

**Reading Classical Greek: Sophocles, *Trachiniae* Part 1**

**Start date**     Friday 28 January 2022                      **End date**                      Sunday 30 January 2022

**Venue**                      Madingley Hall  
                                 Madingley  
                                 Cambridge  
                                 CB23 8AQ

**Tutor**                      **Dr Janet Watson**                      **Course code**                      2122NRX073

**Director of ISP and LL**                      Sarah Ormrod

**For further information**                      [inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk)

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**Tutor biography**

**Dr Janet Watson** has taught Classics at Victoria University Wellington, and Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand, and has recently retired as tutor in Classical Greek at Newcastle University. In the course of her career, she has been a regular contributor to continuing education courses in both Greek language and classical studies, and has taught for the Open University. She has a particular interest in Homeric verse and oral tradition, and has published an edition of Odyssey books VI and VII for Bristol Classical Press, and edited a volume on orality and literacy in the ancient world.

## Course programme

### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
<b>20:30 – 22:00</b>	<b>Deianeira's fears for Heracles, Hylas' news, and the prophecy</b>
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Deianeira's fears are allayed: a messenger brings good news</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>The herald, Lichas', arrives with captive women from Euboea</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free**
16:00	Tea
<b>16:30 – 18:00</b>	<b>Suspensions over Lichas' account of Heracles' conflict with Eurytus Lichas is forced to give the true account of events in Euboea</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
<b>20:00 – 21:30</b>	<b>'Deianeira in myth and art' – illustrated talk</b>
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Lichas forced to give the true account of events in Euboea</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Deianeira's plan to regain Heracles' love</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

## Course syllabus

### Aims:

You should be able to extend your knowledge of basic patterns of Greek grammar and syntax. In addition, you should be able to develop your appreciation of literary style and increase your understanding of the historical and cultural context of the text you are studying.

### Content:

Over the course of this weekend we will read, translate, and discuss the first two episodes of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (*The Women of Trachis*). Sophocles takes as his subject the circumstances leading to the death of the hero Heracles, and in the first half of the play, the action is centred on his wife, Deianeira, who has been anxiously awaiting news of her husband, and fears that he has died after such an extended absence. She is therefore overjoyed when news arrives that he is alive, and on his way home after defeating and sacking the city of his enemy Eurytus, and receives the women he has taken captive with kindness. There is one for whom she feels particular sympathy, but she remains silent, too distressed to speak. Deianeira's joy is short-lived, however, when she learns that Heracles' love for Eurytus' daughter, Iole, was the motive for their conflict, and that she is the silent captive whom she pitied the most. In the past, Deianeira had tolerated Heracles' amorous involvements away from home, but the prospect of sharing him with a concubine under her own roof is too much to bear, so she devises a plan to regain his love. She anoints a tunic with what she believes is a love potion, given to her by the centaur Nessus, and sends this to Heracles as a welcoming gift. Sophocles presents Deianeira as a devoted wife, who has withstood all the troubles and anxieties her marriage has brought her with fortitude and tolerance, but there is a limit: to be repaid with such disrespect is unbearable and she is determined to win him back. The episode ends on a note of hope.

Sophocles' text is the script of a performance, so as well as discussing the presentation of character and themes of the play, we will consider how the words on the page may provide clues to stage action. While evidence for some of the conventions of ancient theatre practice have come down to us, stage directions as such were not included in the manuscripts of the plays themselves, but in individual texts, the words often reveal key details about the stage action and stage furniture.

The course will appeal to those with a confident grasp of the fundamentals of Classical Greek, who want to explore the texts in their original language. For this weekend, the prescribed portion of the play is lines 1-632 (the first two episodes). There will be an opportunity to read rest of the play at the June Reading Classical Greek weekend course (please see the website for further details). For details of available editions of the play, see [Reading and resources list](#) below for available editions.

### Presentation of the course:

You are asked to read the Greek text in advance of the course, so that the language content of the classes is focussed on ironing out any difficulties in the vocabulary, grammar and syntax encountered during preparation, and translating into English (we will aim for fluency without departing too far from the Greek). The classes are led by the tutor, but with full participation from the students, so that all will have the opportunity to take their turn in reading the Greek text aloud, and translating into English, and joining in discussion of the play in its historical and cultural background, and how we may respond to the themes today. After dinner on Saturday, there will be an illustrated talk related to the subject matter of the text.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- recognise some new features of Greek language;
- recognise more vocabulary
- recognise some new idiomatic uses;
- have confidence in their ability to translate from Greek into English;
- feel that they are developing a sense of the style of different literary genres or authors;
- feel that they have learned something more about the background to the language and literature they are studying.

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### Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*, for which there are two options for the text in hard copy, or an online text; Easterling's edition has a text and commentary, the Loeb and Perseus online have the Greek text with a facing English translation.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
*P.E. Easterling (ed.)	Sophocles, <i>Trachiniae</i>	Cambridge University Press, 1982
*H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.)	Sophocles Volume II: <i>Antigone, Women of Trachis, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus</i>	Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1994.
Denniston, J.D.	<i>The Greek Particles.</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> . ed. repr. Bristol Classical Press, 1996
van Emde Boas, E. et al.	<i>The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek</i>	Cambridge University Press, 2019

### Website address

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection?collection=Perseus:collection:Greco-Roman>

Perseus gives access to Greek texts, translations, links to the LSJ Greek Lexicon and Greek grammars (H.W. Smyth *Greek Grammar*; W.W. Goodwin *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*). NB the edition of *Trachiniae* available on this site is that of Francis Storr, 1913.