Williams College Interlibrary Loan

ILLiad TN: 164062

Borrower: VZS

Lending String: *WCM,VRM,MNN,EGA,PSC

Patron: Curley, Dan

Journal Title: Helios ; journal of the Classical Association of the Southwest.

Volume: 21 **Issue:** unknown
Month/Year: 1994**Pages:** 115-135

Article Author:

Article Title: Faraone; Deianira's mistake and the demise of Heracles

Imprint: Lubbock, Tex. ; The Association

ILL Number: 70809707

Call #: PA1 .H44

Location: LSF

Mail
Charge
Maxcost: 25.00IFM

Shipping Address:
Skidmore College
Interlibrary Loan/Skidmore College Library
815 No.Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Fax: (518)580-5540
Ariel: odyssey

clw

✓

HELIOS

Volume 21 Autumn 1994 Number 2

EXPLORING THE SHADOWS: ANCIENT LITERATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Sarah Iles Johnston
Guest Editor

INTRODUCTION 99

SEEK AND GO HIDE: LITERARY SOURCE PROBLEMS AND GRAECO-ROMAN MAGIC 107
C. Robert Phillips, III

DEIANIRA'S MISTAKE AND THE DEMISE OF HERACLES: EROTIC MAGIC IN SOPHOCLES' *TRACHINIAE* 115
Christopher A. Faraone

PENELOPE AND THE ERINYES: *ODYSSEY* 20.61-82 137
Sarah Iles Johnston

THE MAGICIAN'S INITIATION 161
Fritz Graf

MOSES THE MAGICIAN: HERO OF AN ANCIENT COUNTER-CULTURE? 179
John G. Gager

THE MAGIC OF WRITING AND THE WRITING OF MAGIC: THE POWER OF THE WORD IN EGYPTIAN AND GREEK TRADITIONS 189
David Frankfurter

26. Above, note 17.

27. For the period's view of religion, Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (New York 1967). The best general introduction remains Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, in two volumes: *The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York 1967) and *The Science of Freedom* (New York 1967) with 126-66 on science; cf. my "Sociology" 2700 with n. 64.

28. T. Luckmann in K. E. Rosengren, "Malinowski's Magic: The Riddle of the Empty Cell," *Current Anthropology* 17 (1976) 678. Of course, it is part of the larger problem of the false (on my view) distinction between what moderns have defined as magic, science, and religion. For a recent example of the magic/science distinction, which space has precluded my discussing (see my "Sociology" 2700-02), R. Renehan, "The Staunching of Odysseus' Blood: The Healing Power of Magic," *AJP* 113 (1992) 1-4.

29. Thus what is usually called "heresy" in early Christianity represents rather a series of divergent views of how to interpret the New Testament tradition; cf. my "Sociology" 2733-52 and for the theoretical situation, Berger and Luckmann (next note), *passim*.

30. Peter Berger and Thoman Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York 1967) 122.

31. Thus my "*Nullum*" 265-66. In particular, the Bacchanalia at Rome of 186 B.C. on which see E. Fraenkel, "Senatusconsultum de Bacchanalibus," *Hermes* 67 (1932) 369-96 and Isis in Rome 19 A.D., on which see A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1933) 153-55; for both see my "Sociology" 2748-49. Late Republican Rome provides a particularly good example: A. Momigliano, "The Theological Efforts of the Roman Upper Classes in the First Century B.C.," *CP* 79 (1984) 199-211, and J. North, "Religious Toleration in Republican Rome," *PCPS* 25 (1979) 85-103.

32. Best put, albeit for a later period, in Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA 1978) 1-26.

33. Above, notes 11-13, and cf. J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford 1975) 56-57.

34. The account is largely hostile to Periander while, interestingly, favorable to Cypselus. Probably the "evil tyrant" conception had already begun to influence Herodotus, on which see W. W. Howe and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford 1912) II:338-39. For Herodotus' account in general, J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth. A History of the City to 338 B.C.* (Oxford 1984) 186-230, who but briefly mentions (197) the passage on which I have focused. Matters become the more difficult to unravel since the Bacchiads were related to the Philaidai of Athens (*RE* II, col. 2787) and the influence of the latter on Atthidography and Herodotus is controversial: C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1952) 326-31.

35. For a detailed analysis of this passage along the lines this article has criticized, F. M. Ahl, *Lucan, An Introduction* (Ithaca 1976) 130-49. Cf. Sil. 1.81-140 on Hannibal with Lucan.

36. Thus *RE* XVI, col. 2218, begins its article on necromancy "ist die Befragung von Totenseelen, meist um Zukünftiges zu erfahren, so dass die Totenbefragung sur Mantik gehört . . . anderseits zur Magie . . . insofern als man auch gegen die Totenseelen dem magischen Zwang anwendete." Cf. Pease (above, note 10) . . . *Liber Primus* (1920) = 6.2 [May, 1920]) 334: " . . . at a higher stage of culture, it is often replaced by direct access to the gods, or with a more refined view of the soul. . . . " And, of course, perspective mattered. Thus an oracle of the dead could employ necromancy as officially sanctioned (and hence not "magical"): M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 3rd ed. (Munich 1967) I:169-70. More recent bibliography in E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979) 252 n. 26.

37. N. Horsfall, "*Aeneid* VII: Notes on Selected Passages" (Diss. Oxford 1971) *ad* 7.85-89. There is Varronian evidence for linking necromancy with Numa and Pythagoras, which could explain the positive context here—*ARD* I Appendix 4 Cardauns. The only possible downside comes from the apparent insistence throughout book 7 that the Latins live too close to the Underworld and are befuddled by it; thus the appearance of Allecto and the Underworld openings (7.517, 563-71); cf. W. Fauth, "Funktion und Erscheinung niederer Gottheiten in Vergils Aeneis," *Gymnasium* 78 (1971) 54-75. The necromancy of book 6 has caused few problems, since scholars have readily related it to the heroic *katabasis* tradition rather than the "magical" tradition (cf. previous note); thus E. Nordon, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis Buch VI*, 5th ed. (Leipzig 1970) 200 n. 2 and 355-56.

HELIOS, vol. 21, no.2, 1994

DEIANIRA'S MISTAKE AND THE DEMISE OF HERACLES: EROTIC MAGIC IN SOPHOCLES' *TRACHINIAE*

Christopher A. Faraone

Toward the end of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* the bewildered and guilt-ridden Hyllus defends his mother's use of the poisoned robe:[1]

> Hyllus: "Although her intentions were good, she botched the whole enterprise."[2]
> Heracles: "Does she do *good* by killing your father?"
> Hyllus: "Well, when she saw that marriage in her house, she was determined to cast a love-charm (*stergêma*) on you, but she failed utterly." (1136-39)

Although Hyllus clearly exonerates his mother on the grounds of motive, Deianira's culpability has long been a sore point for commentators. In the past, most modern readers were inclined to see her as an ideal—some would even say heroic—wife, who destroys her husband by a tragic miscalculation.[3] According to this traditional reading we must attribute her error either to simple foolishness[4] or to her uncontrollable passion—a passion which clouds her otherwise good judgment.[5] In recent years, however, scholars have grown uneasy with this picture of Deianira. Some suggest that she is, in fact, a nervous, irresolute woman, who is unable to make even the smallest decision without the help of the Nurse or the Chorus.[6] Others argue that Deianira originally appeared in Greek myth as a wild, man-killing Amazon and that Sophocles is guilty of a fifth-century whitewash of her character—a drastic and somewhat incomplete revision which inevitably results in inconsistencies in her motivation, as well as the survival of dissonant details in the plot, such as the poisoned robe and Deianira's method of suicide.[7] Errandonea, the original proponent of this approach, went so far as to say that Deianira, caught in the grip of *erôs*, purposely murders Heracles even in Sophocles' version.[8]

In this essay I return to the earlier view that Deianira is an intelligent, well-meaning wife who does in fact make a tragic error in judgment, but that it is not the mistake of a foolish, faint-hearted, or love-sick girl. On the contrary, she appears as a mature, married woman whose status is threatened suddenly by the arrival of a new wife in the household. As a result, she adopts a course of action occasionally taken by Greek women in her difficult position: she knowingly gives her husband poison but in the hopes of regaining his affections and not with the goal of destroying him. The essay falls into two parts. In the first I shall argue that since Deianira acts on the traditional Greek premise that powerful poisons, when properly administered in small doses, do arouse desire in the male, her culpability—at least in the eyes of a fifth-century audience—would have been mitigated; she errs only in failing to anticipate the power of the particular poison she employs. In the second section I argue that a detailed knowledge of ancient Greek aphrodisiacs is also helpful in understanding another critical problem in this play, the unheroic portrayal of Heracles in the *exodos*. I point out that several types of love magic were believed to reverse traditional gender roles by weakening the male and rendering him more passive and pliable to the demands of the female. This state of affairs, which in ancient Greek cultural terms is entirely perverted, is amply illustrated in the finale of the play where we see the horrible result of Deianira's actions—Heracles, the greatest of all men, reduced to the status of a tearful and weak woman.

I. Deianira's Mistake

I will begin with the robe, and ask: What was it precisely that Deianira thought she was doing when she anointed it with the centaur's blood? All of the necessary information can be found in her recollection of the detailed instructions of the dying Nessus:

> For if you take in your hands the clotted blood from my wounds, where Heracles struck me with arrows black with the poison of the Lernean Hydra,[9] you will have a charm (*kêlêtêrion*) over the heart of Heracles, so that he will look at no other woman and love (*sterxei*) her more than you. (572-77)

Despite the notorious difficulty in deciphering the exact syntax of lines 573-74, it is clear from the start that Deianira is aware that one of the active ingredients of this love-charm is in fact a poison—the bile of the Hydra—into which Heracles regularly dipped his arrowheads. Did she understand why Heracles anointed the arrows with the bile? If one argues that this would be common knowledge to the wife of this famous bowman (and to the audience as well), one might conclude that Deianira is a reprehensible character in this play. Errandonea and others argue that this is, in fact, the first indication of her guilt, and that it is a survival of the story of that pre-Sophoclean "man-killing" Deianira.[10]

Most commentators, however, argue that Deianira realizes the Hydra's bile is poisonous at lines 709-18 only *after* she discovers that the tuft of wool used to smear the poisoned blood on Heracles' robe has disintegrated:[11]

> No, he (sc. Nessus) tricked me, eager to destroy the man who shot him. But I have learned these things too late (*methusteron*), now when it is no longer of any help. For unless I am mistaken somehow, I, wretch that I am, shall destroy him. For I know that the arrow which hit Nessus injured even Chiron, who was a god, and that it destroys every animal it touches. This poison (*ios*) which seeped black from the bloody wounds of Nessus, how will it fail to kill Heracles, too?

These are difficult lines. There is no doubt that this is a crucial admission for Deianira, a confession of "late-learning" that is so familiar to readers of Sophocles.[12] The question remains, however, precisely what it is that she has come to know at this point. Does she realize here for the first time that she has anointed the robe with the poison (*ios*) of the Hydra? I think not. The centaur's instructions (lines 572-77, quoted above) suggest that this is not the case. Was she then aware of the presence of the Hydra's bile in the centaur's blood, but unaware of its continued toxic effect?[13] This is possible, perhaps, but again the mention of the Hydra's poison in Nessus' instructions suggests otherwise, for if she knows that the arrows of Heracles were regularly dipped in it, she would presumably know why. Indeed, in this passage, at least, she recalls the accidental but nonetheless fatal wounding of Chiron, an episode which turns on previous knowledge of the poisoned arrows. There is, moreover, the manner in which she refers to the universally destructive power of the poison (*phtheirei ta panta knôdola*), where she seems to express a well-known fact, and not something recently deduced from the corroded tuft of wool.

The use of debilitating poisons or narcotics as love-potions[14] is, in fact, alluded to several times in classical Greek literary sources, but its social context and significance is most clearly spelled out in Plutarch's advice to young brides:

> Fishing with *pharmaka*[15] is a quick and easy way to catch fish, but it renders them inedible and paltry. In the same way, women who contrive love-charms (*philtra*) and sorceries (*goêteias*) against their husbands, and who gain mastery over them through pleasure, share their lives with stunned, senseless, crippled men. The men who had been drugged (or poisoned; *katapharmakeuthentes*) by Circe did not gratify her, nor did she have any "use" for them[16] after they had become swine and asses. But Odysseus, who kept his wits and behaved prudently, she loved in excess. (*Mor.* 139A)

The first comparison here is to a type of fishing done by stunning the prey with poison, a method still employed in the Far East and similar in effect, I suppose, to the illegal use of dynamite in some areas of the United States. The bottom line of Plutarch's argument[17] is that using drugs or magic to increase the sexual desire of one's husband is ultimately short-sighted and counter-productive, since it also leads to a loss in his virility and energy—in broad cultural terms, he becomes less of a man.[18]

Plutarch's advice suggests a real concern that such incidents were occurring in his own day.[19] There is, in fact, good evidence that anxiety over the use of such dangerous aphrodisiacs dates back to at least as early as the classical period.[20] In the first speech of Antiphon, written for a young client named Apollodorus for the prosecution of his stepmother, we can trace a similarly tragic use of poison as an aphrodisiac. The two victims, Apollodorus' father and a friend named Philoneus, drank wine laced with a *pharmakon* and subsequently died. The background of the case (as presented by the prosecution) is as follows: Philoneus had a mistress (*pallakê*) whom he was trying to get rid of by placing her in a brothel. Apollodorus' stepmother sent for the woman and suggested a plan by which she might regain the affections of Philoneus (Antiphon 1.14; Apollodorus is referring to his stepmother at this point):

> On hearing the wrong intended by Philoneus, she sent for her (i.e., the mistress), and when she arrived, she informed her that she herself was also being mistreated by our father. Therefore, if she (Philoneus' mistress) was willing to be persuaded, she herself (the stepmother) knew how to make Philoneus affectionate (*philon . . . poiêsai*) towards her and our father affectionate towards herself.

According to the prosecution, the stepmother supplied some *pharmakon* to the mistress, who tampered with the wine as the men were drinking together in Pireaus:

> As she was pouring the wine for the libation, Philoneus' mistress . . . slipped in the *pharmakon*. And at the same time, thinking that she was acting shrewdly, she gave Philoneus a larger dose, imagining, perhaps, that if she gave him more, she would be all the more esteemed (*mallon philêsomenê*) by him. For she did not realize that she had been duped by my stepmother, until she was already in a wretched situation. (ibid. 19)

We subsequently learn that Philoneus died instantly, that Apollodorus' father took sick and died twenty days later, and that the mistress, apparently of foreign or servile origin, was tortured and killed for her involvement (ibid. 20). Apollodorus' stepmother, however, apparently escaped indictment until the trial at which this speech was delivered.

It is the argument of the prosecution, that the stepmother was bent on murder from the start (she is called melodramatically "this Clytemnestra here" [ibid. 17] to drive home the point!), and that she simply suborned Philoneus' mistress to do the dirty work—an interpretation of the events that is not unlike one recent trend in the interpretation of the *Trachiniae*, which sees Deianira as the innocent dupe of the homicidal Nessus. There is, however, some indication in the speech that another interpretation was possible and was probably used by the defense; earlier in the speech we learn that this kind of thing had happened before:[21]

> In the first place, I was ready to torture the defendant's slaves, who knew that this woman, my opponents' mother, had contrived to kill our father with *pharmaka* on a previous occasion as well, and that our father caught her red-handed and that she admitted everything—save that her action was not aimed at his death, but at procuring his affections. (1.9.2)

This defense (like the one given for Deianira by the chorus at lines 727-78 or by Hyllus at lines 1136-39) is based simply on motive; she claims she gave her husband a poison in the belief it would regain his affections. It seems, moreover, to have been a credible excuse in the eyes of the husband, for he apparently took no further action against her.

We do not know whether the stepmother was acquitted or found guilty as a result of Antiphon's speech, but there is a good possibility that if she used the same defense at her trial, she would have gone free, for this argument (i.e., on the grounds of intent) appears in an anecdote preserved by the author of the Aristotelian *Magna Moralia*, where it is adduced as an example of the defense for involuntary or accidental homicide:[22]

> For instance, it is said that on one occasion a woman gave a man a philtre (*philtron*) to drink, and afterwards he died from the philtre, but she was acquitted on the Areopagus, where they let off the accused woman for no other reason than that she did not do it deliberately. For she gave it to him for love (*philia*), but missed her mark; so they decided it was not intentional, because she did not give him the philtre with the thought of killing him. (trans. MacDowell)

Although we can never rule out the possibility that this woman or Apollodorus' stepmother were in fact guilty as charged, we must suppose that such arguments were indeed effective for the precise reason asserted in the passage from the *Magna Moralia*: they cannot be guilty of homicide because they did not give the *pharmakon* with the intent to kill.[23] Apparently both women knowingly gave their husbands powerful *pharmaka* which killed them. Plutarch, in the passage quoted above, corroborates this strange yet apparently traditional use of poisons as aphrodisiacs, when he makes an explicit analogy to fishing with poisons. All three texts suggest that it was common knowledge that some love-potions were extremely dangerous. It can also be inferred that the use of such aphrodisiacs by wives or lovers was common enough, and that there were occasional accidents (perhaps on account of an overdose)[24] which resulted in the victim's death. This may well be the point of Deianira's horrified realization that she has gone "beyond what is fitting (*peraiterô*, 633)." As the author of the *Magna Moralia* quaintly puts it, these women claim to have given the love-potion to increase their partner's esteem (*philia*) for them, but in each case they "missed their mark," i.e., they improperly calculated the power of the philtre.

Anecdotes from later Greek literature provide a wider context for understanding this practice. In his essay "On the Bravery of Women," Plutarch tells the story of Aretaphila, who was apprehended in the act of poisoning her hateful husband, the tyrant of Cyrene during the first century B.C.E.:

> But when she was compelled by the evidence, and saw that her preparations for the poisoning (or drugging; *pharmakeia*) admitted no denial, she confessed, but said that she had prepared no fatal *pharmakeia*: "No, my husband," she said, "I am competing (*agônizomai*) for great prizes, namely your affection (*eunoia*) for me, and the repute (*doxê*) and influence (*dynamis*) which I enjoy because of you, and so I am an object of envy to evil women. Fearful of their potions (*pharmaka*) and devices, I was persuaded to invent some devices to counteract them. I was foolish and feminine, perhaps, but not deserving of death, unless you as judge decide to put to death, because of love-potions (*philtra*) and sorcery (*goêteia*), a wife who yearns to be cherished more (*pleon . . . phileisthai*) than you are willing to cherish her. (*Mor.* 256C)

In this case, the wife was in fact guilty of the crime, but we would not be too far off the mark if we imagine that the speech put here into the mouth of the tyrant's wife is one much like that used by the stepmother in Antiphon's speech (to quell the suspicions of her husband after the first incident) or the unnamed woman in the *Magna Moralia*. The passage, moreover, provides an excellent illustration of the more complicated motivations which lie behind the use of aphrodisiacs by queens or the wives of very powerful men, whose personal reputation and power are closely tied to the affection (*eunoia*) which their husbands hold for them. Here Aretaphila describes the agonistic context of her action (*agônizomai*), claiming that it was fear for her own social standing which induced her to "fight fire with fire" as it were and to gamble on the use of a potentially lethal type of erotic magic.

Not surprisingly, nearly all of the anecdotes in the historical record about love-potions concern the wives or paramours of famous individuals. Suetonius claims, for instance, that the emperor Caligula was given a love-potion by his wife Caesonia and that he went mad as a result and eventually died from it (*Cal.* 50); elsewhere, Suetonius reports that the poet Lucretius was also a victim of a love-potion and died, after a period of lunacy (*de Poetis* 16 [Rostagni]). The most interesting case, however, is reported by Plutarch on the authority of the first-century B.C.E. biographer Cornelius Nepos:

> But Cornelius Nepos denies that Lucullus became deranged either by old age or sickness, but asserts that he was crippled by *pharmaka* given to him by Callisthenes, one of his freedman. The *pharmaka* were given in order that Callisthenes might be loved more (*hôs agapôito mallon*) by him—they were thought to have that sort of power—but instead they diverted and overwhelmed Lucullus' sanity to such a degree that while he was still alive his brother took charge of his property. (Plut. *Luc.* 43.1-2)

One might assume that Lucullus' Greek freedman was motivated by jealousy arising out of an erotic relationship; this may be true, although the verb used here (*agapan*) is an impediment to such an argument, as it very rarely connotes sexual love.[25] It is perhaps more important to point out that there is here, as in many of these stories concerned with male-targeting aphrodisiacs, a clearly discernible political dimension to the act; like the wife of a tyrant or king, Callisthenes, a socially inferior freedman, may have feared for his powerful position in the general's retinue—in other words, he had a "dynastic"[26] concern much like those which underlie many of the narratives in which wives like Deianira, Aretaphila, or the stepmother in Antiphon attack their spouses with erotic magic.

What then are the wider ramifications for our reading of Sophocles' play? First and foremost, knowledge of this bit of traditional Greek folklore is of great help in unravelling some ticklish questions about Deianira's motivations and about her culpability. If the Athenians in the audience understood that poisons were sometimes given in small doses to men as love-potions, then her guilt in knowingly using the Hydra's poison is somewhat reduced, for Deianira seems to be employing a traditional remedy for lost love in a manner which was not itself legally reprehensible,[27] although Plutarch's censure of the practice in his advice to young brides clearly indicates some societal disapproval. The question of Deianira's motivation can also be clarified. As mentioned above, Easterling and Winnington-Ingram have, in recent years, argued eloquently that Deianira, like Medea or Phaedra, acts under duress, helpless because she has been overwhelmed by *erôs* which clouds her judgement and causes her to act imprudently.[28] This love-crazed Deianira is, however, difficult to find in the text. Like the stepmother in Antiphon's speech and Lucullus' freedman, Deianira appears to be less worried about Heracles' erotic inclinations toward other women, and more motivated by dynastic concerns over her future position in her husband's household.[29] She candidly admits, for example, full knowledge and acceptance of Heracles' numerous love affairs (lines 459-60, quoted below), and is apparently only threatened when he brings a new bride[30] into their home at Trachis—into the very heart of her own domain.[31] This is, in fact, the one detail in Lichas' story that causes her to abandon her earlier resignation and employ the aphrodisiac:

> For I have taken on a girl—well a girl no longer, I wager, but a married woman (*ezeugmenên*)—as a ship's master takes on cargo, an acquisition that outrages my heart. So now the two of us, the object of the same embrace,[32] lie waiting under one blanket. Such is the gift our faithful and brave Heracles sends back to his dear homemaker to compensate for her long years of service! I, at least, cannot get angry when he is so often sick with this disease (*nosos*). But to live in the same house (*sunoikein*) with her and to share the same marriage (*koinnousa tôn autôn gamôn*), that is something else. What woman could do that? For I see her youth is coming into full bloom while mine is fading. The eyes of men love to pluck the blossoms; from the faded flowers they turn away. Therefore, this is what I fear: that he may be called my husband but be the younger woman's man. But in truth, just as I said, it does no good for a sensible woman to get angry. I shall tell you dear friends, the solution I have to bring myself relief. (536-55)

I apologize for giving such a long quotation, but Deianira is a complex character, easily distorted by presenting her in tiny "sound-bites." Indeed, individual lines such as "an acquisition that outrages my heart" or "the two of us . . . lie waiting under one blanket" when taken out of context can certainly lend themselves to the interpretation of Deianira as a love-crazed woman fretting over her husband's sexual loyalty.[33]

The entire passage, however, if taken together is a masterly portrait of a sensible woman who fears displacement in her own house and bedroom and takes action to prevent it; she is not, however, by any stretch of the imagination a raging mad-woman like Medea. For a moment Deianira does indeed express rage at Heracles' behavior, but she rejects the emotion, preferring (it seems) some practical remedy for the problem. The key to understanding this passage is the contrast between her husband's many past amorous escapades (which are described as bouts of an uncontrollable disease),[34] and this remarkable new situation in which she is about to be supplanted in her home and in her marriage bed. Indeed, her complacent attitude toward Heracles' *nosos* and its attendant infidelities is remarkable for a woman allegedly gripped by passion; elsewhere she is even more forthright in her tolerance of her husband's sexual conquests:

> And has Heracles, although he is only a single "husband" (*heis anêr*), not indeed "married" (*egême*) many other woman before? Never yet has one of them earned insults from me, at least, or reproach, nor will this woman, even if he (i.e., Heracles) is utterly melted by his affection (*tôi philein*) for her. (459-63)[35]

Although it is true that her ironic use of the language of marriage[36] foreshadows Heracles' own tragic confusion of the categories of marriage and concubinage, it is clear that the great number of Heracles' dalliances and Deianira's indifferent attitude towards them were common knowledge in the household. And Deianira is in fact true to her word. Nowhere in the play does she malign Iole or accuse her of breaking up her marriage with Heracles. Indeed we see none of the personal abuse heaped on Jason and Creon's daughter by the jealous Medea. Deianira is not, then, a jealous woman gripped uncontrollably by *erôs*. Her concern is a domestic one, a dynastic one—one might even call it a political one—but it is certainly not an erotic one, except insofar as Heracles' sexual preference threatens her position in the *oikos*. In fact, the main motivation for her subsequent actions is fear—a fear of being ignored or abandoned, a fear which haunts her throughout the play.[37]

Alternative treatments of the myth seem to corroborate this dynastic motivation for Deianira's actions and emphasize by their choice of vocabulary the threat to her high social status as Heracles' wife, a role which is dependent upon her husband's affection and respect for her.[38] The oldest extant version of the myth is found in a fragment of Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 25 M-W, lines 17-22), but his treatment is typically brief and gives no real insight into Deianira's motivation.[39] In Bacchylides' version (16.25-29) it is the announcement of Iole's arrival as a "sleek wife" (*alochos liparos*) at Deianira's home that sets the tragic events in motion. Diodorus, on the other hand, focuses on the emotional relationship:

> But Deianira learned from Lichas of the affection (*philostorgia*) which Heracles had for Iole, and wishing that she herself might be esteemed more (*pleon . . . agapasthai*), she anointed the tunic with the potion that had been given to her by the centaur, who was intent on destroying Heracles. (4.38.1)

The terms used here to describe the emotional ties (*philostorgia/agapasthai*) are once again strangely void of any erotic sense. According to Diodorus, Deianira does not find Heracles' erotic attraction to Iole threatening, but rather his decision to set up some more permanent relationship with her, one based on some deeper level of esteem—a threat which she tries to counter in like terms as she simply desires to be more cherished (the verb is *agapan*) by her husband. Similar language appears in the *Trachiniae*; in the first mention of the love-charm (577), Deianira reports the promise of the dying centaur that if she uses it, Heracles will cherish no other woman more than her (*mêtina sterxai . . . gunaika . . . pleon*, 575-76). The verb *stergein* is equally devoid of erotic associations.[40] In a similar way, Hyllus in his defense of his mother (quoted at the beginning of this paper) describes the love-charm as a *stergêma*, apparently a *hapax legomenon* derived from *stergein*.

This focus on the nonerotic bond between husband and wife is in fact typical of the historical anecdotes discussed above. Philoneus' mistress also gave a *pharmakon* to her man in order that she might be cherished more by him (Antiphon 1.19: *mallon philêsomenê*; cf. section 15: *ton Philoneôn philon poiêsai*). The woman tried and acquitted by the Areopagus (*Magna Moralia* 16) claimed that she gave the poison to gain her husband's affection (*philia*).[41] Callisthenes, the freedman of Lucullus, gave his patron the love-potion because he wanted to be more esteemed (*agapasthai mallon*) by him. Aretaphila, the wife of the Cyrenean tyrant, speaks, not of *erôs* or *pothos*, but rather of losing her husband's *eunoia* and its attendant repute and influence. In nearly all of these situations, the high social status and personal power of the person employing the aphrodisiac depends solely on the esteem and good will of the victim, usually a powerful king or his counterpart in the microcosm of the Greek family, the head of the household. In each case the love-potions are used by wives almost in a defensive way to prevent the eclipse of their personal influence with their husbands.

Deianira, then, knowingly administers a poison to her husband, but either fails to consider until too late the potency of that poison or (more likely in my view) believes that the tiny amount of the Hydra's poison applied externally is a reasonable "dose" for her husband's superhuman constitution. Nessus' deception (*m' ethelge*, 709), then, lies not in the fact that the Hydra's poison was a component of the potion (as we have seen, he mentions the poison quite openly); rather, he deceives Deianira into believing that this poison, like many others, can also have erotic power. Her motivation and culpability would, of course, have been much clearer to the ancient Greek audience, especially if it had always been a crucial part of the Deianira story. Although the earlier treatments of her myth corroborate the dynastic context of Deianira's actions, they are nearly silent about her culpability. Her name itself has, however, been thought to speak volumes, for it apparently means "Husband-killer" or "Husband-destroyer."[42] There are also a striking number of parallels between the structure and staging of the *Trachiniae* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, which suggest a profitable comparison between Deianira and Clytemnestra.[43] I remain unconvinced, however, that Sophocles' play represents a whitewash of an earlier tradition of a violent, Amazonian Deianira. I would agree that her name is significant, but would argue that her myth from very early on centered on the coincidence of love-potion and poison and that Deianira was always perceived sympathetically as a woman pushed too far by her husband's gross insensitivity. Her fateful act arises neither from simple foolishness (i.e., a character flaw) nor from a decision to pursue outright treason or open rebellion like that of Clytemnestra, but rather from a mistake in judgement—a mistake, moreover, of degree (i.e., not realizing the problem of the level of dosage) rather than one of kind (i.e., not realizing that the poison was in fact a poison). Her misjudgment is, however, similar to Clytemnestra's (and therefore similarly culpable in the eyes of Greek men), in that she seeks in an albeit more subtle way to overturn the "natural" order of the world and the traditional dominance of the male.

II. Heracles' Demise

Much as Plutarch predicts in his admonitions to the newlywed bride, Deianira in her attempt to regain the affections of her husband tragically makes him unfit for the role of husband, taking a superhuman champion and reducing him to the status of a whimpering girl. This characterization has understandably brought consternation to many readers and commentators, who sometimes wonder if Sophocles is purposely undercutting the heroic values usually associated with Heracles in fifth-century Athens. Here, too, knowledge about Greek love-potions and their putative effects can clarify Sophocles' intentions and underscore the thematic coherence of the two parts of the play. In this second portion of my paper, I shall examine in greater detail the entire spectrum of effects that traditional love-potions and other forms of erotic magic were thought to have on the male victim, beginning with sexual arousal, moving on to impotence, sleepiness, paralysis, and then finally to death.

The simplest love-potion known to the Greeks was apparently wine; an anonymous scholiast to Lucian puts it quite nicely: "Dionysus, when he invented wine, provided a provocative drug (*paroxuntikon pharmakon*) for sexual intercourse."[44] The positive effect that alcohol has on erotic inclination is, however, notoriously linked to the amount which one drinks. Shakespeare sums up the problem most memorably in the second act of *Macbeth*, where Macduff's porter lists the three most pronounced effects of strong drink on a man: a flushed face, sleep, and "much urine." He adds sexual arousal as a cautious fourth, noting: "Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes: it provokes the desire but it takes away the performance" (*Macbeth* 2.3). There are in fact several ancient anecdotes about male impotence induced by excessive drinking, but they are mostly concerned with Alexander and his hard-drinking Macedonians.[45] A fragment of Eubulus, the fourth-century B.C.E. comic poet, suggests, however, that the Athenians in classical times were also aware of this contradictory pattern of effects:[46]

> Three bowls only do I mix for the temperate—one for health, which they empty first, the second for sexual love (*erôs*) and pleasure (*hêdonê*), and the third for sleep, which men reputed to be wise drink up and then go home. The fourth is no longer for me, but for abuse. . . .

It appears that Dionysus himself is the speaker here, and that he condones the first three stages of inebriation. Here it is quite explicit that as the "dosage" increases, the drinker passes from a state of sexual arousal to drowsiness. An elegiac poem by Evenus is predicated on a similar hierarchy:[47]

> The best measure of Bacchus is that which is neither great nor little, for he is the cause of either grief or madness. He likes to be mixed as a fourth with three nymphs, and then he is readiest for the marriage chamber, too. But if he blow strong (i.e., is mixed in a stronger ratio), he turns his back on love and plunges us into sleep, the neighbor of death. (trans. D. Gerber)

Here the debilitating effects of the wine are linked to the ratio in which it is mixed with water; as one increases the proportion of wine, one moves from enhanced sexual capacity to sleep.

This pattern of a narcotic or poison acting as a stimulant to love-making in small doses and an inhibitor in larger doses is reflected elsewhere in ancient Greek lore about aphrodisiacs.[48] Theophrastus mentions at least three herbal additives—all of them poisons or narcotics—which increase the erotic power of wine: oleander, cyclamen, and mandrake. Mandrake is of special interest here because it was regularly used by the Greeks both as an aphrodisiac and as a narcotic for insomniacs (Aristotle, *de Som.* 456b31). The fact that the same material could both sexually excite and dampen that excitement was not lost on the ancients.[49] In fact, Theophrastus raises the larger theoretical problem of understanding how a single drug can bring about two seemingly opposed states in males, i.e., arousal and impotence, but concedes that there must be some truth to these reports:[50]

> Even Aristophilus, the well known *pharmakon*-seller from Plataea, used to say that he had some *pharmakon* with capacities for both effects, one (sc. capacity) to make a person more able to have sex, and the other to make him completely unable. The inability can be either total or temporarily delimited as, for example, two months or three months, so that it can be used on slaves whenever the owners want to punish or discipline one of them. (*HP* 9.18.4-5; trans. A. Preus with minor changes)

I have argued elsewhere that the manifold effects of this single substance must have been linked to the level or duration of the dosage; the pattern can best be illustrated in this chart, which includes magical spells of a different type (amulets and incense-burning rituals) which I have discussed in detail elsewhere:[51]

Bonner no. 156[52]	attracts	immobilizes	
PGM IV.2075-86[53]	attracts	immobilizes	
PGM IV.2441-57[54]	attracts (1 hour)	immobilizes (2 hours)	kills (7 hours)
Wine (Eub. fr. 93 [K.-A.])	health (1 glass)	sexual arousal (2 glasses)	sleep (3 glasses)
Wine mixed with water (Evenus fr. 2 [West])		sexual desire (mixed 1 to 3)	sleep (stronger)
Mandrake with wine or vinegar	sexual desire (Thphr. *HP* 9.9.1)	sleep (Arist. *de Som.* 456b31)	paralysis (Pl. *R.* 6.488c)
Aristophilus' herb (Thphr. *HP* 9.18.4-5)	sexual desire	temporary impotence	permanent impotence

Although the effects of the aphrodisiacs and erotic spells listed on the chart do not coincide completely, we can see a general movement from activity to paralysis and from active "masculine" behavior to passive "feminine" behavior (as they were culturally defined by the ancient Greeks). Thus the traditional worry (discussed above) that aphrodisiacs could cause death embraces but one extreme of a spectrum of reactions leading from sexual excitement to passivity to impotence to sleep to death.

This is, in fact, the effect that Aphrodite's *kestos himas*, a much earlier attested erotic charm, has on Zeus in the famous episode in the *Iliad*,[55] and it ought not surprise us at this point to recall that this is precisely the sea-change that Heracles has undergone by the time we see him in the *exodos* of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. He is carried on stage on a litter as the chorus wonders out loud if he is asleep or dead (978-80), and when he wakes up he complains bitterly about his pain and his weakness (982-86). Most startling and revealing are his pleas for pity (1070-75):

> Pity me, a man pitiful to many, who cries and wails like an unmarried girl (*parthenos*). Nor could anyone ever say he had seen me act like this before. Always without a groan I submitted to my painful labors. But from such a career, I am found out to be a woman, wretch that I am.

For an Athenian audience this is an alarming confession of a world turned completely upside down. Heracles, who elsewhere in the play is called the greatest and best of men (e.g., *aristos phôs*, 177), has been reduced to a weak and pitiful maiden. He also makes it clear that this transformation was the work of a female: "A woman, a female in no way like a man, she alone without even a sword has brought me down" (1062-63).[56] This image of the greatest and most virile of men reduced to the status of female is perfectly consistent with the *testimonia* given above about the debilitating effects of many male-targeting aphrodisiacs and the concerns about them that Plutarch expresses in his advice to young brides.

It is also significant that this kind of erotic magic so frequently appears in situations which involve what Greek males would call an "unnatural" usurpation of male power. In fact, aphrodisiacs were regularly put forth as face-saving explanations for a particular woman's ability to control a powerful male political leader. Thus, for example, the Attic comedians apparently referred to Aspasia as the new "Omphale," "Deianira," or "Hera," monikers which were apparently attached to her on account of the unseemly public displays of affection which the otherwise supremely self-controlled Pericles bestowed upon her (Plu. *Pericles* 24.6). Omphale was, of course, the eastern queen to whom Heracles was enslaved for a year, and the reference to Hera most probably alludes to the famous deception of Zeus in book 14 of the *Iliad* (an episode involving erotic magic). The reference to Deianira is, however, rather unclear, unless it, too, recalls the fact that, like Deianira, Aspasia was believed to have used love charms to control Pericles.[57] There were similar reports (probably circulated by Octavian and his supporters) that Cleopatra, herself an eastern queen like Omphale, controlled Mark Antony with aphrodisiacs;[58] this, too, may somehow refer back to Deianira and Heracles in a subtle ploy to turn Antony's own propaganda on its head, for he had repeatedly emphasized parallels between his own career and that of Heracles.[59]

Although this apparent correlation between increased male sexual excitement and effeminacy might appear strange to a modern observer, it makes perfect sense in a culture which, as Michel Foucault has demonstrated, linked male sexual identity to a man's ability to *control* his own sexual desire and limit the frequency with which it was satisfied. In fact, a man who failed to display *sôphrosynê* and *enkrateia* with regard to his sexual activities was regularly thought to be weak and effeminate, and completely unfit for political leadership.[60] Since aphrodisiacs by definition aim at increasing desire, it was unavoidable that they were also thought to weaken the self-control of males, and make them politically passive—in other words, they stripped their victims of much of their maleness. The connection between male-targeting erotic magic and political magic is also

easier to explain when approached from this angle. Thus, as noted above, there is no need to posit an erotic relationship between Lucullus and his freedman Callisthenes because the tragic poisoning of his patron can just as easily be interpreted along political lines as a botched attempt to curry favor with his boss. In a similar way, magical amulets designed to enhance the charm of the wearer, for example the Homeric *kestos himas*, confound our own fixed categories of protective and erotic magic: they are amulets in the sense that they protect those who wear them from the anger of their superiors and the animosity of their enemies, but they are aphrodisiacs to the extent to which they can manipulate the emotions and desires of others.[61] Thus, since males alone were the power-brokers in Greek society, there is a natural crossover between male-targeting erotic magic and political magic which aimed at gaining the favor of males who happened to be in positions of power and leadership.[62]

Sophocles' *Trachiniae* is a two-part play, which—like his *Ajax* or the *Heracles* and *Hecuba* of Euripides—often causes interpretative problems for modern critics searching desperately for unity. I suggest that the recognition of this ancient Greek tradition about male-targeting aphrodisiacs can be helpful in appreciating the interconnections of the two halves, the paired tragedies of Deianira and of Heracles. The main "event" is, of course, the death of Heracles, and in Sophocles' play it is vigorously over-determined. In the divine sphere it is attributed directly or indirectly to Zeus and Aphrodite,[63] while in the mortal field of action, the disaster is often thought to be a result of Nessus' plot and his beguilement of Deianira, as well as her own erotic seizure which causes her tragic mistake in judgement. As I have argued above, this interpretation involves a mistaken understanding about Deianira's motives and state of mind. As the many anecdotes about aphrodisiacs illustrate, her main concern was erotic only to the extent that Heracles' affection for her guaranteed her social position and that of her children. My general focus on Deianira's actions should not, however, obscure the obvious culpability of Heracles himself, for it is his own lack of self-control with regard to *erôs* that leads him to sack Oechalia; the weakness and suffering produced by the robe merely amplify the sickness which has affected him throughout the play.[64] In fact, this degeneration seems to have already been in full swing before Heracles dons Deianira's gift.[65] His "girlish" outbursts and helplessness can therefore be understood in another way as a direct result of his own lack of *sôphrosynê* and *enkrateia*. Like Plutarch in his advice to the young bride, Sophocles interlaces two related warnings: the first against the use of aphrodisiacs by wives, and the second against the self-destructive carnality of their husbands.[66] Thus, in the course of their tragedy Heracles and Deianira change their "natural" roles, and herein lies the common thread which intertwines their fates and their tragedies:[67] Deianira, by using magic to dominate her husband "unnaturally," and Heracles, by giving up self-control and giving into bodily pleasures, both conspire unwittingly to destroy each other. Deianira ends up killing herself in a manly, heroic manner[68] when she stabs herself with a sword in the inner sanctum of the house; Heracles, on the other hand, is reduced to a frightened girl very reminiscent of the description of Deianira herself in the *parodos*.

I would conclude, then, by reiterating how a more detailed knowledge of the context and the effect of erotic magic in the Greek world allows a clearer reading of two aspects of Sophocles' play. It helps explain the disquieting figure of a weakened, effeminate Heracles at the end of the play and it gives us better insight into the question of Deianira's culpability, for she now appears as a sensitive and intelligent woman who destroys her own husband neither with malice nor in ignorance, but rather by gambling on an apparently traditional but nevertheless risky use of poison to win back the affections of her man. Her error, then, is the result neither of innate simplemindedness nor of blinding love-sickness. The centaur was able to convince her to use his blood laced with poison because his basic premise—the use of a poison as an aphrodisiac—was in agreement with traditional Greek lore. Her mistake then, according to the dominant male ideology of the day, was in trying to control her husband in the first place,[69] for the result of female challenge to or usurpation of male privilege is always the same (at least in Greek tragedy)—the destruction of the family. Deianira, then, appears in this play as the model, well-meaning wife who on account of her concern for her position in the household gambles on a love remedy; thus, much like the woman castigated by Plutarch in his advice to young brides, Deianira cripples, feminizes, and eventually destroys the most virile of husbands when she mistakenly seeks to control him. In the end, the ancient etymology of her name, "Husband-killer," is appropriate, but in a mitigated sense, as Sophocles' Deianira is neither a whitewashed Amazon nor a Clytemnestra, but like Philoneus' mistress or Callisthenes' freedman, she is a well meaning person concerned about her own social status, who unwittingly and tragically destroys her husband and herself by using magic designed to make her more esteemed in his eyes.

NOTES

1. This paper was originally read at a colloquium sponsored by The Ohio State University Classics Department. I owe most thanks to Sarah Iles Johnston, the organizer of that colloquium and the editor of this collection. My essay was much improved by the suggestions of the initial audience and those of Mary Blundell, Mark Edwards, Richard Seaford, Froma Zeitlin, and an anonymous reviewer. Any remaining defects are, of course, my own. The final version was written at the Center for Hellenic Studies, and I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Zeph and Diana Stewart for their guidance and gracious company and to the other junior fellows who made my stay there a particularly enjoyable and profitable one.

Unless otherwise noted all translations from the Greek are my own. The following works are referred to by the authors last names only, or where necessary to distinguish between works by the same author, by name and date of publication:

Davies, M. *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Oxford 1991).
———. "Deianeira and Medea: A Footnote to the Pre-History of Two Myths," *Mnemosyne* 42 (1989) 469-72.
Easterling, P. E. *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Cambridge 1982).
———. "Sophocles, *Trachiniae*," *BICS* 15 (1968) 58-69.

Errandonea, F. "Deianeira vere DEI-ANEIRA," *Mnemosyne* 55 (1927) 145-64.
Faraone, C. A. "Aphrodite's *Kestos* and Apples for Atalanta: Aphrodisiacs in Early Greek Myth and Ritual," *Phoenix* 44 (1990) 219-43.
Faraone, C. A. and D. Obbink, ed. *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York 1991).
Hester, D. A. "Deianeira's Deception Speech," *Antichthon* 14 (1980) 1-8.
Jebb, R. C. *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments*, V: *The Trachiniae* (Cambridge 1892).
Joly, R. *Le vocabulaire chrétien de l'amour est-il original? Philein et agapan dans le grec antique* (Brussels 1968).
Kamerbeek, J. C. *The Plays of Sophocles*, II: *Trachiniae* (Leiden 1959).
Kitto, H. D. F. *Poesis: Structure and Thought*, Sather Classical Lectures, 36 (Berkeley 1966).
Lloyd-Jones, H. and N. Wilson. *Sophoclea* (Oxford 1990).
Segal, C. *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, MA 1987).
West, M. L. "Tragica III," *BICS* 26 (1979) 104-17.
———. *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin 1974).
Whitman, C. *Sophocles: A Study in Heroic Humanism* (Cambridge, MA 1951).
Winnington-Ingram, R. P. *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (Cambridge 1980).

2. I follow many editors, e.g., Easterling (1982) ad loc., in taking *hapan to chrêma* as an internal accusative. Davies (1991, ad loc.) follows Campbell and others who place a comma after *chrêma*: "The whole thing is, she erred with good intent." Either way, Hyllus is asserting Deianira's innocence of the charge of homicide, on account of her good intent, as the chorus does earlier in the play (lines 727-28, quoted below in note 20).

3. E.g., Jebb, Whitman (103-21), and Kamerbeek. For a close analysis of this early trend in the interpretation of the *Trachiniae*, see H. F. Johansen, "Sophocles 1939-1959," *Lustrum* 7 (1962) 94-288, esp. 255-72.

4. Kitto (173) nicely sums up the *communis opinio* of his day: " . . . it is natural for us to think of it (sc. Deianira's mistake) as Aristotelian *harmartia*. Sophocles has given her many virtues, but not shrewdness; it is her simplemindedness that now brings her to ruin; one error destroys her." J. R. March, *The Creative Poet: Studies in the Treatment of Myths in Greek Poetry*, BICS Suppl., 49 (London 1987) 50, describes the Sophoclean Deianira as "well-intentioned but foolish"; for her view of the pre-Sophoclean character, see below, note 7.

5. Most notably Easterling (1968) and Winnington-Ingram 80-90. P. Holt, "Disease, Desire and Deianeira: A Note on the Symbolism of the *Trachiniae*," *Helios* 8 (1981) 63-73, esp. 69, aware of some inconsistencies, speaks of "a fierce erotic passion which Deianira clearly feels but only occasionally mentions."

6. M. McCall, "The *Trachiniae*: Structure, Focus and Heracles," *AJP* 93 (1972) 142-63; G. H. Gellie, *Sophocles: A Reading* (Melbourne 1972) 55; Hester; and most recently March (above, note 4) 67.

7. Errandonea; L. T. Wellein, "Time, Past and the Hero" (Diss. University of Washington 1959) 54-59; J. A. LaRue, "Sophocles' Deianira: A Study in Dramatic Ambiguity" (Diss. Berkeley 1965) 216-33: and March (above, note 4) 49-77. See also note 43 below for parallels between Deianira and Aeschylus' Clytemnestra.

8. Errandonea.

9. Following the interpretation of West (1979) 111. This passage (esp. lines 573-74) is a notorious crux, but scholars generally agree that there are obvious references here to the famous poison (= the Hydra's blood or bile) in which Heracles dipped his arrowheads (the story was well known, see Stesich. *Geryoneis* and esp. E. *Her*. 1187-88, where the notice seems to be proverbial). Depending on one's understanding of the passage, this poison is mentioned directly in the word *ios* at line 574, or (if one follows the MSS' *ious*, as I do, to mean "arrows") is alluded to in the phrase *thremma . . . hydras* which means "the Hydra's offspring" = "the poison of the Hydra" (so A. A. Long, "Poisonous 'Growths' in the *Trachiniae*," *GRBS* 8 [1967] 275-78; West [1979] 110; and Davies [1991] 161). Those, e.g., Davies (1991) 160-61, who understand *baptein* not in its figurative use (as translated above "to dip [i.e. into blood]" = "to wound"), argue that the word retains its basic meaning "to dip" and instantly calls to mind Heracles' arrows dipped in the Hydras blood. There is also an unmistakable reference to the poisonous gall of the monster in the

adjective *melangcholos*, "black-galled" (cf. line 717 where the Hydra's poison is called *ios melas*). In general, see the paraphrases, e.g., of Jebb ad loc. ("the most envenomed parts") and Easterling (1982) ad loc. ("the Hydra's poison"), which assume that Nessus openly refers to the Hydra's poison.

10. Errandonea (159-60) argues that Deianeira knowingly gives Heracles the poison with the intention of killing him. Wellein (above, note 7, 58-78) argues that she must have at least been aware of the poison's power. See Hester 5.

11. E.g., Jebb, Kamerbeek, and Easterling (1982).

12. Whitman (103-21) is the classic treatment.

13. Easterling (1982, *ad* 716-18) paraphrases with approval Jebb's interpretation: "D. now understands that the venom of the Hydra retains its power even when it is absorbed into the victim's blood."

14. As many of the parallels that follow involve love-potions (i.e., *not* ointments such as the one deployed by Deianira), it would be useful at this point to show that the manner in which a *pharmakon* was delivered to the victim (i.e, by ingestion or contact with the skin) is an insignificant variant, a fact which is apparent from a number of magical texts. The earliest example is a fourth-century B.C.E. lead amulet—discussed by P. Maas, "EPENIKTOS," *Hesperia* 13 (1944) 33-34; and D. R. Jordan, "The Inscribed Lead Tablet from Phalasarna," *ZPE* 94 (1992) 191-94—which is inscribed with hexameters that include the stipulation barring an attack by magic (lines S-T): "... shall not harm me with ointment or with application [so Maas; Jordan suggests 'ghost'] or with drink." As a parallel, Maas cites a second-century B.C.E.curse text from Cnidus: "If he has prepared a *pharmakon* for me, either a drink or an ointment." Both of these texts refer to curses or harmful magic. There is evidence, however, for a similarly insignificant variation in the application of erotic *pharmaka*. A papyrus fragment of a first-century B.C.E.magical handbook contains a spell for enchanting an apple (called a *pharmakon* in the text) for erotic purposes and claims that it will be equally effective if the victim eats the apple or if she simply picks it up and places it in her bosom. See Faraone 233-34 for text and discussion. Among the later Roman-era magical texts, see *PGM* XXXIV.1-24 which mentions an *erôtikon pharmakon* that is either drunk or anointed.

15. I leave this word and its derivatives untranslated in order to preserve the ambiguity in the Greek between "poison" and "magical spell." For a good discussion of the difficulties involved in translating this word and the similarly ambiguous Latin word *venenum*, see C. Pharr, "The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law," *TAPA* 63 (1932) 269-95, esp. 272-74.

16. The expression used here (*chrêsthai tini*) is probably a euphemism (like Latin *uti familiariter*) for sexual relations with a man. See LSJ, s.v. *chraô*, iii.3.

17. There are two interwoven moral lessons here: (1) wives should not use erotic magic on their husbands; and (2) they should not cultivate a pleasure-loving spouse. In my conclusion I argue that Sophocles has intermingled two very similar warnings in the *Trachiniae*.

18. This is, of course, the purpose of the mythological *exemplum* of Odysseus; Hermes warns him (*Od*. 10.301 and 341) that Circe will attempt to render him *kakon kai anênora*.

19. See Juv. 6.610-11 (*Thessala . . . philtra, quibus valeat mentem vexare mariti*); Plu. *Mor.* 126A, and below pp.119-20 for other examples from the Roman period.

20. C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford 1944) 147-48, and Kamerbeek (233) are (to my knowledge) the only scholars who have examined these passages with an eye towards interpreting the *Trachiniae*. R. Sealey, *Women and Law in Classical Greece* (Chapel Hill 1990) 48-49, in his discussion of where and by whom women were tried in Athens, points out the parallels between the chorus' mitigation of Deianira's guilt (lines 727-28: "But when people have erred involuntarily, the resentment towards them is mild, and you should benefit from that mildness") and the acquittal of the women in the Antiphon and *Magna Moralia* passages discussed below. In any event both of these important texts seem to have fallen out of the current debate and appear nowhere in the most recent commentaries of the play, e.g., Easterling (1968) or Davies (1991).

21. W. Endres, a pharmacologist, suggests (*apud* E. Heitsch, *Antiphon aus Rhamus* [Mainz 1983] 123-25) that the unnamed ingredient was crushed blister beetles, which contain canthariden, a drug that in small doses causes irritation to the urogenital tract and erection in males, but which in larger doses causes cramping, internal bleeding, and even death.

22. *Magna Moralia* 16 (= [Arist.] 1188b30-38). The debate over the specific authorship of this tract (i.e., Aristotle or one of his circle) does not affect my argument as the detractors concede

a late classical date to the piece. This anecdote, moreover, is regularly used by modern legal scholars to prove the existence of the concept of unintentional homicide in Athenian law of the classical period; see D. M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca 1978) 114-15 (whose translation I use) and Sealey (above, note 20) 48-49 for discussion. Kamerbeek (233) points out the verbal similarities between this passage and Hyllus' defense of Deianira, quoted near the beginning of this paper.

23. The difficulty remains, of course, in explaining why Philoneus' *pallakê* was killed while the stepmother and the unnamed women in the *Magna Moralia* were allowed to go free. I suspect the difference stems from their status, the latter two being freeborn Athenian wives, while the *pallakê* was probably a slave. Compare the distinction in punishment according to status made in (an admittedly much harsher) Roman law: "Those who give an abortive potion or a love philtre, although they do not do this with premeditated malice, nevertheless, because their deed sets a bad precedent, if of lower birth are condemned to the mines; those of higher station are relegated to an island, after part of their property has been confiscated. But if in consequence of a potion or love philtre a man or a woman dies, then the giver is punished with the ultimate penalty" (Paulus 5.23.14-19, as translated by Pharr [above, note 15] 289).

24. See my discussion below, pp. 124-25, on the hierarchies of enervation associated with increased dosages of aphrodisiacs, and the novel of Achilles Tatius, where a love-potion is mistakenly given undiluted with the result that the intended victim is driven insane (4.15.4). The cause of such overdoses probably lies in the logic apparently used by Philoneus' *pallakê* (discussed above) who increased the dosage to make her lover even more loving towards her.

25. See LSJ, s.h.v., I.1. The basic meanings of the verb are: "to hold in great affection," "to love," and "to be content with." Joly (36-41) surveys the various uses of this verb from the classical to the imperial period, stressing how it gradually ousts the verb *philein* as the most popular word for nonerotic love. This development is, in fact, discernible in the texts I am discussing here: Antiphon and [Aristotle] use *philein* and its cognates, while Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch prefer *agapan*. It is true, of course, that in any particular instance *agapan* or *philein* (especially the latter, see below, note 36) could simply be a euphemism for sexual love or attraction, but (as I argue below) the consistent use of *agapan*, *philein*, or *stergein* or their derivatives to refer to the effect of *pharmaka* deployed by wives against husbands (and the strict avoidance of verbs like *eran* or *pothein*) suggests that the vocabulary generally preserves an important distinction between erotic and nonerotic affection.

26. I use the term "dynastic" very loosely here and in what follows to refer to the broad range of strategies employed in the "political" competition among subordinates for the favor of a single male leader, be he a king, tyrant, general, or simply a Greek husband in his *oikos*.

27. This is clearest in the passage from the *Magna Moralia* discussed above; see MacDowell (above, note 22) 114-16 for discussion.

28. See note 5 above.

29. This has been recognized by some scholars; see Kitto 168-69 with earlier bibliography. I do not mean to exclude altogether the role of erotic attraction and personal jealousy in Deianira's decision making, as her situation is clearly a complicated, multidimensional one. I am, however, arguing against the current trend in interpretation that sees her as gripped solely by an erotic *anagkê* that compels her to act in an irrational manner. In my reading, her decision to use the poison as an aphrodisiac is (given the popular Greek tradition concerning these things) a thoroughly rational reaction to Heracles' unprecedented decision to bring a concubine into the house (see next note).

30. The different quality of Heracles' affection toward Iole and the expectation of a different status is stressed in several passages. See especially the Messenger's challenge to Lichas at line 428 ("Did you not say under oath that Heracles was leading her [sc. Iole] here as his wife [*damar*]?") and Deianira's indignant repetition of the word in the next line. The term *damar*, with which the Messenger addresses Deianira at the beginning of his speech (408), most often signifies "lawfully wedded wife"; Stevens (*apud* Davies, 1991, 129) suggests that there is a special point to describing Iole with a word that should properly be used of Deianira. See the use of *ezeugmenên* and *gamoi* in Deianira's speech at 535-46 (quoted below) and Hyllus' defense of his mother (1139, quoted at the beginning of this paper): " . . . when she saw that marriage in her house."

31. Kitto 168-69 and Hester 3 n. 3 discuss the significance of Iole's presence in the house, adducing several examples where husbands are criticized for housing their concubines in the same house as their wives. To their list add [Dem.] *Against Neaira* 22, where an Athenian husband out of respect for his mother and wife refuses to "lead in" (*eisagein*) his Corinthian concubine to his own home at Athens while she is being inducted into the mysteries, preferring to send her off to stay with a friend. An anonymous referee also points out that the earliest of the Graeco-Egyptian marriage contracts (*P. Eleph.* 1, dated to 311 B.C.E) clearly stipulates that the husband is not allowed to "lead in" (*epeisagesthai*, i.e. into the house) another wife (*gunê*).

32. So A. A. Long, *Language and Thought in Sophocles: A Study of Abstract Nouns and Poetic Technique* (London 1968) 118-20, who is followed by Davies (1991) ad loc. Kamerbeek (ad loc.) prefers to take *hupangkalisma* as the object of the verb: "awaiting a single embrace."

33. Above, note 5. Holt (above, note 5, 68-69) argues for an interior struggle between alternating moods (à la Euripides' Medea) which he suggests is clearly marked in the text.

34. Whitman (115-16) sees implicit in the language of sickness an argument for overlooking the infidelities.

35. I follow the scholiast and most modern editors (most recently H. Lloyd-Jones, review of A. C. Morehouse, *The Syntax of Sophocles* [Leiden 1982], in *CR* 33 [1983] 171-73, esp. 172; and Davies [1991] ad loc.) in making Heracles the subject of *entakeiê* in line 463. Winnington-Ingram (81 n. 27) and Easterling (1982, ad loc.), however, have in recent years popularized the alternate suggestion that Iole is the one "melting" in love (*tôi philein*).

36. For the peculiarly ironic or pointed use of the terminology of marriage (*anêr* and *gamein*) to refer to simple sexual liaisons, see Segal 75-76. It is, perhaps, slang drawn sarcastically from the love-talk of mistresses; note especially the very rare use of *philein* to refer to erotic passion, which is otherwise narrowly limited to amatory inscriptions, the magical papyri, and Lucian, especially the *Dialogue of the Courtesans* where it appears five times. See Joly 15.

37. Deianira's recurrent fear of abandonment is brilliantly discussed by Winnington-Ingram (1980) 75-78. See also R. Seaford, "Wedding Ritual and Textual Criticism in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*," *Hermes* 114 (1986) 50-59, esp. 51-55, who points out that much of the pathos of the opening scenes of the play stems from Deianira's isolation which (especially in her advice to the unmarried women of the chorus at 141-49) seems to draw on the traditional images and ritual sadness of Greek wedding songs.

38. Deianira spells this out clearly to Hyllus very early in the play when she warns that their safety depends on Heracles (83-85). A similar worry apparently leads Phaedra to leave behind her notorious letter in the *Hippolytus* in order to protect her children (715-18).

39. See March (above, note 4) 49-50 and Davies (1989) for a detailed discussion of the text and recent bibliography. The two points in the papyrus (fr. 25 M-W) where Deianira's intent or disposition might have been revealed by Hesiod are unfortunately lacunose: (1) at line 17 an adjective describing her state of mind can be restored either as "thoughtful" (so Lobel: *epi]ph[r]ona*), "malignant," or "arrogant" (both proposed by March: *dus]ph[r]ona or hyper]ph[r]ona*); and (2) line 20, where as Easterling (1982, 16) points out, even if we agree that *aasatô* or one of its participial forms filled the midline lacuna (cf. *Il.* 9.537), the verb is "deliciously ambiguous," referring equally to simple errors and to acts of deliberate malice.

40. See LSJ, s.h.v. ("seldom of sexual love"). Joly notes (*passim*) that *stergein* (and its cognate *storgia*) often occurs as a synonym for *philein* and *agapan* in the nonerotic sense.

41. In fact, the derivation of the word *philtron* ("love-potion") from *philein*, suggests that this whole category of philtres was oriented toward increasing the *philia* of the victim. *Philia* is, however, a rather large category, embracing friendship, political liaisons, and the relationship between man and wife. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.6.10-11), Socrates talks about the subtle attractions which lead to political friendship; his references to magical spells in the context of *philia* are striking and well worth quoting: "There are spells (*epôidai*), which those in the know use against whomever they wish and make them friends, and there are love-potions (*philtra*) which they use against whomever they wish and thus win their love." Cf. also 2.6.12-13. For the strong political connotations of *philia* (like Latin *amicitia*), see W. R. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton 1971) 30-66.

42. Davies (1989) 469.

43. R. Scodel, *Sophocles* (Boston 1984) 31, discusses the "visual echoes" of the arrival scenes of the mute Cassandra and the mute Iole. Kamerbeek (*ad* 1050-51), Kitto (176), and March (above, note 4, 70-71) note verbal echoes such as Heracles' use of the phrase "a robe woven by the Erinyes" used at *Ag.* 355ff. O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 84, points out that both plays, like the *Persians*, are *nostos*-plays, in which the entrance of the main "tragic"-figure is delayed until the *exodos*. One might also note the shared sense of isolation that both wives have while their husbands are off at war. See N. Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, trans. A. Forster (Cambridge, MA 1987) 7-8, for a sensitive discussion of Clytemnestra's speech (861-76), where the queen mendaciously paints a persuasive picture of herself driven close to suicide by premature reports of her husband's death. Such plots may have been a generic type; T. B. L. Webster, *Introduction to Sophocles* (Oxford 1936) 177, and others have, for example, suggested a reconstruction for Sophocles' lost *Tereus*, which has close parallels to his *Trachiniae*: a "diptych play" dealing first with the loneliness of Procne as she awaits the return of her wandering husband, and then with her savage revenge on him.

44. Scholia to Lucian, *Dial. Mer.* 7.4. (p. 280.3-4 [Rabe]). The sentiment seems to have been a traditional one; the herdsman in the *Bacchae* says simply: "Without wine there is no love-making, nor any other joy for humankind" (773-74). See H. M. Müller, *Erotische Motive in der griechischen Dichtung bis auf Euripides* (Hamburg 1980) 134-38, for discussion. For a different approach see M. R. Halleran, "*Bacchae* 773-74 and Mimnermus frag. 1," *CQ* 38 (1988) 559-60.

45. E.g., Plu. *Mor.* 623E and 652D, discussed by D. E. Gerber, "The Measure of Bacchus," *Mnemosyne* 41 (1988) 39-45, esp. 43. See also the warning in a Hippocratic text (*On Ancient Medicine* 20, discussed by D. Micalella, "Vino e amore: Ippocrate, *Antica Medicina* 20," *QUCC* 24 [1977] 151-55) that drinking unmixed wine causes impotence.

46. Fr. 93 (Kassel-Austin) = fr. 94 (Hunter). The passage goes on to list the continued effects of five more rounds of drinking which result in fighting, lawsuits, and other unpleasantries. The first three stages quoted here, however, seem to be a traditional triad which has been augmented *ad absurdum* for comic purposes; see V. de Falco, "Un frammento di Eubulo," *Dionisio* 5 (1935) 73-77; R. C. Hunter, *Eubulus: The Fragments* (Cambridge 1983) 183-89; and Gerber (above, note 45) 42, who discusses, e.g., Panyassis fr. 13 (Davies) where the same sequence is expressed in terms of the gods to whom the three after-dinner libations are poured (the second is to Aphrodite and Dionysus, while the third is to Hybris and Atê).

47. Fr. 2 (West). The date of Evenus is problematic; see West (1974) 171 for discussion.

48. It is, in fact, a widespread and incorrect cross-cultural belief in modern times as well. P. V. Taberner, *Aphrodisiacs: The Science and the Myth* (Philadelphia 1985), discusses the traditional beliefs that alcohol (120-38), opiates (195-98), and other sedatives (e.g., 118-20 for methaqualone, better known by such brand names as Mandrax and Quaalude) are powerful aphrodisiacs. According to Taberner, modern clinical tests have been unable to substantiate any of these claims, and he suggests two possible explanations for these popular, yet apparently erroneous beliefs: (1) when used in small or moderate amounts, alcohol and most sedatives relax the body and reduce social inhibitions about physical contact and sexual intimacy; and (2) in moderate doses, these same drugs tend to increase the time-period of the male erection by delaying ejaculation. Taberner suggests that this second effect, as it increases the possibility for the woman's orgasm, could well be perceived by both partners as an enhancement to sexual congress. This second factor may also help explain why there are so many reports in the ancient sources of women administering such powerful narcotics to their husbands.

49. In an as yet unpublished lecture ("Encolpius' Impotence and the Double Dose of Satyrion") given at the Second International Conference on the Ancient Novel (July 1989, Dartmouth College), I argued that the cause of Encolpius' impotence in Petronius' *Satyricon* might have been the fact that he drank a double dose of the aphrodisiac *satyrion*. For an abstract of the lecture, see J. Tatum and G. Vernazza, ed., *The Ancient Novel: Classical Paradigms and Modern Perspectives* (Hanover, NH 1990) 114-16.

50. A. Preus, "Theophrastus' Psychopharmacology (*HP* IX)," in *Theophrastean Studies*, ed. W. W. Fortenbaugh and W. Shaples, Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities, 3 (New Brunswick 1987) 76-99, examines most of the aphrodisiacs in book 9. For a general discussion of Theophrastus' pharmacological knowledge and a defense of the authenticity of the ninth book, see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology* (Cambridge 1983) 119-135; and J. Scarbor-

ough, "Theophrastus on Herbals and Herbal Remedies," *Journal of the History of Biology* 11 (1978) 353-85.

51. C. A. Faraone, "Sex and Power: Male-Targeting Aphrodisiacs in the Greek Magical Tradition," in *Documenting Gender: Women and Men in Non-Literary Classical Texts*, ed. D. Konstan, *Helios* 19 (1992) 94-99.

52. C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series, 49 (Ann Arbor 1950) 118-19, published a large inscribed amulet, which has two Greek inscriptions on its reverse, the first in smaller letters written along the edge of the stone ("Attract Achillas, the son of Serapias, to Dionysias, the daughter of Serapias"), and the second ("Either attract [*akson*] him or lay him low [*katakleinon*]") written across the middle. At this point it is important to remind ourselves of the technical meaning of the verb *agein* (here found in its aorist imperative form) and its cognates in Greek magical literature; it refers to the process of leading or attracting victims against their wills, so that they drop what they are doing and come immediately to the performer of the spell.

53. The rubric of this necromantic all-purpose spell boasts: "It attracts (*agei*) them, lays them low (*kataklinei*), sends them dreams, binds them, and provides revelations by dreams as well. These things are accomplished by a single spell."

54. This spell consists of incense burning and incantations. Its rubric claims that "it attracts them without resistance and without *ousia* in a single day. It lays them low in excellent fashion and kills them powerfully." Here, as in Bonner (above, note 52) no. 156, and *PGM* IV.2075-86, the verbs *agein* and *kataklinein* are used to describe the actions of a single spell. At the end of the advertisement (lines 2450-54), we are given a graphic example of the potency of this spell, which was allegedly demonstrated before the emperor Hadrian: "for it attracted people in one hour, laid them low in two, and killed them in seven." This recipe reveals the close, climactic relationship between the first three activities (*agein-kataklinein-anhairein*); they are clearly the result of the same spell as it is applied over an increasing duration of time.

55. Faraone 219-29 and idem (above, note 51) 92-94.

56. Hester (8) compares Creon's similar complaint against Antigone at 678-80.

57. Errandonea (148) sees violence and hybris as the link between the three, but there is no hint of violence in the Omphale/Heracles story, only "unnatural" dominance by the female.

58. Plu. *Ant.* 37: "He was not the master of his own faculties, but under the influence of certain drugs (*pharmaka*) or sorcery (*goêteia*)." Compare ibid. 60.1, for the similar correlation between Antony's lack of self-mastery and Cleopatra's alleged sorcery. Note that the *hôs* at *Ant.* 37 in Nabor's influential text is the editor's addition (the Loeb translation which follows Nabor reads: " . . . *as if* he were under the influence . . . "), and does not appear in the MSS. I have used Ziegler's revised Teubner text (1971), which is also used by C. B. R. Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Cambridge 1988) as the basis for his recent commentary.

59. See Pelling (ibid. 123-24) for a discussion of Plutarch's description of Antony's "Herculean" appearance (*Ant.* 4.1-1), his claim to be a descendent of the hero, and his coinage depicting Heracles.

60. M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, II: *The Uses of Pleasure*, trans. R. Hurley (New York 1985), *passim*. See A. Richlin, "Zeus and Metis: Foucault, Feminism, Classics," *Helios* 18 (1991) 160-80, esp. 166-77, for a critique of *The History of Sexuality* and an examination of some unacknowledged debts of Foucault and his followers to earlier feminist writings. Despite some obvious limitations with his work (e.g., the absence of women or the dependence on philosophical, prescriptive literary texts), I find Foucault's formulation of the Greek male discourse on male sexuality and self-control particularly useful because he draws on legal, ethical, and philosophical texts (i.e., the same constellation of works that I have assembled here) and he speaks directly to the ancient Greek cultural equation: weakened male self-control = feminization, an issue that I think is central to our understanding of Heracles in the *Trachiniae*.

61. J. J. Winkler, "The Constraints of Eros," in Faraone and Obbink 214-43, esp. 218-22 (this essay appears in slightly truncated form as a chapter of Winkler's *The Constraints of Desire* [New York and London 1990] 71-98); and Faraone 222-27.

62. See Faraone (above, note 51) for more detailed discussion.

63. Kitto 177 and T. F. Hoey, "Causality in the *Trachiniae*," *CJ* 68 (1973) 306-09.

64. Kitto 152-91, *passim*; P. Biggs, "The Disease Theme in Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Philoctetes* and *Trachiniae*," *CP* 61 (1966) 223-35; and Holt (above, note 5) 64. Apuleius has the priest of Isis (*Met.* 11.15) suggest to Lucian that his very lustful nature (along with his curiosity) made him an easier victim of magic.

65. See Holt (above, note 5) 64 n. 6 for earlier treatments. Segal (73-74) discusses the repeated and ominous references to heat (erotic and otherwise) which begin with Heracles' innate lust and end with the conflagration of the poison on his body.

66. Plutarch, in a long complaint against a luxurious lifestyle (*Mor.* 126A), chides men for indulging in rich food and for stimulating their appetites by odors and sauces and draws an analogy with the use of aphrodisiacs to stimulate sexual pleasure: "I do not know how it is that, while we loathe and detest woman who contrive love-potions (*philtra*) and sorcery (*goêteia*) to use upon their husbands, we entrust our food and provisions to hirelings and slaves to be bewitched and drugged." He does not, it seems, hold the wives and slaves responsible, but the men who are overindulgent and not sufficiently self-restrained with regard to physical pleasures.

67. I focus here almost exclusively on the deployment and the effect of the *pharmakon*, and I direct the reader to Segal 79-87 (who cites earlier bibliography) for a wide-ranging discussion of the pervasive breakdown and reversal of traditional gender roles at the end of the play.

68. Loraux (above, note 43, 7-30, esp. 13-17) discusses the two types of female suicide in Greek tragedy: by hanging oneself (the preferred "feminine" manner) and by stabbing oneself (the preferred "masculine" manner). In an earlier article, she argued that hanging was associated with excessive valuation of the status of a young bride, while female suicide by the sword was associated with maternity. Her findings are supported by my reading of the *Trachiniae*, where Deianira seems to me to be more interested in her status as wife/mother/mistress of the household than in her role as the bride and sexual object of Heracles.

69. Bowra (above, note 20, 125-28) rightly argues that Deianira's guilt lies in her efforts to dominate her husband, but his notion that this endeavor reveals the moral flaw of pride can not be sustained; see Whitman (1951) 114-15.