

führt. Es ist gewiß kein Zufall, sondern hochsignifikant, daß wir auf solche Akzente gerade im zeitlichen Umkreis der Reform des Ephialtes treffen, als die attische Demokratie nicht ungefährdet war. Sie mögen denn auch mit ein Grund für den Erfolg gewesen sein, den Aischylos errang: Er gewann beide Male den ersten Preis<sup>50</sup>).

Konstanz

Wolfgang Rösler

---

sterdam 1988, 13 ff.). Ein unterstützendes Argument ergibt sich aus der Bezugnahme auf die athenischen Typenhäuser in den *Hiketiden* (vgl. Vf. [wie Anm. 5] 111). Mit dem genannten Datum stehen die aufgezeigten Analogien zur *Orestie* mindestens nicht in Widerspruch.

50) Dieser Aufsatz ist aus einem Vortrag entstanden, den ich im Oktober 1991 in Blaubeuren auf dem vom Deutschen Archäologenverband und von der Mommsen-Gesellschaft veranstalteten Symposium „Klassik als exemplarische Bewältigung der Geschichte“ gehalten habe (eine Zusammenfassung in dem Tagungsband, der, herausgegeben von Werner Gauer und Ebert Pöhlmann, in der Reihe *Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft* erscheinen wird). Ich danke allen, mit denen ich bei dieser oder bei anderer Gelegenheit über das Thema diskutieren durfte. Besonderen Dank schulde ich Luc Deitz (London), Martin Hose (Konstanz), Stefan Monhardt (Tübingen) und Stefan Radt (Groningen).

## BEGINNING AT THE END IN EURIPIDES' TROJAN WOMEN

“The Troades, produced in 415, is perhaps the least interesting of the extant tragedies. The plot consists merely of unconnected scenes, depicting the miserable fate of the Trojan captives; and the execution is not in the best style of Euripides.” So wrote A. E. Haigh in 1896<sup>1</sup>). Since then, scholars have received the play more favorably, but Haigh’s criticism of the disconnected plot remains. Apologists for *The Trojan Women* must defend a play which is un-Aristotelian in the extreme: the plot is not a single action but a sequence of episodes; it contains no major reversal of

---

1) A. E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, Oxford 1896, 300.

fortunes; and it lacks a clear complication and dénouement<sup>2</sup>). Especially striking is the absence of a major reversal or peripeteia. The play depicts the aftermath of a monumental reversal, the fall of Troy, where no significant change in fortune is possible for the captive women.

Those who defend the structure of *The Trojan Women* have generally followed one of two approaches<sup>3</sup>). The first of these substitutes another unity for the unity of action. Various studies have shown that the incidents of the play are held together by the roles of Hecuba, Talthybius and the chorus<sup>4</sup>), and that the episodes are held together by a general rhythm and by specific interconnections<sup>5</sup>). These studies are valuable correctives to the assumption that an episodic play has no unity or structure at all; they demonstrate convincingly that *The Trojan Women* is a carefully organized work; but they do not explain why unity of action is largely neglected.

The second approach dispenses with Aristotelian unity altogether. A number of scholars argue that the play is in fact a lyric drama, or propaganda, or – as Murray concludes – “a study of

---

2) Poetics 1451a30–34 (single action), 1451b33–35 (episodic structure; cf. 1455b13–15), 1452a22–24 and 1452b30–32 (reversal), and 1455b24–26 (complication and dénouement; cf. 1456a7–9). Cf. G. Perrotta, *Le Troiane di Euripide*, *Dioniso* 15 (1952) 237: “Le Troiane sono un esempio tipico di quelle tragedie senza unità, che ad Aristotele non piacevano. Esse sono una successione di scene, di quadri.” A. Burnett, *Trojan Women and the Ganymede Ode*, *YCS* 25 (1977) 291 takes exception to the general view “that in *Trojan Women* nothing happens.” Her thesis that the play portrays the punishment of Hecuba’s blindness and arrogance has not, to my knowledge, found followers.

3) Alternatively, an appeal to the play’s position within a connected trilogy may avoid the need to defend its structure; thus H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study*, 3rd ed., London 1961, 211. Yet the play must be judged first of all on its own merits; and it may be that in the ‘trilogy’ as in the final tragedy “closeknit and comprehensible structure is deliberately avoided,” R. Scodel, *The Trojan Trilogy of Euripides*, *Hypomnemata* 60, Göttingen 1980, 79.

4) On Hecuba, see W. H. Friedrich, *Euripides und Diphilos: Zur Dramaturgie der Spätformen*, *Zetemata* 5, Munich 1953, 73–75; on Talthybius see K. Gilmarin, *Talthybius in the Trojan Women*, *AJP* 91 (1970) 213–222; and on the chorus see T. J. Sienkewicz, *Euripides’ Trojan Women: An Interpretation*, *Helios* 6 (1978) 81–95.

5) On the rhythm of the episodes see D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme and Structure*, Toronto 1967, 139; and on their interconnections see U. Albin, *Linee compositive delle Troiane*, in *Euripide: Letture critiche*, ed. O. Longo, Milan 1976, 153–162. The play may likewise be held together by a thematic contrast of character with circumstance (L. M. Mead, *The Troades of Euripides*, *G&R* 8 [1939] 102–109) or of idealism with realism (M. Lloyd, *The Helen scene in Euripides’ Troades*, *CQ* 34 [1984] 303–313); cf. Scodel (above, note 3), 120–121.

sorrow, a study too intense to admit the distraction of plot interest"<sup>6</sup>). Such interpretations correctly emphasize the unusual dramatic effect of *The Trojan Women*; but in suggesting that the play's emotional or ideological purpose precludes a concern with unity, they neglect the positive results of its unconventional structure.

The beginning and the ending of this play show that the structure of the action has been inverted; as we shall see, the ending includes none of the features usually found in the epilogue, while the prologue includes a number of features usually found only in the ending. The absence of the usual beginning and ending suggests deliberate avoidance of structural unity; and since the play begins with an ending and ends without one, it also frustrates the audience's desire for a goal. This novel inversion of the action gives *The Trojan Women* its startling power.

Several points in the following argument build upon the work of other scholars. Pohlenz, for example, observes that the *deus ex machina* has been moved from the end to the beginning; Albini notes that both the prologue and Hecuba's monody suggest finality at the beginning of the play; and Meridor argues that the lack of a concluding prophecy heightens the sense of suffering<sup>7</sup>). However, the detailed discussions below of beginning and ending, and of the relation of these to the structure of the action, are original. I shall argue in particular that the beginning and ending of *The Trojan Women* depart from a relatively regular pattern within the Euripidean corpus. In discussing Euripides' usual practice in the ending, I shall therefore exclude the prosatyrical *Alkestis*, the spurious *Rhesus* and the spurious ending of *Iphigenia in Aulis*. I shall not consider here the reasons why Euripides' endings are more regular than those of his predecessors<sup>8</sup>).

6) On the play as lyric drama see M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie*, 2 vols, 2nd ed., Göttingen 1954, vol. 1, 366, and cf. V. Ehrenberg, *From Solon to Socrates*, London 1968, 289, and Kitto (above, note 3), 215; on the play as propaganda against war see H. Steiger, *Warum schrieb Euripides seine Troerinnen?* *Philologus* 59 (1900) 362-399, C. A. E. Luschnig, *Euripides' Trojan Women: All is Vanity*, *CW* 65 (1971) 8-12, and R. A. H. Waterfield, *Double standards in Euripides' Troades*, *Maia* 34 (1982) 139-142; on the play as a study of sorrow see G. Murray, *The Trojan Women of Euripides*, *Living Age* 245 (1905) 38, and cf. G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides*, London 1941, 282.

7) Pohlenz (above, note 6), vol. 1, 435; Albini (above, note 5), 155; and R. Meridor, *Plot and Myth in Euripides' Heracles and Troades*, *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 213.

8) For a full discussion see F. M. Dunn, *Euripidean Endings: a study of the *deus ex machina*, the concluding prophecy, the aition and the choral exit*, Diss. Yale

## I

The epilogue in Euripides includes four regularly occurring elements: the *deus ex machina*, the concluding prophecy, the aition and the choral exit. Not all are found in every ending, but *The Trojan Women* is his only extant play with *none* of these elements. (As a result, the epilogue itself is less clearly defined in this play.)

Nine of Euripides' plays end with a divine epiphany, and four more end with the appearance of a figure with prophetic powers<sup>9</sup>). In each case, the appearance of a supernatural figure emphatically marks the end of the human action. The two exceptions are *The Phoenician Women* and *The Trojan Women*. In the former, no such figure is required because the action does not end: the sufferings of the house of Cadmus will continue with the exile of Oedipus and the burial of Polyneices by Antigone. In the latter, the absence of such a figure is strongly felt: a divine epiphany in the ending is replaced by the appearance of torchbearers on high when the chorus exclaims:

ἔα ἔα·  
τίνας Ἰλιάσιν ταῖσδ' ἐν κορυφαῖς  
λεύσσω φλογέας δαλοῖσι χέρας  
διερέσσοντας; μέλλει Τροία  
καινόν τι κακὸν προσέσθαι. (1256–59)

In Hippol. 1391 (ἔα· | ὦ θεῖον ὁδμῆς πνεῦμα . . .) and in Ion 1549 f. (ἔα· | τίς . . . πρόσωπον ἐκφαίνει θεῶν;) the same exclamation announces the epiphany of a *deus ex machina*<sup>10</sup>). Here, as Hecuba soon realizes, there will be no divine intervention (ὡ θεοί· καὶ τί τοὺς θεοὺς καλῶ; | καὶ πρὶν γὰρ οὐκ ἤκουσαν ἀνακαλούμενοι, 1280–1); the epiphany of fire brings not release from their sufferings, but more to come.

1985. On *Alcestis* see A. Rivier, En marge d'Alceste et de quelques interprétations récentes, *MusHelv* 29 (1972) 124–140 and 30 (1973) 130–143; on *Rhesus* see A. Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry, tr. M. Dillon, New Haven 1983, 397 and 485; and on *Iphigenia in Aulis* see M. L. West, *Tragica* V, *BICS* 28 (1981) 73–76.

9) Epiphanies are Artemis in *Hippolytus*, Thetis in *Andromache*, Athena in *Supplikes*, Athena in *Ion*, the Dioscuri in *Electra*, Athena in *Iphigenia Taur.*, the Dioscuri in *Helen*, Apollo in *Orestes*, and Dionysus in *Bacchae*; similar is the semi-divine Heracles in *Alcestis*. Prophetic figures are Medea in *Medea*, Eurystheus in *Heracleidae*, Polymestor in *Hecuba* and Theseus in *Heracles*. On the prophecy of Theseus, see below.

10) Cf. also H. F. 815 and Rh. 885.

The second element of the endings is the concluding prophecy, which reveals the course of events later than the action. By distinguishing events in the play from events to come, this prophecy sets a temporal limit to the drama. Every extant play of Euripides ends with such a prophecy<sup>11</sup>) except for *Heracles*, *The Phoenician Women* and *The Trojan Women*. The first two, however, contain limited prophecies: Theseus foretells the honors which Heracles will receive in Attica (H. F. 1331–33), and Oedipus reveals the oracle that he will die at Colonus (Phoe. 1703–7; but see note 13 below). Only *The Trojan Women* ends with no prophecy whatsoever, and the absence of any future is brought home by the words of Hecuba:

οἷ γὼ τάλαινα· τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λοίσθιον  
καὶ τέρμα πάντων τῶν ἐμῶν ἤδη κακῶν·  
ἔξειμι πατρίδος, πόλις ὑφάπτεται πυρί. (1272–74)

A third feature is the aition, which links the action to an institution or custom familiar to the audience. This extradramatic reference is found in every play but four<sup>12</sup>). Yet three of those four exceptions are not quite certain: in *Heracles* Theseus alludes to the Heracleia of Attica (1326–31); in *The Phoenician Women* the oracle may allude to a tomb of Oedipus at Colonus (1705–7)<sup>13</sup>); and the ending of *The Bacchae* is severely mutilated. *The Trojan Women* alone ends without any link to the world of the audience. Indeed the women despair because the city's name will *not* live on<sup>14</sup>):

11) Med. 1386–88, Hcl. 1030–36, Hipp. 1420–30, Andr. 1243–62, Hec. 1259–81, Supp. 1208–26, El. 1250–80, I. T. 1464–72, Ion 1573–94, Hel. 1664–77, Or. 1635–59, Ba. 1330–39.

12) Med. 1378–83, Hcl. 1030–41, Hipp. 1423–30, Andr. 1239–42, Hec. 1271, 1273, Supp. 1205–12, El. 1268–75, I. T. 1453–67, Ion 1575–94, Hel. 1670–75, Or. 1643–47.

13) The existence of such a tomb is assumed by J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Oedipus Coloneus*, Leiden 1984, 2, and denied by L. S. Colchester, *Justice and Death in Sophocles*, CQ 36 (1942) 23. Furthermore the authenticity of these lines is denied by E. Fraenkel, *Zu den Phoinissen des Euripides*, SB München 1963, 98–100, and defended by H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Euripideischen Phoinissen*, Philologus 110 (1966) 29–530, and C. Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu den Phoinissen des Euripides*, Paltingenesia 22, Stuttgart 1985, 230, 255 f., note 67.

14) Compare 1277 f.: ὦ . . . Τροία, τὸ κλεινὸν ὄνομα' ἀφαιρήσῃ τάχα. Survival of the ὄνομα is central to the aition: ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται El. 1275; τύμβω δ' ὄνομα σὺ κεκλήσεται Hec. 1271; Hipp. 1429; I. T. 1452, 1454; H. F. 1329; Ion 1577, 1587 f., 1594; Or. 1646; and cf. Erechtheus frag. 65, line 93.



ὄνομα δὲ γὰρ ἀφανὲς εἶσιν· ἄλλα δ'  
 ἄλλο φροῦδον, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔστιν  
 ἅ τάλαινα Τροία. (1322–24)

The fourth element of the endings is the choral exit. In every extant play of Euripides the chorus speaks the final lines, and almost always these lines suggest finality both in form (since they are marching anapaests, to accompany the movement of the chorus from the orchestra) and in theme (since they summarize the action or draw a moral from it<sup>15</sup>). *Ion* is a minor exception since the chorus again speaks the concluding lines of the play in a meter associated with marching, but here it is the trochaic tetrameter (1619–22). The ending of *The Trojan Women* is a major exception: it ends abruptly with a lyric antistrophe, and the chorus makes no reference to the conclusion of the action<sup>16</sup>. When it says:

ὡς τάλαινα πόλις· ὄμως  
 δὲ πρόφερε πόδα σὸν ἐπὶ πλάτας Ἀχαιῶν, (1331–32)

we realize that its departure marks not an end to the action, but the beginning of further sorrows<sup>17</sup>).

The ending of *The Trojan Women* thus lacks each of the four elements usually found in Euripides. The unusual power of this finale reflects the absence of those devices which elsewhere give to his endings a sense of finality, a feeling that the action is finished.

15) Compare, for example, the morals which conclude *Electra* (χαίρειν δ' ὅστις δύναται | καὶ ξυντυχία μὴ τι καίμει | θνητῶν, εὐδαίμονα πράσσει. 1357–59) and *Ion* (ἐς τέλος γὰρ οἱ μὲν ἐσθλοὶ τυγχάνουσιν ἀξίων, | οἱ κακοὶ δ', ὥσπερ πεφύκασ', οὐποτ' εὖ πράξειαν ἂν 1621–22).

16) Such a reference is strongest in the repeated endings of *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Andromache*, *Helena*, *Bacchae* (τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα) and *Iphigenia Taur.*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae* (ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη, τὸν ἐμὸν | βίοντον κατέχοις | καὶ μὴ λήγους στεφανούσα). I cannot agree with Barrett (ad Hipp. 1462–66) that many of these exit lines are spurious; see A. G. Katsouris, *The formulaic end of the Menandrian plays*, Dodone 5 (1976) 253–254, and Dunn (above, note 8), 40–47.

17) The pessimism noted in these lines by Sienkewicz (above, note 4), 93, is a result of this continuation of suffering. The absence of a formal anapaestic exit may also emphasize the women's loss of autonomy and dignity.

## II

The prologue of this play is equally surprising, since it incorporates exactly those elements which are missing from the epilogue.

In the extant plays of Euripides, a divine epiphany in the prologue almost always involves a single deity and is answered by an epiphany in the epilogue. *Hippolytus*, *Ion* and *The Bacchae* are all framed by divine epiphanies, and in *Hecuba* the ghost of Polydorus has a counterpart in the mantic Polymestor<sup>18</sup>). A minor exception is the prosatyrical *Alcestis*, in which the double epiphany of Apollo and Death is answered by the arrival of Heracles following his victory over Death. A major exception is *The Trojan Women*, in which the double epiphany of Poseidon and Athena has no counterpart in the ending. Since the prologue speech of Poseidon is followed by a concluding prophecy (see below), the opening scene seems to combine prologue epiphany with *deus ex machina*, exhausting the devices of beginning and ending before the play has begun. The apparent transposition of the *deus ex machina* to the beginning of the play<sup>19</sup>) is reinforced by the transposition of those elements which always accompany the *deus*.

The opening prophecy also seems to have been transposed from the ending. A prophecy in the prologue always anticipates events *within* the action, while a prophecy in the epilogue announces events *later than* the action<sup>20</sup>). The former sets the plot in

18) The supernatural frame in *Hecuba* is therefore less specific. As Reckford observes, the agency of Aphrodite or Dionysus is replaced by that of "chance, blind chance" (page 126 in K. J. Reckford, *Concepts of Demoralization in the Hecuba*, in: *Directions in Euripidean Criticism*, ed. P. Burian, Durham 1985, 112–128). Sartre's adaptation (*Les Troyennes*, Paris 1965) restores this type of balanced frame by adding a final epiphany of Poseidon; the film version of M. Cacoyannis, *The Trojan Women*, 1971, adds a more subtle frame by repeating the opening words of Hecuba's monody in her parting lines.

19) Cf. Pohlenz (above, note 6), vol. 1, 435. I do not agree that the transposition is a make-shift expedient: „Das gewaltige Finale, das Bild des brennenden Troia, vertrug am Schluß keinen *Deus ex machina*.“

20) See, for example, D.C. Stuart, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Euripidean Prolog*, SPh 15 (1918) 295–306, and I. Gollwitzer, *Die Prolog- und Expositionstechnik der griechischen Tragödie* (Diss. Munich 1936), Gunzenhausen 1937. Wilson regards this unique prophecy as further evidence of interpolation (J. R. Wilson, *An Interpolation in the Prologue of Euripides' Troades*, GRBS 8 [1967] 205). E. G. O'Neill Jr. observes that "So wide a departure from his usual practice is significant" (*The Prologue of the Troades of Euripides*, TAPA 72 [1941] 289), but nevertheless maintains that the prophecy in *Troades* establishes a 'Known End' to the action in the same manner as Aphrodite's prophecy in *Hippolytus* (293).

motion by anticipating its goal, while the latter brings the plot to an end by dispelling curiosity about later events. The one exception is *The Trojan Women*, where Poseidon foretells the destruction of the Greek fleet after the play is finished:

ἔσται τάδ'· ἡ χάρις γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν λόγων  
 δεῖται· ταράξω πέλαγος Αἰγαίας ἄλος.  
 ἄκται δὲ Μυκόνου Δήλιοί τε χοιράδες  
 Σκῦρός τε Λῆμνός θ' αἱ Καφῆρειοί τ' ἄκραι  
 πολλῶν θανόντων σώμαθ' ἔξουσιν νεκρῶν. (87–91)

The prophecy is especially interesting since it concerns the fortunes not of the Trojan women but of the Greeks. As a result, it succeeds in satisfying curiosity about the future without generating interest in the future of the actors onstage. The plot is thus deprived of expectations, and the women are deprived of hope<sup>21</sup>). This prophecy also adds to the unusual qualities of the epiphany; since concluding prophecies are always spoken by a *deus ex machina* or a similar figure, Poseidon's prophetic words cast him all the more clearly in the role of a *deus*<sup>22</sup>).

This inversion of the *deus* is reinforced by features of the aition and the choral exit which are found in the prologue. The first is an etymological derivation resembling an aition. In lines 13 and 14 Poseidon explains the name of the Wooden Horse<sup>23</sup>):

ὁ γὰρ Παρνάσιος  
 Φωκεὺς Ἑπειός, μηχαναῖσι Παλλάδος  
 ἐγκύμον' ἵππον τευχέων ξυναρμόσας,

21) Thus Pohlenz: „Nachher ist von dem Walten dieser Götter nichts mehr zu spüren. Nur menschliche Leidenschaften und die launische Tyche bestimmen das Geschehen“ (note 6 above, vol. 1, 372); cf. Meridor (note 7 above), 211. Others regard the prophecy as placing “The whole action . . . under the shadow of divine vengeance upon the Greeks” (Grube, note 6 above, 296; cf. K. H. Lee, ed., Euripides: *Troades*, London 1976, p. xv).

22) Cf. Albini (above, note 5), 153–4: “Il *deus ex machina*, posto al principio, conserva le caratteristiche che ne contraddistinguono il ruolo conclusivo.”

23) Lines 13–14 are considered spurious by many editors (Wecklein, Murray, Diggle), but as Wilson points out, their ‘awkwardness’ or ‘frigidity’ does not warrant excision (J. R. Wilson, *The Etymology in Euripides, Troades*, 13–14, *AJP* 89 [1968] 67). Wilson gives very different grounds for suspecting interpolation: in its reference “to the future beyond the limits of the play” and its “almost formulaic use of *κεκλήσεται*” (71), the etymology resembles those usually found in the epilogue. Yet this finding suggests not interpolation but inversion of beginning and ending; and the only remaining anomaly, “the fact that it does not refer to a character in the play” (71), is an exact parallel to the prophecy of Poseidon, which concerns the Greeks rather than the Trojans.



πύργων ἔπεμψεν ἐντὸς ὀλέθριον βρέτας·  
 ὄθεν πρὸς ἀνδρῶν ὑστέρων κεκλήσεται  
 Δούρειος Ἴππος, κρυπτὸν ἀμπίσχων δόρυ. (9–14)

The explanation is not strictly an aition, but it refers to the world of the audience and uses *κεκλήσεται*, a word very common in *aitia*<sup>24</sup>). This is the only such explanation in Euripides' plays that does not occur in an epilogue (cf. note 23 above), and it is especially striking since it may refer to the recently dedicated statue by Strongylion<sup>25</sup>). This etymological derivation disturbs the dramatic illusion in a manner otherwise reserved for the conclusion of the drama.

A more general resemblance to the ending is Poseidon's farewell at the end of his prologue speech:

ἀλλ' ὃ ποτ' εὐτυχοῦσα, χαῖρέ μοι, πόλις  
 ξεστόν τε πύργωμ'· εἴ σε μὴ διώλεσεν  
 Παλλὰς Διὸς παῖς, ἦσθ' ἂν ἐν βάθροισι ἔτι. (45–47)

As Wilson has shown<sup>26</sup>), the audience has every reason to expect that Poseidon will leave the stage, abandoning the walls he loves. His exit, postponed by the entrance of Athena, anticipates the ending of the play by establishing the recurrent theme of imminent departure from Troy<sup>27</sup>).

A final resemblance to the epilogue is the moral spoken by Poseidon as he departs:

μῶρος δὲ θνητῶν ὅστις ἐκπορθεῖ πόλεις,  
 ναοὺς τε τύμβους θ', ἱερὰ τῶν κεκημηκότων,  
 ἐρημιά δούς αὐτὸς ὦλεθ' ὕστερον. (95–97)

24) Hec. 1271, El. 1275, H.F. 1330, Ion 1594 (*κεκλήσθαι*), Hel. 1674 and Or. 1646. Compare Erechtheus frag. 65, line 92, and Supp. 1225 (*κληθέντες*). At Tro. 13 the MSS vary between *κεκλήσεται* (V) and *κληθήσεται* (PQ). For a discussion of Euripides' use of the word, see pages 383–394 in C.J. Ruijgh, *Observations sur l'emploi onomastique de κελήσθαι*..., in: *Miscellanea Tragica in Honorem J. C. Kamerbeek*, ed. J. M. Bremer et al., Amsterdam 1976, 333–395.

25) L. Parmentier, *Notes sur les Troyennes d'Euripide*, REG 36 (1923) 46–49.

26) Wilson (above, note 20), 205–212. It does not follow, however, that Athena's entrance has been interpolated. See also below.

27) Poseidon leaves Troy because the gods' affairs become sick when a city is made desolate (26–27), and Artemis likewise leaves Hippolytus lest mortal death defile her eyes (Hipp. 1437–1438). In *Hippolytus* the focus shifts to father and dying son for the final 26 lines, while in *Troades* the focus is upon human suffering for the entire play.

A concluding moral is most commonly spoken in the epilogue by the *deus ex machina* or the exiting chorus, but such reflection upon the action may also follow major developments in the plot<sup>28</sup>). It is especially surprising that Poseidon draws a lesson from the drama before it has begun<sup>29</sup>).

This survey of the prologue and epilogue of *The Trojan Women* shows that beginning and ending are largely inverted. The unique epilogue lacks those features which usually mark the conclusion of the action, and the unique prologue incorporates these same features to suggest finality before the play begins.

### III

What is the reason for this inversion? One scholar has suggested<sup>30</sup>) that the occurrence of these features in the prologue is so unusual that they must result from interpolation. Not only does this argument require that we obelize the equally unusual epilogue, but it also takes no account of the dramatic potential of this inversion. Other scholars have noted the finality with which the play begins, without describing the inversion which makes this possible. Thus Havelock: "Troy is finished, there is nothing to be done about it, and we wonder what else is now left for act or word to accomplish"<sup>31</sup>).

One result of the inversion of beginning and ending is to emphasize the disconnectedness of the scenes. Firstly, the prologue itself is largely independent of the play. The prophecy concerning the Greek fleet and the explanation of the Wooden Horse refer to times and places far removed from the women of Troy; the

---

28) See C. W. Friedrich, *Die dramatische Funktion der euripideischen Gnomēn*, Diss. Freiburg, 1955.

29) So surprising that P. G. Mason, *Kassandra*, JHS 79 (1959) 88, would transpose the effect of the moral to the end of the play: "the lesson of [lines 95-97] remains in our ears until the end of the play, so that no *deus ex machina* is required to establish justice or impose peace." On the meaning of these lines see D. Kovacs, *Euripides, Troades* 95-97: Is sacking cities really foolish?, CQ 33 (1983) 334-338.

30) Wilson, note 20 above.

31) E. A. Havelock, *Watching the Trojan Women*, in: *Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. E. Segal, Englewood Cliffs 1968, 116. Compare Poole's more general observations that *The Trojan Women* is an "anatomy of the consciousness of catastrophe" (page 258), and "It is Euripides' endgame" (A. Poole, *Total Disaster: Euripides' The Trojan Women*, Arion, n.s. 3 [1976] 259).

exchange between Poseidon and Athena (rather than the appearance of a single πρόσωπον προτακτικόν) makes the opening scene more dramatically self-contained; and the independence of the prologue from the action<sup>32</sup>) is heightened by the lack of a corresponding divine epilogue to frame and unify the drama. Secondly, the absence of the usual features of the epilogue deprives the play of a conclusion which might give meaning and coherence to the preceding scenes. No summary or moral ties the action together, and no concluding prophecy shows where it will lead.

We noted earlier that this disconnectedness of the action is often justified by the emotional intensity of the play. Thus Grube argues: "Its beauty and appeal derive more from the pathos of the situation itself and the power of the poetic presentation than from any elaborately interlocking motives or subtleties of characterization"<sup>33</sup>). This pathos and power are also emphasized by the inversion of beginning and ending. The finality of the prologue, which suggests that the plot is finished rather than about to begin, focuses attention in the following scenes upon the human agents, and upon how they cope with their dead-end situation<sup>34</sup>). The lack of finality in the epilogue heightens this pathos: the suffering of the Trojan women is relieved by no divine intervention or redeeming prophecy; it is not even rationalized by aetiology or moral<sup>35</sup>).

The inversion of beginning and ending in *The Trojan Women* is therefore understandable because it reinforces the disconnectedness and emotional power which are peculiar to this play. But why were those qualities sought, and why was this inversion employed to achieve them? We shall find an answer in the unusual movement of the action.

The inversion of beginning and ending accompanies a more general inversion in the action of the play. Rather than a sequence of events leading to some conclusion, *The Trojan Women* portrays a situation in which movement is impossible: the play begins and ends with the destruction of Troy and the departure of all sur-

---

32) The callous bargain between Poseidon and Athena concerning the fate of the Greeks is followed by the similar random allotment of the Trojan captives by the Greek leaders. The suffering seems all the more arbitrary because the parallel episodes are independent: the Greeks will be punished for the earlier crime of Ajax, not for their treatment of the captives.

33) Grube (above, note 6), 282.

34) Compare Pohlenz, vol. 1, 372 (quoted above, note 21), and Poole 258 (quoted above, note 31).

35) As Poole concludes, "never does a Chorus leave an emptier space at the end" (above, note 31), 259.

vivors. Rather than generating interest as to where individual desires will propel the action, it portrays characters whose desires achieve nothing, who suffer mightily but can never act. This inversion of the action allows Euripides to dramatize the hopeless situation of the women of Troy. As Conacher observes, the only movement in the play is a rhythm of hope and despair: "Again and again, this hope is stamped out and gives way to desolation, only to flicker forth in some new place until its final quenching at the end of the play"<sup>36</sup>). The hopes placed in Polyxena, in Astyanax, in the punishment of Helen, all lead nowhere. The play begins with the end: the end of Troy and of all that the women value. And there is no movement of the plot. The end, the destruction, simply becomes more complete<sup>37</sup>).

The disconnectedness of the scenes, the pathos of the drama, and the inversion of the action, all allow Euripides to dramatize a situation which is essentially undramatic. If *The Trojan Women* lacks conventional dramatic structure, it is because the play deals with events and experiences which lack a coherent or comforting structure; and this unconventional method can be seen most clearly in the inversion of the usual forms of beginning and ending. The unusual and un-dramatic structure of this play is a bold experiment, whose effectiveness must be judged by the individual viewer.

Although its effectiveness will continue to be debated, the general purpose of this experiment is agreed upon. Interpretations as divergent as the political allegory of Norwood and the existential psychology of Poole agree that the play's subject is war and its suffering<sup>38</sup>). We note in conclusion that the extraordinary power with which this theme is presented also depends upon the inversion of the action: the radical change in the structure of the play brings with it a radical change in the expectations of the audience.

Most of Euripides' plays begin with a prologue which anticipates the action<sup>39</sup>). In this respect Euripidean plots are narrative

36) Conacher (above, note 5), 139.

37) Cf. Poole (above, note 31), 259: "The play is concerned with analyzing, more coldly and clinically than most readers seem prepared to admit, the way in which people actually behave, values behave, words behave, in such a frontier situation."

38) G. Norwood, *Greek Tragedy*, London 1920, 244: "No spectator could doubt that 'Troy' is Melos, 'the Greeks' Athens," and Poole, 259 (quoted above, note 37). Compare note 6 above.

39) See note 20 above. For more recent discussions see A. H. Lewin, *A Study of the Prologoi of Four Plays of Euripides*, Diss. Cornell 1971; R. Hamilton,

in quality, for as Brooks points out, every story is a re-telling, and we enjoy hearing stories because they lead – with delays and detours – to an end that we already know<sup>40</sup>). Sometimes in Euripides this retelling is explicit: in *Hippolytus*, *Helen* and *The Bacchae* the outcome of the action is foretold in the prologue<sup>41</sup>). Elsewhere the retelling is implicit: the outcome of the action is foreshadowed in the prologue of every play except *Electra* and *The Trojan Women*<sup>42</sup>). In the former, the revenge of Orestes and Electra is so familiar to the audience that recapitulation of the plot is unnecessary. In the latter there is no plot to tell. The prologue of *The Trojan Women* does not anticipate the story, but finishes it. The epiphany seals the future of Troy and of the Greeks, and the scene that follows seals the fates of Agamemnon, Odysseus and each of the Trojan captives<sup>43</sup>). All that remains to be told, all that gives suspense to the drama, is how the women will react to their situation. Yet for this we are completely unprepared. The characters and the audience share an experience which resembles not the movement of a plot toward its goal, but the uncertainty and terror of facing the unknown.

The experience of the audience differs from that of the characters, insofar as the audience knows that the Greeks also will suffer and their fleet will be destroyed. The prophecy delivered in the prologue will be recalled in the finale as we observe the women departing for the ships. This irony heightens the pathos of the ending: not even our small comfort in this subsequent reversal can alleviate the women's grief. It also places in relief the uncertainty of the plot. In the callous bargain of the prologue and its extra-dramatic sequel, the audience can look forward to reciprocal destruction, if not justice. In the action of the drama, the audience can

---

Prologue Prophecy and Plot in Four Plays of Euripides, *AJP* 99 (1978) 277–302, and H. Erbse, *Studien zum Prolog der Euripideischen Tragödie*, *Untersuchungen zur Antiken Literatur und Geschichte* 20, Berlin 1984.

40) P. Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, New York 1985, 99–109. On the narrative qualities of Euripidean plots, see Dunn (above, note 8), 176–189.

41) *Hipp.* 21–22 and 41–50, *Hel.* 56–59, *Ba.* 47–54.

42) Stuart (above, note 20), 300 and 304. In pages 304–305 he describes *Electra* and *Hippolytus* as the only two exceptions: the former since there is no foreshadowing, and the latter since the foreshadowing is so complete that all suspense is removed. On page 300 he observes that in *Troades* the prologue only foreshadows events later than the end of the play.

43) Talthybius tells the allotted fates of Cassandra, Polyxena (cf. 39–40), Andromache and Hecuba (247–277), while Cassandra foretells the murder of Agamemnon (359–364) and the trials of Odysseus (431–443).



not anticipate how the women will respond to their hopeless situation.

The inversion of the action in *The Trojan Women* thus deprives it of an end or goal. By so doing, it dramatizes human experience deprived of a goal, suffering stripped of false hopes and expectations. And since we, the audience, have no plot to guide us through this experience, the wave of suffering may threaten us also:

οὕτω δὲ καὶ γὰρ πόλλ' ἔχουσα πῆματα  
ἄφθογγός εἰμι καὶ παρεῖσ' ἑὼ στόμα·  
νικᾷ γὰρ οὐκ θεῶν με δύστηνος κλύδων. (694–96)<sup>44</sup>).

Evanston, Illinois

Francis M. Dunn

---

44) This article is an expanded version of a paper delivered at the 1985 Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association. My thanks to John Herington for his helpful suggestions.

## THE GENERIC USE OF *MULA* AND THE STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE MULES IN THE ROMAN WORLD\*)

### *I. Introduction*

Sometimes linguistic history can throw light on social and economic history or practices. The use of *mula* in Imperial Latin requires one to assume a pattern of usage of mules in the Roman world which our sources felt no need to comment on explicitly.

The history of the pair *mulus/mula* offers an interesting case of a grammatical rule in conflict with the facts of everyday life. The general rule is that in masculine / feminine pairs of animal names of

---

\*) I am grateful to J. Bta. Aparicio Macarro, D. M. Bain, J. R. Baker, H. D. Jocelyn and J. N. H. Lawrance for much useful advice and information.