Andromache is one of the noblest and most sorrowful characters associated with the Trojan war. In ancient and modern literature she is famed for conjugal love, fidelity and loyalty. She is represented as loving wife and mother, mourning widow and, later, captive, slave and concubine, everlastingly linked with her past as Hector's wife in the great days of Troy. This paper examines the way in which the Roman tragedian, Seneca, refashioned the Andromache of the Greek and Latin poets and how his representation subsequently, together with earlier depictions, impacted on her portrayal in French literature, particularly Robert Garnier's La Troade (1581), Sallebray's La Troadé (1640) and Racine's Andromaque (1667).

Before Seneca

The name of Andromache is inextricably bound up with that of Hector the Trojan champion in the Iliad. In the famous and moving scene where she takes what is to be her final leave of him, Andromache details the different roles that he has for her: father, mother, brother, husband. He is also the father of the young Astyanax. Achilles's slaughter of Hector destroys this nuclear family. Andromache's grief is profound. The only meaning left for her in life is to bring up Hector's son, the living bond to Hector. But when Troy is conquered, the life of Astyanax is threatened. To the Greeks too he is the living remnant of Troy's greatness, and his removal is imperative to ensure the total extinction of hope that Troy could ever menace the Greeks again. This part of the aftermath of the Trojan war does not feature in the

1 In the chapter ‘Andromaque, je pense à vous’, a title taken from the first line of Baudelaire's celebrated poem, Le Cygne, which encapsulates the image of Andromache as eternal exile, grieving widow and mother, De Romilly 1995:29-43 traces the depiction of Andromache in classical and French literature.

2 'Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honoured mother, you are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband' (Il. 6.429-30, tr. R. Lattimore).
Homeric epics. However, two elements of the story of the fate of Andromache and Astyanax after the fall of Troy are already foreshadowed in the *Iliad*. Hector predicts Andromache's possible enslavement should he be killed and Troy fall (6.454-58), while Andromache also foresees this as her lot, but adds that Astyanax will either be a slave like her or be hurled from the battlements of Troy (24.732-37). Various other Greek epics, now lost or fragmentary, dealt with the fate of Andromache and Astyanax in the aftermath of the Greek victory. The *Iliou Persis* made Odysseus responsible for the decision to kill Astyanax and for his execution, while the *Little Iliad* cast Achilles's son, Neoptolemus, in that role.

Euripides deals with the fate of the Trojans after the sack of Troy in three tragedies. While *Hecuba* does not foreground the fate of Andromache and Astyanax, *Troades* depicts the execution of Astyanax on the order of the Greeks. Odysseus realised the potential for future conflict in the survival of Hector's son. Andromache does not even have the opportunity to grieve over her son's body as she is taken away by her new master, Neoptolemus.

In Euripides's *Andromache* the eponymous heroine is a concubine in the house of Neoptolemus. She has a son by him, and this, coupled with her master's love for her, has provoked the envy of Neoptolemus's childless wife, Hermione. This daughter of Helen and Menelaus accuses Andromache of causing her infertility by means of Eastern magic. In the *Andromache* Hector is by no means forgotten. In her struggle to preserve her own life, and that of her son, Andromache often refers to her past sufferings, the loss of Hector and her brutal enslavement, but does not dwell on the loss of Astyanax. Euripides's concentration on her survival in the new situation and her devotion to her new son would be diluted by introducing grief for another son. Several features of this play, set a few years after the fall of Troy, seem to have inspired later playwrights in their characterisation of Andromache and in the development of the plot. The play ends with a forecast by Thetis of a safe future for Andromache and her son.

The most notable depiction of Andromache, in surviving Latin literature before Seneca, is Virgil's in Book 3 of the *Aeneid*. She features in Aeneas's account, told to Dido and the Carthaginians, of his adventures and suffering. The Trojan party found, at Buthrotum in Epirus, a settlement ruled by Priam's son, Helenus, who had gained a domain and Andromache as his wife after the slaying of Pyrrhus by Orestes. However, in spite of her having a

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3 Fragment 4 (West 2003:147).
4 Fragments 18, 29 (West 2003:137, 139).
5 His usual Greek name: Romans generally preferred to call him Pyrrhus.
6 Thetis's prophecy includes the marriage of Andromache and Helenus that features in *Aeneid* 3.
new husband and other children, Virgil draws her as still totally devoted to her first husband and son.\(^7\) When Aeneas first sees her, she is tearfully offering mourning gifts at a cenotaph for Hector. This sets the tone for the visit. Andromache’s interest is all in the past. Her immediate reaction on seeing the Trojans is to ask about Hector (\textit{Aen.} 3.300-12). Aeneas addresses the highly emotional Andromache as \textit{Hectoris Andromache} (319) thus implying that, in spite of all the tribulations she has suffered, her association with Hector is what defines her. Andromache sustains this by referring to herself as the wife of Hector, \textit{Andromachae ... coningis Hectorae} (487-88) and when she asks Aeneas about Ascanius, she points out that Hector was his uncle. Her attachment to Astyanax is demonstrated by her likening Ascanius’s age and appearance to what her son would have been. The interest in Ascanius she displays at the end of the visit points to the purpose of the vignette in the epic. Aeneas gets new heart from this contact with a new version of Troy built by some of his fellow Trojan survivors. It may be argued that Virgil would have expressly preserved the familiar aspects of Andromache as they represent the established tradition. While Seneca undoubtedly knew Virgil’s rendering, a close reading of the depiction of Andromache in her contest with Ulysses in the \textit{Troades} shows that Seneca has given her more depth and versatility. This more complex persona has been created in answer to the demands of the tragic drama. There are, however, echoes of the Virgilian scene in Seneca’s tragedy as well as that of Racine.

\textbf{Seneca’s \textit{Troades}}

Seneca’s \textit{Troades} draws on the rich body of poems and plays, both Greek and Roman, about the aftermath of the Trojan war. In addition to the works mentioned above and other lost poems such as those of Stesichorus and Pindar, Seneca probably knew the Latin tragedies of Accius and Ennius.\(^8\) In the \textit{Troades} there are echoes of the \textit{Aeneid} and Ovid’s description of the fall of Troy in Book 13 of the \textit{Metamorphoses}, but a large part of the plot, the characterisation, language and style are due to Seneca’s own talent and taste for creative adaptation. The result is an unmistakably Senecan tragedy that

\(^7\) For a detailed discussion of the pathos of the scene between Aeneas and Andromache, see Grimm’s close reading (1967:153-62).

\(^8\) Fantham 1982:71 concludes: ‘it is apparent from the previous analysis of so many plays in either language which share some element of plot with \textit{Troades}, how small a part of Seneca’s tragedy any one of them could have supplied.’
has been hailed as his best play by many scholars. Andromache has also been singled out as Seneca's most admirable heroine.

Seneca's *Troades* has a plot and *persona* different to Euripides's drama with the same title. Consequently the characterisation even of those who also appear in the Greek play is different. Seneca emphasises human motives and actions as triggers of the suffering and thus there is no divine prologue. In many ways the action of the play is a re-enactment of the Trojan war, but now the champions, Achilles and Hector, are both dead and although their spirits loom over the action, the Greeks are represented by Ulysses and the Trojans by a woman, Hector's widow, Andromache. The revival, in miniature, of the war is announced by the counterpoint of the herald's account of the appearance of Achilles's *ingens umbra* (181), his huge shade, seeking a further Trojan victim and Andromache's dream of Hector (443-55) urging her to safeguard Astyanax, the last hope for Troy, from the Greeks. The inevitability of a repeat of the defeat of the Trojans is foreshadowed in the epithet attached to Hector's image, *fallax umbra* (460), his delusive shade. Although in the context it refers to the impossibility of Andromache embracing him, it could also apply to the impossibility of his instructions being carried out successfully.

Ulysses's involvement with the fate of Astyanax precedes Seneca. Although the Roman dramatist does not represent Ulysses as the instigator of the idea (as is the case in Euripides's *Troades*) that Hector's son must be killed for the immediate purpose of ensuring a favourable wind for the Greek ships to leave Troy, and ultimately to ensure that he will not grow up as an avenger of the defeat of his family, he is entrusted with overseeing the execution of the decision. The depiction of Ulysses preserves his well-established verbal dexterity and cleverness as well as his perseverance and psychological insight. More original and striking is that Andromache proves to be a worthy adversary as she handles the challenge of her formidable and experienced opponent. Her ingenuity is perhaps born from desperation. In this encounter Seneca shows Andromache as a brave and inventive woman and in my view considerably enriches the sum of previous portrayals. Seneca extends the resourcefulness of the heroine of Euripides's *Andromache* who is not cowed by Hermione's hostility and faces up to Menelaus's cruel harassment.

9 Regenbogen 1930:413 calls the scene between Andromache and Ulysses one of the most moving and theatrically successful in the whole of ancient drama.

10 'Andromache in the *Troades* ... stands out in the memory as Seneca's finest heroine', Bonner 1949:162.

11 Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1995:13 notes this contrast between Seneca's Andromache and the helpless victim of the Greek tradition.
The Greek tradition shows an Andromache who has no choice but to accept the losses piled on her: Hector, Troy, Astyanax. Only in Euripides’s *Andromache* is there an indication of a woman who is capable of shaping her own destiny and fighting for the future of her son. In Seneca’s drama the outcome may be the familiar one and Astyanax still be killed, but not without Andromache putting up a spirited and sustained performance to try to save his life. At the end of the second act Calchas announces to Pyrrhus and Agamemnon that in addition to Polyxena’s sacrificial wedding to the shade of Achilles, the fates demand the death of Hector’s son and Priam’s grandson before the Greek fleet will be able to sail (Sen. *Tr.|* 366-70). The ostensible cause for the little boy’s death sentence is the fates’ demand, but the careful designation of the victim as Priam’s grandson through Hector, *Priami nepos Hectorus* (369), defining him as an intrinsic part of the core of Trojan power, reveals the political motive behind this demand. When Andromache appears in the next act and shares her sorrows with the chorus, the audience is already aware that further suffering is imminent. With rhetorical flourish and deep irony Andromache indicates that Astyanax is prolonging her trouble: because he is alive, she has to fear for him: ‘He has stolen from me the greatest boon of trouble: to fear nothing’ (422-23). She has no respite from affliction, and as she concludes with another ringing sententia: ‘It is utterly wretched to fear, when you have no hope’ (425). This anxious, doom-stricken mother gives no indication of the effort she will rise to in order to save her son. Warned by Hector, who has appeared to her in a dream, to conceal their son, Andromache is frenziedly searching for a hiding-place for, as is hyperbolically asserted, there is not enough of Troy left to conceal even a child. The only structure that is untouched, and that would be clearly visible in any stage production, is Hector’s tomb. Fantham notes that it was a Senecan innovation to make Hector’s tomb Astyanax’s hiding-place. This gives physical reality to the conjoined destiny of father and son. The tomb also serves as a constant reminder that Hector and Troy have lost their power. The tension generated by the entombment of the living child is only resolved in the final act when the Messenger recounts his heroic leap to

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13 This is reminiscent of the dream of Hector in *Aen.* 2.270ff. when he rouses Aeneas to flee the falling city and to save his family and Troy’s gods. See Fantham 1982:279-82 for details taken from and variations on Virgil’s depiction of the dream; Keulen 2001 on Sen. *Tr.|* 445-60 and Boyle 1994:180: ‘Sen. here rewrites explicitly Virg.’s description of the appearance of Hector’s ghost to the sleeping Aeneas at *Aen.* 2.268ff.’
14 Fantham 1982:87.
death in media Priami regna (1103), ‘into the midst of Priam’s kingdom.’ This, the kingdom which would have been his, is of course now in ruin, but Seneca shows a boy who, although he has lost all the external attributes of his heritage, preserves its proud spirit. Andromache’s response to the gruesome description of the disfigurement of his body, sic quaeque est similis patri (1117), ‘in this too he is like his father’, applies also to her son’s heroic spirit.

Consigning the frightened child to the tomb already reveals unexpected facets of Andromache’s personality. When he shrinks back she deploys positive encouragement: ‘Do you despise a hiding-place as shameful? I recognise your character: you are ashamed to show fear’ (504-05). The brisk string of encouragements directed at Astyanax shows no maternal soft-peddling, but a bleak assessment of the chances. ‘Look what a crowd of survivors we are: a tomb, a boy and a captive woman’ (508). To this sarcastic summary she adds the cold comfort that, if the fates deny him life, Astyanax will [already] have a tomb. Her cool-headed planning is evidence of an instinct for survival and a readiness to fight for her son’s life, absent in previous Andromaches. Seneca’s Andromache may not be drawn as an overtly loving mother, but this is due to the playwright’s emphasis on her as the leader in this final battle for Troy, a battle of words where soft endearments are replaced by strategic planning and clear thought in what one commentator has described as a chillingly “modern” scene of interrogation and psychological warfare.16

No sooner has Astyanax been hidden than Andromache has to face the challenge of the probing of Ulysses whom she classifies to herself as ‘weaving cunning tricks in his heart’.17 Ulysses’s role here is not so much to deceive as to detect deception. The confrontation between Andromache and Ulysses sees both of them assuming roles in order to outwit each other and to achieve opposite goals. Andromache’s quest is to save Astyanax, her living reminder of Hector, and through him give Troy a future chance for revenge, while Ulysses has to carry out his mandate of delivering Astyanax to the Greeks in order to complete their mission at Troy by executing the son of

15 Fantham 1986:275 notes the general lack of warmth towards Astyanax in Seneca’s tragedy compared with that of Euripides’s Troades and argues that Seneca’s Andromache ‘loves only Hector and cares for the child only as a miniature of his father’. This view is not universally shared. Boyle 1994:185-86 quotes Dryden as remarking of the scene between Ulysses and Andromache: ‘there you see the tenderness of a mother so represented in Andromache that it raises compassion to a high degree in the reader ...’

16 Ahl 1986:37.

17 Sen. Tro. 523: rectit pectore astus callidos.
Hector and finally eliminating the possibility of future peril to the Greeks from the Trojans.

Stanford sees Seneca's Ulysses as remaining 'the same deceitful and unscrupulous' politician as in Euripidean drama. He concedes that 'Seneca seems to show a grain or two more of sympathy for Ulysses in his thankless task' and ascribes it to Seneca, the Roman, 'used to imperial discipline and the harsher exigencies of power-politics' having a greater capacity than Euripides, 'the warm-hearted individualist', to understand the possible conflict of feelings that a mission such as this might cause. One may question whether Euripides would be quite as unqualified as Stanford imagines, to understand an inward struggle that pits the life of a widow's child against a military order, but he is undoubtedly right that Seneca's life in the imperial court at Rome exposed him to not too dissimilar situations, where private morality had to give way to reasons of state.

Ulysses's opening speech presents a finely construed apology for the necessity of his cruel mission. He sets out the grounds for the fear of all the Greek leaders: that Astyanax presents a potential threat and that Calchas has confirmed that the fates demand his death. The Greeks will never be able to disarm as long as Hector's child lives; Hector himself used to say this (535). Ulysses makes it clear that he is merely the delegated representative of all the Greeks, and not acting in his personal capacity. He invites Andromache to take a dispassionate view of the situation and concede that their decision is the only one possible, grievous though it may be to her. To underline the seriousness of his intent he declares he would have treated Agamemnon's son, Orestes, in the same way if he had been designated by fate.

Andromache's answer to this diplomatic address with its menace veiled in fine rhetoric, is not addressed to Ulysses, but to Astyanax (nate, 556 and 562).

19 See Boyle 1994:185 for an overview of the portrayal of Ulysses in Latin literature. Boyle goes on to remark, 'Sen.'s Ulysses plays against his own myth in the first half of the scene, being forthright, sympathetic, apologetic, justificatory, credulous and crudely threatening, until at 607ff. he resumes his mythic character, his inscribed and prescribed self.' This judgement seems unconvincing as the scene contains so much pretence; it seems more likely that Seneca meant his audience to see that Ulysses chose to present himself in this seemingly openhearted way at the outset of his meeting with Andromache as the most effective approach. Ahl 1986:39 seems to me closer to a persuasive assessment of this Ulysses: 'He adopts any persona or pose that suits his purpose at a given time.'
20 Seneca's condonation of Nero's murder of his mother is a prime example. This and other instances where Seneca found some accommodation with Nero's excesses are amply described in Tacitus's Annals 13 and 14.
It is in the form of an impossible wish, that she knew where he was, and spins her projected plan to pretend that her son was killed in the night of destruction. This stratagem cuts no ice with Ulysses who abandons his fine words and reverts to the essence: ‘Stop pretending. It’s not easy for you to fool Ulysses ... give up your futile schemes. Where is your son?’ (568-71). By this change from flowery insincerities to cold reality, Seneca creates a convincing portrait of how a statesman with Ulysses’s experience and expertise would act. When Andromache counters this aggressive approach by questions of her own about the Trojan dead, Ulysses threatens to torture her to get to the truth, but she meets this menace with a typically Senecan assertion that death would be a boon. Andromache presents a courageous front and challenges the Greeks to do their worst because, although they are the victors, she knows that they are afraid (586). This insight given to Andromache by Seneca is another of her weapons.

Since the tactics of intimidation prove a failure, Ulysses tries frankness. He admits that he has his own personal grounds for supporting the Greek decision: to ensure that Telemachus will not one day have to fight a second Trojan war.

Andromache not only reacts to Ulysses’s ploys but takes the initiative: in 594-97 she takes the pretence that she thinks Astyanax is dead further by stating positively that he has died. When Ulysses demands proof she keeps up the lie with a bold ambiguity: ‘he lies among the dead’ (603). This is the turning point of the contest. It seems as if Andromache’s stratagem has worked and Ulysses believes her. But then, in a finely executed psychological interpretation, Seneca has him pause and reflect on what he has just accepted (607-18). Ulysses’s thoughts would be spoken as an aside to the audience before he turns to Andromache again with a new scheme in mind, based on his observation that although she shows the signs of distress of a grieving mother, she is also anxious and afraid. By logical deduction he concludes that Astyanax must still be alive, and then proceeds to try to trap Andromache into admitting the truth and revealing her son’s hiding-place.

The methods Seneca has Ulysses using are as callously clever as they are effective: he congratulates her that her son is dead and has escaped the sentence of being hurled from the only tower of Troy still standing. He interprets her trembling at this terrible prospect as a sign that his deduction is correct and quickly instructs his soldiers to search for the child. He completes the act by feigning to congratulate a soldier for discovering the

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21 Other Senecan characters who pray for or welcome death as a release include Phaedra in Ph. 711-12, Amphitryon in HF 509-10, Electra in Ag. 994-96 and indeed Hecuba in the Tm. 1171.
child. Andromache's instinctive reaction of fright indicates that Ulysses is beginning to gain the upper hand. To exploit her distress Ulysses then attacks another point where she is vulnerable, her devotion to Hector. He tells Andromache that Calchas has proposed an alternative way of appeasing the sea, by scattering Hector's ashes on the waves and by flattening his tomb. On reflection it might have become clear to Andromache that this was nothing more than an invention. Desecrating a tomb would be most impious and the gods would be unlikely to be propitiated in this way. However, in the fraught tension of Ulysses's relentless harassment she does not have time to reflect, but has to face the new dilemma. Her struggle to decide between saving Hector's tomb and his remains, or her living child, is the crueler because there is actually no choice for her. Both alternatives will result in her son's death. She tries delaying tactics as Ulysses intensifies his bullying bluff of razing the tomb (663-80), and even tries to prevent them physically from approaching the tomb while she calls on Hector's help. In the end, Andromache chooses the option that seems to give a glimmer of a possibility of persuading Ulysses to relent (686-91). She then makes a supreme effort to sway him, even pleading before him by his humanity and his love for his own wife and son. This makes it clear that Astyanax is still alive and Ulysses does not hesitate to demand that she produce him (704).

Seneca intensifies the emotional stress of the moment by changing the dialogue metre of iambic trimeters, and having Andromache sing her summons to her son to come out of the tomb as an anapaestic monody. Ulysses admits that her plea is moving, but he will not give way. This leads Andromache to a renewed rhetorical outburst: she fires a series of rhetorical questions, but Ulysses responds by refusing to accept responsibility. It is Calchas, not he, who is rejecting her pleas. The theatrical qualities of this scene with its movements of increased tension and suspense building up again and again are continued as Andromache turns to personal attack and insults Ulysses as a master of deceit, not brave enough to fight in open battle with his peers, but willing to take on a boy. Ulysses refuses to give way to the taunts, but grants her request for a delay to take leave of her son.

Andromache's quality as a mother in this play has been criticised, and it is remarkable that not once does she call her son by his name or add any endearment in speaking to him or of him. The name Astyanax is not used in the play at all. Andromache's love for her son is evident in her struggle to

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22 Ahl 1986:37-38 notes that Andromache is totally focused on her dead husband. When her son is being led away to his death, she kisses his cloak in case a trace of Hector's ashes remains there. Although she claimed that Astyanax is her only reason for living, she does not contemplate suicide after his death.
save his life. The crisis situation calls for action, not sentiment. When Andromache first mentions Astyanax, and that he is the sole reason for her to stay alive (419-23), she uses only the pronoun hic, ‘this one here’, which, in performance, would be accompanied by a gesture pointing him out. Andromache’s most frequent way of addressing him is as ‘son’, nate (461, 469, 503, 556). She also identifies Astyanax by means of concepts such as magni certa progenies patri, ‘true descendant of a great father’ (461), spes una Phrygibus, ‘only hope for the Phrygians’ (462), vateris suboles sanguinis nimium incola, ‘too famous offspring of ancient blood’ (463) or by association with his father: nimiumque patri similis, ‘too much like your father’ (464). When Andromache tries to convince Ulysses that Astyanax is indeed dead, she does not say, ‘my child is dead’, but Hectoris pro/es obit, ‘Hector’s offspring has died’ (597). Why does she exclude herself in this way? The reason why the Greeks want Astyanax is precisely because he is Hector’s child. If he were the child of Andromache and an ordinary man, he would be safe. Further, it is also part of the elevated style of the drama to use the ‘grand’ designations for characters of noble blood, and the ‘epic’ noun pro/es, like progenies and suboles, is suitable in the context.

In her leavetaking of Astyanax which is cast in the form of a lament as if he were dead, Seneca has deployed a highly rhetorical style to underline not only the pathos of the cruel death of a young child, but also the final extinction of Trojan hope. The closest his mother comes to an endearment is when she calls him dulce pignus, but this is in the context of further concepts that define him as Troy’s last hope and the last obstacle to the completion of the victory of the Greeks (766-68):

\[ O \textit{dulce pignus, o decus lapsae domus} \\
\textit{summumque Troiae finum, o Danaum timor,} \\
\textit{generis et spes vera \ldots} \]

\[ O \text{ sweet bond, o glory of our fallen house} \\
\text{and final death of Troy, o fear of the Greeks,} \\
\text{o vain hope of your mother \ldots} \]

The anaphora of ‘o’, which is a marker of elevated apostrophe and high emotion, is here used to describe her son’s qualities both as part of her

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23 Significantly the words reported by Andromache to have been spoken by Hector’s shade urging her to save Astyanax, although they include another ‘epic’ term for child, stirps, show more warmth by the use of a possessive adjective and a diminutive adjective which both have overtones of affection: nostrae parvulam stirpem dominus, ‘the dear little son/ offspring of our house’ (456).
family and also as Troy’s last defence against total annihilation by the Greeks. These lines indicate that it is impossible for this Andromache to see her son detached from his iconic status as son of Troy’s champion, Hector, grandson of Troy’s king, Priam, and Troy’s only hope of future greatness. It is impossible for Andromache to treat her son simply as an ordinary mother would treat her son. He is what remains of Troy, and she is the only one who can defend him and keep Troy’s future alive. In the highly charged moments where she is taking her final leave of her little son before he is led off to his execution, she calls him puer, ‘child’ (799), which is less formal than natus. Her words are cast in the form of a funeral lament as she mentions the customary funerary gifts of kisses (oscula), tears (fletus) and torn hairlocks (laceros crines) (799-800):

... oscula et fletus, puer,
laceosque crines occipe et plenus mei succurra patri.

... Take these kisses, and tears, my child,
and my torn hair and, filled with me, go to meet your father.

The sorrow of a parent grieving for the loss of a child is poignantly deepened by the fact that the child is still alive and that his mother is powerless to prevent his death.

The pathos is enhanced by the sudden speech of Astyanax, who is silent for the rest of his appearance, and by his words: Miserere, mater (792), ‘Have pity on me, mother.’ That he appeals not to Ulysses who is in control, but to his mother, shows Seneca’s psychological insight into the world of the child. The bigger reality, the political situation that Andromache and Ulysses are caught in, does not exist for him.

Andromache’s appeal to the little boy’s patriotism (790-91) would likewise pass him by. The poignancy of the death rites, the tears, lock of hair and kisses, enacted with a living child are not only a token of Andromache’s grief, but also a reproach to the Greeks. The only comfort and encouragement his mother offers him is that he will rejoin his father and the Trojans who have gained freedom. The consolation of calling death freedom is as much to help her as mother as to give her son courage. The scene ends with Ulysses cutting short her lamentation and instructing the soldiers to remove the boy.
This scene with its wealth of role playing, its emotional outbursts and appeals, intellectual stratagems and tussles makes splendid theatre. It ends as the Trojan war ended, with the victory of the Greek side, but Andromache has incontestably put up a brave and clever fight and at times seemed to have the upper hand. At times Ulysses seems to show generous and sympathetic impulses, but with so much role playing involved, it is hard to judge whether it is to be interpreted as sincerity. Seneca has made skilful use of Ulysses's traditional attributes in this scene to add tension and psychological realism to the battle of wits. In order to create a worthy opponent for the wily Ithacan, Seneca has enriched the role of Andromache by adding new facets of resolution and resourcefulness to her traditional attributes of dignity, loyalty and endurance.

In the next act of Troades when Helen appears to lure Polyxena to her death with the pretence of marriage to Pyrrhus, it is Andromache who sees through the charade and forces Helen to admit the truth (888-902). Andromache deploys the experience she has gained in her contest with Ulysses to challenge Helen, to accuse her of bringing disaster to Troy. Her sarcastic assessment of the situation forces Helen to reveal what is in store, not only for Polyxena, but for all the surviving Trojan women. The leadership skills Andromache displays in this scene are of the same kind that enabled her to pit her wits against Ulysses, a leader acknowledged for his ingenuity.

Andromache also displays remarkable fortitude in instructing the Messenger to describe in detail the brutal deaths of Astyanax and Polyxena. Her condemnation of the Greek savagery is scathing. When told that her son's body has been so mangled that it is barely recognisable she does not give way to extravagant grief, but merely remarks that in this too he is now like his father. The restrained dignity of her grief is consonant with Hecuba's unforgettable summary in the last scene of the play: considunt virgo ac puer: bellum peractum est (1167-68), 'the girl and boy have fallen; the war is over.'

While it may be argued that in Seneca's Troades Andromache's devotion to Hector still dominates her feelings, and that she does not display a warm

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24 It is noteworthy that the characters themselves draw attention to 'playing their roles', e.g. Ulysses in 569 and 614 and Andromache in 576 and 804. As Boyce 1994:190-91 notes, this is common with Senecan persona who thus, by referring to themselves in the third person, draw attention to their mythic figures and emphasise 'the self-conscious theatricality' of the plays. Notable here are especially Seneca's Medea with her threatening self-exhortation: Medea superest ('Medea is left', 166) and her resolute Medea sum sum ('Now I am Medea', 910) when she has decided on her method of vengeance.
maternal side, it is clear that that is not the role the playwright has given her. In this play she is the champion of what remains of Troy, the women and the children. In order to meet the challenge of outwitting one of the most redoubtable Greek leaders, who has the backing of the whole victorious Greek army, she has to control her feelings. On the face of it the odds are overwhelmingly against her. Yet she conducts a courageous campaign and nearly gets the better of the most guileful of the Greeks. Astyanax has become more than her son, he is the future of Troy and she has to strip herself of her personal emotions in order to fight for the collective future that will ensure the survival of the past.

Sancisi-Weerdenburg sees Seneca’s Andromache as a Roman matrona. Because Roman women of the elite often had to take over the role of the paterfamilias when men were on military service, there are many examples of Roman women who managed considerable estates. Seneca expanded the traditional depiction of Andromache by adding some of the attributes of a contemporary Roman woman, such as the ability to act in a constructive way in a testing situation.

An investigation of the rendering of Andromache in some later works clearly based on Seneca’s drama indicates to what extent his stronger depiction of Andromache prevailed against her previous mythical character.

25 Keulen 2001:290-91 has a summary of the reactions of scholars to the depiction of Andromache in the third act. It is notable that some do find her maternal side compassionate and moving.
27 The short epic Astyanax by the 15th century Italian poet, Maffeo Vegio, is based on Seneca’s Troades and especially on the third act. Putnam 2004 has detailed references to lines and scenes from Seneca’s Troades and Phaedra, as well as Virgilian echoes, which Vegio has adapted and incorporated into this epic. Vegio has introduced a divine dimension with Venus interceding on Astyanax’s behalf, only to be told that the fates cannot be opposed. However, in Jupiter’s promise to Venus that one Trojan, Aeneas, will survive (114), the poet makes explicit what would be implicit to readers of Seneca’s Troades: the future of the Trojans in Rome, founded by the descendants of Aeneas. While preserving the outlines of the plot of the play, the epic loses much of the fine characterisation of the drama. Ulysses is drawn as more brutal and Andromache, although she tries to put up some resistance, is weary and resigned to fate. Her lamentation for the death of her son, her husband and the ruin of Troy dominates the last part of the epic (261-309). This clearly puts the emphasis more on her suffering than on her resourcefulness and determination to resist.
Early French Tragedies

In the 16th century the French playwright Robert Garnier created *Troade*, a supersize tragedy of 2666 lines. This drama incorporated most of Seneca's *Troades* as well as substantial parts of Euripides's *Hecuba* and his *Troades*. Garnier kept most of the contest between Andromache and Ulysses. His version is for the most part a translation of the Latin. He has thus taken over much of Seneca's characterisation of Andromache, but softened it somewhat, especially in her interaction with Astyanax (1107-34), where she uses an abundance of maternal terms of endearment. 28 By adding an adaptation of Euripides's *Hecuba* as the final act and showing the punishment of Polyrmestor, Garnier made clear that those guilty of atrocities would not escape with impunity. This is said explicitly in Hecuba's closing lines of the drama (2663-66). Garnier's play may not have had much success with the public or critics, but it did provide inspiration for another French dramatist, Sallebray, who used the same title for his tragedy. Since Garnier's play had fallen out of fashion, Sallebray made liberal use of his predecessor's work, even copying whole verses from it. 29 An excellent edition of Sallebray's *Troade* 30 notes the important position of this work between Garnier and Racine, and points to its original interpretation of some aspects of the immediate aftermath of the fall of Troy.

Of special note is the way in which Sallebray transformed the character of Agamemnon. 31 He is partly inspired by the war-weary Agamemnon of Seneca's *Troades*, but is more humane in his concern for Astyanax and Polyxena, although a strong motive for his wish to preserve their lives is that he believes that this will improve his prospects of gaining the love of Cassandre. 32 The pair of 'amant-ennemi', or enemy-lovers, created by Sallebray would be further developed by Racine in his *Pyrrhus* and *Andromaque*. 33 The extended role of Cassandre has her taking over some of the actions of Seneca's Andromache. For instance, it is she who has the idea of

28 Such as 'mon mignon, mon cher soleil, ma chere ame, mon enfant, mon amour' (accents omitted in the original).
29 Lebègue 1952:252 notes the lines taken over by Sallebray in his edition of Garnier's play.
31 Racine seems to have partly modelled his gentler Pyrrhus on the way Agamemnon is represented by Seneca and by Sallebray.
32 Sallebray's depiction of Agamemnon seems also to be inspired by Euripides's *Hecuba*, where Agamemnon repeatedly softens his attitude to the Trojans because of his passion for Cassandra.
hiding Astyanax in his father’s tomb. Because Cassandre has promised to intercede with Agamemnon to save Astyanax and Polyxena, Sallebray has modified the role of Andromaque in the scene with Ulysse. Sallebray’s Andromaque loses some of the self-reliance of her Senecan predecessor. The expanded role of Cassandre results in Sallebray’s Andromaque being more fearful and impractical, but, in the last act she is one of the Trojan women who joins Hecuba in blinding Polymestor. This rather uncharacteristic action is ascribed by Phillippo & Supple to Sallebray’s Andromaque developing through suffering, but it may also be an attempt to give the play greater unity by extending the role of Andromaque.

Sallebray’s treatment of the aftermath of the Trojan war forms a bridge between Garnier’s play, which is more closely modelled on the ancient works, and that of Racine who drew inspiration for his own radical transformation from the ancient plays and poems as well as the plays of his French predecessors.

Racine’s Andromaque

Racine’s Andromaque has a plot that hinges on the survival of Astyanax. Racine’s thorough knowledge of Greek and Latin literature enabled him to combine elements and ideas from a multiplicity of sources, amongst which Seneca’s Troades. He invented much of the background story to the play, Pyrrhus’s love for Andromaque, Hermione’s love for Pyrrhus, and Oreste’s political mission. Racine combined these disparate ingredients into a drama which respected the conventions of its time, such as the three unities and conformity to the bienséances.

In the first preface Racine quotes Aeneid 3.292-93, 301, 303-05, 320-28, 330-32 and states that these verses contain the subject of his tragedy. Although these lines indicate the principal characters and the setting, Hermione’s jealousy and rages have been inspired by Euripides’s depiction while Racine has moderated the ferocity of Pyrrhus depicted in the second

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34 Phillippo & Supple 1995:xxvi-xix have a detailed analysis of how Sallebray made use of material from the plays of Seneca and Garnier and how Andromaque’s role is altered by the enlarged role of Cassandre.
36 Phillippo & Supple 1995 indicate in their notes (95-109) where Sallebray has made use of Garnier and where Racine has made use of Sallebray.
37 Knight & Barnwell 1977:8-27 discuss the different ancient works as well as French literature that influenced Racine.
38 In Knight & Barnwell 1977:57-61.
book of the *Aeneid* and in Seneca’s *Troades*. In his second preface\(^\text{39}\) to *Andromaque* six years later, Racine adds a further explanation for differences between the characters and plot of his play and that of Euripides’s *Andromache*. The most striking change is that Racine has elected ‘to let Astyanax live a little longer.’ This is quite fundamental for Racine’s conception of the play. His *Andromache* still has a living bond to Hector; she has not had a child by another man. By choosing to preserve the family as they are at the end of the *Iliad*, Hector killed, but his widow and son surviving, Racine felt that he was conforming to the idea that his contemporaries had of *Andromache*: ‘Most of those who have heard of Andromache hardly know of her otherwise than as Hector’s widow and Astyanax’s mother. It is not considered suitable that she should love another husband or another son. And I doubt whether Andromache’s tears would have made the impression they did on my spectators if they had flowed for another son than the one she had from Hector.’ Racine’s first reason for the change is thus to shape his drama to the expectations of his period. He adds a further patriotic motive by referring to the precedent of Astyanax’s survival in Ronsard’s epic, the *Franciade*, which cast him as the founder of the French monarchy. Ronsard of course changed the boy’s name, but identifies him as the son of Hector and Andromache. Last, but not least, Racine points to the fact that Euripides allowed himself similar liberties with the elements of mythical plots, and he cites the well-known example of the variant of the myth dramatised in *Helen* where Helen is represented as an innocent wife who never set foot in *Troy*. The prefaces illustrate that it was important to Racine to indicate to his contemporaries his awareness of the subtleties of ancient literature. At the same time they draw attention to the ways in which he departed from these sources and how his adaptation contributes to a new interpretation of the ancient material.

The choice to have Astyanax as the son threatened with death thus replicates the situation in Seneca’s tragedy, although it is set a year after the fall of *Troy*.\(^\text{40}\) In *Andromaque* Racine explains Astyanax’s survival as the result of his mother tricking Ulysses by substituting another boy who was executed (73-76). This is an indication that Racine has maintained the resourcefulness characteristic of Seneca’s *Andromache*. However, the situation surrounding the threat to the life of Astyanax is considerably more complex than in any of the ancient dramas. In *Buthrotum* in Epirus the king, Pyrrhus, is

\(^{39}\) In Knight & Barnwell 1977:203-06 (my translation).

\(^{40}\) ‘Ah! si du fils d’Hector la perte était jurée, / Pourquoi d’un an entier l’avons-nous différé?’ (205-06): ‘Ah! If the death of Hector’s son were sworn, / Why did you wait until a year was by?’ (tr. Cairncross.)
betrothed to Hermione, daughter of Menelaus and Helen, but is in love with his captive, Andromaque. Andromaque, however, is faithful to Hector’s memory and spurns the marriage offer of Pyrrhus. Hermione is in love with Pyrrhus, but because she is passed over by him in Andromaque’s favour, she is determined to punish Andromaque and enlists the aid of Oreste, who is in love with her. Oreste has arrived in Epirus as envoy from the Greeks to warn Pyrrhus that Hector’s son must be eliminated as he will always be a menace to Greece. In addition, Pyrrhus should marry Hermione as has been arranged.

It is clear that the elaborate love intrigues complicate the plot considerably and diffuse the focus of attention. Racine develops the action in such a way that Andromaque’s struggle is no longer one against an external foe who has the power of life and death over Astyanax. She herself has that power,41 for, if she agrees to marry Pyrrhus, he will spare her son. Andromaque therefore has to make a choice between loyalty to the memory of Hector and the life of Astyanax.

The character of Pyrrhus has been softened and he has become a man of honour. His ambition is to take Hector’s place in Andromaque’s heart. Like Agamemnon in Sallebray’s Troade, Pyrrhus, in true seventeenth-century style, has become a suitor hoping to win the woman he loves. Nevertheless, he does treat Andromaque harshly when she shows reluctance to marry him. The fact that in this play Andromaque has a choice, is a remarkable departure from the ancient versions. Central to the play are the limits of political power. Although Pyrrhus is king he cannot force Andromache to love him. This underlying theme leads to a very different play that reflects the preoccupations of the literature of seventeenth-century France.

Andromaque herself is marked by her devotion to Hector. She also has moral scruples against marrying the killer of so many Trojans (1009). When Andromaque pleads with Hermione to intercede with Pyrrhus to spare Astyanax, she is cruelly rebuffed. Andromaque finds the solution to her conflict when visiting Hector’s tomb; she will marry Pyrrhus which will oblige him to protect Astyanax. She will then commit suicide in order not to betray Hector. Andromaque refers to her ingenious scheme as an ‘innocent trick’.42 The reasoning Andromaque employs here may be of dubious morality, but arguably she shows a resourcefulness similar to that of Seneca’s

41 In Eur. Andr. Andromache also has a choice. She can sacrifice her own life in order to save her son. This may have inspired Racine’s development of Andromaque’s solution of saving her son.
42 ‘l’innocent stratagème’, 1097.
Andromache. She has adapted to the circumstances and found a plan to ensure the survival of her son.

Racine has created characters who cannot control or even imagine the outcome of their plans and decisions. At the start of the fifth act Pyrrhus expects happiness because he is to marry Andromaque, in reality, and to the spectators’ knowledge, he will face either Andromaque’s suicide or Oreste’s dagger. Andromache expects to die, but is saved. Hermione awaits news that Oreste has carried out her request to kill Pyrrhus, but when she hears from Oreste that other Greeks have carried out the assassination and that it was his example that encouraged them, she rejects Oreste and disowns her instruction to him. Oreste expects to be rewarded for an act which he undertook unwillingly, but is savagely reproached and loses his mind. The expectations of all the principal characters are confounded in the last act.

At the beginning of the play Andromaque was a helpless captive, but at its end she has gained royal power, her loyalty to Hector has not been broken and Astyanax’s life has been saved, while all the other characters who had believed that they were in control of their own destiny are dead (Pyrrhus and Hermione) or mad (Oreste). The passion of these three characters is shown to be so potent that it turns destructive when thwarted. Andromaque, the only one of the principal characters who is not ‘in love’ but loving, has only 230 of the 1648 lines of the play, but they show her maternal love for Astyanax, her suffering because of the loss of Hector, and her steadfastness and dignity. She has to endure threats, attempts at coercion, the ultimatum of a devastatingly cruel decision and a forced marriage, but faces up to all with an unwavering commitment to her core values and loyalties. She is prepared to sacrifice her life to preserve her fidelity to Hector and to protect her son’s life.

Racine has moulded ingredients from Greek and Latin literature as well as earlier French plays into a tragedy consonant with the conventions and taste of his time. The element of pastoral galanterie of the earlier seventeenth century French plays of Rotrou and Corneille accounts for the lovers and their confidants, the murder and suicide of lovers, but the classical ingredients account for the suffering and remembrance of past suffering. As he indicated in his prefaces, Racine reserved the freedom to alter some of the mythic material in order to achieve the result he wanted.

It is notable that this Andromache does not want her son to achieve military glory (1119). In this regard she differs from her ancient counterparts who regret that Astyanax will not fulfil his potential in becoming a great warrior. However, in many other respects Racine has clearly modelled his

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Andromaque on the devotedly loving and loyal wife and mother of ancient literature with some added elements of the Senecan heroine: especially her indifference to threats and death and her ingenuity. Racine’s innovation is that, instead of an intensification of her loss and suffering, the dénouement of his drama rewards Andromaque’s loyalty to her husband’s memory and love for her son with power over those who have wronged her in the past and the preservation of her living link to Hector, her son Astyanax. In Oreste’s account to Hermione, Pyrrhus promised Andromaque his whole kingdom and that Astyanax would be king of the Trojans (1507-12):

> Je vous donne, a-t-il dit, ma couronne et ma foi:  
> Andromaque, régniez sur l’Épire et sur moi.  
> Je voue à votre fils une amitié de père;  
> J’en atteste les Dieux, je le jure à sa mère.  
> Pour tous mes ennemis je déclare les siens,  
> Et je le reconnais pour le roi des Troyens.

‘I give to you,’ he said, ‘my crown, my troth,  
Andromache, reign o’er this land and me,  
I will ensure your son a father’s care;  
The gods are witness of this oath to you.  
I here acknowledge all his foes as mine,  
And recognize him as the Trojans’ king.’

The end of Racine’s drama overturns the received tradition of the ancient literature and is the outcome of a fundamental reinterpretation of the aftermath of the Trojan war. Whereas Seneca’s Troades is an anti-war play, showing the suffering of even the innocent associated with it, and where Andromache, a good woman, is left bereft after a heroic struggle, Racine engages the war theme more indirectly. Barthes’s interpretation of Andromaque as showing the transition from an old to a new order provides an explanation for Racine’s rewriting of the ancient myth. Barthes sees Pyrrhus as the pivotal character who wants to abandon the old order, the Greek side of the Trojan war. He breaks his word to Hermione and disregards the Greeks’ demand that Astyanax should be eliminated, but he also forces Andromaque into an action which will change her clinging to the past. Pyrrhus’s bold action costs him his life and thus propels Andromaque and Astyanax into the new order. Andromaque accepts the legacy of Pyrrhus (1587-92):

Aux ordres d'Andromaque ici tout est soumis;
Ils la traitent en reine, et nous sommes ennemis.
Andromaque elle-même, à Pyrrhus si rebelle,
Lui rend tous les devoirs d'une veuve fidèle
Commande qu'on le venge, et peut-être sur nous
Veuve venger Troie encore et son premier époux.

Everything here bows to Andromache.
She is their queen, and we their enemies.
And she herself, so heartless to the king,
Renders him all a faithful widow's dues,
Commands them to avenge him, and perhaps
Seeks to avenge Hector and Troy on us.⁴⁶

These words spoken by Pylade to Oreste to try to persuade his distraught companion Oreste to leave, encapsulate the change, not only in Andromaque's position, but also in her attitude to Pyrrhus and his legacy. Pyrrhus's death, according to Barthes's analysis, did not set Andromaque free, but only initiated her into his world. She herself accepted this conversion and consequently freed herself. This is indicated in lines 1587-92 quoted above. Andromaque becomes the widow of Pyrrhus as well as of Hector and has accepted that position. While Racine set out, according to his prefaces, to preserve the traditional associations of the mythical Andromache, his adaptation results in a more nuanced and adaptable heroine who has the freedom to act as well as to suffer.

The triumph of Racine's Andromaque and the legacy as ruler that awaits Astyanax were influenced by the adoption of the Trojan myth as a French foundation myth by some French authors. Conversely, the outcome of Seneca's Troades, where Andromache and the other Trojan women face a bleak future of enslavement and exploitation, and where Trojan civilisation seems to be effectively destroyed, has been read to imply Seneca's criticism of contemporary Rome, where the Julio-Claudian dynasty traced their origin back to the royal house of Troy. Boyle argues that the uncertainty about the date of Seneca's Troades does not preclude it from being applied to the contemporary regime in Rome.⁴⁷ The myth of Rome as Troy reborn was so firmly established in Latin literature and apparent in Roman public monuments and events, for instance the Troiae lusus or 'Troy game' Andromache refers to in Tro. 778, that the relevance would be inescapable. This interpretation of the Troades and the end of Trojan civilisation indicating the

imminent demise of the new Troy, Rome, is difficult to accept. It makes better sense to read the play as a general indictment of the futility of war, the unjust suffering caused by it, and the fickleness of fate which from one day to the next can destroy happiness and security. The suffering and loss not only of Andromache, but also of Hecuba, who frames Seneca's tragedy with her appearance in the first and last acts, underscores this. The uncertainties of power and high office are further emphasized by the presentation of an Agamemnon who is all too aware that the Greek triumph may not be permanent (258-66):

Violenta nemo imperia continuit ait,  
moderata durant; quoque Fortuna altius  
evexit ac levavit humanar apes,  
boc se magis supprimere felicem deset  
variosque causae tremere metuentem deos  
nimium faventes, magna momento obrui  
vincendo didici. Troia nos timidos jacit  
nimium ac feraces? stamus hoc Danai loco,  
unde illa ceedit.

No one holds on to power for long by violence, but power exercised with moderation endures; the higher Fortune exalts and raises human might, the more it becomes the fortunate to humble themselves and, fearful of the gods when they are too favourable, tremble at the uncertainty of events. I have learnt through conquering that greatness is crushed in a moment. Does Troy make us overweening and brutal? We Danaans stand in the very place from which she has fallen.

Amidst the disillusion and affliction, the positives emerging from the play are the attitudes of the two children killed by the Greeks. Their spirited refusal to submit to their savage conquerors and show fear in the face of death, reveals bravery similar to that which Seneca's Andromache displays in her contest with Ulysses. Fortitude in the face of disaster is the hallmark of the Stoic. Although Seneca did not rewrite the myth, as Racine was to do, his Andromache perhaps foreshadows the ultimate conquest of the Greeks by the Trojans through their descendants, the Romans. Seneca's audience would be reading this tragedy in the light of Rome as the new Troy. In that sense the cyclical nature of victory and defeat could be seen to apply to them as much as to the erstwhile conquerors of Troy.

The heroic Andromache of Seneca's play would, however, ultimately triumph on Racine's stage and save her son for future greatness as the ancestor of French kings.
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