

PLOT AND MYTH IN EURIPIDES' *HERACLES* AND *TROADES*

RA'ANANA MERIDOR

EURIPIDES' FREQUENT INTRODUCTION of divine appearances, prophecies, and oracles at the end of his plays is well known.¹ No less well known is his use of them, whatever their other functions,² to tie loose ends and "adjust the outcome" of the drama "to established legend"³ when the version he chose or invented diverged from the mainstream of traditional myth. It may, therefore, be of interest to examine the way in which the poet achieves these objectives in the only three plays that end without supernatural predictions,⁴ *Alcestis*, *Heracles*, and *Troades*, and to discuss the consequences for their interpretation.

In the *Alcestis*, the earliest of Euripides' surviving plays (438 B. C.) and, as the fourth in its group, perhaps not tragedy proper, the miraculous rescue of the queen from death (or Death) at the end of the play, prophesied already by the divine prologist (*Alc.* 65–69), leaves the royal couple, at least insofar as the facts are concerned, "to live happily ever after." As this is where myth too seems to have left them,⁵ no need arose for an adjustment in an epilogue. Loose ends remain, e.g., the result of Heracles' forthcoming

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¹*Deus ex machina*: *Hi.* 1283 ff., *Andr.* 1231 ff., *Supp.* 1183 ff., *Ion* 1553 ff., *El.* 1238 ff., *IT* 1435 ff., *Hel.* 1642 ff., *Or.* 1625 ff., *Ba.* 1330 ff., *Rhe.* 890 ff.; as for *IA*, the spurious ending is generally held to have replaced a *deus ex machina* prophecy: see T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1976, hereafter cited as "Webster") 290 n. 20; A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*³ (Göttingen 1972) 481–482. Prophecy by mortal endowed with superhuman powers: *Med.* 1386–88. Reported prophecy or oracle: *Cycl.* 696 ff., *Heracl.* 1028 ff., *Hec.* 1259–81, *Pho.* 1703 ff.

²For different views see, e.g., G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941) 76–78; K. v. Fritz, "Euripides' Alkestis und ihre modernen Nachahmer und Kritiker," *AntuAbendl* 5 (1956), 27 ff. esp. 63 f. (= *Antike und moderne Tragödie* [Berlin 1962] 256 ff., esp. 312); A. Spira, *Untersuchungen zum deus ex machina bei Sophokles und Euripides* (diss. Frankfurt 1960) esp. 156; W. Schmidt, *Der deus ex machina bei Euripides* (diss. Tübingen 1963) esp. 218 ff.; Webster 290 f.; R. Eisner, "Euripides' Use of Myth," *Arethusa* 12 (1979) 153 ff., esp. 167.

³P. T. Stevens, *Euripides Andromache* (Oxford 1971) 242. Cf. v. Fritz *ibid.*, Webster 291.

⁴None of Aeschylus' and only one of Sophocles' seven complete plays closes with a *deus* (*Phil.* 1409 ff.) and none of either with a reported prophecy or oracle, as opposed to sixteen out of the nineteen of the Euripidean corpus which close with either the one or the other.

⁵The story of old Admetus' expulsion from his country with his family and Theseus' admission of them into his to settle there, mentioned by a scholiast to Ar. *Ve.* 1239 and ascribed to Phanodemus, is believed by Jacoby to be a patriotic invention of the Atthidographer; see Jacoby on *FGrHist* 325 F 26.

labour, the future of Alcestis' children,⁶ and the unreconciled quarrel between Admetus and his father. However, none of these loose ends is relevant to the outcome of the play; moreover the absence from the finale of the usual divine element is in a way compensated for by Heracles' superhuman intervention and by the taboo and mystery surrounding the veiled and silent figure of the queen just returned from the dead. These considerations seem to exclude the *Alcestis* from the present discussion.

The other plays of our group, *Heracles* and *Troades*, were written about the same time (415 B. C.),⁷ nearly a quarter of a century after the *Alcestis*. Different as they are *prima facie*, the essential feature of both is that monstrously suffering man comes to learn that he has nothing to hope for from god. This conclusion is stated more than once in each tragedy, is restated close to the finale, and stands unrefuted and unmodified to the end.⁸

To create this final impression in the *Heracles*, Euripides has to exclude from the end all mention of Heracles' eventual apotheosis, traditionally the last stage of the hero's eventful career.⁹ In view of the poet's evident tendency to "reinsert his characters in the traditional story" (Webster 291), the play may be expected to contain earlier clues which tie it to established myth. Indeed, an allusion to the apotheosis may be detected in the second stasimon:¹⁰

If the gods had understanding
And wisdom as men conceive it

⁶The son who sings on stage is known from the *Iliad* to have become the master of the Greeks' quickest steeds before Troy, *Il.* 2.711–715 and 763–767.

⁷The *Troades* was produced in 415 (Ael. *VH* 2.8). According to E. B. Ceadel, "Resolved Feet in the Trimeters of Euripides and the Chronology of the Plays," *CQ* 35 (1941) 66–89 esp. 78, both it and the *Heracles* were written in 416. A. M. Dale, *Euripides Helen* (Oxford 1967) xxvii n. 1, prefers 414 for *Heracles*.

⁸*HF* 1087 f., 1127, 1303–07 and 1311 f., 1392 f. Heracles' last-minute salvation of his family, which was hoped for, despaired of, and finally accepted as Zeus' intervention (211 f., 339–347, 498–501, 739, 801–806) makes Zeus' abandonment of Heracles to Hera's maltreatment (827 ff.) all the more poignant. *Tro.* 469–471, 1240–42, 1280 f., 1288–92.

⁹See P. E. Easterling, *Sophocles Trachiniae* (Cambridge 1982) 17.

¹⁰Noticed by A. P. Burnett, *Catastrophe Survived* (Oxford 1971) 182 n. 30. The passage is differently interpreted by G. W. Bond, *Euripides Heracles* (Oxford 1981) n. on 655–672 *ad fin.*, who admits (n. on 637–654) that "... the audience are no doubt aware that Heracles will ... become a god with Hebe, Youth, as his bride" but believes that "any mention of this would be premature."

Burnett also lists some other hints, verbal and visual, at the "ultimate fourth action of divine salvation" (*ibid.* 182) for Heracles. Of these, however, the metaphorical use of "heaven" in 1240 (said not by Heracles but by Theseus) seems to be too common for irony; "he will be taken up to heaven" has no counterpart in the Greek text of 1295–98, and the interpretation of 1226 and 1395 as representation by tableaux of Heracles' apotheosis seems rather far-fetched. As for 1151 see n. 13 below.

A second youth should be awarded
 To distinguish those who excelled in life.
 Such men after one death
 Would rise again into the sun's beams
 And run a double course of life. (655–662).¹¹

These lines are likely to have reminded the audience of Heracles' deification and "the eternal second youth in store for . . . the husband of Youth herself."¹² But the effect of these lines is also likely to have been set aside by the rapid succession of subsequent events on stage which claim the audience's undivided emotional involvement. The deification motif reappears when Heracles, on realizing what he has done, contemplates fire as one of the means of committing suicide (1151 f.),¹³ for the pyre on Mt Oeta and his marriage to Hebe were connected in the myth.¹⁴ Immediately afterwards, however, it is suppressed again by the arrival of Theseus (1153 ff.). Consequently it is not likely to have been in the minds of the audience while they were watching the end of the tragedy, where the only succour to suffering man comes from fellow man.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the early vague allusion to Heracles' admittance to heaven with Hebe as his bride, strengthened by the allusion to the pyre on Mt Oeta, would suggest to the audience the poet's interest in establishing some relation between his plot and the traditional story of Heracles' ultimate apotheosis. That he could rely on hints as slight as these ironic expressions is probably due to the great popularity of the story.

¹¹Philip Vellacott's translation (Harmondsworth 1963), slightly adapted.

¹²Burnett (above, n. 10). See also R. Scodel, "Hesiod Redivivus," *GRBS* 21 (1980) 301–320, esp. 308 ff.

¹³Fire is a rare enough method of suicide in such lists to be significant, *pace* Bond (above, n. 10) on 1148–52; see the examples cited by him and those cited by Fränkel, "Selbstmordwege," *Philol.* 87 (1932) 470–473. In Greek tragedy this is the death chosen by young widows, with one jumping into the flames of her husband's pyre (Eur. *Hi.* 980 ff.), another into the fire made of her husband's statue (Eur. *Protesilaus*, see Webster 97 f.). "Fire" in prayers for death seems to mean lightning, e.g., Aesch. *PV* 582, Eur. *Hi.* 381. Soph. *Phil.* 797 ff. is explicitly connected with the death of Heracles.

¹⁴Cf. *Herac.* 910–916 and see Easterling (above, n. 9) 17.

¹⁵According to Scodel (above, n. 12) 310 f., "What the chorus presents" in *HF* 655 ff. "as an unreal condition becomes, in the light of Heracles-religion, a real hope . . . And despite the grimness of the intervening scenes, the drama ends with the establishment of the Attic worship of Heracles (1328–33)." However, the drama ends only a hundred lines later and 1328 ff. is presented as human acknowledgement of human *arete* and is taken as such by Heracles (1352 f.). It is, therefore, likely that the divine side of Heracles' nature is meant to be recalled only afterwards and that the final effect in the play is intended to be that of human values. Note also that Heracles' stressed dependence on Theseus as on a son (1401) pictures him as having become old, again a far cry from the superhuman vanquisher of Old Age perhaps hinted at in 649 f.; see Scodel (above, n. 12) 310, Bond (above, n. 10) on 649 f.

If this interpretation of the function of *HF* 655 ff. and 1151 f. is correct, then Euripides subtly exploits the common knowledge of the traditional story in order to outline for his audience a generally accepted and significant element in it that is at variance with his treatment, without allowing this element to interfere with the immediate impact of the situation presented on stage.

The relationship of the final situation of the *Troades*¹⁶ to traditional myth is more complex than in the *Heracles*. Information about significant events in store for the play's participants after the conclusion of the plot is here supplied not only by vague allusions—which will be dealt with below—but also by explicit supernatural predictions uttered in the early parts of the play.

This location is unusual for such information. Usually in Greek tragedy supernatural predictions made prior to the epilogue refer to events that will happen later in the play (or in the thematically connected group of which the play is a member) and are thus fulfilled before the play (or its group) is over; if they are not actually fulfilled, they are at least accepted as valid by those affected and so again perform a function in their play (or group of plays) itself.¹⁷ This is not the case in the *Troades*, where both Poseidon's prediction in the prologue of the storm at sea that will hit the Greeks¹⁸ on

¹⁶Since so little is known for sure about the other members of the 415 group (see, e.g., J. Diggle, *CR* NS 31 [1981] 106), the *Troades*, although believed by most to have been the last tragedy of a connected trilogy, will be treated here as a single play. This seems justified as there is no consensus about the kind and degree of connection between the plays (convenient accounts in D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* [Toronto and Oxford 1967] 132 ff., and R. Scodel, *The Trojan Trilogy of Euripides* [Göttingen 1980] 11–15), and such independence is allowed the individual plays also by advocates of the connected trilogy theory (e.g., B. Snell, "Euripides' *Alexandros* und andere Strassburger Papyri mit Fragmenten griechischer Dichter," *Hermes Einzelschriften* 5 (1937) 67; Conacher 138; Scodel 16). Moreover, forward-pointing hints in the last play of even a connected group do not seem to need the earlier plays in order to fulfil their function.

¹⁷Cf. Aeschylus *Pers.* 805 ff. ("fulfilled" by acceptance 843 f.); *Ag.* 1280 ff. (fulfilled in *Cho.*); *Eum.* 81 ff.; *PV* 771 ff., 871 ff. (fulfilled in the lost *Prometheus Lyomenus*). Sophocles: *Aj.* 750 ff.; *Ant.* 1064 ff.; *Tr.* 76 ff., 163 ff.; *OT* 417 ff., 449 ff. (455 f. is "accepted" by Oedipus' own stressed request to be exiled: 1340, 1436, 1449 ff., 1518), 711 ff., 790 ff.; *El.* 32 ff.; *Phil.* (e.g.) 610 ff. ("fulfilled" by the *deus ex machina* prediction and its acceptance 1423 ff.); *OC* 87 ff., 1372 ff. (Oedipus' curse depends on Polynices' attacking Thebes, 1370 ff., and is "fulfilled" by Polynices' decision to do so, 1399 ff., esp. 1424 ff.). Euripides: *Alc.* 65 ff.; *Hi.* 43 ff.; *Hec.* 37 ff.; *HF* 831 f., 838 ff.; *Tro.* 356–364, 445–450, 461 (all "accepted as valid" by Cassandra); *IT* 85 ff.; *Ion* 69 ff.; *Pho.* 67 f.; *Ba.* 47 ff. This may apply also to Cassandra's prophecy in the lost *Alexander*, now known to be enunciated before the final scene (R. A. Coles, "A new Oxyrhynchus Papyrus: The Hypothesis of Euripides' *Alexandros*," *BICS* Suppl. 32 [London 1974]), and assumed to concern the future sack of Troy. On the connected trilogy theory it points forward from the first play of the group to the third and is realized in the course of the intervening time.

¹⁸The Greeks may be considered *dramatis personae*, being represented on stage by their herald and by the king for whose wife the war was waged.

their way home (88 ff.) and Cassandra's prophecies in the first episode concerning Hecuba's death in Troy (428 ff.)¹⁹ refer to events which will happen after the end of the play and are not accepted as valid by those affected. As Hecuba's death in Troy, however, is not part of established myth,²⁰ these prophecies by Cassandra will be discussed in an appendix.

Poseidon's prediction, like the allusions in the *Heracles* to the hero's ultimate apotheosis, refers to a generally accepted²¹ and significant development that is substantially at variance with the tendency of the story presented on stage. Yet while the event alluded to in the *Heracles* is an integral part of the myth that has been excluded from the plot, that of the *Troades* is not necessarily associated with the story of the women surviving the sack of Troy (for example, it is absent from the *Hecuba*), so it seems that Euripides had a particular function in mind for it. However, as the storm will hit the Greeks as soon as they leave Troy (94) and the play ends with their embarkation (1332), information about the storm would reasonably be expected in a prediction made in the epilogue. Its unique location in the prologue indicates either that the poet desires the audience to be aware of the later event already at an early stage or that he does not wish the announcement to affect them at the end of the play, or both. It is commonly held that the whole action of the play takes place under the shadow of the ultimate doom of the Greek fleet and that this is so clear in the minds of the audience that there is no need to repeat it at the conclusion (e.g., Grube [above, n. 2] esp. 282 f., 296). Others maintain that by the end the audience is so involved in the suffering of the Trojan women that the earlier prediction is almost totally forgotten (Scodel [above, n. 16] 67).

Be this as it may, the reasons given in the prologue for sending the storm on the Greeks exclude a direct causal connection with the woes of the Trojan women: Athena insists on her own personal grievance (69–73)²² and Poseidon in his final *gnome* insists that it is the conquerors' devastation of

¹⁹"She shall die here" (αὐτοῦ) 430; see the appendix below.

²⁰There existed no standard version of Hecuba's end. According to an unknown early lyric poet Hecuba stayed on in Troy (this is not explicitly stated but is most likely as her voice is heard "by" Ida, Tenedos, and the rocks of Thrace), turned into a bitch by the Furies (PMG 965). Stesichorus had Apollo, who was according to him Hector's father, transfer her to Lycia (PMG 198, 224). In Euripides' *Hecuba* a tomb of hers on the Thracian Chersonese is mentioned (1270–73); see Appendix.

²¹For the punitive storm see Alcaeus 138 in D. L. Page, *Lyrica Graeca Selecta* (Oxford 1968) with H. Lloyd-Jones, "The Cologne Fragment of Alcaeus," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 125–139, esp. 136.

²²The stressed personal motivation of the gods who appear in the prologue has been noted by many, e.g., U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Tragödien* 3³ (Berlin 1919) 263; E. G. O'Neill Jr., "The Prologue of the *Troades* of Euripides," *TAPA* 72 (1941) 288–320, esp. 315; Scodel (above, n. 16) 67.

the holy places that brings disaster on them (96 f.).²³ So, too, Cassandra keeps total silence about Ajax's aggression against her; the Greeks' offence against the goddess, it seems, is the only relevant issue. By the end of the play, an audience under the impact of the action would be craving for some kind of retribution for the sufferings of the Trojan women. A statement to the effect that a storm is in store for the Greeks as punishment for their sacrilegious conduct before the play opened would have made little impression on them. Lacking a more satisfactory sequence of cause and effect, they might ignore the reason given. Incidentally, a prediction of the storm at the moment of the captives' embarkation would also have made the audience aware of something that the early location of the prophecy allows them to forget, namely that the Trojan victims will inevitably share the fate of their masters. Introduced in the prologue and connected with its cause, the predicted suffering of the Greeks is theirs exclusively, and it is the penalty which they will pay for offending the gods. This penalty puts into strong relief the fact that the gods do not exact any penalty for offences against human beings.

It is impossible to say for sure whether the prediction is meant to be remembered throughout the performance or, rather, to be set aside by the stage action and called to mind for fleeting moments by vague indications—Andromache's mention of Ajax's attempt on Cassandra in 618 f. and the chorus's prayer that a thunderbolt strike Menelaus' ship on the high sea at 1100 ff.—so as to be pondered later in recollection. The location in the prologue is appropriate since the predicted storm is not the result of events in the play (the Cassandra of the first episode is Agamemnon's prize, not the victim of the Locrian's assault): it had to be mentioned at the very outset so that knowledge of it could serve as a point of reference for later allusions; the same effect is produced, without announcement, by the audience's knowledge of the traditional story that is an integral part of the myth dramatized in the *Heracles*. One way or the other, the punitive storm certainly constitutes an important factor in the total tragic experience and

²³The notion was familiar to the Athenians; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 807 ff., *Ag.* 338–344 (and Hdt. 8.109.3). It seems to be blurred by Page's reading of *Tro.* 96–97, adopted by J. Diggle in the 1981 OCT edition.

The text does not seem to need emendation. The punctuation to be preferred may be *πόλεις* at the end of 95, rather than M. L. West's *δοῦς* in 97 (*BICS* 27 [1980] 15), where the aorist of the participle is rather difficult, or D. Sansone's *τύμβους θ'* in 96 (*GGA* 234 [1982] 35 f.), from which it might be understood that it is specifically their desecration of the tombs of the dead which brings disaster on the conquerors. What is of interest to Poseidon here and is punished by the gods generally is the devastation of the holy places of the conquered city; shrines and tombs constitute in combination the totality of the sacred places that receive worship as long as a city is inhabited. Line 96_b stresses the relevance of tombs to shrines; both are *ἱερά*, of the gods and of the dead. The two are paired also in, e.g., Aesch. *Pers.* 404_b–405_a, Eur. *Ba.* 1359.

in the interpretation of the play. However, it hardly alleviates the fate of Troy and her womenfolk for the audience by suggesting the working of an overall retributive system. It may, rather, be intended by its very location to point out the irrelevance of such a system to the sufferers.²⁴

This reading may be significant for the interpretation of the *Heracles*. Both the events referred to as occurring after the action of the play, the storm and the apotheosis, constitute *prima facie* a requital for the outrageous suffering presented on stage, the one by punishing the offending party, the other by compensating the victim. Announced in an epilogue Heracles' deification might have been taken as a redress of the wrong by the gods. As it is, the vague allusions that invite us to relate the apotheosis to the action of the play only after the latter has made its overwhelming impact seem meant to provoke the realization that the "Happy End in Heaven" solution of the traditional story is quite irrelevant.

Euripides' interest at this period in the problem of requital seems also evident in another detail in the *Troades*, which is in a way reminiscent of the allusions in the *Heracles* to the extra-dramatic apotheosis. The play contains no statement to the effect that the death sentence decreed by Menelaus against Helen (1039–41) will never be carried out. Everyone knew, of course, that, far from being stoned on her arrival in Greece, Helen was again going to be Menelaus' queen in Sparta. Still, Euripides seems to have included a hint at this well-known fact. After Helen is led to the ships to be conveyed to Greece for execution (1047 f. and 1055 f.), the chorus envisage "the daughter of Zeus" crossing the sea as she "takes up in her hands her golden mirror" (1107–09).²⁵ The incongruity of such a description with her status of condemned captive, as well as her presentation as Zeus' daughter, may point to the chorus' assumption that Helen is not subject to human justice and will be reinstated in her husband's favour. All the same, this is not stated explicitly. A possible reason may be that such a statement would probably have aroused indignation towards Menelaus, whereas in this play Menelaus is portrayed as a sympathetic character, as is evident from his deferential treatment of the captive Hecuba (912 f., 1036 ff., 1053 f.). Sympathetic too is the only other Greek seen on the stage in the play, the not very sensitive but very considerate herald (422 f., 709 f., 735 ff., ? 786 ff., 1130 ff., 1150 ff., 1269). He is the one who carries

²⁴Differently Conacher (above, n. 16, 136), who believes that the audience got some ethical satisfaction from the punishment of the villains of the play, although the direct cause was not their behaviour towards the human population of Troy, and K. H. Lee, *Euripides Troades* (Basingstoke and London 1976) xv ff., for whom the same Greek *hybris* is at work on different levels from the *Palamedes* on, so that the storm supplies for the audience the expected divine justice.

²⁵Moses Hadas's and John McLean's translation in *Euripides: Ten plays* (New York 1960).

the victors' orders to the women of Troy, thus making possible the conspicuous absence from the stage of all the Greeks directly responsible for the woes of the on-stage captives. This presentation of the Greeks deprives the Trojan captives even of a personally responsible opponent to blame for the blows inflicted on them in the course of the play. The lack of outlet for their exasperation adds to the atmosphere of impotent despair.

But this is not all. The deceptive impression that Helen will be punished may, in its context, also point out the futility of such justice. Although Helen is blamed for the sufferers' woes throughout the play (134 ff., 772 f., 1213 ff.), no Trojan expression of joy, by either the queen or the chorus, follows upon her condemnation. Hecuba keeps silent, and the immediately succeeding stasimon, in which the chorus, who had expressed unusual involvement in the *agon* while it lasted (966 ff. and 1032 ff.), is expected to react to its outcome, opens with "Thus, O Zeus, you betrayed to the Achaeans your temple in Ilium, your misted altar" (1060-63).²⁶ This theme, developed in the first pair of stanzas (1060-80), seems in its wider context to complement and balance the theme of the last pair of stanzas of the stasimon which immediately precedes the same scene. There (820-859) the chorus realizes that the love which the gods once showed Troy is useless now, here that the Trojans' sacrifices to them are of no avail. As the ancients reinforced their petitions to their gods by either a recital of past favours shown by the addressed god to the petitioner (e.g., *Il.* 5.116) or by a list of services rendered by the petitioner to the god (e.g., *Il.* 1.39), these two pairs of stanzas which frame Helen's trial will have been taken together as expressing the Trojan survivors' feeling that they are utterly cut off from their gods. In its immediate context, juxtaposed with Helen's condemnation, the passage 1060 ff. seems to convey the total inadequacy of a justice consisting of Helen's execution when weighed against the destruction of a city and the bereavement of wives and mothers. Still, this is the only satisfaction for which the surviving victims can pray, and Hecuba saw in Helen's condemnation a manifestation of divine justice on earth (884-888). Therefore, her prayer had to be *prima facie* granted in order to make possible the realization of the worthlessness of this kind of justice. Any mention at this point of the eventual reconciliation between Menelaus and Helen would have precluded such unmasking. Soon afterwards, however, still in the same stasimon, occurs the mention of Zeus' daughter with her golden mirror that foreshadows Helen's returning unscathed to her former position. Euripides seems to have aimed at making his audience aware both of the meaninglessness of the granted satisfaction and of the fact that the victims will not be granted even this meaningless satisfaction. Since the Helen episode is flanked by the taking of Astyanax to his death and

²⁶Richmond Lattimore's translation in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, eds. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, *Euripides* 3 (Chicago 1958), slightly adapted.

the bringing of his body for burial, it follows that, at the very same time that Troy's last hope is physically exterminated, the only hope she could have entertained of compensation for her suffering is doubly exposed as an empty illusion.

To sum up. This survey shows that in his two approximately contemporaneous tragedies without divine epilogue, *Heracles* and *Troades*, Euripides makes subtle and diverse use both of a prediction in the prologue and of vague allusions before the *finale* to refer to further events belonging to the legend but not included in the stage action. The relevant developments are Heracles' apotheosis in the *Heracles* and the storm at sea and Helen's reconciliation with Menelaus in the *Troades*. These are well-known mythological data that affect the interpretation of the respective plays. Evidently Euripides assigned some importance to the audience's awareness also of the generally accepted version. It seems noteworthy and may be significant that the events bear upon recompense for human suffering. The allusion to Helen's reinstatement occurs late enough to allow previous creation of the impression that the death sentence against her will be carried out and the woes of the Trojans will be avenged. The apotheosis and the storm *prima facie* provide, the one divine personal compensation for the terrible wrong and suffering brought on Heracles, the other divine justice consisting of the punishment of the Greeks for their offences against the gods. Placed as these two events are,²⁷ the poet may well have intended them to insinuate that irreversible human loss and the suffering caused by it are beyond recompense.

APPENDIX: *Tro.* 428 ff.

The deviation of *Tro.* 428 ff. from the usual practice of Greek tragedy has been pointed out above (000). The following discussion offers a reason for this deviation.

The prophecies concerning Hecuba's death are provoked by Talthybius' referring to Hecuba's servitude in Odysseus' household as to a certain fact (421–423). Cassandra, basing herself on information from Apollo, objects that Hecuba will die here and Odysseus will return alone to Ithaca. In this context "here" stands for "in Troy"²⁸ and the prophecies about Odysseus support that about Hecuba by implication. Nobody on stage pays

²⁷Differently from Sophocles who prefers the closing moments of his plays for such allusions, cf., e.g., *El.* 1498 and see Easterling (above, n. 9) on *Tr.* 1270.

²⁸Euripides' strict usage of *αὐτοῦ* does not recommend understanding it as standing vaguely for "in this area" or "on this side of the Aegean," as seems implied by those who take *Tro.* 430_b to refer to Hecuba's change into a bitch in Thrace prophesied in *Hec.* 1265; Lattimore (above, n. 26) rightly connects 430_b with 431 ff.

any attention to these prophecies. They seem *prima facie* superfluous also for the audience which even without them is not likely to expect the old queen to reach Odysseus' home: in none of the accounts of her end does Hecuba reach Greece (above, note 20). Indeed, everybody knew that Odysseus lost on his way all that he took with him from Troy, and this would include Hecuba. What is more, not only do the prophecies appear superfluous, but they, together with the audience's previous knowledge, are suppressed throughout the play by frequent and insistent references to Hecuba's impending enslavement to Odysseus (277, 421 ff., [489 ff.], 1270 f., 1285 f.). The poet seems to aim at making the audience react unreservedly to the prospect of this additional infliction on the old queen of Troy. Indeed, when towards the end of the play the Greek herald orders the chorus of captive women to leave for their captors' ships and Hecuba to follow Odysseus' men (1266 ff.), the audience is not likely to recall at this point (1328 ff.) that only the other women are destined to be slaves in Greece. It seems rather that Hecuba's death in Troy—a release from misery and humiliation she herself had desired (1282 f.)—is deliberately excluded from the end of the play so that the final effect will be one of total despair.

Two interrelated facts strengthen this impression: only in this tragedy does Euripides introduce the theme of the enslavement of the queen of Troy to Odysseus—it is not even hinted at in the *Hecuba* or, indeed, anywhere else in extant Greek literature before *Troades*.²⁹ Secondly, of the two versions offered him by myth, the poet chose the one according to which Odysseus is responsible for the death of Hecuba's, and Troy's, last hope, Hector's infant son Astyanax (721 ff.).³⁰ All these factors combine to increase and deepen Hecuba's suffering and its effect on the audience. This is obviously not meant to be blunted by the knowledge that Hecuba is going to escape by death the last and most debasing of her calamities.

It is, then, clear why Hecuba's death in Troy is not predicted at the end of the play. It is less clear why it is predicted at all, seeing that it is predicted only to be suppressed.

The answer seems to be found in Euripides' own *Hecuba*. In that play the Greeks have already left Troy and are temporarily stationed on the Thracian Chersonese. There Polyxena, the virgin daughter still with Hecuba, is publicly sacrificed on Achilles' tomb, and Polydorus, the youngest son whom Priam and Hecuba hid with a Thracian guestfriend, is found

²⁹Later the motif was very popular: see Apollod. *Epit.* 5.23, Dio Chrysost. 11.154, Ov. *Met.* 13.485–487, Sen. *Troad.* 980, Hyg. *Fab.* 111, Dict. Cret. 5.13, Q.S. 14.21 f., and the scholium on Eur. *Hec.* 99. According to Wilamowitz (*Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* 2 [Berlin 1924] 153 n. 1), Hecuba's enslavement to Odysseus is the invention of an epic poet (no proofs adduced). However that may be, here it is significant.

³⁰The child was killed by Neoptolemus in the *Ilias Parva* (*Il. par.* 134–135), by Odysseus in the *Iliou Persis* (Procl. *Chr.* 108).

murdered. Hecuba avenges the death of her child on his treacherous host, and it is predicted that she will die after having turned into a bitch; her tomb on the shore of the Thracian Chersonese is mentioned as a landmark (*Hec.* 1259–73).

The references in the prologue of the *Troades* to Polyxena and “the children” as already dead (39–41)³¹ seem intended to disconnect the later play *a priori* from the earlier one in which too the chorus consists of Trojan captive women and Hecuba is played by the protagonist.³² However, even if it is already established that Polyxena and Polydorus died in Troy before the Greeks set sail (and before the *Troades* begins), Hecuba might still be expected to die on the Thracian Chersonese—Euripides’ sources for the *Hecuba* are not really known and the legends may have existed separately³³—while the Greek fleet of the *Troades* is clearly to be imagined as sailing straight from Troy into the open sea. It would, therefore, seem that the “here” of *Tro.* 430 serves as a guide for the audience which is meant to discard foreknowledge about the fate of Hecuba supplied by the earlier play.

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³¹*Tro.* 41, “Gone are Priam and the children” recalls the situation in the *Iliad*, where Polydorus too is killed in the battle for Troy (*Il.* 20.407 ff.).

³²For Polyxena see G. Petersmann, “Die Rolle der Polyxena in den *Troerinnen* des Euripides,” *RhM* 120 (1977) 146–158, esp. 154 f.

³³See L. Méridier’s discussion in *Euripide* 2 (Coll. des Universités de France, Paris 1927) 173 n. 6.