

Author's Comments

History of the Story

Hecuba is the tragic wife of Priam, the Trojan King, who ultimately sees her children killed, her husband brutally slain before the altar, her city sacked and burned, and herself and the other women carried off as slaves. Part of this story is told in Homer's *Iliad*, part probably in a lost epic on the tenth year of the Trojan War, and part in Euripides plays *The Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*. Ovid retells the story in Latin and references to it are found in such diverse writings as Dante's *Inferno* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* ("For Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba...").

Euripides Hecuba

"Admired, much quoted and echoed in antiquity, it became one of the favorite plays of the Byzantine schoolbooks, was translated by Erasmus into Latin, and was finally almost canonized as a model of tragedy by the French classical dramatists. But in the nineteenth century the *Hecuba*, in a peripety as sudden and undeserved as that of its protagonist, fell into a profound disfavor, which has never been withdrawn; indeed it is still commonly cited by handbooks, those tidy morgues of leached opinion, as one of the feeblest, if not the feeblest, of surviving Greek plays."

William Arrowsmith, "Introduction to Hecuba" , *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 489.

Hecuba at the Fall of Troy

This play is neither a translation of Euripides' play *Hecuba*, nor is it an adaptation of his play, although both derive from the same underlying story. There are important differences in perspective and as to what is told and what is shown. Such artistic differences have always been found in how dramatists viewed the same story, for example the murder of Clytemnestra as rendered in Sophocles' *Electra*, in Euripides' *Electra* and in Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers*.