

## RECONSTRUCTING EURIPIDES' *TROJAN TRILOGY*

©David Stuttard

### THE CONTEXT OF *TROJAN WOMEN*

What sort of dramatic impact did Euripides expect *Trojan Women* to have on its first audience? As Donald Rumsfeld might say, there are many known unknowns, which make this question difficult for us to answer with any great conviction. These range from questions of politics (would the audience actually have interpreted the play as an indictment of Athens' treatment of Melos the previous year?<sup>1</sup>) to issues of production (what do we really know about the way this specific play was first performed?). But chief among the barriers to our understanding there is one rather crucial known known: *Trojan Women* was the third play in a trilogy, of which the first two plays are lost.

For other plays of the last two decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, such a loss might not be so significant. We need look no further than the lists of plays performed to know that gone were the days of trilogies (such as Aeschylus' *Oresteia*) where each component play tackled a different episode from the same myth. The fashion now was for three distinct tragedies, which, although they may have had an overarching thematic link, were quite unrelated in their subject matter.

But in 415 BCE, for reasons, which may perhaps become apparent, Euripides decided to buck the trend, and write a trilogy in the old style, each play a part of the larger story of the *Trojan War*, a three act tragedy (almost) with *Trojan Women* as Act III.

To a modern producer (to me<sup>2</sup>), the lack of the first two plays is intensely frustrating. It is as if we possessed only the fifth act of *Hamlet* or the last movement of the *Eroica*. What survives is undoubtedly a great work, but without seeing it in its original context – or even something approximating that context – its true greatness is diminished.<sup>3</sup>

But all is not lost – for not all is lost of the first two plays, *Alexandros* and *Palamedes*. Indeed, enough survives (especially of *Alexandros*) that it is possible to attempt some sort of a reconstruction<sup>4</sup> and so, in 2005, I began working on the fragments.

### THE BASIS OF THE RECONSTRUCTION

I already had a strong connection with *Trojan Women*. I had translated the play for performance by *Actors of Dionysus* (aod) in 1995, and had subsequently written an adaptation based on that translation in the Autumn of 2001. By 2005, I had not only made an audio recording of this adaptation,<sup>5</sup> but directed it on several occasions for performances within the UK, and in ancient theatres, including at Ephesus and Troy. Moreover, it had been picked up by other producers and performers, and its apparent strength led me to conclude that it was this adaptation, rather than a translation of the play, that I wanted to use as the core of the reconstructed trilogy.

This had other benefits. I was acutely aware that there could be no such thing as a definitive reconstruction. But, taking as my starting point something, which was already an adaptation, I could give myself much greater freedom and flexibility when it came to working on the fragments. Using my experience of studying, translating and directing the plays of Euripides, I was aiming to produce works, which not only replicated the structure of Greek tragedy, but contained something of his style, addressing some of the issues which permeate his surviving plays from roughly the same period. I hoped to create a work of drama, sufficiently informed by what survived of the original plays to go some way towards restoring *Trojan Women* to its original context, and so in turn address some of the questions of interpretation and performance raised by that play. But above all, I wanted to make good drama.

## THE FRAGMENTS

So to the fragments.<sup>6</sup> 193 lines of *Alexandros* survive in one form or another. This represents perhaps a sixth of the entire play. But apart from one 10-line fragment, in which the chorus reflects on the nature of nobility, there are only two or three other fragments, which are series of complete lines (and none of these are more than 4 lines long). The rest range from relatively lengthy passages where only part of each line survives to one- or two-word fragments. In addition, we have 43 lines of a Latin adaptation by Ennius (3rd-2nd Century BC) in fragments ranging from one to 11 lines long, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD Greek “*hypothesis*”, or summary of Euripides’ play.<sup>7</sup>

Of *Palamedes*, less than 40 lines (perhaps a thirtieth of the play) survive, over half of which come from one scene, the *agon* or debate in which Palamedes is tried for treachery. What else we know about the play comes from supposed allusions to it in other authors, for example Euripides’ contemporary, the comic poet Aristophanes, and entries in ancient dictionaries.

The distribution of the fragments is entirely random. They have survived purely by chance, most because they were quoted by later writers<sup>8</sup> to illustrate philosophical or linguistic points rather than for what they revealed about the dramas from which they came. Thus they reveal little in themselves about the structure of either play. In keeping with ancient practice, none of the fragments is attributed to a specific character.

## BEGINNING THE RECONSTRUCTION

From the start it was clear that there was a lot of room for creativity. I began with *Alexandros*. The existence of much of the *hypothesis* meant that there was at least some sort of structure to work from, though even here many of the crucial details of the plot were frustratingly glossed over.

Two half-lines from the prologue survive. Nothing more. Nor is there anywhere anything to suggest who the speaker might have been. This forced me to make my first major dramatic decision.

The choice of character to deliver the prologue in any Greek tragedy is crucial. Not only does s/he provide such information as may be needed to fill in the background, but the way in which s/he does this can bias the audience to favour a certain character or standpoint, as well as establishing the whole atmosphere of the play.

The presence of Athene in the prologue of *Trojan Women* (ll. 48ff.), where she persuades Poseidon to unleash a storm to destroy the Greek fleet as they sail home, suggested to me that she might well appear in the prologues to the other two plays as well. After all, she has good reason to do so. *Alexandros* is a play about what happens after Paris has snubbed her in his famous Judgement.<sup>9</sup> And in *Palamedes*, the central character is actually Odysseus, protégé of Athene (who similarly helps and instructs him in the prologue to Sophocles’ *Ajax* ll. 1-133). Moreover, as audiences commented after the first readings of the trilogy, having Athene appear in all three plays helps give them a unity of focus, as well as developing her character as a capricious god.

Decisions such as this informed much of the process. Throughout, I wanted as far as possible to link all three plays, both through characterisation and through the use of language. Thus, I introduced motifs and images which would run through the three plays, many of them anticipating or prefiguring their appearance in the existing adaptation of *Trojan Women*. One of the first occurs in the *Alexandros* prologue, where Athene speaks of “the light, which bathes the far horizon with the first pale blush of dawn”, an image taken from line 1069 of *Trojan Women*, and which appears in my adaptation of that play. Repetitions such as these help create not only continuity, but also tension and, when they are used in situations of great reversal, pathos.

## RECONSTRUCTING ALEXANDROS

The process of writing *Alexandros* was very different from that involved in tackling *Palamedes* chiefly because more of *Alexandros* survives. Thus, I was able to use the *hypothesis* to map out the shape of the play, dividing it into sections of Choral Passages or Episodes. Before beginning each section, I would familiarise myself with the fragments, and note what I thought the key things to achieve might be. So, for the 1<sup>st</sup> Episode of *Alexandros* (after the Choral Parodos), I noted:

*Structure:*

Priam arrives on way to Games. Comforts Hekabe, and justifies exposing Paris.

*Themes:*

The importance of the city; the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the few; the prosperity of Troy linked to Troy's piety.

*Need to*

Establish Priam's character, the benign, but wily politician. Establish Priam's relationship with Hekabe. Underline the wealth of Troy, as characterised by the preparations for the Games.

And for the second part of that Episode:

***Structure:***

The herdsmen (as a rabble?) accuse Paris of behaving inappropriately, being arrogant and – importantly – anarchic. Perhaps they say he has been claiming to have a special relationship with the gods.

Paris asks if he can defend himself, and makes a speech about how men should be judged by their worth, not their birth. Hekabe takes on the role of rebutter of his argument, and makes a speech based on prejudice. Priam, ever the politician, says he tends to agree with Hekabe, but will allow Paris to prove his worth – by entering the Games.

***Need to***

Establish Paris' character as a true counterpart of Helen – arrogant but irresistible.

Because I was engaged in part in a work of creative writing, however, I found that I could not always adhere to the guidelines I had set myself. As often happens, characters would assert their own personality and take speeches or scenes along an unexpected route. The trick tended to be to give them some autonomy but aim, in the end, to herd them like sheep towards the agreed goal.

It should be noted, too, that, when it came to the structure and substance of speeches, I drew heavily on my familiarity with other Euripides plays to try to ensure that my characters would say the sort of thing that his may have done. So, in the section outlined above, *Alexandros*' speech was highly influenced by Orestes' words to Electra<sup>10</sup> in which he discourses on the true nature of nobility.

But even though the *hypothesis* survives, there are several tantalising gaps in our knowledge of the structure of Euripides' *Alexandros*, and – more tantalisingly still – these tend to come at crucial points in the action. Nowhere is this more true than in the scene towards the end of the play where Hekabe attempts to murder *Alexandros* (whom she has failed to recognise as her son, Paris), and is prevented from doing so only by the intervention of Cassandra.

There have been many and various attempts to unravel how the action unfolded in the lost play. This is clearly a scene of heightened drama, leading up to the crucial recognition scene and the acceptance of Paris back into Troy. But how was it done – and how to do it in the reconstruction?

Here there was no guide and I fell back on what I felt Euripides might have done in the circumstance, the Euripides of dramatic irony, the master of compassion with his profound

understanding of human frailty. Thus I engineered a scene in which Cassandra recognises Alexandros for who he is and frantically urges Hekabe to kill him, telling her that he is her son and that he will cause Troy's destruction; while Hekabe, on the hand, who has mourned her child's supposed death for twenty years, can hear only that part of Cassandra's speech identifying Alexandros as Paris, and rejoices at his reappearance, providing her own interpretation of the prophecy to suggest that it has already been fulfilled in a less cataclysmic manner.

This scene leads to the final confirmation of Alexandros' true identity by the herdsman who rescued him (cf. Sophocles *OT* II. 1110ff) and an ending characterised by general rejoicing, tainted only by Alexandros' revelation that he must go to Sparta for an as-yet undisclosed purpose.

My intention was that *Alexandros* should portray Troy at the height of its power and prosperity, the place from which its fall would be greatest. It also needed to establish the character of Hekabe, the self-confident queen through whose veins runs a vein of Homeric cruelty,<sup>11</sup> firmly within this setting – the antithesis of the situation in which we find her in *Trojan Women*. We shall return to this below.

In its reconstructed state, this *Alexandros* proved to be a very accessible play, full of twists and turns, and characterised by a certain humour rather than high tragedy. It was gratifying that in performance it seemed to leave the audience wanting more.

#### RECONSTRUCTING *PALAMEDES*

*Palamedes* is an altogether darker play. It was also much more fragmentary, and there is no *hypothesis*. Nothing really remains apart from fragments of the trial scene, where Odysseus accuses Palamedes of collaborating with the Trojan enemy.

So, again there is much scope for the imagination. Perhaps because of our sketchy knowledge of the play, but certainly because I wanted to change the atmosphere immediately and significantly from that of *Alexandros*, I set the play in winter and invented a thick fog enveloping the plain of Troy. One of the benefits of the fog was that it could shroud a character's identity, forcing the recurrent questioning of new arrivals, "Stand! Show yourself! Who are you? Friend or Trojan?", which itself underlined a jumpy uncertainty concerning loyalties and motivations.

The lack of source material also allowed me to strip the story to its core, cutting away anything, which might appear extraneous, and creating a play, which I hoped would be chilling in the inevitability of its story-line. It is the story of a loyal servant hounded to his death because of the ambitions of others, and (here as elsewhere in the *Trilogy*) modern parallels could not but help suggesting themselves. It would not be accidental if a modern audience were reminded of the tragedy of David Kelly, especially in the messenger speech. Not that it is essential (or even important) to the appreciation of the play for these parallels to be picked up – in ten years time, Dr Kelly's death will not be as resonant as it was at the time of writing, but the universality of the situation will remain.

Another determining factor was that I felt this play needed to be short. I have already used the analogy of plays in a trilogy being like movements in a symphony, and here in the second, slow movement, where the rivers and the bay were frozen over with ice, it seemed important to preserve momentum by keeping it simple.

One of the themes running through the *Trilogy* is duplicity, and one of the most duplicitous characters in Greek tragedy is Odysseus, who (we know) played a major role in Euripides' *Palamedes*. It was my decision, therefore, to bring him to the forefront of the drama, to create a story in which we see the "strutting, swaggering Odysseus", as Cassandra calls him in my *Trojan Women*, first engineering the downfall of his arch rival before himself being humiliated by Palamedes' father Nauplius.

In this story, the trial scene would become a sham (as is the trial scene in Euripides' *Hekabe* II. 1109ff of 425 BCE), and questions of force versus justice could be explored. Again, these issues were

very much alive at the time of writing the reconstruction, just as they had been in 416/15 BCE, when Thucydides tells us that the Athenian ambassadors, in demanding the capitulation of Melos, had abandoned any pretence of diplomacy, resorting to the argument that justice lay in the fact that Athens had greater firepower: might was right.

Rather than plan each scene as I had with *Alexandros*, I came up with an overall shape for the play and worked towards that, with the *eminence grise* of Odysseus providing my guide. The end result was a more direct, more disturbing play than *Alexandros* – certainly a more masculine one, as in it, as in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, there are no female characters. (Although Athene does appear, it is in the guise of a young soldier). It may be that it lacks the Byzantine richness of the first play, but this is deliberate. I wanted the audience to be brought with a jolt down to earth, face to face with the stark realities of the war setting, which in turn might go some way towards explaining the inhumanity of the army's behaviour in *Trojan Women*.

#### EXCLUDING CERTAIN KNOWN KNOWNS – THE OAR SCENE IN *PALAMEDES*

Here I must admit to wilfully excluding a scene, which, it appears, existed in Euripides' *Palamedes*. After the trial and execution of Palamedes, his brother Oeax was shown carving a message on an oar, a report of what had happened, which he then launched into the sea that it might be carried home to Greece and to his father.

Although I could see how Oeax might be brought to the fore in the second half of the play (in the same way that Teucer becomes the protagonist after the suicide of his brother in Sophocles' *Ajax* II. 987ff), I felt that there was no way in which I could make what seemed to me such an implausible "message in a bottle" scenario work in a way which would not end up as being ludicrous. So, convincing myself that ancient audiences might have been better at suspending their disbelief, and with an admittedly heavy heart, I left it out.

Instead, I had Palamedes' father, Nauplius, turn up somewhat unexpectedly (but not as unexpectedly as Aristotle<sup>12</sup> criticizes Aegeus for doing in Euripides' *Medea* II. 663) as a kind of *homo ex machina*. His arrival had been foreseen earlier by Palamedes, and the speech I gave Nauplius, when he did appear, justified the fact that no-one had been expecting him: if they'd known he was on his way, things might just have turned out differently.

#### UNEXPECTED INCLUSIONS - THE NIGHTINGALE, THE BLUE JAR AND THE WAITING MAN

Similarly, some new details crept into the mix. Three examples from *Palamedes* may serve as illustrations.

For the first there is, at least, some justification from the fragments. In antiquity, one of the most well known quotations from the play was this: "You have killed him, you have killed him, you Greeks – the Muses' nightingale, who harmed no-one."<sup>13</sup> We do not know where this originally came in the text, but I wanted to use it as the final sentence of the play. But the image of "the Muses' nightingale" coming from no-where seemed to jar, so I wondered if the nightingale might be introduced earlier. Thus it was that it now makes an appearance in the messenger speech, when Talthybius tells the chorus how, when he discovered Palamedes' body:

There was one other thing. A nightingale. Perched on a branch above his body. But as we approached, it flew off. And the mist came down again.

The nightingale introduces an element of mystery, of other-worldliness into the description. Actually, it is the second mysterious detail we meet in the Talthybius' speech. Just before this passage, he tells us how about Palamedes' body:

And in his hand, a tiny jar, a tiny blue jar – here, I've brought it for you. Take it. Take it.  
Take it if you wish.

The jar was again somewhat unexpected. I had first introduced it in the first play, when Hekabe instructs Cassandra to bring the poison with which she intends to murder Alexandros, and tells her that it is contained in a blue jar. By repeating the image here, without explanation, I hoped not merely to establish a through-motif, but to take the already somewhat romantically mysterious account of Palamedes' death to a possibly supernatural plane.

This feeling that there may be something not entirely explicable about Palamedes' death (compare Oedipus' death in Sophocles' *OC*), is enhanced when Nauplius describes his sailing into the bay at Troy. He tells us:

And so we slowly nosed to land and found our mooring. And when we did, when we reached shore, there was a man there on the beach, just standing, standing, motionless, as if he was expecting us. And he told us about Palamedes, and he told us what had happened. He told us what had happened, Odysseus.

The identity of the waiting man is unclear – even to me. But audiences found the image haunting, and tended to agree that it gave the ending of the play a disturbing twist.

#### CONTINUITY, CHARACTERS AND CHORUS

I said earlier that I hoped that restoring *Trojan Women* to its original context might shed light on some of the questions of interpretation and performance of that play. So what light, if any, has my reconstruction shed?

Audiences for the first readings of the trilogy at the British Museum and Tristan Bates Theatre in April and May 2007 (see next section, p. 7ff) certainly came away saying that their perception of *Trojan Women* had been changed and deepened.

One thing which had changed was their reaction to Hekabe. In *Trojan Women* Hekabe is a slave, a defeated queen. But in *Alexandros* she is at the height of her powers. We know from surviving fragments that someone in *Alexandros* gave an impassioned speech condemning slaves as being lazy and slovenly, "all belly, and looking to nothing beyond that".<sup>14</sup> The chances are that the speaker was Hekabe herself. Thus, in typically tragic progression, the scourge of slaves becomes a slave herself.

Equally, in *Alexandros*, we are shown a Hekabe who is merciless, ready to kill in order to protect her city and way of life. We suspect that had she been in the victorious Greek army, she might well have condoned the killing of Astyanax in order to remove a perceived threat.

For an audience, which has seen the way Odysseus behaves in *Palamedes*, the impact of Hekabe's situation in *Trojan Women* is further heightened – when they hear that she is to be given to Odysseus as his slave, they may now share her horror.

Two other characters in *Trojan Women* appear in earlier plays, one certainly, the other probably. Probably the messenger who brings the news of Palamedes' death is Talthibius – invariably he appears in tragedies concerning Troy in his role as messenger. And with him, again, the audience can perceive a more complex journey than if they saw him only in *Trojan Women*. Now a journey that ends in his honouring of the corpse of an enemy child begins with his complicity in the illegal execution of an ally. As a character caught up in a situation of profound inhumanity, powerless to intervene, yet desperate in the end to show compassion towards Hekabe and her loss, he assumes the voice of the common man, to which the audience can relate with ease.

If there is any doubt that Talthybius appears in more than one play, there is none when it comes to Cassandra. Parts of her prophecy survive both from Euripides' own *Alexandros* and from Ennius' subsequent Latin adaptation.

Her presence in the earlier play not only lends continuity in terms of character, but also explains the manner of her entrance in *Trojan Women*. Here, we first see her dressed incongruously as a bride, carrying torches usually associated with marriage. The usual explanation is that she is ironically referring to her impending union with Agamemnon, to whom she has been assigned as a slave, and this is partly right.

However, for an audience, which has seen *Alexandros*, the torches take on an altogether more sinister character. For, in the earlier play, there has been much talk of torches, not least from Cassandra herself, where she refers to Hekabe's dream, twenty years previously, in which she gave birth to a child with a hundred hands, each clutching a blazing torch – and the next day she gave birth to Paris. It was this dream, which led to the baby being exposed on the mountain-side, because the interpretation of it was that the child would be responsible for the destruction of Troy. Thus in *Trojan Women*, Cassandra is not only signalling the fate which awaits her, but also reminding Hekabe (and the audience) of the causes of the war: Paris and Hekabe's failure to kill him.

Hekabe's own role in the destruction of Troy is, of course, one of the planks of Helen's speech in the *agon* of *Trojan Women*,<sup>15</sup> a speech which modern audiences invariably see as shallow and false. From seeing *Alexandros*, however, we know that much of what Helen says is, in fact, true. Interestingly, this did not seem to matter to the audiences at the first readings of the *Trilogy*. They still took Hekabe's side – as, for the scene to work dramatically, they must.

There are other ways in which plot elements interlink throughout the trilogy, but perhaps the most significant is to do with the storm which Athene and Poseidon tell us at the beginning of *Trojan Women* will destroy the Greek fleet on its way home.<sup>16</sup> By the end of the play, I have found that there is a tendency among audiences, caught up in the story of human suffering, to have forgotten (or ignored) this crucial first scene, and I long wondered if this were a flaw in the writing, or in production.

However, it is unlikely that an audience seeing the complete trilogy would react in the same way, for at the end of *Palamedes* it now appears<sup>17</sup> that Nauplius announces his intention to take revenge for his son's killing by setting up misleading beacons to lure the Greek navy onto the rocks on their homeward voyage. When the plays are performed consecutively, this mention of the fleet's destruction not only serves as a bridge between *Palamedes* and *Trojan Women*, but it emphasises to the audience that the perceived victors in the final play are themselves heading for disaster.

#### STAGING THE TRILOGY

Having completed the reconstructions of *Alexandros* and *Palamedes*, I showed them to a number of people, in both the theatre world and the world of Classics. Their positive feedback suggested that the next stage might be to mount a public reading of the whole *Trilogy*. Discussions with the British Museum led to their agreeing to host the first reading in their lecture theatre in April 2007.

At this point, James Albrecht expressed an interest in becoming involved both on the production side and as director, a suggestion which I enthusiastically embraced. Thanks to James, the Tristan Bates Theatre at the Actors Centre, London, was brought into the equation, generously allowing us not only to rehearse there for a week prior to the first reading, but also to stage two subsequent readings in the following week. We felt that this was particularly important, as we wanted to attract as many people to the events as possible, including figures from theatre, who might then be interested in helping to take the *Trilogy* further.

I had previously had lengthy conversations with Robert Cogo-Fawcett, himself an international theatre producer and practitioner, who had generously offered to help with the project, in part through

the organisation *Made in Brighton*. In addition, he had written to a number of very high profile English theatres to encourage them to read and consider the scripts.

Robert's involvement helped give the project an added credibility within the industry, and as the date of the first performance neared, Douglas McJannet of Arden Entertainment<sup>18</sup> kindly offered to become involved, giving us the assistance of the Casting Director, Anne Vossler, as well as Producer, Oscar Mathew, helping with publicity and marketing.

To help give a sense of place and atmosphere, I had earlier approached musician and actor Emilia Brodie, who, together with Hannah McPake, wrote a brilliant score for the entire trilogy, which they performed live, using violin and cello, as well as percussion and singing. I had worked with Emilia previously on a number of projects, beginning in 2003, when she was a violin-playing Aphrodite in *Hippolytus*. She subsequently composed and improvised a musical score for readings of *Bacchae*, which we performed on board the ship *Minerva II* on two Swan Hellenic cruises.

Having sent Emilia the scripts in late 2006, she and I met at my house in February 2007, at which time she let me hear some of the ideas she had come up with for themes. She was keen to have a number of key themes, which would recur during the trilogy in one form or another, binding the three plays together, while still allowing herself the space to improvise during rehearsal. Thus, for example, there was a dance theme which occurred at the end of *Alexandros*, reappearing distorted in a minor key in *Palamedes*, and finally being played in a very fragmented form at the end of *Trojan Women*.

Musically, *Alexandros* was the most joyful of the three plays, with dance-like rhythms, major keys and racing pizzicato accompaniments to wordless singing. *Palamedes* on the other hand contained few melodies, but rather utilized harsh discordant bowing to create a sound reminiscent of splintering ice or rasping wind. *Trojan Women* combined the two, with a greater emphasis on the vocal element, haunting and passionate. At the end of the play, when Troy's destruction is complete, all the themes from the trilogy reappeared in one form or another in fragments.

A cast of 13, including musicians, was assembled, many of whom had significant experience in both radio and theatre.<sup>19</sup>

The first performance was on a Friday, and rehearsals began on the Monday of that week, which meant that the first day was given over mainly to a reading of all three plays, with the next three days each being used to rehearse one play a day. A final read-through and technical rehearsal then took place at the British Museum on the Friday, before the first public reading in the evening.

Despite the fact that these were, in essence, readings, James had introduced an element of staging into the performances. Although all members of the cast were holding scripts, they used the space available, making entrances and exits (from and to seats positioned at the sides of the stage), as well as addressing speeches and conversations to each other. The chorus and musicians were positioned stage right in *Alexandros* and stage left in *Trojan Women*, with the chorus upstage centre and the musicians downstage right in *Palamedes*. Actors who played both named characters and members of the chorus would emerge from the chorus to take up a different position on stage when they were playing specific characters. All this was hugely beneficial in assisting the audiences in following the story-line.

The three performances (at the British Museum and Tristan Bates Theatre) attracted good audiences and, as became apparent from the Question and Answer sessions afterwards, there was massive enthusiasm for the project. Several theatres sent representatives, and at time of writing (in July 2007), we are in discussion with Arden Entertainment as to the best way to take the project forward. Ideally we hope to see the *Trilogy* staged in its entirety in 2008, and up-to-date information about developments can be found at the [www.trojantrilogy.co.uk](http://www.trojantrilogy.co.uk) website.

## IN CONCLUSION

So, what do the reconstructions suggest about *Trojan Women*?

In its restored position as the third play in a connected trilogy, *Trojan Women* becomes the final stage in a long reversal, during which the stakes have been incrementally raised. What started out as a decision involving the fate of a baby has gradually escalated so that it engulfs not only Troy, but the Greek world, the whole world, too.

It may be, therefore, that Euripides returned to the old form of a trilogy of thematically-connected plays to allow him to do something typically revolutionary: to expand the traditional shape and dynamics of the single tragedy to cover the trilogy as a whole. Thus reversal happens gradually over three, not only one – proud, flawed Hekabe's fall from greatness to suffering is played out over an entire trilogy, not simply one single play.

In addition, at a time of renewed hostilities it allows Euripides the space to explore consequences. Importantly, he explores the consequences for both sides of the conflict: the Trojans in *Alexandros*, the Greeks in *Palamedes*, and both in *Trojan Women* concluding (among other things) that, in such an all-engulfing war as that at Troy, there could be no winners. Perhaps this was what made it so powerful for a modern audience.

## AND FINALLY

Euripides' *Trojan Trilogy* was originally rounded off with a fourth play, the comedic satyr play *Sisyphus*. Only a line and a half survives, so any kind of reconstruction is impossible. But I am intrigued to see what effect a comedy after such a trilogy might have, so am currently engaged in writing my own *Sisyphus*, which I hope, along with the three tragedies, may one day be performed.

**Bibliography**

Aristotle *Poetics*

Cicero, *De Divinatione*

Collard, C., M. J. Cropp and J. Gilbert (tr) *Euripides Selected Fragmentary Plays* Vol 1, Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 1995

Collard, C., M. J. Cropp and J. Gilbert (tr) *Euripides Selected Fragmentary Plays* Vol. II. Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2004

Euripides *Electra*

Plutarch

Thucydides *Histories*

Stobaeus,

ps-Longinus

Clement of Alexandria

**Images from the reading of *Alexandros*, *Palamedes* and *Trojan Women***

All images copyright: [www.daveashtonphotography.com](http://www.daveashtonphotography.com)



**The full cast** (numbers refer to plays: 1 = *Alexandros*; 2 = *Palamedes*; 3 = *Trojan Women*):

Emilia Brodie	Musician(1,2,3)/Chorus(1,3)/Andromache(3)
David Cann	Shepherd 2(1)/Odysseus(2)/Menelaus(3)
Souad Faress	Hekabe(1,3)
Mark Katz	Messenger(1)/Oeax(2)/Chorus(2)
David Killick	Priam(1)/Nauplius(2)
Edmund Kingsley	Hector(1)/Palamedes(2)/Chorus(2)
Katherine Kingsley	Chorus(1,3)/Helen(3)
Jacob Krichefski	Shepherd 1(1)/Talthybius(2,3)/Chorus(2)
Marianna Maniatakis	Athene(1,2,3);Chorus(1,3)
Hannah McPake	Musician(1,2,3)/Chorus(1,3)
Guy Quartermaine	Alexandros(1)/Chorus(2)
Sarah Stanley	Cassandra(1,3)/Chorus(1,3)
Ian Webster	Deiphobus(1)/Agamemnon(2)/Chorus(2)



*Odysseus and Palamedes*



*Palamedes Chorus*



*Trojan Women (ending)*



*Trojan Women Helen and Menelaus*



*Alexandros Cassandra*



*Souard Faress as Hekabe*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> As memorably described by Thucydides *Histories* 5.84f

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the process I performed a number of roles: with aod (a small-scale and, for the most part, unfunded – certainly underfunded – company), I was not only translator/director, but also co-producer, being jointly responsible for everything from securing bookings to arranging accommodation while on the road. For the *Trojan Trilogy* events at the British Museum and Tristan Bates Theatre, I handed over the directorial role to James Albrecht, mainly because I thought (rightly) that he would bring a fresh perspective to the texts, at the same time giving me enough distance to allow me to see how the reconstructions worked in performance. Initially, James and I intended to produce the readings, but latterly Arden Entertainment took on most of the work. I was present at all rehearsals and readings, acting essentially as dramaturg, assisting James whenever required, and altering the text if necessary.

<sup>3</sup> It could, of course, be argued that if it were so crucial for *Trojan Women* to be seen in its original context, more care would have been taken that the first two plays survived. After all, we have the whole of the *Oresteia*. However, in their choice of which plays to preserve, the Greeks did not necessarily use the same criteria, which modern producers would.

<sup>4</sup> As we shall see, in addition to the Euripidean fragments, there exists a later hypothesis of *Alexandros*, together with fragments of a Latin translation/adaptation of the play by Ennius. Scenes and moments from the plays are also referred to by the contemporary Aristophanes.

<sup>5</sup> Available from [www.companydionysus.com](http://www.companydionysus.com)

<sup>6</sup> The fragments of both plays are contained in Collard, Cropp and Gilbert (2004). An excellent and invaluable book.

<sup>7</sup> P. Oxy. 3650 col i (=TrGF T iii, Hypothesis) ed. R.A. Coles, *BICS* Suppl. 32 (1974) Hypotheses were written sometimes as prefaces to the entire scripts in manuscripts or to form part of a collection of summaries of plays, in which the scripts did not appear. This hypothesis is of the latter kind, being from a papyrus which also includes the hypotheses of *Andromache*, *Alcestis* and *Aeolus*. A thorough discussion of hypotheses and fragments can be found in Collard, Cropp and Lee, (1995) pp. 1-10.

<sup>8</sup> incl. Plutarch, Stobaeus, ps-Longinus and Clement of Alexandria, all of whom quote lines or phrases which they attribute to our plays, generally to flesh out philosophical or historical arguments. In some cases it is debatable how trustworthy they are in attributing these quotations.

<sup>9</sup> There is some debate as to whether the play takes place before or after the Judgement. Many commentators are firm in their belief that, when the play takes place, the Judgement has not yet happened. This belief is based on some lines of Cassandra, thought to be from the Ennius adaptation, and quoted by Cicero in his *De Divinatione* I.1.114: *eheu, videte! iudicabit inclytum iudicium / inter deas tres aliquis; quo iudicio Lacedaemonia / mulier, furiarum una, adveniet* (alas, look! a man will judge a famous case between three goddesses, because of which judgement a Spartan woman, one of the Furies, will come). It should be noted, however (i) that the crucial word, “*iudicabit*” (will judge), appears in some versions as “*iudicavit*” (has judged); (ii) that, while Cicero attributes these lines to Cassandra, he does not say they are from Ennius’ *Alexandros* (and he introduces the quotation by saying that sometimes prophecies describe things which will happen in the *distant* future, *ante multo*, a timescale which sits uneasily in the context of our play; and (iii) even if the lines are from Ennius’ *Alexandros*, this is not to say that they reflect the situation in the Euripides version.

<sup>10</sup> Euripides *Electra* II 367 ff. The play is almost contemporary with the *Trojan Trilogy*.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, the Hekabe of *Iliad* 24.201ff, who talks of how she would like to rip out Achilles’ liver and eat it whole.

<sup>12</sup> *Poetics* 61<sup>b</sup>21.

<sup>13</sup> There was even a tradition that when *Palamedes* was performed as a revival after Socrates' death, this line moved the audience, who saw parallels between Palamedes and the executed philosopher – see Hypothesis to Isocrates, *Busiris*, 24-30 (T iic), quoted by Collard, Cropp and Gilbert (2004) p 93.

<sup>14</sup> fr. 49.

<sup>15</sup> (ll 919 ff, where she, too, alludes to Paris in terms of a destructive torch).

<sup>16</sup> ll 77 ff.

<sup>17</sup> See Collard, Cropp and Gilbert (2004) p. 95.

<sup>18</sup> [www.arden-entertainment.co.uk](http://www.arden-entertainment.co.uk).

<sup>19</sup> The full cast were (numbers refer to plays: 1 = *Alexandros*; 2 = *Palamedes*; 3 = *Trojan Women*)

Emilia Brodie	Musician(1,2,3)/Chorus(1,3)/Andromache(3)
David Cann	Shepherd 2(1)/Odysseus(2)/Menelaus(3)
Souad Faress	Hekabe(1,3)
Mark Katz	Messenger(1)/Oeax(2)/Chorus(2)
David Killick	Priam(1)/Nauplius(2)
Edmund Kingsley	Hector(1)/Palamedes(2)/Chorus(2)
Katherine Kingsley	Chorus(1,3)/Helen(3)
Jacob Kricheski	Shepherd 1(1)/Talthybius(2,3)/Chorus(2)
Marianna Maniatakis	Athene(1,2,3);Chorus(1,3)
Hannah McPake	Musician(1,2,3)/Chorus(1,3)
Guy Quartermaine	Alexandros(1)/Chorus(2)
Sarah Stanley	Cassandra(1,3)/Chorus(1,3)
Ian Webster	Deiphobus(1)/Agamemnon(2)/Chorus(2)

Original music composed and played by Emilia Brodie and Hannah McPake. Production Coordinator: Oscar Mathew. Casting Consultant: Anne Vosser. Lighting design and technical operation: Neil Hobbs.