possibility was ritualized at Sparta in the placing of a baby on a shield while the words 'On it or with it' were pronounced.<sup>24</sup> In literature, too, some associations of babies and shields are found: at Theocritus 24.4 the baby Heracles sleeps in a captured shield, as Zeus according to Nonnus 28.312 slept as a baby in a Corybantic shield. These may be merely later fancies, though the passage from Theocritus has similar heroic implications to Euripides' concept, and there may be overtones of religious ritual too: from the non-Greek world, the Celts are said to place a new-born baby on a shield and test its strength by bathing it in a river.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Remarkable emphasis is put on the children's hands by the transferred qualification seen in χεῖρας ἐπισημαίνοντας (559), for strictly speaking it is the children who panic, not their hands. Perhaps this is a device to draw attention to the active hands as part of a series leading through 750, 762–3 (Astyanax's final clasp), 782 (his detachment by Talthybius) to 1178–9.

<sup>20</sup> There may be a sad reflection of the reason for Astyanax's murder in the similarity of his hands to Hector's, for in the *Iliad* it was the death of Greeks 'at Hector's hands' that led Andromache to fear revenge. See the passage referred to in n.12 above.

<sup>21</sup> Described by Snodgrass (1967) 53.

<sup>22</sup> For methods of burying children, see Kurtz and Boardman (1971) 189–92, and Garland (1985) 78–9.

<sup>23</sup> For the domestic atmosphere of late fifth-century funerary monuments and epitaphs, see Humphreys (1980) 112.

<sup>24</sup> This practice is discussed by Hammond (1979–80).

<sup>25</sup> Celts: *Anth. Pal.* 9.125.4–8; Gow (1952) on Theocritus 24.4 refers to Aelian *fr.* 283 Domingo-Forasté, where Lagos marries Arsinoe and is said to have exposed her child, the future Ptolemy Soter, on a shield. This has more than a hint of myth about it, since a guardian eagle appears and acts as umbrella and parasol for the baby.

The decisive passage, however, is dramatic and not cultic, for Ajax in Sophocles' play, in making arrangements for the disposal of his armour, says that it is all to be buried with him except his shield, which his son Eurysakes is to inherit (574–7). The association of shield, child and burial in both plays can hardly be fortuitous, and Euripides must be building his own scene as a variation on that of Sophocles. Eurysakes is a boy with a future: he may be expected to take his father's place and naturally exhibit the capacity to employ the weapon with which above all his father was associated, the shield like a tower, just as Achilles took the spear of his father Peleus (*Il.* 19.388). There are signs that Euripides has tried to align his material to this pattern, for, perhaps prompted by Hector's shield in a vivid picture of his retirement from the battlefield at *Iliad* 6.116–18 or his boast to Ajax at 7.238–9 that he is an expert at manipulating his shield, he has gone out of his way to make the shield into a weapon which typifies the aggressive hero of the defence of Troy, who is not in epic automatically associated with a particular weapon. We have noted how the shield was credited with creating terror among the Greeks (1136), and at verses 1221–2 it is given the remarkable title of 'victorious mother of myriad routs' (καλλιῆνικε μυρίων μῆτερ τροπαίων).<sup>26</sup> Surely this shield is being built up to represent Hector, much as the shield of Ajax did that hero. Further, the son of Ajax is significantly named after his father's weapon, and in a famous epic episode, whose mixture of war and homeliness may contribute something to the tone of our funeral scene, the Trojans are said to have given the name Astyanax, 'Lord of the town', to Hector's son Scamandrios, because Hector alone protected Troy (*Il.* 6.402–3). It is as Astyanax that the boy is known in *Troades*, and it is because of his father's role that he has been killed (723). The one boy will live, the other has died; the one shield will survive, the other will be buried. Yet Astyanax will inherit his father's shield too, albeit in death. Thus the burial is for Astyanax, whose being is likewise determined solely by his father's qualities, a grim travesty of the inheritance of Eurysakes. The selection of the shield is not only to be explained by the provision of a suitably martial container for a warrior's son, but is surely a deliberate reversal of Ajax's choice of his shield to survive along with his own, again significantly named, son. The scene in *Iliad* 6 may have something else to contribute, too, for when the baby is frightened at his father's helmet and starts to cry, his parents laugh and Hector takes off the helmet and puts it on the ground (467–73). The terrifying helmet is laid aside so that Hector can hold his child and pray for his future glory, to be picked up again when Hector returns to battle (494–5), but there is no such tender parenthesis in *Troades*; the terrifying shield is indeed laid on the ground before Hecuba evokes the domestic intimacies and the frustrated hopes of the child's life, but when the shield is taken up again it is to be buried and the child's body goes with it.

However, the sadness in our scene is not felt just for the child himself, deprived of his inheritance except in this distorted fashion, but rather arises because his end is an event in which is most clearly visible some far more profound and general destruction. He is buried in a shield which could not protect him; he was murdered by being thrown from walls built to protect him; this child's end marks the end of whatever that shield and those walls stood for too. And if the

<sup>26</sup> Emblems on heroic shields in some cases were intended to strike terror into enemy hearts. Agamemnon's shield is decorated with a Gorgon's head surrounded by Fear and other figures (*Il.* 5.738–42, 11.32–7). In Aeschylus' *Septem*, bronze bells fitted beneath the shield of Tydeus create terror by their sound (385–6); the messenger is terrified by the shield of Hippomedon (489–90); and in general the boasts conveyed by the insignia on the shields in the play seem designed to demoralize the opposition. A terrifying shield is parodied in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, where Lamachus' shield bears a Gorgon (574, 1124) and Dicaeopolis professes to be frightened of the bogey-woman (μορμῶν, 582). Thus the apparent paradox of the use of a defensive weapon in *Troades* as an instrument of terror is largely explained without weakening the impact of the shield as a symbol of Hector's role as the main defender of Troy.

<sup>27</sup> Revenge is a regular feature of Greek laments; here the future dimension is built into the scene by the procession of children carrying the ashes of their fathers. See Collard (1975) on *Supp.* 1114–64.

great defender's shield and the city walls have failed to function, then the whole community which they protected is exposed to annihilation. Somehow this child represents all the children of Troy, and therefore the city's future is laid to rest with him. In Euripides' *Supplikes*, the sons of the heroes who died in the expedition against Thebes look forward to the time when they will grow up and avenge their fathers; since Greek soldiers are typically hoplites, the boys look forward to receiving shields: 'Will I ever hold a shield and avenge your murder?' (1142).<sup>27</sup> The burial in *Troades* underlines the lack of that dimension; the shield is buried with the child, the child will not grow up, there will be no shield to hold, there will be no revenge. Euripides also reaches towards Homer, or at least to Homer at his most Euripidean, with tragedy seen in the intrusion into everyday realities of a disaster which is tinged with symbolism.<sup>28</sup> At *Iliad* 22.437–74, when Hector is already dead, his wife Andromache is at home working at the loom, and all unawares she orders the servants to prepare hot water for her husband's bath when he gets home. Hearing distant cries, she rushes to the city walls with foreboding in her heart, and sees Hector's body being dragged behind Achilles' chariot. Here symbolism touches domesticity: she faints, and as she falls she loses the veil that she was wearing, one that Aphrodite gave her on her wedding day (470–2). The death of her husband is the end of her marriage, and her loss is symbolized by the fall of the apparel, blest by the goddess of love, which she received and wore at its start. The domestic realism, the shock of recognition that the unthinkable has happened, the hinted symbol, all are paralleled in the fate of Astyanax in *Troades* and the reaction of his mother and grandmother. In Homer, over and above the disaster to herself and her son's future disadvantages, which form the burden of Andromache's lament, a glimpse of a larger threat is caught: an orphan's life awaits her son 'if he escapes the tearful war of the Achaeans' (487). In Euripides, a similar but far more central focus is given to the child's death as symbolizing the end of a way of life of an entire community.<sup>29</sup>

When Hecuba has laid out the child, she contemplates the shield and sees how it bears the marks of her own son, the arm-band moulded with his grip, the rim stained with sweat from his beard (1194–9). The shield is permeated for Hecuba with the physical presence of her son, much as a little earlier the dead child evoked him. Now it is the typical signs of powerful manhood that arise before her mind's eye: arm, grip, forehead and beard, subtly contrasted with the boy's carefully tended hair, his hands and his mouth. At the moment of parting in her scene, Andromache is overwhelmed by the sensed actuality of the child and the tug of love which affects her is marked by the word ἡ δ'ύς: 'oh the sweet smell of your skin' (757). In the present scene, when Hecuba surveys the broken body a comparable surge of love is marked by the same word: 'Hands, how sweet a likeness you have to your father's' (1178–9). It is the likeness in the hands that attracts her, and so the word 'sweet' prepares us for the suggested blending of Astyanax and Hector. And now, at the point of everlasting departure from the shield, the sole remainder for her of her son's possessions, the implement which typifies his role in her world of Troy, she again utters a brief litany of physical details and again the onset of emotion is marked by the same word: 'how sweet lies the impress in your handle' (1196). The direct address to the shield as a person, repeated at lines 1221–5, is an apostrophe to a stage property rare in Euripides,<sup>30</sup> and as such contributes to the assimilation of the shield to Hector. It is hard to imagine a more powerful poetic device than this for suggesting the experienced tangibility of a loved person now no more. This is also part of what is buried with Astyanax.

<sup>28</sup> For such symbolism in Homer, see Griffin (1980); the Andromache episode is discussed on pp. 2–3.

<sup>29</sup> On the expression of total destruction which spans three generations found in the burial of Astyanax by Hecuba, and its reflexion in iconography, see Anderson (1997) 167–8.

<sup>30</sup> Contrast the address by Cassandra to the wreaths of Apollo as she discards them (451–3), which does not have the same vivid sense of a personal presence.

The ritual which follows is that part of the whole funeral sequence which has been emphasized before (378, 390) and which Andromache performed for Polyxena (627), namely the dressing and lament. Since the washing has been carried out already and the body will be taken away for interment by others, this is the part that Hecuba and the women can do, but because it forms part of a whole, it is no mere token but, for all their wretched plight, it is a proper funeral. As such, it is an advance on what could be done for Polyxena, and of course the opposite of the exposure of the rest of the dead. This was one of the advantages Cassandra claimed for the Trojans during the war (387–90); in that respect, this funeral is the last regular act performed at Troy, a survival belonging to the time before the city's fall. What we see corresponds to the laying out, the dirge and the procession from the house in an Athenian funeral.<sup>31</sup>

After her address to the shield, Hecuba bids her attendants bring what clothes they can find to adorn the body (1200), and they return from within the prison quarters with Trojan spoil (1207). We remember that the main embarkation was yet to take place, and the presence of booty alongside the prisoners is paralleled at *Hecuba* 1014–16. The raiment then is not rags, but something at least fine enough to get married in (1218). Nor is Astyanax dressed in something recognizable as funeral clothes, as apparently are the children of Heracles in *Heracles* (cf. 329, 525–6), though he is adorned with wreaths (1247). As she adorns the body Hecuba leads a lament, which is in the form of three short speeches each followed by a lyric dirge from the Chorus, in the central one of which she herself joins (1209–37).

Hecuba's first two speeches are concerned with what the boy did not do, namely win athletic victories and make a noble marriage. These then emphasize once again the nature of the child as a being not complete in himself, but oriented towards a normal and glorious future, which in this case will not ever be realized. The first of the speeches ends with Helen (1213–15) and the second with Odysseus (1224–5), the two most hated Greeks and the two responsible for Astyanax's death, Odysseus directly and Helen ultimately. The second speech also contains the adornment of the shield with a wreath, a wreath of victory because it was victorious so often, and at the same time a funeral wreath, because although as a material object it cannot die, it will be buried with the boy and therefore 'die' (1221–3). The third speech is concerned with the wounded body, and thus evokes again the tangibility and helplessness of the child: she bandages his wounds although to no effect, and commits him to his father's care among the dead (1232–4). The dressing of the wounds is related to a concern for propriety<sup>32</sup> and appearances at funerals, yet at the same time the verses complement Andromache's despairing admission that the boy's father would not rise from the earth to save him (753); Hecuba now reassures him that his father will look after him, but only because they are to be united among the dead.

The first two choral laments deal with the communal aspects of the death: Hecuba blames Helen for killing the child and destroying the whole house, and the Chorus respond by addressing Astyanax as the once great lord of the city (*ἀνάκτωρ πόλεως*, 1217), that is as the one who should have inherited that role which belonged to his father.<sup>33</sup> The child is seen in a social context involving past and future, and the Chorus widen Hecuba's narrower focus. When they next respond, they start with the sorrow of the land and return to Hecuba's personal grief, though in addressing Hecuba as 'mother' (1229) Andromache's loss too is caught up in their grief. Thus their thoughts trace a chiasmic pattern of feeling, guiding our sympathies from Hecuba to Troy and from Troy back to Hecuba. In their third cry the boy's wounds in Hecuba's third speech are

<sup>31</sup> These features of regular funerals are described by Garland (1985) 23–34.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Biehl (1989) on 1232.

<sup>33</sup> Edinger (1987) 378 argues that the term used recalls *Il.* 6.402–3 and 22.506–7 and shows that Astyanax, named in honour of his father (the protector but not the king of the city), is addressed rather than Hector himself. But in either case the boy and his father are closely associated in the Chorus' thoughts here.

picked up by their self-inflicted wounds of frenzied mourning (1235–6), so that the episode of dressing and lament ends with emphasis on the physical aspects of the death and the grief alike.

The scene finishes with the bearing of the body away for burial (1246). We must suppose that the body is carried off on the shield with which it has become so closely associated in the course of the scene. To carry the two off separately now would disintegrate the tight mesh of concepts which have united the boy and the shield. Hecuba's instruction for the procession to begin is preceded and followed by general reflections of less intense emotional tone than that of the lament, but which add considerations which, in view of their positioning at the end of the scene, are crucial for judging the impact of the whole.

The first is Hecuba's reflection that, although her suffering was fated and Troy was hated by the gods and its people's divine offerings were futile (notice how she links her distress with that of Troy), nevertheless if the god had not overthrown their city she and they ('we') would not have become a subject of poetry for later generations but would have remained in obscurity (*ἀφανεῖς*, 1244). This is a consolation which Cassandra had earlier used of Hector and Paris (394–9), and though later the Chorus will assert that the name of the city will be obliterated (*ἀφανεῖς*, 1322), the two views are not incompatible. In view of the role credited by the Greeks to posthumous fame as a way of securing immortality, Hecuba's conclusion is not rendered untenable because the physical elimination of the city was complete, and these verses are not to be regarded as the last delusion of mankind incapable of facing total annihilation. Hecuba speaks in circumstances of almost inconceivable despair and her observation is no trite apophthegm trotted out without struggle; it is, of course, something at least with which to try and counterbalance disaster, but it also verbalizes a flash of recognition of the inscrutable and horrendous way the world works: the universally desired fame is theirs after all, but this is the unimaginable way it has been bestowed.

Similarly, her second reflection is neither cynical nor self-deluding: the dead child has the ornaments that he should have; richer grave goods are a matter of indifference to the dead and merely pride on the part of the living (1247–50). Here in the face of appalling adversity and all-encompassing ruin, Hecuba can still assert the essential rightness of the provision of due, if minimal, funeral rites. The indifference of the dead to extravagant adornment does not entail the insignificance of any adornment at all. Here should come into play our memory of the importance given to burial rites in epic, dramatic and real-life contexts alike. Hecuba has been able to perform for Astyanax at his mother's request the service which led Teucer and Antigone to extraordinary acts of heroic defiance. This is a priceless tribute and has been paid, whatever else may happen. It is as if in these two reflections Euripides leaves us with two irreducible nuclei of human values in the midst of desolation, to have the fact of one's having existed remembered, and to treat the dead with reverence.<sup>34</sup> The tone is hardly optimistic, but it seems that there is something which cannot be swallowed up even in the total destruction of a nation. Hecuba has not had to summon up her courage as Antigone did, but maybe the tenacity with which she holds on to these deepest convictions despite her circumstances is in its own way heroic.

<sup>34</sup> Though Hecuba has not suffered from direct contact with the gods, still her humanism salvaged from the wreck of a disaster for which she feels the gods are responsible has something in common with a Euripidean theme found towards the end of several plays, e.g. *Hippolytus*, *Heracles* and *Bacchae*. For controversy over the interpretation of the funeral and Hecuba's claims, see the Appendix.

## IV

As the body is carried off, the Chorus mourn for the dead boy, all of whose inherited blessings have gone, and for the mother (1251)—Andromache? or Hecuba, whether as grandmother or mother of all the families of Troy?—whose hopes of life have been brought to nothing. Thus the last note on which we leave the boy is a reiteration of what has been called above the relational nature of the child, looking back to his inheritance and forward to an expected future, but never completing the transition. Then, even in the middle of the anapaests with which the Chorus mourn over the departing cortège, they cry out at the sight of flames burning on the heights (1256). Though the body goes for burial, not cremation, it is perhaps excusable to feel that the fires of Troy are somehow also the boy's pyre and, because of the symbolic value with which his body has been invested, are also the pyre of the Trojan dead left unburied at the sack. Certainly Hecuba imagines the fire as a pyre and wishes to hurl herself on it and die with her burning city (1282–3), so the fire becomes the pyre of the city and all it stands for, which is now obliterated. In the concluding lyric dirge, shared between Hecuba and the Chorus, the theme of the annihilation of Troy repeatedly occurs (1292, 1299, 1319, 1322–4); the city falls as if in an earthquake (1326) and the women depart for the ships. Earthquakes are generally Poseidon's work, and this one is said to swamp (ἐπικλύζει, 1326) the city, again perhaps bringing to mind the Poseidon of the prologue and the threat to the Greek fleet at sea.

Hecuba is separated from the Chorus by the special guard of Odysseus' soldiers (1270–1). Now that the funeral is over, we are back at the initial distribution of destinations for servitude, though now the fates of Cassandra, Polyxena and Helen, as well as that of Andromache and her boy, have been settled. And with the completion of the funeral and the immediacy of embarkation, the focus of attention of Hecuba and Chorus alike reverts to their personal losses and future: 'Alas, this is the very last of all my sufferings. I leave my native land, the city burns', says Hecuba (1272–4). And so throughout the scene, the Chorus participate in Hecuba's dominant lament, but for them too their grief is for their dead husbands (1308–9) and their exile (1311). The universalizing movement of feeling, mediated largely by the sufferings of children and the fate of Astyanax, has run its course. No further reference is made to Astyanax and his burial. We have only Cassandra's words to remind us that offerings at the tomb were part of the service to the dead (381–2), which this tomb will not receive; Cassandra's words, that is, and Poseidon's remark at the end of the prologue on the folly of bringing to desolation the tombs, the sanctuaries of the dead.

The funeral scene is a *mélange* of truncated ritual and affirmation of tradition. Even though distortion of a norm is evident in some features—the old buries the young, the coffin is replaced by a shield, the laments deal only with what might have been but never now can come to pass, the customary tending of the grave will be impossible—and part of the tragic effect derives from this disorder, especially in the aspect last mentioned, nevertheless it is a proper funeral. Burial by the old and laments for an unrealized future are virtually inescapable features of every child's funeral; they are pathetic because nature's norm has been subverted, not because ritual is perverted. Hecuba repudiates Cassandra's 'marriage' for the parody which it is, but she conducts the funeral with full reverence in the way that Andromache enjoined.<sup>35</sup> Of course the funeral is merely the best that can be done in the most wretched of circumstances, but to concentrate on the negative aspects is to miss the richness of the scene.

<sup>35</sup> See Easterling (1993) 19–20 for the tone of the closing scenes: though ritual has been 'grossly perverted' in the scene in which Cassandra carries her own wedding torch, yet 'perversion does not seem to be the right word' for the preparation of Astyanax's body for burial or for the final lament of the women. These events are important in establishing a sense of ritual at the end of the play: 'Ritual as the shaping, or mediation, or patterning of suffering has more power than dialectic...'

And not only is the burial right, but this particular form of burial has its own peculiar rightness for this particular child. A crucial part of this ritual is the use of the shield, which is no mere convenient substitute for a coffin, but is specifically asked for by Andromache. The right place for a dead hero's shield is with his son, as Ajax in Sophocles' play saw; but only by burial can this boy come into his inheritance. And since the shield has proved to be so powerful an evocation of her son Hector, the quintessential Trojan hero, it is Hecuba's presence as celebrant that enables the funeral to seem like the fitting consummation of all the defensive endeavours of the Trojan soldiers. In this way, it is the last of the series of Trojan funerals to which Cassandra referred (387–90). Further, however, since Poseidon and Athena in the prologue have made it clear that the sea will be full of corpses of Greeks wrecked on the homeward voyage (84, 89–91), Astyanax's funeral completes the comparison which Cassandra made to the disadvantage of the Greeks in respect of burials, and in retrospect it can be seen that the divine punishment envisaged for the Greek impiety towards Athena includes deprivation of burial as well as loss of life. In Greek funerary epigrams death at sea is the typical situation which prompts expression of grief for lack of burial. Finally, the placing of the scene immediately before the departure of Greeks and Trojan women makes the funeral into a fitting symbol for the end of the city, and at the same time, since it is the last meaningful act that the women can perform in Troy, with the funeral the play is led to a satisfactory conclusion.

M. DYSON  
*University of Queensland*

K.H. LEE  
*University of Sydney*

#### APPENDIX

The interpretation of the funeral scene here adopted is more positive than some others recently advanced, and two points deserve further analysis. Of Hecuba's consolatory reflection that without the destruction the Trojans would have vanished in obscurity (*ἀφανέϊς ὄντες*), whereas now they will be famed in song (1242–5), Poole (1976) 285 says that a reader who accepts such a 'flimsy comfort' will have 'colluded in the perpetuation of all the celebrity values whose essential hollowness the play has exposed'. However, although Poole brilliantly demonstrates a series of delusions to which the Trojans are subject, some of which act as poison preventing them facing reality, there is no reason why something traditional should not remain as a valid insight, even if ostensibly inadequate to the scale of the calamity. Attempts have been made to contradict Hecuba's reflection out of the mouth of the Chorus: 'the name of the land will go into oblivion' (*ἀφανέϊς εἰσιν*, 1322), but they founder on the fact that, while Hecuba speaks directly about fame enshrined in poetry, the Chorus' words have no bearing on that matter.

What their words mean can be seen from the context. The final obliteration of Troy, initiated by Talthybius' orders, involves both the burning of the city and the deportation of its surviving population (1260–8). Hecuba responds accordingly: 'I am leaving my land, the city burns' (1274). She addresses Troy, once so proud among its neighbours (*ἐν βαρβάρους*): 'Soon (*τάχα*) you will lose your glorious name', and explains this again in terms of burning and immediate deportation (1277–9). Directly before our passage we learn that temples and city are ablaze and will soon (*τάχα*) fall nameless (1317–19), and afterwards there follows the crash and the departure to the ships. Set in this context, verse 1322 must refer not to future songs but to the immediate obliteration of the city's standing, as at verse 1278, and the scattering described at verses 1322–3 (*ἄλλαι δ' ἄλλο φροῦδον*) suggests exile as well as material disintegration. The utterance of the Chorus may be glossed: 'The glory hitherto enjoyed by the land will be wiped out, the survivors will be dispersed, the name Troy will not be attached to this place.' Far from con-

tradicting Hecuba, these words refer to the obliteration embodying the very reversal of fortune upon which her intuition of Trojan poetic fame is premised, only now it is concretely enacted in the violence of conflagration and deportation. As her earlier reflection was appropriate to the end of the funeral, so the passionate lyricism of the Chorus, who in fact only follow Hecuba's own response at verse 1278, is appropriate to the actuality of the final cataclysm. Hecuba has not changed her mind, as is suggested by Halleran (1985) 101: Troy could still be renowned in song, and indeed was, even while its whereabouts were unknown.

A contradiction can only be generated if the Chorus' words are taken out of their dramatic context. Thus Croally (1994) 247 says 'after this great statement of poetic consolation, with an inescapable contradiction, we find that Troy will lose its name, and thus will cease to be the subject of great poetry'. He is well aware that great poetry, including *Troades* itself, is evidence of the realization of Hecuba's hope, and he seems to take line 1322 as a distancing of the tragic discourse of the play from epic, whereby Euripides raises doubts about the ideology implicit in Hecuba's consolation. However, even if it were clear that the consolations of fame were out of place in an Euripidean tragic outlook, it is too much to expect Hecuba's reflection to be countered on the basis of these few words, whose required meaning is at odds with the emotional tone and lyric mode of the context in such a way that the price of undermining ideology could well be the belittling of overwhelming grief.

The second point concerns the degree of distortion of ritual to be felt in the burial scene. Croally (1994) 76 has an elaborate argument to suggest that the boy's death is a parody of a traditional sacrifice of a girl in order to save a community. First, he finds it strange that the boy is dressed in wedding robes, a practice more usual in the case of girls, and thus sees Astyanax aligned with tragic women who find marriage in death. However, Hecuba is only dressing the boy well for his funeral, as he should have been for his wedding (1218–20); no special wedding-robes are mentioned (and their presence would be utterly unrealistic in the circumstances); see Lee (1976) 269 and Biehl (1989) 427. There is little historical evidence for corpses of either sex wearing wedding-clothes; commentators content themselves with Peek (1955) 683 and 1238. The tombs of unmarried males as well as females could be marked by a wedding urn (*loutrophoros*), cf. Garland (1985) 87. Though it is true that more funerary epigrams dwell on girls deprived of marriage than on boys, that is to be expected in view of the dominating role of marriage in a woman's life in antiquity, and epigrams relating to males do occur: in four out of seven such found in *Anth. Pal.* 7 the viewpoint taken is that of the grieving mother (334, 527), parents (468), and either mother or bride-to-be (627). This viewpoint is that of the play, which is full of mention of marriages; Hecuba has already considered the boy's own hypothetical marriage along with, it should be noted, his martial achievements (1168–9), and her grief is aligned with that felt by tragic mothers for their sons at *Med.* 1026–9 and *HF* 481. In any case it should be noted that in tragedy a man, too, can find marriage in death, cf. Haemon (*Antig.* 1240–1). In no way, therefore, do lines 1218–20 require or even suggest a female paradigm to which the boy conforms. Second, Croally associates his feminized Astyanax with the 'distinctive' figure of a virgin who sacrifices herself to save her community; however, no consideration is given to Menoeceus in *Phoenissae*. Third, in view of the description of Astyanax as a 'sacrificial victim' (σφάγιον, 747), the conclusion is drawn that his death is a parody of a traditional sacrifice for the salvation of a city. The word may well bear its technical meaning here, but, more likely, 'sacrifice' is hyperbole for 'slaughter', as its congeners are regularly used. But even if it does, an interpretation built upon one distant word, in the absence of any issue of a sacrifice plainly articulated in *Troades* as there is in *Heracleidae*, *Phoenissae*, *I.A.* and *Erechtheus*, is unconvincing.



## MODERN WORKS CITED

- Anderson, M.J. (1997) *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford)
- Biehl, W. (1989) *Euripides Troades* (Heidelberg)
- Collard, C. (1975) *Euripides Supplices* (Groningen)
- Croally, N.T. (1994) *Euripidean Polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy* (Cambridge)
- Devrient, H. (1904) *Das Kind auf der antiken Bühne* (Weimar)
- Dickey, E. (1996) *Greek Forms of Address* (Oxford)
- Dunn, F.M. (1993) 'Beginning at the end in Euripides' *Trojan Women*', *RhM* 136, 22–35
- Easterling, P.E. (1993) 'Tragedy and ritual', in R. Scodel (ed.), *Tragedy and Society in the Classical World* (Ann Arbor) 7–23
- Edinger, H.D. (1987) 'Euripides' *Troades* 1217', *Hermes* 115, 378
- Fantham, E. (1986) 'Andromache's child in Euripides and Seneca', in M. Cropp *et al.* (eds.), *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy* (Calgary)
- Garland, R. (1985) *The Greek Way of Death* (Ithaca, NY)
- Gow, A.S.F. (1952) *Theocritus* (2nd ed., Cambridge)
- Griffin, J. (1980) *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford)
- (1998) 'The social function of Attic tragedy', *CQ* 48, 39–61
- Halleran, M.R. (1985) *Stagecraft in Euripides* (London)
- Hammond, M. (1979–80) 'A famous exemplum of Spartan toughness', *CJ* 75, 97–109
- Humphreys, S.C. (1980) 'Family tombs and tomb cult in ancient Athens', *JHS* 100, 96–126
- Kassel, R. (1954) *Quomodo quibus locis apud veteres scriptores Graecos infantes atque parvuli pueri inducantur describantur commemorantur* (Meisenheim am Glan)
- Kern, H. (1918) 'Der antike Astyanax-Mythus und seine späteren Auswüchse', *Philologus* 75, 183–201
- Kurtz, D.C. and J. Boardman (1971) *Greek Burial Customs* (London)
- Lee, K.H. (1976) *Euripides, Troades* (Basingstoke and London)
- (1986) 'Helen's famous husband and Euripides *Helen* 1399', *CPh* 81, 309–13
- Loroux, N. (1986) *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*, trans. A. Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass. and London)
- Meridor, R. (1989) 'Euripides' *Troades* 28–44 and the Andromache scene', *AJPh* 110, 17–35
- Morris, S.P. (1995) 'The sacrifice of Astyanax: Near Eastern contributions to the siege of Troy', in J.B. Carter and S.P. Morris, *The Ages of Homer* (Austin) 221–45
- Oakley, J.H. and R.H. Sinos (1993) *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (Madison)
- Peek, W. (1955) *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* (Berlin)
- Petersmann, G. (1977) 'Die Rolle der Polyxena in den Troerinnen des Euripides', *RhM* 120, 146–58
- Poole, A. (1976) 'Total disaster: Euripides' *The Trojan Women*', *Arion* 3, 257–87
- Seaford, R. (1987) 'The tragic wedding', *JHS* 107, 106–30
- Sifakis, G.M. (1979) 'Children in Greek tragedy', *BICS* 26, 67–80
- Snodgrass, A.M. (1967) *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (London)
- Vernant, J.-P. (1991) *Mortals and Immortals* (Princeton) 50–74