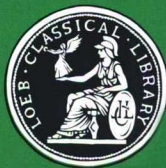


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EURIPIDES
TROJAN WOMEN
IPHIGENIA AMONG
THE TAURIANS
ION



Edited and Translated by
DAVID KOVACS

EURIPIDES

PHIGENIA AMONG THE TAUROIANS

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藏书章
EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
DAVID KOVACS



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PREFACE

The Greek text, as in earlier volumes, is my own. I explain my editorial principles and the simplified system for reporting manuscript readings in the general introduction in Volume One. I have discussed in my *Euripidea Altera* (Leiden, 1996) some of the readings adopted here. I hope to discuss others in a forthcoming volume. Readers should note that text enclosed between square brackets is deemed to be spurious. Angle brackets mark words or lines thought to have been accidentally omitted by copyists. As in previous volumes, where I have marked a lacuna of a line or more I have usually filled in, purely by way of illustration, what the sense seems to require. Unattributed supplements are my own.

As in Volume Three I have marked passages written in lyric meters and sung in the original performance by translating them line-for-line to match the Greek. For spoken verse I use the ordinary typography of prose.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge help received. A grant from the Division of Research of the National Endowment for the Humanities enabled me to devote the academic year 1996-7 to this volume and its successor. My heartfelt thanks to the Endowment for its support. I was also elected, for that year, to a Visiting Fellowship at Balliol College, Oxford. My thanks to the Master and Fellows for

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their splendid hospitality and to Jasper Griffin for his stimulating friendship.

I have had highly profitable discussions on textual matters with Martin West, James Diggle, Charles Willink, and Chris Collard. Martin Cropp very kindly allowed me to see a draft of his forthcoming Aris and Phillips edition of the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*. George and Philippa Goold criticized both my text and my translation.

To Judith Kovacs, who consented thirty years ago this year to throw in her lot with mine, I owe much more than I can hint at in an academic preface. To her this volume is gratefully and lovingly dedicated.

University of Virginia

David Kovacs

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

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TROJAN WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

For quite some time scholars connected *Trojan Women*, put on in early spring of 415 B.C., with the Athenians' attack on the island of Melos, which ended—in the waning months of 416—with the massacre of the adult men and enslavement of the women and children. (See Thucydides 5.84-116.) The prevailing view was that the play was a sort of *pièce à clef*: in the play's Greeks, who have taken Troy and proceed to kill Astyanax, the son of Hector, we are meant to see the Athenians, while the Trojans stand for the Melians. On this reading, the play expresses Euripides' revulsion from his city's treatment of Melos and his abhorrence of wars of aggression.

But there is evidence of various sorts against this view. First, there was not enough time between the fall of Melos and the City Dionysia for Euripides to have planned, written, and rehearsed a play on this theme: see van Erp Taalman Kip 1987. Second, the play is the only surviving part of a loosely connected trilogy whose first two plays were *Alexandros* and *Palamedes*. The fragments of the *Alexandros* make it plain that the fall of Troy is to be seen against a divine background, and that it was the gods in the last analysis who destroyed Troy, with the Greeks as their instrument, a theme also prominent in *Trojan Women*. This view of the fall of Troy would be ill suited, to say the least,

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to a play meant to criticize Athens for destroying Melos. Third, however successfully it has been put on in modern times as a play of protest against war, it contains several scenes and choral odes, notably the scene where Helen is on trial and the ode on the gods' abandonment of Troy, that add nothing to or work against this supposed purpose. Lastly, the chorus of Trojan captives, in a choral ode speculating on where they will be sent as slaves (197-229), go out of their way to pray that they may be sent to blessed Athens and not to hateful Sparta, something hard to explain if Euripides is trying to tell his countrymen how criminal Athens has been in its prosecution of the war against Sparta. We should look at the play without the assumption of allegory.

The play's first audience watched two other plays by Euripides that same day, plays on events related to the Trojan War. Here is what can be known or reasonably guessed about these plays. (See Murray 1946, Kovacs 1984, and Hose 1995.) *Alexandros* tells the story of Paris, also known as Alexandros. His mother Hecuba when pregnant with him dreamt that she gave birth to a firebrand, and the dream was interpreted to mean that her son would destroy Troy. The order was accordingly given that the child should be exposed, but the herdsman who was to have done so saved him instead and raised him as his own. When he has grown to manhood (the play begins at this point) the other herdsmen bring him bound before Priam to punish him for behavior that is too proud for his station. (Nature, as so often in Greek myth, triumphs over nurture.) He confutes his accusers and is then allowed to compete in athletic contests (ironically, contests Hecuba had instituted in memory of her exposed son). He defeats his

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brothers. One of them, Deiphobus, angry at being defeated by a supposed slave, persuades his mother Hecuba to kill him. How this was to be managed our sources do not say, but the truth about his parentage emerges in time to prevent his death. Though Cassandra in a moment of prophetic vision recognizes her brother and prophesies the doom of Troy unless he is killed, no one believes her, and Paris, the long-lost and deeply mourned son, is received joyfully into the royal house. The audience, however, know that he is Troy's destined destroyer.

There are tantalizing hints in the fragments of *Alexandros* concerning the role of the gods in that play and hence in *Trojan Women*. These hints suggest that in Euripides' play, as in other sources from the fifth century and earlier, the curse child, who is fated to be the ruin of his parents, is no mere fluke about which the gods happen to know in advance, but is a deliberate instrument of the gods, used to bring about that ruin. In Aeschylus, the coming of Paris to Troy with his bride Helen is described as the arrival of an Erinys, one of the ministers of Zeus's justice. A fragment of the *Alexandros* by the Roman dramatist Ennius, which was probably a fairly close translation of Euripides, describes Helen as "one of the Furiae," i.e. an Erinys. This came presumably from the prophecy of Cassandra, and if we take her words literally, they imply that Zeus wills the destruction of Troy and that his agents are Helen and her abductor Paris. That Paris survived is due, as Andromache says at *Trojan Women* 597, to the malice of the gods. But it is not only the Trojans who are doomed. In our play Cassandra speaks of herself as an Erinys, this time in connection with the death of Agamemnon and the ruin of his house (457; see also 356-60). It seems likely then that the plan of Zeus

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encompasses ruin for both sides, as it does in the *Oresteia* and in Homer. In fact, another fragment, assigned with some likelihood to the prologue of *Alexandros* (fr. 45 Snell), makes this explicit: "Zeus the father has contrived these events to cause grief and pain for Greeks and Trojans." This divine perspective reappears in many passages in *Trojan Women*, as we shall see presently.

About *Palamedes*, the next play, we know considerably less. The main outline of the story, however, is clear from later accounts that seem to be summarizing Euripides or the myth already current before he wrote. The setting was the Greek camp before Troy. Palamedes was the cleverest and most inventive of the Greeks. Among his many accomplishments for the benefit of the Greeks was the art of writing. But Palamedes' cleverness was the cause of his downfall. It was a ruse of his that forced Odysseus to join the Trojan expedition, unmasking Odysseus' feigned madness as pretence. Because he was angry at being detected and also jealous of Palamedes' cleverness, Odysseus decided to kill him. By an elaborate trick he managed to bury gold beneath Palamedes' tent and then arranged for the interception of a forged letter from Priam to Palamedes offering him as the price of betraying the Greek camp the exact sum of gold Odysseus had buried. Palamedes spoke in his own defense but was convicted and put to death. His brother Oeax wrote about his fate on the blades of oars, set them adrift on the Aegean, and thus managed to get his message to their father Nauplius. Legend told how Nauplius set false beacons on the coast of Euboea and wrecked the Greek ships on their homeward journey in order to avenge the death of his son.

The general tragic theme of the unknowability of the

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future, that seeming blessings turn out to be curses and vice versa, was surely developed in this play as in *Alexandros* and *Trojan Women*. In particular, Palamedes, like many another tragic hero, is destroyed because of his very excellences. (Compare Paris' words in *Alexandros* fr. 44 Snell: "Alas, I am to die because of the excellence of my mind, which is the salvation of other men." The paradox is repeated once more at *Trojan Women* 742-3 if these are genuine, and more distantly echoed at 744.) It was Palamedes' invention of writing that allowed Odysseus to concoct such convincing evidence against him. In partial compensation, it is the same art that allows him to win posthumous revenge against his enemies and vindication in the eyes of future generations.

The first two plays raise expectations that are fulfilled in the third. *Alexandros* leads us to expect that Troy will fall, and *Palamedes* that the Greek fleet will be wrecked. The first is fulfilled before *Trojan Women* opens, and the second is adumbrated in its prologue. The rest of the play shows the aftermath of Troy's destruction. Zeus's plan to ruin both Greeks and Trojans has been brought, in the case of the second, to completion and, in the case of the first, to the brink of completion.

Trojan Women is the most oddly constructed of Euripides' extant plays. There is no *peripeteia* (swift change of fortune) at all: the Trojan women are miserable at the play's beginning and scarcely more so at the end: only the death of Astyanax makes any real change in their situation. The play consists of four scenes revolving around Cassandra, Andromache, Helen, and the dead Astyanax, preceded by a prologue involving Poseidon and Athena. Diverse as they are in other respects, all five of

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these scenes can be regarded as meditations on the archaic Greek themes of the deceptiveness of appearances, the unreliability of human knowledge, and the power of the gods.

After Poseidon has sketched the opening situation and he and Athena have plotted to wreck the Greek fleet in punishment for Greek sacrilege (Ajax had abducted Cassandra from the shrine of Athena, and his guilt was shared by the Greeks when they failed to punish him), the two divinities depart. In the first episode the Greek herald Talthybius arrives to tell the Trojan women of their fates. Agamemnon wants Cassandra as his slave mistress. About the sacrifice of Polyxena to the ghost of Achilles he speaks with misleading vagueness and tells Hecuba merely that her daughter will attend Achilles' tomb. Hector's widow, Andromache, is to be the slave of Neoptolemus, the son of the man who killed her husband. Hecuba herself has been allotted to the wily and treacherous Odysseus, a monstrous indignity. Talthybius gives orders for Cassandra to be brought out of the tent.

The next scene begins with a *coup de théâtre*: Cassandra enters brandishing torches, ostensibly in joy at her coming "marriage" to Agamemnon. Her connection with Agamemnon can be no rational source of joy, especially since she is Apollo's priestess and sworn to lifelong virginity. But Apollo has revealed to her that her union with Agamemnon will bring about the death of the Greek king and the ruin of his house. Troy will thus be avenged. After affirming once more that she is an Erinyes sent to ruin Greece, she goes off.

After a stasimon in which the Chorus sing of the deceptive joy of Troy's last night, Andromache enters with her

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son Astyanax bound for the ship of Neoptolemus. In an antiphonal lyric they lament the fall of Troy, the death of Hector, and the cruelty of the gods, who allowed Paris to escape death and go on to destroy his country. Hecuba learns from Andromache of the sacrifice of her daughter Polyxena. In a long speech Andromache, reflecting on Polyxena's lot and her own, argues that Polyxena is better off. Since she is dead, she does not feel the loss of her former happiness as Andromache must. Andromache's situation is hopeless. She will be required to live in the same house with the son of her husband's killer. There she must either love Neoptolemus at the cost of disloyalty to Hector or remain true to her husband and incur the hatred of her new master.

Hecuba sees hope for the future. If Andromache wins over her new master, Astyanax may grow to manhood, and he and his descendants may once more settle Troy. No sooner has she said this than Talthybius enters with the news that the Greeks have decided to kill Astyanax: the son of their most dangerous foe must not be allowed to live. He is to be hurled from the battlements. Andromache's response is surprisingly lucid: the nobility of the boy's father, she says, has proved his undoing. She blames the gods for the fall of Troy and for the death of her son. Mother and child are led away.

After a stasimon in which the Chorus sing about Trojan history and lament that the gods no longer favor Troy comes the Helen episode. Menelaus enters in search of his wife, intending, he says, to kill her as soon as they get back to Argos. A sort of trial takes place. Helen speaks in her own defense, arguing that her running off with Paris had divine causes for which she cannot be held responsible.