An Interpolation in the Prologue of Euripides' *Troades*

John R. Wilson

IN ITSELF, the encounter between Poseidon and Athena in the pro-
logue of *Troades* (48–97) makes an unobjectionable, some would even
say a brilliant scene. And yet, as I will attempt to show, it cannot
belong in this position in the play and may not be by Euripides at all.
My demonstration depends on the following main points. First, and
most conspicuously, the scene is not properly introduced by Posei-
don's opening rhesis, which ends in a manner that precludes Athena's
entry. Secondly, the whole rhetorical structure of his rhesis focuses
attention on Hekabe, who would be the next speaker were it not for
Athena. Thirdly, the scene itself introduces a reference to the future
beyond the limits of the play which has long been recognized as uni-
que in the Euripidean prologues. Finally, it detracts from rather than
enhances the subsequent monody of Hekabe, otherwise so well intro-
duced by the opening rhesis. The coincidence of all these points
strongly suggests that the Poseidon-Athena scene is interpolated.

I

The formulaic quality of the opening rhesis in Euripides' plays has
been treated in a number of studies, of which the most thorough is that
by Louis Méridier.[1] What is significant for our study of the linkage of the

---

[1] Louis Méridier, *Le Prologue dans la tragédie d'Euripide* (Bordeaux 1911); *cf.* also Hans
von Arnim, *De Euripideorum prologorum arte et interpolatione* (Greifswald 1882). The follow-
ing studies are more concerned with the relation of the opening rhesis to the rest of the
prologue, or with the supposed symmetrical structure of the rhesis: Walter Nestle, *Die
Struktur des Eingangs in der attischen Tragödie*, Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft
X (Stuttgart 1930); Ingeborg Gollwitzer, *Die Prolog und Expositionstechnik der griechischen
Tragödie* (Diss. München 1937); Walther Ludwig, *Sapheneia, ein Beitrag zur Formkunst in
Spätwerk des Euripides* (Diss. Tübingen 1954) 30–40; Max Imhof, *Bemerkungen zu den Pro-
logen der sophokleischen und euripideischen Tragödien* (Winterthur 1957) 57–112; Franz Stoessl,
RE 23.1 (1957) 632–41 *s.v.* PROLOGOS, and 23.2 (1959) 2312–2440; Dietmar Korzeniewski,
"Zum Prolog der Stheneboia des Euripides," *Philologus* 108 (1964) 45–65.

opening rhesis to the following scene is the way the speaker ends his rhesis.

In most cases, when the exposition is finished the speaker abruptly breaks off with a particle such as ἀλλά. He does this either to indicate his departure, to introduce a new character (invariably with the epideictic ὅδε) or to do both at once.[2] The break-off marks a transition from one stage of the action to the next and clearly separates the expository opening rhesis from what follows. Such a break-off is the rule when the *prologizon* leaves the stage, whether or not he introduces a new character. So in *Hippolytus* (51ff) Aphrodite breaks off to leave and at the same time introduces the hero (*cf. Hec.* 51ff,[3] *Ion* 76ff, *Ba.* 55ff):

> ἀλλ' εἰσορῶ γὰρ τόνδε παῖδα Θησέως
> στείχοντα, θήρας μόχθον ἐκλελοιπότα,
> Ἱππόλυτον, ἔξω τῶνδε βήσομαι τόπων.

Sometimes the *prologizon* breaks off to leave without introducing a new arrival, as Iphigeneia does at *Iphigenia Taurica* 64ff (when Orestes enters at 67 she has already left the stage):

> ἀλλ' ἐξ αἰτίας
> οὔπω τίνος πάρεισιν; εἶμ' ἔσω δόμων
> ἐν οἷσι ναίω τῶνδ' ἀνακτόρων θεᾶς.

So, too, at *Phoenissae* 84ff Iokaste breaks off with a prayer to Zeus without introducing the Paidagogos and Antigone:

> ἀλλ', ὦ φαεννὰς οὐρανοῦ ναίων πτυχὰς
> Ζεῦ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς, δὸς δὲ σύμβασιν τέκνοις.

Similar is Bellerophon's exit at *Stheneboea* 27ff.

In the plays in which the *prologizon* remains on stage, however, he breaks off his rhesis only if he introduces a new entry. So at *Medea* 46ff the Nurse introduces the Paidagogos and the children:

---

[2] Erling B. Holtsmark, in his unpublished dissertation "Some Aspects of Style and Theme in the *Persae* of Aeschylus" (Berkeley 1963) 185 n.4, notes the frequent reference to the motion of a new entry (στείχοντα, ἐκβαίνοντα, περᾶν, κτλ). Usually, too, the *prologizon* refers to his own departure with a future verb of motion (βήσομαι, χωρήσομαι, εἶμι) and always does so if in departing he refers to a new entry. Furthermore, the new entry is typically mentioned in a clause introduced by γάρ, for it is the new entry which motivates the speaker's exit.

[3] For δέ at v.51 as a dismissive when preceded by μὲν οὖν, see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*[2] (Oxford 1954) 472.

ἀλλ' οἵδε παῖδες ἐκ τρόχων πεπαυμένοι
στείχουσι, μητρὸς οὐδὲν ἐννοούμενοι
κακῶν· νέα γὰρ φροντὶς οὐκ ἀλγεῖν φιλεῖ.

At *Heraclidae* 48 Iolaos breaks off not with ἀλλά but with an exclamation as he notices the threatening approach of the Argive herald:

ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, δεῦρο, λαμβάνεσθ' ἐμῶν
πέπλων· ὁρῶ κήρυκα τόνδ' Εὐρυσθέως
στείχοντ' ἐφ' ἡμᾶς . . .

But, when the new arrival is expected, the break-off is not ἀλλά or an exclamation but the milder ἤδη δέ, as at *Alcestis* 24ff (*cf. Cyc.* 36ff):

ἤδη δὲ τόνδε Θάνατον εἰσορῶ πέλας,
ἱερῆ θανόντων . . .

It is important to realize that if there is no new entry, there is no break-off, but only a quiet gnomic statement. This means that instead of the formulaic transition from one stage of action to the next, we have a simple juxtaposition. Amphitryon, for example, ends his exposition (which is aimed at the audience and in which Megara, despite her presence, is only mentioned in the third person) with the following general remarks (*HF* 57ff):

τοιοῦτον ἀνθρώποισιν ἡ δυσπραξία·
ἧς μήποθ' ὅστις καὶ μέσως εὔνους ἐμοὶ
τύχοι, φίλων ἔλεγχον ἀψευδέστατον.

Megara then addresses him as though he had not yet spoken:

ὦ πρέσβυ, Ταφίων ὅς ποτ' ἐξεῖλες πόλιν
στρατηλατήσας κλεινὰ Καδμείων δορός . . .

The effect is one of formal stiffness.

But if, as sometimes happens, the *prologizon* ends his rhesis quietly with a gnomic close and there follows the unprepared entry of a new character, the effect is one of surprise, rather than of stiffness. At *Andromache* 56 the maid enters with unexpected news and at *Helena* 68 Teukros arrives quite unexpectedly and brings Helen up to date on the Trojan War. *Orestes* 71 is a special case, for Elektra ends her rhesis by looking out for Menelaos, but Helen arrives instead. The arrival is half prepared (but without a break-off, for there is no direct introduc-

tion), and yet ultimately it turns out to be a surprise, as with the maid and Teukros.

Such unexpected entries are always preceded by a gnomic close to the rhesis, never by a break-off. For the break-off is used only to introduce a new character (*Cyc.* 36, *Alc.* 24, *Med.* 46, *Heracl.* 48), prepare the *prologizon's* own departure (*IT* 64, *Ph.* 84) or to do both (*Hipp.* 51, *Hec.* 52, *Ion* 76, *Ba.* 55). If the break-off does not introduce a new character, it can only prepare the *prologizon's* departure *even if no actual verb of leaving follows*. So in *Phoenissae* Iokaste departs without any farewell or mention of leaving, and yet the break-off with ἀλλά at line 84 is itself (since it does not introduce a new entry) a sufficient token of departure. But in *Troades* Poseidon breaks off his rhesis not only without specifically introducing a new character, but with an actual farewell to Troy (45–7):

ἀλλ', ὦ ποτ' εὐτυχοῦσα, χαῖρέ μοι, πόλις
ξεστόν τε πύργωμ'· εἴ σε μὴ διώλεσεν
Παλλὰς Διὸς παῖς, ἦσθ' ἂν ἐν βάθροις ἔτι.

Here formulaic practice and the sense of the words themselves combine to make us fully expect that he will indeed leave. In the other prologues the break-off formula advances the action of the play by preparing for what follows (departure of the speaker, entry of a new character). In *Troades* the break-off formula serves to hinder rather than promote the action. Poseidon in his parting address to Troy goes out of his way to create the impression that he will depart in what (since he misleads us) we may term a false departure.

It may be argued here that *Alcestis* also contains a false departure in the opening rhesis: at line 22 of that play Apollo announces his intention of leaving in the words ἐγὼ δέ . . . λείπω, but with the entrance of Thanatos at line 28 he engages in a dialogue with him. Similarly Poseidon in *Troades* announces his intention to depart in exactly the same words ἐγὼ δέ . . . λείπω (23–25) and, like Apollo (it can be argued), does not leave at the entry of Athena, but engages in a dialogue with her. In both plays the initial intention to depart belongs to the main body of the exposition. The crucial difference, however, is that in *Alcestis* this intention is not further defined, whereas in *Troades* it is followed up by a departure formula, which is a mechanism to get a character off the stage and advance the action. In *Alcestis*, the actual break-off formula conforms to the usage of a *prologizon* who remains

on stage, in that it leads to the dialogue which follows by introducing Thanatos (ἤδη δὲ τόνδε Θάνατον εἰσορῶ πέλας) and does not confirm the initial idea of departure. In *Troades*, on the other hand, the break-off formula confirms the intention of leaving, so that the entrance of Athena comes as a shock.

Clearly Poseidon's lingering to engage in a dialogue with Athena in spite of the break-off formula which demands his immediate departure is quite extraordinary, so extraordinary that it justifies a thorough study of formulae of departure throughout Euripides.

II

The break-off formula which, as we have seen, is universally applied as a signal of departure in the opening rhesis, is also found in a comparable situation in the main body of the plays. For when a character's departure represents a break in what went before and a transition to a new stage in the drama (as is always the case at the end of the opening rhesis), the speaker who is about to depart usually breaks off with ἀλλά and a verb of motion, almost always εἶμι.[4] Of course at the end of an *agon* a character can depart, most often in the heat of anger, without stopping to say that he is leaving.

But what concerned us in Poseidon's speech was not the departure formula itself, but the fact, unique in the prologues, that no departure follows. If we inquire into the practice outside the prologues, we will find only three passages (*Heracl.* 678ff, *Ph.* 891ff, *Or.* 1060ff) where a person breaks off with the intention of departing and then does not actually depart. These three cases of false departure have characteristics that distinguish them from *Troades* 45ff and serve to confirm rather than undermine our objections to that passage. They all occur at a point when the action is already fairly far advanced, and mark a turning point in that action. In all of them a character, after expressing his intention of leaving, is insistently prevented from doing so by someone else in a conflict that underlines the importance of what is happening. Thus in *Heraclidae* (678ff) the servant who has brought to

---

[4] For self departure with ἀλλά + εἶμι see *Alc.* 209, *Heracl.* 678, *Andr.* 89, *Tr.* 1153, *El.* 1132, 1316, *IT* 636, *Ph.* 753, 891, 1009 (with departure following immediately at 1012 and excising 1013–18—see Eduard Fraenkel, *Zu den Phoinissen des Euripides* [SB München 1963] 51–3), *Ba.* 857. Fraenkel (pp.29–30) discusses the formula ἀλλ' εἶμι and uses it as an argument for excising *Ph.* 753–6, since elsewhere departure follows soon after ἀλλ' εἶμι, "wenn dass nicht von einen andern Person verhindert würde."

Iolaos and Alkmene news about the war with Eurystheus breaks off with ἀλλ' εἶμι (678) to return to the battlefield, but is prevented from doing so by Iolaos, who, in a stichomythic *agon*, insists on going along, and orders the servant in to fetch his armor from the palace (698 ἀλλ' εἴσιθ' εἴσω). Iolaos' sudden decision to go along with him into battle proves in retrospect to be a turning point in the action, for his triumphant rejuvenation enables him to capture his arch-enemy Eurystheus. In *Phoenissae*, in a more obviously dramatic scene, Teiresias makes as if to leave without satisfying Kreon's curiosity as to how the city may be saved. Once again it is only after much insistence that he is persuaded not to leave, thus reversing the expectations set up by the break-off at 891–1 (ἀλλ' . . . ἄπειμι). The consequences of his being prevailed on to remain on stage (896 ἐπίσχες) are the death of Menoikeus and the ruin of Kreon as well as the salvation of the city. Finally, at *Orestes* 1060ff, a point in the play when we know that Orestes and Elektra have been ordered to kill themselves, Orestes brusquely cuts short their joint lamentations with the break-off:

$$\text{ἀλλ' εἶ' ὅπως γενναῖα καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος}$$
$$\text{δράσαντε κατθανούμεθ' ἀξιώτατα.}$$

This is followed by a farewell to Pylades and a statement that he is actually going (1068):

$$\text{καὶ χαῖρ'· ἐπ' ἔργον δ', ὡς ὁρᾶις, πορεύομαι.}$$

But this clear intention of departure is resisted by Pylades (1069 ἐπίσχες), which leads to yet another break-off and another farewell (1082–3 ἀλλ' ὦ ποθεινὸν ὄμμα . . . χαῖρε). With extraordinary insistence Pylades continues to protest and begins a discussion that involves plans leading to revenge and, ultimately, salvation. The pivotal function of the false departure and the resistance it meets are obvious here as in the other two examples.

But in *Troades*, when Poseidon is about to leave, there is no one on stage to prevent him: there is no *agon* on the result of which hangs the outcome of the whole play. All that happens is that Athena walks on as Poseidon is about to walk off. She appears completely unaware of his stated intention to depart, so that the reversal of expectation set up by his false departure is completely pointless.

An apparently closer parallel to Poseidon's false departure only confirms its oddity. In *Hercules Furens*, Amphitryon says farewell to

the chorus as, together with Megara and his grandchildren, he waits for Lykos to drag him off. As in *Troades*, a break-off is made (*HF* 503 ἀλλά followed by χαῖρε at 512) which is interrupted not by the protest of a character on stage but by the entry of a new character. However, as the situation makes clear, the break-off to say farewell is not a break-off to depart, for as a prisoner Amphitryon is merely waiting for Lykos to reappear and lead him off to his death. But even though Amphitryon's break-off is not quite a false departure, it nevertheless (unlike *Troades*) shares two characteristics of a regular false departure. The unexpected entry of the savior Herakles instead of the executioner Lykos marks a turning point in the play which is even more striking than those which we have hitherto examined. In contrast, the surprise of Athena's entry in *Troades* is devoid of dramatic meaning.

Another element that Amphitryon's farewell in *Hercules Furens* shares with other false departures is that it occurs when the play is already far advanced. This is almost a corollary of the fact that a false departure marks a turning point in the play, for it takes time to develop the original trend which the false departure then reverses. The reversal of the break-off formula into a false departure marks a reversal in the plot as well. But in *Troades* the play has hardly begun, so that when Athena appears she "reverses" a trend which has not yet been established. And far from being a pivotal point, the reversal, as we shall see later, has no effect whatsoever on the action of the play, which after Athena's departure continues to establish the mood of Poseidon's opening rhesis.

But even without Poseidon's false departure, the unprepared arrival of Athena is itself somewhat problematical. Everywhere else the unprepared arrival of a god is strikingly epiphanic and invariably occurs towards the end of the play. In such sudden epiphanies the god gives a happy ending to the story either by stopping an act of violence with a curt ἐπίσχες (*Ion* 1320, *Hel.* 1642) or παῦσαι (*IT* 1437, *Or.* 1625),[5] or by insisting on a guarantee for the future (*Suppl.* 1183). Athena's entry in

---

[5] Fraenkel, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 74–76, quotes these last two passages as examples of what he terms (p.76) a "pausai-Motiv" which has as its characteristic that (p.74) "eine neu auftretende Person, um die Handlung voranzutreiben, zu den auf der Bühne Anwesenden sagt: 'hört jetzt auf mit dem was ihr soeben noch getan habt." But a *pausai-Motiv* of this kind is too general to be satisfying, in that it does not distinguish between those occurrences that are epiphanic, such as *IT* 1435 and *Or.* 1625, and those that are not (*e.g.* the appearance of Orestes at *Or.* 1022, whose entry has been carefully announced by the chorus and who

Troades has none of the abrupt imperiousness or epiphanic quality which marks the unprepared entry of a god, and furthermore it occurs at the beginning instead of at the end of the play. But the oddity of Athena's entry only compounds the even greater oddity of Poseidon's false departure, which by itself gives one grounds enough to question *Troades* 48ff.

III

So far we have confined ourselves to a technical consideration of formulae. But Poseidon's opening rhesis is more than the sum of its formulae, and in fact is organized to form a powerful transition to Hekabe's monody. That the intervention of Athena disrupts this organization will become clear after a description of the whole sequence.

After the initial three lines, in which Poseidon introduces himself in

---

is actually answering a speech of Elektra's: her lines at 1018–21 formally constitute the "basis" for a distichomythia begun by Orestes at 1022–3).

Sometimes the entrance of a human can be epiphanic, as is notably the case with Theseus at *OC* 1751, who, like the Theseus in the *Herakles* of Euripides, functions to some extent as a *deus ex machina* and instructs the mortals who remain on stage how to conduct themselves before the miracle that has just happened. This mysterious passage is built on the extension of a motive properly applicable to a god.

In the passage in the *Phoenissae* that gave rise to Fraenkel's observations, Kreon says (1584–6):

> οἴκτων μὲν ἤδη λήγεθ᾽, ὡς ὥρα τάφου
> μνήμην τίθεσθαι· τόνδε δ᾽, Οἰδίπου, λόγον
> ἄκουσον . . .

The language is epiphanic, and Kreon is probably making a new entry. Like Theseus in the *OC*, he begins with the exposition of divine law (1586–91):

> ἀρχὰς τῆσδε γῆς ἔδωκέ μοι
> Ἐτεοκλέης παῖς σός, γάμων φερνὰς διδοὺς
> Αἵμονι κόρης τε λέκτρον Ἀντιγόνης σέθεν.
> οὐκ οὖν σ᾽ ἐάσω τήνδε γῆν οἰκεῖν ἔτι·
> σαφῶς γὰρ εἶπε Τειρεσίας οὐ μή ποτε
> σοῦ τήνδε γῆν οἰκοῦντος εὖ πράξειν πόλιν.

If he does make a new entry (as Fraenkel's manifold arguments persuade me), then this is his first appearance since the Menoikeus scene. A difficulty with such a reading of the play, as Fraenkel points out, is that no room is given for Kreon to express his grief at Menoikeus' death. I suggest that this difficulty is partially removed by the hieratic force of the *pausai*-formula, which here gives Kreon a loftiness that dissociates him from the anxious father that he is shown to be in the Menoikeus scene.

a suitably hymnal style, he states the grounds for his sympathy to-wards Troy: he and Apollo had themselves built its well-laid stone wall. Against this image of a divinely protected city is set in sharp con-trast the present ruined condition of these same walls, a destruction caused immediately by Epeios, the builder of the Trojan Horse, but ultimately by Pallas Athena. Poseidon then depicts the results of this destruction. As is natural, he is most concerned with the effects on the gods' shrines. Their groves and temples are deserted and defiled with blood, as is more particularly the altar of Zeus Herkeios in Priam's palace. The Achaeans are ready to depart and return home with their booty.

He then describes how he has been worsted by Hera and Athena. He has to leave the city, for both it and the altars of the gods have been abandoned. This reason for departure picks up the theme of desertion: desertion of the city involves desertion of the city's shrines.

So far we have a statement of arrival, an evocation of the distant and happy past, a brief mention of the present, the causes for it, then a more extended description of the present situation, with the deserted city and the defeated god Poseidon on one side and the Greeks and Athena on the other. Poseidon next describes the captive women, who are the only survivors from the city. Some of them are being distributed by lot among the Greeks. But there is another group, those who are not subject to lot, but who have been preselected for the leaders of the Greek army. To this group belongs Helen. Their quarters are within view of the speaker, who points to them with the phrase ὑπὸ στέγαις ταῖσδ' (32f).

From the wide category of Trojans vs Greeks and the general region of Troy, we have moved to the narrow category of 'women subject to lot' vs 'women picked out as prizes' and to the specific vicinity of the women's tent. There is now a further concentration on the figure of Hekabe herself, who is in view of the audience and who is pointed out for our inspection as the visible symbol of all that has gone before. She is a woman of many sorrows, about some of which she is still in ignorance. For she does not yet know of Polyxena's death, and the sacrilegious marriage of Kassandra to Agamemnon is still in the future.

This central position of Hekabe in Poseidon's speech is attained not only through increasingly specific references, but also through the staging itself. She has been on stage from the start, prostrate before

the entrance way, so that whatever Poseidon says about Troy's misfortunes is from the start connected with her. At the end of the speech she becomes not only the focus of attention but also the summation of all Troy's misery. She is the quintessence of that misery, a misery which we have heard Poseidon talk about, but which we are now invited to see concretely in a person (*Tr.* 36–7):

$$\tau\grave{\eta}\nu\ \delta'\ \grave{\alpha}\theta\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu\ \tau\acute{\eta}\nu\delta'\ \epsilon\check{\iota}\ \tau\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\grave{\iota}\sigma\sigma\rho\hat{\alpha}\nu\ \theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota$$
$$\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ {}^{c}E\kappa\acute{\alpha}\beta\eta\ \kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\ \pi\upsilon\lambda\hat{\omega}\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\varsigma\ \ldots$$

This goes beyond the usual epideictic style of the opening rhesis, where the pointing out of objects merely implies the presence of the audience, to whom the visible objects and people are pointed out and to whom the plot is explained. In the two lines quoted the audience is more than implied: it is actually addressed, however obliquely, in the phrase $\epsilon\check{\iota}\ \tau\iota\varsigma\ \ldots\ \theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota$, which combined with $\tau\acute{\eta}\nu\delta\epsilon$ means, "If anyone wants to see this woman here . . ." This boldness drew the attention of the ancient critics, as we can learn from the scholiast's remark on the passage: $\psi\upsilon\chi\rho\hat{\omega}\varsigma\ \pi\rho\grave{\sigma}\varsigma\ \tau\grave{\sigma}\ \theta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\tau\rho\sigma\nu\ \delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$. It verges on the practice of comedy and is all the more striking in that up to this point the prologue is exceptionally free from the usual expository style of the opening rhesis, at least up to the mention of those women who have not been selected by lot (32) and the introduction of Helen. However, the appeal to the audience in the introduction of Hekabe is not "frigid," as the scholiast would have it. It is in fact more emotional than the immediately preceding lines, which gave information that was factually important but not fitting the mood of the speaker. The proximity of the women's tent and the presence of Helen are both important for the audience but, unlike the general picture that went before, are of no special concern to Poseidon. Hence Friedrich Leo, who admires the first part of the rhesis[6] and who rightly judges that the little information Poseidon has to offer is naturally arranged according to the emotions of the speaker, considers that the information about the Trojan women and the introduction of Hekabe is "standardized." Such a judgement is true about the Trojan women but not about Hekabe. She is deliberately pointed out as an object of pity, and her sorrows are then summarily listed. This re-establishes the elegiac mood of Poseidon's speech, which had been temporarily

[6] *Der Monolog in Drama, AbhGöttingen* N.F. Bd. 10 nr. 5 (1908) 24.

broken by the need to explain about the other captive women (*i.e.* the chorus) and Helen. That he points her out so frankly to the audience heightens rather than lowers the emotional level.

The catalogue of her woes that follows the introduction of her name supports the boldness of this procedure and at the same time re-establishes the tone of unforced sympathy which distinguished the first part of the rhesis. As part of the exposition, moreover, it prepares for future events: for the reception of the news of Polyxena's death by Hekabe and for the entry of Kassandra, who breaks upon the stage in the course of the first episode. Kassandra is reserved for last, because this gives Poseidon a chance to insist once more on the impiety of the Greeks, especially of Agamemnon. Rhetorically, however, the mention of Polyxena and Kassandra and of Priam (which recalls an earlier mention at 16f) accentuates the suffering of Hekabe, who is herself a symbol of Troy's suffering.[7]

The spotlight is now fully on Hekabe as the central figure, and all that remains is to break off with a farewell to the city as a whole, which she now represents. The break-off to depart which immediately follows further concentrates our attention on the heroine, who will be left alone on the stage, and on whom all of Poseidon's speech has focused. He ends his rhesis on a note of finality: Troy is destroyed, a city which was 'once prosperous' and 'would still be standing' were it not for Pallas Athena. In this way Poseidon returns in circular fashion to his original thought at 4ff. Even his part in building the walls is picked up in the phrase ξεστὸν . . . πύργωμα. The "Ring-form" of his final address still further intensifies the impression that the god has said and done all that he can do.

But then Athena appears, and not only contradicts the departure formula but upsets the careful focus on Hekabe. Athena has now been mentioned three times (10, 24, 47), first as the inspirer of Epeios, who

[7] It has been suggested to me that the focus at the end of the speech may be on Helen and Kassandra as well as on Hekabe, or even primarily on Kassandra. That at least the emphasis is not on Helen is shown by the extraordinary appeal to the audience at 36ff to notice Hekabe and by the heroine's silent presence on the stage from the start—a highly dramatic procedure usually associated with Aeschylus. For this same reason it is impossible to give prime importance to Kassandra, who is rhetorically on the same level as Polyxena and Priam and his sons: they all exemplify the πολλῶν ὕπερ of line 38 in a "reverse foil" (*i.e.* foil placed after rather than before the subject it enhances). For the focus on Hekabe generally see Eugene O'Neill Jr., "The Prologue of the *Troades* of Euripides," *TAPA* 72 (1941) 288ff, esp. 308–9 (but for O'Neill's article as a whole, see *infra* n.22).

built the Trojan Horse, second as, in conjunction with Hera, the destroyer of Troy and the victor over Poseidon, and thirdly as the one ultimate cause of Troy's destruction. But this insistence on divine causation is natural, since the speaker is himself a god and could not be thought of as being defeated by human antagonists. It is in no way a preparation for the entry of Athena herself at line 48. On the contrary, the very fact that she is mentioned at the end of Poseidon's farewell (47) makes it next to impossible that she should then appear without some such remark as "But here she comes" (we would say, "Speak of the devil!").[8]

After the initial interchange of civilities (which breaks the elegiac mood established by Poseidon and carried on by Hekabe in her monody) it is clear that Athena and Poseidon are concerned not with Hekabe or even the Trojans, but with the Lokrian Aias and the Greeks who will, in a future which lies outside the scope of the play, be punished for their impiety. This is the only case in the prologues of Euripides where a future event is treated which lies beyond the time limit of the play.

Furthermore, the dialogue scene itself is unique. For in all other examples of a plotting scene by subsidiary characters (Athena and Poseidon are both *prosopa protatika*) the plot is always directed against the hero. This is a natural result of the concentration of a Greek tragedy, which does not admit of subplots. So at *Hercules Furens* 822ff the two goddesses Iris and Lyssa (corresponding to the two gods in *Troades*) plot against the main character, Herakles, while in *Ion* (925ff) the Old Man and Kreousa plot the destruction of Ion.[9] In *Troades*, however, the two gods do not plot against the main character, Hekabe, or even against the Trojans whose fate she symbolizes. In

[8] The objection might be raised that there is no need to assume the sudden appearance of Athena at all. Why could she not have been present from the start? But such an assumption is refuted by what superficially supports it: the threefold mention of Athena. In Greek tragedy, whenever a character on stage is referred to in the third person (as Athena is at 10, 24 and 47), he is always pointed out with an epideictic adjective, usually. If ὅδε Athena was on stage, the lack of the epideictic adjective shows that Poseidon didn't know it, a situation which for a god would be intolerable even in Comedy.

[9] Though not quite a plotting scene, the episode between Orestes and Hermione in *Andromache* presents close parallels to that between the Old Man and Kreousa in *Ion*. Like Kreousa, Hermione is defeated and distraught, and expresses her passion in a lyrical way (825ff). Her despair is turned to hope by Orestes, who will carry her out of reach of the momentarily triumphant Andromache and at the same time ruin Andromache by his plot to murder Neoptolemos (the success of which is reported without delay in the next scene).

effect they do not plot against the Greeks either, as far as the char-
acters in the play are concerned, for the only Greeks besides Talthy-
bios who appear on stage are Helen and Menelaos, and both of them
will survive the storm. What is more, in both *Ion* and *Hercules Furens*,
the plot is made when the hero is at the height of his fortunes, which
in practice does not happen until the play is more than half finished.
In *Troades*, where the plotting scene virtually begins the play, the
triumph of the Greeks, against which the two gods are plotting, has
not been presented at sufficient length for a reversal to be effective.
Another point of difference is that in the other plays the plotting has
immediate results: Herakles goes mad even before the two plotting
goddesses, Iris and Lyssa, have left the stage (*HF* 867ff), while in *Ion*
the failure of the Old Man and Kreousa's plot is reported immediately
after it has been hatched (1106ff). In *Troades*, the punishment of the
Greeks, far from being reported in the very next scene, is not reported
anywhere in the play. As we have already seen, the punishment, in an
unprecedented extension of the subject matter of prologues, lies in
the future outside the limits of the play.

IV

We have looked at the Athena-Poseidon scene from the point of
view of Poseidon's monologue and seen how it is both responsible for
an unprecedented and awkward false departure and at the same time is
irrelevant to Hekabe, on whom Poseidon's speech has focused. We
have also seen how it is concerned with events that lie beyond the time
limit of the play and do not directly concern the main characters or,
in effect, any of the characters in the play. What remains is to see how
the Athena-Poseidon scene itself joins with Hekabe's monody at 98.
If the join at 97 and 98 is as awkward as the join at 47 and 48 and if, with
48–97 removed, the join between 47 and 98 is not only technically
smooth but rhetorically demanded, surely we must conclude that
48–97 is an interpolation.

In those plays where, as in the present text of *Troades*, a monody in
the prologue is preceded by an iambic scene after the opening rhesis
itself, the function of that additional iambic scene is to heighten the
effect of the monody. So, in the scene which follows the opening
rhesis in *Medea*, the Paidagogos brings news of Medea's banishment.
Since we know that she is already at the breaking point, we feel that

when she hears of this the results will be terrible. This feeling adds tension to the monody which she then delivers in ignorance of her latest setback. In *Andromache*, the maid brings news about Menelaos' plan to murder Andromache's child. This can only heighten the pathos of the lament into which Andromache then falls, even though she does not refer there to the new turn of events. In *Helena*, the news that Teukros presents in an iambic scene not only affects the heroine deeply at the time but is systematically reviewed in the ensuing monody. In *Electra* Orestes arrives in the iambic scene which precedes his sister's monody: that he should then witness her lament not only adds to its effect but is also important for understanding his own psychological development. Finally, in *Iphigenia Taurica* Orestes' arrival prior to Iphigeneia's monody gives her lament an ironical poignancy: Orestes is not dead as she imagines, but he is indeed in mortal danger. In contrast to all these plays, the iambic scene which precedes Hekabe's monody in *Troades* could, even if good in itself, only weaken the pathos of her lament by thoughts of vengeance. But in fact, as we have seen, the vengeance misfires against Helen, who is the main target of her hatred.

The punishment of the Greeks is a result of their impiety, and a comparison with *Agamemnon* shows the ineptness of the impiety-theme here. When in Aeschylus' play Clytemnestra imagines what is going on in Troy at the moment of its capture, she piously wishes that the Greeks may not commit sacrilege and thus endanger their homecoming (338–42). The herald appears in the next scene and calmly relates how, in Troy's total destruction, the altars have been demolished (527ff). This is calculated to make the audience shudder, and the expected retribution is described by the herald in the same scene (636ff). In *Troades* a similar impiety (note particularly the reference to the altars at v.96) also turns our thoughts to the Greeks and their retribution. But whereas in *Agamemnon* the impiety adds to an already great dramatic tension and finds a speedy retribution, in *Troades* it breaks up a dramatic sequence of lament and does not, at least within the play, result in any retribution at all. In Euripides, thoughts of vengeance come uppermost only after a mood of pathos has been developed at some length. One has only to think of *Hecuba*, *Hercules Furens*, *Ion*, *Andromache* and *Orestes*. Even in *Electra* a plot cannot be laid until the heroine's sufferings have been fully exposed. In *Troades*, the thoughts of vengeance do not come until Kassandra's

wild scene, and even then they are not shared by any one else. Only towards the end of the play, when she sees Helen, is Hekabe roused into action, but actual vengeance is denied to her, so that the final part of the play returns to the dominant mood of pathos.

Another consideration is the silent presence of Hekabe. In Poseidon's opening rhesis it is an immense asset, for his speech centers on her and she gains a symbolic stature as the representative of Troy's suffering before she has even spoken. But in the following scene she becomes an embarrassment, precisely because she reminds the audience (who after Poseidon's speech could hardly ignore her) that the discussion is now off course.

Enough has been said to indicate that the difficulties raised by the Athena-Poseidon scene are not confined to the join at 48–9, but also extend to 97–8, creating a double dislocation.

And what if we remove the scene? To begin with, we are no longer plagued with the false break-off, or with a subject matter treated in the prologue which lies outside the limit of the play, or with a scene that does not enhance the succeeding monody. More positively, the focus on Hekabe now has its full effect. Our curiosity about the silent queen is immediately satisfied as Hekabe raises herself from the ground and delivers her monody. Poseidon's opening rhesis both sets the mood and gives the factual ground for a continuous *threnos*, which is given lyrical form first by Hekabe and then by the chorus of Trojan women along with her, in a movement which does not end until the entrance of Talthybios at 235.[10]

At this point we should consider the Athena-Poseidon scene in the light of the whole play. For a number of critics it is a key element in the play. Grube remarks: "Few would deny that our knowledge [of the vengeance to come] is an essential feature of the dramatic purpose, or that the significance of the various scenes is thereby enhanced. The appearance of [Poseidon and Athena] does impress upon us,

---

[10] With the removal of the Poseidon-Athena scene the prologue will structurally resemble those of *Hekabe* and *Ion*, both plays in which the *prologizon* is supernatural and directly introduces the monody of the hero.

I have deliberately avoided discussing the style of the Athena-Poseidon scene itself, since judgements on such matters rarely win general agreement. In fact I find that 75–86 is particularly fine, a passage that may well be adapted from *Palamedes*. On the other hand, I find 48–64 particularly weak, and would tend to think that this is a bridge passage and is entirely the work of an interpolator.

once and for all, the ultimate doom of the Greek fleet."[11] For Kitto, without this thought of *hybris* about to be punished the play would not be a tragedy at all (it would, he implies, be too passive). But it is Kitto himself who draws attention to the impersonality of the only Greek who is on stage at all long. "As if deliberately to make the actions of the Greeks simply impersonal decrees and to discourage us from interesting ourselves in their motives, the Herald is used throughout—not for example Odysseus, as in *Hecuba*—coming in like a series of telegrams."[12] If *Troades* was intended to be a series of "incidents to illustrate the cruelty of the Greeks,"[13] it would have been differently conceived. In fact, as Grube points out, the Greeks are shown in as favourable a light as possible, considering what they actually do. Talthybios is throughout humane in his attitude and at 782 even starts the anapaestic movement in which Hekabe laments for Astyanax[14] and later helps in his burial. Menelaos is, in his confused and simple-minded way, actually an ally of Hekabe's against Helen. Of the Greeks mentioned other than Helen, only Odysseus, the villain of *Palamedes*, is treated with horror (281ff), and it is to Odysseus that the idea of murdering Astyanax is attributed. Odysseus' punishment, though, is fully outlined by Kassandra (427ff) and, like the doom of Agamemnon (356ff), has nothing to do with the storm.

In fact the feelings of Hekabe and the chorus are not directed at any of the Greek heroes, but at Helen, who is almost one of them, a traitor in their midst. She is repeatedly called the cause of the Trojans' or of the Greeks' misery, or of both together (130ff, 368f, 498f, 766ff, 780f), including the death of Astyanax (1213ff). In the latter case one would have particularly expected an outburst against the Greeks and above all against Odysseus. Only if Helen is punished will the gods and *dikē* be vindicated (884ff, 969). On other occasions, however, there is thought to be no use even in invoking them (469ff, 858f, 1240ff, 1230f). On one occasion the chorus wonders if the gods are at all aware of what is happening (1077ff).[15]

---

[11] Georges M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941) 283.

[12] H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London 1939) 210.

[13] Kitto, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 211.

[14] Grube, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 291.

[15] The only special contribution of the Athena-Poseidon scene that is perhaps not supplied from the other two plays is the element of divine irresponsibility, well brought out by Max Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie*[2] (Göttingen 1954) I.370–1 and II.151–2. He draws

But though the play goes out of its way not to stress the *hybris* of the Greeks, their impending doom should still be in the audience's mind if they are to feel that war profits no one. At this point it is important to remember that *Troades* is, after all, the third play in a trilogy, perhaps the only real trilogy that Euripides wrote. Bruno Snell, in his monograph on *Alexander*,[16] shows that there is more than a community of subject in the sequence *Alexander, Palamedes, Troades*. Events in the first play only find their full meaning in the light of the third. The opening of *Alexander*, where Kassandra recalls Hekabe's dream that in Paris she gave birth to a fire brand, is only fulfilled in the concluding lines of *Troades*, which ends in flame. Kassandra's visionary prophecies in the first part of *Alexander*, which are not believed by Hekabe, are recalled by the audience when the same Kassandra reappears in *Troades* with further prophecies.[17] The change in Troy's fortunes from the first play to the third are epitomized in the person of Hekabe, whom we know in *Alexander* as a proud and passionate queen, a queen who cannot bear to see her sons humiliated by an unknown shepherd at the funeral games, but who in *Troades* is only a slave (Snell p.66).

Other information relevant to *Troades* is a prophecy on Hekabe's end (Snell pp.29–30, 67). That we know this from *Alexander* explains how we can do without the information in *Troades*. For it is customary for Euripides to inform us of the fate of his hero or heroine if he or she is still living at the end of the play. More significantly,

---

attention to the parallel language in which the vagaries of fortune are described by Hekabe (1203ff) and in which the fickleness of Athena is brought out by Poseidon (67f). For Pohlenz the implication is that the gods in their self-seeking are below the philosophic-religious level of Hekabe (especially at 884ff), whose search for justice is doomed to failure. This contrast, however, is adequately brought out in *Troades* by the chorus (821ff, 1060ff, 1288ff), and always in reference to Zeus. Athena is not really relevant here: she was never favorable to Troy (she changes her heart only in relation to the Greeks who, as we have remarked, have already been doomed in *Palamedes* and who are treated as kindly as possible in this play). Athena as the self-appointed champion of Troy (57, 65) is an oddity in view of her consistent vilification throughout the drama (10, 24, 47, 535ff, 551ff, 561, 598ff). Of course, in the ode about the Trojan Horse a grim effect is obtained by depicting the worship of Athena by the very Trojans she is about to destroy (535ff, 551ff), but this has nothing to do with her fickleness (with Homer's characteristic economy this scene is prefigured at *Il.* 6.305ff).

[16] *Euripides Alexandros und andere Strassburger Papyri mit Fragmenten griechischer Dichter* [*Hermes* Einzelschr. 5] (Berlin 1937).

[17] For the significance of the first episode of *Alexander* as an introduction to the whole trilogy, see Snell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 34.

Helen, in her defense against Hekabe (914ff), relies partly on the events enacted in *Alexander* to prove her point. In particular she refers at 921 to the man who saved the baby Alexandros from death as simply ὁ πρέσβυς.[18] She is equally allusive about Hekabe's dream (922), δαλοῦ πικρὸν μίμημ'. She doesn't need to be more explicit, since both facts are known from *Alexander*.

Just as Kassandra's prophecies in *Alexander* look forward to *Troades*, so the prophecies in the next play, *Palamedes*, look beyond *Troades* to the homecoming of the Greeks. For there is little doubt that *Palamedes* ends in a prophecy of coming disaster.[19] Palamedes had been treacherously removed by Odysseus, but the dead hero's brother ingeniously floated a message of what had happened to their father Nauplios in Euboia, who duly prepared his revenge by setting up false signal beacons on the rocks of the Euboean coast. The imminent doom of the Greeks is in this way present, but not too overwhelmingly present, in the minds of the audience as they watch *Troades*. Ironically, in *Palamedes* it is the Greeks themselves, notably Odysseus (who is also the main villain, next to Helen, in *Troades*), who cause their own doom just as, in *Alexander*, it is the Trojans who, through Paris, determine the destruction of their city (the key rôle of Paris is referred to in *Troades* by the chorus at 597ff as well as by Helen in her defence). Throughout the trilogy there seems to be remarkably little interrelationship between the two sides, which explains the almost complete self-involvement of the Trojan women.[20]

Imperceptibly our discussion of the wider implications of removing the Athena-Poseidon scene has led us to a motive for its insertion

---

[18] The reference is equally allusive whether the old man is a servant, comparable to the Old Man in *Ion*, or, as T. C. W. Stinton suggests (*Euripides and the Judgement of Paris* [SocPromHellSt Suppl. 11, London 1965] 67 n.3), is Priam himself.

[19] The lament (588 N²)

ἐκάνετε ἐκάνετε τὰν
πάνσοφον, ὦ Δαναοί,
τὰν οὐδέν' ἀλγύνουσαν ἀηδόνα Μουσᾶν

was probably spoken by Palamedes' brother Oiax (see L. Parmentier, *Euripide* IV, Budé ed. [Paris 1948] p.8). The *threnos* would then be broken off by the appearance of a god (probably Aphrodite), who would offer some kind of consolation. One may compare the lament of Peleus (*Andr.* 1173ff), which is stopped by the appearance of Thetis at 1226. So, too, in *Electra* horrified recollections of the murder are interrupted by the appearance of the Dioskouroi (1233) and in *Bacchae*, at the lacuna after line 1300 (see Dodds *ad loc.*), Agaue's lament is interrupted by the appearance of Dionysos.

[20] *Cf.* the fine interpretation by Gilbert Murray in his *Greek Studies* (Oxford 1946) 127–48.

into *Troades*. For if we take away the trilogic context and imagine[21] a performance of *Troades* in isolation, some information about the doom of the Greeks would be desirable. The lack of *Palamedes* is made up for by the scene between Poseidon and Athena, except that now the villain who brings on destruction is not Odysseus (the man who ruined Palamedes) but the Lokrian Aias. Since we lack *Palamedes*, we should perhaps be grateful for an interpolation that attempts to make up the deficiency. But this does not render any the less objectionable the double dislocation it causes.[22]

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

February, 1967

---

[21] We do not have to imagine it. We have Plutarch's testimony (*Pelop.* 29) that the play was revived under Alexander of Pherai, whose tyranny lasted from 369–358 B.C. (W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* I.III.1 [München 1940] 486, mistakenly says that this performance took place at the court of Alexander II of Macedon). Inscriptional evidence shows that in such revivals even of Aeschylus, only one play of a given trilogy would be performed on any one occasion.

[22] Eugene O'Neill Jr, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) defends the quality of the Athena-Poseidon scene largely for its function of providing a "Known End" (the destruction of the Greeks), but does not consider that this function has already been performed by the last part of *Palamedes*. This also weakens his comment (pp.289f) on the uniqueness of the "exotragic prediction" in *Troades*. Euripides' "wide departure from his usual practice" is better explained as the work of an interpolator than as the poet's own repetition in a jarring context of what has been said at the end of the preceding play.