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AISTHESIS

Aisthesis is a student run publication, operating within the Stanford University Department of Classics. It takes its name from the Greek αἴσθησις, which denotes sense perception, cognition, or moral discernment. This journal is dedicated to showcasing exactly such judgment, as well as intellectual capacity and originality, and thus publishes only the most impressive undergraduate research in the field. For additional information, please visit us online at: <https://classics.stanford.edu/projects/aisthesis-undergraduate-journal>.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Our discipline is something of a collage. A Classicist, to write a truly remarkable paper, must employ the tools of the historian, the linguist, and the philosopher to consider the varied remnants of antiquity – be they sun-baked, crumbling marble columns or fragments of a song, passed down through the millennia. Classics calls upon students to employ every ability in their academic arsenal and rewards those who have the tenacity and patience to study earnestly with some of the most beautiful, thoughtful, and puzzling products of the human mind.

In this, the sixth edition of Stanford's Aisthesis, we are pleased to present you with four papers as diverse as they are fascinating. Each paper reflects the ingenuity and diligence of its author, as their interests and passions move through their writing. We hope that you enjoy reading them as much as we all did editing them.

In closing, I would like to thank the Stanford Department of Classics for their continued support, as well as the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU) for the funding that makes this endeavor possible. I would also like to commend and thank every student who submitted their work to the journal, and I would like to once again thank the Aisthesis student staff for their dedication and hard work. They are the proof that Classics is a collaborative effort.

Daniel Ruprecht

Editor-in-Chief

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CHTHONIC COMMUNITIES

THE EARTH AND BELONGING IN

ANTIGONE

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ABSTRACT

Right now, all over the world, communities are being ripped apart and stitched together, shattering from within, and arguing over blurred boundaries. Belonging is a complicated and confusing concept, one that never ceases to stir debate and conflict. This paper investigates how Sophocles' *Antigone* addresses the issues of community and belonging specifically with reference to the physical earth. I will discuss how the relationship of each character to the earth mirrors and deepens our understanding of their relationship to the Theban community. I'll also discuss the role of land in historical Athens, and how the play and history inform each other. The literature and history together display how Athenians conceptualized community and how they attempted to understand this very fuzzy idea by literally grounding it in the earth. This information is not just helpful for understanding life and experiences in ancient Athens though. It delves into the fundamentals of what brings groups of people together, how they define themselves, and how they attempt to maintain the group in a world of constant change and ambiguity.

CHTHONIC COMMUNITIES

THE EARTH AND BELONGING IN ANTIGONE

MICHELLE PLOUSE

The world is in a state of flux and rapid change. Communities are shifting at an unprecedented scale. There are currently over 50 million refugees worldwide, as well as another 33 million who are internally displaced.¹ The number of immigrants has grown 41% in the last 15 years, reaching 244 million in 2015.² This has sparked fierce political debates all over the world and unsettled the social fabric of countless nations. Meanwhile, civil rights movements for groups like African-Americans and women have challenged laws that make them unequal members of American society and the internet has created huge and significant communities of people that have never met in person. So much change and uncertainty causes many to wonder what a community is and what it means to belong. Sophocles, in the *Antigone*, also contemplated belonging and illustrated its complexity through his characters' relationship with the physical earth, in Greek—χθών or γῆ. Close analysis of the main characters' relationship to the land and the community, as well as legal and mythical evidence from Athens, reveals that in both the historical city and the drama belonging was grounded in the earth. This analysis has important implications not only for our understanding of Antigone, but also of the way Athenians constructed belonging, and the varied nature of belonging itself.

The drama, written by Sophocles in the mid-fifth century BCE, is set in the aftermath of the battle of the Seven Against Thebes. The two sons of Oedipus, Eteokles and Polyneices had been named co-kings of Thebes, but Eteokles quickly took full control of the city.

1 Adrian Edwards. "World Refugee Day: Global forced displacement tops 50 million for the first time in post-World War II era." *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency*. Last Modified June 20, 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html>.

2 "244 Million International Migrants Living Abroad Worldwide, New UN Statistics Reveal." *un.org*. Last Modified January 12th, 2016. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/01/244-million-international-migrants-living-abroad-worldwide-new-un-statistics-reveal/>.

Polyneices gathered supporters from Argos and attacked Thebes, where he and Eteokles killed each other in battle. The Thebeans buried Eteokles, but King Kreon declared that Polyneices should be left unburied and dishonored. The play opens with Polyneices' sister, Antigone, deciding to defy the king's orders and bury him. Kreon captures her and sentences her to death, at which point Kreon, Antigone, and the supporting characters debate Polyneices' burial and the concept of belonging. However, Kreon remains stubborn and sends Antigone to a cave to commit suicide. Antigone goes to her death just before Kreon realizes his mistake and finally buries Polyneices. By then it is too late, and Antigone's death has set off a string of suicides, leaving Kreon without his son or wife.

The clearest example of how the ground is essential to the construction of belonging in *Antigone* is the contrast between Eteokles and Polyneices. Their status as belonging or outcast is decided based on their actions toward the earth and relationship with it, and then that status is expressed via the earth as well. The play actually begins with the expression of their status, and addresses the stark contrast between the two brothers. The community of Thebes accepts and buries Eteokles well. Antigone tells Ismene that he is, “σὺν δίκης χρήσει...κατὰ χθονὸς ἔκρυψε, τοῖς ἔνερθεν ἔντιμον νεκροῖς,” (with the use of justice buried under the earth, honored by the dead underground).³ The living community members give him a just and lawful burial, following their traditions for every dead member of the community. His placement under the earth is a sign of respect from those above and allows him to enter the connected community of the dead who honor him as well.

Polyneices, on the other hand, receives no burial and Kreon in fact declares to the whole city that they must leave him, “ἄκλαντον, ἄταφον, οἰωνοῖς γλυκὺν θησαυρὸν εἰσορῶσι πρὸς χάριν βορᾶς,” (unwept, unburied, a sweet treasure to birds looking for food).⁴ The fact that the whole population must hear this announcement shows how community oriented this issue is; everyone needs to know that Polyneices no longer belongs to the community so that they can shut him out as a group. The prohibition on mourning shows that the community shouldn't care about him or miss him.

³ Sophocles, *Antigone*, ed. Nicolas P. Gross (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr Commentaries, 1988), 24-5. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Ibid., 29-30.

The birds and dogs are signs of disrespect as well, but they also have an element of wildness that's significant. The Thebans throw Polyneices to the wild and cast him out of the domestic sphere of the city/community of Thebes. All of these meanings are expressed through his relationship to the earth—that is, his lack of a proper burial. Land is central to the way that the community expresses who belongs and who they have cut out of the society.

The way that acceptance is gained or lost is tied to the ground as well, as Kreon and Antigone argue over Polyneices' fate and relationship to the earth. Kreon maintains that he is an enemy for attacking the land. Kreon states, “οὐτ’ ἂν φίλον ποτ’ ἄνδρα δυσμενῆ χθονὸς θείμην ἐμαυτῷ,” (I never would consider a friend a man hostile to my own earth) and then stresses this point again a few lines later:

Πολυνείκην...ὅς γῆν πατρώαν... ἡθέλησε μὲν πυρὶ πρῆσαι κατ’ ἄκρας...πόλει τῇδ’ ἐκκεκήρυκται τάφῳ μήτε κτερίζειν μήτε κωκῆσαι τίνα.

(It has been proclaimed to the city not to cover Polyneices in a tomb, who returning to his fatherland...wanted to burn it down from the heights, nor to bewail him).⁵

Here the refusal of burial is directly tied to Polyneices' violent actions against the land. Because he did not treat the earth well, he is to be cast out from it.

Antigone, however, has a different idea about how Polyneices relates to the earth. In the midst of a dramatic bout of stichomythia between the two characters Antigone says to Kreon, “οὐ γάρ τι δοῦλος, ἀλλ’ ἀδελφὸς ὥλετο,” (not a slave, but a brother died) and Kreon replies, “πορθῶν δὲ τήνδε γῆν,” (attacking this land).⁶ The two lines grammatically run together as one sentence. They describe Polyneices both as a brother and an invader of the land. Kreon here reasserts his point that anyone who attacks the earth of Thebes cannot also belong to it and be buried within it. However,

⁵ Ibid., 187-188 and 198-204.

⁶ Ibid., 517-518.

Antigone says that his status as a brother is more significant than how he treated the land. Her argument is that familial ties earn him a proper burial in the earth regardless of his actions towards it. She in fact says just a few lines later that, “Αἰδης τοὺς νόμους τούτους ποθεῖ,” (Hades requires these laws) claiming that the divine law of the underworld itself says that Polyneices belongs there.⁷ The fact that Polyneices shares blood with those who are already in Hades means that according to religious law, he belongs underground as well. He has many family members who are already resting underneath; he is from a long line of people belonging to this earth, and therefore he should join them in his ancestral home. While Kreon uses Polyneices’ actions toward the earth to decide whether he belongs, Antigone focuses on his relationship to those who dwell above and below it.

However, both Kreon and Antigone use the earth to decide and then express Polyneices’ status in the community. The characters of Eteokles and especially Polyneices show how closely social belonging in the play is tied to the physical earth.

The earth or those beneath it are also imagined in the play to hold power, create legitimacy, and determine whether an individual belongs in the community. In the passage near the beginning of the play where Antigone describes Eteokles’ burial, she says that he has been, “τοῖς ἔνερθεν ἐντιμον νεκροῖς,” (honored by the dead underground).⁸ Here the dead are actually capable of giving honor to him, which the living are expected to mirror by honoring him equally. The underworld is also a site of law-making. In the ode to man, the chorus sings:

νόμους γεραίων χθονὸς...ύψιπολις• ἄπολις,
ὅτῳ τὸ μὴ καλὸν ξύνεστι τόλμας χάριν. μήτ'έμοι
παρέστιος γένοιτο μήτ'ἴσον φρονῶν.

(Honouring the laws of the earth...he is a citizen of a proud city; city-less is he who engages in things that aren’t good for the sake of boldness. May he never be by my hearth nor sharing my mind).⁹

⁷ Ibid., 519.

⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁹ Ibid., 369-375.

The earth itself upholds laws, and following those laws leads directly to having good standing within the community. In contrast, anyone who breaks these laws is city-less, with no community. The ode goes into detail about not sharing a hearth or mind with this individual to emphasize that they are outcast and separate. The earth holds a great amount of power and influence here. Again, all decisions about who is a part of the community revolve around how each person relates to the ground.

Not only in the play, but also in the historical city of Athens, where this tragedy was written and watched, the people believed that the earth was central to social belonging. The way the Athenians thought about their own origin and identity was grounded in the earth. In the name of the mythical first king of Athens, Erichthonius, is the word χθών, or earth. He is so named because he emerged from the earth. He was born after Poseidon attempted to rape Athena and ejaculated on her leg; she wiped it off in disgust and threw it to the ground. Thus fertilized, the earth bore Erichthonius, who later became Athens’ first king. This legend is commonly seen on vases and is attested in the Iliad, among other works. Josiah Ober argues that because of the belief that “their ancestors were born of the soil of Attica, all Athenians were, in effect, a single kinship group,” or at least they believed themselves to be.¹⁰ Ober gives the example of a funeral oration by Hyperides, who said, “in various different locales...one must trace each man’s separate ancestry. But in making speeches concerning the Athenian men, born of their own land and sharing in common a lineage of unsurpassed nobility, I believe that to praise their ancestry on an individual basis is to be superfluous.”¹¹ For Hyperides, all Athenians are members of one family because they share in common the Attic earth. By definition, being “Athenian” meant coming from the land of Athens itself, springing from its soil. The earth, then, was essential to Athenian identity and sense of community.

The importance of the earth was evident in the governing of the city as well. Relationship to land was a legal issue regarding citizenship and officeholding. According to Aristotle’s Athenian

¹⁰ Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989,) 263.

¹¹ Hyperides, *Funeral Oration* 6.6-7. Translation by Ober in *Mass and Elite*, 262.

Constitution, new archons were questioned before taking office and asked:

τίς σοι πατήρ καὶ πόθεν τῶν δῆμων...εἴτα ἡρίᾳ
εἰ ἔστιν καὶ ποῦ ταῦτα, ἔπειτα γονέας εἰ εὖ ποιεῖ,
καὶ τὰ τέλη τελεῖ, καὶ τὰς στρατείας εἰ ἔστρατευται
(who is your father and what deme is he from
...then if he has family tombs and where they are,
then if he is good to his parents, and if he repaid his
debts, and if he has done military service).¹²

The questions about his parents, debt, and military service ensure that he follows the rules of the community and contributes to it. This was required of anyone who was to be a leader in the community. But just as important was the information about his family tombs. An Athenian citizen had to have ancestors who were citizens and buried in Attica, usually on family-owned land. He needed to have a clan of ancestors below the earth, vouching for his right to inclusion. This tie, mediated through the earth, proved that he belonged in the community. Athens also maintained the close connection between citizenship and land through a law that made it impossible for any non-citizen to own land.¹³ In ancient Athens, connection to the community and to the earth were inseparable.

In *Antigone*, Sophocles uses the earth-community connection to express the complexity and tension of the drama. Like Polyneices, Antigone has an ambiguous relationship to the earth, therefore both does and does not belong to the Theban community. Polyneices is buried three separate times and unburied twice. This back and forth with the ground, now above now below, is parallel to the community's uncertainty about whether to accept him. His first two burials are only half-burials. The guard says that the corpse, “οὐ μὲν γὰρ ἡφάνιστο, τυμβήρες μὲν οὐ, λεπτὴ δ’ ἄνος φεύγοντος ὥς ἐπῆν κόνις,” (was hidden, not entombed, but there was light dust on

¹² Aristotle. Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 18, translated by G.C. Armstrong, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 55.3.

¹³ Alberto Maffi, “Family and Property Law,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law*, ed. Michael Gagarin and David Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 259.

it, as if done by someone fleeing a curse).¹⁴ Here the body lays in a strange middle ground: he is not truly buried and underneath the earth, but he is not exactly above it either. As the characters in the play debate whether Polyneices belongs, he is shown neither above nor below the ground to reflect the uncertainty.

When the question of his belonging is finally resolved, his relationship with the ground is as well. After his encounter with Tiresias, Kreon realizes that he was wrong and that Polyneices should be buried and accepted as part of the community. He goes to clean and cremate his remains and then built a, “τύμβον ὄρθοκρανον οἰκείας χθονὸς,” (high-crested tomb of his native earth).¹⁵ This final tomb ends the confusion and puts Polyneices in a clear location below the earth, accepted into the community of revered ancestors. The point is made clearer by the word which connects yet again his placement in the earth with a sense of home and belonging. The long debate over his standing ends with a firm answer here, which is signalled by his movement from above the ground to underneath it.

Antigone has an even more complex relationship to the earth and much less resolution which—mirrors her complicated relationship with the community as a whole. Throughout her last monologue, burial, and death, it is made clear that Antigone exists in a middle ground, not really belonging in the community but not exactly an outcast either. She is deeply connected to the earth and the city of Thebes through her ancestry, yet she defied the edict of the king. She followed religious laws but not man-made ones. Her status as a community member is deeply uncertain. She forces the audience to question what it means to belong, and how and when belonging should be revoked. As these questions are being explored, Antigone’s relationship to the ground is complicated with her burial. Kreon orders that Antigone be buried alive in a cave and left there until she dies of starvation. Antigone is both alive, and underground, in the world of the dead. She is cast out from the world above, but doesn’t yet belong below. Burial usually signifies acceptance into the community, but Antigone’s burial is a form of exile and punishment. She is allowed to go to the community of honored dead but isn’t in fact honored by those above, and doesn’t belong with the dead in the first place.

¹⁴ *Antigone*, 255-256.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1203.

Antigone's final speech highlights this fact even more. She wails that she is going to see her parents in the underworld, “μέτουκος,” (as a foreigner).¹⁶ μέτουκος primarily denoted resident foreigners living in Athens, someone who is not fully included in the community and is not grounded in the earth like the native citizens. Even as Antigone goes underground to rest with her honored ancestors, which should be the most native possible location for her, she is still foreign and doesn't fit.

Finally, Antigone's death itself is a final message of her uncertainty in the earth and the community. Once alone in the cave, Antigone decided to kill herself by hanging. Kreon found her, “ἐν δὲ λοισθίῳ τυμβεύματι τὴν μὲν κρεμαστὴν αὐχένος...βρόχῳ μιτώδει σινδόνος καθημμένην,” (in the depth of the cave, hung by her neck... having fastened a noose of cloth thread).¹⁷ Hanging inside the tomb, she is both above the ground and below it at once. Her relationship to the earth is ambiguous in every way imaginable, and as classicist Valerie Reed wrote, “the question of Antigone's proper place... would itself be suspended...as it were, ungrounded: her “suspension” would make it impossible to know whether she has found her home in the underworld or not.”¹⁸ Although the play reaches a conclusion, the question it brings up about whether Antigone can or should be accepted into the community remains unanswered. By relating Antigone to the ground in such contradictory and confusing ways, Sophocles is able to express the deep concern and uncertainty surrounded her status in the community of Thebes. The lack of resolution in her relationship to the earth keeps the audience thinking about the unsolved, and maybe unsolvable question he has posed to them, as the image of her body, above and below at once, hangs suspended in their minds.

It's helpful to look toward each character's relationship with the earth to understand exactly what their relationship is with the community of Thebes as a whole. Eteokles is always honored as a full community member. Polyneices is tugged back and forth between outside and inside, not fully on either side until he is accepted into the ground and the community at the very end.

¹⁶ Ibid., 869

¹⁷ Ibid., 1220-1222.

¹⁸ Valerie Reed, “Bringing Antigone Home?” *Comparative Literature Studies* 45, No. 3 (2008): 316-340, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25659661>, 326.

Antigone straddles these lines as well, not really belonging but not being entirely outcast either, but she remains in the middle ground even after her death, never getting a resolution. Antigone's final place above and below ground is especially important to notice because it makes the important point that Sophocles is not posing an answer to the complex issue of Antigone's status, he is asking a question about what it means to belong.

This reading of Antigone also shows another layer of significance that the play would have held for its historical audience. The complexity and ambiguity of the relationships to the earth that Antigone portrays functioned as a tool for Athenians. It was a space to observe and think about the issues and uncertainty inherent in questions of belonging. Just like the Athenians used the earth to clarify who belonged, Sophocles used the earth to portray to his audience those situations in which acceptance is unclear.

Possibly the most significant insight to be gained from looking at the earth-belonging connection though is a better understanding of what the most important traits of community member were, both in the play and the historical city of Athens. There were two main things that decided a person's acceptance and both revolved around the earth. This can be seen in Kreon and Antigone's argument over Polyneices' status, mentioned above (page 3). Athenians believed that a good community member was one who treated the land well unlike Polyneices. They must be able to treat the communal space, the earth, with respect and care. However, like Polyneices, the good community member must also come from the earth. He must be born there of native parents, able to trace his lineage to the land itself, and have blood relatives under the earth, tying him to it. This trait is an significant part of what brings the community together. It gives them all the feeling that they are in some way essentially the same because they all come from one origin. These are logical requirements of community membership for a group that locates belonging in the ground, but the tragedy makes their importance even more explicit. Being an Athenian meant being able to coexist peacefully in the space with others and also being naturally from the earth itself, connected to everyone else through it.

The earth of Attica is what brought the community of Athenians together, so it makes sense that it is also what the idea of community

was grounded upon. The very definition of belonging was based upon this essential feature of the community. In the modern day, the nature of belonging is more elusive than ever. Refugees, college students, and entrepreneurs move thousands of miles from home. Teenagers meet on internet chat rooms and stay in touch with friends over Skype. Terrorist organizations recruit people over Facebook and viral cat videos bridge the gap between generations. Huge communities form around hobbies like World of Warcraft and rock climbing. People all over the world are connecting to new people in new ways. Athens and *Antigone* offer an interesting perspective on belonging. When we ponder how communities and acceptance work, it's worth considering what caused a certain group to form, what each community is grounded in, because it is the relationship to that ground that brings a group together.

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STRUCTURAL FLAWS

POLITICAL COMMENTARY THROUGH ARCHITECTURE IN SENECA'S *THYESTES*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how Seneca the Younger uses a Stoic interpretation of the structures he describes in *Thyestes* to comment upon the dangers of excess in general and the failings of his own time period in particular. Plain Cyclopean walls serve as a practical Stoic measure against which Seneca compares other buildings, both physical and imaginary. Atreus' strange and needlessly extravagant palace is antithetic to the Stoic focus on nature and function, in architecture as in life. Similarities between Seneca's description of this palace and Suetonius' description of Nero's Domus Aurea suggest that Seneca uses these buildings to construct a criticism of the emperor. Nero's palace exemplifies his non-Stoic indulgence in ostentation and excess, which disrupts the order of the universe and threatens Rome's natural balance. The tragedy becomes a staging ground for its author's political criticisms and ends in a warning about what might happen to those who refuse to return to what is proper (i.e. Stoic living).

STRUCTURAL FLAWS POLITICAL COMMENTARY THROUGH ARCHITECTURE IN SENECA'S *THYESTES*

RACHEL E. DUBIT

In *Thyestes*, Seneca describes several physical structures, both real to the play and imagined by its characters, in varying degrees of detail. These include great Cyclopean walls, luxurious hypothetical palaces, the actual palace Atreus inhabits, and structures built in the ocean. Seneca employs a Stoic interpretation of these diverse constructions to comment on the negative effects of excessive luxury in the real world. In the years leading up to Nero's extravagant Domus Aurea, Seneca contrasts the ivory inlaid roofs of such palaces with the simple, functional, plain stone walls and humble cottages of the lower classes. His commentary conveys a warning about grandiose architecture as an inversion and distortion of the natural order, leading to the downfall of Stoic values. In this criticism, Cyclopean walls evoke the past and the heroic age, whereas excessively magnificent palaces represent the inversion of Stoic values in the present. Imagery of the destruction of palaces, or of construction in unnatural places, constitutes a warning about the effects of such deviations in the future. My paper begins with an overview of Stoic values and Seneca's personal philosophy, particularly as they manifest in architecture. I touch on the various types of architectural features in *Thyestes*, starting with the Cyclopean walls, moving to a discussion of ostentatious palatial structures, and ending with hypothetical buildings in the ocean. The main part of my argument focuses on a comparison of the familial palace of Pelops to Nero's Domus Aurea (as described by Suetonius), as these are the structures with the most detailed and developed implications for Seneca's critique of Nero. I note the role of Stoicism in Seneca's interpretation of architectural themes throughout, arguing that this interpretation is a means to critique Nero's morals as both a bad Stoic and a bad emperor.

Seneca's philosophy, though unique in many respects, aligns primarily with the Stoic school, especially in its focus on nature

(both human nature and the natural world).¹ For Stoics, man represents only one part of an ordered universe² in which each component must perform its own function. A good Stoic is able to face misfortune and prosperity alike, as these vagaries are part of the natural progression of human life. Seneca, in particular, advocates living for the good of the whole rather than seeking personal gain, finding internal harmony by fitting into and benefiting the external world.³

Stoicism is a philosophy uniquely adapted to work not only in such logical and moral terms, but also in physical contexts (fitting for a philosophy that is, after all, named for a type of building).⁴ It is therefore possible to read Stoic values into architectural themes. Introspection and self-understanding are the first steps to finding Stoic freedom, wisdom, and virtue;⁵ extravagant surroundings, just like emotional excesses, distract from this goal.⁶ Since one of the ultimate purposes of humanity is to live in harmony with nature,⁷ architecture (particularly domestic architecture) should attempt to further the “natural order” as much as possible. Ideal Stoic structures should be simple, functional, and reflective of shapes and materials found in the natural world. Luxury, an unnatural and unnecessary choice, has no place or purpose in architecture.⁸

Thyestes is not the only work in which Seneca uses buildings as social commentary. His epistles, an arguably clearer reflection of the author’s personal beliefs, also contain architectural references. From gardens and Epicureanism to remote villas and Stoic resignation, Seneca often associates physical locations and structures with moral and philosophical thought.⁹ By using physical structures as a method of criticism, Seneca joins a tradition of Stoic condemnation

1 Natali, Monica. “Tra stoicism e platonismo.” 1994. Pp. 428.

2 Samson, Peter. “The Stoic Way.” 1975.

3 Ibid.

4 Natali, 429.

5 Ibid., 431-432.

6 As Samson notes, “the inherited magnificence had no relationship to the human conditions which prevailed” (1) at the time when Stoicism flourished, which is perhaps why the Stoics rejected luxury in favor of a philosophy more compatible with the harsh realities of daily life.

7 Natali 441

8 Thomson, David. “Classical Heritage.” 1993. Pp 62.

9 Henderson, John. *Morals and Villas in Seneca’s Letters*. 2014. Pp. 27 and 28-39.

of excess in architecture.¹⁰ Starting early in *Thyestes* and continuing throughout, he describes both Stoically ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ structures. In this play, unlike the *Epistles*, Seneca turns his architectural eye towards the emperor rather than a correspondent or host, making for a much more politically charged interpretation.

Seneca introduces architectural elements in the play with a description of Mycenae’s ancient walls, an example of Stoically ‘correct’ construction. When Atreus invites Thyestes to come back from exile to their shared home, ostensibly as an offering of reconciliation and equal rule, Thyestes is initially eager to return. As he approaches the city, he sees the welcome sight of his homeland and the “sacred towers of the Cyclopes, an honor greater than [any] human creation”¹¹ (*Cyclopum sacras / turres, labore maius humano decus*, Seneca 407-408).¹² The theme of divine or super-human walls reaches back to Homeric epic, which, though set somewhat later in legendary history than the story of Atreus and Thyestes, was written long before Seneca’s time.¹³ Cyclopean walls recall such great citadels as Troy, Tiryns, and Mycenae itself.¹⁴ They are enduring, functional, and, though impressive, simple in design – in short: paradigms of Stoic values in architecture and a distinction (*decus*) upon humanity. For Seneca, these walls are physical manifestations of a past in which Thyestes’ homeland celebrated virtue and pragmatism over depravity and luxury. This model past contrasts sharply with the present in which the play is set, as well as with the time in which the playwright is living.

Though *Thyestes* is happy to see his fatherland, with its Cyclopean towers and stadium, his zeal turns to dread when he remembers that he will have to return to the palace and see his brother. In anticipation of the luxury his brother will use to tempt him, Thyestes reminds himself, “this bright gleam of the throne is not something that should blind me with its false shine” (*clarus hic regni nitor / fulgore non est quod oculos falso auferat*, Seneca 414-415). In a further plea to Stoic strength, he rejects the great palatial

10 Ibid., 56.

11 All translations are my own.

12 All Latin is taken from the Oxford Classical Text.

13 For more on the importance of walls in Homer, see Maitland, Judith. “Poseidon, Walls, and Narrative Complexity in the Homeric Iliad.” 1999. Pp. 1-13.

14 Rautenbach, Susan. “Cyclopes (I)”. 1984. Pp. 42-46.

residences of kings:

*Non uertice alti montis impositam domum
et imminentem ciuitas humilis tremit,
nec fulget altis splendidum tectis ebur...
...nulla culminibus meis
imposita nutat silua...*

"[I have] no house which is set on the high peak of a mountain, and hanging over the common citizens makes them tremble, nor does bright ivory gleam from [my] high ceilings...No grove waves, planted on my roof"

Seneca, *Thyestes* 455-457, 464-465

Instead, Thyestes professes to prefer a smaller, more peaceful lot in life (469). Unlike the Cyclopean walls, such richly decorated structures with frivolous, over-the-top ornaments present a danger to Stoic virtue. They tempt conflicted characters like Thyestes towards depravity and threaten to invert the natural order of the world. The fact that Thyestes ultimately does give in to Atreus' offer and prepares to live in just such a palace illustrates the powerful allure of this kind of architecture and the lifestyle it represents.

Atreus embodies in a character all that Thyestes claims to reject. His domain is the familial palace of the Tantalids, and it is here that he performs his most notable and nefarious action: the 'sacrifice' of his brother's sons. Seneca describes this palace through the play's messenger (see appendix 1), focusing on its size, decoration, and aspect. Much of the description of this residence recalls the very sort of dwelling Thyestes had rejected only 200 lines before. Atreus has a roof that shines (*fulget...tectum*, 645-6) – perhaps because it is inlaid with ivory. He also has an entire grove (*nemus*, 651) contained in his dwelling, much like the *silva* Thyestes claims he will *not* have waving from his rooftop. This *domus*, just like the one Thyestes rejects, is set high on a mountain (*in arce summa*, 641). In short, the setting, decoration, and contents of the royal palace of Pelops are the same as those of the extravagant residence Thyestes spurns in favor of a more humble and functional (and therefore more

Stoically appropriate) cottage.

In addition to Thyestes' Stoic musings, the palace of the Tantalids likens itself to a very real residence in Rome. Nero's famous Domus Aurea, begun around the same time as the publication of *Thyestes* and probably planned well before the play was released, is featured in Suetonius' life of the emperor (see appendix 2). Nero had been working on the magnificent Domus Transitoria¹⁵ at least from ca. 60 CE, and presumably changed his plan into that of the larger and even more extravagant Domus Aurea after the great fire of 64 CE.¹⁶ While the dating of *Thyestes* is uncertain, it probably came out within the same period of a few years.¹⁷ Nero already had a reputation for extravagance in all aspects of his life and rule, and particularly in architecture. He was even rumored to have used siege engines and fire to make room for his earlier Domus Transitoria.¹⁸ The Domus Aurea is only the most famous example of an already well established trend toward excess in architecture.

Amidst the palace's general splendor and many extravagant oddities are several characteristics which call to mind Atreus' palace and Thyestes' imagined anti-dwelling. Though not situated on a mountain peak, the Domus Aurea stretches from the Palatine to the Esquiline. If these are the heights from which the palace hangs over the people, the *ciuitas* that trembles (Seneca 456) at its size and its owner would be the Roman populace itself. Already, this comparison is hardly flattering for Nero. The 'mountaintop dwelling' theme references the humble palace of Augustus on the Palatine,¹⁹ contrasting the humble home of a good emperor with the monstrosity Nero is constructing. The Julio-Claudian dynasty favored homes on the Palatine overlooking the Roman forum, but Nero distorts this tradition by constructing a domineering complex covering a huge swath of Rome.

The similarities between Nero's and Thyestes' palaces continue with the vast layout of the two grand houses. Nero's

¹⁵ Little is known about Nero's earlier residence, but it is said to have been "a splendid residence." Ball, Larry. *The Domus Aurea*. 2003. Pp.2

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Scholarly consensus indicates a publication date of ca. 62 CE. Davis, Peter. *Seneca: Thyestes*. 2003. Pp. 180.

¹⁸ Ball 2-3.

¹⁹ Seneca and Fitch, John G. "Thyestes." 2004. Pp. 223.

house has a public *vestibulum* large enough to contain his colossal statue and of such great length (*tanta laxitas*) that it features a triple colonnade, just as Atreus has his hall designed to contain masses (likewise supported by *columnae*) and his public rooms in which whole crowds of people can gather (*turbae capax*, Seneca 645 and *quae populi colunt*, 648). Where Atreus' palace contains a grove or wood (*nemus* at 651 and 656, *silua* at 655), Nero takes the theme of enclosing nature a step further by including a miniature sea, cities, countryside, and *siluis uaria* all within his private residence. These natural elements, subsumed into man-made structures, invert Stoic architectural values.²⁰ They are unnecessary and extravagant, and they force natural themes into an ill-suited context.²¹ In short, they are an affront to Stoic morals.

Parallels regarding the decorative detail of the palaces further the connection. Nero's dining rooms have ivory panels (*tabulis eburneis*) on their ceilings, while ivory flashes from the roofs of Thyestes' imagined palace (*fulget altis splendidum tectis ebur*, Seneca 457). Suetonius describes the luxury in even more detail, adding moving parts and showers of flowers and perfumes. The palace(s) of *Thyestes* already feature ostentatious anti-Stoic themes and decorative elements, and Nero's Domus Aurea only exaggerates these themes, displaying them in colossal proportions.

These similarities establish a resemblance not only between the two palaces but also between their inhabitants. In describing Atreus' palace in such detail, Seneca may be referencing Neronian architecture and values (of which the Domus Aurea is merely the most famous example) in general. Suetonius, though writing several decades after Nero's reign when parts of the emperor's palace would already have been taken apart, was likely to have had full access to plans and records of the edifice and its construction. He served as official imperial secretary under both Trajan and Hadrian, and his duties included overseeing the archives. He wrote his imperial biographies after his time as secretary, and surely made use of his access to the archives and libraries while still in office.²² This makes the similarities between the palace he describes and that described

²⁰ See Thomson 62 for more on Stoicism and architecture

²¹ The layout of the *Domus Aurea* seems more in line with the villa type than the domus, but its urban context is contrary to the nature of the villa.

²² Hazel, John. "Suetonius." 2001.

by Seneca all the more striking.

If Nero represents Atreus, the people of Seneca's Rome find themselves in a situation much like Thyestes'. All about them are luxury, ostentation, extravagance, and corrupting power, by which Nero seeks to tempt them away from the natural order of the world. This situation presents a very serious threat to Stoic values, but not yet a complete downfall. Seneca leaves his readers with a warning: if Rome wishes to avoid a fate as disastrous as that which befalls Thyestes and his family, she must return to moral high ground.

Unlike Thyestes, the Romans must reject anti-Stoic practices in fact rather than in word alone. Yet again, Seneca represents this theme through architecture. When Thyestes lists the trappings of wealth and luxury he repudiates, he mentions that he does not "drive back the sea by putting up piles" (*non...retro mare / iacta fugamus mole*, Seneca 459-460). If subordinating nature to human structures, as Nero and Atreus do in their constructed groves, springs, and ponds, represents an affront to Stoic values, extending human control over the ocean itself represents their complete inversion. Seneca's choice to use ocean imagery is particularly significant, as Roman literature often used bodies of water to represent the essence of the natural world.²³ An attempt to overpower the sea would be an attack on nature itself. It is one thing to bring elements of nature into a house, but it is another to extend the house itself into the very heart of nature, turning the sea aside by means of manmade structures. The Romans, like Thyestes, can reject such practices. However, unlike Thyestes, they must resist corrupting influences in practice too. Declarations of good intent will not help them if Nero persists in seeking to impose his will over nature.

The emperor is meant to set an example for morality and correct behavior throughout the empire, as Augustus did with his reforms, his focus on family values, and his famously humble Palatine home. Therefore, if luxury and indulgence were allowed to continue on the scale of the Domus Aurea, Rome would be headed towards an absolute and irreversible destruction of good Stoic morality. Much like the curse of the Tantalids, Nero's extravagant lifestyle could prove ruinous if perpetuated.

²³ For water imagery in Roman literature and its symbolism in linking mankind to nature, see Campbell, Brian. *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome*. 2012. pp. 120-122.

Seneca emphasizes his admonition with images of structural collapse in *Thyestes*. From early in the play, Atreus expresses his willingness that his palace should fall to the ground around him, provided that it also take down his brother in its destruction (*haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus / ruat uel in me, dummodo in fratrem ruat*, Seneca 190-191). The image of the house falling to ruin appears again shortly thereafter, when the structure cracks throughout as though bursting at the seams (*totis domus / ut fracta tectis crepuit*, 263-264). A similar image appears towards the end of the play when Thyestes, realizing the horrific nature of Atreus' crime against him, wonders that Mycenae is not overturned, with its every structure burnt to the ground (*non tota ab imo tecta conuellens solo / uertis Mycenas?*, 1010-1011). Throughout the play, images of architectural destruction accompany thoughts of *nefas*, violence, and crime. Perhaps this is Seneca's way of suggesting that the world cannot support structures which embody such negative ideals, at least not for long. In the same way, a reign such as Nero's is destined to crumble and fall, just as surely as his house and Atreus' palace will. If the way *Thyestes* turns out is anything to go on, Rome's future is uncertain at best, disastrous at worst.

With his detailed architectural motifs, Seneca proves himself a master of subtle criticism. He constructs parallels between Rome under Nero and Mycenae under Atreus, the true significance of which becomes evident only once viewed through the lens of Stoicism. Just as architecture should be a functional reflection of the natural world rather than a grotesque mimicry or an ill-suited display of wealth, so should *imperium* be just, natural, and temperate rather than exaggerated and fear-inducing. Seneca reminds Rome that it, like Mycenae, is rooted in a glorious heroic past, but that it too may be corrupted. A return to Stoicism, in architecture as in morality, is its only hope for redemption.

Appendix 1: *Thyestes* 641-656, 665-668, 682-683

*In arce summa Pelopiae pars est domus
 conuersa ad Austros, cuius extremum latus
 aequale monti crescit atque urbem premit
 et contumacem regibus populum suis
 habet sub ictu; fulget hic turbae capax
 immane tectum, cuius auratas trabes
 variis columnae nobiles maculis ferunt.
 post ista uulgo nota, quae populi colunt,
 in multa diues spatia discedit domus.
 Arcana in imo regio secessu iacet,
 alta uetustum ualle compescens nemus,
 penetrale regni, nulla qua laetos solet
 praebere ramos arbor aut ferro coli,
 sed taxus et cupressus et nigra ilice
 obscura nutat silva, quam supra eminens
 despectat alte quercus et vincit nemus...
 Fons stat sub umbra tristis et nigra piger
 haeret palude: talis est dirae Stygis
 deformis unda quae facit caelo fidem.
 hinc nocte caeca gemere ferales deos...
 ...Quo postquam furens
 intravit Atreus liberos fratris trahens...*

At the height of the citadel is part of the house of Pelops, faced south, the furthest side of which rises like a mountain and edges the city and holds its people insolent under the strike of its king; here a huge roof shines forth, which can cover a crowd, the gilded beams of which columns distinguished by varied marks support. After these common rooms, where peoples gather, the opulent house extends for a great length; hidden in the farthest back [part] lies an area, confining an old grove in a valley, the innermost sanctuary of the kingdom, in which no tree is accustomed to stretch its flourishing branches or be tended with a knife,

but yew and cypress and dark ilex wave in the hidden grove, above where a tall oak looks down from on high and rules the grove...

A sad, sluggish spring stands under the shadow and oozes into the dark swamp; such is the misshapen water of the dread Styx, which makes trust in the heavens. Here in the blind night wild gods [are said] to groan...To this place, then, raging, Atreus entered dragging the children of his brother...

Appendix 2: “Nero.” *De vita Caesarum, liber sextus.* XXXI.1-2

domum a Palatio Esquilia susque fecit, quam primo ‘transitoriam’, mox incendio absumptam restitutamque ‘auream’ nominauit. de cuius spatio atque cultu suffecerit haec rettulisse. vestibulum eius fuit in quo colossus CXX pedum staret ipsius effigie, tanta laxitas ut porticus triplices miliarias haberet, item stagnum maris instar circumsaeptum aedificiis ad urbium speciem, rura insuper aruis atque uinetis et pascuis siluisque uaria, cum multitudine omnis generis pecudum ac ferarum. in ceteris partibus cuncta auro lita, distincta gemmis unionumque conchis erant, cenationes laqueatae tabulis eburneis uersatilibus ut flores, fistulatis, ut unguenta desuper spargerentur; praecipua cenationum rotunda quae perpetuo diebus ac noctibus uice mundi circumageretur...

He built a house from the Palatine to the Esquiline, which he at first called the *transitoria*, but soon after its construction being burned and rebuilt he named it *aurea*.

The size and splendor of which the following will suffice to relate. It had an entryway, in which a 120 foot image of [Nero] himself stood; so great in spaciousness that it had a mile-long triple portico; there was also a pond like a sort of sea, surrounded with buildings in the likeness of cities; and furthermore countryside with cultivated land and vines and pastures and several woods, with a multitude of all kinds of animals, tame and wild. In the other parts it was all inlaid in gold, picked out with gems and there were collections of shells; the dining rooms were paneled with moving ivory ceiling tiles, which with its pipes sprinkled flowers and perfumes down from above; the main dining hall was round, which revolved continually, day and night in turn, like the universe.

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“QUOD MIRABILIUS EST” REPLACING A FRAGMENT OF CICERO’S *DE RE PUBLICA*

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ABSTRACT

Cicero’s *De re publica* is largely incomplete. In this essay, I will argue for the reconsideration and reinterpretation, if not reconstruction, of one piece of this text by considering text, translation, interpretation, and context within the fragment and its surrounding lines. I’ll be using evidence from Cicero, his scholars, other classical authors and their commentators, manuscripts, and dictionaries. This particular fragment of the third book, which seems to address the rewards due to supreme virtue, may be valuable to discussions of government, justice, and ideal humanity. I argue that it should be located in the section of Book III in which Laelius discusses the rewards of *virtus*.

QUOD MIRABILIUS EST¹ REPLACING A FRAGMENT OF CICERO’S *DE RE PUBLICA* WILLIAM BREWSTER MORGAN

Marcus Tullius Cicero was an author, orator, and statesman of Republican Rome whose enduring influence is unparalleled among his contemporaries and comparable to only a few of his predecessors. For this reason alone, it is a worthy task to continue the tradition of appreciating Cicero and his words, and that appreciation calls for reinterpretation. Due to the efforts of a nineteenth-century Vatican cardinal, Cicero’s unique political treatise on ideal government, the *De re publica* (*On the Republic*), was not entirely lost to the past. From what remains, critical questions persist within the work’s exploration of justice, which will be prominent in this inquiry. Though about two-thirds of its content is missing, the text can be partially reconstructed with fragments copied by later writers. Locating the fragments in the text is often difficult and controversial. The location of at least one Fragment² -- henceforth capitalized for clarity -- may be reasoned out. There have been two proposals for where the Fragment should be located; here I will propose a third. To determine the Fragment’s location in the *De re publica*, I will provide a background of pertinent portions of Book III (the lone starting clue) and an analysis of the Fragment. One part of my task is to inspect the Fragment, but another necessitates filling in its textual surroundings as the Fragment is settled back into Book III. Those surroundings must be introduced if a gap or *lacuna* in the text is to bear words once again.

1 “What is rather extraordinary...” [translation mine] from Heinrich Keil, ed., *Grammatici Latini*, vols. 2 and 3, ed. Martin Hertz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855), 255.

2 See the Fragment as it is traditionally presented on page 31. See also my reconfiguration and translation of the Fragment on page 46.

THE FRAGMENT

‘Athos Athonis’ protulit Cicero in III de republica: [quid ergo illa sibi vult [1] absurde exceptio?] nisi si quis Athonem pro monumento vult [2] funditus †efficere. [3] quis enim est Athos aut Olympus tantus?³

PRISCIAN AND THE THIRD BOOK

Priscian was a 6th century Latin grammarian based in Constantinople who most notably authored “the principal textbook of all the Middle Ages,” the *Institutio de Arte Grammatica*.⁴ Priscian, like other post-imperial Latin scholars, quoted Latin literature that otherwise would have been lost, including the Fragment from the *De re publica*. It is because of his textbook that the Fragment survives.

Priscian expressly placed the Fragment in Book III.⁵ In a word, Book III of the *De re publica* is about justice. In it, the two interlocutors argue, “Philus trying to show that justice is solely a convention based upon expediency, and Laelius striving to prove that justice is the true and eternal principle behind all law.”⁶ The discussion recalls two speeches delivered by Carneades, a Greek philosopher and skeptic in Rome, in 155 B.C.E. in which he first defended, then declaimed, justice’s role in society.⁷ Cicero reversed the order of the speeches and shifted the emphasis in his work, putting Laelius’ argument for justice after Philus’ argument against

3 Hertz 255. For a tentative translation of the whole Fragment, see Fott 103. The inserted numbers denote the three points of textual discussion in the next section (“Analyzing the Fragment: Textual Debates”).

4 Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph Solodow, rev. Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 713.

5 Loc. cit. See next section for Priscian. See also the Appendix at the end of the paper for manuscript evidence of this placement.

6 Sabine and Smith 42. Zetzel xvi: “what was undoubtedly the most famous section of the dialogue in antiquity”

7 Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Republic and The Laws*, trans. Niall Rudd, ed. Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 192-193. xvii: “The discussion of justice in the third book explicitly owes a great deal to the New Academic philosopher Carneades...” For Carneades’ philosophy, see most conveniently Sabine and Smith 26-27. For Carneades’ influence on Book III, see Sabine and Smith 53-54, Wood 73, Zetzel xvi, and Steel 191.

it and thus guiding the conclusion of the debate to affirm the value of justice.⁸ The contention of this paper is that the Fragment was originally contained in the section in which Laelius discusses the rewards of *virtus*.

ANALYZING THE FRAGMENT: TEXTUAL DEBATES

Scholars debate whether Cicero wrote what Priscian copied as the first sentence of the fragment. M. Hertz, one of Priscian’s commentators and translators in the 1850’s, brackets the sentence, deeming it an addition of Priscian.⁹ His reasoning for such a decision is unclear. Most of Priscian’s editors since have followed Hertz or simply removed the sentence altogether.¹⁰

Conversely, evidence of Priscian’s known quotations of the *De re publica* and the text of the *De re publica* in general cast doubt upon this consensus. Priscian’s properly-credited fragments give neither textual nor contextual reason to believe that he wrote any part of the Fragment.¹¹ Cicero, on the other hand, asked six similar direct questions leading with *quid* in the verified text of the *De re publica*. Two of these have a third-person subject like the Fragment. Two other Cicero selections either refer to an exception or use the words

8 Rudd and Powell xiv: “the outcome is never left in doubt.”

9 H. Keil, ed., *Grammatici Latini*, vols. 2 and 3, ed. M. Hertz, 255.

10 Keyes 228-229, Sabine and Smith 228, Heck 233, Krarup 138, Büchner 320, Ziegler 105, Zetzel 71, and Powell 117 (Charles 194 and Fott 103 neither noted Hertz’s deletion nor omitted the sentence, appearing to identify it as Cicero’s; Mai 269, Heinrich 114, and Osann 306-307 wrote before Hertz and kept the sentence). Rather than dispute Hertz, some appear to hold implicitly the explicit attitude of Rudd and Powell, who abandoned the Fragment entirely as one “whose placing or authenticity is doubtful (xxxii).” This is curious because they also say, “The fragments have been fully re-examined by Heck,” who noted Hertz’s deletion of the first sentence (Heck 233) as Powell would do in his Oxford Classical Text (Powell 117). The Fragment was excluded in one edition and included in the other, apparently by efforts involving the same editor.

11 See Zetzel 70, 85, 86, 93, 97, and 98 for fragments (N.B. The *Index of Fragments* on p. 200 compiles the locations of the fragments within the *Grammatici Latini* and *On the Commonwealth*). Keyes, Sabine and Smith, Krarup, Büchner, Ziegler, Rudd and Powell, and Zetzel either do not provide the first sentence or do not provide the Fragment altogether. Compare Zetzel’s Priscian fragments with the sentence in question provided eightfold by Mai 269, Heinrich 114, Osann 306-307, Hertz 255, Charles 194, Heck 233, Powell 117, and Fott 103. The Fragment sentence is an outlier among attributions to Priscian.

illa and *exceptio*.¹² Consequently, the aforementioned consensus that the fragment is Priscian's is doubtful. Note that five scholars kept the sentence, three of whom edited the *De re publica* before Hertz edited *Inst.* in 1855.¹³ That the fragment is dubious seems to persist on the sole basis of a 20th century convention that resurrected Hertz's unfounded emendation. I do not doubt that Cicero wrote the first sentence.

ABSURDE, ABSORDA, ABSURDA

In the first sentence of the Fragment, a minor textual dispute arose between editors who chose *absurde*, *absorde*, or *absurda*. Three manuscripts of Priscian's *Inst.* used *absorde*¹⁴ and its editors used *absurda*, but Hertz and Cod. Halberstad used *absurde*.¹⁵ *Absorde* was an error in transcription. *Absurda* is the feminine form of the adjective *absurdus*, describing *exceptio*. *Absurde* is the adverbial form of *absurdus*, describing *vult*. It is curious that Hertz sided with Cod. Halberstad, diverging from three Priscian manuscripts, Priscian editors before him, and *De re publica* editors before him. Of three earlier and four later *De re publica* scholars who printed the first sentence, all had *absurda*.¹⁶ The evidence, reinforced by *Inst.* and *De re publica* scholarship, leans toward *absurda*. Hertz took the outlying position. While *absurde* and *absurda* are nearly interchangeable, it is better to trust *absurda* given that it is firmly backed by an enduring, robust consensus of both Priscian and *De re publica* editors and is controverted only by one editor and one manuscript.¹⁷

12 See *Rep.* 1.10, 2.8*, 3.5, 5.2, 6.15, and 6.18* for direct questions using *quid*. Sections marked with asterisks contain questions most similar to the first Fragment sentence. See *Rep.* 1.10 and 4.4 for uses of exceptions, the former containing *illa* and *exceptio*.

13 See n. 9.

14 See St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, ms 904, 106b7, for Manuscript G and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Reichenauer Pergamenthandschriften, Augiensis cxxxii, [84] 42v, for Manuscript K. N.B. I was not able to view the manuscripts in person, but rather via digital photocopies (online links are included in the bibliography). See Appendix at the end of the paper for images of the manuscripts.

15 Osann 306.

16 Mai 269, Heinrich 114, Osann 306-307, Charles 194, Heck 233, Powell 117, and Fott 103.

17 The translation and meaning of the sentence and Fragment as a whole are negligibly altered by this nuance, but it is important to come to a reasoned,

FUNDITUS EFFICERE

In the second sentence of the Fragment, *funditus* may be fully acceptable as the original text of Cicero, but *efficere* is not. Of the scholars who marked any part of the sentence as corrupt or offered corrections, only Powell and Fott marked both *efficere* and *funditus* as corrupt.¹⁸ Since they advocated this position in very recent updates of *De re publica* scholarship, it is necessary to suggest replacements for both words even though *funditus* may very well be bona fide. For the latter, two possibilities are *profundum* or *fundatum*.¹⁹ If a choice must be made between them, then *fundatum* is the better adjective due to its superior likeness to *funditus* compared to *profundum*, which retains the *-fund-* root yet is not a likely descriptor of a mountain.²⁰ In any event, an adjective next to *efficere* is a doubtful placeholder, especially if *funditus*, a more syntactically-suitable adverb, is rejected by just two scholars, the non-editor of whom followed the editor's judgment. *Efficere*, on the other hand, needs to be replaced.²¹ There are not many present active infinitives akin to *efficere*; one is *effundere*, whose translation ("to hurl, knock down, overturn")²² is more convincing than, yet not dispositive over, its repetition of the *-fund-* root. Scholarship proposes a few other ideas. The two Priscian manuscripts²³ that did not have *efficere* gave *efferri*²⁴ instead. Bergk inserted *effingere*, and Halm chose *effodere*.²⁵

acceptable interpretation of the Fragment's text.

18 Compare Powell 117 and Fott 103 with Hertz 255, Heck 233, Krarup 138, Büchner 320, and Zetzel 71. One wonders why Powell deviated. He abided Hertz's stance on the first sentence, yet he disputed his stance on *funditus*. Powell maintained that both words are corrupt, and Fott followed Powell. Fott 18: "I have usually avoided such speculation or argument..." "Usually" does not apply to this case. It should be noted that Dr. Fott is a translator of the *De re publica*, not an editor.

19 Traupman 342 and 191, respectively, give "high" for *profundum* and "well-founded, established" for *fundatum*.

20 Cicero used *profundum* on three occasions – *Planc.* 15 (Watts 424-425), *Sest.* 45 (Gardner 92-93), and *Verr.* 2.4.26 (Greenwood 310-311) – but all of them were used to modify the "deep," i.e. the ocean. Within the confines of Cicero's work, mountains are not described with *profundum*.

21 Osann 307: "Nihil verius vulgate *efficere*...ad sensum loci, cui explanando nullus editorum adhuc vacavit..."

22 Traupman 159.

23 See Hertz 255.

24 Osann 306-307: Codd. Krelius gave *efferri* because of two passages, one from Cicero and the other from Livy.

25 Heck 233, Krarup 138, and Ziegler 105. Bergk, Büchner (320), and Ziegler

Heck and Zweifel agreed on *efferre*.²⁶ *Efferri* is a present passive infinitive in a sentence with an accusative direct object (*Athonem*) of an infinitive, so it is a grammatical impossibility. Halm's *effodere* merits further consideration on account of its connotations. *Efferre* is too far from *efficere* in structure and shares its broad definitions.²⁷ Finally, there is *effingere*, which combines structural similarity and contextual aptness.²⁸ While *funditus* has little justification for alteration, *efficere* cannot remain as it is.

Quis

In the third sentence, one must choose between *quis* and *quīs*. Fragment translators side with *quis*.²⁹ In the undisputed *De re publica*, what we are sure is legitimate Cicero, there are no uses of *quis* that are actually uses of *quīs*.³⁰ *Quīs* in the Fragment would be a dative or ablative plural connecting relative or regular relative pronoun, albeit with no clear antecedent or apparent relative clause. Alongside scholarly suggestions, dictionaries indicate that there are multiple tenable possibilities for *quis*.³¹ *Quis* could be an interrogative pronoun, an indefinite pronoun, an absolute adjective, or some sort of usage “transferred” from out of context. An indefinite pronoun typically necessitates a *sī* or *nē* before it.

agreed on *effingere*. Ziegler was arguably the foremost editor of the *De re publica* after Cardinal Angelo Mai, the first editor who found the palimpsest containing the bulk of what we have. *Effodere*, defined as “to dig up, hollow out” on Traupman 159, is particularly intriguing because it has connotations (see my “*Effodere* and Xerxes Context” section) that lend a distinct meaning to the Fragment. After Halm, Heck said “perhaps a gap is to be established.”

26 Büchner 320. Heck 234 contradicted this, saying there is no suitable proof for *efferre* in the Fragment’s meaning.

27 See Traupman 159 for various translations. Compare Zetzel 71 and Fott 103 for one such translation of the infinitive (“to raise up”). Fott acknowledged it as poor conjecture.

28 Traupman 159: “to mold, form.” Osann 307: “*efficere*, quod constat eodem significatu quo *effingere* passim dici.” See my “*Effingere* and Alexander Context” section for discussion on the contextual aptness of *effingere*.

29 Keyes 229, Sabine and Smith 228, Zetzel 71, and Fott 103. All four translated as “what.” N.B. Büchner used “Welcher” (“which”).

30 *Rep.* 2.11, 2.48, 3.27, 3.28, 6.18, and 6.22. Uses of the indefinite pronouns *sī quis* and *nē quis* were excluded. Keyes (121, 157, 207, 209, 271, 275) translated the six remaining examples of *quis* as “who,” “how,” “who,” “who,” “what,” and “what,” respectively.

31 Traupman 357. For a more comprehensive entry of *quis* and its transferred usage, see Lewis and Short 1516.

An absolute adjective is caseless when *quis* certainly takes the nominative case with *Athos*, *Olympus*, and *tantus*. A transferred usage is possible, but is so potentially extraneous that it would have to be perfectly justified. The latter and the interrogative pronoun are to be considered further. With regard to translation, “who,” “what,” and “how” are the prime options, all supported by Cicero or his later editors.³² “Who,” however, awkwardly personifies the mountains (Athos and Olympus) and “how” is not a safe translation. Thus, while an interrogative *quis* seems the likely choice, translating the text into English remains uncertain. Having finished discussing the more contested words of the fragment, we now must further consider the translation and interpretation of the Fragment to place it.

TRANSLATION, INTERPRETATION, AND CONTEXT

A. THE EXCEPTION

The *exceptio* in the first sentence of the Fragment translates most basically into “exception.” The surviving text of Book III should indicate what kind of exception this is. If the first sentence is ascribed to Cicero (as it should be), it will be the second *exceptio* in the *De re publica*. The first *exceptio*, from Book I, has to do with wise men excusing themselves from regular politics and saving their expertise for a state in crisis.³³ Cicero’s tone is derisive and condescending; his question evokes a mood similar to that of the Fragment *exceptio*, a mood of agreement with his own position. The Fragment *exceptio*, however, is an altogether different type of exception: an “absurd” exception. The common thread between the two exceptions is Cicero’s rhetorical opposition, nigh indignation, to the exception at hand. Although the situations are not interchangeable, each conforms to a passage in which questions are asked seeking concurrence with what Cicero argues.

It is quite likely that the Book III passage in which the Fragment fits is itself fragmentary. In Book III, the two most likely fragmentary passages are within opposing arguments. The first passage comes from Philus’ speech against justice where he says there is no such thing as natural justice and that injustice beset Roman women after

32 For Cicero’s support, see n. 32. For later support in translation of the Fragment, see n. 31.

33 *Rep.* 1.10. In his Explanatory Notes, page 176, Powell called this *exceptio* an Epicurean “proviso” to which Cicero objected as he defended the art of politics.

the passage of the Voconian Law.³⁴ The *exceptio* could be a rhetorical question highlighting the injustice of some women inheriting more money than others. This might work if the first sentence were alone, but since it is still part of the Fragment, the remainder of which does not relate to Philus' argument, it cannot.

This leaves the second passage on the rewards of *virtus* in Laelius' speech for justice. After he says goodness "consoles itself with many comforts, and sustains itself above all with its own beauty," Laelius talks about "great men who rose above worldly rewards."³⁵ According to Augustine, there was then an argument against the resurrection of bodies. Hercules and Romulus, whom Cicero asserts emphatically were made gods from men, were not carried up to the heavens in bodily form.³⁶ The *exceptio* here is that Hercules and Romulus are excluded from heaven despite their deification and their *virtus*. Even divine bodies can be withheld resurrection to the heavens if they were of mortal origin.

The next sentence³⁷ implies that such exemplars do not fail to receive intangible rewards, that is, immortality of the spirit or soul rather than the body. Cicero thus asserted that Hercules and Romulus did not join the gods and goddesses of mythology, deification of the spirit or soul is the highest reward for *virtus*, and justice proportions reward to *virtus*.

B. ATHOS THE MONUMENT: *EFFODERE* AND XERXES CONTEXT

The rest of the Fragment after the *exceptio* explains that neither Mount Athos nor Mount Olympus, though they are kingly prizes, can reward godly men.³⁸ Even a monument made out of Mount

34 *Rep.* 3.17. Rudd and Powell 63: "If it were a part of nature, like hot and cold or bitter and sweet, then just and unjust would be the same for everyone."

35 *Ibid.* 70-71. Rudd put "goodness" for *virtus* in *Rep.* 3.40.

36 Rudd and Powell 71: "for nature would not allow that something with an earthly origin should exist anywhere except on earth..." For Augustine's commentary, see Powell 109: "acute sibi argumentari videntur adversus corporum resurrectionem... Nam cum Herculem et Romulum ex hominibus deos esse factos asseveraret..." To clarify, Hercules was a legendary demigod and Romulus was the mythical founder of Rome.

37 *Rep.* 3.40. In translation, it is best put at Sabine and Smith 222: "The bravest never [fail to enjoy the fruits of] courage, energy, and endurance." Mai 257: "Romuli aliorumque aliquot hominum, non corpora, sed animos in caelum iuisse confirmat [Cicero] physicis argumentis."

38 It is unknown whether the distinction "gods made from men" belongs solely to Hercules and Romulus. The phrase itself was paraphrased from lost text by

Athos cannot reward the highest *virtus*. The second sentence of the Fragment rhetorically hypothesizes the transformation of Mount Athos, "the most easterly of three peninsulas extending south into the Aegean from Thrace," into, as, or for a *monumentum*.³⁹ The meaning of the sentence changes depending on which of the two words, *effodere* or *effingere*, is substituted for *efficere*. Using *effodere* means that Athos is dug or hollowed out for a monument or, better yet, for an accursed reminder of whoever rent the mountain. Digging into a mountain is quite different from molding it, and more so if the mountain is truly tunneled (as opposed to a channel through the narrowest part of the nearby isthmus). I believe the text cannot read *effodere*, as I will explain, but first we must consider a story about the Persian King Xerxes I. Athos' best-known historical association in antiquity was when Xerxes cut a canal through Athos' isthmus to Macedonia during his 480 B.C.E. invasion of Greece -- and analyzing his action and its treatment by ancient authors points us away from *effodere*.⁴⁰

Three ancient Latin poets - Catullus from the first century B.C.E. and Statius and Lucan from the first century C.E. - provided three themes with which to grasp this episode's significance. First, there is the power of iron. In his *carmina*, Catullus used the Athos channel

Augustine.

39 Sabine and Smith 228. "Pro" poses multiple possibilities for translation. For strictly geographical descriptions of Athos from antiquity, see Mela 2.30.2 (Romer 78), Pliny the Younger (Plinius Secundus) 4.72.1-73.6, Sequester 230.1, Servius (Honoratus) 12.701.5, Stuttaford 255, Rowland and Howe 173 (174 features a wonderful illustration that will become important in my "Effingere and Alexander Context" section), Gaertner 317, Fallon and Fantham 97, Zissos 357, Barich 230, Briscoe 500, and Johnson 54. For dictionary entries on Athos, see Lewis and Short 188 and Traupman 72. The former cites some of the ancient Latin authors who mentioned Athos. For more comprehensive entries, see *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, vol. 2, 1038 and Glare's *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol.1, 215.

40 For comments on Athos and Xerxes' canal from antiquity, see Catullus 66.46 (Uzzi and Thomson 121), Cicero, *De finibus*, 2.112.3 (Reid 217-218), Valerius Maximus 1.6(ext).1.14, Virgil, *Appendix Vergiliana*, 31 (Clausen et al. 20), Lucan 2.677 (Fox 51-52), Seneca the Younger, *Epigrammatica*, 239.5, 442.2, 461.1 (Riese 197, 332, 339), Pliny the Elder (Plinius Secundus) 4.37.2, Statius, *Silvae*, 4.3.56 (Coleman 118), Juvenal (Juvenalis) 10.174, Ampelius 13.4.3, Claudian, *Against Rufinus* 1, 1.336 (Platnauer (1) 50-51), Marcellinus 22.8.2 (Rolle (1) 212-213), Marcellinus 31.4.7 (Rolle (2) 404-405), Martianus 6.655.2 (Willis 231), and Sidonius 2.509 (Anderson 52-53). For Herodotus' seminal account of Xerxes' canal and the Hellespont bridge, see Herodotus 7.22-7.24 and 7.33-37 (Godley 334-339 and 346-353, respectively).

to express amazement at the physical manifestation of ascendant human power, writing, “What hope is there for hair when mountains yield to iron?”⁴¹ On one level, Xerxes’ canal was a marvel of human triumph over a mighty natural force. Symbolism may overwhelm fact, admittedly, because Xerxes did not really go “through” Athos proper, but across the more manageable isthmus behind it.⁴²

Second, there is rhetoric. The canal and the bridge over the Hellespont were traditionally treated by classical authors as rhetorical opportunities to denounce Xerxes as a disruptive transgressor of nature (or at the very least as megalomaniacal, as shown by Herodotus’ well-known account referenced above). Statius, as a loyal imperial poet, joined Catullus in beholding the “miracles of human endeavor...” and was more interested in glorifying Emperor Domitian’s road by presenting Xerxes’ feats as adynaton, or impossibilities in his *Silvae*.⁴³ Statius showed that Xerxes’ Athos was a rhetorical point of emphasis by comparison in writing as well as an achievement, albeit embellished in literature.

Finally, there is Julius Caesar. Though it occurred shortly after Cicero finished the *De re publica*, the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey featured great works of military engineering by the former. In his *Bellum Civile*, Lucan, less the loyal imperial poet than Statius, reproached Caesar for casting rocks into the sea and felling forests to build a bridge, equating him to an arrogant Xerxes and his own haughty, imperial-minded projects.⁴⁴ While Cicero might have favored Pompey over Caesar, both had the un-republican tendencies

41 Lee 109. This line was translated from the original passage cited above (66.46).

42 Green 248 and Quinn 362. The effort still took three years (483-480 B.C.E.) according to Herodotus (7.22). Rolfe 405: “[L]ater times have unanimously regarded all this as fabulous reading.” Upon inspecting the testimony of ancient authors, one should not discount sensationalism and literary manipulation as motivating factors in ancient writing. The various accounts of Athos tell as much about their authors’ opinions and times as they do about Xerxes.

43 Coleman 118. Coleman also notes that “By Juvenal’s time [late first and early second century C.E.] skepticism of both feats was expressed...” Criticism, of course, started centuries earlier. For Juvenal’s opinion, see Juvenal (*Iuvenalis*) 10.173-6. Cicero simply used Athos for antithesis in *De finibus* (2.112.3). The passage in the *Silvae* I refer to is at 4.3.56.

44 Lucan 2.677 (Fox 51-52). Fox 365: “In the imperial period Xerxes occurs in contexts about engineering ambitions, especially in reference to projects planned and/or executed by Julio-Claudian emperors. Xerxes thus serves to sound the note of criticism of so-called imperial *metalourgia* (“grand work projects”).” Fantham 213: Like Statius, Lucan also represented Xerxes’ act as adynaton.

that he wanted his fellow Romans to reject in favor of a noble return to the pre-Gracchian Golden Age of the Scipionic Circle, whose “values and social behavior...Cicero most admired.”⁴⁵ Lucan joined the later writers of antiquity who made Xerxes and his feats a standard of pomposity against which the criticisms of the imperial period could resonate more powerfully.

Thus, if *effodere* is substituted for *efficere* in the second sentence of the Fragment, the sentence shares at least some of the elements of Xerxes’ “impressive precedent” at Athos, including the potency of iron and rhetoric of emphasis.⁴⁶ Regardless of whether Xerxes’ infamy or Caesar’s megalomania factored prominently into Cicero’s thought process while he crafted this sentence, opening up a sizeable mountain at its base is a serious disruption of nature. It is unfit as an expression of *virtus* of the sort that Cicero lauded. Furthermore, there is no proof that Cicero ever used *effodere* in his other writings.⁴⁷ Such a *monumentum* is a reward only for dishonorable men, certainly not the likes of Romulus or Hercules. It would be an unvirtuous reminder like that which Xerxes left in the foothills of Athos, a tainted mark of engineering and shameless defilement—or so it was written afterwards. The reward for virtue is virtue itself.

C. ATHOS THE MONUMENT: *EFFINGERE* AND ALEXANDER CONTEXT

Besides more support from scholarship and exclusive support from Cicero himself, putting *effingere*, not *effodere*, in place of *efficere* would far better suit the context of the Fragment. Using *effingere* means that Mount Athos is sculpted into what amounts to a giant statue or memorial of someone great, perhaps antiquity’s greatest king. This image summons up thoughts of Dinocrates, an architect who boldly envisioned the shaping of Athos into the figure

45 Wood 65 and Zetzel xiii (quote). Rudd and Powell xxii: “Neither Pompey nor Caesar, [Cicero] says, has given a thought to the proper aims of the statesman as defined in the *Republic*; each only wants power for himself.” Ibid. xviii: “Scipio never appeared to threaten the stability of the Roman state in the way that the later generals, Marius, Sulla, Caesar, and Pompey did.” For the Scipionic Circle, see most conveniently Wood 65. See also Sabine and Smith 5, 28, 34-38, 47.

46 Quinn 361 (quote).

47 The opposite is true, or at least significantly truer, for *effingere*. He used *effingere* three times (*Div.* 2.94 (Falconer 466-467), *Nat.* 3.23 (Rackham 306-307), and *Tusc.* 1.61 (King 72-73)) referring to appearance, creation, and representation. Only Halm posited *effodere*.

of his future patron, Alexander the Great.⁴⁸ According to Vitruvius, the favor-seeking architect interrupted Alexander's royal tribunal sporting a stirring, Herculean appearance: a poplar wreath, lion skin, and club. Appealing to Alexander's self-identification with Hercules was a successful ploy. That Alexander looked up to the demigod gauges more precisely the extent of the latter's *virtus* without ignoring the former's characteristic vanity. After injudicious Dinocrates declared the idea to Alexander, the king commended the design but condemned the site as a matter of good judgment (the area lacked cornfields to furnish the proposed city with a reliable, abundant food supply).⁴⁹

Alexander was of two minds. On one hand, illustrated above by Vitruvius, he appreciated ambition. The impracticality and imprudence of the Athos monument drove him to refuse it, not its grand, daring intent. The monument was unsatisfactory upon consideration of what it would practically entail, but through its flaws Dinocrates' talents shone in rays of Alexandrian pride and "magnificence, boldness, and ostentation."⁵⁰ Alexander liked the Athos idea and the man who thought of it, later commissioning him to lay out Alexandria. On the other hand, illustrated by later writers Plutarch and Lucian, he sought to limit ostentation. According to Plutarch, Alexander declined the Athos monument not due to any

48 Osann also made this connection (see his 307): "Etenim Ciceronem suspicor hic respexisse ad inanem illam iactantiam architetti clarissimi Dinocratis..." The earliest author, Latin or otherwise, to mention Athos' conversion to a statue, let alone in the image of Alexander, was Vitruvius in the preface to the second book of his *Ten Books on Architecture* (see Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, 2.pr.2.5). See Rowland and Howe 33 for a translation of the passage and 173-174 for commentary and an illustration of Dinocrates' grand idea. See the Athos entry on *BrillOnline Reference Works* or *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopedia* for more references. I would like to thank my mentor in this project, Dr. John Oksanish, for his work on Vitruvius that provided formative background on this section and my understanding of the Alexandrian concept of the monument.

49 Vitruvius 2.pr.2.5. Rowland and Howe 33: Dinocrates, more of an impetuous, seductive sycophant than a studied architect, planned "to carve all Mount Athos into the image of a man," a city in one hand and a junction of rivers in the other. The plan is a more developed version of what one might visualize for the Fragment monument. This was not the only example of the audacity of Alexander's artists or of Alexander's seemingly-impulsive taste for ambitious, grand projects. See e.g. Plutarch, *Lives. Alexander*, 72 (Perrin 427): "This project [the Athos monument], it is true, Alexander had declined; but now he was busy devising and contriving with his artists projects far more strange and expensive than this."

50 Loc. cit.

practical failings, but because Xerxes had already memorialized his arrogance there with his canal.⁵¹ One great king refused to repeat the shortsighted moral failing of another. The link between Alexander's two paradoxical attitudes was his overriding concern for future judgment of his greatness, the redeeming element of his vanity. He believed that certain displays of magnificence would confer the same quality to his fame, while others (for example, Athos and its damning connections to Xerxes) would irrevocably damage it.

While genuine modesty is scarce here, Alexander considered two kinds of monuments in pursuit of posterity's favor: a physical testament to his greatness, or a statement of personal substance worth more than any awesome rock carved in his name. With one eye trained on the future, Alexander, Lucian shows, would have preferred the scales of his duality to tip toward his perceived capacity to rise above hubris rather than his penchant for encomiums of praise.⁵² A monument to the great king had to be sensitive not only to the king's greatness but also to how that monument represented that greatness. If a colossal monument dedicated to Alexander was not commensurate to or reflective of his *virtus*, then certainly no monument would have sufficed for Hercules or Romulus. If the only lasting reward worthy of Alexander was posterity's recognition of his *virtus*, then Hercules and Romulus deserved the highest such reward.

Thus, using *effingere* ties the *monumentum* in the Fragment to the Alexandrian conception of a monument that Vitruvius, Plutarch, and Lucian tried to convey in their writings. That is, edifices are good, but the real reward of the greatest, most virtuous man is conferred upon him by the timeless, echoing legend of his *virtus*: "The bravest never [fail to enjoy the fruits of] courage, energy, and endurance."⁵³ In this way, Cicero argued it does not matter if divine men are resurrected or not, for their immaterial reward of legacy is

51 Plutarch, *Moralia. On the Fortune of Alexander*, 2.2 (Babbitt 435). "But," said he, "let Athos remain as it is. It is enough that it be the memorial of the arrogance of one king..."

52 See Lucian, *Essays in Portraiture Defended*, 9 (Harmon 304-307). "She praised Alexander for his greatness of soul, and observed that thereby he had erected a monument greater than Athos itself in the minds of those who should think of him ever and anon in time to come: for it took no little determination to contemn so marvellous an honour."

53 N.39 above.

itself divine.⁵⁴ Their divinity is secured not in heavens, but fables.

D. ATHOS AND OLYMPUS CONTEXT

Though Hercules and Romulus lie at the positive extreme of *virtus*, and Mount Athos and Mount Olympus lie at the positive extreme of natural greatness, it is not for this reason that they do not suffice as rewards according to Cicero. Indeed, the latter are mighty mountains with mythological implications. Olympus is the citadel of the Greek gods and goddesses and figures prominently in Greek mythology. Athos, though it was frequently noted for its height and size in Latin literature around the turn of the Common Era, “is not remarkable as mountains go.”⁵⁵

The mountain was famous for more than its physical characteristics.⁵⁶ The literary tradition of Athos’ involvement in stories of mythologized classical figures, as told by ancient Latin writers, is sporadically distributed across four centuries from Virgil to Claudian in the following examples: Jupiter struck Athos with his lightning bolts either in thunderstorms or, more implicitly, in the classical version of creation;⁵⁷ Aeneas, hearing the name of his nemesis Turnus, “clashe[d] his weapons terribly...vast as Athos,”⁵⁸ Hercules would not groan, whether Athos bore down on him or his burning by the Oetean torch resembled a blazing Athos;⁵⁹ Apollo

54 Rudd and Powell 70: “What riches will you offer as an incentive to such a man? What kinds of power? What kingdoms? Such things in his view are human possessions; *he regards his own goods as divine* [emphasis added].”

55 Quinn 361, with a more technical point made at Green 248. For comments on Athos’ magnitude from antiquity, see Livy 44.11 (Schlesinger 124-125), Ovid (Ovidius), *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, 30 (Johnson 45 and 54), Germanicus 584, Mela 2.31.1 (Romer 78), Seneca the Younger (Seneca junior), *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1153, *Epigrammatica*, 442.2 (Riese 332), Statius, *Thebaidos*, 5.52, Claudian, *The Gothic War*, 26 (Platnauer (2) 138-139), and Marcellinus 28.8.2 (Rolle (1) 212-213). Literary techniques, of course, are a significant factor in Athos’ classical description.

56 For *inclusus* or “famous” Athos, see Livy 44.11 (Schlesinger 124-125) and Briscoe 500.

57 Virgil (Vergilius), *Georgics*, 1.332 (Fallon and Fantham 58), Petronius, *Satyricon*, *fragmenta*, 27.3 (Branham and Kinney 156), and Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 1.664 (Barich 52). See Zissos 357 for Valerius Flaccus’ imitation of Virgil’s reference to Athos in the *Georgics*.

58 Virgil, *Aeneid*, 12.701 (Fairclough 349).

59 Seneca the Younger, *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1383 (Fitch 450-451) and 1730 (Fitch 476-477).

drove his “horses” past Athos one morning, illuminating the waves for Jason and his Argonauts;⁶⁰ Venus once filled the air with her rage, first making Athos wonder,⁶¹ and one giant armed himself with Athos in a crossfire of mountain-throwing giants.⁶²

Athos certainly was an ancient Latin literary fixture from mundane anecdotes to oft-told tales of antiquity. The folk tales and the well-documented exploits of Xerxes and Alexander make Athos significant and help explain why Cicero might have written it into the *De re publica*. Clues in this precise area of classical philology can safely rely only on surviving primary sources as relevant as possible to the writer and writing in question. Speculation will always persist as long as sources remain missing, but it does not have to preclude what can be established from the sources that do remain.

It would make sense that for men like Hercules and Romulus, unlike virtually all others, mountains, irrespective of name or fame, were not enough. Thus, it is not mere glorification or adulation but the realization that such men attain a reward in the afterlife equal to or greater than resurrection itself: undying *virtus* via divine remembrance.⁶³ The inadequacy of Athos and Olympus reveal the surpassing magnitude of divine rewards, and rather than accepting arrogance, Cicero turns it against the impertinence of Xerxes and the rashness of Dinocrates, implying that if mountains could not be molded for Hercules and Romulus, they could not be molded for any man.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION, SUMMARIZED

(1) **Priscian** – The argument for Priscian’s authorship of the first sentence of the Fragment hinges on the opinion of one scholar and one manuscript. Priscian’s fragments do not support it and the Priscian consensus is one of popular repetition more than sound reason. The *De re publica* supports Cicero’s authorship.

(2) **Absurda and the First Sentence** – Hertz probably printed *absurde* because it made more sense than *absorde*, the choice of three Priscian manuscripts, and was closer to the manuscripts than

60 Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 2.76 (Barich 63).

61 Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 2.201 (Barich 67).

62 Claudian, *Shorter Poems LII*, 68 (Platnauer (1) 284-285).

63 This line of thought surely did not fuse well with early Christianity, and for that reason Augustine and other Latin Fathers might not have been so eager to quote more of the *De re publica* for fear of subverting their own arguments.

absurda, if he even considered it. Priscian editors and seven *De re publica* scholars overrule Hertz with *absurda*.

(3) **Funditus efficere and the Second Sentence** – *Funditus* was challenged only by Powell and Fott, the latter of whom is not an editor and simply followed Powell. Though their work is some of the most recent scholarship on the *De re publica*, they do not have enough weight or reason for *funditus* to be changed at all. *Efficere*, though held by all but two Priscian manuscripts, is clearly a placeholder acknowledged by seven scholars. *Effodere* and *effingere* are possible replacements for *efficere*.

(4) **Quis and the Third Sentence** – *Quis* is unsupported by Fragment translators and the *De re publica*. It is grammatically incompatible with the Fragment. *Quis* could be a “transferred” usage, yielding “how,” or an interrogative pronoun, yielding “what.” The latter is better supported by Cicero and exclusively supported by his translators.

(5) **The Exception** – Fott translated *exceptio* as “limitation.” In this way, the bodies of Hercules and Romulus are symbolically prohibited from resurrection. This is “absurd” because they were made gods from men; Cicero distinguished between deification of the spirit or soul and the presupposed reward of divinity, resurrection of the body.

(6) **Athos the Monument: Effodere and Xerxes Context** – *Effodere* in place of *efficere*, while it has precedent through Xerxes as a monumental action, contradicts the context and meaning of the Fragment. It also goes unsupported by Cicero and scholarship, of which only one editor supported *effodere*.

(7) **Athos the Monument: Effingere and Alexander Context** – *Effingere* in place of *efficere* is better supported by scholarship and exclusively supported by Cicero. Moreover, it better suits the context of the Fragment because its ties to Alexander aptly convey Cicero’s message that the real *monumentum* for Hercules and Romulus is, and can only be, posterity’s reverence for their *virtus*.

(8) **Athos and Olympus Context** – In the Fragment, Mount Athos and Mount Olympus are not any less for not being enough to reward the most virtuous. Rather, nothing on Earth can justly reward Hercules and Romulus in the first place. This goes back to the understanding that the rewards of the highest *virtus*, embodied by divine men, are not physical but rather everlasting perceptions of such men as divine with respect to their *virtus*. Legacies, not

bodies, are resurrected by the collective perception of posterity.

Therefore, the Latin and English versions of the Fragment, respectively, read as follows:

...quid ergo illa sibi vult absurdia exceptio? nisi si quis Athonem
pro monumento vult funditus effingere. quis enim est Athos aut Olympus
tantus?...

...What, therefore, does that absurd exception want for itself? Unless
someone wants to mold Athos entirely as a monument. For what Athos or
Olympus is so great?...

LOCATION AND DETERMINATION

This inquiry started with Priscian’s testimony that the Fragment was quoted from Book III. Subsequent discussion has dealt with issues of text, translation, interpretation, and context within the Fragment itself. Settling the *exceptio* situated the Fragment in Laelius’ speech, the part where he delineates the “Rewards for Virtue,” which in this case is perpetual, unmatched honor for the unparalleled virtue of Hercules and Romulus.⁶⁴

There are two prevailing arguments for placing the fragment: Büchner returned it to section 40 (Ziegler’s 40 is Mai’s 28), specifically after the second sentence of Cicero in Lactantius’ *Divinae Institutiones* 5, 18, 4-8, a position advocated earlier by Wilsing.

vult...paene virtus honorem, nec est virtutis ulla alia merces...
quam tamen illa...accipit facile, exigit non acerbe...(Fragment)...
huic tu viro quas divitias obicies? quae imperia? quae regna? qui
ista putat humana, sua bona divina iudicat.⁶⁵

*He wishes... mostly for the honor of virtue, and there is not
any other reward of virtue... however how he receives these things
easily, he does not drive them out fiercely... to what man do you
present these riches? These powers? These reigns? He, who thinks
that those human affairs, judges his own goods divine.*

64 Fott 99.

65 Krarup 138 and Ziegler 100. Wilsing and Büchner inserted the Fragment “post acerbe” or “after acerbe.”

Zetzel put the Fragment at the end of that section, which he summarized helpfully as “The soul is immortal; the rewards of virtue are not material.”⁶⁶

[40b] Augustine, *City of God* 22.4: *When Cicero asserted that Hercules and Romulus became gods, he said:* “It was not their bodies that were taken up to the sky; nature would not permit what is derived from the earth to stay anywhere but on the earth.” [40a3]...[40d]...[40e]...[40a 1-2, 4-5]...[3 inc. 5] . . . unless someone wants to raise up Mount Athos from its base as a monument. But what Athos or Olympus is big enough . . .⁶⁷

The former proposal, according to Büchner, sees the Fragment and Cicero’s third sentence in that paragraph, pondering what can possibly be offered to a virtuous man, as a climax of rhetorical questions.⁶⁸ While that line of Cicero is full of rhetorical questions, the Fragment is hyperbole, which rhetorical questions do not logically follow. Those questions and the sentences preceding them try to define *virtus* and its rewards in general. The Fragment describes an extreme exception to general *virtus* and reveals its rewards by the use of hyperbole; thus it does not fit within nor should it precede this paragraph.

In addition, Lactantius interspersed those lines of the *De re publica* with commentary. If he was trying to respond to the text, it is not likely that he would skip the three sentences of the Fragment without even mentioning what they said or how he felt about them. Also, the second sentence does not correlate well with the *exceptio*. In this case, the *exceptio* would be how *virtus* does not sharply demand honor. This does not work because then the *exceptio* is not “absurd” and Cicero does not oppose a limitation on *virtus*’ demands; his thinking on justice in this section advocates *virtus* rewarded proportionately to what it deserves. The Fragment would have a contradictory effect in the Lactantius context.

Zetzel was right to avoid Wilsing and Büchner’s speculation and put the Fragment after the Lactantius passage (for it surely does not go before and does not interpolate), but he did not account for

⁶⁶ Zetzel xlvi.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 71.

⁶⁸ Büchner 320.

two other fragments that also come after it.

(a) Paraphrasing what preceded the Hercules and Romulus fragment, Augustine said, “They seem to argue strongly to themselves against the resurrection of bodies...”⁶⁹ Sabine and Smith further clarified by saying, “The fragment is perhaps part of an argument setting forth the divine nature of the soul.”⁷⁰ Apparently, there was an argument between two or more of the interlocutors over resurrection, and it was probably Laelius who set forth the divine nature of the soul.

Zetzel erred in having the Hercules and Romulus fragment at the beginning of section 40 and the Fragment at the end. In doing so, the relation between the two fragments is ignored, and the fragments no longer move the argument from the broad survey of *virtus* (Lactantius’ paragraph) to particular instances of great men. Zetzel is quite alone in his dissent. Ten scholars of the *De re publica* from Mai, the editor who published the first overall edition, to Fott, who published the most recent English translation, all have the Hercules and Romulus fragment after Lactantius’ paragraph.⁷¹ This fragment must have been Laelius’ conclusion to the argument over resurrection, confirming that indeed their spirits or souls were carried up into the sky, not their bodies. The Fragment thus fits into place immediately following, painting a vivid picture of the striking insufficiency of Athos and Olympus in order for Cicero’s readers to understand the notion of a resurrected spirit as the reward for the highest *virtus*.⁷²

(b) All that is left is to determine what comes after the Fragment in Section 40. Zetzel decided to deviate from Ziegler when he took a Nonius fragment (40c) out of the Section and transferred it to his “Uncertain location in Book 3” section: “[40c] The bravest never . . . bravery, energy, and endurance...”⁷³ In doing so, he not only deviated from Ziegler, but also from nine other editors who put

⁶⁹ N.38 above.

⁷⁰ Sabine and Smith 221.

⁷¹ Mai 257, Heinrich 112, Osann 289-290, Charles 192-193, Sabine and Smith 221, Krarup 133, Ziegler 100-101, Rudd and Powell 71, Powell 109, and Fott 100.

⁷² Krarup 133: Reitzeustein asserted the same placement.

⁷³ Zetzel 77. He sourced his decision in the uncertain and patchy nature of the text. Zetzel must not have trusted Mai’s aid for the meaning and gap (Mai 257).

the fragment after the Hercules and Romulus fragment.⁷⁴ The 40c fragment further explains the intangible, potentially-divine rewards in store for men of virtue, therefore it properly follows the Fragment after a gap in which Laelius probably elaborated that nothing on Earth can reward the best men. And thus, the solitary change to the accepted ordering of three parts of Section 40 (that is, the Lactantius paragraph, the Hercules and Romulus fragment, and the reward fragment) is the insertion of the Fragment (in bold below) between the Hercules and Romulus fragment and the reward fragment:

Herculem et Romulum ex hominibus deos esse factos... quorum non corpora sunt in caelum elata (neque enim natura pateretur ut id quod esset e terra nisi in terra maneret)...⁷⁵ quid ergo illa sibi vult absurdia exceptio? nisi si quis Athonem pro monumento vult funditus effingere. quis enim est Athos aut Olympus tantus?... numquam viri fortissimi fortitudinis, in pigritatis, patientiae...⁷⁶

their bodies...were not raised to heaven; for nature would not allow that something with an earthly origin should exist anywhere except on earth...⁷⁷ **What, therefore, does that absurd exception want for itself? Unless someone wants to mold Athos entirely as a monument. For what Athos or Olympus is so great?**...the most valiant men never {fail to receive the rewards} of valour, energy, and endurance...⁷⁸

74 Mai 257, Heinrich 113, Osann 290, Charles 193, Sabine and Smith 222, Krarup 133, Ziegler 101, and Rudd and Powell 71. Only Powell (116) agreed with him. Again, there is a discrepancy between Rudd and Powell's edition and Powell's Oxford Classical Text of the *De re publica*.

75 Powell 109.

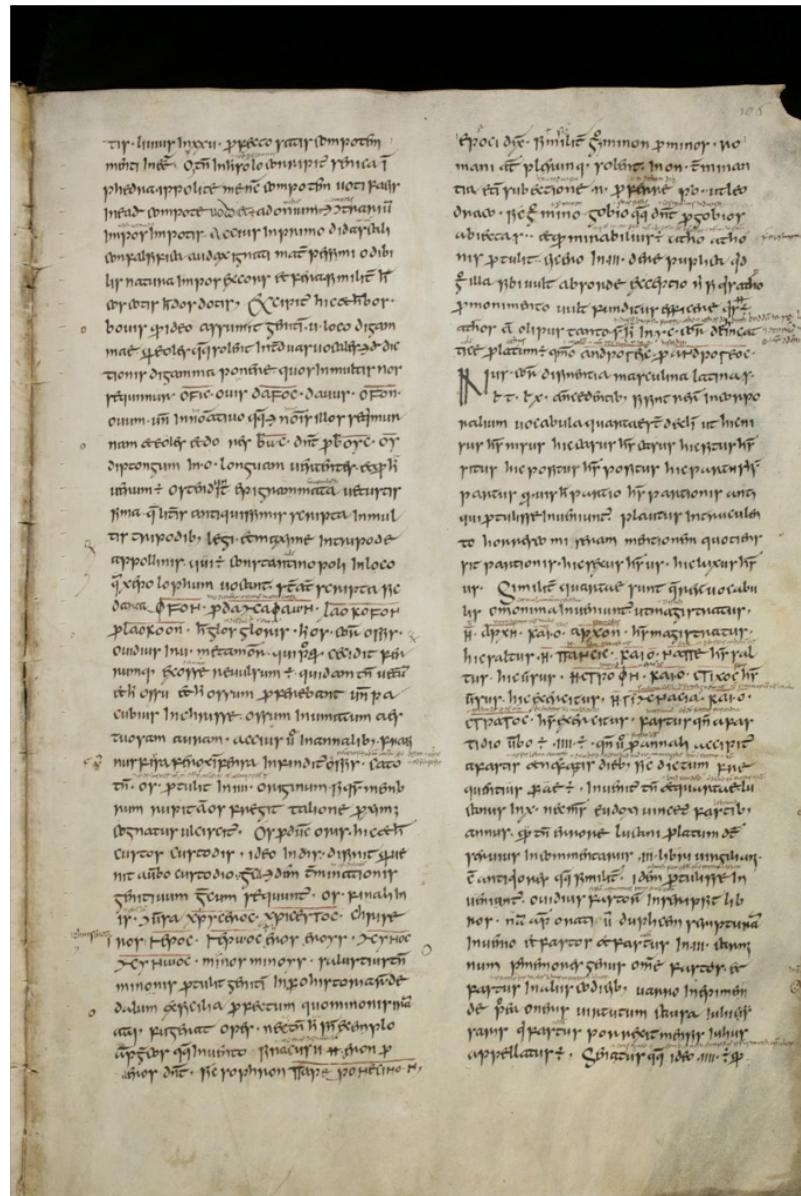
76 Ziegler 101.

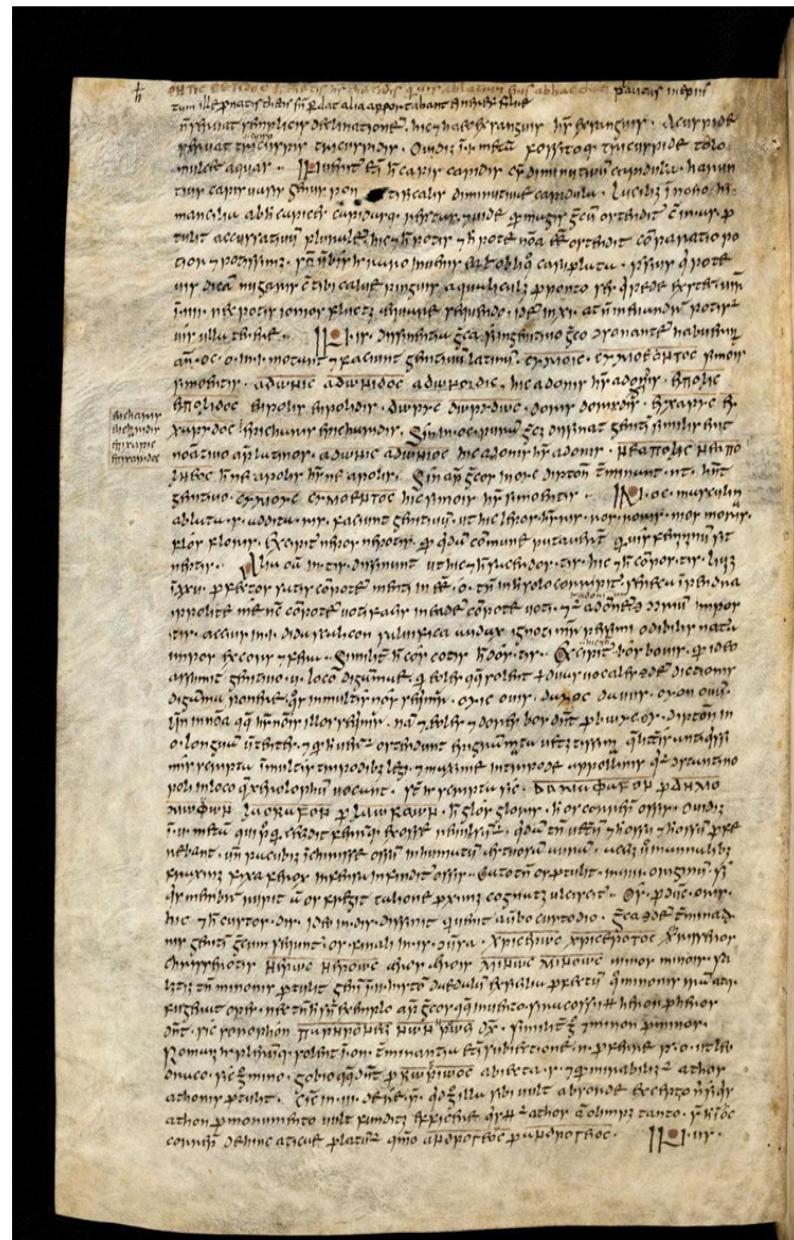
77 Rudd and Powell 71.

78 Loc. cit.

APPENDIX

The following are images of Manuscripts G and K (two manuscript-copies of Priscian's *Institutio de Arte Grammatica* mentioned and cited on page five) in that order. The Fragment is at the top-right corner of the Manuscript G page and the bottom of the Manuscript K page.





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SAVAGERY AND CIVILISATION

CHANGES IN LITERARY DEPICTIONS OF HERACLES

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will discuss the changing role of Heracles in literature due to intellectual, political, and intertextual pressures, with particular focus on 5th century B.C. Athens, and Rome under Augustus and Nero. I will cover the evolution in his characterisation from violent civiliser to philosophical figure, and then back to brutality under Nero. The role of Heracles in a range of texts will be discussed, with the intertextuality and context for each being used to draw conclusions as to why his characterisation changes. I will focus primarily on his civilising role, and how the relevance of that to authors fluctuates due to changing societal pressures. By the end of the paper, it will be concluded that Heracles' inherent brutality is inescapable for long periods of time, and that it is key to his long-term appeal as a mutable and relevant hero.

SAVAGERY AND CIVILISATION CHANGES IN LITERARY DEPICTIONS OF HERACLES OLIVER GERLACH

Heracles is one of the best known of all mythic heroes, present in works ranging from Homer's *Iliad* to Kevin Sorbo's *Hercules and the Amazon Women*. His popularity has endured for well over two thousand years, with depictions changing constantly to reflect the environment of the time. Far more than just the musclebound animal-slaughterer of most modern interpretations, he has been a literary hero, a cultic deity, and an allegorical figure, with different significances to each interpretation. The focus of this study is a cross-cultural perspective on the literary Heracles¹ and the fluctuations in his characterisation over time due to external pressures, both intellectual and political.

The literary Heracles is an extensively discussed figure, both in ancient literature and modern scholarship. This scholarship, however, tends to vary between two extremes. At one end of the spectrum is the extensive survey, such as Galinsky's comprehensive overview *The Herakles Theme* (1972).² The opposite extreme is the specific analysis of individual works, such as Hardie's various studies of Virgil.³ Each of these options has its advantages and disadvantages: the survey approach gives a good surface level account of changes in presentation of Heracles, but is somewhat lacking in analysis of cultural influence and intertext, while the detailed approach studies individual works very effectively but tends to ignore the bigger picture of Heracles' cultural significance and flexibility. There is a distinct lack of scholarship aiming for balance between the two approaches; the intertextuality of literary depictions of Heracles is a sorely underwritten topic. Too often, scholarship views Graeco-Roman literature as a monolithic whole, divorcing it from the complex interplay of external and literary pressures essential to an understanding of cultural use of literature in favour

1 The focus of this study is entirely on literary depictions between the 5th century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.; the wealth of art and material evidence available is far too large a topic to cover here.

2 Also Stafford (2012), Blanshard (2005), and Rawlings and Bowden (2005).

3 E.g. Hardie (1986); also Galinsky (1990) and Zarker (1972).

of an “ahistorical” method of literary analysis.⁴ The dialogic nature of classical literature means that all of these works are inherently connected through intertext and a shared understanding of their changing cultural context and significance; a connection often neglected in favour of chronological survey or individual textual analysis.⁵ This dissertation aims to begin to redress these issues, avoiding the chronological survey by discussing the influences on and cultural significance of a range of different depictions and aiming to reunite the fields of cultural, contextual study and literary analysis.

CHAPTER 1: HERACLES AND THE NEW CHALLENGES OF THE POLIS

Before the 5th century B.C., Heracles fills an important role: he slaughters monsters, clearing the way for civilisation to exist in formerly wild places. This civilising role, however, should not necessarily be taken to mean that he is himself civilised. The archaic Heracles enables civilisation to exist, but once he has paved the way for this he does not participate; he is a wild figure, not part of the cooperative life of the *polis*.⁶

The tragic Heracles of the 5th century B.C. is a different figure to the Heracles of Archaic art and poetry. The tensions between the modern civilisation of the 5th century, the existence of which is enabled by Heracles’ actions, and Heracles’ own wildness are explored in a number of plays. Only four surviving tragedies make significant use of Heracles, but these give enough evidence to examine the significance of Heracles and his civilising role in the changing intellectual landscape of 5th century BC Athens.

1.1 HERACLES THE MONSTER: *TRACHINIAE*

Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* is among the earliest surviving plays to make extensive use of Heracles. Euripides’ *Alcestis* may possibly predate it, but in all likelihood the *Trachiniae* was performed before any of the other plays discussed in this chapter.⁷ The presentation

⁴ Bassnett (1993), 35-37.

⁵ Bakhtin (1981) 5, 278-9.

⁶ The archaic Heracles is primarily depicted fighting monsters; artistic depictions lend themselves to physical achievements rather than intellectual ones. For examples, see Stafford 2012 chapters 1-2, Blanshard 2005 pp26-30.

⁷ The dating of *Trachiniae* is complex; the formerly popular theory placing it in approximately 450 BC on grounds of style and structure (i.e. Reinhardt 1979

of Heracles in this play is primarily unsympathetic; he is a bestial, violent, old-world hero, outdated relative to the changed values of 5th century B.C. Athens (namely an increased focus on democracy, co-operation, and unity). His drunken conduct (268-78) leads, albeit indirectly, to Iphitus’ treacherous murder, a level of brutality far removed from the behaviour of the comic Heracles the drunkard (*φωνμένος*, 268) and reminiscent of the drunken rampages of centaurs.⁸ In fact, his behaviour is often distinctly centaurian throughout the play. The callous violence with which Heracles slaughters Eurytus and sacks Oechalia purely in order to possess Iole (359-65) parallels Achelous’ capture of Deianeira and the resulting violence between Heracles and Achelous (10, 18-27, 497-530). Deianeira’s opening speech betrays Heracles’ flaws from a very early stage in the play:

τέλος δ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀγώνιος καλῶς,
εἰ δὴ καλῶς. λέχος γὰρ Ἡρακλεῖ κριτὸν
ξυντᾶσ' ἀεί τιν' ἐκ φόβου φόβον τρέφω,
κείνου προκηραίνουσα: νῦξ γὰρ εἰσάγει
καὶ νῦξ ἀπωθεῖ διαδεδεγμένη πόνον.
κάφύσαμεν δὴ παῖδας, οὓς κεῖνός ποτε,
γῆτης ὅπως ἄρουραν ἔκτοπον λαβών,
σπείρων μόνον προσεῖδε κάξαμῶν ὄπαξ.

Then Zeus the contest-master came to a good decision- if it was good. for though I am the claimed bride of Heracles I grow fear on fear in my worry for him, for night brings pain which the next night clears away. And we have children, yet he only sees them like a farmer does his remote crops: Only when he sows and when he reaps. (26-33)

pp42-5) is now often contested; there is insufficient evidence to draw any firm conclusions. Davies 1991 ppxviii-xix, Stafford 2012 p80 and Hoey 1979 pp210-232 offer further discussion.

⁸ Note that Lichas’ account of Heracles’ behaviour appears to be not entirely true; the messenger later directly accuses him of lying about Iole (419-433). Even when bending the truth to make Heracles seem more sympathetic, Lichas is unable to paint an entirely positive picture of Heracles’ deeds. There is no way to forgive these acts.

Heracles has delivered Deianeira from one evil, only to leave her constantly terrified (28-9) and neglected, aside from when he wishes to fulfil his legendary sexual appetites (33). Deianeira's fear may be for Heracles rather than of him, but the emphatic repetition of her fear, “φόβου” – “φόβον” (28), shows that her life with Heracles is far from happy. The conflict between Achelous and Heracles was one between two monsters; the bestial, sexually voracious Heracles is no better than the physically monstrous Achelous. Heracles is, in fact, worse than Achelous in a number of respects. Achelous' suit towards Deianeira is presented as reasonably legitimate (εξήτει πατρός, 9-10), seeking her as a wife (νυμφείων... μνηστήρ, 6-9) while Heracles' towards Iole is clearly not. Heracles seeks Iole not as a legitimate wife, but as a secret lover (“κρύψιον...λέχος”, 360), and when he explicitly fails to obtain her father's approval (359) he sacks an entire city (353-4) and then sends Iole home to Trachis, reportedly without even informing his herald Lichas of her name or parentage (314-5). It is later revealed (419-26) that Lichas does in fact know her name, but the impression that he does not serves to present Heracles in an even more negative light through the first part of the play. Through Heracles' slaughter of innocents and sacking of cities, Sophocles presents him as an enemy of civilisation, just like the monsters whose extermination built his fame. Heracles' murder of Lichas (772-80), explicitly described as “with no cause” (οὐδὲν αἴτιον, 773), is exactly the sort of crime against which Pindar's heroic Heracles would bring just punishment.⁹

The important turning points of the play focus on significant elements of civilisation: marriage and sacrifice. Invariably, both of these features are perverted by Heracles.¹⁰ Heracles performs the duties of a modern 5th century hero, organising his household (156-78), marrying Deianeira (27-8), and sacrificing dutifully (287-8, 752-61), but each of these is polluted with archaic, brutal violence. His son Hyllus is pressured into contributing to the death of his own father (1206-7), his marriage is destroyed through the forced, violent abduction of Iole, an act explicitly Heracles' fault rather than her own (431-3), and his dutiful sacrifices are a celebration of the unprovoked destruction of an entire city and slaughter of the royal family (288).

⁹ Galinsky (1972) 49.

¹⁰ Segal (1981) 62.

This warped, inappropriate sacrifice, celebrating the unjust destruction of an entire city, bears further examination as a major aspect of Heracles' presentation in this play. On returning from Oechalia, Heracles marks out sacred precincts to construct altars. The word used is “όπιζεται” (237), a significant and serious ritual act of civilising.¹¹ This is used to describe Heracles marking out limits and drawing the lines of civilisation and religion in wild country. Such delineation fits his common role as a civilising figure, bringing order, religion, and culture to the wilderness. The context in which it is placed, however, serves to undermine this civilising power. Heracles is performing an act of civilisation and construction in order to celebrate its opposite, the destruction of an entire city. This juxtaposition brings the tension between the civilising Heracles and the primal, destructive Heracles into sharp relief, a contrast also highlighted by the choral ode comparing the city of Trachis and the surrounding wilderness (633ff).

The entire play centres around this internal conflict between the two aspects of Heracles, and the ultimate victor is the barbaric Heracles. While Heracles tries to be a proper member of the civilised *polis*, setting out written instructions for how his family are to behave in his absence (156-78), he cannot keep his bestial nature constrained for long. He cannot be forced into domestic life, no matter how hard writers like Pindar have tried to portray him as a virtuous model and ideal athlete.¹² By the end of the play, Heracles is a wild beast. He describes the poisoned cloak as “ἀμφίβληστρον” (1052), a hunting net. The cloak, a traditional return gift and mark of civilised tradition,¹³ has been perverted by Nessus' blood, a reminder of Heracles' archaic monster-hunting past, and transformed into a hunting net for the capture and slaughter of wild beasts. The brutality of Heracles' death is far removed from the relative civilisation of the start of the play. The foam that shows the true nature of Nessus' blood rises from the earth (ἐκ δὲ γῆς, ὅθεν

¹¹ c.f. Herodotus 3.142, Euripides *Helen*, 1670.

¹² Pindar's Heracles (*Olympian* 3) is a model for athletes; he is a solitary, disciplined figure who shows physical perfection and is reliably victorious. This does not, however, mean that he is a model for ordinary citizens, who should prioritise the good of the *polis* above such concern for individual glory; a conflict likely to cause tensions.

¹³ Segal (1981) 64.

προύκετ', ἀναζέουσι θρομβώδεις ἄφροι, 701-4) like the autochthonous monsters of pre-civilised Greece (ό γηγενῆς στρατὸς Γιγάντων, 1058-9). The blood itself is described as ancient (πάλαι, 555, 1141), another reminder of Heracles' past and true nature that he cannot escape. The primitive savagery at the core of Heracles' person is deadly and antithetical to civilisation: Heracles cannot hope to live in the modern world and must instead die, dragged away from family life and ultimately towards death by his own archaic brutality.

Following Heracles' death, a commonly accepted part of this story at the time was his apotheosis,¹⁴ evident from numerous 5th century BC vases depicting Heracles' marriage to Hebe.¹⁵ Although it was not explicitly shown in *Trachiniae*, it seems likely, given this pervasive view, that Sophocles intended Heracles' death to be followed by an ascent to Olympus. The apotheosis is alluded to (1208-10), although this "cure" (ἰατῆρα, 1209) may just be an end to his suffering rather than a deification. Heracles' apotheosis is achieved through a ritual cleansing; his body is burned, erasing his wrongs to some extent and making his modern cult more acceptable. He has been purified of his crimes, so his role in the 5th century world as a cult figure and deity is reasonable, even if his life and heroism were less appropriate for the period. Deification does not, however, wipe away crimes entirely. Sophocles' gods are not benevolent and flawed, but often cruel, and he shows an acceptance of the divinity of other less than pleasant figures.¹⁶

More important than Heracles' own position after his death is the symbolic function of the pyre. Heracles has finally performed a ritual correctly, acting as his own ritual scapegoat. He may have had to die to enable this, but now, free from pollution, civilisation can reassert itself, paving the way for the modern world and enabling its survival free from the risk of destruction by Heracles and his brutality.¹⁷ Heracles' apotheosis functions not only to transform him from a man to a god, but also from an archaic hero focused on physical achievements (Pindar *Olympian* 3) to a more modern tragic

14 Segal (1981) 100.

15 Stafford (2012) 86.

16 Segal (1981) 105.

17 Segal (1981) 101.

hero in his final few moments.¹⁸ Heracles' characterisation at the end of this play brings him to a depiction similar to his starting point in Euripides' *Heracles*, a more recognisably tragic hero, no longer entirely outdated, ready to be propelled into the next stage of his literary life as a more thoughtful and well-behaved figure.

Even in his final moments, though, Heracles cannot entirely shake off his destructive nature. Hyllus is still forced to unwillingly marry Iole (1236-7). Heracles has ensured that she remains a part of his family, still functioning as his captive prize even after his death. He has progressed, but not repented; the continuation of his character development must occur in later plays.

1.2 HERACLES THE HERO: *ALCESTIS*

Euripides' *Alcestis*, first performed in 438 BC, falls close to the middle of the range of possible dates for *Trachiniae*. As such, the chronological order of the two plays is impossible to define and *Alcestis* cannot be viewed as a continuation of any rehabilitation of Heracles that may be visible in *Trachiniae*. *Alcestis* is, however, the earliest complete surviving play by Euripides, definitively placed before his *Heracles* in the narrative of Heracles' developing characterisation. *Alcestis* is an unusually complex play; as the fourth play in a sequence, it does not fit into standard definitions of tragedy. Generally seen as straddling the borderline between tragedy and satyr plays, *Alcestis* is a play with so many possible interpretations that no definitive understanding of any aspect of it is possible.¹⁹ Due to this generic complication, the presentation of Heracles in *Alcestis* is clearly radically different from Sophocles' treatment of him in *Trachiniae*.

Certain aspects of the characterisation of Heracles in the two plays are similar; much like the Heracles of *Trachiniae*, the version depicted in *Alcestis* is an archaic hero, able only to solve problems through extreme violence (69, 844-52) rather than thought. He is a poor speaker (1008-36), and feels somewhat out of place amidst the relative eloquence of the other characters.²⁰ When drunk, however, (772ff) he is far more loquacious, outlining an entire philosophy of life. This drunken philosophising, while reminiscent of the more

18 Segal (1981) 105.

19 Luschting & Roisman (2003) 4-5.

20 Luschting & Roisman (2003) 153.

thoughtful Heracles of Euripides' later *Heracles*, is clearly in the same archaic mode as the rest of Heracles' behaviour; it is primarily based on the determination and wild physical energy seen in Pindar's *Olympian 3*.

For the most part, however, Heracles is presented in a manner almost identical to that of standard depictions of him in comedies; the comic Heracles is a far more common figure than the tragic equivalent, and his characterisation is rigidly defined, with focus on his appetites for food, wine and sex. Nuanced presentations are non-existent in surviving plays, although Aristophanes often uses him to deflate pretentious characters (e.g. *Frogs* 42-8), possibly implying a resistance to over-civilisation similar to many interpretations of Euripides.²¹ In light of this stock characterisation, the generic complications in *Alcestis* become visible. He is a heavy drinker, drinking his wine unmixed ("εὐζωπόν", 757) and behaving in a generally tasteless manner (760). His party attire of a myrtle garland (759) can be seen as a warped parody of Alcestis' performance of her own funeral rites (171-2). The servant's description of Heracles' behaviour while staying with Admetus (747-72) is instantly recognisable as a common feature of the comic Heracles; his role as the nemesis of household slaves is well attested (e.g. Aristophanes *Frogs* 465ff). The Heracles of *Alcestis* is also not exceptionally intelligent and therefore easily deceived (531), although he proceeds to reverse this deception when introducing the disguised Alcestis to Admetus (1070-1109).

Heracles' depiction, simplistic and slightly erratic as it is, serves a clear purpose: he is present as a stark contrast to Admetus. On every level, their values and methods differ strikingly: Heracles' acceptance of death (782) contrasts with Admetus' refusal to accept death, a refusal which drives the entire play. Heracles is shown violating every rule of etiquette (747-72), while Admetus is focused on *xenia* at the expense of all else, for primarily selfish reasons (553-60). Admetus' focus on rigid social regulations is a positive force twisted into something complex and not entirely beneficial, while Heracles' simplicity and common sense give him a purer, more straightforward set of values²² which lead to him assuming a warm welcome even from Death himself (851-9). Of course, he does not

²¹ Galinsky (1972) 69.

²² Galinsky (1972) 69.

get the welcome he expects, and has to revert to his traditionally violent ways (844-52).

Galinsky suggests that Heracles is here representing Euripides' resistance to what he may have viewed as excessive civilisation and social rules.²³ This argument is not entirely without merit; other plays from later in Euripides' career, primarily *Bacchae*, show the same themes.²⁴ Heracles' archaic, brutal methods (844-52) succeed in retrieving Alcestis from the underworld where the subtler approaches of other heroes (e.g. Orpheus, referred to in 968) have failed to rescue anybody. This interpretation seems somewhat dubious, though; the thirty-three year gap between *Alcestis* and *Bacchae* is a long one, and the assumption that Euripides held exactly the same views over all the changes in that timeframe is a risky one on which to hang an argument.

Rather than a representation of Euripides' resistance to social rules, Heracles is arguably being used here simply as a foil for Admetus. As discussed above, the contrast between the two characters is stark, and Admetus receives far more complex characterisation than Heracles. The presentation of Heracles as the familiar comic buffoon, strong, inebriated, and benevolent, makes it easier to hold him up as a mirror to Admetus. The Heracles of *Alcestis* is a stock figure and a theatrical trope. He is simplified to familiar elements, enabling Euripides to place more focus on Admetus' side of the divide. The presence of Heracles prevents Admetus from rescuing Alcestis himself, a version of the story that is believed to be shown in other plays revolving around the same myth.²⁵ By forcing Admetus to remain at home, Euripides opens up new ways to look at his character, making him a more complex figure. Euripides does not feature Heracles in his story because he wishes to make a statement about Heracles and what he can represent, but rather he includes him out of convenience. Heracles' mythic exploits give him experience in retrieving people from the underworld, making him an ideal character to propel the plot. This character history, coupled with his role as a foil to Admetus, enables a more complex characterisation of the play's protagonist.

²³ Galinsky (1972) 69.

²⁴ Parallels between Dionysus and Heracles are important, although outside the scope of this discussion. For more see Galinsky (1972) 81-82.

²⁵ Conacher (1988) 43-45.

1.3 HERACLES THE PHILOSOPHER: *HERACLES*

Alcestis is not the only Euripides play to make extensive use of Heracles. Euripides' *Heracles* falls significantly later than *Alcestis*, and after even the latest probable date for Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Initially performed in 416 BC, *Heracles* is a play with a rather different context from the earlier two. By 416 BC, Heracles had already been appropriated by Socrates and the sophists as an ideal model for the clear thinker and modern virtuous man. Prodicus had been active in Athens since at least 430,²⁶ and it is likely that his account of the "Heracles' Choice" story²⁷ was well known by this point. According to Plato, Socrates also appropriated Heracles for his own purposes. In his *Apology*, Socrates compares his mission of education to Heracles' labours (Plato *Apology* 22a). While the events dramatized here did not occur until 399, the existence of this comparison suggests that Socrates may well have claimed similar comparisons during earlier parts of his career.

Euripides and the sophistic school of thought were similarly controversial at the time, with ideas which often coincided.²⁸ The novelty of thought shared by Euripides and the sophists, in which creativity and logic are prized, is particularly prominent in *Heracles*.²⁹ The motivation behind Heracles' labours is changed radically from earlier tradition: instead of embarking on his labours to atone for slaughtering his family, Euripides' Heracles does so from a desire to reclaim his family's homeland (17-21). Rather than the penitent hero of tradition, this Heracles is a selfless man working for his family and his city. He is presented as a caring father who is close to his children (73-9, 460-75, 636, 986-9). This Heracles is a pious and virtuous man, and is defended as such even by the goddess Lyssa (849-53). Euripides' novel approach to his source material is also clear from the aspects of Heracles that he focuses on. Where the Heracles of *Trachiniae* is a physical, unthinking brute who does

26 He appears in Plato's *Protogoras*, which has a dramatic date of approximately 430 B.C.

27 As in Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34, Plato *Symposium* 177b

28 The full extent of Euripides' relationship with the sophists is impossible to define, but they seem to at least share a number of ideals. See Conacher (1998) 9-10; Allan (2000); and Dillon (2004) for a thorough discussion..

29 Lycus, the tyrant invented by Euripides, is frequently described as "new" (κατινώς: 38, 541, 567, 768), as are the events of the play (530, 1118, 1177), emphasising the new creativity at work in the story.

not hesitate to seek death after his madness, *Heracles* presents him as a far more thoughtful man who carefully considers his options ("ἐσκεψάμην", 1347) before deciding against suicide.³⁰

This focus on thought over action pervades the play; even in the most archaic scene, in which Iris and Lyssa appear in person to wreak vengeance on Heracles, Lyssa appeals to Iris' sense of reason (843-856). She is overruled by Iris, who explicitly rejects her reason (σωφρονεῖν, 857), a tragic triumph of cruelty over reason. Lycus, the other primary antagonist of the play, is also presented as a man of physical action over careful thought (ἔγὼ δὲ δράσω σ' ἀντὶ τῶν λόγων κακῶς, 239). Amphitryon, defending Heracles against Lycus' accusations, argues thoughtfully and rationally (170ff) and uses a range of logic and language (i.e. λόγοισι... δεῖξαι, 172-3, πάνσοφον, 188) with a distinctly sophistic tenor,³¹ focusing on the logical value of his argument (171-3) and defending the practical, modern nature of Heracles' use of archery (188-203). In general, the more positively depicted characters are those who value thought and reason, such as Heracles, Megara, and Amphitryon; all of these are presented as victims of Lycus' tyrannical ambitions, and the two "factions" have diametrically opposed philosophies. Lycus' action focus is contrasted against the sophistic attitudes of the protagonists, showing Euripides' prioritisation of the new value of thought. Heracles' final word before departing the stage at the very end of the play is "φρονεῖ" (1426) emblematic of this new theme.

Beyond his new powers of reasoning, Euripides' Heracles is thoroughly and consciously stripped of the archaic violence familiar from earlier portrayals. The effect of his labours on the wilderness is "taming", according to Amphitryon (ἐξημερώσαι, 20); a peacefully civilising word with no violent connotations at all.³² His madness, often, as in *Trachiniae*, viewed as being an externalisation of his internal flaws, is explicitly brought upon him by outside forces. This is a Heracles who is seen as a reasonable family man and not a danger to civilisation, and this is evident from the regularity with which other characters accurately blame external forces, such as the

30 It has been argued that the entire play is a polemic against suicide, written in response to Sophocles' treatment of the theme in both *Trachiniae* and *Ajax*. See de Romilly (2003) 290-2.

31 Galinsky (1972) 60.

32 Galinsky (1972) 58.

gods (1127, 1180, 1253, 1263-4, 1310, 1311-2, 1393). The only point during the play in which Heracles self-identifies as “καλλίνικος”, a common earlier epithet for him,³³ is during his madness (960-2). Earlier in the play, he explicitly states that should his children die he would lose this old title (580-2). By the end of the play, Heracles is no longer “καλλίνικος”; that is the old Heracles, the Pindaric lone athlete, the archaic brute and the madman.

Euripides' *Heracles* presents a new and different vision of the hero. Euripides' reasons for this cannot be definitively pinpointed, but may well have been influenced by the changing intellectual climate of Athens between the mid-5th century performance of *Alcestis* (and, in all likelihood, *Trachiniae*) and the later *Heracles*.³⁴ A new, more thoughtful Heracles became present in the collective consciousness, perhaps spreading from Prodicus' public performances. In general, the content of Euripides' plays seems to reflect these newer concerns of the audience rather than the traditional themes explored in depth by previous playwrights. Euripides tended to focus on the unexplored,³⁵ a position which required a keen awareness of the social and intellectual context of his work.

The historical context of the play colours the depiction of Heracles, particularly towards the end of the play. *Heracles* dates to during the Peloponnesian war, a time when traditional religion was declining.³⁶ This attitude is visible in a number of points in the play. Amphitryon, a generally reasonable and positive voice, denounces Zeus (342) and declares that mortals are superior. The very nature of the gods is doubted at some length by Heracles himself (1340-66), and Heracles' rejection of suicide (1415) denies his traditional apotheosis. From this point on, Heracles' story is new. It may not be shown onstage, but whatever he does with the rest of his life is not part of the previously established canon, and therefore neither are the events of his death. Galinsky suggests that this humanisation of Heracles is to prevent him from declining and fading like the Olympian gods;³⁷ while this may or may not be the case, it is

³³ Larson (2016) 341.

³⁴ Winnington-Ingram (2003) 55-56.

³⁵ Winnington-Ingram (2003) 61.

³⁶ The prolonged war and its implications tested the religious feelings of the Athenians. This was felt particularly strongly in the aftermath of disasters such as the Sicilian expedition and the plague (Thucydides 2.47-52, 8.1).

³⁷ Galinsky (1972) 65.

undeniable that Euripides is consciously refocusing Heracles into a mortal hero rather than a divinity.

Heracles' discussion with Theseus towards the end of the play (1220ff) shows him struggling against his old brutality, which has come back to haunt him through no fault of his own. He considers the old-fashioned solution of suicide (1241), which would lead to his deification, but is eventually persuaded against it through logic and reasoning. Theseus pushes him towards life through a series of rhetorical questions, and Heracles is won over to a more thoughtful lifestyle than his older brutality. His patience and endurance in his labours become a model for a new life (1353-7), focused on cooperative citizenship, while the violent heroism inherent to these deeds is left in Thebes alongside the bodies of his family.³⁸ Heracles' decision to go on living may prevent his divinity, but Theseus offers him a hero cult in Athens (1328-33). This cult is specifically heroic and not the traditional hybrid Olympian/chthonic cult of Heracles found across the Mediterranean. Heracles will specifically receive honours for a man (“ἄνδρъ”, 1335), and will go “εἰς Ἀιδου” when he eventually dies (1331). The shrines offered by Theseus are also restricted to chthonic rather than Olympian worship; Theseus offers to share his own τεμένη, and his worship does not follow the same hybrid Olympian/chthonic structure as Heracles'. By sharing his shrines, Theseus is clearly delineating the sort of worship appropriate for Heracles: that presented to a mortal hero, not a god. Euripides' reversal of the order of Heracles' labours and his madness makes this a clear-cut, fresh start. Heracles' awakening from his madness functions as a new apotheosis; rather than rising to heaven, he becomes a virtuous hero and is granted formal honours as such. His worst moment, the slaughter of his entire family, loses some of its shame for him; rather than a sin he must atone for, it is the tragedy that caps off his archaic early life and enables him to move into a newer, more philosophical role. This transition is enabled by Theseus and Athens; Heracles would not be able to obtain such a clean start and acceptance from Thebes, a town stained with the blood of his family, but the magnanimity of Athens (the home of the audience) enables him to move on and become a modern hero.

³⁸ For the contrast between Athens and Thebes, in which Thebes is the “other” of the mythic past and Athens is the more civilised home of intellectualism and reason, see Zeitlin (1990) 144-7.

1.4 HERACLES THE GOD: *PHILOCTETES*

The only surviving tragedy to feature Heracles and post-date the radical character rehabilitation of Euripides' *Heracles* is Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, originally performed in 409 BC. The contrast between the Heracles of *Trachiniae* and the Heracles of *Philoctetes* is stark. Not only is he appearing post-mortem as a ghost, Heracles also fills a very specific role in *Philoctetes*, appearing at the end of the play as a *deus ex machina*. This is a role with limitations which inevitably colour the way in which he is depicted; he cannot be a violent drunkard or the archaic monster of *Trachiniae*, but must have sufficient dignity and authority to provide the play's final resolution. Heracles must persuade Philoctetes and Neoptolemus to set aside their differences and sail to Troy (1409-16), a task far beyond the Heracles of *Trachiniae*, who resorts to sacking Oechalia because of his lack of persuasive power (*Trachiniae* 359-60).

The ghostly Heracles of *Philoctetes* is a more contemporary figure, better suited to 4th century BC civic life than the version presented in *Trachiniae*, despite speaking in an archaic, epic style.³⁹ He advocates teamwork and goals that serve the *polis* rather than an Achillean quest for personal glory (1433-7, esp. “συννόμω”, 1436), and is clearly not the uncivilised character of *Trachiniae*. He acts in opposition to the archaic values that led to his death, warning Philoctetes and Neoptolemus against the personally-focused courses of action they both intend to take before his arrival. Heracles presents himself as a model of eternal glory for Philoctetes (1418-22), a role reminiscent of Pindar's ideal model for athletes (*Ol.*3). He also compares the glory of Philoctetes' upcoming sack of Troy to that of his own labours (1421-2), a parallel that gives Philoctetes' constant suffering a greater meaning and purpose.

Given his role as *deus ex machina*, the important element of this version of Heracles is not his monster-slaying past or his cultural significance, but his relationship to Philoctetes. As Philoctetes' oldest and closest friend, and even surrogate father, Heracles is the divine figure most likely to persuade him to sail to Troy. Without this relationship, any other god would fill the role, and would probably have similar characterisation. Heracles has been rewritten to fit the dramatic role he fills.⁴⁰

³⁹ Schein (2013) 334.

⁴⁰ There is a relatively common view that the Heracles of *Philoctetes* is merely

The depiction of Heracles in *Philoctetes* is inarguably more positive than that of *Trachiniae*; Sophocles perhaps perceived the audience as more favourable towards the rehabilitated Heracles in 409 BC than they had been beforehand. Certainly, the sophistic appropriation of Heracles in this period was prominent; the two plays were produced in different intellectual climates. Sophocles shows a clear awareness of sophistic thought throughout the play,⁴¹ as is clear from Odysseus' argument with Neoptolemus (96-134) in which he espouses the value of clever rhetorical argument. As such, it is a plausible explanation that Sophocles' changes to Heracles' character were made due to the changed intellectual climate of Athens.

By the end of *Philoctetes*, Heracles has become the thoughtful figure of later literature, a persuasive force and virtuous hero first and foremost, and no longer the violent brute of *Trachiniae*. Across the various plays by various authors discussed here, Heracles has developed and evolved over time, with his cultural significance changing alongside. He has completed the character arc begun in *Trachiniae*, in which he developed from a thoughtless creature of pure physicality and violence into a tragic hero, and continued in *Heracles*, growing into a thoughtful culture figure. It is this transition that is central to his role in *Philoctetes*: he is the mediator between man and god, between past and future, between wilderness and civilisation, and between truth and story.⁴² At the end of *Philoctetes*, Heracles is an enlightened force of reason; this remains the dominant aspect of his character in later Greek literature.

Theocritus, writing in the 3rd century BC, prioritises Heracles' human aspects, his emotional capacity and interpersonal relationships, over his superhuman heroics (*Idylls* 13.6-15, 13.65-75).⁴³ Diodorus Siculus focuses on his lateral thinking and inventiveness (i.e. 4.11.6, 4.12.2, 13.1-7) and his persuasive skills, which are powerful enough to change the mind of Zeus himself

Odysseus in disguise, perpetrating a complicated deception. Arguments for this view are very reasonable, but complicate matters beyond the scope of this discussion. See Roisman 2005 pp109-11 for a more detailed analysis.

⁴¹ See Segal 1981 pp292-361 for a detailed analysis of the philosophy and thought throughout the play.

⁴² Segal (1981) 352.

⁴³ Theocritus does not forget Heracles' brutality, however; the simile comparing him to a lion (13.61-4) is a stark reminder of the dangers of Heracles' wild side.

(4.15.2). Later still, Lucian describes the Gallic Heracles as a god of eloquence equivalent to Hermes (*Heracles* 4) and rationalises his traditional weaponry as metaphors for the power of words (*Heracles* 6). The primary characteristics of the literary Heracles in Greek works after the end of the 5th century B.C. are those more relevant to the more complex later intellectual climate.⁴⁴ Even through the Romanisation of Greece, the progression from the Archaic brute to the more human, thoughtful Heracles shown in the later plays remains. The brutality of Heracles is, to some extent, inherent and impossible to erase, but Greek literature happily embraces the more “civilised” version as a primary portrayal.

CHAPTER 2: HERCULES AND THE SAVAGERY OF ROME

To the Romans of the early 1st century B.C., the archaic brutality of the Heracles shown in early Greek art is far removed from their concerns. Lucretius dismisses Hercules as a worthless hero, arguing that the civilising effects of his labours were pointless, as none of the monsters slain by Hercules would have posed any more threat to humanity than the surviving wild beasts (*De Rerum Natura* 5.22-42). Lucretius sees no use for the violence or the civilising efforts of Hercules, and therefore dismisses him; he believes that the strife of the Social Wars cannot be repaired through more violent conquest, and therefore Rome would be better served by an intellectual saviour like Epicurus. Beyond this, Hercules represents the old Roman religion,⁴⁵ and therefore presents an obvious target to topple and supplant with Epicurus. Even the intellectual Hercules of literature has no purpose; Epicurus is his intellectual and moral superior, and can outdo him in every way.⁴⁶ Epicurus’ rage against

⁴⁴ Apollonius of Rhodes is the one major writer to go against this trend; the Heracles of the Argonautica is an Archaic physical hero (e.g. 1.124-9) focused on his “μέγα τε σθένος” (1.531), in contrast to the more thoughtful Hellenistic Jason. See Clauss 1993 pp2-13, 29-36, 92-9.

⁴⁵ The Roman Hercules comes from a more cultic background than the relatively literary Greek Heracles (Morgan 2005 pp196-200, Larson 2016 p339), and therefore at this point holds a significance more religious than literary.

⁴⁶ Without rejecting him as Lucretius does, Cicero also uses Hercules to support Epicureanism, albeit to a lesser degree. *Tusculae* 2.8-9.20-22 translates Heracles’ speech from *Trachiniae* 1046-1111 as an example of why pain should be avoided, although he disagrees with Epicurus’ belief that wisdom (an important trait of the Hellenistic Heracles) can defend against pain (*Tusculae* 2.7.18).

the gods is even described in Herculean terms, with *animi virtutem* (*De Rerum Natura* 1.70) and eventually becoming *victor* (1.75). By supplanting Hercules with Epicurus, Lucretius is able to present Epicurus himself as a new folk hero in the vein of Hercules, but without the ties to traditional religion.

Towards the end of the 1st century B.C., however, circumstances changed dramatically enough to affect literary portrayals of Hercules. The instability of the civil wars transformed the cultural climate and preoccupations of Rome substantially. During the second civil war, Antony endeavoured to align himself with Hercules, claiming descent from the Heracleidae and encouraging depictions of himself with traditional Herculean accoutrements.⁴⁷ This was a long-standing part of his self-identification, to the extent that Julius Caesar had previously abandoned attempts to adopt Antony because he would not set aside his Heracleid descent in favour of the Julian family tradition of descent from Aeneas (Appian *Bellum Civile* 3.16). This self-presentation was met with Augustan propaganda depicting Hercules and Omphale in order to emasculate Antony at the hands of Cleopatra.⁴⁸ Towards the end of the war, however, Antony had moved towards the patronage of Dionysus,⁴⁹ enabling the Augustan faction to reclaim Hercules to some degree. Given that Antony’s later self-identification was primarily Dionysian, this reclamation did not need to include rehabilitation; Hercules could remain the same Hercules, and Dionysus, as an imported deity, had always held a somewhat tenuous position in the pantheon and therefore was easier to vilify. Despite the damage caused by Antony’s appropriation, the turmoil of the civil war brought another level of relevance to Hercules; his role as civiliser, increasingly seen as outdated and less significant than his virtue and philosophical value (as discussed previously), suddenly becomes significant to a new level, clearly reflected in the literature of the time.

2.1 HERCULES THE CONQUEROR: *THE AENEID*

Virgil’s *Aeneid* is the first Augustan work to feature Hercules

⁴⁷ Freyburger (2009) 24.

⁴⁸ This may not have been exceptionally significant to Augustan propaganda, but many Hercules/Omphale artefacts exist. See Hekster 2004 pp171-7 for detailed analysis.

⁴⁹ Freyburger (2009) 24.

in a major role, both explicitly and allusively. As with all aspects of Virgil's writing, his use of Hercules was complex and can be interpreted in a variety of ways, although a view focused on intertextuality of characterisation is rare; the preferred view of Virgil's Hercules is one preoccupied with the positive parallels between him and Augustus. Virgil clearly drew connections, both direct and indirect, and played up the traditional positive associations of Hercules, before problematising this comparison and subverting the expectations of the careful reader. On one level, Virgil reclaimed Hercules from his Antonine associations by transforming Aeneas into a successor to Hercules,⁵⁰ hoping to grant the traditional ancestor of the Julii the same cultural hero status afforded to Heracles by the Greeks. Both Aeneas and Virgil's Hercules have a focus on *virtus*, a quality ascribed to Aeneas in, for example, 6.806, and to Hercules in 10.469. This value placed on internal virtue and courage is distinctly reminiscent of the virtuous, family-minded Heracles of Euripides' *Heracles*. The similarities between the two portrayals go beyond this, however; Virgil's Hercules is able to endure suffering bravely (8.291-2) and to continue thinking rationally in intensely violent situations (*non... rationis egentem*, 8.299), despite struggling with the same anger as Aeneas (*furiis exarserat*, 8.219). Beyond these parallels, Virgil's methods of showing the value of Hercules to the world of 1st century B.C. Rome mirror earlier Greek versions. In book IV, Aeneas' rejection of Dido's tempting luxury in favour of continuing his arduous journey to the foundation of Rome is analogous to Hercules rejecting Vice (often depicted in similar eastern luxury to Virgil's Dido) in favour of Virtue, albeit with Virtue transformed into a more Roman sense of Duty. Hercules serves as a model of heroism for his Roman successor. The parallel is a strong allegorical reading for any part of the audience familiar with Prodicus' parable of Heracles' choice, a version likely to be brought to mind by the clearly literary nature of Virgil's use of Hercules.

Virgil's Hercules is not merely a virtuous philosophical model for Aeneas in the style of the later Greek Heracles. Any function Hercules serves as a model for Aeneas also applies to his role as a

⁵⁰ For example, the parallels between Juno's relationship with Aeneas and with Hercules are an entirely Virgilian innovation. Allusions to Hercules in Aeneas' characterisation are important but beyond the scope of this discussion of depictions of Hercules himself. See Galinsky 1990 and 1972 (chapter 6) for detailed analysis.

model for Augustus. Galinsky claims that Virgil's primary motive for including these parallels was to hint at the future deification of Augustus.⁵¹ This statement is not without value; Hercules was certainly significant as a deified figure in Roman culture. Livy links Hercules' deification to that of Romulus, making him an important model for Roman heroes (Livy 1.7.15), as does Cicero (*Tusculae* 1.12.28). Later in *Tusculae*, Cicero characterises Hercules' deification as a reward for service to the Roman people; a value relevant to Augustus' role as *princeps*. This is, however, far from the only reason for Virgil's parallels between Augustus and Heracles, as Galinsky suggests.

The civilising role of Hercules, so constantly perverted by Sophocles in *Trachiniae*, is brought to the fore in a stark contrast against his previous cultic significance in Rome and against Lucretius' blunt dismissal of this role. Anchises' prophecy to Aeneas in the underworld compares Augustus to Hercules (6.801-3), specifically in terms of the scale of their conquests, showing the importance of civilising the wilderness to both figures. Within this brief comparison, Hercules *pacavit* the hydra (6.803). This verb has significant links to Augustus' self-presentation; he uses *pacare* to describe his own conquests three times over the course of his *Res Gestae* (Galinsky 1990 pp281-2). Virgil clearly presents Hercules as a predecessor to Augustus, tying both his positives of conquest and his problematic elements into an implicit view of Augustus.

The lengthy fight between Hercules and Cacus in Book 8 prefigures both the conflict between Aeneas and Turnus later in the *Aeneid* and reflects the real-life conflict between Augustus and Antony. This is achieved through a range of parallels between Hercules and Augustus, more significant to the depiction of Hercules than the similar parallels to Aeneas. Cacus as a genuine *monstrum* (8.198) is a Virgilian innovation; previous versions have him as a mere human cattle thief (Livy 1.7.5, Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.39.110).⁵² Given this change, the fight between Hercules and Cacus becomes one more closely aligned with the monster-slaying labours of the

⁵¹ Galinsky (1990) 284-5.

⁵² Initially, Cacus is not even a thief. Diodorus 4.21.2 presents him (at this point known as Κάκιος) as a good man who receives Heracles as a guest. The herding nature of early Italian society refocuses Cacus into a more relevant concern; cattle theft is of special significance to such a society exclusively (Larson 2016 p343).

Greek Heracles than the cultic protective role of the Roman version. Virgil is consciously moving his Hercules away from the religious role of earlier Roman tradition and back towards the more vibrant, dangerous literary Heracles featured so heavily in Greek texts.⁵³ By adding an additional labour centred on the future site of Rome, Virgil is Romanising Hercules and making his civilising role a prerequisite for the founding of Rome, addressing one of Lucretius' major complaints about Hercules; namely that he does not operate within Italy (*De Rerum Natura* 5.36).⁵⁴ This newfound Roman significance of Hercules the civiliser is positioned relative to Hercules' other labours as *super omnia* (8.303-4); Hercules' civilising role centred around the future site of Rome is thus presented as his single most important aspect. Cacus, transformed into a genuine *monstrum*, is a good match for the superhuman, quasi-divine Hercules in a huge clash reminiscent of the Gigantomachy (i.e. 8.225-7, 250). By using this newly mythic episode to “prefigure” Augustus and Antony, Virgil presents Hercules (and therefore Augustus) as a pacifying victor over the gigantomachic uprising against divinely imposed law and order).⁵⁵

This presentation is problematised by the violence inherent in Hercules' quasi-gigantomachic exploits. Hercules' tossing aside of a vast boulder (8.250) is reminiscent of Polyphemus' casting a mountain at the fleeing Odysseus (*Odyssey* 9.481)⁵⁶. Similarly, the brutality of Hercules in his slaughter of Cacus (8.260) makes him seem distinctly monstrous, like the Heracles of *Trachiniae*. Hercules and Cacus have much in common; Hercules burns with rage (219) while Cacus is the fire-spewing son of Vulcan (8.226, 8.252). The problematic elements of Hercules are not just confined to his fight with Cacus; the Salian hymn to Hercules also features reference to some of his less heroic exploits, including his unwarranted destruction of Oechalia (8.290-1), familiar from the tragic events of *Trachiniae*. Even the civilising Hercules who enables the existence of Rome retains the monstrous archaic brutality which so fascinated

⁵³ Virgil models his Hercules to some extent on the portrayal given by Apollonius of Rhodes in his *Argonautica*. See Nelis 2001 for detailed discussion of Virgil's use of Apollonius throughout the *Aeneid*.

⁵⁴ For more on Virgil's engagement with Lucretius, see Hardie 1986 chapter 5.

⁵⁵ Hardie (1986) 110-18; Morton Braund (1997) 219.

⁵⁶ Hardie (1986) 115.

Sophocles. As such, any reading of Hercules as a representation of Augustus bears an edge of uncertainty over the appropriateness of Augustus' behaviour during the civil war; this Hercules is extremely violent and hardly suitable to inhabit a city, let alone rule one.

Despite Virgil's determination to link Hercules' civilising powers to the *Pax Augusta*, there is no overwhelming evidence for Augustus actively promoting any link between himself and Hercules.⁵⁷ He is known to have refused the title *invictus*, a title commonly associated with Hercules,⁵⁸ bearing the same connotations as the Greek καλλινίκος, and used by Virgil of both Hercules (8.293) and Aeneas (6.293). However, although Augustus may not have actively promoted the linking between himself and Hercules in literature, he was clearly aware of it and took advantage of it. The fact that he orchestrated his triumph over Antony and Cleopatra to fall on the 13th of August, the same day as the festival of Hercules at the Ara Maxima,⁵⁹ suggests an appropriation of the civilising role of Hercules. By combining the two festival days, Augustus presents his victory and ending of the civil war as an enabling of peace and stability in true Herculean style. The recent civil war had changed the situation sufficiently that the civilising Hercules of old was once again important, supplanting the sophistic intellectual Hercules. His darker side and inherent monstrous nature also rise to the fore again with Virgil, tied inextricably to his civilising role. The balance between Hercules' pacifying power and his inherent brutality will shift further with later writers as the sources of instability in Roman culture change.

2.2 HERCULES THE PROBLEM: *METAMORPHOSES*

Several years later, Hercules made another major appearance in epic. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is just as problematic as the *Aeneid*, and its unsettlingly disjointed chronology brings this unconventionality to the attention of the reader early on. A disproportionate amount of space is granted to his death and the events leading up to it, and immediately followed by an account of his birth, while his labours are almost completely neglected. Most scholarship on Ovid's Hercules has focused on the hyper-epic burlesque of the character,

⁵⁷ Galinsky (1990) 285.

⁵⁸ Zarker (1972) 35.

⁵⁹ Galinsky (1990) 287.

but investigations of the tension between the Stoic ideal Hercules and the archaic brute have been limited. Scholarship may have neglected it, but the problematizing nature of Ovid's Hercules and his relationship to Virgil's version is significant and complex. Ovid expanded on the themes resurrected by Virgil, studying the dangers of the civilising Augustan Hercules and pushing this to its logical anti-Stoic conclusion in Hercules' fiery passionate death.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* serves as something of a rebuttal to the *Aeneid*, showing that a primarily literary and entertaining view of myth can coexist with Virgil's more allegorical and politicised approach, although any association with Virgil's work bears a certain political charge. There is clear political significance to *Metamorphoses*, particularly towards the end, but Ovid's primary focus was on myth and narrative, only telling the stories of Aeneas and Rome in the final four books. As such, Ovid's view of Hercules was one that had limited concern for the established Roman cultic figure; he had previously addressed the cultic Hercules in his *Fasti*, and epic is an ideal genre for an examination of the heroic, literary version. The Hercules of *Metamorphoses* is an entirely literary figure, much like that of the *Aeneid*. The debt owed by Ovid to Virgil's literary refocusing of Hercules is clearly visible from the close linguistic parallels between Hercules' fight against Achelous in *Metamorphoses* and against Cacus in the *Aeneid*. Achelous' description of his waters which precedes his fight with Hercules (9.17-18) is almost exactly the same as the river Thybris' description of himself before Virgil's Hercules/Cacus episode (*Aeneid* 8.62-3). Achelous further identifies himself as *nec gener externis hospes* (9.19), reminiscent of the Oracle's prophecy to Latinus, which describes the coming Trojans as *externi... generi* (*Aeneid* 7.98). Latinus himself later repeats this, stating that his daughter must marry *generos externis* (*Aeneid* 7.270). Achelous' echoes of this in his self-identification show why his suit for Iole is doomed to failure, and simultaneously align Hercules with Virgil's Aeneas/Hercules parallels. Furthermore, the simile comparing Achelous and Hercules to a pair of fighting bulls (9.46-9) recalls a near-identical simile used of Aeneas and Turnus (*Aeneid* 12.715-22), and the detail of Deianeira being visited by Rumour (9.137-9) is a condensed version of Virgil's account of Rumour spreading news

of Aeneas and Dido's similarly illicit affair (*Aeneid* 4.173-197). These literary parallels show Ovid's intentional alignment of his Hercules with Virgil's; the two depictions may not be exactly the same, but Ovid wished his reader to hold Virgil's version in mind when reading *Metamorphoses*, both for its literary significance and the problematic nature of the parallels to Augustus.

Ovid's Hercules may align closely with Virgil's, but the two authors had differing agendas, with the civilising role being less significant to Ovid. Hercules' labours are passed over efficiently (i.e. 9.134-5), and the only real reference to him as a conqueror and civiliser is Jupiter's description of him at his death as *omnia qui vincit* (9.250). The reasons for this change of focus are clear: by the 8 A.D. publication of *Metamorphoses*, the civil wars were too distant for there to be any great need of a civilising, pacifying hero. As such, no attempt needed to be made to focus on Hercules' civilising role, let alone on its ties to the *Pax Augusta*. Other links between Virgil's Hercules and Augustus were also ignored by Ovid; where Virgil's portrayal of Hercules hints at Augustus' future deification, Ovid has previously shown scepticism for Hercules as a model of deeds deserving of apotheosis. In a passage reminiscent of Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 1.78-84) he presented a doctrine for deification far removed from Hercules' heroics (*Fasti* 1.297-307). Galinsky goes as far as to claim that Ovid's Hercules has no Augustan significance at all, but there are demonstrable mocking references to Augustus in *Metamorphoses*' account of Hercules' life.⁶⁰ The part of Hercules that rises to Olympus on his death is described as *augusta gravitate* (9.270); *augusta* is a word used only three times in the entirety of *Metamorphoses*.⁶¹ In the context of a character previously used by Virgil in alignment with Augustus, this seems a clear reference. The alignment of the two figures is, however, far from serious; *gravitas* reappears a mere 17 lines later, this time in reference to Alcmene's pregnancy (9.287). The seriousness of Augustus, tied thus to the *pondus* of Hercules (9.277) is something of a joke; Ovid draws attention to the alignment and then proceeds to deflate it.

Freed from serious Augustan allegorisation, Ovid is able to present Hercules' vast power in a less positive light than Virgil, expanding on Virgil's subtler hints of his inherent darkness. As

⁶⁰ Galinsky (1975) 252.

⁶¹ Galinsky (1975) 257.

Hercules climbs Oeta to die, he is compared to a wounded bull (9.205-6), reminiscent of his father Jupiter's choice of form for incidents such as the abduction of Europa. Just after this reminder of his semi-divine status, Hercules proceeds to unjustly hurl his herald Lichas from the mountain (9.211-29). This abuse of his strength against a defenceless victim casts him as a tyrant, a god overstepping his bounds and abusing his power. Hercules' abuse of power is emphasised by Ovid's odd choice of explanation for Lichas' transformation into a rock (9.219-25); adapted from the famously anti-religious Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 6.527-9), this description and the oddity of describing a body in motion cooling and freezing serve to draw further attention to Hercules' inappropriate behaviour before his death. Beyond this, Hercules' apotheosis is compared to a snake shedding its skin (9.267-70), a comparison loaded with negative connotations (i.e. 10.8-10, 11.56-60, 12.13-17, 15.389-90).⁶² Earlier in *Metamorphoses* a great deal of time is devoted to Cadmus' transformation into a monstrous serpent (4.571-603). That this particular monstrous transformation is what Ovid alludes to here is attested by the earlier reference to Hercules as *Aionius* (9.112), pointedly highlighting the Theban ancestry which he shares with Cadmus. All of these hints at Hercules' monstrous nature and abuse of power make it clear that he is unquestionably not one of the *felices animae* (*Fasti* 1.297) deserving of deification.

Where Virgil's Hercules is the violent archaic civiliser and imperialist, Ovid's is an interrogation of death. Hercules is a figure with Stoic aspects to his character; he represses his pain (9.163) and dies showing no emotion (9.236-7). The Lucretian elements of his maddened climb up Oetea coupled with the ghastly depictions of his madness and death (9.166-75, 9.262-4) serve as an interrogation of the Stoic ideal, purgative death.⁶³ Hercules, the traditional Stoic ideal, is undone by his own lusts and killed by a cloak, the symbol of love (9.153-4). True to Stoic form, he leaves behind him a permanent legacy, the rock that was once Lichas, which was still visible in Ovid's time (9.226-9). This is a brutal perversion of Stoic calm acceptance of death, as Hercules dies in a blaze of agonised suffering, having

⁶² Note the five different words for "snake" used to describe Achelous' earlier transformation into a serpent (67-75). Snakes hold a great monstrous significance in *Metamorphoses*.

⁶³ See Hill 2004 pp36-41 for discussion of Stoic suicide.

slaughtered still more people in his maddened search for death. Here Hercules has lived a life of passion and violence in accordance with Cato's Stoic doctrine (Cicero *De Finibus* 3.61). His life has indeed been lived in accordance with his violent nature, so he has no justification for suicide; even as he approaches death, he continues to behave according to his character, with the continuity between his madness and sanity hinted at by continuing similes such as his comparison to a bull (9.46-9, 205-6). His cleansing is severely traumatic; this horror, coupled with the distinctly non-Stoic nature of the events leading to his death, serves to show that this is far from a positive consideration of Stoic deaths. Ovid is here playing the Stoic death for bathos rather than pathos, presenting his Hercules as far removed from the Stoic suicidal sapiens and continuing the Virgilian approach of creating a complex, problematising approach through layers of literary tradition. This philosophical aspect to the Hercules of *Metamorphoses* recalls Euripides' Heracles and its move from the violent civiliser of old to a new, sophistic Heracles. The change between Virgil's Hercules and Ovid's version parallels the similar shift between Sophocles' Trachiniae and Euripides' Heracles, but where Sophocles was looking forward with his portrayal of Heracles and pushing him into uncharted territory, Virgil was casting back to an earlier version more relevant to the climate of his time. The philosophical, mock-Stoic Hercules of Ovid, however, has no such archaism to his changes. The end of Hercules' dying speech (9.203-4) is reminiscent of the sceptical agnosticism of Euripides' Heracles (*Heracles* 1341-6), but the rest of that speech is far too floral to have anywhere near the emotional impact of the equivalent in *Trachiniae*. Ovid's Hercules has none of the eloquence of the post-Trachiniae Greek Heracles, and no interest in such things (9.29-30), despite his relatively philosophical purpose.⁶⁴ The edge of uncivilised brutality remains; Nestor avoids discussion of Hercules due to his extreme violence (12.536-555). Even in the newly peaceful context of Augustan Rome, Hercules still had a core of uncivilised violence.

⁶⁴ This speech also has hints of the comic Heracles in his arrogant self-inflation. Furthermore, the detail that he dies posed like a banqueter (9.235-8) recalls the comic focus on his appetites. The comic Heracles is outside the scope of this discussion; see Galinsky 1972 chapter 4 for detailed analysis.

2.3 HERCULES THE TYRANT: *HERCULES FURENS*

Hercules' savagery is inescapable. As the title would indicate, it is a vital part of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. This play can be dated to significantly later than Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (between 45 and 55 A.D.) and therefore the context is substantially different; the Roman Empire was more established, and so the civilising Hercules had even less relevance to Seneca than to Ovid. In fact, Seneca's main model for his tragedy was among the texts previously discussed at least focused on Hercules' civilising role; the *Heracles* of Euripides. Seneca used a number of Euripides' innovations, primarily the character of Lycus and the order of events in which Hercules' labours precede his madness.

The plot of *Hercules Furens* may follow the model of Euripides, but the themes, concerns, and characterisation do not. Seneca had a preoccupation with death absent from Euripides' version, shown most clearly by Theseus' lengthy and detailed description of the underworld (658-70).⁶⁵ More specific elements owe more to Sophocles' *Trachiniae* than to Euripides. Like *Trachiniae*, the real tragedy of *Hercules Furens* is not Hercules' assorted murders, but his realisation of what he has done.⁶⁶ Unlike Euripides' version of the same story, Hercules comes to this revelation on his own, rather than having it explained to him by Amphitryon. Hercules' personality is, in large parts, reminiscent of the barbaric murderer of Sophocles. Much of the impious behaviour and tendency to pervert significant ritual acts discussed above recur in *Hercules Furens*; Hercules offers Lycus' blood in a horrific human sacrifice, suggesting this both while sane (920-4) and while maddened (1036-8). This barbaric approach to ritual is accompanied by Hercules' failure to purify himself appropriately between his murder of Lycus and his thankful sacrifice to Jupiter (895-9). Despite Motto and Clarks claims that this is acceptable due to his semi-divine nature, he is explicitly presented as blasphemous;⁶⁷ Juno (admittedly not an

⁶⁵ Discussion of Seneca's preoccupations in any great length is outside the remit of this discussion. Seneca's writing is influenced by a wide range of doctrines (*De Brevitate Vitae* 14.2) despite a common perception of him as entirely Stoic. For further analysis of his morbid tendencies and Stoic approaches to death, see Rosenmeyer 1989.

⁶⁶ Shelton (1978) 66.

⁶⁷ Motto & Clarks (1988) 282.

unbiased witness herself) describes him as being filled with *impietas* (97). Even the details of some of Hercules' crimes are reminiscent of *Trachiniae*; when the maddened Hercules beats his child against the floor, the imagery (1005-7) is very close to Hyllus' description of Lichas being dashed against a rock by Heracles (*Trachiniae* 781-2).⁶⁸

The Hercules of Seneca is a violent civiliser like Virgil's and that of earlier Greek traditions; Juno resents him specifically for his conquests and pacification of the earth (30-35). Hercules has even conquered the underworld (46-48, 889-90), despite the futility of forcibly bringing peace to a region known for its quiet placidity (i.e. *placido quieta*, 680, *qua tenet Sopor*, 690); this unnecessary conquest is so arrogant that even the gods fear the potential violent consequences (66-70). In fact, Hercules' drive for conquest is so great that he enjoys his labours rather than suffering them reluctantly (42).⁶⁹ This drive is, of course, ironic in its consequences; Hercules' prayer to be sent just one more monster (936-9) is answered with his own madness. Hercules himself is the final monster. The inappropriate nature of a number of his deeds is not passed over by Seneca (465-71, 477-80); much like Sophocles, Seneca has no interest in presenting Hercules as a sanitised hero freed from his crimes. Where Euripides' Heracles shows a high level of care for his family, serving to justify his actions through purity of motive, Seneca's version has no such care, and is entirely unredeemed. The ending of the play is a bitter one. Hercules eventually yields to Amphitryon (1311-5), rather than to Theseus, as he does in *Heracles*. Theseus' role here is to present Athens as a haven for criminals, a place where even the gods are seen as innocent (1344). Hercules has not been absolved of his crimes; his only solution is to go into exile in a city far less utopian than the forgiving ideal presented by the Athenian Euripides. Hercules is not even given a chance to agree; his final request of the play is that Theseus return him to the underworld and chain him up in Tartarus (1338-40).

Hercules has finally pacified the entire world (250, 883), an

⁶⁸ Note that this imagery is entirely absent from Ovid's more recent account of Hercules' slaughter of Lichas (*Metamorphoses* 9.211ff); Seneca is clearly familiar with Sophocles and alluding to his distinctly unsympathetic portrait of Heracles.

⁶⁹ This is the embodiment of Stoic tonos (Galinsky 1972 p170), although, as discussed below, this drive is treated less than positively.

extension of the goals of many historical leaders who chose to align themselves with Hercules. When Hercules journeys to the underworld, however, the earth returns to uncivilised lawlessness (249-53); his final labour serves to undo the progress made by the previous eleven. This can be read as an allusion to the temporary effects of positively-received conquering emperors like Augustus. Hercules' journey to the underworld has caused damage to him as well as the world, however; upon his return, he begins to hallucinate (1145-6), his sanity fraying even before he is fully driven mad. During his formal madness these hallucinations grow, playing on his fears. His visions of the Nemean Lion (944-9) and the giants (976-86) are manifestations of his fear of that which he has conquered slipping from his grasp and back to a wild state; the paranoia of an unstable tyrant.

This tyrannical instability manifests itself even before Hercules' madness. His main desire is peace; he has pacified the entire world aside from his own home (926-37, 955-7). This shows early hints of a megalomaniac desire to pacify the entirety of the cosmos (937-9), an autocratic obsession with conquest which defines the entirety of his personality. The golden age of peace he seeks is, of course, impossible; this is Seneca's cynical and world-weary reaction to the hopes of earlier Augustan writers (Virgil *Eclogues* 4, *Aeneid* 6.791-4). When Hercules finally falls into full madness, his megalomania only increases; he hubristically seeks deification (957-64), possibly so he can conquer heaven itself (960-1). This has echoes of Suetonius' apocryphal account of Caligula's campaign against the ocean (Suetonius *Caligula* 46).⁷⁰ In his mad quest for apotheosis, Hercules aligns his goals with the giants in a perverse echo of Virgil's gigantomachic combat between Hercules and Cacus.⁷¹ He threatens to pile up mountains to reach heaven (968-73) and to release the Titans, siding with them against the gods (965-8). Like Ovid's Hercules, he is far from an ideal model for deification. Unlike in previous accounts, however, the madness of Seneca's Hercules is internal rather than external.⁷² As shown above, Hercules exhibits

⁷⁰ For linguistic connections to imperial models of deification in this passage see Chaudhuri 2014 pp132-3.

⁷¹ Morton Braund (1997) 219.

⁷² Internal madness and anger are important themes of Seneca's philosophy; the Caligulan tyrant of *De Ira* has much in common with his Hercules, and Seneca

symptoms of this megalomania before his madness, and no divine presence is explicitly shown bestowing madness upon him (as Lyssa does in Euripides' *Heracles*).⁷³

After the madness has passed, Amphitryon attempts to absolve Hercules of blame for his murders, placing responsibility on Juno⁷⁴ instead (1200-1), but Hercules prefers to blame his own personality and the inherent brutality visible in almost every depiction (*pectus omnium ferum*, 1226). He goes so far as to self-identify as a *monstrum impium* (1280)⁷⁵ and wishes to be buried under a great weight of stone (here, the ruins of Thebes; even when sane, Hercules is not above destroying the very cities he enables the existence of) as if he were a Titan buried beneath a mountain (1289-94). To Seneca, Hercules serves as a warning against rapacious tyrants overstepping their bounds, further attested in his philosophical work (*De Beneficiis* 1.13.1-3, 7.3.1, *Epistles* 94.63). Hercules is tied to Imperial Rome through the use of imagery, such as the chariots reminiscent of imperial triumphs:

*Alium multis gloria terris
tradat et omnes fama per urbes
garrula laudet
caeloque parem tollat et astris;
alius curru sublimis eat* (192-6).

This language and imagery is clearly Imperial in nature, and the act of tying the destructive Hercules to the Imperial rule shows a scepticism towards Neronian power and an implicit warning against overreach.

clearly believes this rage to be a great danger to the individual and the state.

⁷³ Shelton (1978) 59 sees this madness as rising from Hercules misinterpreting virtus to merely mean physical strength, and therefore slipping from the Stoic path. This overstates the importance of Stoicism to Seneca's Hercules; his personality is singularly focused on conquest and autocracy. Hercules is described using Stoic terms not because he is himself a Stoic character, but because Stoic language forms the core of Seneca's frame of reference (Shelton 1978 pp70-1). This language is a reflection of Seneca's intellectual environment, not intentional characterisation.

⁷⁴ Note that the Juno presented in the prologue is much the same as Virgil's vindictive version.

⁷⁵ Hercules regards himself in much the same way that Sophocles regards him in *Trachiniae*. See chapter 1 for depictions of Heracles as a wild beast in *Trachiniae*.

As in *Trachiniae*, Seneca's Hercules is a monster and a threat to civilisation, the very worst sort of destructive autocrat. When everything has been pacified, the civiliser cannot conquer anything more and turns his violent impulses upon himself and his own civilisation. This view, also offered at much the same time by Seneca's nephew Lucan (*De Bello Civile* 1.21-3) parallels the Roman Empire of Seneca's time, moving from the great conquests and pacification overseen by Augustus through to far more destructive figures such as Caligula and Nero.

CONCLUSION: HERACLES AND THE FRAGILITY OF CIVILISATION

As shown above, Heracles is an eternally significant figure, his characterisation fluctuating in response to pressures both intellectual and political. When a civilising, pacifying hero is required in response to conflicts such as the Roman civil wars, Heracles can easily be adapted to fit that role. When a more philosophical society demands an intellectual hero, Heracles can equally easily fill that niche. He is a figure of almost unlimited flexibility, with so many character traits established across his canon of adventures that no situation requires him to be wholly reinvented; every one of the versions discussed has roots in earlier depictions, and none of these writers has entirely transformed him.

This flexibility is key to his enduring popularity. The maddened, murderous Hercules of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* is much the same character at his core as the archaic brute of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, but modified with ease to fit Seneca's imperial concerns. Five hundred years separate these two texts, and in that time Heracles has been a monster, a hero, a philosopher, a god, a conqueror, and a tyrant, all without ever changing so far as to be unrecognisable.

The core of Heracles that remains the same no matter which aspects of his personality are brought to the fore by contemporary concerns, is made up of a small number of central traits. Among these, and most important to the literary depictions discussed above, is his violence. Heracles may pacify the wilderness, slaying monsters and enabling the existence of civilisation, but the very strength that enables this also prevents him from ever being truly a part of the civilisations he allows the creation of. In some periods attempts are made to civilise Heracles and enable him to coexist

with urban society, but there is always an undercurrent of danger. Even when appropriated for philosophical purposes, Heracles is a character who is inherently violent and unable to function in society for long without disaster. This is the one character trait which consistently and reliably reasserts itself throughout antiquity, causing any attempt to rehabilitate him and remove this violence (such as Euripides' *Heracles*⁷⁶) to be at best a short term success; he is a volatile force of nature, always retaining his connection to the monsters he slays as well as to the people he protects.

The darkness at the heart of Heracles' power is a vital part of his enduring appeal to writers. It enables Heracles to function as commentary, with the problems central to his life being easily adjusted to fit contemporary concerns. Heracles' central flaw is his violence; almost every major issue in his life stems from his power in some way. Violence is similarly at the heart of all cultures in some way or another; civilised society serves to mask unacceptable forms of behaviour,⁷⁷ but this undercurrent is always present at some level.⁷⁸ Heracles' core of violence enables writers to illuminate the problems and tensions of underlying violence within their own societies, from the fragility of the Athenian polis to the self-destructive nature of Roman imperialism. He is reflected in the demagogue, promising to solve problems but only causing violence; in the military leader, pacifying through force but failing to bring long-term stability; in the politician, bringing eloquence and philosophy but undone by secret scandal. Heracles is a societal mirror, his dark heart reflecting inherent human savagery and the dangers of powerful men to civilised society.

⁷⁶ Euripides may remove this brutality, but he shows a clear awareness of it and provides justification within the play.

⁷⁷ These unacceptable levels of violence change depending on the levels of individual security afforded by the culture in question, but no matter what the social regulations are, this undercurrent of violence is invariably present. See Wood 2007 pp89-93.

⁷⁸ Wood (2007) 85-88.

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