

**THE HECUBA OF
EURIPIDES, LITERALLY
TRANSLATED**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649233403

The Hecuba of Euripides, literally translated by Roscoe Mongan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ROSCOE MONGAN

**THE HECUBA OF
EURIPIDES, LITERALLY
TRANSLATED**

THE
HECUBA OF EURIPIDES

LITERALLY TRANSLATED.

BY

ROSCOE MONGAN, B.A.,

EX-SCHOLAR, T.C.D.,

TRANSLATOR OF "EURIPIDES MEDEA," "SOPHOCLES OEDIPUS TYRANNOS," "ÆSCHYLUS
PROMETHEUS CHAINED," ETC.



DUBLIN:

W. B. KELLY, 8 GRAFTON STREET.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

EDINBURGH: OLIVER & BOYD

1865.

293. 9. 48.

A LITERAL TRANSLATION
OF
THE HECUBA OF EURIPIDES.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORUS.

I AM come, having left the vault of the dead and the gates of darkness, where Pluto dwells apart from the gods, [I] Polydorus, the son of Hecuba, Cisseus' [daughter,] and of my father Priam; who when danger held [i.e., threatened] the city of the Phrygians, that it should fall by the Grecian spear, alarmed, in secret sent me from the Trojan land to Polymestor's house, his Thracian friend, who sows the fertile Chersonesian soil, ruling with his spear a people famed for steeds: and with me my father sends in secret a store of gold, that if the walls of Troy should ultimately fall, there might not be a want of sustenance for his surviving children. But I was the youngest of the sons of Priam; on account of which circumstance he sent me forth secretly from the land: for I was not able with my youthful arm to sustain the shield or [hurl] the spear. Wherefore as long indeed as the landmarks of the country stood erect, and the turrets of the Trojan land were unshaken, and my brother Hector prospered with the spear, by the kindly care of the man of Thrace, my father's friend, like some young scion I was growing up to maturity, hapless that I am. But when Troy and Hector's life were now no more, and my paternal mansion was razed to the ground, and he himself falls at the heaven-built altar, having been slain by the blood-stained son of Achilles, for the sake of gold my

father's friend kills me wretched: and having killed me, cast me into the surges of the sea, that he himself may possess the gold in his palace. On the shore I lie [at one time:] at other times amidst the tumults of the deep, tossed by the various ebbings and flowings of the waves, unwept, unburied; but now, for the sake of my dear mother, Hecuba, I hasten, having left my body hovering now the third day, just as long as my wretched mother has been in the land of Chersonese, [after having come] from Troy. But all the Greeks, having their ships [at anchor,] sit inactive on the shore of the Thracian land:—for Achilles, son of Peleus, appearing over his tomb, has detained the entire Grecian host, directing homeward the sea-dipt oar; and my sister, Polyxena, he demands to receive as a dear offering and honour on his tomb. And he shall obtain this [favour:] nor shall he not be gratified by his friends; and fate leads forth my sister to die on this day. My mother shall behold the two corpses of her two children, both mine and that of her ill-fated daughter. For in order that wretched I may obtain interment, I shall appear on a wave before the feet of a female slave: for I have effectually entreated [i.e., I have succeeded in obtaining permission from] the powers [that rule] below, that I may obtain [the rites of] burial, and fall into my mother's hands. As much then as I wished to obtain shall indeed be mine; but I shall withdraw apart from the aged Hecuba; for she now advances beyond Agamemnon's tent, terrified at my vision. Alas, my mother! who from a royal palace hast beheld the day of slavery, how thou now farest ill, as much as once [thou farest] well; some god now ruins thee, counterbalancing thy former happiness.

Hecuba. Lead, my children, an aged woman before the doors—raising, lead me on, now your fellow-slave, ye Trojan dames, but formerly your queen. Take me, carry me, conduct me, raise my body, holding my aged right hand; and I, leaning on the bending staff of my hand, will hasten to put forth the slow advances of my limbs. O lightning of Jove!—O gloomy night! why am I thus scared at night with terrors, with phantoms? O venerable Earth! thou parent of black-winged dreams, I dread the midnight vision which I have beheld in my sleep, respecting my son who is preserved in Thrace, and my beloved daughter, Polyxena, a dreadful apparition, I have learnt, understood. O gods of this land! preserve my son, who alone [remaining to me] as the anchor of my house, inhabits snowy Thrace, under the protection of his

father's friend. Some new [calamity] will happen: some melancholy intelligence shall reach us melancholy: never did my soul shudder or tremble so incessantly. Where, I pray, Trojan dames, shall I behold the inspired soul of Helenus, or Cassandra, that they may expound my dreams for me?—for I beheld a dappled hind slaughtered in the bloody gripe of a wolf, torn with violence from my knees, piteously. And this also was a terror to me; Achilles' spectre came over the summit of his tomb, and he demanded as an honorary offering some of the afflicted Trojan dames; from my daughter then, ye gods, I supplicate you, from my daughter avert this [misfortune.]

Chorus. Hecuba, with speed to thee I fly, having left the tents of my lord, where I was allotted, and appointed as a slave, driven from the Trojan city, enthralled by the Greeks with the point of the spear, not alleviating any of thy sufferings, but taking on me a heavy load of tidings, and [being] to thee, O lady, a herald of woes. For it is rumoured that it is resolved in the full council of the Greeks to offer up thy daughter as a victim to Achilles: for you remember when ascending his tomb he appeared in arms of gold, and stopped their sea-passing barks, having their sails suspended by the ropes, exclaiming thus: "Whither, ye Greeks, do ye speed your course, leaving my tomb unhonoured?" The wave of much contention clashed: a twofold opinion pervaded the martial council of the Greeks, some thinking that they should grant the offering to the tomb, and others not. Agamemnon, honouring the bed of the inspired prophetess, was earnest for your interest; but the sons of Theseus, scions of Athens, were the proposers of two arguments: but they both concurred in one opinion, to crown Achilles' tomb with virgin blood; and said they never could prefer Cassandra's bed before Achilles' spear. The force of the arguments, strenuously urged, was perhaps equal, until that subtle-minded—that babbler, the sweetly-speaking Laertiades, allurer of the crowd, persuades the army not to slight the bravest of all the Greeks for the sake of a victim alive; that none of the dead standing near Proserpine should say, that the Greeks, thankless to the Greeks who had died for Hellas' sons, had departed from the plains of Troy. Very soon Ulysses will be here to tear the virgin from thy bosom, and drag her from thy aged arms. But go to the temples, go to the altars: fall suppliant at Agamemnon's knees: invoke the gods, both those of heaven and those

beneath the earth ; for either supplications shall prevent thee from being deprived of thy wretched child, or thou must behold her fallen before the tomb, a virgin purpled with the dark stream of blood from her golden-tressed neck.

Hecuba. Ah, wretched that I am! what shall I exclaim—what lamentation—what wailings! Wretched through wretched old age, and slavery not to be endured nor borne. Alas, me! who will assist me! what offspring or what city? My aged husband is gone; my sons are gone: which way do I proceed, this way or that? Whither shall I go? Whether is there any god or demon to assist me! Ye Trojan dames that bring ill news, ye that bring [tidings of] destructive ills, ye have ruined, undone me. No longer is life pleasing by its light. O wretched foot, conduct, conduct me aged to the tent. My daughter, child of a most unhappy mother, come forth—come forth from the house: hear a mother's voice, my child, that that thou mayest know what, what a [terrible] report I hear regarding your life.

Polyxena. Here. Mother, mother, why callest thou? What new tidings to announce hast thou scared me from the house, as a bird, with this alarm!

Hec. Alas, my child!

Pol. Why dost thou thus ominously call me? The prelude is to me ill-boding.

Hec. Alas! alas! thy life.

Pol. Speak out, conceal it no longer. I fear, I fear, my mother. Why, pray, dost thou groan?

Hec. My child, thou child of an unhappy mother.

Pol. What tidings dost thou bear?

Hec. The universal vote of the Greeks is urgent to immolate thee at Peleides' tomb, my child.

Pol. Ah, me! Mother, how do you utter these immeasurable ills? Tell me, tell me, mother.

Hec. I tell, my child, ill-omened tidings; announcing that it is decreed by the votes of the Greeks concerning your life.

Pol. O thou that hast suffered dreadful [afflictions,] O completely wretched, O mother, hapless in thy life, what, what wrongs abominable and unutterable has some power brought on thee? No longer is this child for thee; no longer shall I wretched share captivity with thy wretched old age. For wretched thou shalt behold me as a mountain-fed cub, a hapless victim, torn from thy arms, and sacrificed to Orcus,

sent beneath the darkness of the earth, where amongst the dead unhappy I shall lie. Thee indeed, O mother, wretched in life, I mourn for with sorrowful lamentations: but my own life, my wrongs, my ruin, I mourn not; but to die has fallen me as a superior lot.

Cho. And truly Ulysses comes with haste of foot, Hecuba, about to intimate some new tidings.

Ulysses. Lady, I think that you already know the intention of the army, and the decree that has been passed, but still I shall declare it. It has been resolved on by the Greeks to sacrifice thy daughter Polyxena on the lofty elevation of Achilles' tomb; but us they appoint to be the escorts and conductors of the virgin; and Achilles' son presides as dissector and priest of the sacrifice. Do you know then what you should do? Be not dragged away by violence, nor enter with me into a contest of hands, [i.e., strength;] acknowledge [superior] power, and the presence of thy misfortunes: it is wise even in misfortunes to have the necessary prudence.

Hec. Alas! alas! the mighty conflict, as it seems, approaches, replete with lamentations, nor void of tears. For I too did not die, where I should have died; nor has Jove destroyed me, but he preserves me in order that I wretched may witness other afflictions greater than the [former] afflictions. But if it be lawful for slaves to ask of those free [questions] not rude, nor hurtful to the feelings, it is necessary that you be interrogated, and that we interrogating should hear.

Ulys. It is allowed, ask: for the time I grudge not.

Hec. Dost thou remember when thou camest a spy to Ilium, disfigured in torn garments, and drops of death from thine eyes trickled down thy beard?

Ulys. I do remember; for it touched not [merely] the surface of my heart.

Hec. But Helen knew thee, and told me alone.

Ulys. We remember having come into imminent peril.

Hec. And humble didst thou touch my knees?

Ulys. So that my hand died within thy robe.

Hec. What didst thou say, being then my slave?

Ulys. Inventions of many arguments that I may not die, [i.e., I invented many, &c.]

Hec. Did I save thee then, and send thee from the land?

Ulys. So that I now behold this splendour of the sun.

Hec. Art thou not now acting a base part in these your plans, who from me hast indeed received [the service] which

you own you did receive, whilst you do us no service, but injury as much as you can? Ye are a thankless race—as many of you as court popular applause; may you not be known to me, who heed not injuring your friends, if you but speak to [win] the favour of the crowd. But why have they, holding out this trick as a pretext, passed sentence of death against this child? Whether did necessity induce them to slay a human victim at the tomb, where to slay an ox were more becoming? Or does Achilles, wishing to repay with death those who slew him, with justice intend death for her? But she certainly has done him no wrong. It would be right, that he should demand as an offering on his tomb; for she destroyed him, and brings him to Troy. But if it is meet that some choice captive, and in beauty distinguished, should die, this [attribute] is not ours; for Tyndarus' daughter is in beauty most comely, and has been found not less injurious than we. Against the justice [of the measure] I set off this plea; but what requital you should make, at my suit, [i.e., I demanding,] hear. Falling prostrate, you touched my hand, as you own, and my aged cheek. I in my turn touch these same portions of your body, and demand the return then [promised;] and I supplicate you, do not tear my child from my hands, nor kill her: of dead [we have had] enough. In her I delight, and forget my afflictions. She instead of many is my [only] consolation, my country, my nurse, my staff, the guide of my way. It becomes not those in power to exercise that power in what they should not; nor does it behove the prosperous to imagine that they shall always prosper; for I too was once, but now I am no more: one day snatched from me all my happiness. But, by thy beard, reverence me; pity me; and going to the Grecian host, dissuade them, by saying how invidious [it would be] to kill women, whom heretofore you have not torn from the altars and slain, but have compassionated. But the same law concerning blood prevails amongst you for the free and the slave. Your dignity, even though you speak badly, will persuade them; for the same language proceeding from the ignoble and the illustrious has not the same effect.

Cho. What nature of man is so obdurate, which hearing the cries of thy wailings, and long lamentations, would not shed a tear?

Ulys. Hecuba, be advised; and do not, in thy rage, deem him hostile in spirit who advises kindly. Thy own person,