Reading Classical Greek: Sophocles, *Trachiniae* Part 2

**Start date**  Friday 17 June 2022  **End date**  Sunday 19 June 2022

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

**Tutor**  Anthony Verity  **Course code**  2122NRX090

**Director of ISP and LL**  Sarah Ormrod

**For further information**  inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk

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**Tutor biography**

Anthony Verity taught Classics at Dulwich College, Manchester Grammar School, and Bristol Grammar School, and was subsequently headmaster of Leeds Grammar School and Dulwich. In retirement he has translated the poems of Theocritus and Pindar, and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, all in the Oxford World's Classics series. His version of Xenophon's *Symposium* is due for publication this year. His main interests are in Homer, Greek tragedy, and Latin poetry. He has been a tutor at ICE since the 1970s. He writes book reviews for Classics for All, and has contributed to the periodical *Greece & Rome*, and to *Reading Greek*, the Cambridge language course.
Course programme

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

19:00 Dinner
20:30 – 22:00 Deianeira reveals that her plan may mean she has poisoned Heracles
22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday
07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30 Hyllus reports that Heracles is in agony, and accuses Deinaeira of murder
10:30 Coffee
11:00 – 12:30 The Nurse reports Deianeira’s suicide
13:00 Lunch
14:00 – 16:00 Free time
16:00 Tea
16:30 – 18:00 Heracles arrives carried on a litter, raging at his fate
18:00 – 18:30 Free time
18:30 Dinner
20:00 – 21:30 ’Heracles in myth and art’
21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday
07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30 Heracles speaks of his past labours, his desire for revenge, and his longing for death
10:30 Coffee
11:00 – 12:30 Hyllus tells Heracles the truth about Deinaneira. Preparations for his spectacular death
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 the weekend we shall read, translate, and discuss the third and fourth episodes of Sophocles' *Trachiniae (The Women of Trachis)*. This second half of the play deals firstly with Heracles' wife Deianeira's slow realisation that the charm she has smeared on the robe she sent to Heracles as a love potion is in fact a deadly poison from the blood of the centaur Nessus. Her suspicions are confirmed by an angry speech from her son Hyllus, who observed Heracles' excruciating torment on donning the robe after sacking the city of Eurytus. Deinaeira quietly leaves the stage. A Nurse enters from the house and describes Deianeira's suicide. Heracles, whose powerful presence has brooded over the whole play so far, at last arrives (line 962), carried on a litter and writhing in agony. Hyllus and an Old Man leading the litter-bearers watch in horror. Heracles, consumed by outrage as much as by pain, tells Hyllus to take revenge on Deianeira; he contrasts his glorious past and the labours that he, a son of Zeus, was forced to perform, with his present miserable state. Hyllus now reveals what drove Deianeira to send him the poisoned robe: it was all a tragic mistake. Heracles understands that his time has come. Still the insulted hero and heavy father insisting on filial obedience to the very end, he orders Hyllus to construct a funeral pyre on nearby Mount Oeta on which he will be cremated alive. He further makes Hyllus swear to marry Eurytus' daughter Iole. Hyllus reluctantly obeys both commands, and the play ends with him and the Old Man escorting Heracles' litter offstage.

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;
- begin to develop a sense that they are developing a sense of the style of different literary genres or authors;
- begin to learn something more about the background to the language and literature they are studying.
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 * (there are two options for the text in hard copy, and an online text; Easterling’s has a text and commentary, the Loeb and Perseus online have the Greek text with a facing English translation).

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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**Website address**

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.