

# Euripides' *Heracles* 140–235: Staging and the Stage Iconography of Heracles' Bow

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**E**URIPIDES' *HERACLES* has not fared well with its critics. Since Wilamowitz there has been special concern with the problem of unity.<sup>1</sup> Some have tried to find a single unifying theme or motif to span the play's three (or two) parts;<sup>2</sup> others have argued that this disjunction is what gives the

<sup>1</sup> See U. von WILAMOWITZ-MÖLLENDORFF, *Euripides, Herakles* (Berlin 1894: hereafter 'Wilamowitz') I 132f, 139, who felt that the lack of unity is intentional; for a more negative view cf. G. Norwood, *Greek Tragedy*<sup>4</sup> (London 1953) 46f. For an excellent review of the history of Euripidean criticism, see A. Michelini, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison 1987) 3–69, and 231–36 for the issue of unity in *Heracles*; for the depiction of Heracles in Greek art see F. Brommer, *Herakles, die zwölf Taten des Helden in antiker Kunst und Literatur* (Münster 1953); J. Henle, *Greek Myths: A Vase Painter's Notebook* (Bloomington 1973) 179–82; *LIMC* IV (1988) 1, 728–838; 2, 445–559. Also useful for the following discussion are F. Lissarrague, *L'autre guerrier (archers, peltastes, cavaliers dans l'imagerie attique)* (Paris 1990) esp. 13f; R. Tölle-Kastenbein, *Pfeil und Bogen im antiken Griechenland* (Bochum 1980) esp. 41–46, 51–57.

<sup>2</sup> Wilamowitz I 128, followed by A. Verrall, *Essays on Four Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge 1905) 140ff, and L. Greenwood, *Aspects of Euripidean Tragedy* (Cambridge 1953) 59ff, who use late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psychological models to soften the transition between the parts; a useful corrective: R. Schlesier, "Heracles et la critique des dieux chez Euripide," *AnnPisa* 15 (1985) 7–40, who argues that critics spend too much time trying to fit Euripides' plays into modern models. J. T. Sheppard, "The Formal Beauty of the *Hercules Furens*," *CQ* 10 (1916) 72–79, sees friendship as the unifying theme; H. Chalk, "Bia and Arete in Euripides' *Heracles*," *JHS* 82 (1962) 7–18, a redefinition of arete; contra, A. Adkins, "Basic Greek Values in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Hercules Furens*," *CQ* n.s. 16 (1966) 192–219; cf. also D. Furley's defense of Chalk in "Euripides on the Sanity of Herakles," in J. Betts, J. Hooker, and J. Green, ed., *Studies in Honour of T. B. L. Webster* (Bristol 1986) 102–13, esp. 103; J. Gregory, "Euripides' *Heracles*," *YCS* 25 (1977) 259–75 on Heracles' two fathers, a view developed further in *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor 1991) 121–54; cf. C. Segal's review in *AJP* 114 (1993) 163–66.

tragedy its unique power.<sup>3</sup> As a result, critics have tended to explicate the elements of the play that reflect their various theories about its unity rather than taking each component as part of the dramatic continuum of the play as staged. Moreover, this focus on formal structure and unity has brought particular censure upon the famous debate between Lycus and Amphitryon over the respective merits of the archer and the hoplite (140–235). Its length and its function within the structure of the drama have perplexed scholars.<sup>4</sup> I shall consider this passage in relation to Heracles' bow as a stage prop to show that this *logomachia*, in view of the staging of the play, makes Heracles' bow, as well as the various spears that would have been on stage, the visual manifestation of many of the play's issues that scholars have long noted, especially independence, dependence, and friendship. I shall also suggest some implications of the dispute and its staging for the relationship between the individual and the community.<sup>5</sup> For even before Heracles appears, Euripides asks his audience to reflect on the iconographic significance of that prop, the bow he carries, and what it betokens about who and what Heracles is. Thus when the hero does stand before the audience, the bow is a constant reminder of the question of the meaning of the hero and the myth.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. W. ARROWSMITH, *Euripides* (=D. Grene and R. Lattimore, ed., *The Complete Greek Tragedies* III [Chicago 1959: hereafter 'Arrowsmith']) 268.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Wilamowitz I 139; Verrall (*supra* n.2) 149ff; E. KROEKER, *Der Herakles des Euripides* (Giessen 1938: hereafter 'Kroeker') 20; G. BOND, *Euripides' Heracles* (Oxford 1981: 'Bond') 101–10, esp. 108: "This *ψόγος τοξότου* (160–4) and its answer, three times as long (188–203), are foreign bodies, 'blanks in the debate' as Hazlitt once called Burke's splendid reflections"; R. Hamilton, "Slings and Arrows: The Debate with Lycus in the Heracles," *TAPA* 115 (1985) 19–25, esp. n.2, collects more critical references; M. Padilla, "The Gorgonic Archer; Danger of Sight in Euripides' *Heracles*," *CW* 86 (1992) 1–12, traces how this passage "establishes a formal paradigm" of the "interconnection between 'sight' and 'danger', visibility and vulnerability."

<sup>5</sup> This is particularly important for the ephebes if those who claim that tragedy is intended especially for them are correct. See J. Winkler, "The Ephebes' Song: *Tragodia* and *Polis*," in J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin, ed., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos* (Princeton 1990) 20–62; P. Vidal-Naquet, "Les jeunes, le cru, l'enfant grec et le cuit," in J. Le Goff and P. Nora, ed., *Faire de l'histoire* III (Paris 1974) 137–68 (= "Recipes for Greek Adolescence," in Vidal-Naquet's *The Black Hunter*, tr. A. Szegedy-Maszak [Baltimore 1986] 129–56), and "Le *Philoctète* de Sophocle et l'Éphébie," *AnnEconSocCiv* 26 (1971) 623–38 (=J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* [Paris 1979] I 159–84).

The argument in the passage itself, between bow and spear, seems to represent two different issues: for Lycus, it is lack of courage (εὐψυχία); for Amphitryon, independence. In his speech Lycus seeks to justify his murder of Heracles' family, especially the boys. What arguments can Megara and Amphitryon make that he should not? Heracles is the son of Zeus. Where is Zeus? He then turns to question Megara's evidence (σεμνόν) that Heracles is the best man (ἀρίστου φωτός). He killed animals with his own hands? No, says Lycus, he used nets. Aside from the rather bad pun (βρόχοις/βραχίονος), this would have been a startling accusation. For Lycus' description of Heracles as one who made his reputation in the marshes (151) trapping animals (157f) recalls what Vidal-Naquet has termed the "black hunter," or an "ephebe manqué."<sup>6</sup> Lycus in effect describes Heracles as an ephebe who has failed to become a man. In any case, all these things give Heracles only the appearance of courage (δόξαν ... εὐψυχίας, 157).<sup>7</sup> For in the real world, the world of adult men, Heracles is for Lycus (159–64) a man

ὅς οὔ ποτ' ἀσπίδ' ἔσχε πρὸς λαιῶν χερὶ  
οὐδ' ἦλθε λόγχης ἐγγύς, ἀλλὰ τόξ' ἔχων  
κάκιστον ὄπλον, τῆι φυγῆι πρόχειρος ἦν.  
ἀνδρὸς δ' ἔλεγχος οὐχὶ τόξ' εὐψυχίας,  
ἀλλ' ὅς μένων βλέπει τε κἀντιδέρεται  
δορὸς ταχεῖαν ἄλοκα τάξιν ἐμβεβώς.

In Lycus' view Heracles' use of the bow is the final proof that he lacks true εὐψυχία. Warfare with the bow is no ἔλεγχος for

<sup>6</sup> See P. Vidal-Naquet, "The Black Hunter and the Origin of the Athenian Ephebia," in *The Black Hunter* (*supra* n.5) ch. 5, especially his contrast (118) between the two types of hunts—adult in the daytime with a spear and childish at night with a net. Euripides' etymological play at 153f (βρόχοις/βραχίονος) calls particular attention to this charge: see Bond *ad loc.* Euripides will return to Heracles' use of nets at 729f, where Amphitryon notes that Lycus βρόχοισι δ' ἀρκύων κεκλήισεται ξιφηφόροισι. Other aspects of Euripides' treatment of Heracles would mark him out as a 'black hunter': use of the bow rather than the spear, works at the borders of civilization (20, 700), and action as an individual rather than part of the unit (565ff, 590ff).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. LSJ *s.v.* δόξα III.2: "mostly, good *repute, honour, glory*" (my emphasis), citing this line. But given the context, it must have the sense of "mere reputation, appearance." The charge of cowardice must have been especially shocking, as Heracles was held to be unable to hear the prayers of cowards: cf. Plb. 29.6; L. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and the Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford 1921) 148.

εὐψυχία. In fact it is quite the opposite. A real man will stand in the ranks with his fellow hoplites and face the front line of the enemy. Because it allows ready flight, the bow is the coward's weapon. As before, ὅς οὔποτε ἄσπίδ' ἔσχε would in effect declare that Heracles is not just a coward but not a fully adult male who has been integrated into the community.<sup>8</sup>

Amphitryon uses the first half of his speech to refute the charge that Heracles is guilty of cowardice (δειλία, 170–87).<sup>9</sup> But when he turns to address the bow *vs* spear question his point is no longer that Heracles is no coward but rather that the bow is τὸ πάνσοφον δ' εὔρημα (188) because it frees a man from depen-

<sup>8</sup> Wilamowitz's translation (II 179) of 163f as "Den Blick gerichtet auf den Wald von Speeren, Der drüben starrt—und keine Wimper zuckt," with his explanation at III 45, and L. PARMENTIER's "elle <épreuve de la bravoure> consiste à rester à son poste, et à voir, sans baisser ni détourner le regard, accourir devant soi tout un champ de lances dressées, toujours ferme à rang" (*Heraclès* [Paris 1923: hereafter 'Parmentier']) are preferable to Arrowsmith's "no, your real man stands firm in the ranks and dares to face the gash the spear may make." Cf. Bond 110f. This tension between bowman and spear man is old (cf. *Il.* 4.85ff). Indeed if R. Drews (*The End of the Bronze Age: Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe c. 1200* [Princeton 1993] esp. ch. 11, 13) correctly argues that the collapse of Bronze Age societies was brought about by a shift to massed men with spears and swords against chariots and bowmen, then this dispute probably reflects Iron Age societies' attempts to come to grips with the social implications of that shift. Again, all this takes on added significance when we consider the epebes in the audience, for the spear and shield mark their transition into full adulthood. See also A. N. Snodgrass, "Hoplite Reform and History," *JHS* 85 (1965) 110–22; A. Arnaud, "Quelques aspects des rapports de ruse et de la guerre dans le monde grec du VIII<sup>e</sup> au V<sup>e</sup> siècle" (Paris 1971) 26f; E. L. Wheeler, "Ephorus and the Prohibition of Missiles," *TAPA* 117 (1987) 157–82, esp. 170–73; W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* I–V (Berkeley 1971–91) IV 30f.

<sup>9</sup> Hamilton's discussion (*supra* n.4) shows the point for point balance of the arguments within the speech. It is interesting to note that Amphitryon is rather ambiguous about Heracles' use of weapon in his description of his son's participation in the gigantomachy (179). Although βέλη could of course refer to either a spear or arrows, its most natural association would be with arrows. Not until 1193 is the weapon expressly called a spear. Aside from the adjective, given the importance of the spear *vs* the bow, Bond (158 *ad* 1193) is surely wrong to take ἐπὶ δόρυ γιγαντοφόνονας "just to mean 'battle'."

dence upon his fellow men.<sup>10</sup> This independence is of course not possible for the hoplite (190–93):

ἀνὴρ ὀπλίτης δοῦλός ἐστι τῶν ὄπλων  
καὶ τοῖς συνταχθεῖσιν οὔσι μὴ ἀγαθοῖς  
αὐτὸς τέθνηκε δειλία τῆι τῶν πέλας.<sup>11</sup>

The hoplite warrior is dependent upon his fellow hoplites. If they are not reliable, regardless of his own merits, he will die because of their cowardice. The obvious intent of this assault upon the hoplite is to show that the bowman is free of any such dependency. He stands or falls on his own ability. The father of Heracles then continues with the other great advantages of the bow. Whereas the hoplite has one spear, the bowman has a multitude of arrows. Moreover, the bowman can hurt his foe from afar without exposing his own body to risk. Amphytrion concludes his discussion on the bow gnomically by declaring that to hurt the enemy and not be hurt yourself is after all what battle is about (201ff):

<sup>10</sup> The reader senses that within the drama the reason for this shift is Amphytrion's own frustration at having to depend upon others who were unwilling or unable to help him when his own winds of fortune changed. His former comrades in arms, though willing to help, are like him too old to be of any use (*cf.* 233, 267). They can barely help themselves walk (125–29, 266–69; *cf.* 312–15). And the young men of Thebes are full of δειλία. Indeed Amphytrion returns to this complaint toward the end of his speech when he chides them for being untrustworthy friends (217ff). Had Amphytrion been a bowman and able to act independently, the story might be different. Moreover, the point that the bow is a prudent man's weapon is probably directed against Lycus' protestations at 165f that his murder of Heracles' children is not a matter of shame (ἀναίδεια), just prudence (εὐλάβεια, 165f). For Amphytrion continues by addressing the tyrants' reasons for killing the children (206–12) and advising him not to use force against them, for the winds of fortune will one day change (215f).

<sup>11</sup> Wilamowitz (III 52), followed by Bond (118), transposes these lines because (he argues) the sequence would be more logical: the hoplite (a) has only one weapon and (b) must depend upon his fellows; the bowman (a) has many arrows and (b) does not have to depend upon friends. He adds: "Wie fadenscheinig die sophistische Argumentation in allen Stücken ist, braucht nicht gezeigt zu werden." The bowman's independence, however, not stated in the text, is to be inferred from the hoplite's weakness and perhaps the gnostic saying at the end of the passage (201ff). As the Mss.' reading stands, the hoplite is dependent upon his friends and has only one weapon, whereas the bowman has many weapons and can do harm from afar. *Cf.* Parmentier (*supra* n.8: 29 n.1): "Wilamowitz place les vers 193–194 après le vers 190. Mais il convient de ne pas demander trop de logique à cette argumentation sophistique." *Cf.* W. Verdenius, "Notes on Euripides' *Heracles* vv. 1–522," *Mnemosyne* SER. 4 40 (1987) 1–17.

... τοῦτο δ' ἐν μάχῃ  
σοφὸν μάλιστα, δρῶντα πολεμίους κακῶς  
σώζειν τὸ σῶμα, μὴ ἔκ τύχης ὠρμισμένον.<sup>12</sup>

What began as a defense of Heracles and his bow has turned into an indictment of the hoplite. It would seem that Amphitryon is rejecting not just the spear and hoplites but community as well.<sup>13</sup> There is the further irony that Lycus the usurper is defending community values while Amphitryon the paragon of community virtues rejects them. By this reversal Euripides forces his audience to confront a central question of this play: what is an individual's duty to the community especially when it has become tyrannical or when the community fails to pay the individual the obligations it owes him? Thus through their exchange Heracles' bow becomes the visual vehicle of this conflict of individual over corporate values. It also ties together other collateral issues (change of fortune, friends, and dependency upon community) in the first part of the play.

Indeed, from the beginning of the play, Euripides fixes his audience's attention upon how the shifting winds of fortune have caused Heracles' family to be deserted by the community and friends on whom they should have been able to depend.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> These lines should be translated: "in battle this is the greatest wisdom: while harming the enemy to keep your own hide safe so that it is not anchored to a chance (assignment of fellow soldiers)." ὠρμισμένον agrees with τὸ σῶμα, and ἐκ τύχης refers to the τοῖς συνταχθεῖσιν of line 191. It has to do with the luck of the draw for partners in a phalanx. Bond (120), though wrong to understand ἐκ τύχης as "the luck inherent in battle," correctly rejects Paley's suggestion (*Euripides* [London 1880]) to take ὠρμισμένους (LP) with πολεμίους, which Arrowsmith follows: "unless he <your foe> stands secure, beyond your range." Cf. Wilamowitz's "vom Zufall unabhängig Dem Feind zu schaden, selbst sich wohl zu wahren" and Parmentier's "en tenant son personne en sûreté et sans dépendant du hasard." Cf. Verdenius (*supra* n.11) 11.

<sup>13</sup> This must surely have been disquieting to the epebes in view of the epebic oath (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 76): μήτε τὰ ἱερὰ ὄπλα καταισχυνεῖν, μήτε τὴν τάξιν λείπειν, ἀμυνεῖν δὲ τῇ πατρίδι καὶ ἀμείνω παραδώσειν. J.-P. Vernant, "Entre la honte et la gloire: l'identité du jeune Spartiate" in his *L'individu, la mort, l'amour: soi-même et l'autre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1989) 173–209, provides some interesting parallels with the way the Spartan *agoge* dealt with the shift from the individual Homeric warrior ideal to the corporate hoplite warrior and the tension created between them.

<sup>14</sup> Indeed if we were to ask what is the *Heracles* about with or without unity, on a very gross level we would have to respond φιλία. The *Heracles* virtually ends with the truism—ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ σθένος μᾶλλον φίλων ἀγαθῶν πεπᾶσθαι βούλεται, κακῶς φρονεῖ (1425f). Cf. Sheppard (*supra* n.2). All com-

Both Megara and Amphitryon state this complaint expressly. Amphitryon declares that they are in ἀπορία σωτηρίας because they lack friends who can help (54ff):

φίλων δὲ τοὺς μὲν οὐ σαφεῖς ὀρῶ φίλους  
οἱ δ' ὄντες ὀρθῶς ἀδύνατοι προσωφελεῖν (55f).

He thought some to be "friends" who were not, while others would be but did not have the ability. Megara too will complain that οὐτ' ἐν φίλοισιν ἐλπίδες σωτηρίας ἔτ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν (84f). They are alone, without hope, betrayed by those who should have helped them, including the gods. For as Megara had said at the outset of her speech (62): ὡς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποισι τῶν θεῶν σαφές.<sup>15</sup> Their friendship is just as unsure as the human kind. Later just before the first stasimon Amphitryon will be less oblique. He will tell Zeus ἀρετῇ σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὦν θεὸν μέγαν (341), for Amphitryon understands how but lacks the ability to

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mentators see friendship as an important issue within the play. When a fifth-century Athenian aristocrat said φιλία, the word would have had a different ethical context than our word "friendship." Within the Athenian aristocrat's moral construct, φιλία would be primarily a matter of obligations and duties, not feelings or goodwill. A φίλος is one who has done a χάρις and to whom a χάρις is owed or vice versa. One cannot be a good φίλος without repaying his debts. Amphitryon says as much in his gnomic tag at 57ff. Intentions play a very small rôle within this system of morals. See A. Adkins, "Friendship' and 'Self-sufficiency' in Homer and Aristotle," *CQ* n.s. 12 (1963) 30-45; cf. K. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley 1974) 276ff. Heracles will fault himself for not being present to do his duty to his family (574-82). He had left his family undefended. Intentions do not matter, only outcome, even though he had set the people of Thebes under obligation to him by his mighty deeds and they should have defended his family. Thus he renounces his labors. Friends should repay debts.

<sup>15</sup> Although this phrase is gnomic and means that good fortune may change into bad, given the context of Amphitryon's and Megara's speeches, there is also the notion that the friendship of the gods (reflected in good luck) is ultimately of the fair-weather kind. Thus the line can be rendered: "how unstable <because they are inscrutable> are the relationships of the gods with men." σαφές has the idea of both "sure, reliable" and "clear." Cf. Bond 78, whose comments (75) on σαφεῖς in line 55 are instructive both in that line and here. ἀνθρώποισι would be both dative of advantage and disadvantage. Neither Wilamowitz's translation ("doch dunkel alles was die Götter senden"), nor Parmentier's ("combien les desseins des dieux sont obscurs pour les hommes"), nor Arrowsmith's ("how dark are all the ways of god to man") quite do the line justice. Kroeker's discussion is thought provoking (12f), but he moves too far away from the immediate sense of the text when he reduces Megara's meaning to "das menschliche Sein in seiner tragischen Verkettung mit Schicksal und Leiden wird sichtbar." Surely Megara's point is that one cannot rely on the gods because one cannot figure them out. Cf. the Chorus at 655-72.

fulfill his duty to his friends, whereas Zeus who has the power does not even know how to help (σώζειν δὲ τοὺς σοὺς οὐκ ἐπίστασαι φίλους, 346). Concomitant with all these complaints about friendship is the recognition of mutability in the human experience (cf. Megara at 63f). This mutability creates the need for friends and makes those very friends untrustworthy and the gods incomprehensible, thus Amphitryon's insistence upon independence. Yet it is also this very mutability with its possibility for change that gives Amphitryon hope for help and justice.

This point is elaborated in an important exchange between Megara and Amphitryon (87ff). Megara demands that Amphitryon develop a plan to save them from death. He admits that he cannot. Even though they are weak, they can at least wait and prolong the time before death. Megara with savage sarcasm asks him if he really enjoys his life and suffering so much. Amphitryon responds pointedly that he does indeed. He rejoices in life and especially its mutability: καὶ τῶιδε χαίρω καὶ φιλῶ τὰς ἐλπίδας (91).<sup>16</sup> He develops this theme further in a very sophistic speech just before the parodos (95–106). There he argues that, based on the principle that opposites give rise to their opposites, their luck may yet change. The storm will not last forever. The winds will change their direction. He caps his speech with the rather startling (and much discussed) declaration (105f):

οὗτος δ' ἀνὴρ ἄριστος ὅστις ἐλπίσι  
πέποιθεν αἰεὶ· τὸ δ' ἀπορεῖν ἀνδρὸς κακοῦ.<sup>17</sup>

Amphitryon rejects any hope that depends upon the community and its obligations to his family. As noted earlier,

<sup>16</sup> Given the context, ἐλπίς has to refer to the hope that mutability gives.

<sup>17</sup> "The best man is he who always relies on hope (the mutability of nature). It is the mark of a base man to be at a loss." See Bond (89ff) for discussion and references. It seems logical from the nature of their exchange to take ἐλπίς here and at 91 as a shorthand for Amphitryon's earlier χρόνον δὲ μηκύνωμεν ὄντες ἀσθενεῖς (87). Thus it is a hope for change. Cf. Kroeker 14ff. This speech is reminiscent in many ways of Ajax's about the vicissitudes of "long and immeasurable time" (Soph. *Aj.* 646–92; cf. esp. *HF* 101ff with *Aj.* 670ff). Critics have long noted numerous connections between the *Heracles* and Sophocles' *Ajax*, especially the different attitudes each play displays toward change. Note that the *Ajax* also has an exchange based on the merits of the bow and spear (1120ff). Cf. Furlley (*supra* n.2) 102ff; J. De Romilly, "Le refus du suicide dans L'Héraclès d' Euripide," *Archaiognosia* 1 (1980) 1–10. For Sophocles' hero the mutability of the world is a cause for despair and ultimately the cause of his suicide. Here for Amphitryon this flux of nature is the basis for hope, hope that time will bring change.



this is played out in the debate over the spear (hoplite) and bow. It is important to note, moreover, that throughout this play the spear is a symbol of the individual's obligation to the community and the community's obligation to the individual. Indeed from the outset of the play, Heracles' family is represented before the altar of Zeus Soter, where the spear he used in the Minyan war has been offered as a trophy. This spear and the altar on the stage would have been the visible tokens of what the god owes him from his birthright and what the community owes him because of his participation in the war. Both Amphitryon and Heracles cite this participation as the basis of Thebes' obligation to Heracles. Amphitryon says (218–21)

ὦ γαῖα Κάδμου (καὶ γὰρ ἐς σ' ἀφίξομαι  
 λόγους ὀνειδιστήρας ἐνδατούμενος),  
 τοιαῦτ' ἀμύνεθ' Ἑρακλεῖ τέκνοισι τε;  
 Μινύσαις ὅς εἰς ἅπασι διὰ μάχης μολῶν  
 Θήβας ἔθηκεν ὄμμ' ἐλεύθερον βλέπειν.

In accord with his focus on independence, Amphitryon reports the battle as a monomachia.<sup>18</sup> Here Heracles fights one for all.<sup>19</sup> He is the independent champion upon whom all others depend. This is the only place where this conflict is described in such terms. Amphitryon is again rejecting the community, but it is nonetheless the basis for Thebes' debt to Heracles. The Thebans should have come with sword, fire, and spear.

Indeed Heracles will ask Megara about his friends' failure to help based upon his battles with the Minyans (560). When Megara tells him that misfortune has no friends, Heracles will renounce his labors and declare (565–73):

ἐγὼ δέ, νῦν γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς ἔργον χερὸς  
 πρῶτον μὲν εἶμι καὶ κατασκάψω δόμους  
 καινῶν τυράννων, κρᾶτα δ' ἀνόσιον τεμῶν  
 ρίψω κυνῶν ἔλκημα· Καδμείων δ' ὄσους

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bond *ad loc.* It is noteworthy that Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 2.4.11) makes this victory the basis for Creon's giving Megara as wife to Heracles. For monomachia in general see E. L. Wheeler, "Hoplomachia and Greek Dances in Arms," *GRBS* 23 (1982) 223–33; Pritchett (*supra* n.8) IV 15–21.

<sup>19</sup> J. Diggle, *Studies in the Text of Euripides* (Oxford 1981) 47f, gives good reasons to support Elmsley's emendation for ὅς εἰς μινύσαισι πᾶσι, the reading of L. Cf. A. Lesky, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Bern 1969) 151 n.15 for other examples in Euripides of the antithesis of one for many.

κακοὺς ἐφηῦρον εὖ παθόντας ἐξ ἑμοῦ  
 τῶι καλλινίκωι τῶιδ' ὄπλωι χειρώσομαι  
 τοὺς δὲ πτερωτοῖς διαφορῶν τοξεύμασιν  
 νεκρῶν ἅπαντ' Ἴσμηνὸν ἐμπλήσω φόνου,  
 Δίρκης τε νᾶμα λευκὸν αἰμαχθήσεται.  
 τῶι γάρ μ' ἀμύνειν μᾶλλον ἢ δάμαρτι χρῆ  
 καὶ παισὶ καὶ γέροντι; χαιρόντων πόνοι,  
 μάτην γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἦνυσα.

Here, just as his father had done, he expressly rejects community. They should have defended his family as he advanced the common good. They did not. They have not fulfilled their χάρις to him. Thus he will henceforth reject his labors and, in a sense, any duties to community beyond his family.<sup>20</sup> Obligations do not exist outside it. He alone will kill the tyrant then all men of Thebes who did not come to his family's aid. They have failed in their obligation to him. He renounces his duties to them. He will use his bow to prove his independence and kill them all.<sup>21</sup> The very bow he used to civilize the world for the sake of mankind will be the instrument that destroys the city (cf. 20).<sup>22</sup> Further, he will renounce his epithet Καλλίνικος that marks him out as the patron of war and athletic competitions.<sup>23</sup> In short, he does not want to be counted in the community.

Euripides of course undercuts all this. The hybris of Heracles in rejecting community and his desire to kill his fellow citizens is in his madness turned against his family. The bow with which he intends to bring down the community will instead bring down a son and a wife. He would have felled his father too had not Pallas Athena armed with a spear stopped him. Many have noted the similarities between Euripides' description of Athena and the chryselephantine statue on the Acropolis (e.g. Gregory [*supra* n.2] 139). They suggest that this was intended to presage

<sup>20</sup> This is particularly striking, as the Greeks believed that the city had its origins in families working together and that they derived their duties and obligations from this. See H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et courètes* (Lille 1939) 115–44. For a discussion of the rôle of sacrifice in this play, see H. Foley, *Ritual Irony. Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Cornell 1985) 147–204.

<sup>21</sup> The τῶι καλλινίκωι τῶιδ' ὄπλωι of line 570 should be taken in the sense of “this triumphant bow” given the πτερωτοῖς ... τοξεύμασιν of line 571. One should envisage Heracles holding his bow up for all to see. It is after all what frees him of his dependency on his countrymen.

<sup>22</sup> See Bond *ad* 20. It is noteworthy that Amphitryon has no problem with Heracles' intention to destroy the city (599f).

<sup>23</sup> See Farnell (*supra* n.7) 147ff for the significance of this epithet.

the service that Athena will provide to Heracles. In whatever respect Athena is always Heracles' benefactor, her deterrence of his patricide is not as important as her appearance as a hoplite (1003). Given the context of spears in the play, the point is not that she is from Athens but rather that she is representative of community. The playwright will underscore this equation of hoplite and community in the next episode.

Theseus arrives just after Heracles awakens to realize what he has done. One notes instantly that Theseus comes with hoplites. Indeed his first words to Amphitryon are ἤκω σὺν ἄλλοις.... σύμμαχον φέρων δόρυ (1163, 1165). He, in sharp and dramatic contrast to Heracles, does not come alone (cf. 595–98). Theseus is a hoplite and brings with him the ἔνοπλοι γῆς Ἀθηναίων κόροι (1164). One must assume that as Theseus stands upon the stage he holds a spear. The visual effect would have been striking. Heracles, bound, his bow tossed to the floor; Theseus with spear ready to rescue.<sup>24</sup> Indeed in this episode we see acted out the value of a friend who can help. Theseus is both willing and able to be a friend. Heracles has put him under obligation by the χάρις of freeing him from the underworld; Theseus will repay this χάρις (1220–25):

οὐδὲν μέλει μοι σὺν γε σοὶ πράσσειν κακῶς·  
καὶ γὰρ ποτ' εὐτύχησ'. ἐκεῖσ' ἀνοιστέον,  
ὅτ' ἐξέσωσάς μ' ἐς φάος νεκρῶν πάρα.  
χάριν δὲ γηράσκουσιν ἐχθαίρω φίλων,  
καὶ τῶν καλῶν μὲν ὅστις ἀπολαύειν θέλει,  
συμπλεῖν δὲ τοῖς φίλοισι δυστυχοῦσιν οὐ.

The Athenian national hero always pays his debts; this is what makes him a good friend. It does not matter to him what Heracles has done; no pollution is so great that it could keep Theseus from fulfilling the requirements of their friendship. οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων (1234). Rather Theseus' friendship will allow Heracles to find purification for his crime and restore to him the honor that is his due (1322–39).<sup>25</sup> Amphitryon's view of the hope that the mutability of the human condition offers is vindicated; but his understanding of

<sup>24</sup> The image of a bound Heracles may have some cultic significance: see C. Faraone, "Binding and Burying the Forces of Evil: The Defensive Use of 'Voodoo Dolls' in Ancient Greece," *ClAnt* 10 (1991) 165–200, esp. 195 and fig. 5.

<sup>25</sup> It is noteworthy that Theseus again says that this motivation is the repayment of his debt: κἀγὼ χάριν σοὶ τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας τῆνδ' ἀντιδώσω (1336f).

the nature of independence is wrong. All men, including Heracles, need friends upon whom they can depend because of this hope-giving mutability. Although Heracles is a very great man, he cannot succeed without his friend, without a community. To underscore his need, the playwright makes Heracles request that Theseus help (συγκαταστήσον) him finish his labors (1386ff).<sup>26</sup> He is now as dependent upon his friend as members of the chorus were upon each other during the parodos (cf. 1394–1404, 117–29).<sup>27</sup> Heracles, καλλίνικος, must depend upon Theseus and the Athenian hoplites to finish his labors.

We should note, moreover, that it was not Theseus' friendship, his arguments, or his offers of honor that turn Heracles away from his thoughts of suicide: it was Heracles' realization that to commit suicide would be seen as an act of cowardice (1347–52):

ἐσκεψάμην δὲ καίπερ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὦν,  
μὴ δειλίαν ὄφλω τιν' ἐκλιπὼν φάος·  
ταῖς συμφοραῖς γὰρ ὅστις οὐχ ὑφίσταται,  
οὐδ' ἀνδρὸς ἂν δύναιθ' ὑποστήναι βέλος.  
ἐγκαρτερήσω βίον· εἶμι δ' ἐς πόλιν  
τὴν σὴν, χάριν τε μυρίων δῶρων ἔχω.

He is no coward; he will stand in the front ranks of life and fight.<sup>28</sup> Just as Amphitryon's understanding of Heracles was wrong, so too is Lycus'. Yet it is not his independence upon which his heroism rests but his willingness to accept friendship and to depend upon another. Heracles' heroic act is to allow himself to be accepted into the community of Athenian hoplites, to allow himself to be helped by them, to take such honor as they will give him. For the audiences this would have been particularly moving. There must have always been a tension

<sup>26</sup> Note all the compounds of σύν (σύγκαμ', 1386; συγκαταστήσον, 1387; συμπενήσασ', 1390) that Heracles uses.

<sup>27</sup> Note too that Heracles needs his father's help to bury his sons (1420ff).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Bond 401ff. Note especially his discussion of the military metaphor in ἐγκαρτερήσω at 1351. Cf. Kroeker 102, 139. The reading of line 1351 is, as Lee says in his Teubner edition (*Euripides, Hercules* [Stuttgart 1988]), "locus vehementer disputatus." On the reading βίον vs θάνατον, see especially J. M. Bremer, rev. A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen, Mnemosyne* SER. 4 30 (1977) 199; De Romilly (*supra* n.17) 6, both essentially following W. Kranz, "Ἐγκαρτερήσω θάνατον," *PhilWoch* 47 (1927) 138f. But whatever the reading ("rester ferme devant la mort," De Romilly, or "I shall stand fast and endure life," Bond), Heracles' point is clear: he will not kill himself. Moreover, he sees this act of resisting suicide as heroic.

between the old Homeric heroic ideal of the lone warrior standing in battle and the corporate warrior that was required for 'modern' warfare. Indeed this seemed to play an important part in both Spartan and Athenian education. Both states would train their youth to be independent and hunt with nets and bows on their own before they were made a part of the citizen body by taking up the spear and shield of the hoplite. But questions remain: with what weapons will Heracles continue to fight and what of the bow and its symbolism?

Heracles will answer this question. Indeed as he finishes his speech he turns to address his weapons as the instrument of his family's death. He will wonder outright how he can continue to carry or use them when each time they brush against his chest they will cry out: ἡμῖν τέκν' εἶλες καὶ δάμαρθ' ἡμᾶς ἔχεις παιδοκτόνους σούς (1380f). Yet he declares that he must keep them, for they are after all the tools with which he performed his greatest deeds in Hellas, and without them he would be at the mercy of his enemies. He will be of no use to himself or his friends: οὐ λειπτέον τάδ', ἀθλίως δὲ σωστέον (1385). Heracles keeps the bow because it is such a part of his identity that without it he has nothing to bring to the community. The community that takes Heracles takes him as he is. Thus while Heracles (leaning on Theseus with spear) walks out with the chorus, the bow and arrows he grasps would visually underscore for the audience that both Lycus and Amphitryon have misunderstood their iconography. They are not the symbol of cowardice that Lycus claimed nor of independence, as Amphitryon thought, but rather the emblem for his heroic resolve to live and his desire to be a true friend, one who can both give and receive help. Thus the individual quest for glory and honor must be maintained—now in the context of community. In the world of Euripides, this is the best that it gets.<sup>29</sup>

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