

HECUBA

QUEEN OF TROY



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University of Southern California

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a bronze sculpture of a woman, identified as Hecuba. The sculpture is rendered in a realistic style with visible patina and texture. The woman's head is tilted slightly to the left, and her eyes are closed. Her right hand is raised, with fingers gently touching the back of her neck and hair. The hair is styled in thick, wavy curls. A broad, flat ribbon or band is draped across her chest, featuring the letters 'ES' in a stylized, raised font. The background is a mottled, textured surface, possibly a wall or another part of the sculpture, with shades of green, brown, and red. In the top right corner, there is a red rectangular box containing white text.

Hecuba symbolizes gender equality at USC and captures the diversity of the Trojan Family.

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF TROY

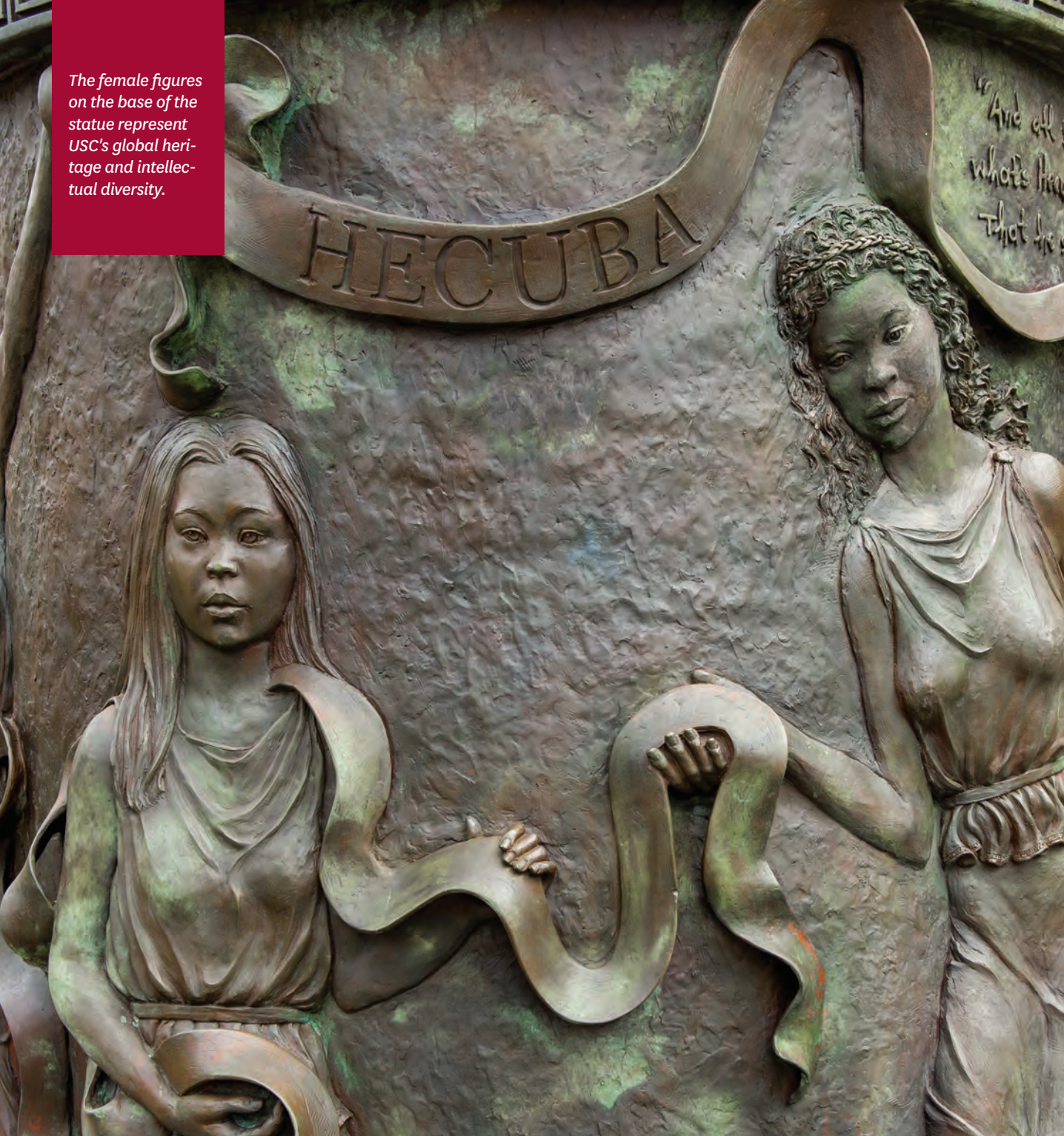
In Hecuba, the university community gains a female counterpart to its beloved Tommy Trojan. Hecuba symbolizes gender equality at USC and captures the diversity of our Trojan Family. As the majestic Queen of Troy, she serves as a new mythical icon for USC defined by passionate conviction.

For President C. L. Max Nikias and the rest of Trojan Family, she epitomizes the strength, courage and wisdom of the women of Troy,

while strongly affirming USC's extraordinary cultural diversity.

First Lady Niki C. Nikias also recognizes a special kinship that connects the ancient Queen of Troy and the modern Trojan woman. She observes that “in the decades that Max and I have been at USC, we have seen the loyal spirit of Hecuba alive here within the Trojan Family”—a spirit guiding USC into a new, glorious era.

The female figures on the base of the statue represent USC's global heritage and intellectual diversity.



USC OF THE 21ST CENTURY

At the base of Hecuba, rendered in relief, six female figures salute the rich ethnic diversity of the USC community. These women represent the Trojan Family's global heritage: they are African, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and Native American.

The figures also symbolize the intellectual diversity of USC, as each embodies an academic discipline: the humanities and the sciences,

medicine and technology, the arts and the social sciences.

A ribbon flows through the entire scene, poetically joining the six women in the common bonds of humanity that unite all Trojans. In this, we recognize a powerful commitment to the women of Troy, and a reflection of our Trojan Family's diversity. This defines the University of Southern California in the 21st century.



The faces of Hecuba, the mythical Queen of Troy. In each of these forms, she represents the wisdom and strength of the classical heroine.

Left: Hecuba and Polyxena by Merry-Joseph Blondel (France, c. 1814) is part of the European painting collection at LACMA; Right: Hecuba watercolor interpretation by USC graduate student Yasmin Davis; Bottom: Hecuba from the "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum," a collection of short biographies of historical figures with fanciful portraits in the form of coins, published by Guillaume Rouillé in 1553.



*Raised among
contemporary
traditions,
Christopher
Slatoff cultivated
an interest in the
human figure.*



CHRISTOPHER SLATOFF: MODERN MYTHMAKING

The larger-than-life works of sculptor Christopher Slatoff testify to his passion for engaging people through immersive artistic experiences. His public art installations appear on three continents, including numerous pieces across California that pay tribute to the heritage and culture of the Golden State. At USC, he is known for creating the statue of the university's visionary founder, Judge Robert Maclay Widney, that stands near the entrance of Widney Alumni House. Unveiled in 2014, the Judge Widney monument quickly became a campus landmark.

The son of a painter and art professor, Slatoff studied in France and the United States before launching his career in Los Angeles. He currently serves on the faculty of the Art Center College of Design, in addition to his roles as a lecturer at the Getty Center, as the sculpture chairman of the California Art Club, and as an artist in residence at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has earned acclaim for his dedicated outreach efforts, including the establishment of art education programs for underserved communities and special needs children.

*Hecuba's facial
features were
delicately crafted
to evoke a com-
mon humanity.*



DESIGNING A SYMBOL FOR THE AGES

The statue of Hecuba epitomizes the compassionate spirit of the USC community, while reflecting the university's faith in knowledge and progress. The design of her face represents a blending of features seen across humanity. Its inspirations included ancient Greek vases, as well as Katherine Hepburn's portrayal of Hecuba in the 1971 film *The Trojan Women*.

After an extensive modeling and sculpting process, the statue was cast in bronze at the renowned Artworks Foundry in Berkeley, California. The following weeks brought meticulous alterations until the work was ready for its debut at the USC Village.



Slatoff drew inspiration from historical research and collaborated closely with President Nikias and Gayle Garner Roski, namesake of the USC Roski School of Art and Design, to create the statue's meticulously detailed elements.



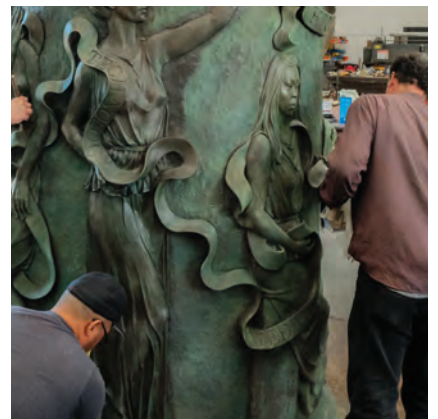
After months of modeling and sculpting, a life-size version of Hecuba was transported to a foundry in northern California and prepared for the casting process. Molten bronze was poured into pieces of a ceramic mold that were reassembled by welders.











Foundry workers applied a patina to give the monument an appropriately burnished look. The completed statue was swathed in a protective covering and carefully moved to USC ahead of its official unveiling.



*President Nikias
overseeing the
final installation of
the Hecuba statue
in the USC Village's
central piazza.*







The USC community gathered to mark the debut of a new Trojan icon.

A GRAND UNVEILING

In fall 2017, President Nikias formally unveiled the statue of Hecuba at the USC Village's grand opening celebration. With a dramatic flourish, the sculpture was revealed in the central piazza, capping a full day of festivities. Just hours earlier, USC had hosted its newest undergraduates and their families at its annual New Student Convocation.

Thousands of USC's students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni and trustees attended the ceremony, as well as supporters, community partners and special guests. Hecuba's introduction to the Trojan Family marked a major milestone in the university's history—a moment steeped in optimism for the future, and in the enduring power of the Trojan spirit.

*On a festive day
of celebration, the
spirit of Hecuba
was alive among
the Trojan Family.*





*With an
outstretched arm,
Hecuba invites
residents and
visitors alike into
the USC Village.*



CENTERPIECE OF A COMMUNITY

The creation of the USC Village presented an opportunity to connect the university's vibrant future with a storied past. With Hecuba, the Village has a striking centerpiece, a figure rooted in antiquity that reminds us of our timeless Trojan values.

With her right arm outstretched in a welcoming gesture, Hecuba invites Village residents and visitors into the diverse Trojan Family. As students return to their residential halls from a lecture, a study group or a meeting with friends, she reminds them of the warm, hospitable feeling of their home

away from home. Later, as generations of USC alumni return to campus, she will spark cherished memories of the most formative years of their lives.

It is only fitting that the woman at the center of the Trojan Empire stands as the focal point of USC's new academic, cultural and social crossroads. In addition to her function as a gathering place and a beacon for our community, her stately presence echoes the ancient ideals that continue to guide the university's young scholars.

No matter where USC's students eventually find themselves in the world, they all hold something in common: the love and support of their Trojan Family. And as the Queen of Troy instills them with strength, loyalty and pride, she ensures that they will always carry their *alma mater* in their hearts.

A CLOSER LOOK AT HECUBA

For those who look closely, the statue is rich in detail—and symbolism:

- Hecuba herself stands 12 feet tall, rising atop a pedestal that measures 9 feet tall. The entire silica bronze sculpture weighs nearly 2 tons.
- Six female figures appear in relief around the statue's base, each representing a different academic discipline: science, humanities, technology, medicine, social sciences and the arts. They are all joined together by a "ribbon of thought," which signifies the interconnectedness of ideas and the continuous pursuit of learning.
- Hecuba extends her right arm in a heartfelt appeal to the USC community, an embodiment of the steadfast Trojan Family.
- A quotation from *Hamlet* appears as an inscription on the pedestal, alongside a pair of lines from Euripides' *Hecuba*. The two excerpts from Euripides appear in Greek.

From *Hamlet*:

"And all for nothing, for Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?"

From *Hecuba*:

"Those who have power ought not exercise it wrongfully, nor when they are fortunate should they imagine that they will be so forever."

"Human words ought never to have more force than their doings."

Hecuba's right arm extends in a welcoming gesture, while her left hand rests above her heart, signaling a compassionate spirit.


Hecuba's face comprises a blending of features seen throughout humanity.



Six figures represent the continuous pursuit of knowledge in science, humanities, technology, medicine, social sciences and the arts. A nearby plaque notes that each of their faces represent the ethnic diversity of peoples “who span all continents and who come together in the New Troy today.”



Three inscriptions offer insight into Hecuba's timeless appeal. Two of them are lines spoken by Hecuba in the plays of Euripides, while the third comes from Hamlet.

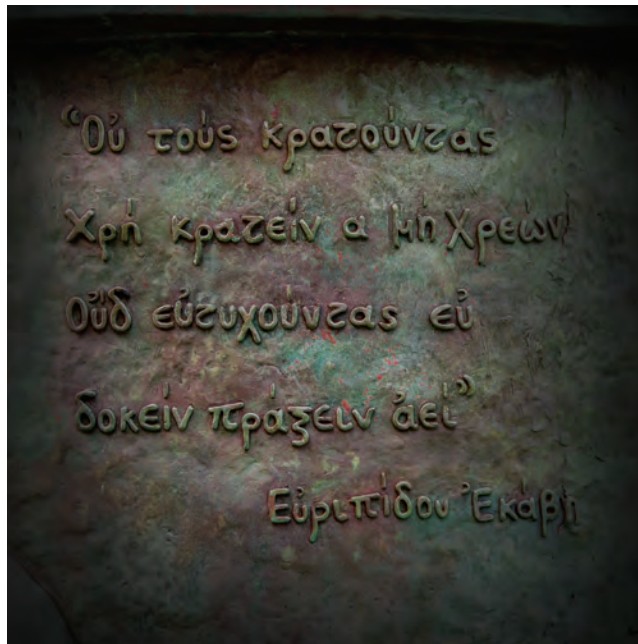


"And all for nothing, for Hecuba!
what's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her"

Shakespeare's Hamlet

To e or not to e?

There is something especially unique about one inscription on Hecuba's base: the spelling of Shakespeare. In omitting the final "e," the artist embraced a spelling that emerged in the 18th century. The choice generated much attention, but a Renaissance scholar in the United Kingdom affirmed the reasoning behind USC's decision. Indeed, Shakespeare's surname has been spelled 20 different ways over the ages. As the university's statement explained, "USC chose an older spelling because of the ancient feel of the statue, even though it is not the most common form."



‘Οὐ τοὺς κραζούντας

Χρὴ κρατεῖν αἰ μὴ χρεῶν

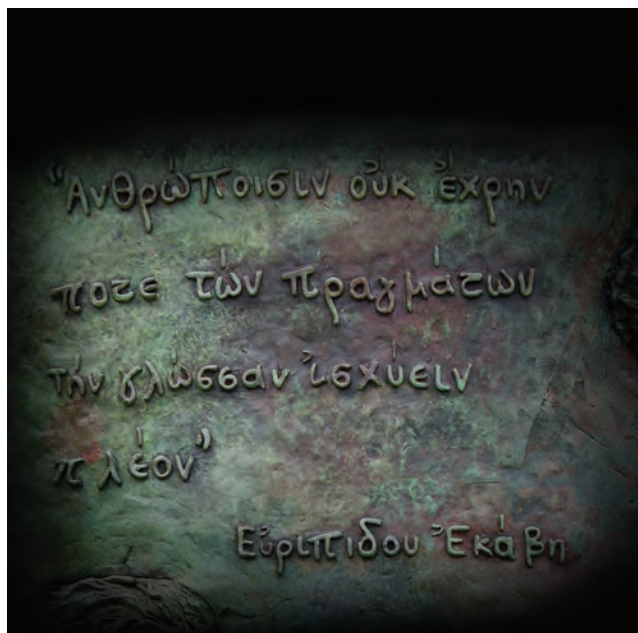
οὔδ’ εὐτυχούντας εὖ

δοκεῖν πράζειν αἰεὶ

Εὐριπίδου Ἑκάβη

*“Human words ought never to have
more force than their doings.”*

– Euripides, Hecuba



“Ἀνθρώποισιν οὐκ ἔχρην

ποτὲ τῶν πραγμάτων

τὴν γλῶσσαν ἰσχύειν

πλεόν”

Εὐριπίδου Ἑκάβη

*“Those who have power ought not
exercise it wrongfully, nor when
they are fortunate should they
imagine that they will be
so forever.”*

– Euripides, Hecuba



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