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**A TRAGIC MORTAL STORY:
THE STORY OF HEKTOR AND ANDROMACHE**

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**Written for a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Civilization

Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honoured mother,
You are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband.

-Andromache, *Iliad*¹

¹Lattimore, Richmond. *Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967: VI.429-30

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One: Hektor	5
Chapter Two: Andromache	8
Chapter Three: The Marriage	10
Chapter Four: The Weight of Mortality: Hektor's Fate	13
Chapter Five: The Lost Soul: Andromache After Hektor	16
Chapter Six: Tragedy in its Final Conclusion	18

Introduction

This thesis paper was not written to analyze any specific source or sources of the literary figures of Hektor and Andromache, but rather to assimilate a common theme associated with them as individuals and as a family. I will look into how ancient writers, such as Homer and Virgil, interpreted them, and how modern writers, such as Marion Zimmer Bradley, portray them. Regardless of who the author is, I am determined in this paper to provide enough evidence that Hektor and Andromache were universally tragic, and can even be considered the most tragic couple in ancient literature. This is true in Homer's depictions in the *Iliad*, Euripedes' renditions of the Troy's capture and imprisonment of Andromache in the *Trojan Women* and *Andromache*, respectively, as well as many others. The images of Hektor and Andromache are a source of inspiration to writers, who parallel scenes or traits of the characters to represent tragedy.

Both ancient and modern writers have biases, however, as David Traill of the University of California stated in his article "Unfair to Hektor?"

Homer did not compose the *Iliad* with a disinterested, international, twentieth-century audience in mind. He composed and performed for a contemporary Greek audience, for whom the Greek heroes were vital figures of awe and veneration. It seems clear that this audience had certain expectations about how their great heroes would fare on the battlefield, and that these expectations did not include defeat by an enemy hero, no matter how distinguished. It would be foolish to criticize Homer for bending his plot a little in order to respect these expectations. It would be surprising if he did not share them himself.²

Equally, we can look at modern writers and find biases they have given to the same stories. For example, Marion Zimmer Bradley, author of *Firebrand*, a novel on the fall of Troy, introduces new perspectives. Her biases are based not on geography, but rather a psychological mindset. Jonquil Wolfson wrote that Bradley said "anything is women's

² Traill, David, "Unfair to Hector?" *Classical Philology* v.85 no.4 (1990): 303

(or, for that matter, men's) work if they are strong enough for it and want to do it."³

Wolfson is making a clear point that Bradley is a feminist, and that her feminism lives in her writings. Both of these authors are then biased in one sense or another, but both are able to bring out the magnitude of the tragedy that befell Hektor and Andromache. Throughout literature, including the characters' origin stories, many stories represent the multiple facets of how great their tragic story is. By using multiple sources and stories, I will attempt to paint an overall picture that depicts Hektor and Andromache by many figures in different cultures and time periods.

Chapter One: Hektor

Hektor was a great man, one of wisdom, courage, and strength. The oldest son of Priam and Hecuba, Hektor was crown-prince, the heir to the throne of Troy. The city of Troy itself has a very influential mythical history which needs mention as a part of Hektor's past. One myth introduces Troy as a very wealthy city located in Asia Minor near the straits leading into the Black Sea. It was at one point built with the help of the god Poseidon. Priam's father, Laomedon, then refused to give Poseidon his daughter, Hesione, the payment for Poseidon's help. As the story goes, Herakles arrived in time for Hesione's sacrifice, promising to save her in exchange for two stallions. The stallions referred to were given "by the gods to Tros, first king of Troy, to compensate him for the abduction of Ganymede."⁴ Herakles was not given the stallions, and thus returned sacking Troy. The Troy Hektor is now living in is the rebuilt city from this sacking.

Hektor had several siblings – fifty brothers and fifty sisters – brought into the world by many women. Hektor's parents, King Priam and Queen Hecuba, are completely

³ Wolfson, Jonquil, "MZB: A Feminist by Any Other Name?," 22 October 1999; <http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/marion_zimmer_bradley_feminism_990122.html>

⁴ Evslin, Bernard. Gods, Demigods, & Demons: An Encyclopedia of Greek Mythology. New York 1975: 99-100

mortal, bearing only a very distant connection to Zeus by the great-great-great-great grandfather to Hektor being Dardanus, a son of Zeus (mentioned in the *Iliad* XX.215).⁵ This is an important note due to the adversaries Hektor is faced with later during the Trojan War.

A Lost Brother?

Earlier I mentioned Hektor had many brothers, some by Priam and Hecuba. One brother, Paris, was prophesied to bring destruction upon the city of Troy. This prophecy is reflected in Hecuba's dream: "...[she] dreamed that she brought forth a torch from which serpents issued. The dream-interpreters ordered her child to be destroyed, but the servant charged with killing him exposed him instead..."⁶ Cast out after birth, similar to other stories in Greek literature, he was taken in by a shepherd instead, brought up without knowing his royal birth. Life would have been fine then, but when three goddesses – Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite – ask him to choose which goddess was the fairest of the three, the future of Troy takes a turn for the worst. Paris chooses Aphrodite, who offers him the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen.

When Paris went back to Troy, Hektor accepted him as a brother. His acceptance of his lost brother would be his biggest mistake. Paris, sent out on a mission to recover his aunt Hesione, returns with Helen of Sparta instead. Hektor spoke to Paris, telling him to return Helen on several occasions, even once the war with the Achaians had begun. Hektor, in being the crown-prince of Troy with a father too old to put on his armor, took on his responsibility and led his men onto the battlefield for ten years, fighting for a cause he did not believe in. This great void in the characters of Paris and Hektor is very notable

⁵ Hektor. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. Oxford 1970: 313

⁶ Paris. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. Oxford 1970: 781

when, in the *Iliad*, Hektor comes back to find Paris acting as if there was no war waging, let alone for his actions:

Strange man! It is not fair to keep in your heart this coldness. The people are dying around the city and around the steep wall as they fight hard; and it is for you that this war with its clamour has flared up about our city. You yourself would fight with another whom you saw anywhere hanging back from the hateful encounter. Up then, to keep our town from burning at once in the hot fire.”⁷

Many things can be drawn from this speech alone. It is evident that Hektor is aghast at seeing Paris acting so indifferent about the war he caused. Yet, in the last sentence he includes Paris by saying “our town,” reminding Paris that he is no longer a shepherd, but a royal son of the King of Troy, and as a prince, must take on princely duties. It is for a prince of Troy that the people are fighting and dying, and still Paris’ only reason for returning to battle is because of Helen’s insistence. This lack of responsibility is completely the opposite of Hektor’s complete on-taking of all responsibility by leading the men into his brother’s battle. With this in mind, we must take a look at how Hektor is treated on the battlefield by the Achaians.

To begin, in Book XI Paris is encountered by Diomedes, who gives a long list of fairly abusive, although accurate, epithets: “Archer, foul fighter, lovely in your locks, eyer of young girls” These epithets suit Paris, who cannot, after ten years of war, come to terms with his responsibilities. It is the epithets given to Hektor, or the lack of epithets, that is a slight on the behalf of the Achaians. Hektor recognizes and accepts that his opponents are strong and come from great families, usually descendants of the gods. With the lack of acceptance as a worthy foe by his enemies, Hektor is often sent into a defensive mode, upset that, despite his younger age, he is able to fight in battle. This is apparent due to the fact the Trojan War lasted ten years. His speech to Aias, a response

⁷Lattimore, Richmond. *Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967: VI.326-331

to Aias' speech which did give to Hektor an epithet, shows to the audience Hektor's true character:

Aias,
Son of Telamon, seed of Zeus, o lord of the people,
Do not be testing me as if I were some ineffectual
Boy, or a woman, who knows nothing of the works of warfare.
I know well myself how to fight and kill men in battle;
I know how to turn to the right, how to turn to the left the ox-hide
Tanned into a shield which is my protection in battle;
I know how to storm my way into the struggle of flying horses;
I know how to tread my measures on the grim floor of the war
god. (VII.234-41)

The respect Hektor gives to Aias in giving him an honorable epithet far surpasses the respect all the Achaians together give to Hektor. It is evident in reading the *Iliad* that Hektor understands he is not an equal to his foes, and yet he has suffered the battlefield for just as long as the Achaians. He is often treated without respect, as if he were a boy on the field instead of the knowledgeable prince he is. In fact, both Aias and Diomedes refer to all the Trojans as dogs, even though they have matched the Achaians in battle. It is not so much Hektor's own courage that makes him the great warrior that he is. Often he must escape battles that he understands far outweigh him. His sole presence on the battlefield encourages his men to fight such famous men as Achilles and Diomedes. It is also necessary to remember that many of the Achaian leaders were experienced kings, while Hektor himself was still a prince, which is one of the reasons why he is being treated as a boy. The fact that an epithet is not commonly attached to his name is a sign of his youth and innocence compared to the Achaian fleet.

Chapter 2: Andromache's Story

Andromache was brought up at her father, King Eëtion's, palace at Thebe, a smaller province in western Turkey, at the foot of Mt. Placeus. Eëtion ruled the Cilician

people with his wife, Andromache's mother, not mentioned by name. The family had seven sons, as well; Podes played a small role in the *Iliad*, the remaining seemingly perished while trying to defend the city against attacks made by Achilles. Her mother was ransomed after the capture of Thebe, later dying in the Trojan palace due to an unknown illness before the end of the Trojan War.

The character of Andromache suffers many hardships in her life due to her *pietas*, or piety. It is important to remember that not only Troy was burdened with the Trojan War, but many of the surrounding communities, such as Thebe, suffered great loss as well. Piety is an important aspect of life in the ancient Mediterranean world, and specifically in the Roman civilization in three levels. A translation of Lucilius explains these levels: "The interests of our country come first, then those of our parents and, in third and last place, our own."⁸ A typical Roman, in all actions, would have to account for all three areas. By the point in the *Iliad* when Andromache is introduced, Hektor returns to see his family, Andromache and Astyanax being the last and most dramatic scene in Book 6. She is overly burdened by his insistence to keep fighting for the main reason that her entire family has already died. The only family that remains for her is Hektor and Astyanax. Hektor's duty as crown prince prevents him, however, as piety to the state must be addressed. Andromache's home at Thebe already destroyed, her main focus is on her familial piety, even though she has made Troy her new home. In this sense, Andromache has had to be reborn, giving her loyalties to a new home and family.

Presence in the Greek Literary World

Andromache's story has been used as a reminder of a foreboding future that may come to pass for others. Her main appearance in the *Iliad*, the earliest known of, was very tragic and a reminder to the audience as to what Hektor was protecting and living

⁸ Wagenvoort, Hendrik. *Pietas: Selected Studies in Roman Religion*. Netherlands 1980: 4

for. Her dialogue to Hektor in Book VI places a deal of importance on his shoulders. Hektor's character in the *Iliad* until now had not been given the full significance needed to be such a worthy opponent. After Homer, Euripides extended the humiliation and disaster that befell Andromache in *The Trojan Women*, with her enslavement and the loss of her son, and in *Andromache*, when the audience is shown her humility. She is referred to as well. For example, in the *Troades* the mood automatically changes somberly at the mention of Andromache.

Chapter 3: The Marriage

The marriage of Andromache to Hektor was a great honor, for Troy was the wealthiest city in Asia Minor, and marriage to Hektor meant someday ruling the city. Both born mortal from mortal parents, they inherited a great amount of wisdom, which gave them patience. It is noted that Andromache did not berate her husband for sleeping with other women, but instead accepted the bastard children to suckle at her own breast.⁹ She also gave birth to her own sons, Astyanax and Laodamas. Tradition tells of the desire for sons, and for Andromache to give birth to a son first, as far as we know, was the sign of a good wife. In fact, it was so important to produce a male heir that Greek society eventually imposed drastic laws. "To ensure a preservation of an *oikos* [integrity of a property-owning family] whose deceased male head had produced no sons, his daughter (termed the *epikleros*) was obliged by law to marry her father's next-of-kin; her son or sons eventually inherited their grandfather's property..."¹⁰

The relationship between Hektor and Andromache is somewhat mysterious. Using terms found in the *Iliad* that describe Andromache's parents, we learn that they both acted as rulers. Her mother was said to rule, *basileuō*, while "her father was also

⁹ Pomeroy, Susan B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*. New York 1975: 110

¹⁰ Blundell, Sue, "Marriage and the Maiden: Narratives on the Parthenon." *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*. New York 1998: 48

said to have been lord, *anassō*. Tablets from Mycenaean Greece refer to a great king as *anax*, while a subordinate ruler is called *basileus*. On the other hand, Homer does use the verb *basileuō* to describe ruling by kings in other instances.”¹¹ Thus Andromache has supposedly been brought up in a palace where the king and queen act more as a joint ruling than a purely male dominated monarchy.

Hektor, conversely, grew up in a society that instituted the women as household watchers who weaved and took care of the house all day. His father had many mistresses, and a wife, Hecuba. It is, however, mentioned in Ovid’s *Heroides XIII* that Laodamia wrote a letter to Protesilaus regarding the lifestyle of the Trojan women (it is thought to be expressly speaking of Hektor and Andromache):

I envy a Trojan woman because they observe the tearful funerals of their own, nor will the enemy be far away, with her own hands the young bride will place the helmet on the brave husband and will offer the Trojans weapons. She will offer the weapons and while she will offer the weapons, at the same time she receives kisses – this type of duty is sweet to both – and she will bring her husband forth, and will give commands to return and will say, “Bring back those weapons to Jove!”

That one, carrying clear with himself the commands of his wife, will fight carefully and will consider his home. For that one returned she will strip him of his shield and will unfasten his helmet, and will take in his exhausted body with protection. We [who are not in Troy] are uncertain; anxious fear forces us to imagine all deeds which are able to occur.¹²

The actual wedding that took place between Andromache and Hektor is referred to in the *Iliad*. The wedding followed the traditional marriage procession, where

¹¹ Pomeroy, Susan B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*. New York 1975: 22-3

¹² Andromache. “Mortal Women of the Trojan War” <<http://www.stanford.edu/~plomio/andromache.html>>

Andromache wore a “circlet, which Aphrodite the golden once had given her on that day when Hektor of the shining helmet led her from the house of Eëtion, and gave numberless gifts to win her.” (XXII.470-2) This procession from the house of the bride’s parents’ house to the house of the husband’s parents’ or his own house is widely known in literature and art. The physical transfer from one household to another accompanies the bride’s loyalties to include the new family she is now a part of as her most immediate family. Sappho also wrote a poem describing the marriage procession:

Crying Ektor! The winded runner
 Silver with sweat, laughing, Ektor!
 Ektor comes from that famous Asia,
 From its strange towns with his friends.
 The bring home a black-eyed girl
 From Theba the high on the Plakia,
 The graceful, the young Andrómakha,
 They come in the ships on the ocean...

Men and boys march and sing to Páon,
 To Apollo of the harp, archer of archers,
 And sing that Ektor and Andrómakha
 Are like two of the gods together.¹³

There is no question as to the amount of love shared between the couple. Andromache’s attempts in Book VI to please and protect Hektor by giving him advice on the battlefield, a conversation topic only engaged on by men, shows how great her devotion is for Hektor. Hektor has to, as crown-prince, act on his piety to the state above his family, even though he clearly places his wife and child above this piety to the state. The audience is able to perceive this dilemma of state and familial piety in Hektor’s speech to Andromache in Book VI:

But the trouble of all the Trojans in the future is not so much a concern to
 me,
 Nor of Hecuba herself nor King Priam,
 Nor of my brothers who, brave and numerous,

¹³Davenport, Guy. Sappho, *Poems and Fragments*. “poem 14” University of Michigan Press 1965

May fall in the dust beneath men who are their enemies,
 As much as yours is, when someone of the bronze-clad Achaians
 Leads you away weeping, having robbed you of your day of freedom.
 (VI.450-5)

Schein mentions Kakridis' theory of "the ascending scale of affection motif," explaining "the order in which Hektor encounters and speaks... confirms his supreme loyalty and love for his spouse."¹⁴

Chapter 4: The Weight of Mortality: Hektor's Fate

Homer endows it [the destruction of Troy] with even greater meaning by his description and depiction of Troy as a socially developed community of men and women, parents and children, younger and older generations, whose annihilation is felt as the destruction of a rich human culture and civilization by the equally human but far more savage Greek army. When Hektor is killed by Achilles, he falls not only as the leading Trojan warrior, but as a son of Priam and Hecuba, the husband of Andromache and father of Astyanax, and the chief exemplar of a familial solidarity and loyalty that in the *Iliad* are characteristically Trojan.¹⁵

The tenth year of the Trojan War became the final year with the long-awaited encounter between Hektor and Achilles. The *Iliad* is an epic based greatly on Achilles actions, which lead to the downfall of Troy through Hektor, since "he alone protected Ilion." (VI.403) Achilles, up until the death of Patrokles, his closest comrade, by Hektor, was resolute to return home, taking into account the words of his mother, the goddess Thetis. Achilles had resolved his anger caused by Agamemnon's disrespect and haughtiness, and he no longer had reason to help the ungrateful Achaians. At the death of Patrokles, however, Achilles revenge was spurred once again, this time towards the Trojans.

Hektor and Achilles are very similar in necessity and fate. The magnitude of how Hektor and Achilles were two unwilling pawns in the Trojan War outreaches any other.

¹⁴ Schein, Seth. The Mortal Hero. University of California Press 1984: 174

¹⁵ Schein, Seth. The Mortal Hero. University of California Press 1984: 168-9

Both were, in the end, forced to endure the war, knowing it would not be possible to leave alive. Bound by a truce among the suitors of Helen and by a customary necessary length of grievance over his loss of Briseis and the disrespect displayed by Agamemnon, Achilles suffered the loss of his closest comrade, which sends him after the murderer, Hektor. Hektor is bound as well, by his responsibility as crown-prince and as brother to Paris.

The final battle is described by Homer in Book 22 of the *Iliad*, Achilles returning to Troy with Hektor standing ready in front of the gates. Hektor is reminded by his parents, standing on the wall above him, that if he fights Achilles, he will surely die. This act makes it clear then, that Hektor is well aware of Achilles superiority on the battlefield, and Hektor has avoided him purposefully the past ten years. This does not prove Hektor cowardly for avoiding such an inevitable meeting, but rather proves his wisdom. Troy has remained standing longer with hopes for a truce between Paris and Menelaus, the direct producers of the war.

The reason Hektor then decided to face his foe is uncertain, even with an inner monologue in the *Iliad* at XXII.99 – 130. Once he regains his former thoughts of the situation, he now has a new set of problems to work out. If he were to return to the city, the respect of him, his family, and the city, would be shattered, but if he stands outside to face Achilles, he would surely perish. An interesting look at this can be taken from a modern book titled *If I Die in a Combat Zone*, in which a soldier recounts his actions: “It was not courage, exactly; the object was not valor. Rather, they were too frightened to be cowards.” Christopher McDonough applies this to Hektor, “caught between difficult options, [he] does not run back inside the walls of Troy but instead around them, in this way straddling the line between death and dishonor.”¹⁶ The need to keep everyone’s

¹⁶ McDonough, Christopher. “Afraid to Admit.” *Classical & Modern Literature* 20 no.1 (fall 1999): 28

respect overcomes his own need to survive after Achilles has chased him around the city and Athena has falsely offered Hektor assistance, giving him hope to live and thus restore both respect and his life to Troy.

Hektor's death is not painless. Before the battle, he offers an oath to Achilles, stating:

Brutal as you are I will not defile you, if Zeus grants
to me that I can wear you out, and take the life from you.
but after I have stripped your glorious armour, Achilleus,
I will give your corpse back to the Achaians. Do you do likewise.
(*Il.* XXII.256-9)

Achilles' hatred for Hektor is too strong to allow any oaths between them, thus responding "forever these hold feelings of hate for each other, so there can be no love between you and me." Throwing the spear, Hektor dodges it, but Athena replaces Achilles lost spear, with which he kills Hektor. When Hektor runs to meet Achilles in swordplay, Achilles finds an opening at the collar bone and stabs the spear through Hektor's throat, missing the windpipe so that they are able to have one final dialogue before his "soul fluttering free of the limbs went down into Death's house mourning her destiny." (XXII.362 – 3) After Achilles has delivered his vaunts and promised Hektor for no ransom would he give his body to Troy, Achaian soldiers come and stab him repeatedly with their swords. This does not satisfy Achilles need for vengeance, so he attaches Hektor to his chariot at the tendons, and dragged him behind as the people of Troy wailing mourned the loss of their great leader, who "adored [him] as if [he] were a god." (*Il.* XXII.434-5) Hektor's beauty is referenced to frequently throughout his defiling, a reflection of the beauty of the city of Troy in all its rich culture and civilization.

Chapter 5: Life After Hektor

The Trojan War ended shortly after Hektor's death. After the savage raping of the city by the Achaians, the booty was split among the leading warriors. This horrific scene is dramatized in Euripedes' *The Trojan Women*. Andromache has now seen the death of all she cared for aside from her son, Astyanax, whom she hopelessly worries over. She had been given an ultimatum to either give Astyanax, who was prophesied to eventually grow up to avenge his father, to them or have her husband's grave desecrated. Astyanax is taken and thrown off the walls of Troy, Andromache taken away by Neoptolemus, the slayer of the royal family of Troy, including King Priam at an altar of Zeus. Art depicts a scene with Neoptolemus beating Priam to death at the altar of Zeus with an infant thought to be Astyanax, seen below in Figure 1.¹⁷



Figure 1.

Whatever the means might have been, Andromache was now completely alone in the world with no reminders of the family she had once again. Several times she claims herself to be dead already, wishing she had suffered Polyxena's fate rather than her own.

As Neoptolemus' mistress, she is taken to Epirus. Much of her time at the house of Neoptolemus is told of in Euripedes' *Andromache*, with her struggle against Hermione, Neoptolemus' wife. Andromache produced four sons by Neoptolemus "until he sought Hermione, the daughter of Leda, and a Spartan wedding, handing me [Andromache] to

¹⁷ Woodford, Susan. *The Trojan War in Ancient Art*. Duckworth 1993: illustrations on 109, 115

Helenus, a slave to a slave.”¹⁸ While Neoptolemus is away, Hermione tries to give Andromache the death she has been seeking, but Andromache now has a family, renewing her need to live. Afterwards, Neoptolemus is murdered by Orestes, Hermione’s original betrothed.

Andromache is subsequently given to Helenus, the twin brother of Cassandra at Troy. He would be the final man in Andromache’s long life of slavery. Helenus, in some stories, is the traitor to Troy, telling Odysseus of his prophecy of the Trojan horse. Married to her half brother, she ruled alongside him over Epirus. Another scene proving her unending devotion to Hektor appears during this stage in her life when Aeneas is on his quest for Italy. The dismal setting is a replica of Hektor’s tomb, which Andromache has erected. Inside she is seen praying to be with him once again. She has no care to be alive, and yet she cannot kill herself, even though in her mind she already is gone. Although she has already bore Helenus a son, Cestrinus, she still only has her heart devoted to Hektor. The only thing she has to speak of is the past, and upon Aeneas’ leaving she tells Ascanius, Aeneas’ son, of his resemblance to Astyanax and ladens him with gifts:

Take with you these last
 gifts of your people – you, the only image
 that still is left of my Astyanax:
 so did he bear his eyes, his hands, his face;
 So would he now be entering his youth,
 were he alive, his years the same as yours. (*Il.* VI.636-641)

After Helenus’ death, she left Epirus and went back to Asia Minor with Pergamus, one of her sons to Helenus. Here she lived out the rest of her life, a widow only to Hektor, but married to three men in her lifetime.

Chapter 6: Tragedy in its Final Conclusion

¹⁸Mandelbaum, Allen. *Virgil, Aeneid*. Bantam Books 1971: 68 lines 426-8

I find it difficult not to classify Andromache and Hektor as the most truly tragic couple in Greek literature. Several stories and pieces of art are dedicated to retelling the stories and tragedies surrounding the Trojan War, of which Hektor and Andromache were pawns of a greater power. The courageous and strong life of Hektor helped pull Andromache through her early hardships. I think William Allan describes Andromache's position best in his introduction:

Francesca da Rimini's words [“There is no greater pain than to remember, in our present grief, past happiness...” Dante, *Inferno*, V.121-3] might well be applied to the experience of Andromache after the fall of Troy, shadowed by her happy past, and forced to endure the miserable and humiliating life of a slave and concubine in Greece.¹⁹

These events are depicted in several manners, but never have I found a parody of Andromache, even when looking to comedy. She is a reminder of a life of suffering, brought upon her because of the virtue and loyalty she possessed so well. Her behavior after Hektor's death is exactly what Dido from the *Aeneid*, was living, and, if not for heavenly intervention, Dido would have lived her life in devotion to one man. Andromache accomplishes this only in mind while her body and virtues are used by others. It is Andromache who keeps Hektor alive, not forgetting the pain of Troy, which Hektor is often connected to. Hektor's key significance in everything that is Troy is also shadowed by Andromache's dependence on Hektor. She speaks of the importance in her marriage with Hektor at her learning of his death on the high walls of Troy:

Hektor, I grieve for you. You and I were born to a single
destiny, you in Troy in the house of Priam, and I
in Thebe, underneath the timbered mountain of Plakos
in the house of Eetion, who cared for me when I was little,
ill-fated he, I ill-starred. I wish he had never begotten me.
Now you go down to the house of Death in the secret places
of the earth, and left me here behind in the sorrow of mourning,
a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby

¹⁹ Allan, William. *The Andromache and Euripidean Tragedy*. Oxford University Press 2000: 1

who was born to you and me, the unfortunate. (*Il.* XXII.477-85)

Already here Andromache shows herself has dead, sharing a “single destiny,” and yet she is left to mourn among the living. At the sight of his defiled body behind Achilles’ chariot she faints, but Homer gives her the death she is supposed to receive in their joint destiny, the descriptive words, such as “darkness of night misted over the eyes” and “gasped the life breath from her,” very similar to someone’s death. Her marriage veil flew from her head, signifying her bond with Hektor was now shattered in fate, although he will never leave Andromache’s mind as she lives her life in humiliation and defeat.

Tragedy can only be spoken of to those who were made to suffer by unseen forces succumbing unwillingly to great evils where great virtue lies. There is no doubt in my mind that Hektor and Andromache were both forced to yield to unforgiving forces beyond their control in their great fortune and virtue. Andromache, wronged in every fashion a woman in ancient Greece could be wronged with without causing it herself, was not given the one true break she wished for by staying with Hektor through everything, even if it meant her own end.