

## How Many Husbands Has Helen in the *Troades*? A Note on E. *Tro.* 959-960

Ra'anana Meridor

The two lines discussed in this note stand immediately before the end of Helen's speech in her own defence, in which she tries to avoid paying with her life for her elopement with the Trojan prince Paris from her home in Sparta and her husband king Menelaus, causing the Trojan War (899<sub>b</sub>-902). Helen pleads that the death sentence would not be just in her case (904) as she acted under the constraint of divine will (919-937) and upon the personal intervention of a mighty goddess, Aphrodite, who subdues even Zeus (940-950<sub>a</sub>); consequently she should be pardoned (950<sub>b</sub>). To lend credibility to the plea that her elopement and marriage to Paris were the product of divine compulsion she adds that immediately after the death of Paris she repeatedly tried to escape to the Greek camp, but was intercepted by the guards on the city wall (951-958), "and it was by force that this new husband Deiphobus carried me off and kept me against the will of the Trojans" (959-960). She concludes by returning, by way of a rhetorical question, to her initial assertion that a capital sentence is unwarranted in her case (904), asking how she can justly be put to death when marriage was forced on her (961-964<sub>a</sub>). If Menelaus, her judge and husband, wishes to be stronger than the gods, that is an ignorant desire on his part (964<sub>b</sub>-965).

Lines 959-960 were rejected as a "mythological interpolation" by Wilamowitz.<sup>1</sup> His rejection has been followed *i.a.* by the editors in the OCT and Teubner series.<sup>2</sup> The lines are defended by others, including the editor for the Collection des Universités de France according to whom they provide a reminder within this play, the third of the four Euripides produced that year at the Great Dionysia and the only one to survive, to the first, in which Deiphobus is known to have appeared on stage<sup>3</sup> — a significant echo if the three tragedies of that group constituted a connected trilogy.<sup>4</sup> The arguments *pro* and *contra*

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<sup>1</sup> U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Griechische Tragödien*, 3. Band,<sup>3</sup> Berlin 1910, ad 959-960 (p. 362).

<sup>2</sup> *Euripidis Fabulae* II, ed. G. Murray, Oxford 1904, 1908, 1913, ed. J. Diggle, Oxford 1981; *Euripides Troades*, ed. W. Biehl, Teubner, Leipzig 1970.

<sup>3</sup> *Euripide* IV, ed. L. Parmentier, Les belles lettres, Paris 1925, p. 5-6, n. 3, about the first play of the group: "Cette rivalité entre les deux frères donne de l'intérêt à l'allusion au mariage forcé d'Hélène avec Déiphobe, *Troyennes* 959-960 (deux vers souvent rejetés à tort)."

centre mainly on whether the introduction of this additional husband — Paris' younger brother who in the *Little Iliad* married his widowed sister-in-law shortly before the fall of Troy<sup>5</sup> — is compatible with the line of thought of Helen's argument<sup>6</sup> and with certain significant details both in her speech<sup>7</sup> and in Hecuba's reply to it.<sup>8</sup> No consensus has been reached so far.<sup>9</sup>

In this note I shall try to support the rejection of the two lines by indicating some probable undesirable implications of their inclusion for the structure of the *Troades*. My argument will demonstrate that Euripides' placement of Helen among the unassigned captives and his postponement of her meeting with Menelaus to his *agon*-scene are choices integral to his plot, and that they seem to militate against any reference to Deiphobus. I shall start by examining what may be learned to this effect from Euripides' use and non-use of his sources in this play.

The events constituting the plot of the *Troades* take place in the short passage of time between the conquest and the final burning and abandonment of Troy. The last stages of the city were described in detail in the *Ilias Parva* (n. 5 above)

<sup>4</sup> As is widely assumed. There is, however, no necessary link between the defence of these two lines and the "connected trilogy" theory; Wilamowitz (above with n. 1), e.g., assumed a linked trilogy.

<sup>5</sup> For the *Ilias Parva* see *Homeri Opera* V, ed. T.A. Allen, Oxford 1946, pp. 106-107 (epitome), pp. 127-136 (testimonia); this detail is on p. 106. The episode is not mentioned in the Homeric epics. Whether it underlies *Od.* 4.274-276, 8.517-520 has been debated since antiquity; see Stephanie West and J.B. Hainsworth (*A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 1, Oxford 1988) on *Od.* 4.276 and 8.517 respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Thus according to K.H. Lee, *Euripides Troades*, Basingstoke 1976, 959-60 n.: "The mention of her forced marriage assists Helen's argument. Even after Paris's death she was not free because she was forced to obey the wishes of her new husband Deiphobus", while S.A. Barlow, *Euripides Trojan Women*, Warminster 1986, *ad* 959-960 (p. 211) maintains that "The line of argument is that Helen has been trying to rejoin the Greeks, but was prevented by the Trojans. Now she faces death from the husband she was trying to rejoin. Mention of Deiphobus here interrupts this line of thought".

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Barlow (n. 6) on pp. 211-212 remarks that if 959-960 are retained, "the reference to two quite different sorts of ... 'force', (959 and 962), one inspired by Aphrodite, the other the brute force of Deiphobus himself, would be confusing. Helen is making the point that Aphrodite is the only *bia*". G.M.A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides*, London 1941, 293 n. 2, notes that it appears from 998 that "the man who married by force" in 962 is Paris, while in the text, if 959-960 stands, "force" in 962 repeats "force" in 959 and thus refers to Deiphobus.

<sup>8</sup> Grube (n. 7) remarks that no reference to a second forcible marriage to Deiphobus is found in Hecuba's answering speech to Helen.

<sup>9</sup> Of the latest commentators K.H. Lee (n. 6) retains the two lines, Barlow (n. 6) and W. Biehl, *Euripides Troades*, Heidelberg 1989, delete them.

and the *Iliu Persis* (n. 14 below),<sup>10</sup> two of the six epic poems composed most probably in the seventh and the sixth centuries<sup>11</sup> that, together with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, told the story of the Trojan War from its origins to the return of the heroes to Greece. These poems, which supplied the Athenian tragedians (and Greek and Roman artists generally) with many of their subjects,<sup>12</sup> have not come down to us. All that we have are: (1) a few mostly tiny fragments of the text and some patches of haphazard information about accidental details, retrieved from the writings of ancient scholars, and (2) a very concise summary of the poems, more like a list of the themes treated in them, which was probably composed in the second century CE<sup>13</sup> and based not on the poems themselves but on an earlier, lost adaptation. This summary seems to achieve its straight chronological sequence by including only one of the parallel versions of the same event. Still, *faute de mieux*, it may serve as a kind of table of contents of these poems. The part telling of the end of Troy is explicitly said to be based on the *Iliu Persis*.<sup>14</sup> As the *Troades* includes almost all the important events listed in the second half of this section, it would seem likely that Euripides availed himself of this epic for the construction of his play. Of course all or many of these events may have been described — perhaps with differences in emphasis or detail — in the *Ilias Parva* as well; the surviving fragments of that epic indicate that generally this is indeed so. Moreover, some of the same events had already been treated before Euripides by non-epic poets. Nevertheless, seeing that the *Troades* agrees with the *Iliu Persis* in the rare case where this epic is known to have differed from the *Ilias Parva* (see below, the first and the sixth sentences of the relevant part of the summary), one may reasonably assume that the former served the poet as the mythological basis for his play. Nonetheless Euripides does not restrict himself to this epic exclusively: Cassandra's becoming Agamemnon's gift of honour, for instance, is absent from our summary and may well derive from a different source.<sup>15</sup> Nor does he make use of all the details found in the *Iliu Persis*. The absence from Euripides' play of an event or a detail mentioned in the summary

<sup>10</sup> This is the generally accepted view. For somewhat different presentations of the relations between these two epics see W. Pötscher, "Epischer Zyklus," in *Der Kleine Pauly*, München 1979.

<sup>11</sup> All the dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>12</sup> See Arist. *Po.* 1459b2-7.

<sup>13</sup> Proclus, the author of the (lost) *Chrestomathia* from which were taken the tables of contents of the six epic poems of the Trojan cycle found in the introduction to the text of the *Iliad* in different medieval manuscripts, seems to be the second century grammarian rather than the fifth century philosopher. See A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, London 1966, p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> For the *Iliu Persis* see *Homeri Opera* V (n. 5), p. 107-108 (epitome), p. 137-140 (testimonia); this detail is stated in the title of the relevant part of the epitome.

<sup>15</sup> Neither Proclus nor his source is likely to have omitted this important episode. It is known already in the *Odyssey* (11.421-423) but seems to be absent from descriptions of the end of Troy that include Ajax's assault on Cassandra. The *Odyssey* never mentions the latter explicitly, although it knows of Athena's wrath 3.132-135, 145, 4.499-502. See also below with n. 34.

seems especially significant when it is replaced by another one or results in vague phrasing; in either case the conclusion seems to be that the omission is a rejection. As one such change concerns the two lines mentioning Helen's marriage to Deiphobus discussed in this note, an analysis of all the events found in the summary of the *Iliu Persis* but missing or curtailed in the *Troades* may be illuminating. The relevant part of the summary is given below. Each sentence of the summary is followed by a reference to the passage(s) in the *Troades* dealing with the same event, as well as to extant pre-classical and classical mythological versions which differ from those of the summary. The sentences are numbered for the sake of convenience.

("...and having slain many they take the city by force.")

- 1) "Neoptolemus on the one hand kills Priam who had fled for rescue to the altar of Zeus Herkeius." / *Tro.* 16<sub>b</sub>-17, 482<sub>b</sub>-483. In the *Ilias Parva* (Fr. 16) Neoptolemos first drags Priam from the altar.
- 2) (a) "Menelaus, on the other hand, having found Helen, leads her down to the ships" (b) "having butchered Deiphobus." / (b) In *Od.* 8.517-520 Deiphobus is overpowered by Odysseus and Menelaus.
- 3) "But Ajax the son of Ileus, pulling Cassandra away by force, drags together with her the wooden image of Athena" / *Tro.* 69-70.
- 4) "enraged by this the Greeks resolve to stone Ajax, but he flees for rescue to Athena's altar and is saved from the imminent danger."
- 5) "Afterwards, having set the city on fire, they sacrifice Polyxena at the tomb of Achilles." / *Tro.* 39-40, 260-271, 622-623.<sup>16</sup>
- 6) (a) "And Neoptolemus takes Andromache as his gift of honour," (b) "Odysseus having slain Astyanax." / (a) *Tro.* 272-274, 568-779, 1126-1130. (b) *Tro.* 719-725. In the *Ilias Parva* (Fr. 19) it is Neoptolemus who kills Andromache's son by Hector.
- 7) "And they divide among themselves the rest of the booty";<sup>17</sup> / *Tro.* 28-31 (first word).
- 8) "but Demophon and Acamas" (Theseus' sons) "having found Aethra" (Theseus' mother)<sup>18</sup> "take her with them." / *Tro.* 31 with the scholiast's explanation.
- 9) "Afterwards the Greeks sail away, and Athena contrives against them destruction on the high sea." / *Tro.* 75-94.

<sup>16</sup> This order of the sentences follows Allen's (n. 14) transposition of the two sentences beginning with "afterwards"; differently M. Davies (ed.), *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Göttingen 1988.

<sup>17</sup> "The booty" in this context seems to indicate the female captives (cf. the summary of the *Cypria* in *Homeri Opera* V [n. 5], p. 105), and "the rest of the booty", following upon the fates of the noblewomen of the royal family - the mass of the ordinary female population.

<sup>18</sup> She had been kidnapped and brought to Sparta by Helen's brothers (Alcman, *PMG* 21, Paus. 5.19.2-3) and followed Helen to Troy as her servant (*Il.* 3.144).

As is evident from the above, Euripides omits in the *Troades* the events outlined in two of the nine relevant sentences of the summary, namely those in the second sentence, in which Deiphobus is mentioned, and those in the fourth. Also, he formulates *Tro.* 31, which refers to the theme of the eighth sentence, so elliptically that the phrase needs the aid of the ancient commentator to be understood (see below with n. 30). I shall start with the fourth sentence and pass from it to the second, and I shall try to show that the strange phrasing of *Tro.* 31 is also related to the subject of this note. Since the fourth sentence results from what is told in the third, both sentences are examined together.

Ajax's sacrilegious offence against Athena, when he dragged Cassandra from the refuge she sought in the goddess' sanctuary during the sack of the city, is mentioned in the prologue of the play (69-70). But while according to the *Iliu Persis* his fellow heroes intend to punish Ajax by stoning, the *Troades* states explicitly that the Greeks did not even reproach him for his impiety (71). This is a significant change. The poet may have wished to incriminate all the Greeks; the punitive storm was not going to hit Ajax alone, but would fill the Aegean Sea with corpses (88-91). It seems also to be an innovation. Athena's vindictive wrath and the disastrous storm she brought on the Greeks because of Ajax had already been treated by Alcaeus.<sup>19</sup> Line 3 of the fragmentary poem speaks of stoning; the little left of ll. 4-7 may be remnants of a statement maintaining that the Greeks would not have suffered at sea had they killed Ajax. There is, however, absolutely nothing from which one could learn why Alcaeus' Greeks did not kill Ajax. Be this as it may, the explicit mention of stoning does not tally with the *Troades*' insistence on their not even rebuking the offender. Whether change or innovation, Euripides announces it in the prologue. The rejected version is likely to have been familiar to the audience from its graphic presentations: Ajax being called to account by the other Greeks for the outrage he committed against Cassandra was not only the subject of one of the episodes portraying the fall of Troy in Polygnotus' famous wall painting in Delphi — a different wall painting of the same subject decorated the Stoa Poikile in Athens.<sup>20</sup>

The second sentence, Μενέλαος δὲ ἀνευρὼν Ἑλένην ἐπὶ τὰς ναῦς κατὰγει, Διίφοβον φονεύσας, summarizes Helen's return to her first husband. It describes three actions: two are expressed by aorist participles and one by a finite verb in the present indicative situated between them. A comparison with a similarly constructed sentence by the same author helps to determine the precise sequence of these actions. The summary of the *Nosti*<sup>21</sup> reads: μεθ' οὗς ἐκπλεύσας ὁ Μενέλαος μετὰ πέντε νεῶν εἰς Αἴγυπτον παραγίνεται, τῶν λοιπῶν διαφθαρεῖσιν νεῶν ἐν τῷ πελάγει,<sup>22</sup> i.e. Menelaus sailed out in the wake of Diomedes and Nestor but was overtaken by the dreaded storm which destroyed all but five of his ships and pushed him off course until he arrived in

<sup>19</sup> See Alcaeus fr. 298 in E.-M. Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus*, Amsterdam 1971.

<sup>20</sup> Paus. 10.26.3, 1.15.2. According to *LIMC* I<sub>1</sub> (n. 24 below, 1981), 'Alas II' no. 109 the Stoa Poikile wall painting too was by Polygnotus.

<sup>21</sup> For the *Nosti* see *Homeri Opera* V (n. 5), p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> "Menelaus having sailed out in their wake arrives in Egypt with five ships, the other ships having perished at sea."

Egypt with the petty remains of his fleet. In other words, while both the actions expressed by aorist participles precede the action of the main verb in the indicative, the participle subsequent to the main verb supplies in retrospect the second of the three consecutive actions and is the one from which the main action immediately arises. The events described in the *Iliu Persis* and epitomized in our sentence may accordingly be reconstructed as follows: Menelaus finds Helen in a relatively high place (the palace on the acropolis of Troy) in the power of Deiphobus (as his wife), restores her to his authority by killing his rival, and brings her to the Greek camp on the beach,<sup>23</sup> obviously — although we have no information concerning her reinstatement in this epic — to be his queen, as she is in the *Odyssey* (book 4) back in Greece, and as she is already in conquered Troy in the *Ilias Parva* (Fr. 18; see below with n. 31). The absence of evidence for Helen's reinstatement in the *Iliu Persis* may indicate that in this epic poem Helen's return to her former husband was immediately followed by his pardon.<sup>24</sup> We are also ignorant about the first stages of Menelaus' recovery of Helen in the *Ilias Parva* but, seeing that this poem knows of Helen's marriage to Deiphobus (above with n. 5) and there (Fr. 17) Menelaus approaches his run-away wife with his sword drawn (though it falls from his hand at the sight of her beauty), it may well be that the succinct sentence of the summary also applies to the description of this event in the *Ilias Parva*, and that this was the generally accepted version.<sup>25</sup>

All this is a far cry from the situation in the *Troades*. Here Helen is in the power of the victorious Greek army, together with the other captives set aside as prizes for the highest in command (32-35), and it is the army that hands her over to Menelaus so that he can punish her for her infidelity or, if this is his wish, take her back to Greece as his wife (869-875; note ἀγέσθαι 875). We are not supposed to ask how she came to be in the hands of the army. It cannot have been Menelaus who took her captive — their meeting on the stage is obviously their first meeting (860-861, 869-872). This radical departure from tradition is dictated by Euripides' wish to create the conditions necessary for a formal debate about Helen's guilt, the *agon* in which she fights for her life. These quasi-judicial pleadings could not have taken place had Menelaus recovered Helen in the traditional way and reinstated her either by the very act of recovery or, in spite of his different intentions, at the sight of her beauty (see above with nn. 24 and 25). This change, too, is announced by Euripides in the prologue: when he describes the place where the chosen captives are temporarily kept (32-35), none but Helen is explicitly mentioned, and she is mentioned at length, even though

<sup>23</sup> For this meaning of "the ships" see e.g. the passage on Achilles' corpse in the summary of the *Aethiopis*, *Homeri Opera* V (n. 5), p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> See Lilly B. Ghali-Kahil, *Les enlèvements et le retour d'Hélène*, Paris 1955, p. 31; "Helene" in *LIMC* IV, Artemis, Zürich und München 1988.

<sup>25</sup> In the pictorial representations of Menelaus' recovery of Helen, his taking hold of her, sword in hand, the dominant portrayal of the event, is attested already before the middle of the 7th century; his sword may drop from ca. 500. See *LIMC* IV (previous n.), reproductions 2, pp. 157-165 and 210ff. and explanations 1, pp. 528-530 and 537ff.



she is not the only one of the *dramatis personae* staying under that roof and in spite of the fact that her sister-in-law Cassandra, who shares the same fate and who will be spoken of a few lines later without any hint of her whereabouts (41<sub>b</sub>-44), will come on stage long before her. This shows clearly how important it was for Euripides to inform his audience already at the beginning of the play that Helen's position in this tragedy was different from what might have been expected.

The Greek army's possession of Helen, which relieves Menelaus of the task of transferring her from the authority of the Trojans to that of the Greeks and from the control of his rival to his own power, seems like a Euripidean invention answering the specific requirements of this play. He may, however, have availed himself of an earlier, unconventional, version in the (lost) *Iliu Persis* of Stesichorus, where the sight of Helen's beauty made those about to stone her drop their stones (PMG 201). The motif of punishing Helen by stoning for the suffering she has brought on the Greeks also occurs in the *Troades*, and it may have been borrowed from the lyric poet.<sup>26</sup> But in our play it serves as a threat (1039<sub>b</sub>-1041) or as a vague plan for the distant future (877<sub>b</sub>-879, 1055-1056<sub>a</sub>), never to be realized, so that nothing can be deduced from the *Troades* about the circumstances in which Stesichorus made Helen face her would-be executioners. It does not seem likely that it was Menelaus who handed her over to them — in order to do so he himself would have had to resist the impact of her charms, and there is no hint whatsoever of that in the traditions relating to him. On the other hand, even the little known of Stesichorus provides plenty of evidence for the liberties this poet took in introducing innovations into mythological material. The possibility that in his *Iliu Persis* "the Greeks" did take hold of Helen before Menelaus and condemned her to stoning cannot, therefore, be entirely ruled out.

Be that as it may, the results of this examination correspond with what is known both about the use Euripides made of his prologues for the announcement of changes and innovations,<sup>27</sup> and about his altering accepted versions of traditional stories in order to introduce formal debates.<sup>28</sup> It would seem that in our case these alterations require the renunciation of any mention of Helen's connection with Deiphobus. Such an allusion would have reminded the audience of Deiphobus' death at the hands of Menelaus and of Helen's consequent reinstatement. But here her right to be reinstated depends on the question of her guilt debated in the *agon* in which the problematic lines 959-960 are found, and this *agon* is the reason why Euripides put Helen among the Trojan captives. Helen's fate was, of course, known beforehand to an audience brought up on Homer. This is exactly why the poet had to prevent every hint at this end if he intended

<sup>26</sup> In 1955 Ghali-Kahil (n. 24), p. 41, pointed out that the Stesichorean motif of Helen's (failed) stoning found no followers either in literature or in the graphic and plastic arts. There is no mention of it in the 1988 *LIMC*.

<sup>27</sup> See I. Gollwitzer, *Die Prolog- und Expositionstechnik der griechischen Tragödie*, diss. München 1937, p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> T.K. Stephanopoulos, *Umgestaltung des Mythos durch Euripides*, Athen 1980, p. 39.

to gain and keep his audience's fully involved attention during the *agon*.<sup>29</sup> An examination of *Tro.* 31 and its relation to the eighth of the sentences listed above is instructive in this context.

Without the aid of an ancient commentator, the statement of *Tro.* 30-31, "One part (of the captives) the Arcadian contingent got by lot, the other part the Thessalian contingent and the Theseid princes of the Athenians", would make one justifiably wonder why the Thessalian soldiers had to share their captive women with princes not from their own country. The scholiast on *Tro.* 31 helps later generations by telling them what Euripides' audience understood from the mere mention of the Theseids in the company of recipients of Trojan captives, namely that the reference is to the famous rescue of Theseus' mother Aethra by her grandsons.<sup>30</sup> Now the question to be asked seems rather to be why Euripides contented himself with the provocative mention of the Theseids, but refrained from explicitly speaking of their noble act or even introducing the name of Theseus' mother. A survey of what is known about this episode may help towards an answer.

From the summary of the cyclic *Iliu Persis*, taken together with the scholium on *Tro.* 31 (n. 30), we learn that Aethra was found by her grandsons probably at the end of the distribution of the common captives, and that she was all they took from the booty. In the *Ilias Parva*, too, Aethra's fate seems to be decided after that of the other captives; it certainly is decided after Helen's fate. We learn that there (Fr. 18) "Aethra ..., when Troy was taken, ... came stealthily to the Greek camp. She was recognized by the sons of Theseus, and Demophon asked for her from Agamemnon. The latter was ready to grant Demophon the favour, but said that Helen must first give her consent. He sent a herald, and Helen granted him the favour."<sup>31</sup> Evidently Aethra's rescue by her grandsons depends here on the pleasure of a Helen who graciously waives her right to her runaway slave. No doubt this Helen has already returned to her position as Menelaus' queen. We do not know whether this is how the Theseids took hold of Aethra in the *Iliu Persis* as well — the summary is too concise either to prove or to refute such a view — but we know that this version was current when Euripides wrote the *Troades*: Polygnotus had it in mind when he painted the famous wall painting in Delphi.<sup>32</sup> The cryptic hint at Aethra's rescue by her grandsons makes sense if Euripides wished to flatter Athens by means of that event, and yet

<sup>29</sup> On Euripidean suppressions and omissions by means of which "he artfully brings about the reverse of a known end" see my "E. Tr. 28-44 and the Andromache scene", *AJPh* 110 (1989), 17-35, esp. 28ff. The present paper returns to the relation between the *Iliu Persis* and the *Ilias Parva* versions of Aethra's recovery, but views it differently, adding the *agon* as reason for Helen's early introduction as captive.

<sup>30</sup> *Σ Tro.* 31: "Some maintain that this was said so as to please" (the Athenian audience). "For Acamas and Demophon did not take anything from the booty but Aethra alone, and it was for her that they came to Troy, Menestheus commanding."

<sup>31</sup> *Il. Parv.* Fr. 18 = Paus. 10.25.8. The translation is W.H.S. Jones' (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, Loeb Classical Library 4, 1979), slightly adapted.

<sup>32</sup> This is the conclusion drawn by Pausanias (previous note) from the scene in the painting.



prevent the audience from recalling Helen's contribution to it. By the time they have inferred from this hint what the playwright means them to infer, the constant flow of new information demands their attention and does not allow them to linger further over an event already belonging to the past. Still, lest even the bare mention of the Theseids suffice to evoke the image of the reinstated regal Helen in the minds of some of the audience, Euripides takes care to obliterate this impression instantly by having the description of the captive Helen (32-35) follow immediately upon the reference to the Athenian princes.

All these observations make it most unlikely that the marriage of Helen to Deiphobus was introduced in lines 959-960. It is of course well known that Euripides allowed the co-existence of contradictory mythological versions when he wished to derive from each its specific effect;<sup>33</sup> he seems to have done so also in the *Troades* with the Cassandra-Agamemnon and the Cassandra-Ajax stories (above with n. 15). Indeed, this play may well be the earliest extant literary composition including both episodes.<sup>34</sup> But, unlike Helen's status in this play, in the above instances noted by scholars there existed no standard version; each of the variants was well established, so that the use of the one did not affect the other. On the other hand, the army's handing over Helen to a Menelaus who did not take her captive was an innovation. Consequently every allusion to the established version of Helen's position ran the danger of undermining the credibility of the new and unestablished one and with it the credibility and effectiveness of the *agon*. Euripides is hardly likely to have endangered the structure he had built so carefully by introducing Helen's additional Trojan husband; he knew his craft too well.<sup>35</sup>

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

<sup>33</sup> See T.C.W. Stinton, *The Judgement of Paris*, London 1961, p. 56, and G.W. Bond, *Euripides Heracles*, Oxford 1981, note on 397.

<sup>34</sup> They are, however, kept strictly separate but for 616b-619a, long after Cassandra's final exit.

<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to the anonymous reader for his helpful criticism of this paper.