



# Hercules:

## A hero for all ages

Hover the mouse over the panel title, hold the Ctrl key and right click to jump to the panel.

1a)	Hercules and the Christians .....	1
1b)	The Tragic Hero .....	3
2a)	Late Mediaeval Florence and Beyond.....	5
2b)	The Comic Hero .....	7
3a)	The Victorian Age.....	8
3b)	Modern Popular Culture .....	10
4a)	Herculean Emblems .....	11
4b)	Hercules at the Crossroads.....	12
5a)	Hercules in France .....	13
5b)	A Hero for Children? .....	15
6a)	C18 <sup>th</sup> Political Imagery .....	17
6b)	C19 <sup>th</sup> -C21 <sup>st</sup> Literature.....	19
7)	Vice or Virtue (plenary panel).....	20
8)	Antipodean Hercules (plenary panel) .....	22

### 1a) Hercules and the Christians

Arlene Allan (University of Otago)

#### Apprehending Christ through Herakles: “Christ-curious” Greeks and *Revelation* 5-6

Primarily (but not exclusively) in the first half of the twentieth century, scholarly interest has focussed on the possible influence of the mythology of Herakles and the allegorizing of his trials amongst philosophers (especially the Stoics) on the shaping of the Gospel narratives of Jesus. This paper reverses that focus and demonstrates how familiarity with Herakles’ story, in several of its various forms, served to aid a ‘Christ-curious’ Greek-speaker in his or her apprehension and acceptance of Jesus.

After rehearsing the most obvious similarities between these two salvific figures, the paper looks specifically at how a ‘Christ-curious’ attendee at a house-church meeting might have responded to a reading of *Revelation* 4-6 with its description of the ‘One upon the Throne’ and the ‘Lamb who was slain’, particularly in relation to Herakles’ depiction on and around

the throne of Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia, arguing that once an association between these two has been made in the new convert's mind, it would be most difficult to dislodge. Thus, despite the hostility to 'paganism' amongst the well-educated Apologists and the early Church Fathers, it may be the case that, post-Constantine, the Church built upon a pre-existing affinity between Christ and Heracles already recognized among some of the laity, thereby mirroring Paul's example by 'capturing every conception of mind to the submission of Christ' (2 *Cor.* 10:5).

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Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides (Monash University)

### **The Tides of Virtue ... and Vice: Heracles among the Christians**

This paper explores the reception of Heracles in early Christianity seeking to highlight the thorough engagement of early Christian thinkers with *all strands* of pagan philosophical and literary traditions. By the fourth century BC Heracles with his attributes of determination and endurance in the face of adversity had become an ideal for moralists and philosophers. The famous *Choice of Heracles* by Prodicus paved the way for the comparison of Heracles with Christ (e.g. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* II 1.21-34 echoed in Augustine, *Confessionum libri XIII* = CCL 27: 129-30) which was further anticipated by his investment with Roman Stoic values. Heracles loomed large in the mind of the Christian author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* (c.63-4AD), was discussed in second century by Justin Martyr (1 *Apol.* 21.2), Origen (*Against Celsus* 7.53), and Tertullian (*Against Marcion* 4.10.7) and later by St Ambrose (*De Iacob et beata vita*).

Heracles' adventures against Cacus (= Evil), his catabasis to the Underworld following his initiation to the Eleusinian mysteries, his resurrection of Alcestis, and, finally, his own apotheosis were taken up anew by early Christianity at a time when defining the new religion against the established pagan cults was crucial for its success. However, rather than this being a desperate attempt on behalf of Christianity to secure its appeal, Heracles, the glutton of the Greek literature (Callim. *Dian.* 159-161), the arch-enemy of Lactantius (*Institutiones* 1.18.3-10, 13-17 and 1.9.1-11) and the ideal ruler of distinctly anti-Christian Roman emperors such as Diocletian, offered Christian thinkers a sounding board for debating some of the core issues of Christianity such as the resurrection of the flesh and immortality, the nature and effects of the vices, baptism and even possession and exorcism.

This paper suggests that the Orphicized Heracles of the first Christian centuries shaped the arena for a new type of cultural competition in the shadows of the Second Sophistic which the Christian Fathers had inherited – the competition of dogmas.

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Efstathia Maria Athanasopoulou (University College London)

### **At the Root of a Universal Proverb: "Heracles' lion skin doesn't make you brave"**

This paper traces a relation between the phrase 'the lion skin does not make you Heracles' (Libanius, *Against Aristeidis On Behalf of Dancers* § 53, Chorikios' *Apology of Mimes* §77) and the phrase 'the garments do not make the priest', which has become a well-known universal proverb, suggesting that the first phrase is its antecedent.

The discussion will focus on Heracles' lion skin, which is conceived as one of the archetypal theatrical costumes for the articulation of discourse on comic and tragic drama and even pantomime and mime, and the affinities between the popular theatre of the Common Era and the Christian church in practice and in debate. This will be situated in the broader debate concerning the influence of ancient theatre on the formation of Christian rituals.

The paper will conclude that the prominence of Heracles' lion skin in theatrical discourse from the fifth century BC to the sixth century AD and its inevitable insertion into the moral discussions surrounding theatrical performance make Heracles' lion skin the ancient Greek antecedent of the universal proverb about priest's garments.

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Cary MacMahon (Independent)

### **Wearing the Hero on Your Sleeve: piecing together the materials of the Heraklean myth in late Roman Egypt**

This paper will survey a corpus of woven images from late Roman Egypt (C2<sup>nd</sup>-C6<sup>th</sup> AD) depicting Herakles and his Labours and propose a methodology for understanding their meanings within the society which created and wore them in life and in death. It will be argued that these textiles should be situated within a late-antique nexus of ideas where garments can be arguments about politics, religions, philosophies and magic.

The corpus comprises tapestry-woven medallions which formed elements of the decorative schema on tunics, ranging from naturalistic to highly stylised renderings of Herakles. Examination of the textile-working technologies employed (e.g. raw materials, dyes, weaving pattern-books) and the sources for the images (e.g. coinage, mosaics) shows that a variety of socio-economic groupings are implicated in consumption and manufacture of these textiles, and reveals another route by which a ubiquitous story was disseminated and re-appropriated. Scholarship on the evolution of these textile representations of Herakles from bucolic demi-god to exemplar of suffering Christian fortitude, and their proposed connection with funerary rites, will be assessed. However, this paper will caution against any narrow reading of these textiles as ornamental status symbols illustrating a mythology re-worked for funerary purposes, and instead suggest that they could be just as potent when worn in life. By focusing on images with the Nemean Lion and drawing on current academic debate about late-antique Biblical textile-images, non-funerary meanings which could be accorded to these textiles in late Roman Egypt will be suggested, from decorative political statement to religious argument with apotropaic potential.

Finally, there will be discussion of modern excavation and collecting practices which may have privileged the preservation of the Herakles textile corpus, exploration of the motivations behind such practices, and suggestions of further work which could be undertaken in this area.

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## **1b) The Tragic Hero**

Robyn Rocklein (Arizona State University)

### **Shattered Female Greek Virtue: Dejanira as depicted in Handel's *Hercules***

Throughout the centuries, interpretations of the Hercules myth have directly reflected ancient Greek societal values and expectations of male and female archetypal roles, as well as provided philosophical insights into their respective eras. In the theatre, these rigid expectations are unspoken, yet interpretations form deliberate vehicles for moralizing male and female virtue in general, and specifically, the virtues of Dejanira. Numerous studies examine the varying interpretations of this myth; few, if any, address the ways female Greek virtues are depicted operatically within the confines of the myth. This paper reveals that in the music of George Frideric Handel's *Hercules* (1745), Dejanira contradicts the ideal Greek woman. The paper provides brief overviews of ancient Greek societal expectations and the

constraints of eighteenth century *opera seria* in England before examining Handel's music and the way it highlights the absence and presence of female Greek virtue.

*Hercules* illustrates how Handel moulded the Hercules myth to adhere to audience expectations and transformed the myth to appeal to the 'contemporary' religious and societal expectations of eighteenth century England, while vividly depicting Dejanira's lack of virtue in his music.

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Eleanor Regina OKell (University of Leeds)

### **Heracles between Public and Private: spinning Sophocles' *Trachiniae***

Heracles, widely recognised by scholars today as a hero situated on the boundary between gods/men and men/beasts, has also served during his long history to explore other boundaries, such as that between virtue and vice. This paper focuses upon Heracles' identity as a hero and his contribution to debates about the role of private acts in forming public perceptions of worth.

The paper will examine Broughton's changes to the cast and plot of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (Handel's *Hercules*, 1744) in the context of the eighteenth century's development of the concept of a permissible separation between public and private personas. The continued effects of this attempted separation in the twenty-first century will be examined through the changes made by Crimp (*Cruel and Tender*, 2004) and Rodosthenous et al. (*The Wife of Herakles*, 2010). Dispensing with literal deification, both feature journalists and spin doctors (government ministers and PR agents) who create and destroy a military and sporting hero respectively.

These results prompt a reassessment of critical preconceptions and a re-examination of "news" and its sources in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* in the context of Athenian definitions of acceptable behaviour and the fifth-century BC's perceived continuity between public and private life.

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Sue Hamstead (University of Leeds)

### **Herakles and Filicide**

With many and varied stories attaching to this legendary hero, Herakles has, from earliest times, been an ambiguous figure: undertaking great feats as a benefactor of civilization but also capable of great atrocities; his morals and motivation frequently questionable. The most shocking story of all concerning him must surely be the one in which he kills his own children.

As the majority of modern interpretations choose to ignore the act of filicide altogether, this paper considers those treatments which do include it or make allusion to it – chiefly productions of the Euripidean play that bears his name – and investigates why the occlusion of this aspect from mainstream offerings has been so successful. His trajectory through time into the present age will be compared with that of Medea, another mythological figure who had many stories attached to her but who is now remembered almost solely for the one act that she and Herakles have in common: the murder of their own offspring. This is despite the evidence of statistics which suggest that in real life a father is more likely to be the

perpetrator of such an act than the mother. This paper draws on the relationship of stories to real-life experience in seeking to explain our favoured image of Herakles.

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Amanda Wrigley (University of Westminster)

**“An everyday tale of life in ancient times (and in EastEnders)”: Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *Dianeira* (Radio 3, 1999).**

Radio is a cultural sphere of great significance for a full understanding of ancient Greece in the public imagination in twentieth-century Britain. English-language translations, adaptations and creative reinterpretations of ancient Greek stories have been, through this medium, accessible more readily, more widely and to far larger and more diverse audiences than is usually taken into account in studies of classical reception.

The radio production of Greek plays has a particularly rich history. This paper will consider the 1999 BBC Radio 3 production of Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *Dianeira*, an adaptation of Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* written especially for radio, starring Olympia Dukakis, Alan Howard, Harriet Walker, Joseph Fiennes and Simon Callow.

Wertenbaker’s radio adaptation offers creative solutions to many of the play’s so-called problems, resulting in a fresh and thought-provoking version for the late twentieth-century audience. Wertenbaker re-tells this story of stories, applying a further story-telling framework to the ancient tale, taking advantage of the complex possibilities offered by radio for fluid narrative chronology and point-of-view, and of the productive ambiguities arising from the blurring of boundaries between memory, imagination, thought, soliloquy and dialogue.

This re-telling re-interprets *Trachiniae* in distinctly modern psychological terms, a move which capitalizes on the natural intimacy of the medium. *Dianeira* is a study of dysfunctional families, with Herakles portrayed as both distant father and careless husband: the mythical family is modernized, the Greek hero ‘de-heroized’. The psychological interpretation encourages listeners to apply the mythological story to their own time, their own families. Or, as *The Scotsman* put it: ‘It’s an everyday tale of life in ancient times (and in EastEnders)’ (3 December 1999).

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## **2a) Late Mediaeval Florence and Beyond**

Lenia Kouneni (University of St Andrews)

**Hercules in Late Medieval Italy: Images of a pagan hero in ecclesiastical settings**

Hercules, a popular and complex hero, was heavily utilised in late medieval Italy in a variety of civic and religious contexts. Among other manifestations, he appears on reliefs that decorate the exterior of cathedrals in Italy from the twelfth century onwards. Benedetto Antelami sculpted a relief of Hercules with the Nemean lion for the façade of the cathedral of Fidenza, while two reliefs, ten centuries apart in date, representing Hercules and the Erymanthian Boar were placed on the west façade of San Marco in Venice. In Milan an antique relief thought to represent Hercules was preserved in the church of Sant’ Ambrogio, behind the wall of the choir, and played an important role in religious and political ceremonies. In Florence both the Campanile and the Porta della Mandorla of the Cathedral were decorated with images of Hercules and his labours.

This paper explores the presence of the hero in these contexts and examines the possible reasons behind the decision to place a pagan figure in an ecclesiastical setting. The image of Hercules had undergone an *interpretatio Christiana* and the hero was seen as an *exemplum* of Christian virtue, but his appearance in such settings seems to hold an additional meaning that goes beyond a Christian interpretation. Hence, this paper will argue that Hercules' images are as complex and diverse as the life of the popular hero.

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Giampiero Scafoglio (Cattedra di Lingua e Letteratura Latina; Seconda Università di Napoli)

### **Dante's Hercules**

This paper gives an overview of the "Hercules-theme" in Dante Alighieri's thoughts and poetry, paying special attention to the *Comedy*.

To begin with, where does Dante draw on the knowledge of Hercules and his deeds? He explicitly mentions his sources in the *Convivio*, notably 3.3: Ovid, Lucan and 'other poets', among whom Virgil certainly appeared.

Hercules' killing of the Lernean Hydra is mentioned by Dante in the *Epistle 7* to Emperor Henry VII: the hero becomes a model of virtue and strength, an example to emulate, for the sovereign. On the other hand, the divine origin of Hercules (son of Jupiter) provides feedback on the divine origin of imperial power (asserted by Dante in the treaty *De monarchia*).

In the *Comedy*, two short references to Hercules' death due to the posthumous revenge by Nessus (*Inf.* 12.67-69) and Hercules' love for Iole (*Par.* 9.101-102) seem to be no more than cultural allusions, aimed at the ostentation of mythological erudition. It is significant, however, that Dante does not express a moral judgment on Hercules' love for Iole, indeed remains silent on adultery and does not refer to lust; instead, he points to this love as a (positive) example of a strong and deep feeling.

On the other hand, the references to the capture of Cerberus (*Inf.* 9.98-99) and the killing of Cacus (*ibid.* 25.25-33) are far more important to the moral background of the poem, since Hercules is viewed as the champion of Good defeating Evil. This is also the meaning of another episode evoked many times by Dante: Hercules' fight against the giant Antaeus (*Inf.* 31.112ff. and in particular 132; but cf. *Conv.* 3.3.7-8; *De mon.* 2.7.10 and 2.9.11).

Thus, in Dante's thoughts and especially in the *Comedy*, the Hercules-figure is a symbol of Good in the eternal struggle against Evil, although the hero is not yet an allegorical prefiguration of Christ (as he is already in some Medieval texts, and will be, increasingly, in the Renaissance).

Finally, Dante's Hercules works as a *trait d'union*, a connecting and mediating figure, between the hero of flesh and blood of classical antiquity (sometimes already interpreted as champion of the Good, e.g. in the *Aeneid*) and the symbol of Christ, as he will become in late Middle Age and Renaissance.

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Tom Sienkewicz (Monmouth College, Illinois)

### **Herculean Transformations in Florence**

This paper illustrates the history of Herculean iconography in the history, art and literature of Florence from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance and into the twentieth century. A brief chronological overview of selected literary texts from Late Antiquity and the Renaissance

which helped to mould or to articulate Renaissance attitudes towards the hero is followed by a survey of some specific public representations of the hero in Florentine art.

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## 2b) The Comic Hero

Stephe Harrop (Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance; Royal Central School of Speech and Drama)

### “Ercles’ Vein”: Heracles as Bottom in Ted Hughes’ *Alcestis*

Ted Hughes’ version of *Alcestis* (1999) is a play which diverges substantially and significantly from its ancient source-text, particularly in its interpolation of a scene in which Heracles drunkenly re-enacts his labours. Hughes’ Heracles is an example of the poet’s use of a mediating literary text to create a complex, reflexive relationship between ancient source-text and modern performance, with the thespian antics of Hughes’ boozy demi-god (‘I am the lion ... You be Heracles ... *Heracles roars*’) closely echoing the histrionic exertions of Shakespeare’s Nick Bottom (‘Let me play the lion too ... this is Ercles’ vein’).

This paper contends that this inter-textual comedy serves multiple purposes within Hughes’ free adaptation, including the establishment of a link between the heroic Heracles of *Alcestis* and the maddened, murderous figure who, elsewhere in the tragic canon, will massacre his own family. The comic buffoonery of Heracles-as-Bottom allows uneasy shades of the tyrant ‘Ercles’ to seep into and infect the drama, subtly de-stabilising Heracles’ heroism, and gesturing towards the darker corpus of Heracles mythology and literature.

It is argued that this referencing of Bottom’s bombastically Senecan ‘Ercles’ is symptomatic of a deep unease concerning the monstrously powerful hero, and the ultimate consequence of his ‘excessive *modus vitae*’. With bleak irony, the closer Hughes’ text comes to the vulgar comedy of the rude mechanicals, the closer it brings us to Heracles’ tragic catastrophe.

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Sofia Frade (University of Lisbon)

### “Breaking news: Hercules is the son of Zeus” - The chorus in Helen Eastman’s *Hercules*

In Euripides’ *Heracles* the chorus has a fundamental role in defending Heracles’ status as a demi-god, yet the old men of Thebes are strangely a lot closer to Amphitryon than to the hero and cannot bear the violence of the madness and retreat from its consequences in the second half of the play. In Eastman’s modern version, the violence of the madness is moderated, but the problems related to the status of the hero are no less important. Once again, the chorus has a fundamental role, not only in describing the new scenarios of each labour, much like the original chorus, but also by poking around and questioning the identity of the hero time and again. As true celebrity journalists Eastman’s chorus are not on anyone’s side. Hercules ignores them, yet they keep their role until the very end. And, as easily as they were ready to destroy the hero, they will be the ones to announce his true nature.

This paper examines how the chorus is fundamental to the structure of Eastman’s *Hercules* and the way in which it helps the audience to focus on the essential question (both of this play and the Euripides’ original): what is the true nature of the hero?

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Helen Eastman (University of Oxford)

### Writing and Directing *Hercules*, Chester 2010

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## 3a) The Victorian Age

Edith Hall and Henry Stead (King's College London)

### **Hercules and the Victorian Strongman**

This paper investigates the role of Hercules in the curiously fig-leaved world of the Victorian strongman and the emergent industry of physical culture in Britain, what the Herculean brand offer these physical artistes and their audiences and whether it was a simple signifier of superhuman strength or more deeply connected the mythical figure and his various representations in literature and art.

The main focus is the hugely influential figure of Eugen Sandow, father of modern bodybuilding and canny Prussian entrepreneur, who publically engaged with classical culture and the figure of Hercules so as to traverse class barriers, extend the reach of his art form and, not least, expand his profit margins. In both Sandow's immediate orbit and the wake of his legacy other "heavy athletes" have associated with the figure of Hercules in various ways, including the mighty "Katie Sandwina" aka "The Woman Hercules".

Ancient Greek and Roman visual culture enabled the lowly act of the strongman to run away *from* the circus and stride proudly into the drawing rooms and cultural realms of British and American high society. The paper draws connections with the mass-media fuelled C19<sup>th</sup> culture of self-improvement and the related art forms of *poses plastiques* and *tableaux vivants* to raise the question of whether the role of "the fig-leaf of antiquity" changes during this period from a modesty-saving cover-up to an indicator that classical antiquity was in fact being exploited as a popular cross-class brand, providing a platform for cultural and social exchange.

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Paula James (Open University)

### **The Herculean Worker? - Identifying the hero and his ideological stance in the Trade Union emblem**

The central figure grappling with a serpent is a stark and almost naive image in the 1889 Dockers' Strike Banner. It has a feel of fairground art to it. The hero is presumed to be Hercules and the snake symbolises the evils he will sweep away in society: prostitution and destitution as the emblem proclaims, with the backing of Cardinal Manning, whose portrait appears on the reverse side of the banner itself.

A Christian (and philanthropic) Hercules as moral exemplar is not a new phenomenon by this time but what are we to make of this primarily aristocratic icon (his brief appearance on the emblems of the French revolution notwithstanding) when he becomes the muscleman and champion of the working classes in struggle?

This paper argues that the complexity of the political statement of this banner belies the simplicity of its form, suggesting that it might be possible to draw conclusions about the



different layers of consciousness amongst the unskilled and newly organised labour that the proletarian 'Hercules' represents.

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Clemence Schultze (Durham University)

### **Hercules among the Victorians: myths and typologies**

Typology is the explication of persons in the Old Testament as prefiguring those of the New: the former are Types to be fulfilled in the Antitype of Christ; both precursor and fulfilment were perceived as divinely ordained. Typological reading of the Bible, an ancient and widespread practice, was also applied to other literature and to the natural world. In the Victorian period poets and novelists could expect their readers readily to adopt this approach for secular works.

Graeco-Roman myths were susceptible to typological interpretation, as evidenced by Tractarian poets John Keble and Isaac Williams; the latter analyses the practice in *The Christian Scholar* (1849). He defends the educational use of classical literature (dangerous and testing though it may be) and illustrates how, by extension or by comparison, Christian truths can be derived from it. Thus, Williams takes Hercules – who, like Sampson, had long been regarded as a Type of Christ (cf. Milton) – and uses part of Pindar's *First Nemean* to contrast his birth with the Nativity. The same subject is treated by John Warren, Lord de Tabley, in a poem (1862) which similarly requires typological reading. Charlotte Yonge framed an entire novel (*My Young Alcides*, 1875) as a contemporary version of the Labours.

However, as cultural and religious changes over the century greatly affected the understanding of the biblical text, typology likewise underwent a shift. This is apparent in William Morris's 'The Golden Apples', one of the episodes from his long mythological poem *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70). Morris had grown away from his early Tractarian influences and was moving towards Socialism. Zealous in action but lacking certainty, his Hercules appears less a Type of Christ than a Type of modern man.

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Edmund Richardson (University of Leeds)

### **Hercules Burlesqued**

As punishment for murder, Hercules was bound over as a slave to Omphale, Queen of Lydia. The months passed, Hercules did the chores and wore the Queen's bracelets, while Omphale – as some representations have it – wrapped herself up in the skin of the Nemean Lion, and appropriated the hero's club.

As 1864 drew to a close, the story of Hercules and Omphale was suddenly the talk of London. 'Hercules and Omphale; or, the Power of Love' was enchanting audiences, night after night, at the Royal St. James's Theatre. It was a breathtaking, spectacular pantomime, which drew audiences from all over Britain. But its author, William Brough – known as 'clean Brough' to his late brother Robert's 'clever Brough' – also sent his burlesque Hercules lumbering into some of the time's most significant political debates.

The story of Hercules' subordination to Omphale was, in itself, a striking reversal of accepted gender roles. But Brough went further: his Hercules was, in fact, a woman – Charlotte Sanders. British political discourse was marked by furious disagreements over the role of women in society, and the year had been punctuated by Queen Victoria's interventions in policy-making, and battles with her Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. This paper will explore

Brough's astonishing, polemical depiction of the 'King of Clubs' – alternately fantastical and shambolic, caught between radical politics and helpless laughter.

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### 3b) Modern Popular Culture

Eran Almagor (Ben Gurion University of the Negev)

#### **A New Hercules? *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix***

The popular French comic strip *Asterix* is a modern day myth, which provides the readers with an imaginary world of heroes, living in the timeless year of 50 BC, in a fantasy land which is supposed to be Roman Gaul. The mythographers, as it were, the author René Goscinny and the artist Albert Uderzo, succeeded in turning harsh history into a popular illustrated tale, creating an image more powerful than any historical account. While this aspect has been explored to a certain extent, most notably in the collection *Ils sont fous... d'Astérix!* (Catalogue de l'Exposition, Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires; Paris: Éditions Albert René, 1996), subtitled *un mythe contemporain*, there are still areas which are worthy of further study, particularly the relationship of Asterix to ancient mythology.

Of particular interest is the animated feature film *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix* (*Les Douze Travaux d'Astérix*) produced in 1976, the only movie to be based on an original screenplay that was firstly not preceded by a comic book in the series and, secondly, written by Goscinny and Uderzo. This paper focuses on the unique medium of the screen in presenting the story, as opposed to the written/illustrated one of the *Bandes Dessinée*, to address the plot, which casts Asterix as a Hercules surrogate, and examine the de-construction and re-construction of the myth of Hercules in the context of the only representation of Greco-Roman gods and goddesses in this series.

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Hugo Koning (Leiden University)

#### **Hercules, Lion of Olympus**

No modern-day phenomenon comes closer to Greek mythology than the hero-packed universe of American comics. Little wonder, then, that 'incredible' Hercules is the star of his own popular Marvel series, meeting and beating most of the monsters familiar from ancient legend - and several new ones, too. This paper explores some of the most interesting similarities between the Greek hero and his comic incarnation, focusing on the way the ancient icon is brought up to date in a modern context and a modern medium, demonstrating that the process of actualisation, which requires a sound knowledge of tradition and a great measure of creativity on the part of authors and artists alike, is executed with both intelligence and (generic) self-consciousness.

This being established, the paper turns to the difficult question, in both ancient and modern times, of Hercules' divinity. Whereas Hercules successfully fights his mortal self in the Underworld in issue #131, he nonetheless truly dies some episodes later (or so it seems). The ambiguous status of Hercules as a god or a man can be constructed as a meta-comment not only on the difficulty of bringing ancient gods to life again, but also on the ever-growing 'worship' of our comic (and movie) heroes, who become more and more like gods.

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Adriana Nogueira (University of Algarve)

## **Hercules in Music in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries**

Based on the assumption that Heracles, like all the Greek gods and heroes, is part of mythic material, that, as C. Kerényi said, is ‘not unamenable to further reshaping’ and ‘capable of transformation’, this paper will examine the context in which the name Hercules is used in some examples from the music scene from the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to today.

The paper will analyze the lyrics and the video clips (where available) of musicians using different languages (mainly English, but also Portuguese) to try to see how Hercules was used by these artists. In considering the different meanings and referents of Hercules, the paper will explore which elements of the hero artists have picked and which artists have left behind and examine whether the reference is to the Heracles myth in general or whether there is more to it (especially in the lyrics), as well as reflecting on why artists are attracted to Hercules rather than other heroes.

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Andreas N. Michalopoulos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

### **«Ο Ηρακλής πήρε το ρόπαλό του»: the reception of Herakles in modern Greek press<sup>1</sup>**

Herakles is taught in Greek elementary schools, from the first grade onwards, as the most important hero of Greek mythology. His labours are widely known to the average Greek and form part of the collective ‘national’ culture and identity. Herakles’ great significance as a cultural figure in modern Greece is strongly felt in various fields, from art and culture to politics, economics and sport.

This paper explores the reception of Herakles and his labours in the modern Greek press, both printed and electronic. The paper discusses selected symptomatic appearances of Herakles in a wide range of media, from political newspapers and websites to arts and sporting columns, in order to address a range of questions. These will include: which Heraklean labours are most commonly used and why; what aspect of the hero is most regularly highlighted; what is Herakles’ ideological stamp in modern Greece; for what reasons and purposes and on what occasions is the hero mentioned in news reports and articles’ what (if any) is the development of his image from antiquity to present-day Greece.

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## **4a) Herculean Emblems**

Alison Adams (University of Glasgow)

### **Hercules in Emblem Books: a survey**

Hercules is probably the heroic figure who appears most frequently in emblems. The didactic genre, in which word and image work together to convey meaning, flourished across Europe in the early modern period, with emblems published in Latin and a large range of vernacular languages, as well as in polyglot editions. Hercules was already present in the first emblem book printed, Alciato’s *Emblematum liber* of 1531, and his popularity spreads through books published in France, Germany, the Low Countries, and Spain.

Emblem writers exploit many elements from the wide range of his exploits and attributes: the twelve labours of Hercules, Hercules at the crossroads, Hercules the lover, Hercules the musician, the eloquence of Hercules, particularly in the *Hercule gaulois* tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> Tr.: “Heracles got his club”.

This paper firstly offers examples illustrating all of these in order to provide background and a broader context for other conference papers relating to this period. The emblems' purpose is to show Hercules' relevance to different groups of potential readers, and of these groups political leaders are especially important. Thus, the paper will then focus on introducing a single and insufficiently known French text, in praise of Henri IV, André Valladier's *Labyrinthe royal de Hercule gaulois triomphante* (1601).

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Daniela Castaldo (University of Salento)

### **Herakles the Musician: The sixteenth-century recovery of a classical iconography**

In the classical world, beside the most established iconographical tradition of Herakles as the hero of physical strength and endurance, there is a less famous tradition that shows him as a musician, linking him with the Muses. 'Herakles the lyre player' is portrayed by the Romans, for example on the *denarius* of Quintus Pomponius Musa (66 BC), perhaps representing the cult statue placed in the *Hercules Musarum* temple, on a gem engraved by Skylax (C1<sup>st</sup> BC) and on a bas-relief from Flavia Solva (C2<sup>nd</sup> AD). At the beginning of the sixteenth century, this theme appears in the work of engravers reproducing ancient gems as commissions for the most important collectors and connoisseurs of antiquities, such as Giovan Battista Franco and Enea Vico. 'Herakles the lyre player' is depicted several times by the French poet and engraver J. J. Boissard, both in works illustrating the ancient monuments he had seen on his journey to Rome (*Antiquitates Urbis Romae*, 1597-1602) and in the *Emblematum liber* (1593), where it illustrates the emblem of Virtue. This iconographical tradition, representing Herakles as the emblem of the man who becomes able to attain virtue thanks to the good effects of the arts, seems to have a parallel in the thought of the ancient Pythagoreans who believed that the soul could be purified and refined by music, especially by the music of the lyre.

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## **4b) Hercules at the Crossroads**

Ioannis Deligiannis (Academy of Athens)

### ***Prohemium visionis Herculis ... e graeco in latinum traductae per ... Saxolum Pratensem ad ... Alexandrum de Gonzaga: Felice Feliciano and the fifteenth-century Latin translation of Prodicus' tale of Hercules by Sassolo da Prato***

The image of Hercules standing between Virtue and Vice is the focal point around which Sassolo da Prato structures the prefatory epistle to his Latin translation of Prodicus' tale of Hercules from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, dedicated to Alessandro Gonzaga. Hercules's choice provides Sassolo with the opportunity not only to damn vice, but primarily to praise virtue as the moral foundation of both the Greek and Roman civilization and to glorify the achievements of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, Alessandro's father and ruler of Mantua. Using Plato and Xenophon as his authorities Sassolo aims at preparing the young Alessandro to become a virtuous leader or at least a high-principled personal patron.

His epistle makes insinuations about the political conditions that troubled the ruling house of Mantua in the first half of the fifteenth century, but also the cultural and intellectual atmosphere that was being formed thanks to the presence in Mantua of Vittorino da Feltre. Into this very ambiance in the second half of the fifteenth century comes the calligrapher Felice Feliciano. Before becoming a noted figure, Feliciano tried his fortune in the royal house of Mantua under the leading artist of his time, Andrea Mantegna. There Feliciano produced two manuscripts of Sassolo's translation, one for himself and a luxury copy for an

important client of his, written in a script resembling monumental Roman script and decorated with a miniature of Hercules between Virtue and Vice.

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Olga Vassilieva-Codognet (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris)

### **Hercules in a dress: Gender-Inverted and Christianized variations on *Hercules at the Crossroads* in seventeenth-century emblemata**

Seated upon a grassy mound, the young girl is carefully playing with the tip of an arrow, from which she soon will receive the incurable wound of love. But who will be the object of her affection: *amor saeculi*, standing on the flat road leading to his terrestrial realm, or *amor divinus*, standing on the steep path leading upward to his lofty dwelling place? Only the girl's soul knows the answer. *Conscientia testis* is the title of this picture, or rather the *motto* of Otto Vaenius' 1615 emblem. Heir to both Annibale Carracci's *Ercole al bivio* and Raphael's *Amore e Psiche* frescoes at the Farnesina, this masterful creation by Otto Vaenius (1556-1629: *pictor doctus*, Justus Lipsius's friend and Peter Paul Rubens's master) inspired other emblems throughout the seventeenth century.

This paper examines the tradition of gender-inverted and Christianized variations of *Hercules at the Crossroads*. Starting from *Ercole al bivio* painted by Federico Zuccari (Vaenius' master during his formative years in Rome), with its top/bottom opposition of Virtue and Vice, absence of personifications and presence of an angel calling a prostrate, pleasure-exhausted Hercules to higher aims, the paper will assess Hercules's centrality in Vaenius' work (*viz.* paintings, emblems, medals) and review his various depictions of the Stoic hero, from allegorical portrait to symbolic hieroglyph.

Finally, the paper will focus on the multiple offspring of *Conscientia testis*, thus shedding light on the forms and functions of a series of images that prove to be characteristic of the Counter-Reformation. In these by-products of Prodikos' fable, the female personifications of Vice and Virtue have been replaced by male incarnations of Sacred and Profane Love, while the immortal hero has become a young girl who essentially functions as an identification figure for the reader. She does so all the more easily because the readership of emblem books was preponderantly female, from the *Infante* Isabella Clara Eugenia, dedicatee of the *Amoris divini emblemata* and co-ruler of the Southern Netherlands, to the more anonymous nuns who owned most of these books. Prodikos can be satisfied: although his three main protagonists have been altered, his love-triangle schema remains, as does the essence of his moral apologue: the world's false allurements should be discarded in favour of more demanding but ultimately more rewarding goals.

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## **5a) Hercules in France**

Marc Bizer (University of Texas at Austin)

### **The Erasmian Hercules in Joachim Du Bellay's *Regrets***

In scholarship on sixteenth-century France, Hercules is most widely known as the Lucianesque figure, the "Gallic Hercules" who found his way into the hearts and minds of humanists, who, as R. E. Hollowell put it, "saw in [him] a ready-made literary and artistic device to glorify their language, their literature, and their monarchy". In a less-determined geographical and national context, Erasmus focuses in his adage "*Herculei labores*" not on the image of the man but on the commonplace of his travails: these can mean "something great and manifold", but also may designate those efforts which mostly benefit others and

bring little profit to the doer. Indeed, in the course of the long explanatory note on the adage, Erasmus quickly dispenses with typical lessons for teaching the king before turning to himself and underscoring his thankless devotion to collecting ancient wisdom. "Anyone," he concludes, "who cares for the restoration of literature must have a truly 'Herculean' spirit."

This paper will explore the light such an Erasmean perspective could shed on the works of the sixteenth-century French poet Joachim Du Bellay, in particular on his most famous poetic collection: *Regrets*. The collection engages with several mythological characters, most notably with Odysseus, but also Jason and Hercules. Considered to be paragons of wisdom in the period, they appear in association with King Henri II because of the prevailing royal iconography.

Drawing on previous work on uneasy negotiation between the individual and the national in Du Bellay's treatment of Odysseus and on the collection's mock epic qualities, this paper will show that Du Bellay's personal travails in Rome can be considered to be Herculean labors in the second Erasmean sense. There is, in a sense, place for two Herculeses in the *Regrets*: for a Gallic Hercules in the person of King Henri II, and an Erasmean one in the person of the poet himself.

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Jon Solomon (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

### **Hercules at the Court of Louis XIV**

The positive reception of Rossi's and Caproli's ballet-infused operas, not to mention the end of the Fronde, encouraged Mazarin to entice the much heralded Francesco Cavalli to Paris to set Francesco Buti's libretto for *Ercole amante*. The premier was designed to be performed for the king's marriage to the Spanish Infanta, Maria Theresa (Marie-Thérèse) of Austria, a marriage which would help Louis consolidate the Catholic territories of Bourbon France and Hapsburg Spain, and provide a venue for the most ambitious operatic production to date and one of the most magnificent ever conceived. Louis' sumptuous wedding eliminated the budgetary constraints usually associated with the for-profit public opera houses of Venice and Buti's imaginative libretto provided ample opportunities for Cavalli to expand his musical horizons.

The Prologue's imaginative Chorus of Rivers is amply and celestially balanced by the magnificent Chorus of Planets in the Epilogue. Meanwhile the introductory allegory compares Louis and the Infanta to Hercules and Hebe. Buti greatly expanded the story recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, dramatized in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* and most recently by Jean de Rotrou (*Hercule mourant*, 1634, under the patronage of Richelieu). Buti also introduced the adversarial divinities of the *Aeneid* and other ancient and medieval plots and allegories, with Venus assisting Hercules in his amorous advances towards Iole and Juno intending to unite Hyllus, Hercules' son by Deianeira, with Iole whose father, Hercules kills. After a number of intervening events, most noticeably an earthly cataclysm and vivid invocations of Neptune and Hades, Hercules is killed with a cloak soaked in the poisoned blood of the centaur Nessus but ultimately undergoes an apotheosis and marries the Olympian Hebe.

Emulating the most current Venetian fashion and the most elegant narrative models from Renaissance *intermedi* and *ballets de cour*, Buti incorporated many of the ancient characters associated with the mighty Theban while rendering the entire tale as a symbolic political allegory. Contemporary operatic style dictated that he create romance (Hyllus and Iole), expand the role of the Olympian gods (Juno, Venus, Neptune), utilize the expensive stage machinery (with vistas of Hades, an earthquake that releases the ghost of Iole's father from Hades, and Neptune rising from the waves to rescue the drowning Hyllus). Buti also inserts an Ovidian Somnus passage.

On the other hand, the political importance of the wedding required that the original story not be trivialized for the young monarch, especially one who might be associated with the hero. Hence, a morally superior Hercules must be faithful to his wife so he can achieve ultimate glorification and apotheosis, two goals of tremendous significance for the monarch whose armies were the envy of Europe and whose self-proclaimed right to be king was divine.

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Rosie Wyles (Kings College London)

### **Hercules between the Court and Stage in early 17th-century France**

The theatrical reception of Hercules in France is made particularly piquant by the explicit exploitation of links between the French royalty and this heroic glutton, lover, protector of mankind, and demi-god who was also the supposed forefather of the French people.

What does it mean to put Hercules, in either his tragic or comic guise, on stage after a ruler has been associated with this hero? An intensive propaganda campaign identified Henri IV (1589-1610) with Hercules at crucial moments of his reign and right up until his death in 1610. Yet it was only after his death that serious dramatic treatments of the Hercules myth emerged. Can Hercules' almost complete absence from the stage, between 1570-1613, have really been caused, as Tolbin has suggested, by a lack of faith in man's capacity for heroic action during this period, when in fact Henri IV's heroic exploits were well known and celebrated?

This paper re-evaluates the evidence, taking into account the significance of Le Sieur de Fiefmelin's *Alcide, jeu comique et moral* (1601) and re-assessing Jean Prévost's *Hercule* (1613) and Pierre Mainfray's *Tragedie des Forces Incomparables et Amours du Grand Hercules* (1616) in the context of the propaganda campaign during Henri IV's reign. Having done so, it explores the relationship between the royal and theatrical appropriation of Hercules and offers a different interpretation for Hercules' apparent 1570-1613 absence from the French stage.

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Russell Goulbourne (University of Leeds)

### **Voltaire's Hercules**

This paper will examine Hercules exemplary role in Voltaire's writings. Firstly in his "private" correspondence, particularly in the 1750s and 1760s, Voltaire uses Hercules as a symbol of the struggles he and his fellow free-thinkers face in trying to overcome religious intolerance and superstition: Voltaire compares himself and others to Hercules, battling the Lernaean hydra of anti-enlightened thought. Secondly, in his more public polemical writings Voltaire uses Hercules as part of his strategy of undermining the authority of religious tradition and Biblical narrative: for example, he presents Hercules alongside Christ as two figures to whom divinity has been falsely attributed, and he sees in the stories of Samson and Jonah, as well as in resurrection accounts, retellings of ancient myth. Voltaire, the new Hercules, sets the ancient Hercules at the very heart of his Enlightenment project.

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## **5b) A Hero for Children?**

Owen Hodgkinson (University of Leeds)

## **Hercules in children's literature: a "warts and all" model of masculinity?**

This paper will examine various portrayals of Hercules in children's literature throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the various ways in which authors have chosen to deal with (or sometimes omit) his less heroic activities (murder of wife and children, adultery) and other aspects which might be considered unsuitable for children but are essential to the ancient myth (e.g. his conception).

References to Hercules and his exploits as a role-model and inspirations for young boys across the period will also be examined in order to establish the positive qualities perceived by the authors as worthy of emulation by the boys of their time. Changing contemporary models of masculinity are referenced explicitly or implicitly as comparanda for Hercules (e.g. modern military heroes, competitors in 'strongman' contests, comic book characters).

Finally the paper will consider the extent to which and the ways in which children's authors felt and tried to reconcile these possible tensions. Earlier children's versions, even for the youngest target audiences, are generally less likely to censor the myths or to make them 'politically correct' than very modern ones, but evidently the need was sometimes felt at least to mitigate unheroic aspects, leading many authors to give great weight to the twelve labours myth being an act of atonement for the murders, when the murders are not omitted.

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Lisa Maurice (Bar Ilan University)

## **Hercules according to Disney and Hallmark: A modern role-model for mini-heroes**

Many elements of the Hercules myth are unpalatable to modern eyes, particularly when programming for children and young adults; the rape of Alcmena, Hercules' madness and subsequent murder of his children, the episode with Omphale, to give but three examples. Nevertheless, Hercules, the greatest hero of them all in the ancient world, has continued to attract film-makers attempting to appeal to juvenile and family audiences. Both the Disney Corporation (1997) and Hallmark (2005) produced screen versions of the Hercules myth. Moreover, both of these productions used the figure of Hercules to explore the concept of the hero, as well as to present a moral message for their viewers, adapting the myth in accordance with this agenda.

In the Disney version, based as much on the Superman comic books as on Greek myth, Hercules is a misfit who has to grow into the role of a 'true hero' and who does so through the discovery of romantic love. The Hallmark version also presents Hercules as an outcast, continually searching for approval and to find his place in the world. Hallmark's Hercules is a tale of a journey of moral and spiritual growth as the man becomes a hero both physically and emotionally, coming to find acceptance and peace, and is, therefore, finally rewarded, again by true love and marriage.

This paper investigates the ways in which the Hercules myth has been altered in these two screen versions, and examines the moral and ethical messages being transmitted to the audience as a result of these changes. The conclusions are then contextualized within the wider culture of which they are a product, to provide an insight into the moral values and ideals of the modern Western world, as promoted by Hollywood in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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Katherine Lu (University of Michigan)

## **Going the Distance: defining heroism in Disney's *Hercules***



This paper presents a case study of the reception of the Hercules saga in Disney's *Hercules* (1997). While many, including the Greek government officials who denied the Disney company permission to host a premiere party on the Pnyx, view Disney products through the lens of 'what they got right' and 'what they got wrong', this paper presents an assessment of the movie's essentially serious engagement with its Greek inheritance.

Disney's *Hercules* seeks to define the nature of a 'true hero', a task for which the ancient Greeks also used Heracles. In the animated film, the problem of Hercules' destructiveness is couched as adolescent awkwardness, something he can outgrow as he turns his energy towards civilizing the Theban environs. His one 'weakness' is his love for Megara, a heroic failing which has a Greek precedent in Apollonius' *Argonautica* with Heracles' erotic attachment to Hylas.

The conclusion of the animated film, in which 'Hercules the Saviour' offers to exchange his life for Megara's, shows a Christianization of Herculean heroism, one in which early Christians preceded Disney. Thus, the paper concludes by offering a reflection on the ways that this distinctly pre-9/11, American presentation can shape our interpretation of the ancient material.

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Angeline Chiu (University of Vermont)

### **Child's Play: The education of young Hercules in two children's television programs**

The late 1990's proved to be a particularly fertile period for the reception of the Hercules myth in film and television, spearheaded by Disney's 1997 animated feature film *Hercules* and syndicated television's long-running *Hercules: the Legendary Journeys* (1995-99). These projects both spawned television programs specifically tailored for young viewers, and this paper examines these spin-offs: Disney's *Hercules: the Animated Series* (1998) and Fox Kids' *Young Hercules* (1998-99) in terms of classical reception for children.

Both the television shows in question attempt to translate the ancient myth into storytelling for a modern juvenile audience, and the shows' adaptations and interpretations constitute a heretofore underappreciated aspect of classical reception, notably as these programs, others like them, and sources of children's entertainment may well be the formative initial encounters that their young viewers have with classical mythology in general and Hercules in particular.

The paper first considers what canonical elements of the Hercules myth these programs contain and then examines the innovations they incorporate into their portrayals of a young, pre-heroic Hercules. This paper analyses the characterisation of the adolescent Hercules, the circumstances of his education, the roles of his companions, and the construction of maturation.

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## **6a) C18<sup>th</sup> Political Imagery**

Valerie Mainz (School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies; University of Leeds)

### **Standing on the Shoulders of Giants**

The seminal article, 'Hercules and the Radical Image of the French Revolution' by Lynn Hunt appeared in the second issue of the journal *Representations* in the spring of 1983. That

contribution to the study of the political culture of the French Revolution claimed that the figure of Hercules came quite suddenly to stand in for the French people. Hunt also observed that the re-invention of this mythic hero in the guise of a representative of collective popular power at its most militant was a creation of the Jacobin government and not of the popular classes, for the strong worker colossus featured only later in the socialist and proletarian iconography of the nineteenth century.

Through a close analysis of a range of visual imagery, this paper revisits the picturing of Hercules during the French Revolution to consider how this mythical being had figured under the Ancien Régime and was then re-appropriated at a time when the French nation went to war. It may be that the guises of the fighter and even of the flawed warrior hero, rather than those of the labouring worker, provide a better explanation for the appearances of Hercules at this pivotal moment in history.

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Annie Verbanck-Piérard

Musée royal de Mariemont (Belgium)

### **Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine and Hercules: a political emblem between tradition and innovation**

From 1713, after the War of the Spanish Succession, the Southern Netherlands (most of the later Belgian territories) were transferred to the Austrian Habsburgs. In 1744, Empress Maria Theresa (reigned 1740-1780) appointed Prince Charles of Lorraine, her brother-in-law, as governor of the Austrian Netherlands. Under his rule (1744-1780) these provinces enjoyed a period of prosperity, peace and stability.

Charles innovated by sponsoring cultural life, being an ardent urban planner and being very interested in new technical and scientific experiences. His promotion of science and trade, particularly, was deeply influenced by the achievements of Enlightenment. At the same time Charles was also a very traditional *Ancien Régime* governor, especially with regard to his own political power and references to Antiquity comprised the main symbolic language he used to legitimate his authority.

This paper explores how the figure of Hercules contributes to the ideological program of Charles of Lorraine, between tradition and innovation, and how the Prince developed his personal interpretation of the Herculean paradigm.

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Filipa Medeiros (University of Coimbra)

### ***Monstrorum dominatori*: Emblematic and allegorical representations of the Herculean task performed by D. José I, King of Portugal**

Popular in the ancient world and throughout the Middle Ages, the Herculean legend was interpreted, in the Humanistic period, from the standpoint of social, political and religious processes involved in the course of history. Hence, it became closely linked to European rulers, who identified themselves with Heracles' performance, using his figure as a political emblem. Moreover, as mythology developed into a metaphorical language, Renaissance and Baroque art often employed the heroic image as a convenient symbol in allegorical programs, representing virtue, superhuman strength and, particularly, eloquence.

According to this perspective, Hercules' myth became an excellent propagandistic icon exploited by royal courts and, consequently, the strategy inspired many other countries with the same political purpose. Taking Portugal into account, it is obvious that the historiographic record had regularly connected Heracles to the ancient genealogy of the Iberian people, using the mythographic tradition in order to magnify the Portuguese past and improve the image of Lusitania. This paper reveals that this association gained special meaning in the late-eighteenth century, since the heroic image of Heracles appears repeatedly in iconographic pieces in honor of D. José I and his minister Pombal. From an analysis of the linguistic and visual elements observed in the selected allegorical and emblematic representations, the paper draws conclusions about the ideological point pursued by the symbolic compositions, designed to illustrate the Herculean task performed by the king responsible for rebuilding Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755.

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## 6b) C19<sup>th</sup>-C21<sup>st</sup> Literature

Vered Lev Kenaan (University of Haifa)

### **Hercules and Antaeus: On the modern attraction to antiquity**

This paper focuses on the conflict between Hercules and Antaeus and the impact it left on the Western imagination. The struggle depicted by the second-century sophist Philostratus is a salient example of a long pictorial tradition that presents their combat as an allegorical conflict between the wild and the civilized, the corporeal and the spiritual. The figure of the giant Antaeus, the son of Poseidon, is known for being a mighty wrestler who re-charges his incredible physical strength with the touch of the earth. A cruel aggressor, Antaeus kills strangers after forcing them to wrestle with him. In *Theatetus*, Antaeus' style of wrestling is used metaphorically to ascribe superiority in philosophical argumentation to Socrates. In the *Laws* Antaeus' unique style of wrestling is linked with his use of his legs during the fight. The attraction Antaeus has to the earth is manifested in his peculiar foot combat. His connectedness to the earth explains, according to the *Bibliotheca's* author, why Antaeus is known to be Gaia's son. Antaeus' attachment to his mother is hence the secret source of his invincibility.

The philosophical invocation of Antaeus draws attention to an important missing link in the narrative chain that stands for another, no less essential, form of knowledge. What does the myth of Antaeus say about the inversed source of authority, the paternal source of knowledge? Given that the mother element draws us downwards, might we not wonder at the meaning behind a paternal motivation that propels us upwards? In the philosophical tradition the mythological opposition between Mother Earth and Father Sky, between the chthonic Gaia and the Olympian Zeus, reflects a duality consisting of the tangible and the intangible realms. In the myth of Antaeus, the aspiration to direct the human gaze away from phenomena is represented by the figure of Hercules.

Hercules is the only hero among those who dared to wrestle with Antaeus who succeeded in unravelling the enigmatic source of Antaeus' invincibility. Hercules understood that in order to weaken Antaeus he needed to lift him into the air. This paper examines the pictorial and literary reception of these two antithetical agents of knowledge and rethinks their role in shaping the relation of modernity to antiquity.

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Charilaos N. Michalopoulos (Democritus University of Thrace)

### **Herculean Traces in Modern Greek Poetry**

Despite his popularity in classical poetry, Hercules is perceived to have had a rather meager presence in Modern Greek poetry. This paper maps the presence of Hercules and investigates his special function in Modern Greek poetic production. The paper focuses on the work of Kostis Palamas, Constantine Cavafy and Yiannis Ritsos, whose work coincides with some turning points of Modern Greek history at the beginning, in the middle and in the late third of the twentieth century, respectively. References to Hercules in the prose critical work of Palamas, Cavafy and Seferis will also be included.

Hercules proves to be a rather controversial mythical figure. His myth caters for a wide variety of themes ranging from the greatness of the heroic past to the linguistic dispute over the use of the *katharevousa* (i.e. conservative Modern Greek language) or the *demotikē* (i.e. the Modern Greek vernacular). At the turn of the century, Hercules appealed to the poets of the 'Megali Idea' (such as Palamas) because he reaffirms national pride, which lies at the heart of their theoretical and poetological agenda. For the same reason during the 1960s Yiannis Ritsos gave a serious blow to Hercules' grandeur in an attempt to keep up with the anti-heroic and politically-charged post World War II climate of the work of the so-called 'Generation of Defeat' poets.

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Fiona Hobden (University of Liverpool)

### **Heracles Bound: a new Choice for the hero in Jeannette Winterson's *Weight* (2005)**

This paper examines the representation of Heracles in *Weight: The Myth of Atlas and Heracles* (2005) by contemporary writer Jeanette Winterson. Following the general narrative, Heracles persuades Atlas to surrender the earth he carries on his shoulders in order to fetch apples from the garden of the Hesperides, and then tricks the Titan into taking back his burden. For both characters the meeting becomes a stimulus to experience, evaluate and attempt to overcome the physical and psychological boundaries of freedom, and also to negotiate the relationship between personal responsibility and fate. For Heracles this is bound up in his heroic identity and trajectory: his new compulsion to be a 'good man' comes into confrontation with his desires, his nature, and his narrative destiny.

This 'Cover Version' thus imagines the hero through the familiar prism of virtue, but turns his Choice into a paradigm of human experience, one that authenticates/is authenticated by autobiographical interpolations from the author. By co-opting Heracles' and Atlas' experiences to her own, Winterson gives a very personal dimension to the 'permanent truths about human nature' that are said to underpin myth (xiv). It is this personal dimension that lends *Weight* philosophical punch.

The author refreshes her own story and ultimately allows Atlas to 'tell the story again' (a repeated refrain) by providing a new ending. But although Heracles frees Prometheus from his restraints, he remains bound, eventually meeting his prophesied death. In this Heracles is both victim and architect of his fate: murdered by 'a dead enemy ... He had killed himself after all' (118-9). In this intimate reception, constrained by this retelling of the myth, Heracles has no choice. The question remains, do we?

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## **7) Vice or Virtue (plenary panel)**

Susan Deacy (University of Roehampton)

### **Virtue and Vice in the Adam Room, Grove House**

As Pevsner put it, 'there is still nothing like Roehampton anywhere in London to get an impression of the aristocratic Georgian country villa' (*Buildings of England*: 687). This paper focuses upon one aspect of this 'impression': the 'Choice of Hercules' on the chimneypiece of what is now one of the showpiece rooms of the University of Roehampton: the 'Adam Room' in Grove House.

The paper explores why the myth was thought suitable for display in an eighteenth-century gentleman's residence, considering the key inspirations for the chimneypiece, notably the works of Matteis and Shaftesbury, and the Farnese Hercules, the 'must see' of the Grand Tour and a staple feature of the gardens of the men who were transforming their estates into simulacra of classical sanctuaries. The paper also considers whether the chimneypiece follows Rysbrack's design for a 'Choice of Hercules' chimneypiece and explores the place of the chimneypiece within the iconography of a room, usually ascribed to Robert Adam, which has been described as 'a good example of classical restraint' (Coe, *History of Grove House*). In conclusion, the image exemplifies eighteenth-century uses of Hercules as an every(gentle)man, while also appropriating the concept of the 'underside' of Hercules by pointing to the hero's connections with the decadence and indulgence of 'Vice'.

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Katy Barrett (University of Cambridge)

### **"L'Homme entre le Vice et la Vertu": David Garrick as Sir Joshua Reynolds' Augustan Hercules**

In 1761, Horace Walpole described the latest portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'a large picture of three figures to the knees, the thought taken by Garrick from the judgement of Hercules. It represents Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy,' but criticized Garrick's face as 'distorted, and burlesque.' He thus summed up perfectly the tension inherent in Reynolds' portrait; it drew on classical myths and imagery but distorted them to make a striking visual point about the status of contemporary man. This paper argues that the portrait of *David Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy* is at the centre of Reynolds' visual statement of an over-looked Augustan discourse in eighteenth-century ideology, a statement made particularly through referencing Hercules' choice between vice and virtue.

Reynolds confronted directly the Earl of Shaftesbury's use of Hercules as the archetype of the polite, virtuous citizen in both his 1714 text *A Notion of the Historical Draught of Hercules*, and the resulting painting by Paolo de' Matteis. The art historian John Barrell has placed Reynolds in a line of art theorists from Shaftesbury, arguing that eighteenth-century ideas were dominated by the civic humanism that Hercules' choice exemplified. The paper draws on work by the literary historian Paul Fussell to argue that Garrick, in fact, presents precisely the reverse because at the centre of Reynolds' painting is not Hercules – an idealised, virtuous hero, or the virtuous 'public body' that he was supposed to create, but Garrick, a 'fallen' man caught between Tragedy and Comedy: his own dual personality, which Augustan literature (and painting) constantly sought to save.

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Manuel Caballero (Munich)

### **New Representations of Hercules' Madness in Modernity: the depiction of Hercules and Lichas**

Although Alcmene's son was a multifaceted character in the ancient world (city founder, model of excellence, example of ruler's virtue, etc), he was considered fundamentally to be a prototype of the saviour and the striving hero. Thus, many of the pictures, sculptures and paintings in pottery referred to his well-known Labours but there are a few surviving plastic

representations of another interesting facet of this hero: his madness. These representations depict the death of his wife and children.

This paper considers an important change in the perspective taken towards Hercules in painting and sculpture in Modern period. Turning away from the Labours and from Hercules as the savior of Deianeira (although that episode still attracts many artists, e.g. Antonio Canova and André-Joseph Allar), the attention of painters and sculptures in Modernity focused on another event in his life, an event for which there is almost no evidence in ancient literature (the story appears mainly in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) and no evidence at all in ancient iconography: the death of Lichas. Antonio Canova's great masterpiece, *Hercules and Lichas*, is probably the best example of this innovation and the paper concentrates on this sculpture, alongside other relevant representations, to examine the new portrayal of Hercules in his madness and the literary and iconographical sources that inspired it.

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## 8) Antipodean Hercules (plenary panel)

Matt Dillon (University of New England, AU)

### **Hercules "Down Under": Antipodean experiences of the hero's machismo**

Antipodean Herculean academic studies might seem to have significant potential. After all, Hercules appears early in modern Australian history in the form of an aboriginal inhabitant in his fishing boat being transformed into the Belvedere torso, a massive Hellenistic muscled marble of the hero-god ('Natives of Botany Bay', Robert Cleveley, 1790s). This paper examines how the hero has fared in the succeeding centuries in *terra australis*, asking 'Who is Hercules to the "ordinary Aussie"?'

Hercules appears in scientific and cultural contexts. *Episcaphula hercules* is the name of a massive beetle found in the north, and *Coscinocera hercules* that of a moth of northern Australia and Papua New Guinea, which with a wingspan that at nearly 30cms is one of the world's largest. Artworks featuring Hercules hang in art galleries and museums, but more by virtue of who painted them rather than for an appreciation of who is being depicted: e.g. one of Dürer's fifteenth-century engravings of 'Hercules at the Crossroads' (Art Gallery NSW) or one of classicising British artist G. Rayner Hoff's 1920 plaster relief sculptures of 'Hercules, Deianira and Achelous' (Armidale NSW).

Two product lines, a supermarket 'Hercules' plastic kitchen wrap and bags and 'The Hercules, the strongest tray on earth' (a stainless steel back-tray for colossal mining trucks designed and produced in Australia), suggest that Australian consumers know something about 'Hercules' as a byword for strength and endurance. As does the strongman website, 'Planet Hercules', with its emphasis on deeds of muscle, such as a mighty Aussie pulling a semi-trailer.

Such appropriations of Hercules are at first somewhat depressing: the Twelve Labours of Hercules (none of which actually involved lifting, or even for that matter great endurance) are reduced in antipodean terms to a sandwich bag and a mining truck tray. These create the identity of Hercules 'down-under' and the antipodean experiences of the hero's machismo. Yet there is something respectful about the Australian cultural transmission of Herculean strength: here there is no brand of disposable nappies called 'Hercules diapers'. This is Olympian glory of an antipodean nature because Zeus/Jupiter, Hera/Juno, Athena/Minerva, are nowhere in the great southern land and even though antipodean society extols drinking as its main national pastime Dionysos/Bacchus is neglected. Only Hercules is preserved in

an ordinary Australian context, striding the colossal mining landscape, leaving the other gods far away.

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### **The Unsettled Settler: Herakles the colonist and the *Labours* of Marian Maguire**

In *Herakles Writes Home*, a striking lithograph from Marian Maguire's series *The Labours of Herakles*, the black-figure hero scribbles away inside his wooden homestead on the half-cleared slopes of Mt Taranaki. Maguire has sent Herakles out to New Zealand as a pioneer farmer. Her skillful compositions attract the eye with their elegant design and clever visual puns. But the weaving of Greek myth and art into the narrative of New Zealand history is no mere pastiche – it offers a deeply unsettling perspective on this familiar material. Beyond the witty 'in jokes' lurk a series of troubling questions. What does this innocuous word 'home' mean? And how does the distinctly archaic Heracles fit amongst the cultural souvenirs he has collected around him, or the strange landscape he is in the midst of transforming?

Heracles' 'homelessness' is a central facet of his character. Although born in Thebes, he seldom lingers in one place long enough to put down roots. The Greeks filled every spare moment of his mythology with long-ranging journeys. This pre-eminent colonist not only rid the Mediterranean of its monsters but gave even the most modest hamlets a story of his visit. Such additions to his mythology provided a strategy by which scattered communities could assert their place within the Greek world by tying their own origins to the most Panhellenic of cultural symbols. And yet, his role as a unifying force exists uneasily alongside his individualistic temperament; this is a hero whose behavior frequently threatens communal life.

Maguire's observation that '[y]ou can get Herakles to do anything you want' is not, then, an exclusively modern conceit. Herakles functions in her series as a cultural cipher, malleable and familiar, even in this unfamiliar setting. The unexpected blending of his life-story with the distinctive mythology of New Zealand provides a disconcerting perspective on these stories. By giving Heracles, the familiar foreigner who never seems quite at home, the task of colonizing New Zealand, Maguire achieves an element of intellectual distance. This figure, with its established symbolic baggage, seems at first glance to simplify, even do away with, the complex and messy dynamics of colonization. In fact, Heracles' mythological remoteness allows, paradoxically, a closer engagement with the difficult realities of colonial history; his translocation to the South Pacific enacts in the most dramatic way the collision of worldviews which comprises the origins of New Zealand as a modern state.

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Marian Maguire (Independent)

### ***The Labours of Hercules* (2006/2007): 12 lithographs and 8 etchings**

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