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Hector: Tragedy

by Antoine de Montchrestien

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,
by Richard Hillman

Référence électronique

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by Antoine de Montchrestien
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Translation

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HECTOR: TRAGEDY (*c.* 1601-1604)

By
Antoine de Montchrestien

Note on the Translation

The translation is based on the edition of Louis Petit de Julleville, which is still the only modern edition of the complete tragedies.¹

As with my previous translations of French Renaissance tragedy, I employ hexameter couplets, which, however less at home in English than iambic pentameter, provide a more faithful impression of the original Alexandrines. That is the form consistently used by Montchrestien, except in certain choruses, which present variations in line-length and rhyme-scheme. These I have attempted to reproduce. I give the name “Andromache” its common English pronunciation (four syllables, with primary stress on the second), although Montchrestien’s verse, while employing the same spelling, which approximates the Greek, anticipates the three-syllable pronunciation mandated by the later spelling “Andromaque” (as in the tragedy of Racine [1667]).

There are no stage directions in the early text, and I have occasionally supplied the lack where this seemed useful, at the risk of sometimes intervening arbitrarily. I have also attempted to distinguish the different choruses where appropriate.² All additions to the text of reference are in square brackets.

A single setting serves throughout the play (which also strictly respects the “unities” of time and action) of a flexible kind common in contemporary stagings. The dialogue all takes place within an outer chamber in the palace of Priam, from which entrances lead to other parts of the palace and from which, through a window or gallery, sections of the city may be seen by the characters (as is necessary when, in ll. 2045-48 [Act V], Andromache is described returning from her encounter with the distraught populace).³

¹ Antoine de Montchrestien, *Les tragédies*, ed. Louis Petit de Julleville, new ed. (Paris: E. Plot, Norrit et Cie., 1891), from which page numbers are given for quotations in the original. The edition by Christopher Norman Smith of *Two Tragedies: Hector and La Reine d’Ecosse*, by Antoine de Montchrestien, Athlone Renaissance Library (London: Athlone Press, 1972) is less readily available and presents no significant variants.

² See below, n. 5.

³ I have doubts concerning the opinion of Tiphaine Karsenti, *Le mythe de Troie dans le théâtre français (1562-1715)*, Lumière Classique (Paris: H. Champion, 2012), p. 325, n. 2, that the meeting of the Nurse and Andromache with Priam (ll. 579-82 [Act II]) requires a division into two distinct playing spaces. It is possible to envisage variant stagings here, and in general the imaginary division of a single space into multiple centres of action is an established convention. Cf. the possible placements and movements implied by l. 1561 and ll. 1578-80 (Act IV).

*Speakers*⁴

1. Priam
 2. Hector
 3. Hecuba
 4. Andromache
 5. Cassandra
 6. Antenor
 7. Chorus
 8. [Chorus of Women]⁵
 9. Messenger
 10. [Nurse]
 11. [Helen]
- [Non-speaking: infant son of Hector and Andromache,
several Trojan princes]

-
- 4** Orig. “Entreparlevrs” (p. 2). The reason for the order given is not clear, as noted by Françoise Charpentier, *Les débuts de la tragédie héroïque: Antoine de Montchrestien (1575-1621)* (Lille: Service de Reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille III, 1981), p. 437, who also proposes that the two female parts omitted (the Nurse and Helen) were doubled by the actors (probably male) playing Hecuba and Cassandra—a hypothesis suggesting the text’s at least partially theatrical origins. “Speakers” would then be equivalent to “actors”. See also below, n. 106.
- 5** For a Chorus (or choruses) of Women in the context of the choric functions generally, see the Introduction, pp. 25-27.

Act I

[Cassandra, Chorus, Andromache, Hector, Nurse,
Infant son of Hector and Andromache]⁶

CASSANDRA

1 What fatal undertow is sweeping you to sea,
2 Where many a boiling gulf gapes destructively?
3 O vessel, stay at anchor, see your lines are sure,
4 Which now to this tranquil shore tie you up secure.
5 So many treacherous straits traversed at great peril,
6 So many rocks avoided, using strength and skill,
7 By your wise ancestors, who with both head and hand
8 With difficulty could the first tempest withstand—
9 These should have been your lesson that your risky course
10 Is guided by these seas ruled by a fatal force.
11 With no lighthouse on land and a pole star that fails,
12 Do you really dare once again to set your sails?
13 Do you foresee at all what is bound to occur
14 If you embark in the depth of such a dread winter?
15 There no further Halcyon days for you remain,
16 And the sceptre of Aeolus⁷ decrees free rein
17 To those rebel spirits who, as they fiercely blow,
18 Cause to tremble and groan the elements below,
19 And even have the heavens in their fury sharing:
20 Where but to shipwreck is now destined your sea-faring?
21 I'm speaking all in vain: Trojans, you do not hear—
22 No more than the breeze where these speeches disappear.
23 No, I can urge without cease your coming distress:
24 You never will believe Cassandra, prophetess.
25 O senseless warriors, what sort of ardent furor,
26 Blinded to the harm it does, engenders this error?
27 What good are all your combats? O vain arrogance
28 To think you can surmount the supreme ordinance—
29 With a mere mortal arm, by mere human designs,

6 There is no list of characters in the original text.

7 Aeolus, keeper of the winds, retrained them for seven days in the year so that Alcyone, transformed into a seabird, could lay her eggs.

30 To think that you can breach the high decrees' confines,
 31 Since the god of gods who is father of us all,
 32 To whom the earth, the sea and heaven are in thrall,
 33 Takes the part of those strict laws of Fatality
 34 He carved in adamant of his Eternity.

35 I sense that the Demon⁸ maddens me more and more:
 36 Note well that voice he causes from my mouth to pour;
 37 Lodge it within your hearts; it carries less deceit
 38 Than you in Phoebus' tripod oracles⁹ will meet.

39 You¹⁰ run all full of furor fresh quarrel to seek,
 40 But your towers are topped by the treacherous Greek;¹¹
 41 A sombre mist troubles the quiet of your day,
 42 And your destiny turns its kindest face away.

43 The lion, overthrown upon a field soaked through
 44 With tears and blood, and now by the timorous crew
 45 Of hares assailed, as they assemble without fear,
 46 Shows that with his failing life hope must disappear.

47 We must flee—I see the flames. Haughty Pergamum,¹²
 48 Swallowed by fire as it falls, to ruin is come,
 49 And in thick swirls sweeping along, the heavy smoke
 50 Clouds the gilded temples, triumphing at the joke.¹³
 51 But what direction can we give our rapid course
 52 In trying to take cover from the foreign force,
 53 If our trembling foot, though transported here and there,
 54 Stumbles on death or captivity everywhere¹⁴—

8 Orig. "Démon" (p. 4), that is, the spirit of prophecy that possesses her.

9 The reference is to the famous Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, who spoke from a tripod.

10 The second-person pronoun shifts here from the plural to the singular, as if she were now addressing Troy as such, rather than the Trojans. This may reflect her increasing oracular frenzy.

11 Orig.: "Mais ton Fort est vaincu par la fraude Gregoise" (p. 4). "Fort" seems to refer most immediately to the walled city, but also implied is the familiar contrast between Trojan strength and Greek guile. The translation attempts to convey a sense of distraction.

12 "Haughty Pergamum": orig. "Les orgueilleux Pergames" (p. 4)—presumably, the citadel of Troy, imagined, as often, with multiple towers; it is clear from what follows that the structure is meant.

13 The obvious "joke" ("en se jouant" [p. 4]) would be destiny's "last laugh" at Trojan arrogance. More specifically implied, perhaps, are the fouling of the rich decor and the inversion of the normal function of temples, that is, to send the smoke of sacrifices upward.

14 An audience might have recognised the ironic adumbration of Cassandra's own fate: she will become the captive mistress of Agamemnon, then be murdered with him by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; this is the subject of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.

55 If a gulf gapes equally for the innocent
 56 As for the causers of this criminal event
 57 Consuming Priam, his house with him burning quite
 58 In the flames that his fatal brand had set alight?¹⁵
 59 Would, as his father prayed, at his birth he had died!
 60 But you, O iron Fate,¹⁶ did otherwise decide.

CHORUS

61 Mouth too truthful in predicting unhappiness,
 62 You never open but to make us feel distress:
 63 Yet, for the mortal race, it is a worthy thing
 64 To be advised in time of heaven's threatening,
 65 So that what is foreseen may be provided for.
 66 The blow that strikes one unprepared harms all the more,¹⁷
 67 But that which one expects has so little effect
 68 That its true evil is less than the fearful prospect.

CASSANDRA

69 It is not for no reason I make you afraid.
 70 If ever my oracle the truth so betrayed
 71 As it seems to these Trojans who lack all belief,
 72 Even now in these ills, I'd feel hopeful relief.
 73 But what? Can I blind that inner sight by negation
 74 Which espies in the future a sad conflagration?

CHORUS

75 O Cassandra divine, no such presage display!

CASSANDRA

76 What use pretending? Troy will be ashes one day,
 77 And all its high palaces, tumbled to the ground,
 78 Will be stony heaps where a little grass is found.

15 The reference is to Priam's son Paris, whose mother Hecuba dreamt she would be delivered of a firebrand that would cause the city's destruction. He was exposed at birth but rescued and nurtured by a shepherd. Eventually, his ravishing of Helen triggered the Trojan war. See William Smith, *The Smaller Classical Dictionary*, rev. E. H. Blakeney and John Warrington (New York: Dutton, 1958), s.v. "Paris".

16 "[I]ron Fate": orig. "Destin de fer" (p. 4). I reserve capitals in such abstractions for clear cases of personification.

17 Ll. 62-68 are marked for emphasis.

79 You do not believe me; that's your old custom still—
 80 And of that god who animates my mind, the will;¹⁸
 81 All you'll gain in the end—here my sorrow is great—
 82 Is that it will be said of you, "Wise¹⁹ but too late".

CHORUS

83 So many good citizens hope for the contrary.

CASSANDRA

84 The best judgement is blind to its own misery.

CHORUS

85 They say that the Greeks are meeting with small success.

CASSANDRA

86 If I spoke of human things, I would say no less.

CHORUS

87 And that they are intending to embark their army.

CASSANDRA

88 Can you still ignore their accustomed trickery?²⁰

CHORUS

89 That if we just hold out this is their final effort.

CASSANDRA

90 Often the final blow is the most deadly sort.²¹

CHORUS

91 That to the winds we'll send their fortune and their
 sails.

18 "[A]nimates my mind": orig. "m'allume" (p. 5). Responsible for both the prophetic gift and the disbelief was Apollo, supposed to have punished her thus because she refused him.

19 "Wise": orig. "Sages" (p. 5). The plural form matches most immediately the collective nature of the Chorus, more largely the Trojans generally.

20 Obviously evoked is the climactic sleight of the Trojan horse, but more subtly foreshadowed is Achilles' treacherous killing of Hector.

21 The line is marked for emphasis.

CASSANDRA

92 So to dupe the common people one forges tales.²²
 93 That hope within our hearts has long since been sustained,
 94 And yet their siege is still as stubbornly maintained.

CHORUS

95 What have we to fear, protected by Hector's arm?

CASSANDRA

96 His death at last, while exposing himself to harm.²³

CHORUS

97 None of the Argive leaders in valour can match him.

CASSANDRA

98 I fear only that his own misfortune may catch him.

CHORUS

99 He is cherished by the gods and by men respected.

CASSANDRA

100 But like the rest of us, he is to Fate subjected.

CHORUS

101 God, who gave him to us, can cause his preservation.

CASSANDRA

102 God, who gave him to us, could cause our deprivation.

CHORUS

103 For the public welfare, he keeps in place good princes.²⁴

CASSANDRA

104 Some he removes himself from hated provinces.

22 Another single line marked for emphasis.

23 This line is marked for emphasis.

24 Ll. 103 and 104 are marked for emphasis.

CHORUS

105 Our destinies, when justly weighed in heaven's scale,
106 Against those of the Greeks sufficiently avail.

CASSANDRA

107 The monarch whose hand holds that scale up in the sky,²⁵
108 Just as it pleases him, hurtles them low or high.

CHORUS

109 He makes himself the saviour of peoples oppressed:
110 By the good that follows his favour is expressed.

CASSANDRA

111 Those most favoured he comes finally to despise,
112 When they lend their hands to an unjust enterprise.

CHORUS

113 To arm for one's country and the gods' sacredness
114 Is an action that both God and all mortals bless.

CASSANDRA

115 Oh, too gross error: in thinking one does no ill,
116 One gives the enemy equal reason to kill.²⁶

CHORUS

117 The outraged Trojans still have vivid memories
118 Of how they were sacked by the tyrant Hercules.²⁷

25 Ll. 107-16 are marked for emphasis.

26 Orig. of ll 115-16: "O trop grosse erreur si l'on ne croit mal faire, / Par en donner subiet à son propre aduersaire" (p. 6). The expression is elliptical, but the gist seems to be that anyone can claim to be on the side of right—a fairly unusual perspective in the period.

27 This occurred twice, initially after the hero rescued Hesione from a monster and obtained from her father Laomedon the promise of horses received from Zeus; Laomedon's failure to keep his promise provoked Hercules' war against Troy. See Smith, s.v. "Heracles" (p. 145). Versions of this became a standard part of the medieval Troy stories. See, e.g., Guido de Colomnis [Guido delle Colonne], *Historia destructionis Troiae*, ed. Nathaniel Edward Griffin, Mediaeval Academy of America Publication 26 (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936); online at <https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.medievalacademy.org/resource/resmgr/maa_books_online/griffin_0026.htm> (accessed 6 September 2018), bk. IV (print ed. pp. 33-42). See also Raoul Le Fèvre, *Recueil des histoires de Troye* (c. 1474), trans. and first pub. William Caxton, *The recuile of the histories of Troie, etc.* (London: William Copland, 1553; STC 15378), bks. I and II.

CASSANDRA

119 Ilium was razed, a great and shameful offence:
120 But an evil was done, and war the consequence.

CHORUS

121 And why this war? Surely, there was great need compelling
122 An errant thief²⁸ to snatch her from her distant dwelling!

CASSANDRA

123 The fault is wholly ours, so we must bear the blame.

CHORUS

124 Now the Greeks are at fault, armed in a women's name.

CASSANDRA

125 Instead, your fellow-citizen should be accused.

CHORUS

126 By what the Greek endures, the Trojan's been abused:
127 What is a fault for us, for him is privilege.²⁹

CASSANDRA

128 He never committed rapine or sacrilege.

CHORUS

129 Let one woman count like the other: that is reason.

CASSANDRA

130 One was taken in war, but the other by treason.

28 "An errant thief": orig. "vn voleur vagabond" (p. 6)—again, a less than complimentary reference to Paris. The Chorus's expression here is mordantly ironic.

29 Doubtless a reference to the legend that the Greeks were dishonest first in detaining Exione (Hesione), sister of Priam. This element figures throughout the sources: see Guido, bk. IV (p. 42) and bk. V (pp. 50 ff.); Le Fèvre, trans. Caxton, bk. III, fol. vi^v; and Jacques Milet, *La destruction de Troye la grande, etc.* (Lyons: Denys de Harsy, 1544), fol. 4^v (La Première Journée).

CHORUS

131 One came of free will; the other left by constraint.

CASSANDRA

132 One case did sacred hospitality attain.

CHORUS

133 The other affronted all righteous honesty.

CASSANDRA

134 Victory brings with it such ranging liberty.

CHORUS

135 Among the spoils of war, women do not belong.

CASSANDRA

136 Yes, great ladies do—only not the common throng.

CHORUS

137 Whose behaviour but the Greeks' manifests such flaws?

CASSANDRA

138 No people can be found that lives wholly by laws.³⁰

CHORUS

139 We should even less, for against an adversary,
140 All defences are just when they are necessary.

CASSANDRA

141 In a quarrel, he is always more highly prized
142 Who seeks out his revenge through valour exercised.³¹

CHORUS

143 So they do pretend. But if, for this Helen's sake,
144 Upon us still more painful hardship we must take,

30 Ll. 138-42 are marked for emphasis.

31 It is difficult not to think here of Montchrestien's seeming personal penchant for affairs of "honour".

145 Great gods, to dampen the ardour of our long fight,
 146 Extinguish, in the lasting night of death, her light!
 147 But is this not Hector? He himself, without fail,
 148 Followed by Andromache, dishevelled and pale.

ANDROMACHE

149 Oh please, dear husband, will you do nothing for me?
 150 Will your death, then, recompense my fidelity?

HECTOR

151 Honour once safe, Andromache, I grant you all,
 152 For I consider that no person is your equal.
 153 But just for a vain dream one's duty to neglect—
 154 Such an extreme request, dear heart, I must reject.

ANDROMACHE

155 Ah, my own faithful Hector, my dear life, my all,
 156 Go freely, for my part, where you hear honour call,
 157 But since to go forth today you are not compelled,
 158 Let this mortal anguish from my mind be dispelled.
 159 This dream is not vain at all, as you must agree
 160 If past ones of mine you recall to memory,
 161 Some of them, alas, confirmed at our dear expense:
 162 Not otherwise do men God's voice experience.³²

HECTOR

163 If we found a motive for doing well or ill
 164 In these impressions that would trouble common people,
 165 All the high designs of a spirit without defect
 166 Would perish at their birth or live to no effect.
 167 No, the hardy man who will as his guide prefer
 168 That duty which serves us as bridle and as spur,
 169 Will always follow its course and, ever the same,
 170 Will seek to compass what he first set as his aim,
 171 While nothing that follows, with accidents combined,
 172 Will be able to make him change a doubtful mind.

32 Ll. 162-84 are marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

173 Because our reasoning is liable to error,
 174 It constitutes impiety, conjoined with furor,
 175 Which moves the gods to turn on us their fiercest ire,
 176 If in contempt we hold them, counting ourselves higher—
 177 We blind mortals, whose mind has such limited scope
 178 That even with human cases it cannot cope.

HECTOR

179 That which we experience by natural cause
 180 We should not lend the stature of eternal laws,
 181 And it is true furor, not just impiety,
 182 To impute to the gods our mere frivolity,
 183 Which holds the soul fast, in the grip of fear and pain,
 184 For monstrous forgeries of a fantastic brain.

ANDROMACHE

185 Whatever the case, you will soon see pass one day.

HECTOR

186 Occasion is all; once the moment slips away,³³
 187 No longer her encouraging laughter do we find:
 188 One must seize her forelock, for she is bald behind.³⁴

ANDROMACHE

189 Nearly twice five years have circled above our head
 190 Since that great host has its obstinate strength exerted
 191 In combatting our fortune, and the confluence
 192 Of all proud Asia's forces come to its defence
 193 Has not managed from these towers to push it back.

HECTOR

194 When I hear of that slowness, all patience I lack.
 195 Before night I want, with that army at my feet,
 196 To see going up in smoke its hope and its fleet.

33 Ll. 186-88 are marked for emphasis.

34 The iconography and moral are widespread, notably in early modern emblem books.

ANDROMACHE

197 O heaven! Gods in your eternal dwelling-place!
198 What ten years could not do can be in one day's space?

HECTOR

199 What ten years could not do, a single moment may.

ANDROMACHE

200 And what if that moment runs the enemy's way?
201 For that is up to heaven; and then, doubtful chance,³⁵
202 Courted by each side, cannot wed both supplicants;
203 But right until the very end one cannot know
204 To whom the favour of happy fortune will go.

HECTOR

205 I agree with that reasoning, endorse it quite.
206 Thus I must either vanquish or die in the fight,
207 Fully content if I to my dear homeland bring,
208 To gain its safety, my life as an offering.

ANDROMACHE

209 But since it is your life that keeps alive its grandeur,
210 Make sure your death does not eradicate its splendour.

HECTOR

211 It's given me so much, I can't render its due.

ANDROMACHE

212 The welfare of all here seems to depend on you.

HECTOR

213 As if thanks just to me the Trojans hold out now.

ANDROMACHE

214 And what would they do without you? Without you how
215 Would they defend these walls from those Greeks merciless?

35 Ll. 201-4 are marked for emphasis.

216 With no shepherd what use the feeble shepherdess?
 217 The driver-less wagon, the ship no pilot steers?

HECTOR

218 Many another leader could comfort their fears.
 219 For thanks to our gods, this city impregnable
 220 Bears a rich harvest of warriors redoubtable.

ANDROMACHE

221 You show above them all—you are their paragon.

HECTOR

222 Love makes you think so: no one has so brightly shone³⁶
 223 That he has no equal, or none that him exceeds.

ANDROMACHE

224 I base it on your far-and-wide admired deeds,
 225 Which your brothers, your father and those fighters praise
 226 Whom merit amongst our loftiest ranks arrays.

HECTOR

227 Is not Aeneas there? And Troilus? Deiphobus?
 228 Polidamas? Menon,³⁷ whose souls and bodies grace us?
 229 Not to mention thousands more, allies and relations,
 230 Who for the prize of honour would take up their stations?

ANDROMACHE

231 You also forget that our adversaries' host
 232 Great chiefs in number, skilled in doing well, can boast,
 233 Such that their actions beyond their high names have gone:

36 Ll. 222-23 are marked for emphasis.

37 Polidamas (thus in most analogues; orig. "Polidame" [p. 10], properly "Poulydamas"): in Homer a voice of prudence, sometimes in conflict with Hector (see *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1951], XII.210-29), figuring also in the tradition from Guido to Le Fèvre and Milet. "Menon" (orig. "Memnon" [p. 10]): a Trojan by this name figures passingly in *Iliad*, XII.93; his role is developed in Le Fèvre, where, as below (ll. 2106), he intervenes after Achilles' killing of Hector (Le Fèvre, trans. Caxton, bk. III, fol. xxx^r); in Guido (bk. XXI, p. 175), he deals a fatal wound to Achilles; Milet (fol. 113^{r-v}) has him killed by Achilles' Myrmidons in the same disloyal fashion as Troilus. See also below, ll. 2244-46 (Act V).

234 Brave Diomedes, Ajax, son of Telamon
 235 (Ajax, crafty forger of frauds and subtle lies);
 236 Then old Nestor of Pylos, admirably wise,
 237 The just Idomeneus and strong Meriones,
 238 Courageous instigator of hostilities;³⁸
 239 The king of many kings, who makes the plans for
 battles,
 240 Presides among the Argives over their war-councils;³⁹
 241 At last, he whom pride of place I should have allowed:
 242 That great son of Peleus, as valiant as proud.⁴⁰
 243 For ever since Patroclus fell beneath your sword,
 244 With no endeavour can his grieving soul accord
 245 But to revenge his death, whose bitter memory
 246 Causes Patroclus' shade to haunt him visibly,
 247 Which, in plaintive accents, urges him to the fight,
 248 Both by the dear respect his own worth should excite
 249 And by the sacred love, like adamant chain,
 250 That seemed their destinies together to maintain.

HECTOR

251 Now you⁴¹ bring it fresh to mind—My arms! My arms, here!⁴²
 252 No, I see him amidst his armed troop disappear,
 253 Where, without glory and distinction he'll lie low;
 254 Soiled with shame, may his name forever that stain show
 255 For not appearing at the place I designated
 256 By my bloody challenge, which fixed the moment fated

38 Orig.: “Le courageux auteur des combats d’Ilion” (p. 10). This implies a more significant role in the larger scheme than is warranted by Homer, although Meriones, in association with Idonomeus, displays notable initiative in one battle-scene (*Iliad*, XIII.246-338). It may be pertinent that in Guido, bk. XV (p. 134), Meriones prevents Hector from taking the body of the slain Patroclus.

39 I.e., Agamemnon.

40 The culminating presentation of Achilles, and the emphasis on his valour and pride, are ironic, given the sequel.

41 The first *tutoiement* on his part, presumably a mark of excitement. Andromache uses “tu” to him only in pleading with him to think of their son (ll. 273 ff.). It is ironic that her mention of Achilles inadvertently rouses Hector to action.

42 I have not presumed to impose a staging here by adding directions, but I take it that he gives an order to an on- or offstage servant or servants, at least the “page” of l. 287, who appear with armour over the following lines; the lance of l. 260 might be one of the items carried on (presumably more than one servant would be needed for all), or Hector might find it missing and call for it.

257 To grant to the better man, to both camps made known,
 258 The palm contested by his valour and my own.
 259 Yes, now I hear my horse neighing, thirsting for combat—
 260 That's a good sign. Oh, my lance!—I'll down him with
 that!

ANDROMACHE

261 These whirling motions, my Hector, must be withstood.
 262 Warriors may well be too brave for their own good.⁴³
 263 Didn't you once say that if a man is not wise,
 264 His very courage will be the cause of his demise?
 265 That to seek out the foe and misfortune produce
 266 Is to put the best valour to very poor use?
 267 Be wise, then, in yourself and for yourself at once:
 268 He who is so for others is a kind of dunce.

HECTOR

269 The question has been decided—lace up the harness.⁴⁴
 270 This time that presumptuous Greek's flesh will bear
 witness,
 271 If he stays to meet me and the shock of my lance,
 272 That I have more manhood⁴⁵ than he has arrogance.

[Enter the Nurse with Hector's infant son.]⁴⁶

ANDROMACHE

273 Hector, here's your son. Ah, where are you going to
 274 Before you have put him upon the path of virtue?
 275 Reject all my prayers, your way to destruction take,
 276 So that him, by your death, an orphan you may make
 277 And I may in your tomb without delay arrive.

43 Ll. 262-68 are marked for emphasis.

44 Orig.: "lacez moy le harnois" (p. 11). This is surely addressed to the servant who has been arming him, no doubt the "page" of l. 287, not to Andromache, who has refused. Cf. l. 585 below. On the symbolism, see the Introduction, p. 23.

45 "[M]anhood": orig. "vertu" (p. 11). The word (from Lat. "vir", "virtus") carried two distinct (if imbricated) meanings: "manly strength", clearly intended here, and "moral strength". When Andromache uses it in l. 274 ("virtue"/"virtu" [p. 11]), she is effectively broadening the meaning.

46 See below, ll. 285-86.

278 Could I see myself a widow and stay alive?
 279 No, no, I have so joined my spirit with your soul
 280 That the same fatal blow needs must sever the whole.

HECTOR [taking the child]

281 Come here, dear little child, sweetest burden to hold,⁴⁷
 282 My rough armoured neck with your tender arms enfold.
 283 What, you're afraid, my son? You turn your face aside?
 284 He fears this fierce helmet, which serves my head to
 hide.
 285 See, see how with his tiny hand he clings so tight
 286 To his nurse's arm, presses to her breast in fright.
 287 Here, page, hold my headgear⁴⁸—I must give him a kiss.
 288 Now that he knows me, how he fidgets, filled with bliss!
 289 Grant me, great gods, that this offspring of royalty
 290 May become just in peace, in war gain victory;
 291 That he may ever seek to win glory eternal,
 292 Pardoning the subject, overcoming the rebel;
 293 Make him the governor of Troy's nobility,
 294 And to his people a star of prosperity.
 295 Grant to his virtue fortune that so greatly swells
 296 They'll say with a boast the son the father excels.
 297 When one day, if it happens, his conquering arm
 298 A foe's spoils consecrates as tokens of their harm,
 299 His mother to console and fill with happiness,
 300 Gods I have so revered, cause her to be the witness.
 301 Nurse, take back your charge now; and you,⁴⁹ my precious
 care,
 302 Come, sweet Andromache, yourself such sorrow spare.

47 This sequence involving Hector's infant son is closely modelled on *Iliad*, VI.466-81. The child's fear of the helmet seems to have posed a minor problem for Montchrestien, since in Homer it is explicitly the waving horse-hair crest that frightens the child, as would not be in keeping with the early modern armour evoked in l. 287 (see below, n. 48) and obviously envisaged for performance. Montchrestien's solution is to make the helmet more generally fierce-looking ("fier"), and the translation follows suit.

48 "[H]eadgear": orig. "salade" (p. 11), a helmet (15th-16th cent.) that included a neck-covering, thus probably accounting also for l. 282, "rough-armoured neck [col armé]". See *Le trésor de la langue française informatisée*, s.v. "salade" (online at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/>> [accessed 29 August 2018]).

49 At this tender moment he begins again to *tutoyer* Andromache.

303 Whether I'm at Troy or fighting strenuously,
 304 The thought of my son and you accompanies me,
 305 To lead me from the dense blows the enemy aims,
 306 And softens me with a father's and husband's names.
 307 But I fear shame, which must always reproach attract;
 308 I fear to be by a false people's darts attacked—
 309 Fickle, presumptuous, without respect or law,
 310 Which, deploying its tongue to fabricate a flaw,
 311 Into base cowardice would turn my careful prudence:
 312 Soon lost is glory gained at great labour's expense.
 313 Then, my heart, seen always as dauntless when I fought,
 314 Declines to forfeit the stature my arm has brought,
 315 My sweat and travail, as I forged for it a trophy
 316 No length of time will see expunged from memory.
 317 The day will come at last—to my grief, I am sure —⁵⁰
 318 That will see the conniving Greeks our city capture,
 319 And cousins and brothers, good old Priam my sire,
 320 Will fall before the furor of the Argive ire,
 321 And deeply their poor sufferings my feelings touch.
 322 But I swear by heaven, I do not feel as much
 323 For them all as for you, Andromache, my dear:
 324 My mind's eye can see some youthful braggart appear,⁵¹
 325 Haughtily leading you, as his share of the booty,
 326 To his father's lodging, where it will be your duty
 327 To work the loom for weaving cloth, his wool to spin,
 328 Bright-sparkling water from his fountain to bring in,
 329 To sweep the place, while bearing with their signs of
 scorn—
 330 Mean occupations for a woman so well born;
 331 Perhaps some passer-by, touched to the inmost life,
 332 Will say: of valiant Hector she was the wife.
 333 Then what rancour will flow in your heart full of care,
 334 Hearing my name so glorious remembered there,
 335 While yourself stripped of rank and possessions remained,
 336 Forever in that dismal servitude retained.

50 Ll. 317-40 closely follow *Iliad*, VI.447-65.

51 In Euripides' *Andromache*, she has become the slave and concubine of Neoptolemos.

337 If so the fates decree, surely I would prefer,
 338 So as not to see you, that death my eyes should cover
 339 With an eternal blindfold, that the grave should keep me
 340 From hearing the sighs of your soul's captivity.

ANDROMACHE

341 Well, then, my dear Hector, hold out your hand to me.
 342 Only on our couple does your heart show no pity:
 343 Alas, your valour destroys us! Its heritage⁵²
 344 Is a hard death met in the flower of your age.
 345 Say, what will you do? Would not marble pitiless
 346 Soften at all, my loving sentiments to witness?
 347 Think at least, I beg you, of that death full of pain
 348 Which you yourself will make your wretched wife sustain,
 349 If she becomes your widow by a hostile sword,
 350 And your ardour with my faith will perhaps accord.

351 Alas, it is against your head their arms conspire;
 352 It is your noble blood their deadly points desire;
 353 This aim seems even vulgar darts to animate,
 354 And you'll run blindly into dangers that await!
 355 No, before fate makes me abandon your embrace,⁵³
 356 Let the earth swallow me; myself for all I brace:
 357 For so much pain would it cause me the sun to spy,
 358 If it saw me but not the brilliance of your eye.

359 If I remain behind—oh, wretched woman!—sole,
 360 Who will be able my heart's anguish to console?
 361 Go to my relations? Alas, they are all dead:
 362 At long last Peleus' barbarous son succeeded
 363 In razing my fair Thebes, teeming with families,
 364 Whose top rose up over the loftiest of cities—
 365 A pine to a briar; his hands in that dear flood
 366 He bathed of my father's and seven brothers'⁵⁴ blood.

52 Ll. 343-77 adapt, sometimes quite closely, *Iliad*, VI.406-32.

53 "[A]bandon your embrace": orig. "de ton col me separé [separate me from your neck]" (p. 13). She seems likely to be embracing him here.

54 "[B]rothers": orig. "germains" (p. 13), seemingly based on the 1545 translation by Hugues Salel, "freres germains". The Greek word ("κασίγνητος") can mean "cousin" as well as "brother", but that sense is not indicated for this occurrence (*Iliad*, VI.421), and I follow standard modern translation practice; see Georg Autenrieth, *A Homeric Dictionary*, trans. Robert P. Keep, rev. Isaac Glagg (Nor-

367 My mother he confined, with cruelty not sated,
 368 Her miseries with austere treatment aggravated
 369 Unworthy of her sex and of her lofty station.
 370 There her growing troubles by no means found cessation:
 371 Fortune when contrary is never solitary;⁵⁵
 372 For Diana, become her vengeful adversary,
 373 After so many torments deprived us of her,
 374 And only to satisfy her rancorous anger.
 375 So that is why without relations I remain—
 376 Without father, mother, brother, assailed with pain
 377 At every moment for their deaths. O my dear spouse,
 378 In future, take their places: you are my all house.
 379 Remain, my sweet soul; cease resisting, my life's light;
 380 Give more weight to my love than to your thirst for fight.
 381 I ask very little; you wouldn't have the heart
 382 To crush my wishes with your rigour and depart.

HECTOR

383 Hope for my triumph, O my dear and sweet companion,
 384 And take off this mourning, not fitting to put on.
 385 If I die in the midst of combat, bear the blow:
 386 We are all destined to perish, as you well know.
 387 Surely of no immortal seed was I engendered;
 388 And if the sons of gods that vessel have encumbered
 389 With which the vile ferryman the Acheron plies,⁵⁶
 390 If we others come to die, why should that surprise?
 391 It is the self-same law that dictates death and birth;⁵⁷
 392 Since fleeing to the right or left is of no worth,
 393 Far better to advance while marching straight ahead,
 394 Seek what one should, though wanting something else
 instead;
 395 Just so reigns destiny, invincible and firm:
 396 It does not shorten, nor does it prolong our term.

man: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), s.v.

55 The line is marked for emphasis.

56 Charon, who ferried souls across the Acheron, or Styx, was supposed to be physically repulsive as well as foul-tempered.

57 Ll. 391-96 are marked for emphasis.

397 Embrace me. The future is heaven's to produce.
 398 I tell you again, this weeping is of no use.
 399 To beguile your distress, your household tasks resume:
 400 Summon up your spirits to ply distaff and loom.
 401 For those of us Troy summons to serve otherwise,
 402 We will lend our swords—and our lives, if need arise.
 403 Adieu, my sweet love. Ardour is kindling within me,⁵⁸
 404 A courage that boils up more than usually:
 405 Mars's vehement ardour. Those brave deeds we do
 406 Of noble and vigorous transports are the issue,
 407 Which are awakened in the soul when it is spurred
 408 By high desires for honour, raised up and stirred,
 409 As a fire arranged around a cauldron urges
 410 Water within to flow upward in boiling surges.
 411 The man who these daring impulsions does not know
 412 Always has his hands in striking sluggish and slow,
 413 As when a ship across a dead-calm sea is going,
 414 Served little by the strength, less by the art of rowing.
 415 But if the sudden stroke of courage his spirit shakes,
 416 Across a thousand deaths a bold passage he makes,
 417 And for that his strong arms can such distinction boast
 418 He enters the ranks of heroes among the foremost.

CHORUS⁵⁹

419 Let the expert mariner pronounce on the storm-cloud,
 420 The ploughman on what soil is fitting to be ploughed,
 421 The shepherd upon flocks, and upon dogs the hunter,
 422 The merchant upon trade, on value the usurer:
 423 But the bold discourses which deal with bravery
 424 Are suitable for spirits whose sage certainty
 425 Unites what is discussed with that which is effected:
 426 For it is by action that manhood⁶⁰ is perfected.

58 Ll. 403-17 are marked for emphasis (with l. 418, it seems, omitted inadvertently).

59 All the lines of the following double chorus are marked for emphasis.

60 “[M]anhood”: orig. “vertu” (p. 14).

427 Giving her gifts to all,⁶¹
 428 Nature employs no even hand,
 429 Denies it should befall
 430 Her favours equally should stand
 431 In men who greatly differ
 432 In rank just as in manner.

433 One has a heart that trembles
 434 When dangers in his sight appear;
 435 A woman he resembles
 436 Whom everything torments with fear.
 437 Another, never afraid,
 438 Is always calm and staid.

439 The anger of the sea,
 440 Having a tempest bred,
 441 May threaten soon to bury
 442 In the watery depths his head;
 443 Still his forehead will fail
 444 To become deathly pale.

445 The collapse he will outface
 446 Of the world's roof upon his head,
 447 Before he will displace
 448 The foot on which his stance is founded:
 449 It's steady as a rock
 450 Not to be moved by shock.

451 Pikes and darts in their swarms
 452 His boldness will never efface;
 453 To Mars's fiercest storms
 454 He proudly will hold up his face;
 455 Should he be overcome,
 456 His heart will not succumb.

61 The original text provides a second heading of "Chœvr" (p. 14), typographically more prominent, for the lyrical, as opposed to sententious, passage running from this point to the end of the act. Presuming that the same chorus is involved, this would seem to mark a shift in mode from chorus-as-participant to chorus-as-commentator, although the contrast here is more in form than in content.

457 His knee always steadfast
 458 In the breach will not buckle under,
 459 If knocked down by the blast
 460 When a lighted fuse sets off thunder.⁶²
 461 Sooner than rank to lose
 462 Loss of all blood he'll choose.

463 The good he will instate
 464 As what he most dearly desires;
 465 His soul in constant state
 466 Whatever change life requires.
 467 At work or in repose,
 468 The same heart's ease he knows.

469 Happy or not his part,
 470 His lifetime will be free of anguish,
 471 And his vigorous heart
 472 Will not ever have cause to languish;
 473 For a good or a bad thing
 474 To him will be less than nothing.

475 That mutability
 476 Which rules all things beneath the moon⁶³
 477 He'll meet with cold sagacity
 478 Mocking the might of adverse Fortune,
 479 Those darts of hers deflected⁶⁴
 480 That were at him directed.

481 Should one seek to defile him,
 482 Mingling him with the multitude,

62 Other (equally anachronistic) scenarios are possible, but the likeliest is the explosion of a mine to make a breach in ramparts under siege. The anachronism is more flagrant than in the details of Hector's armour and definitively sets this choric commentary outside the play-world.

63 According to traditional cosmology, the realms above the sphere of the moon were immune to change.

64 "[D]eflected": orig. "rebouchez" (p. 16). The word is rare in this sense, but A. J. Greimas, *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français* (Paris: Larousse, 1999), s.v. "reboucher", cites a usage equivalent to "rebondir".

483 Or far off to exile him
484 In some bare desert's solitude,
485 To him in every place
486 The same is the sun's face.

487 Seeing himself created
488 A simple soldier or a captain,
489 His duty estimated
490 By virtue's rule (the only certain),
491 All things he will effect
492 Cannot be less than perfect.

493 He whom heavenly dictate
494 Has furnished with such quality
495 As darling of the gods must rate;
496 He can be dealt no injury,
497 Since stronger far is he
498 Than man or Fate can be.

Act II

Andromache, Nurse, Priam, Hector, [Chorus]

[Enter Andromache and Nurse.]

ANDROMACHE

499 Although my soul is trying itself to distract
 500 From thinking of its woe, the thought remains intact;
 501 Amid this misery, all efforts still are vain:
 502 All within me weakens except only my pain.
 503 Wherever I may turn, I can take no delight;
 504 Then, if anywhere I remain, my mind takes flight
 505 And, spinning fantasies, does nothing but collect
 506 Disturbing presages that I cannot neglect.
 507 If only you could see how many cruel cares
 508 Your Andromache hidden in her bosom bears,
 509 Your spirit, Hector, would less obstinacy show!

NURSE

510 But let him go out if he has determined so.

ANDROMACHE

511 If he goes out, it's the end of him, Nurse—he'll die.

NURSE

512 What vain fear has managed your soul to occupy?
 513 After combats galore, is it a novelty
 514 To see Hector trading blows? One who goes to sea⁶⁵
 515 Need not drown; to put oneself in the way of harms,
 516 Judging the risks wisely, wins one respect in arms:
 517 There if some coward by running escapes today,
 518 Tomorrow unawares he'll be caught in the fray.⁶⁶
 519 You do him great wrong to question his manly virtue.

65 Ll. 514-18 are marked for emphasis.

66 Orig.: "Demain sans y penser l'escart tombe sus luy" (p. 17), "l'escart" referring, it seems, to his previous cowardly withdrawal.

ANDROMACHE

520 Ah, that's just what will make my sad presage come true!

NURSE

521 Who has ever seen in you such fears multiplying?

ANDROMACHE

522 Oh, my evil fortune approaches, Nurse—I'm dying!

NURSE

523 Madam, what seizes you? Tell me, by heaven's grace,
524 Where this strange sorrow comes from that darkens your
face?

ANDROMACHE

525 Alas, it's a dream portending horror and grief.

NURSE

526 A dream is mere wind—you need lend it no belief.

ANDROMACHE

527 Now that my eyes again with that dread vision fill,
528 I feel my spirits freezing with an icy chill;
529 My whole body commences slowly to perspire,
530 And my slackened nerves languish, threaten to expire.
531 Lend your hand quickly, Nurse, or I'll be on the ground.

NURSE

532 Never does fear master a body that is sound.⁶⁷
533 The anguish that carries you along like a torrent
534 Has a hidden source, though an effect too apparent.
535 But tell me—let me know of that distress the cause
536 Which is crushing your desolate heart in its claws;
537 Speak out boldly, Madam, with urgency I pray:
538 No dream of any kind can frighten in this way.

67 A line marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

539 Moreover, it is not alone: other ill portents
540 Tell us loudly and clearly of dire events.

NURSE

541 It is a grave error to trust implicitly⁶⁸
542 In one who can for us, but not himself, foresee.

ANDROMACHE

543 It is the most flagrant madness to close one's ears,
544 When heaven speaking through the marvellous one hears.

NURSE

545 Tell me your troubles—they'll be easier to bear:
546 Sorrow becomes lighter when exposed to the air.⁶⁹

ANDROMACHE

547 The sun had no sooner given light to the day
548 Than I rose up from my bed and, turning his way,
549 Told him my dream and begged him in humility
550 To keep far off all sad eventuality.

NURSE

551 That was well done. When heaven shows a frowning face,⁷⁰
552 Let us have timely recourse to its divine grace,
553 To obtain by our prayers some assurance of rescue
554 From the imminent evil that to us is due.

ANDROMACHE

555 Phoebus grew dark then, shedding light upon my sorrow,
556 And, shining uncertainly on my certain woe,
557 Showed himself sometimes red and again sometimes pale,
558 The same as my dream, with regret announcing bale.
559 But let's cease to talk more of the frightening portent
560 Which forms within my grieving heart such fearful torment,

68 Ll. 541-42 are marked for emphasis.

69 A line marked for emphasis.

70 Ll. 551-52 are marked for emphasis.

561 And run to Priam as a last resort to see
 562 If Hector can be stopped by his authority.
 563 Prayers can do much; but only to one who takes action⁷¹
 564 Does the power of good supreme grant satisfaction.

NURSE

565 I approve your judgement. If Priam once forbade,
 566 Even if he were then in armour fully clad,
 567 There is no doubt that he would readily comply:
 568 Never does an upright man his father defy.⁷²

ANDROMACHE

569 Let's go and supplicate him—quick now, not so slow!
 570 He might be already where he may take a blow.

NURSE

571 Cease to be afraid, for here and there I've caught sight
 572 Of warriors of ours arming for the fight,
 573 And the hollow trumpet with its boisterous call
 574 Has not sounded the third order to cross the wall.

ANDROMACHE

575 No more delay! In a matter of urgent need,⁷³
 576 If one acts too late, the business is dead indeed.
 577 And then, if he has plunged into the combat's heat,
 578 I'll never believe he'll be induced to retreat.

[As they go, they meet with Priam, accompanied.]

NURSE

579 Here's Priam, two of your brothers,⁷⁴ in timely fashion.

71 Ll. 563-64 are marked for emphasis.

72 This line is marked for emphasis.

73 Ll. 575-76 are marked for emphasis. "In a matter ... dead indeed": orig. "La chose nécessaire / Trop tard exécutée est la mort d'un affaire" (p. 19). The figurative use of "mort" carries particular weight in the context.

74 Unidentified, non-speaking.

ANDROMACHE

580 Good tutelary gods, I invoke your compassion!

PRIAM

581 Andromache, daughter, I'm surprised to see you.

ANDROMACHE

582 I wanted to come see you, and my brothers, too.

PRIAM

583 Just as for everything else, I praise you for that.
584 But since your Hector is getting ready for combat,
585 Why don't you help arm him as you did formerly?

ANDROMACHE

586 The moment that the sun rose up out of the sea,
587 He cried out three times, his armour at once desired.

PRIAM

588 Just such diligence of warriors is required.

ANDROMACHE

589 Never did I see his heart so burn for the fight.

PRIAM

590 That's where the noble prince places his whole delight.

ANDROMACHE

591 But such eagerness I have good cause to suspect.

PRIAM

592 Andromache, a leader who covets respect,⁷⁵
593 In action everywhere, all chances prompt to meet,
594 Does not sleep through the night, and must die on his
feet.

75 Ll. 592-94 are marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

595 What unhappy words! How you my spirit appal,
596 Consenting to my loss, and to his funeral.

PRIAM

597 What's the cause, I pray you, of her outburst of sorrow?
598 What's the source of those tears which her eyes overflow?

ANDROMACHE

599 Henceforth may you despise, O proud Hector, despise
600 A vision that the heavens grimly authorise!

PRIAM

601 I cannot judge, but I see in her countenance
602 Her heart is affected by grievous sufferance.

ANDROMACHE

603 Neglect, wretched man, neglect till the harm you find,
604 The omen of death that your father stands behind!⁷⁶

PRIAM

605 Chaste spouse of Hector, tell me of that suffering
606 Which causes your eyes to pour forth this tearful spring.

ANDROMACHE

607 O reverend father, so your goodness invites me,
608 But to solace the torment that with such force smites me,
609 Command for my sake that they go right now and try
610 To find your wretched Hector, determined to die.

PRIAM

611 To die! Go on, my sons, bring your brother to me;
612 Let him come; invoke a father's authority.

[Exeunt the sons.]

76 “[T]hat your father stands behind”: orig. “dout ton Pere t’assure” (p. 20). She is evidently being sarcastic in her distraction, but the phrase remains ambiguous: she might be stating either that Priam is protecting Hector from the omen or that he is ensuring it will be fulfilled. The translation opts for the latter.

613 [to Andromache] Yet lift me out of that profound abyss of
 doubt
 614 Where troubled thoughts by feelings are stirred all about.

ANDROMACHE

615 Although my torment is increased by your behest,
 616 How can I ever refuse such a just request?
 617 I dreamt last night, at the very moment when slumber
 618 Comes most soothingly the pupils to disencumber,
 619 That I was embracing Hector—pale, cold and lifeless;
 620 I embraced him—alas, I will lose consciousness!—
 621 With his wounds' blood all sullied, and with dusty grime:
 622 I sensed my knees begin to shake at the same time,
 623 The spirits lapsed that my arteries animated,
 624 And my nerves from their ordinary force abated.
 625 With difficulty waking, I felt strength subside,
 626 Such that a long time after all aloud I sighed.
 627 Yet in my arms my Hector I hastened to press,
 628 Asked him to hold me tight, to kiss me and caress,
 629 And not rebuke me, and my voice for a long moment
 630 With sobbing only gave his speech acknowledgement,
 631 For the object that filled my soul with thoughts of death
 632 Within the hollow of my lungs retained my breath.
 633 One further time thereafter that unlucky dream
 634 Reiterated to my mind its dismal theme;
 635 Alas, and I still seem to see its wretched shape
 636 Fly before my eyes beneath a shadowy drape.

PRIAM

637 If with spirit devout your altar-flames I kindle,
 638 Vouchsafe to hear my prayer, O great gods immortal;
 639 Hear, of Ilium and Troy, O patrons divine,
 640 The humble accent of the prayer that is mine.
 641 If the mortal dream that I have just heard narrated
 642 From heaven was sent down to see communicated
 643 My son's impending death, then do such grace instead
 644 As to deflect the blow that menaces his head.
 645 Or if the god of sleep, abuser of the mind,
 646 Has gone a fickle phantom in his cave to find

647 To trouble Andromache and fill me with pain,
648 Efface her fear, for both of us render it vain.

ANDROMACHE

649 May it please cruel heaven to grant its consent—
650 But I don't believe it: that is not its intent.
651 The morning light of bright Phoebus I saw concealed,
652 When my dream, with my prayer, to him I revealed.
653 Running to the altar, a sacred flame I lit,
654 But the gods, heads averted, did not favour it:
655 At once it went out, and the sacrifice proposed
656 Seethed beneath the coals in which it became enclosed,
657 And nothing came of the efforts I made by blowing
658 To excite a bit of bright flame from sluggish glowing:
659 Consumed on the altar, my offering did choke,⁷⁷
660 And, like all of my vows, converted into smoke.

PRIAM

661 What is our destiny? Gods, be less rigorous
662 And preserve Hector safe for himself and for us:
663 For since your grace as yet does not us so disdain
664 But that by such messengers you herald our pain,
665 Permit us to hope that if you show us such care,
666 Some mercy for the Trojans you still may prepare.

ANDROMACHE

667 Well to know one's evil, but not the remedy,⁷⁸
668 Is the worst form, Priam, of infelicity.

PRIAM

669 It is to the gods that we must have recourse now,
670 Injury or cure to work—only they know how.

ANDROMACHE

671 Their righteous wills reflect their power's privilege;

77 Orig.: "De sorte qu'elle reste à l'autel consommée" (p. 21)—that is, to judge from the context, the flesh merely shrivelled and fumed in place, failing to burn clearly and vigorously as a token of acceptance.

78 Ll. 667-84 are marked for emphasis.

672 Nothing that is can escape their sovereign knowledge.
 673 But to reveal events to humankind so they
 674 May be protected—that is by no means their way.

PRIAM

675 The nature of the gods is to do all men good,
 676 And they would not leave us in dangers where we stood,
 677 If with a suppliant heart we implored their rescue;
 678 But when they are disdained, the contrary they do.

ANDROMACHE

679 It is indeed to disdain them not to give weight
 680 To the foreboding, faithful and legitimate,
 681 That comes to us from them, but by excess of pride
 682 To have as steadfast law our own will dignified.

PRIAM

683 He who ignores the gods because of self-belief
 684 Rushes blind to utter ruin and extreme grief.

ANDROMACHE

685 Soon we will know; we will see today discomfited
 686 This stubborn man, who'll come to feel it on his head.⁷⁹
 687 Restrain his ardour, for if on the field he's found,
 688 A Greek lance will see to his measuring the ground.

PRIAM

689 It is not up to him to decide anything:
 690 It's I who am his father and, what's more, his king,
 691 And I can, if I please, prevent his going there.
 692 But I wish by reason to manage the affair.

[Enter Hector, with Trojan warriors.⁸⁰]

79 The precise moment of Hector's entrance is open to stage interpretation, but it obviously occurs before he is addressed at l. 694. It seems likely that Andromache and Priam see him approaching from l. 686 and finish their conversation in anticipation.

80 It is not clear where else the other warriors might enter who figure explicitly in ll. 819 ff., and it would be logical to have them accompany Hector. Again, alternative stagings are possible.

693 [to Hector] O my staunchest support, so your
armour is on.

HECTOR
694 My lord, too weary a delay I've undergone.

PRIAM
695 The enemy camp thirsts the fight to be renewing.

HECTOR
696 If our camp is backward, it will not be my doing.

PRIAM
697 I'm fearful that good fortune your blows will not second.

HECTOR
698 At least, to combat and die well we will be reckoned.⁸¹

PRIAM
699 How can man advance if heaven will him impede?

HECTOR
700 Heaven favours someone who attempts to succeed.

PRIAM
701 Many a battle is lost for some secret cause,
702 When valour, with wise counsel joined, deserves applause.

HECTOR
703 One who for good reason has armed his hand for war
704 Must march straight into combat, look only before.

PRIAM
705 When a righteous cause is not properly defended.
706 It is greatly at risk, and all hope may be ended.

81 Ll. 698-726 are marked for emphasis, with the exception (erroneously?) of l. 721.

HECTOR

707 When one defends it by manifest force of arms,
708 The gain cannot come without suffering some harms.

PRIAM

709 One assures it with less danger by being prudent,
710 And not the smallest part is choosing the right moment.

HECTOR

711 When some event occurs that our knowledge exceeds,
712 Then must reason seek the cause from which it proceeds;
713 And if we are convinced, let us without delay
714 As far as the Greek ships our valour's flames display.

PRIAM

715 That hollow chimera, which with false shows deludes,
716 Like another Proteus our grasping eludes;
717 Then, when suddenly its form changes in our sight,
718 Our judgement clouds over when danger's at its height!⁸²

HECTOR

719 The spirit of our soldiers, enkindled to glory,
720 Assures us now or never of the victory.

PRIAM

721 With valiant ardour they have combatted indeed,
722 But to win, more good luck than manly strength⁸³ they need.

HECTOR

723 A courage resolute good luck hardly deserts.

PRIAM

724 When it flatters us the most, its face it averts.

HECTOR

725 It is the gods' custom the best to recompense.

82 Proteus, the sea-dwelling herdsman and prophet, could be forced to tell the future only when held firmly until he ceased to change his shape; see Smith, s.v.

83 "[M]anly strength": orig. "vertu" (p. 23), as elsewhere.

- PRIAM
- 738 And to ruin it an act lamentable and vicious.⁸⁶
- HECTOR
- 739 Does he not serve it well who risks himself therefor?
- PRIAM
- 740 Badly he serves indeed when he can do much more.
- HECTOR
- 741 And what more can a man of valour ever do?
- PRIAM
- 742 Live for love of it, and see its ill-fortune through.
- HECTOR
- 743 And is it not my arm that renders me of use?
- PRIAM
- 744 Prudence can do more a town's safety to produce.⁸⁷
- HECTOR
- 745 Counsel without the hand is a bodyless soul.
- PRIAM
- 746 Uncounselled, the hand's efforts fly out of control.
- HECTOR
- 747 Have I not put the army in an ordered state?
- PRIAM
- 748 Order on ill-starred days like smoke will dissipate.
- HECTOR
- 749 If I am to do well, then, what course shall I take?

auguries. Ll. 737-40 are marked for emphasis.

86 “[L]amentable and vicious”: orig. “infame et douloureux” (p. 24).

87 Ll. 744-46 are marked for emphasis.

PRIAM

762 Don't underrate the shelter from dangers they give.⁹⁰

HECTOR

763 Good advice for a coward's heart, afraid to dare.

PRIAM

764 Better for a mind that proceeds with prudent care.

HECTOR

765 Will so long a pause not make our absence a fault?

PRIAM

766 To defend oneself rarely requires assault.⁹¹

HECTOR

767 It's as if the besiegers' hope we reinforce.

PRIAM

768 It's as if the besieged resist with greater force.

HECTOR

769 Can you endure in your own home yourself to find
770 As in a prison by such cowardice confined?

PRIAM

771 When Troy no longer can by combat be preserved,
772 By means of its strong walls must its interests be served.

HECTOR

773 A valiant knight, a soldier whose bold spirits press,⁹²
774 Cannot agree to live enclosed within a fortress.

PRIAM

775 The governor rich in wisdom, the prudent captain,

90 The line is marked for emphasis.

91 Ll. 766-68 are marked for emphasis.

92 Ll. 773-76 are marked for emphasis.

776 Makes no use of his hand when he knows its strength vain.

HECTOR

777 Fine, give over the campaign, and you will soon see,
778 Pouring over our walls, the Greeks with their whole army.

PRIAM

779 Well said, my son, and so spread out in their attack,
780 Our towering ramparts will send them pouring back—
781 No more nor less than seem the efforts of the sea,
782 Foaming against the shores in sheer futility:
783 The surges may swell to double their roaring strength—
784 It all becomes silent and languorous at length;
785 For the rocks in their place always upright remain,
786 The fury that boils in the wild waves to contain.

HECTOR

787 I would hardly that cheerful hope discountenance,
788 But for as long as Hector lives, beneath this lance,
789 Not behind bulwarks, he will choose to stand his ground:
790 The hope of a valiant heart in itself is found.⁹³

[Enter Hecuba, behind.]⁹⁴

PRIAM

791 My dear son, my Hector, sweet centre of my thought,
792 Do not by the lure of senseless ardour be caught,
793 Which guides you to your death with a glorious face:
794 You don't here occupy a simple soldier's place,
795 One who must seek in combat, for lack of renown,
796 Some vulgar laurel his virtue in arms to crown;
797 Your glory has now climbed to such a noble height,
798 You are a demi-god in all the Trojans' sight;
799 Yet please you still respect, with fitting courtesy,

93 This line is marked for emphasis.

94 The placement of this stage direction is especially uncertain; Hecuba's presence would surely have been acknowledged at the meeting of Andromache and Priam, yet she must be on stage by l. 800; arbitrarily, I suggest that she enters in time to hear Priam's more personal plea.

800 Your white-haired father, your mother reverend to see,
 801 Who urge you strongly not today to let the sun
 802 Glimpse you in combat. O hero second to none,
 803 Yield to our will: he is doubly esteemed a treasure⁹⁵
 804 Who can do his family service, also pleasure.

HECUBA [coming forward]

805 If some little part, my son, within you remains
 806 Of the natural respect that a man retains
 807 Who is born for honour and the good of his race,
 808 I am sure that I, as well, could obtain that grace;
 809 But your father's wishes carry such weight with you,
 810 They have no need of seconding by my voice, too.

HECTOR

811 The gods have not formed me with such a wretched⁹⁶ nature—
 812 I have not been given by you so little nurture—
 813 That I do not know at least all that should be known
 814 To have my duty to you quite properly shown:
 815 But permit that rather in fortune's hands I place me,
 816 Than that any stain on my honour should disgrace me.
 817 What will the Greek declare, to mockery so prone,
 818 If, from concern for myself, we leave him alone?

PRIAM

819 These brave men here, all well brought up in arms and
 young,
 820 Will check the chattering of his impudent tongue:
 821 For though it is my wish that we do not allow
 822 You to try⁹⁷ the vicissitudes of combat now,
 823 You—Aeneas and Paris, Deiphobus, Troilus,
 824 Menon, Polidamas—lead out the troops for us
 825 And bring them to the fields. Myself I'll give the task
 826 Of sending you support if you have need to ask.
 827 But for you, my Hector, my one and only hope,

95 Ll. 803-4 are marked for emphasis.

96 “[W]retched”: orig. “triste” (p. 26).

97 “You to try”: Petit de Julleville, ed., maintains the original’s “D’esprouuer” (p. 27), but it seems rather a simple error for “T’esprouuer”.

828 Sole sacred anchor to give our assurance scope,
 829 Remove that armour and withdraw, within remaining:
 830 I wish it as your father, order it as king.

HECTOR

831 O sacred law, which as holy I always prize—
 832 I could not disobey, while you I recognise;
 833 I fear the celestial wrath on me will fall,
 834 If, to please myself alone, I should displease all!
 835 Let then, O my heart, your burning for battle fail:
 836 Since it pleases you, friends, I shed this coat of mail,
 837 This helmet and this shield, with arm-guard and with
 greave,
 838 And as a sacrifice, of Mars I take my leave.
 839 Strive, then, all of you, for me. You of noble race,
 840 Who the honour of the lance amorously chase,
 841 Prevent the Greeks from being able to suppose
 842 That Hector, instead of arming, bleeds from the nose.⁹⁸
 843 You see what the cause is that I hang up my arms
 844 And cannot sally forth: run, follow the alarms,
 845 And if of tomorrow I gain the happy sight,
 846 You will know my hand in the fiercest of the fight.
 847 Go now, my companions, march forward, seize the
 moment,
 848 And do not return till you have made Greece lament
 849 Many of their great leaders by the sword laid low,
 850 On Mars's altar offered to the gods below.

CHORUS

851 May kind heaven its aid in this fight not refuse,
 852 Which after myriad combats our camp renews,
 853 But so well reinforce its sinews and its strength
 854 That the Greek army returns defeated at length,
 855 Vanquished, in despair at having wasted its pains,
 856 Pursuing for ten years an effort with no gains,
 857 Whose fruit is the shame and perpetual remorse

98 Presumably as a claim to be wounded or as a sign of impending ill-luck, which would obviously not deter someone courageous.

858 Born of letting a rash oath determine their course.⁹⁹

HECTOR

859 That is just how we should the battle-plan first draw:¹⁰⁰
 860 Ardour without the gods is mere fire in straw.¹⁰¹
 861 But reflect, as well, on the perils we sustain
 862 When order is not kept and a strong arm is vain.¹⁰²
 863 Let him command who ought, and him who should obey:
 864 No little honour lies in serving in that way.
 865 Multiple commands are naturally confused;
 866 But as one sole spirit through the body diffused
 867 Various moves it, so your men, motivated
 868 By a single will, find their forces animated.
 869 Great warriors, in passing I address you thus,
 870 For if destiny, which in all things governs us,
 871 Conjoins its favour to your conduct in the fight,
 872 Today the sun will look down upon Greece in flight
 873 And you safe-returned, honoured to your hearts' contents
 874 By the populace and your worthy aged parents.
 875 For myself, who stay within these two walls confined,
 876 A secret fire burning inwardly I find
 877 That by this coming benefit I can't be blest,
 878 Which promises you all of honour a great harvest.

PRIAM

879 You must be, Hector, one those trophies satiate
 880 Which may be seen gleaming on your well-garnished gate.
 881 When the thirst for glory is excessively strong,¹⁰³
 882 The soundest judgement becomes altered and goes wrong.
 883 To wish to do all is to wish the impossible;
 884 Indeed, it is still more harmful than it is painful.

99 The Greek leaders had sworn to avenge the dishonour suffered by Menelaus on account of Helen—see Guido, bk. VIII (pp. 80-81), and Le Fèvre, trans. Caxton, bk. III, fol. ix^v.

100 I.e., by imploring the gods' favour, as the Chorus has just done.

101 Ll. 860-65 are marked for emphasis.

102 Hector rather abruptly introduces the theme of his previous exchange with his father (ll. 743-48), in which he took the side of his own "strong arm". See the Introduction, pp. 18-19.

103 Ll. 881-84 are marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

885 My spirit begins to breathe, if ever so slightly,
 886 Since Hector, won over, will remain enclosed tightly
 887 Today, and will not the risks of combat endure.
 888 The sacred knot of respect that keeps him secure
 889 Anchors my heart in the midst of those tossing seas
 890 That seem to conspire against our future ease.
 891 It is no small feat, when faced with a stubborn soul,¹⁰⁴
 892 For a single day to bring it under control.
 893 For it may be that the fatal moment which bears
 894 A danger within it flows past us unawares,
 895 Never to return: ill-luck neither stays in place
 896 Nor does it, as the saying goes, its steps retrace.

CHORUS¹⁰⁵

897 One tires of all things, except of doing well.
 898 Who love of glory knows
 899 Takes pleasure in such deeds, which for him are usual;
 900 The greatest work he finds is also his repose.

901 The more the soul tastes of glory the luscious fruit,
 902 The greater its desire,
 903 A philtre so pleasant, to drink it spurs pursuit,
 904 And the pleasure, the more one drinks it, mounts the
 higher.

905 If anything to noble manhood can excite
 906 It is brilliance of name,
 907 Which pierces all shadowy cloud with rays of light
 908 And speaks itself through the sky on the wing of fame.

909 The pomp that goes with greatness gives our senses joy;
 910 Gold always charms our eyes;
 911 Pleasure tempts us laughingly; good cheer we enjoy;
 912 But desire for honour more deeply we prize.

104 Ll. 891-96 are marked for emphasis.

105 The Chorus's entire speech is marked for emphasis.

913 Desirable nectar, delicious source of health,
 914 Who from true good ensue,
 915 Do not before those vulgar souls profane your wealth
 916 Who of themselves think highly, yet possess no value.

917 What valour newly gains you at the battle's height—
 918 From there the laurels spring.
 919 What use to dust off medals from an ancient fight,
 920 Or triumphs of famous old precursors to sing?

921 For virtue's own sake our efforts we must esteem,
 922 Endure both heat and cold,
 923 Spurn shame underfoot, as well as danger extreme,
 924 And courage maintain as constant as it is bold.

925 When glory fits itself with sturdy feathered wings,
 926 In every place it flies;
 927 It raises itself then far above mortal things
 928 And with rays of divinity inflames the skies.

929 He who amidst a coward's softness falls asleep,
 930 Lulled by idleness,
 931 To earth a burden, noble rank not fit to keep—
 932 That he has ever lived at all, how can he witness?

933 Hidden within his life, just as within a tomb,
 934 Never would he be known;
 935 All but his indistinct effigy would consume,
 936 Melting into the nothing from which it had grown.

937 It goes against all reason that vice should constrain
 938 One who is virtuous—
 939 Who never sold himself, whether from greed for gain
 940 Or for the empty pride of those presumptuous.

Act III

Hector, Antenor, Messenger, Chorus, Hecuba, Priam,
Andromache, [Helen],¹⁰⁶ [Chorus of Women]

[Enter Hector and Antenor.]

HECTOR

941 All of the arts, in truth, are hard to exercise,¹⁰⁷
942 But this to a noble captain's proud role applies
943 By so much more than to the others we recall
944 That it should be granted honour¹⁰⁸ beyond them all.
945 When the craftsman goes wrong in something he is making,
946 Guided by experience and rules, his mistaking
947 He corrects, restores the object he had prepared.
948 But the faults of honour cannot be so repaired:
949 One error, however slight, one detail untold,
950 One consequence neglected, puts him in the hold
951 Of crowds of cowardly carpers by envy stirred,¹⁰⁹
952 Whose eyes and soul by his splendour have wounds incurred:
953 Such flies,¹¹⁰ who never are attached to brilliant things,
954 With wanton impudence discharge their sharpened stings
955 Against an innocent heart, and to multiply
956 The hurt prefer themselves within its wound to die.
957 Slandorous tongues already seem to fill my ears,
958 Pricking my honour with a hundred little spears;
959 And I see already the Greeks with insolence
960 Joining to their blows words of blasphemous offence
961 Against the glory I, at their lives' cost, acquire:

106 In the place of Helen, the original text (p. 30) lists Cassandra, who does not speak; Charpentier, p. 437, plausibly suggests that the reference is to the actor who doubled the roles—indirect evidence, in that case, of performance prior to printing. The issue bears on the dating of the play and thus on its possible relation to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: see the Introduction, pp. 14-16.

107 Ll. 941-56 are marked for emphasis.

108 I retain the original's term "honour"/"honneur" (p. 30) here and in l. 948 below, although in the first case it evidently means something like "distinction", in the second "reputation".

109 "[C]owardly carpers by envy stirred": orig. "plus lasches qu'enuieux" (p. 30)—but envy dominates in the following lines.

110 "[F]ies": orig. "mouches", a term which could historically apply to various stinging insects, as is the case here; see *Trésor de la langue française informatisé* s.v. "mouche".

962 But if tomorrow comes, I'll uproot their desire
 963 To slight my courage, or ever again to blame
 964 This arm of mine, which fear has never put to shame.

ANTENOR

965 Although our men prevail and keep them occupied,
 966 Pretend it is so: no shame, I think, can betide¹¹¹
 967 The man who remains in his deeds quite innocent,
 968 If someone cuts him to pieces¹¹² when he is absent.
 969 So duty dictates, the sole rule infallible
 970 That measures honour, except the impossible.
 971 And from this I conclude, O knight beyond compare,
 972 The offence does not touch one who is unaware,
 973 And he alone we take to swallow¹¹³ the affront
 974 Who hears and says nothing, knows it and bears the brunt.

HECTOR

975 He'll die without renown who no care for it shows.

ANTENOR

976 He who torments himself will live without repose.

HECTOR

977 He deserves abuse who stays silent out of fear.

ANTENOR

978 And blame, who speaks ill when his foe does not appear.

HECTOR

979 Aspersions against us we should never abide.

ANTENOR

980 One may do all well—some will not be satisfied.

111 Ll. 966-96 are marked for emphasis, with the exception of ll. 981 and 994.

112 “[C]uts him to pieces”: orig. “decoupe” (p. 31); here figurative but with irony deriving from the sense of “massacre”, especially on the battlefield. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français [1330-1500]*, s.v.; online at <<http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/definition/découper>> (accessed 14 June 2018).

113 “[S]wallow”: orig. “boire” (p. 31).

HECTOR

981 Just let them keep quiet, whether or not they're pleased.

ANTENOR

982 The boisterous winds are sooner than tongues appeased.

HECTOR

983 The valour of a mighty prince intimidates.

ANTENOR

984 Such a one speaks out, though fear his heart agitates.

HECTOR

985 But one's glory languishes if injured it feels.

ANTENOR

986 A wound that is so inflicted soon enough heals.¹¹⁴

HECTOR

987 A scar on the forehead is always there to see.

ANTENOR

988 It may appear, but not tell how it came to be.
989 Thus a great warrior, whom honour deifies,
990 Himself for his comrades by his scars glorifies.

HECTOR

991 Because it is a token that he has fought well.

ANTENOR

992 And, besides that, his store of virtue one can tell,
993 Which may be flawless yet never from blame is free.

HECTOR

994 What then can be considered a noble soul's duty?

114 “[H]eals”: orig. “est ... passée” (p. 31); Petit de Julleville, ed., (p. 282, n. to p. 31) proposes to read “pansée” (“bandaged”). The translation is not affected.

ANTENOR

995 To show his courage entire and wholly perfect,
 996 Whether it must be used in word or in effect:
 997 In sum, such that it shines in a valour so ample
 998 As to serve beyond all doubt as its own example.

HECTOR

999 Not knowing in myself that degree of perfection,
 1000 I prefer to suppose that to your own affection,
 1001 Not my desert, your praise of my honour is due:
 1002 If sometimes I do well, in that I follow you.
 1003 But let us break off there, father,¹¹⁵ and rather see
 1004 What fortune, good or ill, has befallen our army.

ANTENOR

1005 I learnt from the wounded who made it back to us
 1006 That Alexander,¹¹⁶ Menon, Deiphobus, Troilus
 1007 In emulation strive each other to outdo,
 1008 While on the other side, the Greeks, audacious too,
 1009 Rudely assailed them, rudely their effort deterred.
 1010 As one views the sea by two winds to fury stirred,
 1011 With their contrary force upraising swells by turns,
 1012 As wave against foaming wave in violence churns,
 1013 In just this way one may perceive the two strong armies,
 1014 Each driven by the will to charge their enemies,
 1015 Compelled now to draw back, now once again advanced:
 1016 Victory above them in the air hovers balanced,
 1017 And there is no telling from her wavering flight
 1018 On which side her casual favour¹¹⁷ will alight.

HECTOR

1019 Look kindly upon Troy, O gods, and her flight guide
 1020 To take up a constant station above our side,

115 “[F]ather” (orig. “mon Pere”): in deference to Antenor’s age, which is what keeps him from the battlefield (and implicitly lends him his wisdom).

116 Alexander: the other name of Paris.

117 “[C]asual favour”: orig. “faveur paresseuse” (p. 32). Evoked is the traditional notion of the winged goddess Victory flitting over the battlefield and making her choice arbitrarily.

1021 After fierce Mars has intervened with a sharp thrust—
 1022 For your just will provides the determining gust.¹¹⁸

ANTENOR

1023 I will go out and discover with my own eyes
 1024 Which of the hostile camps will bear away the prize;
 1025 Then, when from the top of our massive ramparts' height,
 1026 Of the combatants' ranks I have had a good sight,
 1027 I will report to you, so that, by your good sense,
 1028 Of your unequalled arm you may avenge the absence.

HECTOR

1029 Go, my dear Antenor, and instantly devise
 1030 The best means of advancing our just enterprise;
 1031 For the sage discourses forged by your mind so prudent
 1032 Have thwarted many times some dire accident.

[Exit Antenor.¹¹⁹]

1033 How a noble heart its condition will deplore,¹²⁰
 1034 Which burns for greater glory and cherishes more
 1035 Exacting labour than desolate empty days,
 1036 When his high manliness, all amorous of praise,
 1037 Rests in the coward bosom of soft idleness,
 1038 Whose chilling languor puts a damper on its prowess.
 1039 True manhood on the action it engenders thrives,
 1040 And the audacious soul, in which ambition strives
 1041 To spread its reputation universally,
 1042 Assaults the basis of our thinking secretly,¹²¹
 1043 Believes that failing of one's valour to make use
 1044 Must to reproach or extreme misfortune conduce.
 1045 Oh, him thrice-happy over others I esteem
 1046 Who pursues as he will a magnanimous dream,
 1047 And neither the disturbing exhortations faces

118 With this line, marked for emphasis, I take it that Hector shifts to addressing Mars directly (“your just will”/“votre vouloir juste”). The controlling image remains the flight of Victory, subject to the winds—hence “the determining gust”/“le vent qui le pousse”.

119 Antenor's promised report is pre-empted by that of the Messenger; his observatory function is deferred to his account in Act IV, ll. 1747 ff.

120 Ll. 1033-52 are marked for emphasis.

121 Orig.: “Assaut tous les penses d'une secreete guerre” (p. 33).

1106 Hold in admiration your forces invincible:
 1107 How many times has great Cybele's sacred mount,
 1108 Seeing beneath it people slaughtered without count
 1109 Who only of your killing complained as they died,
 1110 Trembled awestruck, with fear and wonder horrified?
 1111 How many times have the fields it looks on below
 1112 Been shaken by your arms dealing many a blow?
 1113 How often have Simois and Scamandre,¹²⁸ what's more,
 1114 Seeing in ample torrents the blood of Greeks pour
 1115 Into their waters—at their colour's change astounded,
 1116 In their deep palaces by angry grief confounded—
 1117 Feared that the dead with which the waves you populate
 1118 Might block their vagabond Nymphs in a stagnant state?
 1119 Amid these rival testimonies, mute and spoken,
 1120 Which of your manhood furnish such a brilliant token,
 1121 Lively Fame with a spring into the air upsurges,
 1122 And with a mouth that the truth unceasingly urges
 1123 Proclaims to all comers that in valour and counsel,
 1124 Beneath the whole course of the sun you have no equal.

HECTOR

1125 If, then, my exploits some marks in memory leave,
 1126 Honour the gods for that! For I could not believe
 1127 That success in combat is due to our own hand:
 1128 Without Heaven's blessing, man's works can never stand.¹²⁹

CHORUS

1129 The greatness of men most shows its divinity
 1130 When glory mingles with wisdom and modesty.

HECTOR

1131 He who knows himself, of God is surely aware,
 1132 Who disposes of all and presides everywhere.

128 Simois and Scamander: as the imagery develops, the qualities of the rivers are conflated with their respective divinities.

129 Ll. 1128-78 are marked for emphasis.

CHORUS

1133 One may without offence, although that may be true,
 1134 Honour, with the maker, work and instrument, too.
 1135 When someone has received divine collaboration,
 1136 He should not forfeit a glorious reputation:
 1137 For sweet praise gives incentive and causes to swell
 1138 Every excellent soul's desire to do well.

HECTOR

1139 He who does good service deserves a decent wage,¹³⁰
 1140 Otherwise he'll prove more reluctant to engage.

CHORUS

1141 The only true and proper payment is renown,
 1142 Which praiseworthy deeds in men can fittingly crown.

HECTOR

1143 All those other treasures one hungers to possess,
 1144 Compared to Fame's report, are futile emptiness.

CHORUS

1145 And it is on that same wing that warriors glide
 1146 For all the time they live all round the world so wide.

HECTOR

1147 And more, one can say that, as their valour is known,
 1148 It gives them another life in losing their own.

CHORUS

1149 For if just to gain a few days, sad and unsure,
 1150 Their bodies so suffered, their lot we must call poor.

HECTOR

1151 Far better never to have here below descended
 1152 Than still to be quite unknown when the play has ended.¹³¹

130 “[W]age”: orig. “loyer” (p. 35). The language is monetary, even if the payment envisaged is intangible.

131 Orig.: “Que sortir du Theatre et n'estre point connu” (p. 36)—a rare metadramatic touch.

CHORUS

1153 That desire which Nature on fair souls bestows,¹³²
 1154 To admonish us their immortality shows.

HECTOR

1155 It is from that high hope that our integrity
 1156 Assumes in all our projects chief authority.

CHORUS

1157 You see everyone attempting to live again
 1158 In lifeless bronze and copper images of men.

HECTOR

1159 Let him who pleases live in portraits inanimate—
 1160 I choose instead by deeds my life to animate.

CHORUS

1161 It is they that preserve the features of our glory
 1162 Much longer than can promise brass or ivory.

HECTOR

1163 If to show the body takes such effort of art,
 1164 How much is needed to make visible the heart?

CHORUS

1165 Life for death we exchange—that is the simple bargain,
 1166 When once in that way we determine praise to gain.

HECTOR

1167 I have always resolved, when such things have been said,
 1168 One should do much, though it means being sooner dead.

CHORUS

1169 Even the length of life does not merely amount
 1170 To the years that nature assigns us as our count.

132 “[B]estows”: orig. “ente” (p. 36), lit. “grafts”.

HECTOR

1171 Far better it is to live well one single day
1172 Than last many years and in idleness decay.

CHORUS

1173 By laziness weak and wilting¹³³ of any kind
1174 Is a living man in a dead one's tomb confined.

HECTOR

1175 He who, by Heaven's favour, in good is sustained,
1176 Within those unhappy bonds is never enchained.

CHORUS

1177 Also, when that poison comes our soul to entice,
1178 It charms and lulls it to sleep in the filth of vice.

HECTOR

1179 May it never come close to the walls of a city
1180 Whose morals conform to the rules of equity.
1181 —But what tumultuous noises my ears confuse?
1182 Are those new reinforcements Priam plans to use
1183 For our men's aid? What distress to my hearing draws?
1184 No, of such commotion soldiers can't be the cause:
1185 They are most frightful voices and pitiful cries,
1186 Shrieks of lamentation, intermingled with sighs,
1187 Whose roaring resembles the sound of those wild raves
1188 Screamed by the mutinous wind at the white-tossed waves,
1189 Which, as they fight each other, foretell the dread shock
1190 Of a ship doomed to shatter on the shore's hard rock.
1191 Let us go and find out.

CHORUS

Advance no further—stay:
1192 Here is one of your own people coming our way.

133 “[W]ilting”: orig. “langarde” (p. 36). The word seem to be attested only as a derivative from “languē”, meaning talkative in an unpleasant manner. This hardly matches the context here, however, and I posit a derivation from “languir” (“languish”, “droop”), again with the negative connotation of the suffix “ard”.

[Enter Messenger.]

HECTOR

1193 What tumults are those that with such violence see the?
1194 Tell us, my friend—it seems that you can hardly breathe.

MESSENGER

1195 O great-minded Hector, I've run from far away
1196 To beg you in great need your valour to display.

HECTOR

1197 What, then, has happened? For our fortune to revive
1198 Must a further pledge assist our army to thrive?

MESSENGER

1199 Your camp barely survives—the Greek warrior-bands
1200 Pursue what's left to Troy with both voices and hands.

HECTOR

1201 Do your friends, your captains, not strive with might and
main?

MESSENGER

1202 They make a great effort, but they combat in vain.

HECTOR

1203 And the Trojan princes, are they not in the press?

MESSENGER

1204 Each one would acquire the palm or else the cypress.¹³⁴

HECTOR

1205 It takes just one coward disorder to instil.

MESSENGER

1206 Alas, it was ill luck, not a failure of will.
1207 Troy in arms to the combat ran with eager pace,

134 I.e., either the palm of victory or the cypress as token of mourning.

CHORUS

1270 After learning the wretched state of our affair,
1271 He goes to have some rescue put in preparation.

MESSENGER

1272 Go then and help him, for back to the camp I'll run
1273 To bring our men that hope and that encouraging word.
[Exit Messenger.]

CHORUS

1274 O Fortune—inconstant, unruly and absurd!
1275 How far will this misery go? Is hope in vain
1276 That these combats may honour for our side obtain?
1277 Does this mean the heavens have turned in Greece's
favour?
1278 At this blow, then, O Troy, increase your sad behaviour:
1279 Double your sighs; harsh and relentless Destiny
1280 Hastens the approach of your promised misery;
1281 These inhumane thieves are bound to make us their prey,
1282 It seems, one day. Here was Troy once, someone will say;
1283 There its great Ilium,¹⁴³ with more towers enclosed
1284 Than of days a year's entire span is composed.
1285 All things must perish here below: men, families,¹⁴⁴
1286 Houses, grand palaces, strong castles, likewise cities;
1287 And even empires within fixed bounds endure:
1288 The only thing that for eternity is sure
1289 Eternity is, its days the seasons that follow
1290 With their changes, which each new day in turn will
swallow.¹⁴⁵

143 As if Ilium were the actual citadel (also possibly the sense at l. 119), although there does not seem to be warrant for the distinction.

144 Ll. 1285-90 are marked for emphasis. The essential moral, with attendant imagery, is commonplace, as English parallels also attest, but the example of Troy was well established, and, in combination with Cassandra's vision in ll. 76-78 (Act I), the passage might suggest a particular reminiscence of Pierre Matthieu, *La Guisiade*, in which Henri III threatens rebellious Paris with reduction to ruins. See Pierre Matthieu, *La Guisiade*, Louis Lobbes, ed., *Théâtre complet, Textes de la Renaissance*, 121 (Paris: H. Champion, 2007), and *The Guisiade, The Tragedy of the Late Gaspard de Coligny* [by François de Chantelouve] and *The Guisiade*, trans. and ed. Richard Hillman, Carleton Renaissance Plays in Translation, 40 (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 2005), II.i.205-32; the king presents his court as the city's "Ilion [Ilium]" (226).

145 Orig. of ll. 1288-90:

1291 —But is this not Helen? She is coming our way.
 1292 O sole reason why all of us are cast away,
 1293 You bring about great harms, and that should not astound:
 1294 Such beauty of an age's wars might be the ground.
 1295 Let us listen to these sighs—it brings some content¹⁴⁶
 1296 In one's unhappiness to hear a sweet lament.

HELEN [entering, with Chorus of Women]

1297 O wretched Helen, O lady unfortunate!
 1298 You have good right to weep, since it has been your fate
 1299 Merely to cause the death of many a brave man
 1300 Battling before the walls of Troy as best he can.
 1301 This flower of beauty, bound in few years to fall,
 1302 These lilies quickly past, with roses faded all,
 1303 This eye to be with darkness covered in a trice—
 1304 Did this need to be, O gods, purchased at such price?
 1305 So many stellar princes and lords of renown,
 1306 Equally made enemies, equally cast down,
 1307 All slain for my sake—do they count for less than I,
 1308 I who neither honour nor faith exemplify?
 1309 My soul to a strange confusion cannot but yield
 1310 At the sight of Europe and Asia in one field
 1311 In combat for me alone, wounding one another
 1312 At my rivals' behest, each jealous of the other.
 1313 How can I with assurance live among these widows
 1314 Detesting Greece, who curse the swords that gave the
 blows
 1315 By which their dear husbands, caused to fall in the fight,
 1316 In the midst of combat have been lost to their sight?
 1317 What glances, O gods, can I hope to be allowed
 1318 By the faithful fiancée to her lover vowed,
 1319 Who, succumbing to death when harsh destiny calls,
 1320 Still sighs aloud for her, and names her as he falls?

Rien ne scauroit durer en toute eternité,
 Que l'eternité seule, et les saisons qui changent
 Font les iours, puis les iours l'un par l'autre se mangent. (p. 39)
 I attempt to translate both literally and clearly.

146 Ll. 1295-96 are marked for emphasis.

1321 What face to those desolate fathers can I show,
 1322 Whom sorrow for their sons' death has made older grow,
 1323 When their eye brimming with rage they cast upon me,
 1324 Which insists I am the cause of their misery?
 1325 How many bitter torments and painful afflictions
 1326 Will I endure in hearing the harsh maledictions
 1327 The family will direct at me, brothers and friends
 1328 Of those that into the tomb the Grecian sword sends?
 1329 O three and four times buried in unhappiness!
 1330 The honour lost that woman glories to possess—
 1331 Should I still desire life to perpetuate,
 1332 To be an object at once of love and of hate?
 1333 Rather, alas, let me hide in the earth's deep core
 1334 Than serve to be the torch of an eternal war:
 1335 Since I by my life these hostile flames set ablaze,
 1336 Let me quickly douse them by the end of my days.
 1337 O warrior enemies, pacify your feud,
 1338 Since your mutual hatreds from my case ensued;
 1339 Run here, all of you, to seize me with one accord,
 1340 And before both your camps let death be my reward.
 1341 Of your long sufferings I bear the guilt alone;
 1342 Let me, as reason will, by punishment atone:
 1343 By that means on both sides content we will remain—
 1344 I in enduring, and you in escaping, pain.
 1345 Above all your combats let this advice prevail:
 1346 O Greeks, O Trojans, your fierce anger countervail,
 1347 And if it is not from hate, at least out of kindness,
 1348 Accord me death, so pitying your own distress.
 1349 Eyes, for my own good too bright, seek obscurity:
 1350 The days you render sepulchral no longer see;
 1351 Alas, no more to gaze on fair green fields be led,
 1352 Which for your sake with blood and death are overspread.
 1353 Mouth, you who consented to the loving attention
 1354 Of the handsomest shepherd, by whom I was won,¹⁴⁷
 1355 Now be closed, cease to breathe—the time has come for
 dying;

147 Paris had been brought up as a shepherd.

1386 And far from being put to silence,
 1387 His boastful mouth gives evidence,
 1388 Refusing his crime's shameful seal.
 1389 Of vice the slightest imputation
 1390 Which comes to tarnish reputation
 1391 By the deceit of others' judgement,
 1392 With grief afflicts the noble soul
 1393 In love with glory as its goal,
 1394 And is to him a secret torment.
 1395 He who for his renown lacks care,
 1396 Better or worse spread everywhere,
 1397 Is not by honour animated:
 1398 What other reward—can you tell?—
 1399 May one expect for doing well
 1400 Than to be well appreciated?
 1401 Why are so many worthy pains
 1402 Expended freely by great captains?
 1403 Why do men with audacity
 1404 Rush in at the sound of alarms,
 1405 Except for the glory of arms,
 1406 Which promises celebrity.
 1407 Is there any who does not long
 1408 To be seen apart from the throng
 1409 On the Theatre of Honour's stage?
 1410 Who, drinking in the sweet ovations
 1411 Served by his own and foreign nations,
 1412 Does not enjoy that heritage?
 1413 Not that a laudable soul must
 1414 Stir at every accusing gust
 1415 Which by others' envy is blown:
 1416 The man whom constancy assures
 1417 Forever like a cube¹⁵⁰ endures,

150 Orig. “cube”, which could already convey the metaphorical sense of completeness and resistance to fortune documented from the nineteenth century by *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé* (see *s.v.*). Another example occurs in Simon Belyard, *Le Guysien ou perfidie tyrannique commise par Henry de Valois es personnes des illustriss. reverdiss. & tresgenereux Princes Loys de Loraine Cardinal, & Archeuesque de Rheims, & Henry de Loraine Duc de Guyse, grand Maistre de France* (Troyes: Jean Moreau, 1592), p. 16 (Act II).

1418 Firm in his gravity alone.¹⁵¹
 1419 A man who too much feared that tempest
 1420 With pain would have his head oppressed,
 1421 And his heart would be agitated—
 1422 Like the bark that, being too light,
 1423 The north wind's anger puts to flight,
 1424 To the salt billows relegated.
 1425 Never did one make a good life
 1426 Exempt from hate and envy's strife:
 1427 The sun without shade¹⁵² does not glow;
 1428 To race is to stir up the dust;
 1429 But always the true light robust
 1430 After the night more clear will show.
 1431 However dark is slander's stain,
 1432 The power it cannot obtain
 1433 To obscure a glory deserved:
 1434 Though it arises from the fumes
 1435 Of a flame that with force consumes,¹⁵³
 1436 The brilliance will still be preserved.
 1437 The high spirit¹⁵⁴ of reputation,
 1438 Become a star by transformation,
 1439 Like a fair sun illuminates
 1440 From age to age with greater glow,
 1441 And never the hint of a shadow
 1442 Our sight of that flame obfuscates.
 1443 Though Nature by its proper process
 1444 Transforms mankind to rottenness
 1445 Within the dark depth of his tomb,
 1446 If he survives by memory
 1447 And the radiance of his glory,
 1448 His name will age and also bloom.

151 Orig.: "Ferme en sa propre grauité" (p. 42).

152 "[W]ithout shade": orig. "sans ombre" (p. 42), convincingly proposed by Petit de Julleville, ed. (p. 283, n. to p. 42) as an emendation of the text's obscure "sous ombre".

153 Orig.: "D'une flamme bien allumée" (p. 43).

154 "[S]pirit": orig. "vapeur" (p. 43).

Act IV

Andromache, Cassandra, Priam, Hecuba,
[Chorus of Women],¹⁵⁵ [Chorus], [Antenor]

[Enter Andromache, Cassandra, Chorus of Women, Chorus¹⁵⁶]

ANDROMACHE

1449 So, then, the cruel villain has abandoned me!
1450 Implacable Fate! And you, day of infamy,
1451 Could you have passed without accomplishing an evil—
1452 One that never had its equal, and never will?
1453 Thus do your¹⁵⁷ strokes become impossible to shun?¹⁵⁸
1454 Turn, O wretched mortals, in every direction;
1455 Come try, if you can, to avoid its mortal blow.
1456 Alas, to whom can I turn, on whose mercy throw
1457 Myself? To what god must you pray in lamentation,
1458 Poor woman, your soul now stricken with devastation,
1459 All sad and grieving—rather, nothing else but grief?
1460 Only the final misery will bring relief.
1461 Withdraw your sweet lights, O heavens, into the air,
1462 Which deceive our desires, make light¹⁵⁹ of our prayer.
1463 Will you thus cheat our hope? The brightness that you
 show—
1464 Must it serve no end but your cruelty to shadow?
1465 But must I only of your cruelty complain?
1466 No, but also of his who seems you to constrain,
1467 By the mad audacity with which his heart fills,
1468 To pour on him the harshest of your deadly ills.
1469 O wretched Hector! The furor, for vengeance pressing,
1470 Of some great Demon drives you, to our sad distressing,

155 Any doubt as to the sex of the Chorus that attempts to counsel and console Andromache is removed by Priam's addressing them as "chaste flock"/"chaste troupeau" (l. 1597; p. 47).

156 This Chorus, which I take to be distinct, is presumably that which witnessed Hector's reaction to the Messenger in the previous act (see ll. 1191-92, 1270-72) and informed Andromache. It is thus in a position to intervene below at ll. 1620 ff.

157 The reference is logically to "Fate" (l. 1450; orig. "Destin" [p. 43]), looking forward also to l. 1455.

158 Ll. 1453-55 are marked for emphasis.

159 The pun is not in the original ("moquer" [p. 43]) but seems worth risking as aptly bitter.

1471 Willingly or not, with the enemy to brawl,
 1472 To sacrifice yourself, and in their midst to fall.
 1473 Is this how you have rendered your promise performed?
 1474 Why, you broke it in the same instant it was formed.
 1475 No sooner did the oath out of your mouth proceed
 1476 Than it was proved a lie by a contrary deed.
 1477 A reverend father's sacred and firm direction,
 1478 An honourable mother's most tender affection,
 1479 The wishes of your relations with friendship burning,
 1480 The weeping and sighs of a chaste spouse in her yearning—
 1481 In short, a country's prayers presaging storms ahead:
 1482 Are these then merely toys for the wind in your head?
 1483 Nothing, it's clear, the furor of your course abates:
 1484 You run towards the precipice where death awaits.
 1485 A hard destiny indeed, which against your nature,
 1486 Against your gentle temperament, against your nurture,
 1487 Makes you presumptuous, prejudiced, obstinate
 1488 To accomplish on your own a predestined fate!
 1489 When the dread dart of death comes to threaten our
 head,¹⁶⁰
 1490 We find that all at once our simple grace has fled,
 1491 Our pleasing manners, the native charm we possessed,
 1492 To make us rude, distant, furiously obsessed.
 1493 O Cassandra, sister, our ruin is close at hand!
 1494 You say it loud and clear, with a voice of command,
 1495 Making tremble the laurel which adorns your brow.
 1496 What was our profit, you as prophet to endow?¹⁶¹
 1497 To incredulous Troy you would constantly say
 1498 That a single man's loss would render it a prey.
 1499 Your speech will take effect today, and it is grim:
 1500 Hector goes off to die, and all will die with him.

160 Ll. 1489-92 are marked for emphasis.

161 Again, she does not play on words in the original ("l'Oracle en vain pour nous te fut donné" [p. 44]), but this seems in keeping with her distraction.

1528 Within me pains enter like arrows piercingly;
 1529 Like tempests within me wild griefs go whirling round;
 1530 My heart is perfect hell: all rages there are found.

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

1531 Bring these unruly transports into government;
 1532 Return to yourself, get free of the violent torment
 1533 Plaguing your spirit; when furor thus overflows,
 1534 It is like a wild torrent which no pity knows,
 1535 Sweeps off all before it, and never stops its course
 1536 Until it has vanquished reason by dint of force.

ANDROMACHE

1537 If as far as the tomb I'm carried by despair,
 1538 That cruel rigour will prove sweet indeed to bear:
 1539 For I am fully resolute to die before
 1540 Hector—my treasure, my all—is living no more.

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

1541 Although that desire your soul may dominate,
 1542 Do not act now, O lady magnanimous—wait
 1543 To profit from the joy with which your eyes will thrill
 1544 When soon, glorious in a chariot, he will,
 1545 As the crowd acclaim him with warlike pomp, appear.

ANDROMACHE

1546 Rather, he'll be stretched out upon a long-planked bier,
 1547 Ready for the tomb, where he will forever lie.
 1548 So have I not good reason if I wish to die?

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

1549 Your great apprehension, in which you still persist,
 1550 Casts over your spirit a dense and obscure mist
 1551 Through which a peril that is trivial and slight
 1552 Looms up as a terrible danger in your sight.

ANDROMACHE

1553 The soul is not always ignorant of its fate.

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

1554 Such a one knows how to bring on a wretched state.

ANDROMACHE

1555 Mine is of that order, for, to hold nothing back,
1556 Clearer sight of good than evil matters I lack.

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

1557 You need hope to moderate such trepidation;
1558 Therefore, if reason still in you maintains some station,
1559 Gather up all your hope and make those fears depart:
1560 Better to suffer ill than to be faint of heart.¹⁶⁵

ANDROMACHE

1561 Here I see Priam come. O father full of woe,
1562 What strength you have still that grief does not lay you
low!

[Enter Priam with Hecuba.]

PRIAM

1563 Hecuba, our Hector chooses us to forsake.

HECUBA

1564 So they have informed me, and with anger I quake.

PRIAM

1565 I'm wary of this day, for setbacks we've incurred.

HECUBA

1566 What a great pity that he could not be deterred!

PRIAM

1567 That is also the point that preys most on my mind.

165 The line is marked for emphasis.

HECUBA

1568 O good gods! Turn aside this threat of Fate unkind!

PRIAM

1569 What can keep a noble spirit behind a fence?¹⁶⁶

HECUBA

1570 And yet at other times he seemed to have good sense.

PRIAM

1571 He still does; it's only that for honour he burns.

HECUBA

1572 It's by use of reason well-being one discerns.¹⁶⁷

Priam

1573 He always holds out hope that Mars will be his friend.

HECUBA

1574 Many in that hope come to a pitiful end.

PRIAM

1575 Great author of combats, may it please you stand by him!

HECUBA

1576 And may you, saviour Jupiter, your aid supply him!

PRIAM

1577 Let us see if someone can surer news provide.

HECUBA

1578 There's his Andromache, Cassandra at her side.

PRIAM

1579 You're right, Hecuba, let's approach—they are well met.

166 This line is marked for emphasis.

167 This line is marked for emphasis.

HECUBA

1580 My daughters, come and tell us: why are you upset?

ANDROMACHE

1581 We mourn, O venerable queen, what we foresee:
1582 Our noble Hector's lamentable misery.

HECUBA

1583 Why do you weep at the height of his happiness?

PRIAM

1584 No one who lives with honour can be in distress.¹⁶⁸

ANDROMACHE

1585 There is no greater misfortune than life to lose.

PRIAM

1586 Still greater is to have a life that shame pursues.
1587 But what makes you conclude that this must be in store?

ANDROMACHE

1588 I'm surer of it than I ever was before.

PRIAM

1589 The hands of heaven the web of his fate control.

ANDROMACHE

1590 You'll never see him again—or just without soul.

HECUBA

1591 O gods, what do I hear? Is he already dead?

ANDROMACHE

1592 No, but to bring relief to our camp he has sped.

168 Ll. 1584-86 are marked for emphasis.

HECUBA

1593 In this danger extreme, as extreme was the folly
 1594 To have left him alone, replete with melancholy,
 1595 Eating out his heart with regret and bitter envy.

PRIAM

1596 No one is to blame: in himself the fault we see.
 1597 But you, chaste flock, change to prayers your tears of
 fright:
 1598 It's hardly just now he finds himself in the fight.
 1599 Then, those whom the gods have taken into their care
 1600 Have not lacked support truly needed for their welfare.
 1601 But how did he get out? Do you know what occurred?

ANDROMACHE

1602 I went down to the temple; scarcely had I entered,
 1603 To enquire of the gods if their bitter ire
 1604 Toward Hector, and ourselves, continued still so dire,
 1605 When suddenly my ears met with a roaring sound.
 1606 I left, and the people in a frenzy I found
 1607 As never before: their breasts¹⁶⁹ they beat, beards they
 tear;
 1608 Women, girls, and children petrified here and there,
 1609 Imprinted with terrors, lamenting beyond bournes,
 1610 Dashing wildly to touch the sacred altar-horns,
 1611 Kissing the feet of the gods, soaking them with tears.
 1612 I, whom a fresh inkling about these novel fears
 1613 Struck on the instant, as soon as I heard some say
 1614 That the Trojan camp was fleeing in disarray
 1615 And, failing my Hector's aid, was sure to be crushed,
 1616 Guessing he would likely leave, to our lodging rushed,
 1617 So that, if anger risked carrying him away,
 1618 He might by my tears be distracted from the fray.
 1619 I arrived, but too late; he had already gone.
 1620 Alas, I can speak no longer; please, you go on.¹⁷⁰

169 “[B]reasts”: orig. “l'estomach” (p. 48), which gives as ridiculous an effect in modern French as it would if translated literally. Cf. Petit de Julleville, ed., p. 284, n. to p. 48.

170 She presumably calls on the second Chorus; see above, n. 156.

CHORUS

1621 No sooner had your Hector heard the dismal message
 1622 Of his men's rout than he boiled with violent rage
 1623 And, speaking not a word, ran to the nearby rack
 1624 Quickly and eagerly, then put upon his back
 1625 Bright-glittering armour, in his hand took a spear.

HECUBA

1626 You should have restrained his valour's fatal career.¹⁷¹

CHORUS

1627 He appeared so formidable in that array
 1628 That no one gave a thought to standing in his way.
 1629 He ran straight to the stable, with his own hands deigned
 1630 To equip his horse, then the open country gained.

PRIAM

1631 What we can do, rather than stay lamenting here,
 1632 Is to invoke for him the gods whom we revere.

ANDROMACHE

1633 Priam, it is not enough when misfortunes press¹⁷²
 1634 To implore their favour and sleep in idleness,
 1635 Head on a feather-pillow; they are deaf and mute
 1636 To those who don't help themselves but to them make suit.

PRIAM

1637 But in this situation, what more can I do?

ANDROMACHE

1638 Make use of your sceptre, and his wisdom renew.

PRIAM

1639 Have we not already that means employed in vain?

171 “[V]alour’s fatal career”: orig. “nuisible vaillance” (p. 48), which, translated literally (“harmful valour”), would not carry the same ominous charge.

172 Ll. 1633-36 are marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

1640 At least, he had agreed with us here to remain.

PRIAM

1641 His feeble promise has brought us what benefit?

ANDROMACHE

1642 His loss of control, not himself, transgresses it.

PRIAM

1643 By my authority I could not hold him back.

ANDROMACHE

1644 By your authority, countermand his attack.

PRIAM

1645 Reason's voice is drowned out by the clamour of arms.¹⁷³

ANDROMACHE

1646 The soul is chilled with fear at the sound of alarms.

PRIAM

1647 Spirits strong and active to furor they enkindle.

ANDROMACHE

1648 Danger makes the greatest boldness with wisdom dwindle.

PRIAM

1649 He is always the last to withdraw in retreat.

ANDROMACHE

1650 But see that he does not initiate defeat.

PRIAM

1651 I hope Fate will not deal to me such grievous woe.

173 Ll. 1645-48 are marked for emphasis.

ANDROMACHE

1652 Then hasten, Priam, to prevent his overthrow.

PRIAM

1653 I fear I will be causing him eternal shame.

ANDROMACHE

1654 Must his safety, I pray you, be called by that name?

PRIAM

1655 Now that they've seen him appear, what will the Greeks
say—?

ANDROMACHE

1656 That they can see him again, and he'll make them pay.

PRIAM

1657 —Then vanish at once, as a lightning flash is gone?

ANDROMACHE

1658 That he reserves himself to fight them later on.

PRIAM

1659 An act of cowardice it may well be esteemed.

ANDROMACHE

1660 Whatever the price to pay, let him be redeemed!

PRIAM

1661 But what constant spirit would consent to commit
1662 A real fault for a scarce-imagined benefit?

ANDROMACHE

1663 All possible means we may certainly condone:
1664 His life is at stake, and the safety of his own.

PRIAM

1665 One must maintain one's honour as a sacred thing.¹⁷⁴

ANDROMACHE

1666 The enemy's blows no disgrace to it can bring.

PRIAM

1667 But someone who aspires thoroughly to please
1668 Cannot afford the blame of friends or enemies.

ANDROMACHE

1669 The ardour to please all that glory gives someone
1670 Is often a reason he ends by pleasing none.

PRIAM

1671 The wicked man has nothing but his self-contempt;
1672 The good man at all times remains from change exempt.

ANDROMACHE

1673 A sound judgement does not consider it does ill
1674 In avoiding adroitly an imminent peril.

PRIAM

1675 When judgement of many an action is proclaimed,
1676 Not knowing what the cause is, the effect is blamed.

ANDROMACHE

1677 No commander to general scrutiny needs
1678 Disclose the inward reasons that govern his deeds.

PRIAM

1679 Yes, for honour's sake: he who of that takes no care
1680 Must of sowing doubts in suspicious minds beware.

ANDROMACHE

1681 Everyone knows Hector has too lofty a soul,

174 Ll. 1165-80 are marked for emphasis.

1682 His retreat as a culpable fault to enrol.

PRIAM

1683 The more a man for his perfections garners praises,¹⁷⁵
1684 The more his actions attract penetrating gazes.

ANDROMACHE

1685 Then they'll learn that to Destiny invincible
1686 He wisely yields: is this a fact so terrible?

PRIAM

1687 Rather, they'll judge that his spirit, feeble and
trembling,
1688 Basely gives way to fear, its true motive dissembling.

ANDROMACHE

1689 Unbelieving Priam! Is that how you refer
1690 To that form divine who deigns with men to confer,
1691 That genuine hero to whom the sun bears witness?¹⁷⁶
1692 All right, so much for Hector: let my eye caress
1693 That face of his never again. Not me alone
1694 Does his life concern, but his father hard as stone,
1695 His mother, his relations, his obstinate friends,
1696 For their disdain of him will meet with wretched ends.
1697 And yet, O good gods, since his own father, no less,
1698 His mother and family, blind to their distress,
1699 Seem to outdo themselves in countering his welfare,
1700 Let my death precede his own—that is all my prayer!

PRIAM

1701 I attribute these words to your tender intent,
1702 Which rate, however, as foolish and impudent;
1703 My love for your husband by all is recognised,
1704 That by Hecuba and his kin he is all-prized;
1705 My court respects, admires him, proud to embrace

175 Ll. 1683-84 are marked for emphasis.

176 “[T]o whom the sun bears witness”: orig. “attesté du Soleil” (p. 51).

PRIAM

1733 Do I not see Antenor making his approach?

HECUBA

1734 There he is indeed.

[Enter Antenor.]

PRIAM

1735 O old man without reproach,
Where have you come from, I pray? Do you know her spouse,
1736 To risk harm in combat, has slipped out of the house?

ANTENOR

1737 No one informed me, but I knew by circumstance:
1738 I quickly recognised the shaking of his lance
1739 And the terrible feathered crest his helmet bore,
1740 Which served at once our Trojans' courage to restore.

PRIAM

1741 What, have you seen him already, there in the throng?

ANTENOR

1742 No—plunging like lightning among the Greeks headlong.

ANDROMACHE

1743 I fear that in the end, by such a lightning blow,
1744 He also will be despatched to the shades below.

ANTENOR

1745 Without him all is lost: it would be Troy's last day.

PRIAM

1746 How did he appear to you? Tell us that, I pray.

ANTENOR

1747 I was separated from him, slightly ahead;
1748 To go out today was the last thing in my head,
1749 But I wanted to see the fortune of our army,

1750 And how the bravest warriors performed their duty.
 1751 A tower's height gave me an observation post:
 1752 At once I sensed general stirring in our host;
 1753 All was giving way in every place; I felt doubt,
 1754 Fearing to see the Trojans in a shameful rout,
 1755 Within myself swayed by something like the same movement
 1756 As wafted our army in its astonishment—
 1757 Then suddenly your magnanimous Hector spied,
 1758 On a warhorse mounted with the spur well applied,
 1759 Raising dust in the field and heading for the fray,
 1760 With horror, fear and death companions on his way.
 1761 Through our army with energy he thrust a passage,
 1762 And they, inflamed instantly with rekindled courage,
 1763 Repulsed the enemy, giving active pursuit.
 1764 In the blink of an eye, in front I saw him shoot,
 1765 Above all the Trojans, by head and shoulders highest,
 1766 Streaking like lightning, likewise followed by a tempest—
 1767 Or rather, a thunderbolt striking all with fears,
 1768 And with his blows shattering lances, pikes and spears.¹⁸²
 1769 With strong Ajax and Diomedes, known for prowess,
 1770 He fought hand-to-hand, but the skill of both proved less;
 1771 Nestor and Meriones sought to block his blows:
 1772 That was a weak rampart his fury to oppose.
 1773 Against him then came the elder Atreides,¹⁸³
 1774 Whom he passed over like the wind upon the seas.
 1775 Then he thrust himself in among the common sort:
 1776 His mere looks made them scatter and to flight resort,
 1777 As when a lion, driven by hunger and rage,
 1778 Comes upon flocks that have been left to pasturage,
 1779 Then drives them dashing off in terrified surprise,
 1780 The moment their faces meet his furious eyes.
 1781 Our men went with him, to their true valour restored,
 1782 And through the field like a ravaging torrent poured.
 1783 The most timid man any challenge can defy,

182 “[L]ances, pikes and spears”: orig. “lances, piques et dars” (p. 53). As is confirmed by ll. 1791 ff., the “lance” imagined is that of medieval warfare and jousting, in keeping with the recycling of Homeric material generally.

183 I.e., Agamemnon, the younger son of Atreus being Menelaus.

1847 O happy is the state of mind
 1848 That hope eschews along with care,
 1849 And likewise which avoids despair,
 1850 Unable to be undermined
 1851 When human chance seems to conspire
 1852 From its hands to snatch its desire.
 1853 For such, disaster makes no sense,
 1854 Nor a rebel in mutiny,
 1855 Nor diverse strokes of Destiny,
 1856 Nor any ill star's influence:
 1857 Although one may attempt to spite him
 1858 To his own good all things invite him.
 1859 His speeches, dictated by prudence,
 1860 Pay attention to high and low,
 1861 Though he can hardly fail to know
 1862 The limited intelligence
 1863 Of those whose knowledge and whose age
 1864 May cause them to appear more sage.
 1865 If a result thwarts his intent,
 1866 That does not his conviction dull,
 1867 Or unawares his spirit lull
 1868 To match the evil newly present;
 1869 But, never by surprise beguiled,
 1870 To what he sees is reconciled.
 1871 By stark contrast, a feeble soul
 1872 At the first gust may be affected,
 1873 And though he nothing has neglected,
 1874 In his despair may lose control,
 1875 As if the cleverest of men
 1876 Of his fate could be sovereign.
 1877 Blind in his knowledge's pretence,
 1878 His inner peace perturbed by passion,
 1879 He holds forth in digressive fashion
 1880 On the bizarre experience,
 1881 Thinking to some fixed law to bend
 1882 What on himself does not depend.
 1883 Thus locked in his vain stubbornness,
 1884 Should it happen that his emotion
 1885 Deceives him in his newfound notion,

1886 Now plunged into double distress,
1887 To all pressures he opens wide,
1888 Both those within and from outside.
1889 Truly man's is a wretched state,
1890 Man is the object of all sorrows,
1891 If he anticipates those woes
1892 He should with stable stance await,
1893 To suffer with no word opposed
1894 Whatever is on him imposed.

Act V

Priam, Hecuba, [Andromache], [Messenger],
[Chorus of Women], [Chorus]

[Enter Priam and Hecuba.]

PRIAM

1895 The end of our troubles, Hecuba, we can see:
1896 Hector by valour has escaped from Destiny;
1897 His arm meets no more obstacles; with ease it sped
1898 Through the Greek ranks, which it filled with masses of
dead.
1899 Though this combat gave me many anxieties,
1900 My spirits now rejoice, thanks to hope's gentle breeze.

HECUBA

1901 Our heart is very often prone to false alarms,¹⁸⁸
1902 And our eyes pour forth tears at the mere thought of
harms;
1903 When it seizes our feelings, a fear based on fiction
1904 Is equal in its torments to a true affliction.

PRIAM

1905 I have the proof today, for that imagined ill,
1906 From which my spirit frees itself little by little,
1907 More than any other trouble has caused me woe:
1908 It is just when one loves dearly that one fears so.¹⁸⁹

HECUBA

1909 When all is going well there is reason to fear.
1910 If rigorous Fate caused Hector to disappear,
1911 Either by the sword or grief our lot would be death,
1912 For as he has life from us, from him we have breath.

188 Ll. 1901-4 are marked for emphasis.

189 The line is marked for emphasis.

PRIAM

1913 Good fortune and glory justly measure your worth
 1914 Because to that great-minded hero you gave birth,
 1915 Whose immortal name, carried to places far-flung,
 1916 From one age to the next by mortals shall be sung.

HECUBA

1917 Your fortune mine exceeds: the son by everyone
 1918 Is judged by the father, the father by the son;
 1919 One never thinks a man of noble quality
 1920 Might be engendered by blood weak and cowardly.

PRIAM

1921 Destiny him to us for all our safety sends:
 1922 Ours is the honour, but to all Troy it extends;
 1923 For not just his parents in his fortunes take part,
 1924 But honour to the country at large they impart.

HECUBA

1925 However would it manage without that great captain,
 1926 Who only for its restful peace endures such pain?
 1927 And ourselves, Priam, what disaster would we court
 1928 Without invincible Hector's faithful support?

PRIAM

1929 I count my Troy truly fortunate among cities,
 1930 Not for its many illustrious families,
 1931 Nor its walls, which the gods' hands deigned to edify,
 1932 Nor its lofty towers, which reach up to the sky,
 1933 Nor its expanse of lands, nor treasures in great store,
 1934 But for harbouring in it that great man of war,
 1935 Who always as a blessed flame will cheer the gloom,
 1936 When Troy entire must be nothing but a tomb.

HECUBA

1937 It gives extreme pleasure to fathers in old age¹⁹⁰

190 "[F]athers in old age": orig. "bonnes gens de Peres" (p. 57), in which Petit de Julleville, ed., p. 285,

1938 That vigorous sons pursuing their heritage
 1939 Should constantly the toilsome steps of duty trace,
 1940 When, weak and infirm, they cannot keep up the pace.
 1941 And I think the glory so many combats yield
 1942 To your son, who best of all his weapons can wield,
 1943 Tickles your heart¹⁹¹ as much as those great honours do
 1944 That your strong victorious arm once brought to you.

PRIAM

1945 No, never so much pleasure my spirit obtained
 1946 By having in open field advantages gained
 1947 (Though from warriors well skilled, I took in my day
 1948 A great number of laurels with my sword away),
 1949 As when my dear Hector after some victory
 1950 Returns within the walls filled with honour and glory,
 1951 As in triumph, and after him are seen to trail
 1952 A hundred captive men-at-arms with fear still pale.

HECUBA

1953 I, who have never known what precious happiness
 1954 Fills the soul's senses after victory's success,
 1955 The means of such comparison am bound to lack;
 1956 But when I perceive him to his house coming back,
 1957 Soaked with sweat mingled with dust from the battlefield,
 1958 I feel more pleasure than the wedding rites would yield
 1959 Of my dearest daughter, were happy fate to grant
 1960 Her marriage with a prince agreeable and valiant.¹⁹²

PRIAM

1961 Sometimes a misfortune may prove profitable:¹⁹³
 1962 If the harsh hand of Destiny inevitable
 1963 Had not poured so many troubles upon our head,

n. to p. 57, explains "bonnes gens" as a common locution simply indicating age.

191 "Tickles your heart": orig. "Chatouille ... ton cœur" (p. 57), literally equivalent to the English.

192 If a specific daughter is in question, she is not identifiable, but Hecuba's daughters included Cassandra and Polyxena, who both suffered notably unhappy fates, while the verb in l. 1960 ("[a]ccouplerait" [p. 57]) is open-endedly conditional. On Hecuba's lines in the context of the play's treatment of heroic values, see the Introduction, pp. 23-24.

193 The line is marked for emphasis.

1989 A little ill benefits our experience,
1990 But to suffer too greatly overtaxes patience.

PRIAM

1991 If the heart of mortals were not somewhat inured
1992 To the nature of the evils they here endured,
1993 To still more violent pains they would be exposed
1994 By their thoughts with the evils themselves juxtaposed.
1995 Examples abound—we offer one plain to see:
1996 The wrath implacable of adverse Destiny
1997 Has pursued us so doggedly for many years
1998 That to our miseries no hopeful end appears.
1999 Of a good many sons, my own glorious offspring,
2000 Whose promise seemed to the heavens it would them bring,
2001 The greater part, by the Grecian thunderbolts felled,
2002 In the dust before Troy before my eyes were quelled.
2003 My sons-in-law, whom my cause to the fight enticed,
2004 Their souls at the foot of Mount Ida sacrificed.
2005 The allied princes come my defence to assume
2006 Possess, almost all, Scamander's waves for a tomb,
2007 And of those brave captains, those soldiers admirable,
2008 Who once within our ramparts swarmed innumerable,
2009 There remain to us only the ones whom blind Fortune,
2010 By her favour, from the common loss kept immune—
2011 And possibly the urn by which Destiny chooses
2012 Reserves for evening those it earlier excuses.
2013 Of all vanities, the vainest of all is man:¹⁹⁵
2014 His glory is a phantom, his life a short span.

HECUBA

2015 O luminous fair eye of the vagabond sun,
2016 Have you even seen a fate equal to this one?
2017 But Priam, do not refresh my sad memory
2018 With our long sufferings' pitiful history.
2019 Allow me to savour a moment of repose,
2020 Since the Greek army to my Hector its back shows.

195 Ll. 2013-14 are marked for emphasis.

2021 Enough by far we've had of other confrontations,
 2022 Causes for sighing and for weeping lamentations,
 2023 And since with this one a flower or two appears
 2024 Of hope and pleasure, let us not drown them with tears.
 2025 More evil than good by heaven to man is sent:¹⁹⁶
 2026 Let us never cut back on our passing enjoyment
 2027 And foolishly add to sorrows of too long season;
 2028 That would be to torment oneself without a reason.

PRIAM

2029 Well, then, let us drive these sorrowful thoughts away,
 2030 Which only serve the ulcer in our souls as prey:
 2031 It is wise for man by such means to seek relief,¹⁹⁷
 2032 If not from his misfortune, at least from his grief.

HECUBA

2033 I feel a trembling still in my mistrustful soul,
 2034 Recalling that war's outcome is beyond control,
 2035 And that danger still menaces my precious son:
 2036 O gods, from such concern, come grant me liberation!

PRIAM

2037 In my heart an ardent impulse again you've fanned
 2038 To go and welcome him, to extend my right hand,
 2039 To enfold him in these arms, to accord him honour
 2040 For vanquishing Achilles in this last encounter.

HECUBA

2041 Hear that tumultuous confusion in the street—
 2042 It's the applause with which his arrival they greet.
 2043 Now let us run forward, Priam, no longer stay.

PRIAM

2044 But wait, there is Andromache, coming our way.

196 Ll. 2025-28 are marked for emphasis.

197 Ll. 2031-32 are marked for emphasis.

HECUBA

2045 Oh, her quick paces show how the poor thing is pressed!

PRIAM

2046 Good gods! She begins to lament and beat her breast!

HECUBA

2047 Could the fortunes of Troy have done an about-face?

PRIAM

2048 Her features are a certain sign that is the case.

[Enter Andromache.]

ANDROMACHE

2049 You, tumult, are the harbinger of some mischance!

HECUBA

2050 Fortune has turned—it's in Andromache's appearance.

ANDROMACHE

2051 Some evil from this sign of yours must be inferred.¹⁹⁸

PRIAM

2052 Alas, what new fatal disaster has occurred?

ANDROMACHE

2053 But I cannot know whom it most closely concerns.

HECUBA

2054 Daughter, what trouble so your temper overturns?

ANDROMACHE

2055 Madam, the people in disorder one can spy,
2056 Scurrying here and there, with "All is lost!" their cry.

198 Orig.: "Vn malheur incertain par toy nous est connu" (p. 60). She is continuing to apostrophise the "Tumult"/"Tumulte" (p. 60). Arguably, she speaks ll. 2049, 2051 and 2053 aside.

PRIAM

2057 Have you not enquired the cause of this dismay?

ANDROMACHE

2058 Enough, but all in vain; for each one shrinks away.

PRIAM

2059 This may amount to nothing but a baseless terror:
2060 False news can put the people in a state of furor.¹⁹⁹

ANDROMACHE

2061 Such noisy sighing throughout the heavens resounds
2062 That one cannot suppose they lament on no grounds.

[Enter Messenger.]

HECUBA

2063 This man coming here the turmoil will clarify.

PRIAM

2064 Listen, he's about to speak.

ANDROMACHE

Ah, Madam, I die!

MESSENGER

2065 What stroke of bitter anguish transfixes my heart!
2066 I am wretched indeed the message to impart
2067 Of your new disaster, O—Troy no more I say,
2068 But of these cursèd Greeks the booty and the prey!
2069 O agèd good King Priam, alas, with what ear
2070 Word of your loss incomparable could you hear?
2071 O honoured Hecuba, where will your spirits flee
2072 When you come to know him taken by Destiny?
2073 Woeful Andromache, when of his death you know,
2074 As I tell it, what will you be? Trojans, let go,

199 This line is marked for emphasis.

2075 From this moment let go the sinews of your strength:²⁰⁰
 2076 Their life-source²⁰¹ lies stretched out on the ground at full length.

HECUBA

2077 Ah, I have no more son—O mother miserable!

PRIAM

2078 What tremor freezes me, O father lamentable!

[Andromache faints.]

CHORUS [OF WOMEN]

2079 Andromache, Andromache!—her force gives way;
 2080 Let us take her inside, sisters, without delay.
 2081 It is just as well: in this way she need not hear
 2082 This message of death of which she has had such fear.
 [Andromache is carried off by the Chorus of Women]

PRIAM

2083 At this instant, by sheer amazement staggered quite,
 2084 I suddenly feel all my spirits taking flight!

MESSENGER

2085 How is Andromache? Fainted, carried inside?
 2086 Oh, three, four times happier for her to have died,
 2087 That most prudent princess, before her mind was filled
 2088 With dismal knowledge of how her dear spouse was killed!

HECUBA

2089 O cruel report, by which I too feel struck down!
 2090 Have the Greeks, then, not seized and occupied this town,
 2091 After its strongest rampart they have overthrown,
 2092 While he sighs out his wounded life somewhere unknown?

200 “[S]inews of your strength”: orig. “nerfs de ta vertu” (p. 61), where the physicality of the image inclines “vertu”, as often, toward the sense of “manly strength”.

201 “[L]ife-source”: orig. “Celui qui l’animoit” (p. 61).

2119 Preferring by their flight survival to assure,
 2120 Than to stand fast and then a sudden fall procure,
 2121 When to the Phrygians these words he paused to state:
 2122 “Summon up your courage, my friends: your ancient hate
 2123 Itself must perish here; conclude, if you’re unwilling,
 2124 By a shameful rout, or else by the ruthless killing
 2125 Of these Greeks in flight, who wrongly, with brutal hand,
 2126 Already for twice five years have ravaged your land.
 2127 Let’s send these outlaws to shadowy Acheron
 2128 To load up the feeble skiff of the boatman Charon,
 2129 Till, as the masses pile on, his patience gives way,
 2130 And rudely with his long pole he shoves them away.
 2131 Lay on, strike and slaughter, courageous citizens,
 2132 Earn for yourselves today the distinction of Trojans.”
 2133 He finished speaking; then, with utmost courage unfurled,
 2134 Alone on the Achaians’ camp himself he hurled
 2135 And, with blows redoubled, dealt out a coffin’s place
 2136 To all that with his tongue or eye he could not chase.
 2137 As when a falcon, borne upon his wings in flight,
 2138 Finds a flock of feeble doves fixed within his sight,
 2139 Returning from the fields with a sure sweeping movement,
 2140 As they stir the waves of the windy element,
 2141 Down upon the timid flock he lets himself fall:
 2142 Most of them flee readily at their panic’s call,
 2143 Become prey to other birds, but those that he hits,
 2144 Using beak and claws, on the ground he tears to bits:
 2145 Just so, when Hector fell upon the Argive army,
 2146 On the field it was scattered here and there to see,
 2147 But those who encountered his steps as he swept by
 2148 Were sure, by either his sword’s edge or point, to die.
 2149 Now strong Diomedes²⁰³ and Hipponoos²⁰⁴ the brave

203 If Diomedes (i.e., “Diomède”) is indeed the personage intended by the original’s “Diomène”, as reasonably supposed by Petit de Julleville, ed., p. 385, n. to p. 63, all accounts appear to have him outliving Hector. But as the editor indicates, several names in this passage are deformed or merely fanciful. The sequence itself is invented, but behind it may lie the account in *Iliad*, XI.284 ff. of a Trojan triumph including an exhortation by Hector, a simile comparing him to a destructive force of nature (a storm), and a list of those he killed. Diomedes also plays a prominent role.

204 Orig. “Hippide” (p. 63). I borrow from the list in *Iliad*, XI.299-303, which also includes Autoonoo (l. 2151), orig. “Antonoe” (p. 63).

2150 By his murderous arm had been sent to a grave;
 2151 Autonoos and Ienteus,²⁰⁵ both in jousts distinguished,
 2152 From the radiance of the heavens he had banished;
 2153 And the brave Sthenelus,²⁰⁶ struck by his sword, in turning,
 2154 A wound cut into his thigh felt painfully burning,
 2155 When the skilled Polybetes²⁰⁷ sought to interpose,
 2156 Showed himself, resolute, and wished to try his blows.
 2157 Then a fierce combat between them got underway,
 2158 And their arms began an incessant interplay.
 2159 Hector, by such a hindrance his wrath set alight,
 2160 Summoned up his strength, threw still more into the fight;
 2161 As for Polybetes, to vengeance self-ordained,
 2162 All dangers like a raging lion he disdained,
 2163 Leapt all around Hector, tried him, and again tried,
 2164 Probed where defects in his gleaming armour might hide,
 2165 Struck at the most noble places, but unaware
 2166 That in that fierce conflict he left himself too bare,
 2167 While Hector meanwhile did nothing else but consider
 2168 In what part the most mortal stroke he might deliver.
 2169 That done, at once his belly felt the blade applied,
 2170 There where the navel upon itself turns inside.
 2171 That instant he staggered, and nothing his fall broke,
 2172 But his body, careening, did as the split oak
 2173 When it hit the earth, provoking a greater jolt

205 “Ienteus”: orig. “Ientée” (p. 63); unidentified.

206 “Sthenelus” (orig. “Stenelle [p. 63]), associated with Diomedes; see, e.g., *Iliad*, V.106 ff.

207 Orig. “Polybete” (p. 63), whom Petit de Julleville, ed., p. 385, n. to p. 63, identifies as the son of Pirithoos. The correct form would then be Polyoiptes, but no doubt Montchrestien simply took the name from other accounts of the episode. In Le Fèvre, trans. Caxton, the Greek “baron” is not named but “moche queyntly and richely armed” (bk. III, fol. xxx^r). In Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le roman de Troie*, ed. Léopold Constans, 4 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1904-12), vol. III, ll. 16155 ff., Polybetès is a strong and valiant warrior from the Caucasus, arrayed in a fabulous armour which makes Hector “coveitos [covetous]” (l. 16178); Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, ed. Gabriella Parussa (Geneva: Droz, 1999), makes him a rich and powerful king and moralises covetousness as the cause of the death of Hector, as of many others (sect. 92 [pp. 329-30]). Dares the Phrygian does not mention the rich armour but specifies the perhaps pertinent physical detail of Polybete’s soldierly agility—see Dares Phrygius, *L’histoire véritable de la guerre des Grecs et des Troyens, etc.*, trans. Charles de Bourgueville (Caen: B. Macé, 1572), p. 46: “Capitaine brusque, & vaillant”—cf. above, l. 2163. Montchrestien’s account of his fall to earth and his size seems to carry a trace of gigantic stature: he would have known that Polybotes was one of the giants who rebelled against Zeus and was duly punished.

2229 Blows that like a huge hammer on an anvil beat,
 2230 And beat incessantly: that Prince firm on his feet,
 2231 Unmoving like a high rock, seated at its ease,
 2232 Which mocks at the howling wind and the angry seas.²¹⁵
 2233 Our army, which death more than shame now filled with
 fright,
 2234 Abandoned all meanwhile, and gave themselves to flight,
 2235 With desperate hearts their weapons casting to the ground,
 2236 Lest death they should encounter while to safety bound.
 2237 One lies wholly still, with a mortal wound pierced
 through;
 2238 Another, knocked down, gets up and would flee anew,
 2239 But he has taken only four or five steps more
 2240 Before he tumbles again, backwards or before,
 2241 Depending on where the enemy's blow came from.
 2242 Troy has yielded everywhere, Greece victors become,
 2243 Regaining the field and so pursuing their own
 2244 Advantage that none fought still but Menon alone,
 2245 Who, when constrained by the numbers to turn his face,
 2246 Returned frustrated, not in cowardly disgrace.
 2247 Achilles, meanwhile, causer of great Hector's
 downfall,
 2248 But who to his heart's fierce rage was himself in thrall,
 2249 Returned to where the corpse lay on the field in place,
 2250 Pierced the two heels, then bound them together with lace,
 2251 Attached his chariot with the baldrick he wore,
 2252 Then dragging him behind, around these walls he tore.

PRIAM

2253 The infinite suffering that lays my soul waste
 2254 So presses on my heart that words far off are chased.

HECUBA

2255 O heaven far too harsh! O hostile Destiny!
 2256 I have lost my dear son, and to this you agree!

215 Ll. 2227-32: puzzling lines, here translated literally. The "prince" recalls Hector as he was before receiving Achilles' blows but might also suit Achilles' new stature, however falsely acquired and at odds with his subsequent "rage" (l. 2248).

ANDROMACHE

2289 Let my sorrows, in turn, be openly expressed:
 2290 Too long have I nurtured mourning within my breast.
 2291 Permit me the capacity to speak, O sighs,
 2292 And that in speaking my life may volatilise,
 2293 Fortunate indeed in my bitter agony
 2294 If I die in lamenting my hard destiny.
 2295 It is you, O Heavens, I find I must accuse:
 2296 With what equity could you with contempt refuse
 2297 So many ardent vows, so many fervent prayers,
 2298 Invoking your benevolence for our affairs?
 2299 No, I know well Andromache does not deserve
 2300 To have gods busy themselves her content to serve;
 2301 But Hector, that Hector, whose rare qualities shone
 2302 So that to barbarous nations he was well known—
 2303 That famous magnanimity, courage so perfect,
 2304 Should have made your harsh decrees my wishes respect.
 2305 Virtue,²¹⁸ you are useless if an idol, no more—
 2306 Mere wind of opinion, breath of an orator!
 2307 O ignorant mortals! Try hoping, when distressed,
 2308 The gods will never fail to look out for the best,
 2309 Now that Hector is dead, so ardently engaged
 2310 In glory's pursuit. For a man merely enraged—
 2311 Or rather a tiger—having no effort spent,
 2312 Cut down his vanquisher, subjects his corpse to torment.
 2313 What new horror is this! With numbing chills I quake;
 2314 My mind's eye now seems an image of you to make:
 2315 I see you, dear husband, legs upward from the ground,
 2316 Downward the head, leaping with jerks from bound to bound,
 2317 As Achilles directs and urges on his horses
 2318 To ply round and round our ramparts their agile courses.
 2319 O you despairing grief, my senses wild you render!
 2320 O grievous despair,²¹⁹ to which myself I surrender!
 2321 At this point in the martyrdom in which I seethe,

218 “Virtue”: orig. “vertu” (p. 66), here obviously in the broadest sense of manhood, integrating moral and physical qualities.

219 Ll. 2329-20: there is also a play on words in the original (“dueil desesperé”/“desespoir dolent” [p. 67]).

2354 His arm had proved it by its strength incredible,
 2355 Which often, falling like a flaming bolt of thunder,
 2356 The obstinate Greeks' strong formations dashed asunder.
 2357 But your unjust deceit, from ambush perpetrated,
 2358 By a blow unforeseen his span of life truncated;
 2359 That arm of yours, which felled him without fight to
 earth,
 2360 Could not hope otherwise to overcome his worth.²²³
 2361 Gods! If for their vices the wicked you chastise,
 2362 Some sharp strokes of justice, in your furor, devise
 2363 To make mortals see that the crime is always bound²²⁴
 2364 On the head of its perpetrator to redound.
 2365 But hasten, if you please, your vengeance, all too slow,
 2366 So I may descend to the banks of hell below,
 2367 That glorious spirit the glad tidings to tell,
 2368 Who reviles this traitor, perhaps Heaven as well.
 2369 While I wait for the gods that last grace to deliver,
 2370 O eyes of mine, may you pour forth a double river
 2371 To weep for your Hector—my good and source of pains,
 2372 My comfort and torment, of whom to me remains
 2373 Nothing but the keen desire his shade to see,
 2374 Which of perished heroes now swells the company.

CHORUS

2375 By means of Hector's right hand, Troy remained upright;
 2376 With his death, unhappily, it collapses quite.
 2377 Let fallen Troy the tribute of our tears receive;
 2378 With it the loss of victory and life we grieve.
 2379 The welfare of a state is feeble and unstable,²²⁵
 2380 If it depends on one alone, though brave and able,
 2381 Who offers himself freely to all risks of dying.²²⁶
 2382 Mortals, learn from this that, no more for being king,

223 “[W]orth”: orig. “vertu” (p. 67), here again clearly in the sense of strength and prowess.

224 Ll. 263-64 are marked for emphasis.

225 Ll. 2379-86 are marked for emphasis.

226 Orig.: “Qui s’offre à tous hazards sans crainte de la Parque” (p. 68). “La Parque” is used here, as often, to stand for the fact of mortality, and to retain the personification might interfere with the explicit reference to Atropos in ll. 2384-86.

2383 Emperor or captain, can one live without fears
2384 By thinking to escape the fatal sister's shears—
2385 She who without distinction to the grave sends down
2386 The crook of the shepherd, the sceptre of a crown.

END