

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 **Dr John Taylor** **Course code** 2122NRX090

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

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Tutor biography

Educated at Balderstone School, Rochdale and Exeter College, Oxford. MA, DPhil. Full time Classics teacher 1982-2014. Head of Classics, St Francis Xavier's College, Liverpool, 1986-92. Head of Classics, Tonbridge School 1992-2014. Lecturer in Classics, University of Manchester from 2015. Tutor, JACT Greek Summer School, Bryanston, since 1986 (Director of Studies 1993-2004, Director five times 2007-19). Madingley tutor since 1993.

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 Deianeira 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 Deianeira. 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. Deianeira 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.

Reading and resources list

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).

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</i> , <i>Women of Trachis</i> , <i>Philoctetes</i> , <i>Oedipus at Colonus</i>	Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1994.
Denniston, J.D.	<i>The Greek Particles</i> .	2nd edition reprint. Bristol Classical Press, 1996

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.

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