

CLAS109.11 DEFINING GREEK HEROINES

M Maurizio ch.11.1 HISTORY— Euripides *Medea*

synchronous

Active Reading **FOCUS** • Eur.*Med.* p.511-19

SKIM • **CR11** Diod.III.53-55, IV.17-19, Posidonius in Strab.III.4.17-18 [C164-5]

NB read for one hour, taking notes (fill in active reading worksheet)

RAW notes & post discussion question • B4@11h00

W Maurizio ch.11.3 COMPARE— P. Ovidius Naso *Metamorphoses*

asynchronous

before/in class: skim COMPARE for context; refer to leading questions; focus on ancient texts

Active Reading **FOCUS** • Ov.*Met.* VII p.529-37

NB read for one hour, taking notes (fill in worksheet); finish previous as necessary

WATCH Lecture 11 • B4@11h00

RAW notes & post discussion question • B4@12h00

Th M10-11 map project • B4@23h59

F Maurizio ch.11.2 THEORY— Plot of the Heroines's Story

synchronous

before class: skim THEORY for context; refer to leading questions; summarize modern text

before class: skim RECEPTION for context (African American Medea), cf. Morrison *Beloved*

tl; dr • Jezewski 1984, p.523-26

tl; dr summary & discussion responses (Eur.*Med.* | Ov.*Met.*) • B4@11h00

Q11 • MAP & IDs (p.495, p.541) – *in class*

FINAL notes • B4@23h59

MEDEA

How does heroic epic differ from myth?

How do the journeys of Heracles serve as a charter myth?

How do they represent the edges of the world?

How do heroic tale represent mortality and immortality?

HERACLES vs AMAZONS & CIVILIZATION vs SAVAGERY

Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 3.53-55, 4.17-19

3.53 ¹We are told, namely, that there was once on the western parts of Libya, on the bounds of the inhabited world, a race which was ruled by women and followed a manner of life unlike that which prevails among us. For it was the custom among them that the women should practice the arts of war and be required to serve in the army for a fixed period, during which time they maintained their virginity; then, when the years of their service in the field had expired, they went in to the men for the procreation of children, but they kept in their hands the administration of the magistracies and of all the affairs of the state. ²The men, however, like our married women, spent their days about the house, carrying out the orders which were given them by their wives; and they took no part in military campaigns or in office or in the exercise of free citizenship¹ in the affairs of the community by virtue of which they might become presumptuous and rise up against the women. ³When their children were born the babies were turned over to the men, who brought them up on milk and such cooked foods as were appropriate to the age of the infants; and if it happened that a girl was born, its breasts were seared that they might not develop at the time of maturity; for they thought that the breasts, as they stood out from the body, were no small hindrance in warfare; and in fact it is because they have been deprived of their breasts that they are called by the Greeks Amazons (“without-breast”).

⁴As mythology relates, their home was on an island which, because it was in the west, was called Hespera, and it lay in the marsh Tritonis. This marsh was near the ocean which surrounds the earth and received its name from a certain river Triton which emptied into it; and this marsh was also near Ethiopia and that mountain by the shore of the ocean which is the highest of those in the vicinity and impinges upon the ocean and is called by the Greeks Atlas. ⁵The island mentioned above was of great size and full of fruit-bearing trees of every kind, from which the natives secured their food. It contained also a multitude of flocks and herds, namely, of goats and sheep, from which possessors received milk and meat for their sustenance; but grain the nation used not at all because the use of this fruit of the earth had not yet been discovered among them.

⁶The Amazons, then, the account continues, being a race superior in valor and eager for war, first of all subdued all the cities on the island except the one called Menê, which was considered to be sacred and was inhabited by Ethiopian Ichthyophagi, and was also subject to great eruptions of fire and possessed a multitude of the precious stones which the Greeks call *anthrax*, *sardion*, and *smaragdos*;² and after this they subdued many of the neighboring Libyans and nomad tribes, and founded within the marsh Tritonis a great city which they named Cherronesus³ after its shape.

54 ¹Setting out from the city of Cherronesus, the account continues, the Amazons embarked upon great ventures, a longing having come over them to invade many part

¹ Literally, “freedom of speech.”

² The *anthrax* was a precious stone of dark red color (i.e. the carbuncle, ruby, and garnet); the *sardion* brownish-red (i.e. carnelian, or sard); the *smaragdos* was green (i.e. emerald).

³ A sort of peninsula—presumably the city lay on a ridge of land running out into the marsh.

of the inhabited world. The first people against whom they advanced, according to the tale, was the Atlantians, the most civilized men among the inhabitants of those regions, who dwelt in a prosperous country and possessed great cities; it was among them, we are told, that mythology places the birth of the gods, in the regions which lie along the shore of the ocean, in this respect agreeing with those among the Greeks who relate legends, and about this⁴ we shall speak in detail a little later.

2Now the queen of the Amazons, Myrina, collected, it is said, an army of thirty thousand foot-soldiers and three thousand cavalry, since they favored to an unusual degree the use of cavalry in their wars.⁵ 3For protective devices they used the skins of large snakes, since Libya contains such animals of incredible size, and for offensive weapons, swords and lances; they also used bows and arrows, with which they struck not only when facing the enemy but also when in flight, by shooting backwards at their pursuers with good effect. 4Upon entering the land of the Atlantians they defeated in a pitched battle the inhabitants of the city of Cernê, as it is called, and making their way inside the walls along with the fleeing enemy, they got the city into their hands; and desiring to strike terror into the neighboring peoples they treated the captives savagely, put to the sword the men from the youth upward, led into slavery the children and women, and razed the city. 5But when the terrible fate of the inhabitants of Cernê became known among their fellow tribesmen, it is related that the Atlantians, struck with terror, surrendered their cities on terms of capitulation and announced that they would do whatever should be commanded them, and that the queen Myrina, bearing herself honorably towards the Atlantians, both established friendship with them and founded a city to bear her name in place of the city which had been razed; and in it she settled both the captives and any native who so desired. 6Whereupon the Atlantians presented her with magnificent presents and by public decree voted to her notable honors, and she in return accepted their courtesy and in addition promised that she would show kindness to their nation. 7And since the natives were often being warred upon by the Gorgons, as they were named, a folk which resided upon their borders, and in general had that people lying in wait to injure them, Myrina, they say, was asked by the Atlantians to invade the land of the afore-mentioned Gorgons. But when the Gorgons drew up their forces to resist them a mighty battle took place in which the Amazons, gaining the upper hand, slew great numbers of their opponents and took no fewer than three thousand prisoners; and since the rest had fled for refuge into a certain wooded region, Myrina undertook to set fire to the timber, being eager to destroy the race utterly, but when she found that she was unable to succeed in her attempt she retired to the borders of her country.

55 1Now as the Amazons, they go on to say, relaxed their watch during the night because of their success, the captive women, falling upon them and drawing the swords of those who thought they were conquerors, slew many of them; in the end, however, the multitude poured in about them from every side and the prisoners fighting bravely were butchered one and all. 2Myrina accorded a funeral to her fallen comrades on three pyres and raised up three great heaps of earth as tombs, which are called to this day "Amazon Mounds." 3But the Gorgons, grown strong again in later days, were

⁴ i.e. the birth of the gods.

⁵ A strange statement, in connection with so small a number of cavalry. Perhaps the numbers should be transposed.

subdued a second time by Perseus, the son of Zeus, when Medusa was queen over them; and in the end both they and the race of the Amazons were entirely destroyed by Heracles, when he visited the regions to the west and set up his pillars⁶ in Libya, since he felt that it would ill accord with his resolve to be the benefactor of the whole race of mankind if he should suffer any nations to be under the rule of women. The story is also told that the marsh disappeared from sight in the course of an earthquake, when those parts of it which lay towards the ocean were torn asunder.

⁴As for Myrina, the account continues, she visited the larger part of Libya, and passing over into Egypt she struck a treaty of friendship with Horus, the son of Isis, who was king of Egypt at that time, and then, after making war to the end upon the Arabians and slaying many of them, she subdued Syria; but when the Cilicians came out with presents to meet her and agreed to obey her commands, she left those free who yielded to her of their free will and for this reason these are called to this day the "Free Cilicians." ⁵She also conquered in war the races in the region of the Taurus, peoples of outstanding courage, and descended through Greater Phrygia to the sea;⁷ and then she won over the land lying along the coast and fixed the bounds of her campaign at the Caïcus River.⁸ ⁶And selecting in the territory which she had won by arms sites well suited for the founding of cities, she built a considerable number of them and founded one⁹ which bore her own name, but the others she named after the women who held the most important commands, such as Cymê, Pitana, and Prienê.

⁷These, then, are the cities she settled along the sea, but others, and a larger number, she planted in the regions stretching towards the interior. She seized also some of the islands, and Lesbos in particular, on which she founded the city of Mitylenê, which was named after her sister who took part in the campaign. ⁸After that, while subduing some of the rest of the islands, she was caught in a storm, and after she had offered up prayers for her safety to the Mother of the Gods,¹⁰ she was carried to one of the uninhabited islands; this island, in obedience to a vision which she beheld in her dreams, she made sacred to this goddess, and set up altars there and offered magnificent sacrifices. She also gave it the name of Samothrace, which means, when translated into Greek, "sacred island," although some historians say that it was formerly called Samos and was then given the name of Samothrace by Thracians who at one time dwelt on it. ⁹However, after the Amazons had returned to the continent, the myth relates, the Mother of the Gods, well pleased with the island, settled in it certain other people, and also her own sons, who are known by the name of Corybantes — who their father was is handed down in their rites as a matter not to be divulged; and she established the mysteries which are now celebrated on the island and ordained by law that the sacred area should enjoy the right of sanctuary.

¹⁰In these times, they go on to say, Mopsus the Thracian, who had been exiled by Lycurgus, the king of the Thracians, invaded the land of the Amazons with an army composed of fellow-exiles, and with Mopsus on the campaign was also Sipylus the Scythian, who had likewise been exiled from that part of Scythia which borders upon

⁶ cf. book 4.18.

⁷ The Mediterranean.

⁸ This river flows past Pergamum and empties into the Aegean Sea.

⁹ The city of Myrina in Mysia.

¹⁰ Cybelê

Thrace. ¹¹There was a pitched battle, Sipylus and Mopsus gained the upper hand, and Myrina, the queen of the Amazons, and the larger part of the rest of her army were slain. In the course of the years, as the Thracians continued to be victorious in their battles, the surviving Amazons finally withdrew again into Libya. And such was the end, as the myth relates, of the campaign which the Amazons of Libya made.

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4.17 ¹Eurystheus of Tiryns then enjoined upon him as a tenth Labor the bringing back of the cattle of Geryones, which pastured in the parts of Iberia which slope towards the ocean. And Heracles, realizing that this task called for preparation on a large scale and involved great hardships, gathered a notable armament and a multitude of soldiers such as would be adequate for this expedition. ²For it had been noised abroad throughout all the inhabited world that Chrysaor,¹¹ who received this appellation because of his wealth, was king over the whole of Iberia, and that he had three sons to fight at his side, who excelled in both strength of body and the deeds of courage which they displayed in contests of war; it was known, furthermore, that each of these sons had at his disposal great forces which were recruited from warlike tribes. It was because of these reports that Eurystheus, thinking any expedition against these men would be too difficult to succeed, had assigned to Heracles the Labor just described. ³But Heracles met the perils with the same bold spirit which he had displayed in the deeds which he had performed up to this time. His forces he gathered and brought to Crete, having decided to make his departure from that place; for this island is especially well situated for expeditions against any part of the inhabited world. Before his departure he was magnificently honored by the natives and, wishing to show his gratitude to the Cretans, he cleansed the island of the wild beasts which infested it. And this is the reason why in later times not a single wild animal, such as a bear, or wolf, or serpent, or any similar beast, was to be found on the island. This deed he accomplished for the glory of the island, which, the myths relate, was both the birthplace and the early home of Zeus.

⁴Setting sail, then, from Crete, Heracles put in at Libya, and first of all he challenged to a fight Antaeus,¹² whose fame was noised abroad because of his strength of body and his skill in wrestling, and because he was wont to put to death all strangers whom he had defeated in wrestling, and grappling with him Heracles slew the giant. Following up this great deed he subdued Libya, which was full of wild animals, and large parts of the adjoining desert, and brought it all under cultivation, so that the whole land was filled with ploughed fields and such plantings in general as bear fruit, much of it being devoted to vineyards and much to olive orchards. By and large Libya had been uninhabitable due to the huge number of beasts that previously infested the whole land, but Heracles made it cultivatable and second to none in prosperity. Similarly, he made its cities prosperous because he killed men acting lawlessly or ruling arrogantly. Tales (*mythoi*) say that he despised the categories of savage beasts and lawless men, waging war against the former because, while still an infant, the serpents made an

¹¹ "He of the Golden Sword."

¹² cf. book1.21.4.

attempt on his life; against the latter because, when he came to man's estate, he was ruled but this arrogant and unjust monarch, who burdened him with these Labors.

18 ¹After Heracles had slain Antaeus he passed into Egypt and put to death Busiris,¹³ the king of the land, who made it his practice to kill the foreign-guests (*xenoi*) who visited that country. Then he made his way through the waterless part of Libya, and coming upon a land which was well watered and fruitful he founded a city of marvelous size, which was called Hecatompylon,¹⁴ giving it this name because of the multitude of its gates. And the prosperity of this city continued until comparatively recent times, when the Carthaginians made an expedition against it with notable forces under the command of able generals and made themselves its masters. ²And after Heracles had visited a large part of Libya he arrived at the ocean near Gadeira,¹⁵ where he set up pillars on each of the two continents. His fleet accompanied him along the coast and on it he crossed over into Iberia. And finding there the sons of Chrysaor encamped at some distance from one another with three great armies, he challenged each of the leaders to single combat and slew them all, and then after subduing Iberia he drove off the celebrated herds of cattle. ³He then traversed the country of the Iberians, and since he had received honors at the hands of a certain king of the natives, a man who excelled in piety and justice, he left with the king a portion of the cattle as a present. The king accepted them but dedicated them all to Heracles and made it his practice each year to sacrifice to Heracles the fairest bull of the herd. It came to pass that the kine are still maintained in Iberia and continue to be sacred to Heracles down to our own time.

⁴But since we have mentioned the pillars of Heracles, we deem it to be appropriate to set forth the facts concerning them. When Heracles arrived at the farthest points of the continents of Libya and Europe which lie upon the ocean, he decided to set up these pillars to commemorate his campaign. And since he wished to leave upon the ocean a monument which would be had in everlasting remembrance, he built out both the promontories, they say, to a great distance; ⁵consequently, whereas before that time a great space had stood between them, he now narrowed the passage, in order that by making it shallow and narrow¹⁶ he might prevent the great sea-monsters from passing out of the ocean into the inner sea, and that at the same time the fame of their builder might be held in everlasting remembrance by reason of the magnitude of the structures. Some authorities, however, say just the opposite, namely, that the two continents were originally joined and that he cut a passage between them, and that by opening the passage he brought it about that the ocean was mingled with our sea. On this question, however, it will be possible for every man to think as he may please.

⁶A thing very much like this he had already done in Greece. For instance, in the region which is called Tempê, where the country is like a plain and was largely covered with marshes, he cut a channel through the territory which bordered on it and, carrying off through this ditch all the water of the marsh, he caused the plains to appear which are now in Thessaly along the Peneius River. ⁷But in Boeotia he did just the opposite and

¹³ cf. book1.88.5

¹⁴ "Hundred Gates"

¹⁵ mod. Cadiz

¹⁶ The Straits of Gibraltar are twelve miles wide; for eight miles the average depth is 250 fathoms.

damming the stream which flowed near the Minyan city of Orchomenus he turned the country into a lake¹⁷ and caused the ruin of that whole region. But what he did in Thessaly was to confer a benefit upon the Greeks, whereas in Boeotia he was exacting punishment from those who dwelt in Minyan territory, because they had enslaved the Thebans.

19 ¹Heracles, then, delivered over the kingdom of the Iberians to the noblest men among the natives and, on his part, took his army and passing into Celtica and traversing the length and breadth of it he put an end to the lawlessness and murdering of foreign-guests (*xenoi*) to which the people had become addicted; and since a great multitude men from every tribe flocked to his army of their own accord, he founded a great city which was named Alesia after the "wandering" (*alé*) on his campaign. ²But he also mingled among the citizens of the city many natives, and since these surpassed the others in multitude, it came to pass that the inhabitants as a whole were barbarized. The Celts up to the present time hold this city in honor, looking upon it as the hearth and mother-city of all Celtica. And for the entire period from the days of Heracles this city remained free and was never sacked until our own time; but at last Gaius Caesar, who has been pronounced a god because of the magnitude of his deeds, took it by storm and made it and the other Celts subjects of the Romans.¹⁸ ³Heracles then made his way from Celtica to Italy, and as he traversed the mountain pass through the Alps he made a highway out of the route, which was rough and almost impassable, with the result that it can now be crossed by armies and baggage-trains. ⁴The barbarians who had inhabited this mountain region had been accustomed to butcher and to plunder such armies as passed through when they came to the difficult portions of the way, but he subdued them all, slew those that were the leaders in lawlessness of this kind, and made the journey safe for succeeding generations. And after crossing the Alps he passed through the level plain of what is now called Galatia¹⁹ and made his way through Liguria.

¹⁷ The reference is to Lake Copaïs.

¹⁸ In 52 BCE. Find the account of the siege and capture of Alesia in Caesar *Gallic Wars* 7.68ff.

¹⁹ Cisalpine Gaul.

1. Socius Senecio, just as historians in their geographies crowd onto the outer edges of maps the parts of the earth which elude their knowledge, with explanatory notes—"beyond lies waterless dunes and wild beasts," or "blind marsh," or "Scythian ice," or "frozen sea"—so, too, in the writing of my *Parallel Lives*, now that I have covered those periods of time accessible through reason (*logos*) and attainable through inquiry (*historia*) dealing with facts, I might well say of the earlier periods, "Beyond lie things monstrous and tragic, allotted to poets and makers of tales (*mythos*), lacking credibility and clarity."

4.17. And besides such truthful accounts, there are many other things not only seen but told as tales (*mythoi*) about the Iberian group (*ethnē*) collectively, but especially about the northerners—not only the accounts about their ballsiness (*andreia*) but also those about their raw savagery and bestial insensitivity. For instance, mothers killed their children before they could be captured during the Cantabrian War; even a little baby whose parents and brothers were in irons as war captives, got control of a sword and, at the command of his father, killed them all; one woman killed all her fellow captives; and a certain man, summoned before drunks, threw himself upon a pyre. But they share these things in common with the Celtic, Thracian and Scythian groups; and share a ballsiness (*andreia*) common to both the men and the women.

18. Their women till the soil; when they give birth to a child they put their husbands to bed instead of going to bed themselves and minister to them; when they give birth at work they often turn aside to some brook to bathe and swaddle the child. Posidonius says that in Liguria his *xenos* (foreign-host), Charmoleon of Massilia, told to him how he had hired men and women together for an excavation; and how one of the women, in the pangs of childbirth, went aside from her work to a nearby place and, after having given birth to her child, came back to her work right away in order not to lose her pay; and how he saw for himself that she was working in pain, but how he did not know the reason until late in the day. When he learned of it, he sent her away with her wages, and she carried the infant out to a little spring, bathed it, swaddled it with what she had, and brought it safely home.

19. Now such patterns of behavior as these would indicate a certain savagery; and yet there are other things that, although perhaps less than civilized (*politika*), are not bestial. For instance, among the Cantabrians husbands give dowries to their wives, daughters are left as heirs, and the brothers are married off by their sisters. It involves a sort of gynecocracy—hardly a civilized thing (*politikon*). It is also an Iberian *ethos* to set aside a painless poison, which they synthesize out of an herb very similar to parsley, so that they have it ready for undesired situations. And it is an Iberian ethic to so completely devote themselves to those with whom they ally that they are ready to die for them.