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C. W. MARSHALL

EURIPIDES' *TROJAN WOMEN*
AND THE STAGECRAFT OF MEMORY



ABSTRACT: This study presents an overview of the stagecraft demands of Euripides' *Trojan Women*, and argues that many of the play's spectacular effects create resonances with the *Iliad* and with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Through visual effects, the poet situates his play as a bridge between these two texts. Part I presents an overview of some foundational elements of stagecraft. It offers an alternative to the stage geography proposed by Kovacs (2018), which also removes the need for more than one herald. Discussion also emphasizes the large number of supernumerary performers required for the play. Part II proceeds through the play linearly and describes six scenes of spectacle and how they evoke specific literary precedents. In *Trojan Women* Euripides creates stunning moments of theatre that communicate their emotional impact visually. The cumulative effect of the tragedy's episodic structure becomes fully apparent in performance.

Trojan Women is filled with moments of extraordinary theatre that depend on performance for the creation of their meaning. Despite it being almost 60 years since the pioneering study of Euripidean stagecraft by N. C. Hourmouziades (1965), there remains a distrust about the information that can be inferred about ancient performance practice in scholarship today. That distrust is misplaced. The play is filled with spectacle—*opsis*—and it achieves its unity not from a narrative throughline but from a concatenation of terrible events that continue to escalate the trauma inflicted on the surviving women from the sack of Troy. The dramaturgy of this play reinforces the horrors of war, and through a process of allusive

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stagecraft connects these sufferings to other, foundational texts that lived in the Athenian imagination.

Part 1 of this article argues for several specific details of the play's production, including stage geography, role division, costumes, and masks, about which either there is disagreement or there is an effect achieved specific to this play. Even when certainty is not achievable today, it possible to describe these aspects of stage management with confidence. This argument is needed in part because of challenges to the value of production information in David Kovacs's 2018 commentary on the play. While he accepts that there are "embedded" stage directions whereby action "is 'doubled' in the text by explicit comments from the characters", anything beyond this is characterized as "invent[ing] 'dumb show' out of whole cloth" (2018, 17). This seems to be uncharacteristically dismissive of an entire sub-field. The same commentary also gives the impression that this perspective is more or less settled: no scholarship on stagecraft or the shape of the performance space after 2002 is cited (see 17 n. 2 and 18 n. 48), and as a result a range of methodological advances and new archaeological interpretations are omitted. Once these details are established, part 2 can describe how the structure of *Trojan Women* creates six scenes of spectacle, and how these individual scenes evoke specific moments from earlier performances at the City Dionysia and Athenian festival life. Many of my conclusions are anticipated in the excellent discussion of the stage action of the play by Michael R. Halleran (1985, 92-102), but these can be strengthened and placed within the most recent scholarship on performance criticism. The use of allusion through performance, the stagecraft of memory, is shown to be central to the creation of the play's emotional impact.

The present discussion does not address the use of music and the stagecraft of the chorus in the play. Such a discussion would more than double the overall length of this article. The chorus is central to the play's emotional and spectacular impact, but it accomplishes its effect through other theatrical techniques. The present discussion also does not account for anything except the most rudimentary elements of blocking. Even with these restrictions, the information conveyed is revelatory.

1. PERFORMANCE CRITICISM AND *TROJAN WOMEN*

Basic questions of stagecraft that would be evident to any spectator of the play in performance remain obscure to scholars who only possess the written script. This is a paradox inherent in any critical engagement with performance, but it need not be an obstacle to interpretation. Even when it is not possible to say precisely what happened when *Trojan Women* was first staged in 415,¹ an assessment of available options is possible and can point with strong possibility to the clearest way for meaning to be created. Methodologically, it is proper to assume that Euripides, serving as playwright (*poiētēs*), director (*didaskalos*), and possibly composer, was invested in his own theatrical success, and that his aims in performance were to communicate clearly through words and stage action. One must not confuse a lack of information available with imprecision from the playwright, and, further, clarity of intention does not necessarily result in a single unambiguous interpretation. Complex, heterogeneous interpretations emerge through irony, metatheatre, and stagecraft decisions which must be appreciated from the wider performance context.

Trojan Women was performed at the City Dionysia in 415 BCE, as part of a tetralogy that was (unusually) united in narrative and, as I shall describe, visual imagery. It was the third of three tragedies, following *Alexandros* and *Palamedes* (the satyr play was *Sisyphus*).² The single play remains interpretable as an individual unit, but would have been illuminated more fully within its wider festival and performance context as part of a tetralogy.

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1. There is no indication that *Trojan Women* entered the subsequent performance repertoire. There are no vases from Athens or South Italy connected to the play in Taplin (2007), only a single papyrus of the script (P.Oxy. 4564, from the late third or early fourth century CE), and very few interpolations (Kovacs includes twenty interpolated lines in his 2018 text); additionally, there are no citations in anecdotes or secondary authors not interested specifically in Euripides. Greater presence of any of these would suggest the play had a continued stage life. There is a curious inscribed wooden tablet that includes a few lines that may emerge from a pedagogic context; see Kovacs (2018) 61. For the manuscript tradition, see Kovacs (2018) 59-61: unusually, the play is missing from the important Laurentianus manuscript (L).
 2. For the plays, see Cropp (2004), with discussions at Scodel (1980), Hose (1995) 33-57, and Kovacs (2018) 24-51. Scodel (1980) 122-37 discusses *Sisyphus*. On the date see also Karamanou (2017) 31 and 131-33.

Plays at the City (or Greater) Dionysia were performed in the Theatre of Dionysus Eleutherios at Athens, on the south slope of the Acropolis.³ The performance area included the rectilinear *orchēstra*, which was accessible by two side entrances (*eisodoi*) and the central inward-opening double-doors of the *skēnē*, the wooden stage building, the roof of which could also be used by performers.⁴ Scholars disagree as to whether there was a low platform in front of the *skēnē*,⁵ but the question does not meaningfully impact *Trojan Women*. In either case, movement from the *skēnē* to the *orchēstra* is unimpeded, and the chorus's initial entry is from the *skēnē* in this play.⁶

Trojan Women is a complex play, and so for clarity each of the following subsections begins with an explicit claim about the play's performance that is then argued.

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3. For the most recent overview of the Theatre of Dionysus in the fifth-century, see Papastamati-von Mook (2015) and (2020); Goette (2007) offers a brief overview. On the Euripides' theatre practice as a source for the stage of the Theatre of Dionysus see also Tsitsiridis (2019).
 4. *Orchēstra* as part of performance area: Ley and Ewans (1985). Doors: Taplin (1977) 438-40. Opening inwards: Hourmouziades (1965) 16. Roof as part of playing space: Hourmouziades (1965) 29-34, Taplin (1977) 440-41.
 5. In favour are Hourmouziades (1965) 58-74, Dearden (1976) 13-18, Kampourelli (2016) 53-57, Marshall (2014) 197-200, Konstantakos (2019) 287-94, and Tsitsiridis (2019) 183-90. Opposed are Rehm (1992) 34-36 and Wiles (1997) 63-64, 70-86), and see Taplin (1977) 441-42. Both Rehm and Wiles rightly stress that whether there is a low platform or not, the focus of audience attention is regularly on the centre of the *orchēstra* (the *thumelē*); see Ley (2007) 46-69. Whatever the case, it is misleading to call the platform a "stage" since the performance area extends beyond that.
 6. A similar disagreement emerges concerning scene-painting (*skēnographia*). I find the interpretation of Wiles (1997) persuasive: "the purpose of scene-painting was to create out of transient materials the illusion of a stone monument, in accordance with Dionysos' nature as god of illusion and transformation" (161); "Detailed verbal descriptions ... are not surrogate stage directions to the scenographer" (162). This makes scene-painting not something that is part of a given production, but part of the default resources offered to all competitors at a festival. The opposing view, that painted panels were used, is best articulated by Ley (1989), but the evidence he provides is not determinative. There is no reason to believe representational painted panels were used to denote locations in fifth-century theatre.

- (a) The stage geography of *Trojan Women* is clear, consistent, and visually interpretable: one *eisodos* (perhaps stage right) leads to Troy and the tomb of Achilles, and the other (perhaps stage left) leads to the Greek ships and council area; the *skēnē* represents a tent of Agamemnon, where the captive women are being kept.

Whereas typically in Euripides stage geography is able to be inferred easily, several obstacles prevent a straightforward assignment of *eisodoi* to discrete locations in this play. The *skēnē* represents the tent in which many Trojan captives are being held until assigned to a Greek warrior as a prize (*Tro.* 32-35). Hecuba, her attendants, Cassandra, and Helen are all within, but Andromache and Polyxena are not. It is a temporary structure, associated explicitly with Agamemnon (*Tro.* 176-77 *σκηνὰς ἔλιπον | τὰσδ' Ἀγαμέμνονος*), even if he is presently at the council area and living on his ship (249, 413-15, 455). Hecuba has a stony pallet (507-8) in front of the tent on which she lies, which is likely positioned just before the door.⁷

In the prologue, Poseidon identifies the location as Troy (4-7). Gold is being sent from the city to the ships (18-19) and he, the god of the sea, is abandoning the city (25). The contrast between Troy and the sea is repeated when Athena appears (72-75), and both gods are heading seawards (76-97). The natural inference, I suggest, is that one *eisodos* leads to Troy and another to the ships (as is also suggested by Kovacs 1999, 13): if both were in the same direction, then the location of the *skēnē* would be obscured and the most obvious pointers established for the orientation of the performance area lost; the gods would be coming on stage to return in the direction they had just come, contrary to the straightforward meaning of their words. Talthybius's opening words reinforce this association, noting that he has regularly traveled between the Greek camp and Troy (235-36 *ἐς Τροίαν ... ἐξ Ἀχαικοῦ στρατοῦ*, implicitly tying the ships to the Greek camp). This deep directionality—from the city past the tent and to the ships—will be repeated: Cassandra is taken from the tent to the ships (419-20,

7. It could possibly be represented by the *ekkyklēma*, which is otherwise unused in this play, but it need not (see Taplin 1977, 442-43). This would change the nature of Hecuba's so-called "cancelled entry", described below in section 2.a. It seems likely her bed is close to the door, on the wooden platform if it exists, and not located, say, at the centre of the *orchestra*, as Helen's bed is in *Helen* three years later (412 BCE).

461); Andromache is brought into the performance area and taken to the ships (789); Helen is taken from the tent to the ships (1059); that is the direction Hecuba and all the remaining women will be taken as the play concludes (1265-71).

Other locations are near the city. Andromache says she was with Polyxena when she was killed, at the tomb of Achilles (626-27).⁸ When the herald Talthybius returns with the body of Astyanax, once it has been thrown from the Trojan battlements, he indicates he has washed the body in the River Scamander (1151, and see 29) and will proceed to bury the child; this too can be seen as a move from Troy to the shore (lines 1154-55 associate the child's tomb with ships).⁹ Even at the play's conclusion, Hecuba considers throwing herself into the flames of the burning city, but in the end is resigned to depart to the ships (1282-86). This geography is consistent and clear, generating a strong East-West axis: along one *eisodos* is the Tomb of Achilles, the River Scamander and the city; along the other is the burial place of Astyanax and the Greek ships, which is the Greek camp. The structure of the play presents a relentless movement from city to shore, following the directions established in Poseidon's prologue.

We cannot know which *eisodos* was associated with which side, but certain factors argue for the East (stage right) *eisodos* being Troy and the West (stage left) being the ships.¹⁰ This assignment would create a predominance of movement from left to right, following the path of the sun, which is also the way fifth-century Athenians read. It then also corresponds with the prescription found in Pollux, that by default audience right (stage left) leads to the harbour, and audience left (stage right) leads to the city (*Onom.* 4.126-27; though this must not be given too much weight).¹¹

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8. Polyxena does not appear, having been led away before the play's beginning to be killed on the tomb of Achilles in secret (39-40; this accepts the reading of V in line 40, *λάθρα*, "[u]nbeknownst to her"). The secrecy would also explain why Hecuba does not know where Polyxena is (502-4). See Meridor (1989) 53-55, where the delayed announcement of Polyxena's death becomes "the turning point" of Hecuba's despondency.
 9. For nautical imagery in this play, see Barlow (1981) 29-30, 51-52, 118. For a different view on Scamander's location, see Dyson and Lee (2001b) 23.
 10. Wiles (1997) 133-60 argues for the importance of the East-West axis.
 11. Rightly Kovacs (2018) 19 n. 49, though the assignment is therefore not necessarily arbitrary, as Kovacs claims (19).

Kovacs argues for a radically different stage geography (2018, 18-22), which creates multiple challenges for clear visual communication. For him, one *eisodos* leads to the tomb of Achilles and the place where the Greeks make their decisions (what he calls the agora); on the other is the ships, Scamander, and Troy. There are two substantial differences between this proposal and the interpretation offered here.

First, Kovacs places the Greek place of assembly away from the ships. The play reflects three decisions taken by the Greeks: the allocation of the captives, which included the sacrifice of Polyxena (235-78);¹² Odysseus persuading the Greeks to kill Astyanax (709-24); and the decision to burn the city (1260-64). Kovacs places the Greek assembly as meeting by the tomb of Achilles, perhaps on analogy with the similar scene in Euripides' *Hecuba* 107-40 (which is not set at Troy in any case).¹³ There is no need for consistency on this point between plays,¹⁴ and in *Trojan Women* the Greek leaders are assumed to be at the ships (455, 1053-54, 1285-86). A sequence of pre-play events emerges: the Greeks decide to kill Polyxena; some go to the tent and fetch Polyxena and Andromache, allocated respectively to the dead Achilles and his son; they continue to the tomb of Achilles where Polyxena is killed and Andromache tends the corpse (626-27). When Andromache appears on stage, she is returning from the tomb to the ships; Astyanax is with her. The audience is not told who killed Polyxena. Some spectators may assume from earlier sources that it was Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus), without Odysseus or Agamemnon present, but this is not stated. Andromache knows that she has been assigned to Neoptolemus (657-60), not because she was at the debate (Kovacs 2018: 220), but because she was told when she was brought to tend Polyxena's corpse.¹⁵

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12. Talthybius' coy description of Polyxena's fate has been taken as kindness: "Only if we see Talthybius in fact, whether from sympathy or diplomacy, consoling Hecuba who feared something worse, is her acceptance of his answer and the immediate transition to the next topic plausible" (Dyson and Lee 2000a, 150). It is also evasive. He himself was not present when she was killed, only when the decision was taken.
 13. For Polyxena in *Trojan Women*, see Petersmann (1977); in *Hecuba*, see Mossman (1995) 142-63. Sommerstein (2006) presents a text and detailed reassessment of the presentation of Polyxena's sacrifice in Sophocles' earlier *Polyxena*.
 14. Another difference concerns the allocation of Hecuba as a war-prize. In *Hecuba*, the allocation is to Agamemnon, whereas in *Trojan Women*, with deeper irony, it is to Odysseus; see Marshall (2011) 33 n. 11.
 15. Kovacs (2018) 21 n. 53 recognizes that the assembly place should be by the ships.

Second, Kovacs places Troy and the ships along the same *eisodos*. This creates three substantial problems. (a) The scene-setting function of the prologue is undermined, with the offstage locations identified by both Athena and Poseidon being in the same direction in relation to the performance area. (b) At 789 Andromache is taken to the ships and within seconds of that, Astyanax is taken to the walls of Troy. If both locations are along the same *eisodos*, the effect of the traumatic separation of mother and child is diminished. (c) Hecuba is ordered to go to the ships, taken by Odysseus' men (1266-71); she contemplates throwing herself into the flames of the burning city (1282-83); the men are given specific instructions to hand her to Odysseus (1264-66). This exchange becomes needlessly confused if Troy and the ships are represented as being along the same *eisodos*, and everyone is seeking to go in the same direction.

(b) A single herald, Talthybius, enters in four scenes (230, 706, 1118, 1260).

Kovacs's placement of locations also generates inconsistencies in the movement of Talthybius, all of which are resolved if Agamemnon's tent is assumed to be between Troy and the ships. Kovacs's proposal requires two or possibly three Heralds: Talthybius, who enters at 230; a second Herald at 710, who is present when Astyanax is killed, returning at line 1118; and a third at 1260, who might be Talthybius if the audience is not concerned with him entering the performance area along a different *eisodos* than the one by which he left (see 2018, 20-23, 241-42, and 328-29). With the stage geography proposed above, with the ships and the city on opposing sides of the performance area, all of these problems disappear:

- 230-461 Talthybius arrives from the ships, takes Cassandra, and returns to the ships;
- 706-89 Talthybius arrives again from the ships, separates Andromache from Astyanax, and takes the boy to the walls of Troy;
- 1118-57 Talthybius arrives from Troy with the dead Astyanax, and leaves to find somewhere the child may be buried, near the ships;
- 1260-86 Talthybius arrives again from the ships with some of Odysseus' men, and departs as he finishes his final speech, leaving Hecuba and the chorus alone for their final lament.

This practical efficiency removes the need to argue for more than one herald.¹⁶ It remains possible that different actors played these roles, that the masks and costumes differed from one to the other, but that is adding complexity where a clear and consistent solution is already in place.

The only challenge to this that I can see is Talthybius' speech at 1123-55. In it he claims first that Neoptolemus and Andromache have already left (1123-27, 1145-46), and second that Andromache begged Neoptolemus that Astyanax be buried (1133-35). If the stage movement I have proposed is accepted, then Talthybius cannot have direct knowledge of the first point: he is assuming an outcome that the audience has seen as inevitable, once Andromache was separated from Astyanax (759). Since the play has not been explicit about Neoptolemus' role, this is not an obstacle. The second claim is more subtle:

*καὶ σφ' ἤτησατο
θάψαι νεκρὸν τόνδ', ὃς πεσὼν ἐκ τειχέων
ψυχὴν ἀφῆκεν Ἐκτορος τοῦ σοῦ γόνου· ...*

(1133-35, "She begged Neoptolemus that this dead child, who was hurled from the walls and breathed his last, the son of your Hector, be buried.") Talthybius refers to Astyanax as he is now (dead, hurled from the walls), not as he was when Andromache last saw him (alive, about to be hurled from the walls; 755-56, 774-77). It goes beyond the evidence of the text, though, to make this anything more than supposition by Talthybius, for he would not have been present when Andromache met Neoptolemus. I do not think that these lines constitute sufficient reason to place the ships and the city on the same side of the stage, as Kovacs has argued: as described in the previous section (see 1.a, above) this leads to greater inconsistencies.¹⁷ The Greek here is ungainly in any case: "this long sentence [sc. 1133-44] is not in Eur.'s best style. The main thought is interrupted by a profusion of subordinate clauses and a certain amount of obscurity is the result" (Lee 1976, 256). Taken at

16. For Talthybius, see Gilmartin (1970) and Dyson and Lee (2000a), esp. 156-57 for the identity of the herald at line 706. On Talthybius as a typical Euripidean messenger and the "need to know" in this tragedy, see Sullivan (2007).

17. See also Dyson and Lee (2000b) 22, where they are additionally troubled by the presence of the shield.

face value, this passage implicates Talthybius as being overly sympathetic to the captive women, offering false reassurances that he could not possibly know for a fact.

- (c) Allocation of roles has the same actor playing Cassandra, Andromache, and probably Helen.

As was typical in tragedy, in addition to the chorus and its leader (the *koryphaios*), three actors divided the remaining speaking parts between them. From c. 449 BCE, there was an annual prize given for tragic actors, which means the audience and judges were invested in perceiving the speaker beneath the mask. This allows for creative opportunities for the production team concerning the use of the voice, and the use of continuities and contrasts between specific doublings.¹⁸ The Rule of Three Actors creates a notionally level playing field for competition. Once it is seen that only a single herald is required, role allocation falls into place:¹⁹

	ACTOR A	ACTOR B	ACTOR C
1-97	Hecuba	<u>Poseidon</u>	<u>Athena</u>
230-461	Hecuba	Talthybius	Cassandra
568-789	Hecuba	Talthybius	Andromache
860-1059	Hecuba	<u>Menelaus</u>	<u>Helen</u>
1118-1331	Hecuba	Talthybius	

I have labeled the actors A, B, and C: one will have been the “protagonist”, but it goes beyond the evidence even to insist this is the Hecuba actor, since all the roles across the tetralogy must be considered. The assignment of some roles is not certain, and these are underlined. Possibly, the Talthybius actor plays Helen (61 lines, plus two interpolated in Kovacs’s text) and not Menelaus (31 lines): I suggest that the efficiencies that this assignment gives in terms of backstage movement do not outweigh the interpretative benefits of providing a unified voice for the three women apart from Hecuba who each have a major scene; neverthe-

18. See Pavlovskis (1977) and Damen (1989).

19. Cf. Pickard-Cambridge (1988) 146 and Marshall (2011) 32.

less, it is possible.²⁰ Similarly, the allocation of the gods can be swapped between actors B and C. Poseidon (68 lines, plus four interpolated) and Athena (25 lines) are both disaffected with the Greeks and are leaving Troy. Actor C as Athena keeps all the female characters with the same (male) performer for this play, but also allows the actor more time between roles, which might be welcome if Athena's entrance is by *mēchanē* (see 2.a, below).

Since characters continue across other plays, it is possible that some roles can be shared across the tetralogy, as can be argued for the *Oresteia*. Reconstructions of *Alexandros* draw heavily on a papyrus plot summary, or hypothesis (P.Oxy. 3650 col. i = test. iii). Because it appears Hecuba and Cassandra were both in a scene with Alexandros, that would make actor B Alexandros if the other roles were played consistently across the tetralogy (i.e. the same actor plays Cassandra in *Alexandros* as plays her in *Trojan Women*). Adapting labels from Ruth Scodel, we can identify five scenes for which more than one non-choral speaking role can be identified:²¹

	ACTOR A	ACTOR B	ACTOR C	
AGÓN	Priam	Alexandros	Deiphobus	cf. fr. 48-61a
MESSENGER	Hecuba	Messenger		cf. test. iii 12-14, fr. 61d
PLOTTING	Hecuba	Hector	Deiphobos	cf. test. iii 23-25, fr. 62-62d
PROPHECY	Hecuba	Alexandros	Cassandra	cf. test. iii 25-30, fr. 62e-*62h
RECOGNITION	Hecuba	Alexandros	Herdsmen	cf. test. iii 30-32

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20. Backstage movement is discussed by Marshall (1994), assessing the number of moves from one *eisodos* to the other with a costume change (a 180-degree run) or from the door to an *eisodos* or vice versa (a 90-degree run).

SCENARIO 1

B	Talthybius to Menelaus (789-860) to Talthybius (1059-1118)	2 x 180
C	Andromache to Helen (789-895)	1 x 90

SCENARIO 2

B	Talthybius to Helen (789-895) to Talthybius (1059-1118)	1 x 90, 1 x 180
C	Andromache to Menelaus (789-860)	none

Doubling Talthybius with Helen would mean that both actors B and C require less backstage movement, but neither allocation creates any time pressure on an actor changing costumes (there is always at least 50 lines, and this does not change between the two scenarios described).

21. Scodel (1980) 40-41.

Scodel allows for the possibility that Alexandros is silent in the *agōn*, which would enable wider variation, and of course much remains uncertain. Nevertheless, Hecuba again provides a through-line. Possibly that actor also played her husband Priam, but a fuller understanding of the *agōn* might change that, allowing actor C to play the role, combining Alexandros's biological father and his adoptive one (Karamanou 2017, 25). I also suggest that Euripides would allow the Alexandros actor to return as a messenger to describe the successes of his other role at the athletic competitions he describes. There is, finally, a very strong likelihood that the actor who played Alexandros later played Talthybius in *Trojan Women*. This should inform our understanding of the Greek herald's apparently sympathetic response to Hecuba, which will be informed through vivid contrast by the continuity from the earlier performance as the title role in *Alexandros*.

No similar argument can be made for *Palamedes* or *Sisyphus*: there were probably scenes between Palamedes and Odysseus (test. *v a), Agamemnon (test. *vi, fr. 580), and Oeax (fr. 588a), but no continuity with other plays, and any of actors A, B, or C might have played Palamedes. No characters other than Sisyphus are known from the satyr play.

- (d) **Masks and costumes of the Trojan women, including Hecuba, Cassandra, and Andromache, reveal their abject status and their enslavement, and Helen's appearance stands in contrast to this.**

Hecuba, Casandra, Andromache, and the chorus are all women who have survived the sack of their city and been enslaved. They display the signs of mourning, which overlap with those of enslavement: Hecuba proclaims *πενθήρη κρᾶτ' ἐκπορθηθεῖσ' | οἴκτρῳς* (140-41, "my head [is] ravaged in grief, pitifully"), and she instructs the chorus, *ἄρασε κρᾶτα κούριμον, ἔλκ' ὀνόχεσσι | δίπτυχον παρείαν* (279-80 "Strike the shorn head! Scratch with your nails the two cheeks!"). The play does not specify whether their hair has been cut by themselves or by their captors. In either case, the shorn heads mark all these women as being removed from the free society that they enjoyed so recently. The masks worn by the performers were full headpieces, combining both a full face and a head of hair. When the variable of hair to distinguish individuals is removed, significant details that might have facilitated character identification become erased. Their costumes reflect their former station as free women, but might be dirtied or torn to demonstrate the ravages of

war. The play gives no indications that the women were exoticized or made to appear foreign because they were Trojan. The play also does not reveal the ages of the women in the chorus (are they new brides? are they mothers of children, or of soldiers?), but the masking choice has a levelling effect, reducing all of the women to the common status of war captive. Generational differences might still be evident through gesture, bearing, or costume, but such distinctions are lessened substantially by the shorn heads on the masks.

Though it is speculative, it would not surprise if the chorus were meant to embody women of a range of ages: one might imagine the first semichorus that appears at line 153 to be younger women, with more mature women joining them at line 176, yielding an intergenerational chorus of captives, headed by Hecuba who marks herself as elderly: *ἐγὼ ... ἅ τριτιβά|μονος χειρὶ δευομένα βάκτρον, | γεραιὸν κάρα* (275-77, "I that need a staff for my hand and go about on three feet, an old woman").²² Cassandra is likely presented as young, and Andromache as young or mature, though the impact of this choice would be diminished because of their shorn heads. Cassandra evokes wedding imagery and compares herself to a bride. When she says, *μητέρα, πύκαζε κράτ' ἐμὸν νικηφορον* (353 "Mother, crown my victorious head"), there is obvious irony at how un-bride-like her shorn head appears, an irony reinforced by the garlands of laurel that she does wear (329 *ἐν δάφναις*). Indeed, Euripides makes clear that Cassandra is not perceiving the world as others, including the audience, do. Cassandra refers to the chorus as *ὦ καλλιπέπλοι Φρυγῶν | κόραι* (338-39 "you daughters of Phrygia, with your lovely gowns"), and the audience notes the divergence between this description and what it perceives.

In contrast to these women, Helen remains beautiful. Hecuba castigates her:

*ἦν χρῆν ταπεινὴν ἐν πέπλων ἐρειπίοις
φοικη τρέμουσαν, κράτ' ἀπεσκυθισμένην
ἔλθειν*

(1025-27, "You ought to have come humbly dressed in rags, trembling in fear and with shaven head"). This is not proof that Hecuba no longer

22. Meridor (1991-92) 11-12 suggests all the women other than Hecuba are presented as roughly of the same age.

wears royal clothing, but it does suggest a difference between Helen's appearance and the costume of the other women, including the former queen. I believe that Helen's beauty does not require a distinct mask, and that her allure can be conveyed effectively through posture and gesture, working with costume and the contrast with the Trojan women.²³

The costumes of the men are not the focus of the play. Talthybius presumably adhered to the iconographic representation of heralds in vase-painting, and will have carried a staff (*kērukeion*), and worn a cloak and broad-brimmed traveller's hat.²⁴ Menelaus may have had blonde hair and sported a hairstyle that contemporary Athenians would have associated with Spartans.²⁵ The gods Athena and Poseidon will have appeared with their standard iconographic elements, familiar from vase-painting. When ornaments are brought before the audience, rescued from the fallen city, they are used to decorate the corpse of Astyanax. The finery with which he is honoured would correspond, in cruel irony, to wedding finery. Whatever the audience sees will be the best that the women in the tent have to offer.²⁶

- (e) The play has a remarkable number of non-speaking parts, representing several distinct groups, most of which are men hostile to the Trojan women, and their presence creates a sense of continued threat.

Non-speaking parts comprise performers who are costumed and masked,²⁷ playing individuals who are part of the dramatic world, enriching the overall stage picture. Often their presence can only be inferred when they are addressed directly. The play provides a number of such moments, indicating at least six distinct groups, each of which must number at least two individuals.

- i. Hecuba's attendants.

506 ἄγετε τὸν ἀβρὸν δῆ ποτ' ἐν Τροίᾳ πόδα

“Lead me, who once walked so delicately in Troy...”

23. Marshall (2014) 290-92, 295-98.

24. Yoon (2020) 932.

25. Marshall (2014) 289-90.

26. Wyles (2011) 79.

27. For masks on unspeaking characters, see Marshall (1999) 197 n. 5, adding the example of Hermione in *Orestes* at (2014) 77-78.

Hecuba instructs her attendants to guide her. This could be directed at members of the chorus, but it appears that Hecuba is attended earlier, when she instructs *Τρωάδες* (350, "Trojan women") to take Cassandra's torches back into the tent. Later, these same women will bring the ornaments for Astyanax's body from the tent (1207-08). I assume these addressees are the same: women sympathetic to Hecuba.

ii. Wagon drivers from the Greek army.

568-69 *Ἐκάβη, λεύσσεις τήνδ' Ἀνδρομάχην
ξενικοῖς ἐπ' ὄχοις πορθμευομένην;*

"Hecuba, do you see Andromache here carried on an enemy wagon?"

The wagon on which Andromache enters is being led by someone. It is most naturally Greek soldiers, who may appear armed. I presume there is likely at least one person riding in the wagon, and at least two soldiers on foot, who could help guide a mule-driven vehicle into the *orchēstra*, stop, and then continue off (for the use of real animals, see 2.c, below).

iii. Talthybius's attendants.

786 *λαμβάνετ' αὐτόν*

"Take him!"

Talthybius orders a group to separate Astyanax from Andromache. Because Astyanax will be taken in a different direction (see 2.e, below), this cannot be the same group as the wagon-drivers. I assume Talthybius is speaking to individuals who attend him, who are likely with Talthybius whenever he appears.

iv. Menelaus's attendants.

880 *ἀλλ' εἶα χωρεῖτ' ἐς δόμους, ὀπάονες...*

"So come now, attendants, go into the tent..."

When Menelaus arrives, he also has attendants with him, who may be free or enslaved. The word *ὀπάονες* can signify comrades in arms, and so free soldiers following their leader. In that case, Helen's reference to being taken by force *ἐν γὰρ χερσὶ προσπόλων σέθεν* (896 "by the hands of your servants") would be sarcastic and dismissive, ascribing enslaved

status to those who are free. Alternately, those attending Menelaus may be enslaved, in which case there is no irony. Whichever the case, there is no indication of their number, but it will not have been fewer than those who attend Talthybius.

v. Captains, set to raze Troy to the ground.

1260-61 *ἀδῶ λοχαγοῖς, οἳ τέταχθ' ἐπιμπράναι
Πριάμον τόδ' ἄστν...*

“Captains, who have been assigned to burn the city of Priam...”

When Talthybius returns the final time, he is leading *λοχαγοί*, “captains”. These men will be armed with weapons and torches, and have been given a specific military objective. That would seem to distinguish them from group iv. Their importance here suggests to me they might number at least six (half the size of a chorus).

vi. Servants from Odysseus.

1270-71 *μεθήκουσίν σ' Ὀδυσσέως πάρα | οἷδ'...*

“These men have come from Odysseus to fetch you...”

These individuals have been sent specifically from Odysseus to retrieve Hecuba (they are also addressed at 1285-86, and will exit with Hecuba and the chorus, towards the shore, at the play’s conclusion).

The play’s final scene, then, involves at a minimum four groups of silent characters —Hecuba’s attendants (i), Talthybius’ attendants (iii), captains set on razing the city (v), and soldiers sent by Odysseus (vi)— each of whom has a different motivation. There is, in addition, one other group that can be isolated:

vii. “Servants” addressed by Talthybius.

294-95 *ἴτ', ἐκκομίζεν δεῦρο Κασσάνδραν χρεὸν
ὅσον τάχιστα, δμῶες...*

“Servants, go and bring Cassandra out here quickly...”

The group being addressed by Talthybius are enslaved and include at least one male.²⁸ Two conclusions are possible: either this group is identical with or a subset of Talthybius's attendants (iii), and we learn here that they are enslaved, or else it is a separate group, perhaps enslaved men who are guarding the tent (and the women within) for Agamemnon. If that were the case, these guards, whether armed or not, would be a constant stage presence, serving as a continued visual reminder of the authority under which the Trojan women now find themselves; additionally, there would be five groups of silent characters in the performance area as the play concludes.

Finally, there is a silent child:

viii. Astyanax, who is in the performance area from 568-789.

We are not told his age, but he is not the baby presented in *Iliad* 6. He clasps his mother weeping like a young child (749-54) and he has had a conversation with Hecuba about her funeral (1180-84): I assume he is 6-8 years old.²⁹ Astyanax will have been played by a child. When his body returns as a corpse (lines 1118-1250), his body will be represented by a dummy.

Of these many characters, groups ii, iii, iv, v, vi, and, if they were not Talthybius's attendants, vii, are adult male characters hostile to the Trojan women. To perform the play requires at least eight individuals to play these parts, but possibly they numbered twelve or more. Euripides creates a distinct effect, then, of female voices speaking in the presence of silent male oppressors.

28. LSJ indicates a *δμῶς* is specifically someone captured in war, but that extension is not warranted. The *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* translates *δμῶς* as "slave", adding that it is used especially in domestic contexts.

29. In lines 750-51 Astyanax is called *νεοσσός* ("young bird"); he is able, at the same time, to understand and express fear with his movements; Andromache lifts him in her arms. This suggests to me he is older than he is presented in the *Little Iliad* (fr. 21.3 Bernabé). The argument of Dyson and Lee (2000b), that "[d]ramatic considerations dictate that the child be of different ages in his two scenes" (24), does not seem to me to be credible in the context of a staged performance.

2. SPECTACLE AND *TROJAN WOMEN*

It would be a mistake to believe that the foregoing constitutes a full description of the stagecraft of the *Trojan Women*. Establishing these details is important, because they are foundational for understanding how the play creates its meaning in the episodes: this is information that was available to every viewer of the play in antiquity, and it constitutes part of the evidence available to scholarship today. Even when there is disagreement on specifics, as is inevitable when we deal with incomplete information, the existence of these variables can be recognized, along with the fact that some decision was made, as indeed it must be made every time the play is staged.

Further, none of these details establish why the play is interesting or worthy of our attention. *Trojan Women* does deserve attention: it is a spectacular play that creates a number of distinct scenes that could sear into the memory of individual spectators. Indeed, the supposedly episodic structure reinforces this, and each scene can emblemize the sufferings of the Trojan women. This section briefly surveys the action of the play, and suggests that any of six scenes might be most memorable for a spectator. Each is spectacular, and there is a cumulative effect as each follows its predecessors.

In addition, however, these scenes create resonances with other literature the audience will know, and this deepens the emotional impact of the events staged. In addition to allusions to *Alexandros*, part of the same tetralogy in 415, *Trojan Women* achieves its meaning by creating specific associations with *Iliad* 24, a text most will know from its annual competitive public recitation at the Panathenaea, and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.³⁰ The *Oresteia* had been presented at the Dionysia in 458, 43 years earlier, and so out of the direct experience of all but the most elderly spectators, and no one under the age of sixty. It seems very likely that the *Oresteia* had been reperformed, however, in the 420s.³¹ Reference to *Agamemnon*, then, will be in the first instance to this reperformance. Consistently, these evocations of *Agamemnon* are visual, not verbal; they achieve their effect by evoking memories of stage performance, rather than depending on verbal echoes. This is the stagecraft of memory.

30. There are also structural allusions with Euripides' own *Hecuba*, discussed at Marshall (2011) 33-34.

31. Marshall (2023) 414-18, with discussion of *Trojan Women* at 417.

(a) GODS (1-97)

Trojan Women begins with a tableau of a woman prostrate before the *skēnē*, perhaps attended by handmaids (see 1.e.i, above).³² We do not know how she arrives in the performance area: scholars discuss what is called a “cancelled entry” by which a character walks on, assumes their initial position, and pauses until the play begins.³³ That is possible here. If Hecuba’s pallet is situated on the *ekkyklēma*, it is equally possible that as that device rolls out, from the *skēnē*, she is already in position (possibly with her attendants) when the audience first sees her. That could, in theory, conceal her identity until she begins to sing at line 98: the audience would see a figure or figures in robes, but not necessarily the mask.

Into this stage picture enter two gods: first Poseidon and then Athena. Divine prologues are paralleled (e.g. *Hippolytus*), but a dialogue between divinities is rare, and striking. Both gods are leaving Troy and heading to the sea. With the stage geography suggested above (see 1.a, above), they both travel from one side of the performance area to the other. Kovacs (2018, 121-22) rightly follows Mastronarde (1990, 277-78 and 283) in suggesting that when Athena arrives, it is by the *mēchanē*, the theatrical crane:³⁴ her entrance is sudden and unexpected (Halleran 1985, 9, 43-44, and 92-93). Both scholars also place Poseidon on the *skēnē* roof, and so above the tableau with the prostrate Hecuba. I am not convinced the case against him being in the *orchēstra* to deliver the opening lines is as certain as suggested, but I agree that the roof is plausible. The *mēchanē* is normally a show-stopper, a concluding special effect to signal theatrical closure. Here, it becomes a bold theatrical choice to trigger associations of closure and divine appearance early in the play.

32. For this scene, see O’Neill (1941), Hourmouziades (1965) 160-62, Scodel (1980) 65-67, Meridor (1984) 208-11, Halleran (1985) 92-94, Dunn (1993) 28-31, (1996) 106-12, Kovacs (2018) 119-22.

33. Taplin (1977) 134-36; and see Halleran (1985) 93-94 and Kovacs (2018) 121.

34. For the *mēchanē* as a resource, see Taplin (1977) 443-47 and Mastronarde (1990).

(B) CASSANDRA (230-510)

The appearance of Cassandra from the tent, singing and dancing with flaming torches in her hands, creates a horrifying image of her maddened state (298, 306-10).³⁵ On the one hand, her appearance engages with imagery of marriage, since a bride would normally process with her mother holding a torch. The staging both evokes marriage and marks Cassandra as something other than a proper bride. This emphasis is reinforced by the regular mention of marriage and its god, Hymenaeus (308-41). As Meridor notes, this is “a distortion of what in ordinary circumstances constitutes a fundamental social norm” (1991-92, 14). On the other hand, it develops the violence that has been implicit in the tetralogy since *Alexandros*. That play had introduced Hecuba’s dream of giving birth to a firebrand that would lead to Troy’s destruction (test iii [hypothesis] line 4, *Tro.* 922). Cassandra, appearing from the *skēnē*, creates a direct visual association with her earlier appearance in *Alexandros*, in which she had probably been presented as a young teen.³⁶ Additionally, the scene appears to engage with the parallel scene in *Agamemnon*, when Cassandra moves in the opposite direction to enter the *skēnē*, but turns away three times (*Ag.* 1072-330). When Cassandra throws away the garlands of Apollo that she wears (451-52), at least some of the audience is reminded of the similar casting aside of Apollo’s symbols at *Agamemnon* 1264-68.

Torches too are an important symbol in *Trojan Women*, and the play concludes with Greek soldiers bringing them into the performance area and on towards the city of Troy. Here, their use in Cassandra’s lyric is visually striking, and they are removed (by Hecuba’s attendants, 350-51) as Cassandra begins to speak iambic trimeters. Cassandra’s use of them as an inverted wedding symbol reinforces that fiery imagery in both this tetralogy and in the *Oresteia*. Evidence suggests that torch and fire imagery is present throughout the tetralogy, as in Cassandra’s prediction of Hecuba’s ultimate fate: *Ἐκάτης ἄγαλμα φωσφόρον κύων ἔσῃ* (fr. *62h, “You will be a dog, the delight of torch-bearing Hecate”); compare *Hecuba* 1265). The present

35. For this scene, see Mason (1959) 87-93, Scodel (1980) 76-79, Halleran (1985) 95-96, Rehm (1994) 128-35, 209-11, Mueller-Goldingen (1996), Dyson and Lee (2000a) 143-55, Papadopoulou (2000), Rutherford (2001), Cerbo (2009), Marshall (2011) 37, Brillet-Dubois (2015), Kovacs (2018) 163-65, Warwick (2022).

36. Meridor (1989) 26-28 instead sees the connection between the two Cassandras as “two differently conceived characters” (28).

scene is set before her departure from Troy, and *Agamemnon* is set once the ship arrives. Some spectators might even connect the light seen by the Watchman in the prologue of *Agamemnon* with the burning of the city intimated in the final moments of *Trojan Women*. Cassandra establishes the bridge between this play and the *Oresteia*.

(c) ANDROMACHE (568-798)

The following episode, with the appearance of Andromache and Astyanax on a wagon, again creates an association with both *Alexandros* and *Agamemnon*.³⁷ In *Alexandros*, Priam had apparently entered “in a colt-drawn chariot” (fr. 46a, line 6 *πωλικοῖς ὄχοις*; Karamanou 2017, 173). That scene will have created an association with Cassandra’s royal entrance, riding a chariot alongside Agamemnon and followed by the booty captured from Troy in *Agamemnon*. Both Agamemnon and Priam are royal, and these will have been distinguished, processional entrances. The scene in *Trojan Women* is the antithesis of that: Andromache and her young son Astyanax are on a wagon, positioned amongst the war booty (573-74).³⁸ The difference between a chariot, where its riders stand, and wagon, where at least two can sit, is described by Patrick Finglass: “ἀπήνη in epic denotes a four-wheeled vehicle drawn by mules (cf. *Il.* 24.277-80, 322-27, where Priam’s herald drives a mule-drawn wagon while the king himself rides in a horse-drawn chariot, and *Od.* 6.56-82, where Nausicaa drives a mule-drawn wagon containing her clothes down to the sea)” (2018, 403, and see Tsitsiridis 2019, 127 n. 9). For Euripidean examples, Finglass cites Euripides’ *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, and *Iphigenia in Aulis*: I would argue that the wagons in all three of these scenes evoke memories of the chariot in the reperformed *Agamemnon*.

The positioning of the vehicle in the performance area (its blocking) can reinforce that association: if the audience sees the wagon stop at a place in the *orchestra* that the audience associates with where Agamemnon’s chariot had stopped, the connection is more easily made.³⁹ Working with animals on stage always introduces variables a director wants to control, and so the

37. For this scene, see Halleran (1985) 11, 97-98, Meridor (1989) 28-35, Dyson and Lee (2000a) 155-63 and (2000b) 18-22, Marshall (2011) 37-38, Kovacs (2018) 216-17.

38. For the irony here, see Taplin (1977) 75.

39. Marshall (2023) 417.

straightforward movement across the performance area (from one *eisodos*, stopping in the *orchēstra*, and then off the other *eisodos*) keeps these variables to a minimum. A director may want to remove the unpredictability of working with actual colts or mules, though that would go against the clear implication of *Alexandros* fr. 46a, 6. However it was accomplished, the presentation of Andromache's entrance in *Trojan Women* will have followed what was done in *Alexandros*, and, I suggest, also in the reperformed *Agamemnon*. Her movement here leaves no doubt that Andromache is being taken to the ships.

New information overwhelms Hecuba in this scene: she is finally told of the death of Polyxena (which recapitulates a narrative told fully in Sophocles' *Polyxena* and Euripides' *Hecuba*), and Astyanax is shown to be alive, and not killed along with Priam as in the lost epic *Little Iliad*.⁴⁰ Hecuba's confused emotional state, devastated but given a small sliver of hope, sets her up for the appearance of Talthybius, who arrives as if meeting the wagon on the road. That it is in front of Agamemnon's tent is accidental, but of course dramatically inevitable. Whatever hope Hecuba had for Astyanax's future is taken from her as, cruelly, Talthybius and his attendants separate Andromache from her child and take Astyanax back to Troy (782-89). Visually, this is horrific. Perhaps Astyanax screams. Talthybius departs offering a word of consolation, suggesting how difficult it is for him because he feels pity and shame. It is worse for Hecuba.

It is unlikely that the shield of Hector is visible on the wagon as Andromache enters. Andromache is "sitting next to the bronze armor of Hector" (573 *πάρεδρος χαλκείους Έκτορος όπλαις*), and *όπλα* would normally include shield and breastplate. Theatre has a prerogative to withhold information as well as to present it, and it is not certain that if an audience saw only the breastplate (perhaps displayed prominently on an upright armour stand on the back of the wagon) anyone would wonder why the shield does not appear on the wagon. If the shield is present here, then an unidentified character must take it with them when they exit with Astyanax.⁴¹ Such a stage direction, with a significant prop, is unparalleled in tragedy.

40. Meridor (1989) 30-35.

41. See also Dyson and Lee (2001b) 22-23.

(D) HELEN (860-1059)

Menelaus enters at 860 to fetch his wife, Helen.⁴² Though she is among the captive Trojans, she is not of them, and this third scene introduces variation from its predecessors by having Menelaus come for Helen himself, rather than sending Talthybius again. Nevertheless, there is continuity: Menelaus enters from the same direction as Talthybius had, and is probably played by the same actor (see 1.c, above). Like Talthybius he is accompanied, and he instructs his companions to retrieve Helen from the tent. Unlike Talthybius, he has no interest in the Trojan women: he ignores them, and shows himself indifferent to their plight (Mastronarde 1979, 24-25). What follows is the play's *agōn*, which while not visually stunning, is nevertheless the climax of these three central scenes in which Hecuba engages with a younger woman.⁴³

Part of the appeal of the scene comes from Helen herself. Her appearance is distinct from all the other women in the play (see 1.d, above), and her arguments persuasive and challenging: she not only rejects the accusation that she is the cause of the war, but daringly lays the blame at the feet of Hecuba and Priam. Further, this is possibly the first time she has appeared in a tragedy. There had been Helen figures before this in comedy, and in satyr play. Indeed, Aeschylus' *Proteus*, the satyr play of the *Oresteia*, almost certainly featured both Helen and Menelaus.⁴⁴ Before 415, however, there is no indication that she had ever been incorporated in a tragedy, and so if there are associations to be made with earlier drama, a reperformed *Proteus* may be the primary referent.

A more dominant source text however—a referent more likely to be noticed by a greater percentage of the audience—is *Iliad* 24: following the death of Hector, the poem shows grieving of Cassandra, Andromache, Hecuba, and, finally, Helen.⁴⁵ This creates a situational allusion, whereby the play's dramatic structure creates an association with the grieving at the end of the *Iliad*, establishing a pattern of Cassandra-Andromache-Helen,

42. For this scene, see Ebener (1954), Amerasinghe (1973), Halleran (1985) 65-66 and 98, Gellie (1986), Lloyd (1984) and (1992) 99-112, Poe (2000) 257-58, Meridor (2000), Marshall (2011) 38-43, Kovacs (2018) 261-66.

43. For the patterning of this play as an encounter with three younger women, see Friedrich (1953) 73-75, Steidle (1968) 52-54, and Halleran (1985) 99.

44. Marshall (2014) 79-95.

45. Marshall (2011) 34-36.

in that order, with Hecuba.⁴⁶ The *agōn* with Helen is the point in the play where that pattern becomes clear, and this adds an additional layer to the meaning being created.

(e) ASTYANAX (1118-1250)

Talthybius returns with the corpse of Astyanax.⁴⁷ The child's return occurs immediately after the chorus has prayed for Helen's destruction, as if the gods who the audience knows have abandoned the city already refuse to answer the prayer (Halleran 1985, 22). The sympathy Talthybius offers rings hollow (see 1.b, above), but he is sincere in his desire to do right by the captive women, and leaves the corpse to be decorated by the women in private (or, possibly, with his entourage left as guards) while he prepares a small tomb. There is a respect and a propriety in his behaviour, unsettling because of the intimacy he had displayed since his initial lines, which acknowledged Hecuba by name (235-38), and which was shown in his misleading account about the death of Polyxena (260-70). Structurally, Astyanax frames Hecuba's debate with Helen: "the death of the blameless child frames the sophistic and ultimately successful defense speech of the guilty Helen" (Halleran 1985, 100). The death of the child is impersonal: we are not told who threw him from Troy's battlements, but the possibility that it was an anonymous soldier, or even Talthybius himself just following orders, looms over the scene.

The corpse of Astyanax is carried into the performance area by the attendants of Talthybius upon the shield of Hector. The shield had likely been missing in the earlier tableau, and its presence here, a murdered child on his dead father's shield, is poignant and terrible (1136-37). For some spectators, this scene may evoke the encounter between Ajax and his son in Sophocles' *Ajax*, which itself alluded to Andromache and Astyanax in *Iliad* 6.⁴⁸ The primary referent, though, is to the *Iliad*. The audience remembers

46. Meridor (1991-92) 3 claims, "These episodes succeed one another in no probable or necessary sequence — indeed they do not really succeed on another at all." The failure to apply this Aristotelian expectation on a narrative level misses the necessary and deliberate structuring of the sequence on a meta-narrative level, following the example of *Iliad* 24.

47. For this scene, see Scodel (1980) 93-100, Halleran (1985) 100-1, Meridor (1991-92) 6-8, Dyson and Lee (2000a) 163-67 and (2000b) 22-29, Marshall (2011) 43-44 and (2014) 72-74, Kovacs (2018) 301-4.

48. Dyson and Lee (2000b) 26.

Iliad 24, with Priam at the tent of Achilles asking to ransom the corpse of his son, and looks now at the cruel contrast of Priam's wife decorating the body of Hector's son. "Astyanax's little body is at the centre of this play", writes Adrian Poole, "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" (1976, 280). The scene also remembers Hector's prayer at *Iliad* 6.476-81, that Astyanax would rule over Troy and bring joy to his mother's heart. No one can now say that Astyanax was better by far than his father.

The attendants place the corpse on the ground. This might be in the centre of the *orchēstra* in order best to hold the focus of the entire audience. Talthybius exits at 1155, but at least some of his attendants remain behind, for they are addressed by Hecuba at 1246-50, when she instructs them to take the child away. Talthybius goes off alone to prepare the tomb, as if this loss were a personal one for him. The profound ambiguity of the character is again reinforced. As the women decorate the body before it is removed, the audience sees the treasures they have taken with them as they were led from their homes as captives. On the dead child is placed the wealth of the city, for this, the final funeral of Troy.

(f) TROY (1260-1332)

The play concludes with a busy stage picture that is gradually emptied.⁴⁹ Talthybius returns, brief moments after the departure of the corpse of Astyanax. Whatever the audience expected for the somber burial of Troy's last child is obliterated, as the urgency of war replaces the sentimental kindness Talthybius had intended to show. Choral lines accompany the procession towards the ships (1251-55), when suddenly the chorus notice torches on the battlements of Troy (1256-59). As in the prologue, this creates a clear binary that is most naturally realized with the use of both *eisodoi*. The chorus directs audience attention away from Astyanax's departure (stage left) and towards Troy (stage right). The audience does not have time to catch its breath, when Talthybius returns, having had no time to bury Astyanax as he had attended, with new orders. He shouts to the captains (1261-65). These soldiers are, almost certainly, a stage presence. It would be an anticli-

49. For this scene, see Halleran (1985) 101-2, Dunn (1993) 25-27, (1996) 103-5, Dyson and Lee (2000b) 30-31, Kovacs (2018) 301-4.

max to have Talthybius run on and shout offstage to individuals already carrying out the orders, and that in turn could suggest a sudden unmotivated shift in location.⁵⁰ Rather, Euripides reinforces what the chorus say they see with the visual addition of more soldiers armed with torches, moving from the ships to the city. Their brief stage presence provides a physical embodiment of the city's final destruction, complementing the imagery accrued through the preparation of Astyanax for burial.⁵¹

Talthybius stops, and turns to Hecuba. He is likely attended by his entourage (since he has left, he has been to the ships and received new orders), but additionally he has with him soldiers of Odysseus, who are to return with Hecuba (1265-71, 1284-86). In addition to Hecuba, Talthybius, and the chorus, the audience sees Talthybius's attendants, the captains, the soldiers, joining Hecuba's attendants and (possibly) the tent guards who have been a constant presence since the play began (see *l.e.*, above). The captains head to the city immediately (1264). Hecuba contemplates running and throwing herself on the pyre that is the city she so recently had ruled (1277-83), and has to be forcibly stopped.⁵² Talthybius and his retinue will return to the ships as well (1269-70). He addresses the soldiers of Odysseus (1284-86) and possibly leaves immediately: he is not needed on stage, and he has given his orders (Halleran 1985, 100-1). The soldiers of Odysseus, who are not under his command, would remain to bring Hecuba to the ships.

Hecuba collapses to the ground and begins to beat the floor with her fist (1305-7). This gesture, too, enters into an extended pattern of Hecuba rising and falling that has characterized the play. She began on the ground, prostrate. She raises her head (98) and stands (143) in time to welcome the chorus of fellow captives (Kovacs 2018, 143). As Cassandra was taken away, she collapsed again (462-5). She is soon able to stand, but is led to her pallet (506-10), where she remains for the stasimon that follows, and she likely stands again as Andromache's wagon enters (568). Hecuba remains in the performance area throughout the play, and possibly is seated for the next two stasima as well (799-859, 1060-1117), and after decorating Astyanax's corpse, again falls to the ground here. It would be wrong to

50. Wiles (1997) 119-20.

51. The brief presence of a number of bodies on stage is an effect Euripides will repeat with the arrival of Theoclymenus and his hunting party at *Helen* 1165 (Marshall 2014, 219-20).

52. As discussed above (see *l.a.*), Kovacs (1985) 21 sees lines 1275-76 as an argument in favour of Troy and the ships being located in the same direction. This seems less convincing to me that to see Hecuba reenforcing the stage geography established in the prologue with the locations situated on opposite sides of the performance area.

frame Hecuba entirely in terms of her passivity; she is a victim who endures, and who perseveres above all.⁵³

Hecuba stands, and is led offstage towards the ships by Odysseus' soldiers and with her attendants (1328-30). If Talthybius and his retinue had not left at 1286, they do so now. Finally, the chorus of Trojan women follow, perhaps escorted by the guards of the tent.

The instantiation of dramatic action as physical bodies move across the performance area provides meaning to the play. David Kovacs describes the emotional effect of this movement: "The three episodes and the exodos all end with leftward exits by Cassandra, Andromache, Astyanax, Helen, and Hecuba with Chorus, so this visually unifies them in spite of their disparate character" (2018, 22). Though we disagree about the identity of the herald at line 706 and about the stage geography, we both see this strong, inevitable directionality of the movement suggested by the play's events: however, it is the dead Astyanax and not the living one that is integrated into this pattern. This provides a visual unity to the fate of Troy and the end of the Trojan war. Kovacs also notes that there is continuity with the repeated entry of a character from the same *eisodos*, and again, though we differ on the details, we agree on the pattern (2018, 22-23). As I have indicated, following the stage geography established by the gods in the prologue, the entry of Talthybius for Cassandra, and again for Andromache, the entry of Menelaus for Helen, and Talthybius' final return to ensure the city is razed to the ground, all use the same (stage left) *eisodos*. The exception to this pattern, as also noted by Kovacs, is when the herald returns with the corpse of Astyanax (1118), who is carried into the performance area after being thrown from the city walls (706).

The ultimate destruction of Troy is accomplished, and what remains is a memory. For the audience, the events of this play are situated between the conclusion of the *Iliad* and the beginning of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, as Euripides provides a bridge between those two works, and as *Trojan Women* yokes the world of tragedy to the world of epic. The scenes with Cassandra and Andromache created meaningful visual cues with, primarily, the Cassandra scene in *Agamemnon*. The scenes with Helen and Astyanax created visual evocations of *Iliad* 6 and 24, drawing on the audience's appreciation of structure and narrative echoes. The flames at the end of the play fulfill the prophecy that had been spoken in *Alexandros* at the beginning of the tetralogy. The narrative pattern of the play offers a revision of Euripides' own

53. Steidle (1968) 50-52.

earlier treatment of these events in *Hecuba*. All of these literary works, and others, are evoked through the performance of *Trojan Women*. There may, indeed, be more: additional allusions have been intimated in this discussion to Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Polyxena*, and it may be that these plays and others were brought more forcefully to mind than we can isolate with the scripts as they survive. The stagecraft of memory that Euripides employs in *Trojan Women* creates a densely layered literary web that deepens the sense of tragic inevitability that pervades this terrifying play.

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