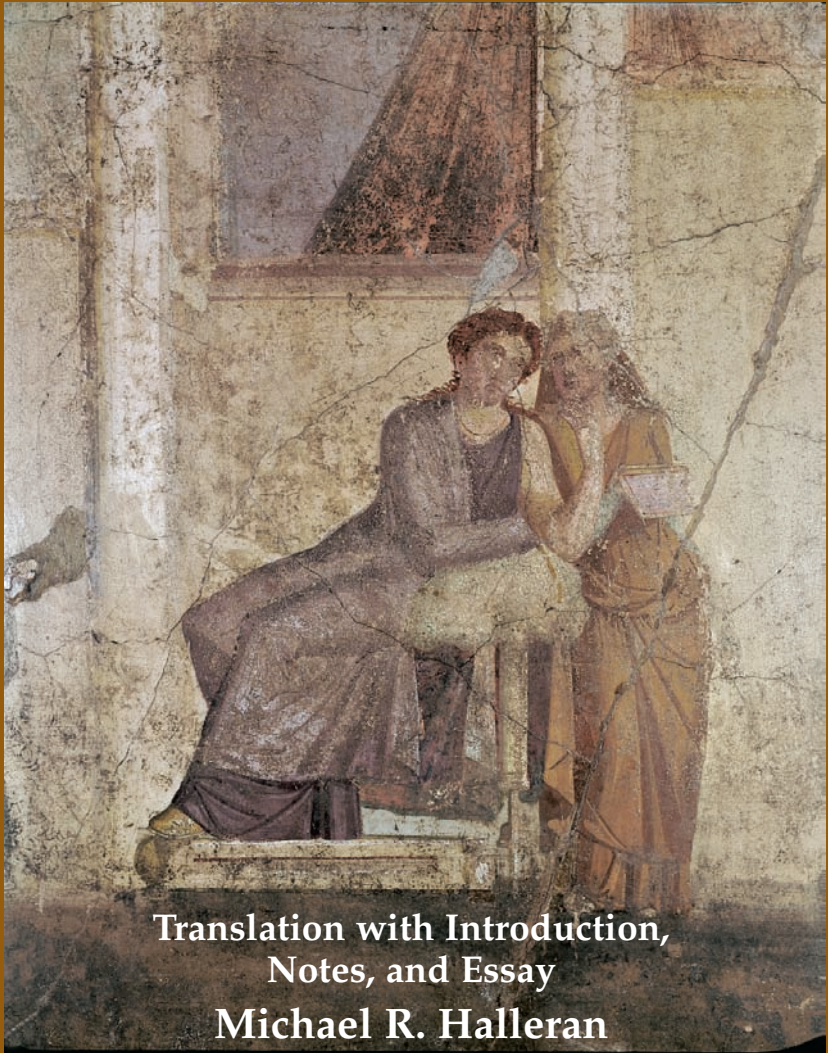


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# EURIPIDES' HIPPOLYTUS



Translation with Introduction,  
Notes, and Essay

Michael R. Halleran

**EURIPIDES' HIPPOLYTUS**  
**TRANSLATION WITH NOTES,**  
**INTRODUCTION AND ESSAY**

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## Preface

In 1995 I published *Euripides: Hippolytus, with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Aris and Philips: Warminster). That book, with Greek text, English translation, and detailed commentary, was meant for a dual audience, both those with a knowledge of Greek and those without. The present work is derivative of that earlier one—and different from it in several ways.

The translation has been revised in hundreds of places. Most of the changes are slight, made in an effort to produce a more fluid rendering, while preserving, in the style of this series, the shape, images, and texture of the Greek. The use of line-end throughout is an attempt to approximate the structure of the Greek verse and should not be construed as an effort at English poetry. James Diggle, following the path-breaking work of W. S. Barrett, published an excellent text, with full apparatus, of the play (Oxford 1984). This translation follows that text except in about a dozen places, which are discussed in my 1995 edition. Square brackets ([ ]) surrounding a word, phrase or line(s) suggest that, although found in the manuscripts of this play, the bracketed text is thought by scholars to be spurious. Conversely, slanted brackets (< >) indicate that the translated words are not found in the ancient texts but are the supplements of later scholars. In a handful of places a tilde (~) suggests that the text as transmitted does not make good sense and the “translation” is makeshift. Stage directions, in the text and at times elaborated in the notes, are not found in the original manuscripts but are inferences from our knowledge of ancient stage practice.

The notes for this edition are brief and geared towards the reader coming to the play without any specialized background. They aim to supply basic information on mythological, cultural and literary issues in an effort to bridge the gaps between the worlds of fifth-century Athenians and twenty-first century Anglophone readers. Similarly, the introductory materials, modified from the earlier edition of *Hippolytus* and my edition of *Heracles* in the Focus Classical Library series, seek to locate the play in its mythological, cultural and literary contexts.

A book reaches completion only with the help of others. I begin by

thanking all those who offered suggestions, advice and corrections on my 1995 *Hippolytus* commentary, and especially Chris Collard, the series editor. In developing this book for the Focus Classical Library, I benefited from the valuable suggestions of the Focus Classical Library editors, Jim Clauss and Albert Keith Whitaker. In preparing the final copy, Ron Kline and Alicia Palacio provided valuable assistance. My colleagues in the Dean's Office have created a wonderful environment in which to pursue common educational visions (and even to carry on some work in Classics). Ron Pullins, the impresario of Focus since its inception, has been a great supporter of the Classics and Classicists for many years now, and I take this opportunity to thank him for his support and friendship. Finally, and as always, my greatest thanks go happily to my wife and family. Erin Halleran read and improved the entire manuscript with her customary unerring judgment, and our children, Rebecca, Tom, and Andy, continue to complete and gladden our lives. To Erin, Rebecca, Tom, and Andy, I offer this book with admiration, gratitude and love.

MRH  
University of Washington  
November 2, 2000

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# Hippolytus

## CHARACTERS

APHRODITE

HIPPOLYTUS

ATTENDANTS OF HIPPOLYTUS

SERVANT

CHORUS OF TROZENIAN WOMEN

NURSE

PHAEDRA

THESEUS

MESSENGER

ARTEMIS

*Aphrodite enters from one of the eisodoi.*

### Aphrodite

I am powerful and not without a name among mortals  
and within the heavens. I am called the goddess Cypris.

---

**Setting:** The play is set in Trozen, with the *skene* building representing the palace. Statues of Aphrodite and Artemis stand on opposite sides of the acting area.

**Aphrodite enters:** Euripides always opened his plays with an expository speech laying out the drama's background. When a divine character delivers the prologue, as is the case here, the references to the future create an irony in which the audience knows what awaits the play's mortals characters but the latter do not. Aphrodite may have appeared on the roof of the *skene* building or at ground level. In either case, like the other divine characters who deliver the prologues in Euripides' plays, she makes no direct contact with the mortal characters and departs before Hippolytus arrives.

- 1: **powerful:** Aphrodite's power is announced at the very outset, the first word in the Greek text.
- 2: **Cypris:** A common name, especially in poetry, for Aphrodite, reflecting her association with the island of Cyprus.

Of those who dwell within Pontus  
and the boundaries of Atlas and see the light of the sun,  
I treat well those who revere my power, 5  
but I trip up those who are proud towards me.  
For this principle holds among the race of the gods also:  
they enjoy being honored by mortals.  
I shall now show you the truth of these words:  
Theseus' son, Hippolytus, the Amazon's offspring, 10  
reared by pure Pittheus—  
he alone of the citizens of this land of Trozen  
says that I am by nature the most vile of divinities.  
He spurns the bed and doesn't touch marriage, 15  
but honors Apollo's sister, Artemis,  
the daughter of Zeus, considering her the greatest of divinities.  
Always consorting with the virgin through the green wood,  
he rides the land of beasts with swift dogs,  
having come upon a more than mortal companionship.  
I don't begrudge them these things; why should I? 20  
But I will punish Hippolytus this day  
for the wrongs he has done me. I won't need much toil,  
since long before this I prepared most of what has to be done.  
When he once came from Pittheus' house  
to the land of Pandion for viewing the rites  
at the holy Mysteries, his father's noble wife 25

- 3-4: **Pontus . . . boundaries of Atlas:** the Black Sea and Straits of Gibraltar respectively, that is, from the ancient Greeks' perspective the eastern and western limits of the known world.
- 10: **Amazon's offspring:** nowhere in the play is Hippolytus' mother named. What is emphasized consistently is that he is a bastard, the illegitimate offspring of Theseus and the (non-Greek) Amazon.
- 11: **Pittheus:** Hippolytus' paternal great-grandfather; his daughter Aethra was Theseus' mother.
- 14: Remarkably what Aphrodite demands from Hippolytus is not simply ritual observance, but his participation in her realm, the world of sex and marriage.
- 17: **consorting:** The word, often used in a sexual sense, suggests the unnaturalness (from Aphrodite's viewpoint) of this association.
- 24: **land of Pandion:** Athens, as Pandion was one of the city's legendary kings.
- 25: **Mysteries:** These were the rites celebrated at Eleusis, outside of Athens, in honor of the goddess Demeter. This detail suggests Hippolytus' religious piety while offering a plausible motive for his visit to Athens.

No play of Euripides is more admired than *Hippolytus*. The tale of a married woman stirred to passion for a younger man was traditional, but Euripides modified this story and blended it with one of divine vengeance to create a masterpiece of tension, pathos, and dramatic power. In this play, Phaedra fights nobly but unsuccessfully against her desire for her stepson Hippolytus, while the young man risks his life to keep her passion secret. Both of them, constrained by the overwhelming force of divine power and human ignorance, choose to die in order to maintain their virtue and their good names.

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