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The iconography of Herakles and the 'other' in archaic Greek vase painting

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The Iconography of Herakles and the 'Other' in Archaic Greek Vase Painting

a thesis presented

by

Pamela Jane Lawson

to

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Abstract

The iconography of Herakles' mythical biography on the surface of vases in the sixth century served as the medium through which Greek artists explored and made comprehensible the opposing forces of civilized and savage, or nature and culture. A close examination of the way in which the artists chose to illustrate Herakles' deeds, helps the viewer today to understand the true nature of Greek anxieties and hopes about the forces operating in their world. Such forces and oppositions represented visually in the archaic period are eventually subsumed by the Greek/barbarian antithesis developed in the fifth century.

Herakles represents the antithesis of the Greek vs. barbarian internalized. Herakles can behave in ways that will be considered 'barbaric' in the next century. However, negative qualities most associated with the barbarian later, are externalized in many of Herakles' deeds, confusing and confining the antithesis. The 'monster' or beast may have been a 'proto-barbarian', and particular deeds bring Herakles into contact with anthropomorphic foes who practice 'barbaric' behavior.

In fifth century literature, Greek attitudes about the barbarian have transformed and expanded. The necessity for a more clarified image of the Greek/ barbarian antithesis is motivated by philosophical developments and historical events. The idea of the barbarian is externalized and defined by authors such as Herodotus.

In Greek Tragedy, the barbarian is now often the *foil* for the civilized Greek.

Because undesirable qualities are transferred to the non-Greek, attempts are made in literature to justify Herakles behavior and to make him a citizen of the *polis*. Representations of Herakles in fifth century art illustrate a similar transformation, despite the general decline in the appearance of scenes featuring Herakles in attic vase painting of the period. This decline may be related to the transfer of most negative qualities expressed in the sixth century images of Herakles to the barbarian of the fifth century. The advent of tragedy and the juxtaposition of the Greek and the barbarian provided a new way to illustrate the varied nature of humanity while additionally celebrating the Greek, making the sixth century iconography of Herakles obsolete.

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Introduction

The mythical biography of Herakles encapsulated for the Greeks of the archaic period concerns and ideas about the oppositions at work in the world. The surface of the Greek vase provided a unique stage on which to conceptualize the meaning and significance of these myths. It was here that the Greek imagination was able to actively work out the precarious relationship between 'civilized' and 'savage' that the myths involving Herakles were so concerned with. The creations of the artists, the solutions they came up with to illustrate such a rich collection of stories with such vivid details, provide us today with an important record of the way in which stories, that were probably circulated orally and played an important role in the Greek psyche, found tangible expression. Such tangible images contain valuable expressions of the nature of Greek anxieties and hopes concerning the forces operating in their world.

It is by no means clear to what degree Greek artists were literate and familiar with recorded versions of popular myths. Inscriptions on some vases suggest that at least one member of an artists' workshop was literate. However, for the artist, as well as for every Greek person, the myths of their society were a part of their everyday experience and occupied a central position in their minds because they expressed real concerns about the world. When the artists depicted these myths on the surface of vases, they were probably influenced as much by popular versions of the myths circulated orally or in written form, as by the personal meaning and

significance of those myths for the individual artist. The creation of an artistic representation of a myth, while on the one hand being the result of the desire on the part of any artist to create an aesthetically pleasing final product, may also reflect the need of the Greek artist to explore, record and describe the relationship of a particular myth to the artists' own experience and understanding of the world. Myths involving Herakles provided particularly rich material for such an inquiry.

Most of the studies of representations of Herakles in the art of the sixth century B.C. have examined scenes representing individual deeds. Scholars have often been concerned with identifying the earliest images, then tracing the development of a particular motif, citing at times influences from and possible connections to contemporary events.[1] There are few attempts at a more comprehensive study of Herakles' iconography. Understandably, this task has rarely been undertaken, in view of the great many depictions of Herakles in sixth century Attic art alone.[2]

In the present study, I shall examine how specific deeds of Herakles are illustrated on archaic vases. I believe the choices that the artists made when representing these subjects can inform an interpretation of the meaningfulness of these myths. Such images

[1]See for example Boardman (1972), (1975b) and (1989).

[2]Scholars have also been reluctant to deal with the literary tradition concerning Herakles, suspicious of any attempt to "impose unity on a hero of such complexity and such manifestly diverse attributes." Loraux (1990), 22.

vividly illustrate for us the Greek imagination working to come to terms with the opposing and sometimes threatening forces felt to be present in the world of archaic Greece.

At the end of the archaic period, a new arena was found in which to explore these concerns, leading to a change in both the characterization of Herakles and the imagery used to represent the hero and his actions. This development affirms the role of the iconography of Herakles in the archaic period, whose function, with the dawn of the classical period, was transferred to the characterization of the barbarian in fifth century poetry and prose.

Before embarking on a consideration of the specific iconography used to represent Herakles' mythical biography, I shall briefly explore the nature of this set of myths and the purpose they may have served in archaic Greece.

1. Herakles and Contradictions

The mythical biography of Herakles is varied and diverse. Not only does the hero perform many different kinds of deeds in every imaginable location, Herakles himself is a complex figure in that he is characterized by so many contradictions. In the words of Karl Galinsky, "What distinguishes Herakles from other mythological heroes is that he belonged to all of Greece and became the one true Pan-hellenic hero...[thus] all kinds of characteristics were attributed

or transferred to him."[3] This meant that Herakles' mythical biography had to be highly adaptable, which in turn resulted in an almost composite conception of the hero.[4] The question then arises, how are we to find meaning in the seemingly irreconcilable aspects of myths involving Herakles, such as his uncontrollable rage and his beneficence? The answer lies in approaching such contradictions as meaningful in and of themselves.[5]

In her work "Herakles: The Super-male and the Feminine", Nicole Loraux takes such an approach and recognizes great potential for interpretation in the paradoxes of the myths of Herakles In her treatment of the hero, she referred to the problems inherent in trying to consider the myth of Herakles as a whole, given all its varied manifestations. She cites Aristotle who had already recognized the problem: "The *mythos* is not single by virtue of having only a single hero....The authors of the *Lives of Herakles* seem to be mistaken ...insofar as they believe that, simply because there is only one hero, there is necessarily unity in the story" (Poetics 1451a16ff.).[6] However, she proposes "...to treat the heroic

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[3]Galinsky (1986), 19.

[4]See Galinsky (1972), for a general discussion of the varied portrayal of Herakles in literature.

[5]G.S Kirk (1975), 201. tells us that "...the first impression of the mythical biography of Herakles is incoherence." He proceeds to examine aspects of Herakles' myths individually, such as his madness, wanderings far and wide, killing of monsters, slavery, bestial aspects, cultural aspects, encounters with death and the underworld, 203ff. However, he does little to incorporate all of these elements into a broad interpretation or reading of the mythology, although he does identify a general polarity between nature and culture as the nucleus of Herakles' mythology (206) an idea he wili develop further in later work.

[6]Loraux (1990), 22.

temperament as unified in its contradictions and, indeed, as constituted by those very contradictions."[7] She is concerned with exploring those particular aspects and actions of Herakles, hero of virility, which suggest a "close relationship to femininity" and thus demonstrate the Greek concern with the interaction between masculine and feminine.[8] In my view, we can extend our exploration of the contradictions and paradoxes of Herakles' mythical biography to reveal even greater information about the Greeks' relationship to their wider world that may be contained there.

In his article, "Methodological Reflexions on the Myths of Heracles," G.S Kirk reaffirms that, in his great range of roles, Herakles reveals qualities and performs actions that are full of contradictions. Kirk proceeds to concentrate on those contradictions that appear to be excessively pronounced in Herakles, such as his 'brutish' side and his 'animality'.[9] Kirk concludes that one of the functions of Herakles' mythical biography is to explore and possibly harmonize the relationship between Nature and Culture.[10] However,

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[7]Loraux (1990), 22.

[8]Loraux (1990), 22.

[9]Kirk (1977), 287-8. Kirk's discussion stresses an 'essential' relationship between Herakles and the centaurs as evidence for the hero's 'animality'. I shall consider this relationship in Chapter 4 when I consider Herakles behavior and characterization more fully.

[10]Kirk (1977), 288, 291. Kirk draws this conclusion in part through Herakles' association with centaurs. Kirk has previously discussed centaurs as the vehicle through which an intentional contrast between Nature and Culture is expressed [Kirk (1970), 152ff]. I shall discuss these conclusions in Chapter 2.3 in more detail when I consider the specific scenes and literary evidence for the myths involving Herakles and centaurs.

he is wary of Structuralist analyses along the lines of those proposed by C. Lévi-Strauss.[11] Warning against this approach in general, Kirk uses the myths involving Herakles to demonstrate the shortcomings of interpretations involving polarities and mediation. Later he criticizes the methodology of Brelich and "the Paris group" of Vernant.[12]

Although Kirk has offered only tantalizing hints as to possible interpretations of Herakles, it is not his goal to attempt more than this. It becomes clear that Kirk is less interested in Herakles than in establishing a methodology of his own, or at least outlining "some ways of looking at the material."[13] What emerges from his work is an emphasis on contradictions, paradoxes and polarities, including preoccupations with society vs. the natural world, gods vs. heroes, immortal vs. mortal.[14] Let us digress for a moment and consider briefly the significance of these phenomena.

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[11]Kirk (1977), 288.

[12]Kirk (1977), 293-5.

[13]For example Kirk (1977), 292 tell us "What one can most usefully do, in my submission, is rather old-fashioned in appearance: it is to collect and sort out all the evidence, to set aside those parts of it that are obviously secondary or tertiary, to consider the rest in the light of comparative material and chronology, to notice parallelisms, oppositions and paradoxes that seem strongly emphasized and yet have no obvious source in (for example) narrative and concretely aetiological requirements, then to search for - or even intuit - an underlying implication or motive."

[14]Kirk (1977), 296-7.

2. Opposing Forces

Archaic Greek poetry and prose are characterized by a tendency to use theories based on pairs of opposites to explain the nature of the universe.[15] Certain manifest natural pairs of opposites, i.e. night and day, male and female, right and left, light and dark, hot and cold, etc., were perceived as symbols of fundamental cosmological, spiritual or religious antitheses. In his book, Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought, G.E.R. Lloyd discusses this tendency in early Greek speculative thought, concluding that:

> ...whether or not the terms are divided into a 'positive' and a 'negative' pole, opposites provide a simple framework of reference by means of which complex phenomena of all sorts may be described or classified.[16]

When applied to the mythical biography of Herakles, this conclusion would suggest that the plethora of seemingly irreconcilable contradictions and paradoxes detected in and intrinsic to these myths about Herakles represent an attempt at understanding some significant aspect or aspects of the world.[17] With Herakles we see myths replete with the interaction of opposing

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[15]G.E.R. Lloyd (1966), provides a solid discussion of this tendency in early Greek philosophical and medical speculation.

[16]Lloyd (1966), 80.

[17]G.S Kirk (1970), 258, states, "The more complex the myth, the more fundamental and abstract the paradox or institution it tends to explain or reflect."

forces that suggests analogous speculation on some important underlying antithesis.

Charles Segal has dealt with this tendency towards antithetical thinking in an article whose title attests to its inspiration: "The Raw and the Cooked in Greek Literature: Structure, Values, Metaphor."[18] Segal uses a broad and inclusive categorization of opposites, savagery and civilization, and sees the exploration of the relationship between the two as a major preoccupation of Greek literature, particularly from Homer to fifth century tragedy. Much of this literature questions and attempts to define the interaction of civilized and savage that corresponds to expressions of a division between man and beast, order and disorder.[19] "For the Greeks human civilization depends upon preserving man's place in the hierarchy between beast and god. Civilization thus rests upon a double opposition: man *versus* beast and man *versus* god."[20]

As we have seen, although the mythical biography of Herakles includes a preoccupation with many sets of opposites, it is possible to subsume most of them under the categorization of savagery and civilization.[21] While it can certainly be said that the myths of

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[18]Segal (1974).

[19]Segal (1974), 289-290.

[20]Segal (1974), 290.

[21]We have already seen Kirk demonstrate a preoccupation with Nature vs. Culture in the myths of Herakles. Segal's discussion of this well-known antithesis is similar, yet I believe more useful for this argument. Dispensing with the category 'Nature', he prefers instead what is 'savage', by which he means that which is savage within nature, and those other negative elements or aspects of the world which are savage yet do not strictly fall under the

Herakles embody a concern with this antinomy, within them there often appears an ambivalence about such divisions. Herakles embodies, occupies and encounters a world somewhere between man and beast, god and man, civilized and savage. To understand this aspect of Herakles' mythology, we must recognize within the myths the definition and characterization of 'savagery' as something specifically un-Greek or non-Greek. At the same time, the myths suggest a concern with human civilization, which we can equate with Greek civilization (which is certainly what the Greeks themselves did by the fifth century, after the battle of Marathon). In fact, as I shall demonstrate in this study, we can detect the development and exploration of this equation during the sixth century in the iconography of Herakles. The contradictory nature of Herakles' characterization and the contrasts manifest in his actions lend themselves readily to the expression, in visual terms, of what the Greeks were beginning to classify as a true antithesis between themselves and the non-Greeks. This process is fulfilled during the fifth century by the evolution or invention of the Greek/barbarian antithesis.

This study will be limited to an analysis of the representations of Herakles in archaic vase painting, supplemented with his characterization in literature of archaic Greece from the point of view of the crystallization of an important Greek/ barbarian antithesis in

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heading of Nature (i.e. loss of speech, p. 303, madness, p. 301, cannibalism, p. 298, pp. 304-5). With this term he can allow for positive qualities in nature such as those found in the centaur Cheiron, who seems to represent what is divine in nature. See Segal p. 299 and below, Chapter 2.3.

the fifth century. This antithesis is already present in an embryonic form in the artistic images of the sixth century. Vase painting scenes featuring Herakles' mythical biography embody this 'proto' antithesis both internalized through hints at Herakles' character and externalized in the foes and obstacles he encounters. The particular way in which artists chose to depict Herakles' actions illustrates already in the archaic period a real concern with exploring, expressing and determining the opposition of both civilized vs. savage, and Greek vs. non-Greek.

3. The Greek / Barbarian Antithesis

Before examining the emerging Greek concept of the non-Greek in archaic visual imagery, it is necessary to define how we can detect this phenomenon. Much work has been done discussing the Greeks' perception and characterization of the barbarian during the fifth century. Before the fifth century, the word 'barbaros' was used infrequently.[22] It originally referred to one who did not speak Greek and appears to have had little or no negative connotation.[23] The work of Edith Hall, Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition

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[22]Hall (1989), 6.

[23]See Hall (1989), Chapter 1, for a discussion of pre-fifth century literature and the portrayal of the barbarian. She argues that there are as yet "no signs of the collective genus of anti-Greeks," 54. Alan Lloyd (1988), on the other hand, sees in early use of the term *barbaros* "a perception of cultural differences without any detectable sign of distaste or disapproval." 217. He states "In origin and for much of its history [*barbaros*] functioned as the term for the second element in the simple antithesis Greek: non-Greek." 216. As I will argue, it is this antithesis that becomes manifest in the sixth century iconography of Herakles.

Through Tragedy, provides a discussion of how the Persians Wars served as the catalyst for a polarization of Greek and barbarian. Due to historical circumstances in the early fifth century, the Greek playwrights created and adapted a 'vocabulary of barbarism', not just to describe a foreigner but which also "...had the potential to enrich the language they used in evoking any character's excess, transgression, subversiveness, or departure form the Hellenic virtues."[24] The concept of the barbarian encapsulated what was considered non-Greek or anti-Greek, whether the particular deeds or characteristics were associated with one who did not speak the Greek language or one who did.

However, as Hall herself mentions, the invention of the barbarian did not emerge from a cultural vacuum. She detects phenomena in archaic poetry and art that foreshadow the fifth century developments.

> The non-Greeks of archaic literature did not perform the central function of the barbarians in the fifth century and beyond, that of anti-Greeks against whom Hellenic culture and character were defined. But this does not mean that the myths of the early period were not concerned with most of the oppositions later assimilated to the cardinal antagonism of Greek versus barbarian - civilization against primitivism, order against chaos, observance of law and taboo against transgression. These oppositions, on the contrary, lie at the heart of the archaic thought world...[25]

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[24]Hall (1989), 203.

[25]Hall (1989), 51.

Archaic art and poetry are certainly concerned with defining a Greek way of life, which is often done by contrasting Hellenic virtues and practices with some manifestation of the opposite phenomena. By the fifth century, "Barbarians are understood in Greek terms to the degree that their customs are opposite."[26] In the sixth century, what is opposite or different has not yet been assimilated into a single construct of the barbarian, but what it is to be Greek begins to be demonstrated through contact with what is 'different'. As the antithesis Greek/ non-Greek takes on greater significance, Herakles, and the artistic representations of him in particular, becomes a vehicle through which this essential comparison is made. He is a translator of what is different.

Through manipulation of the iconography of Herakles, the Greek artist attempts to define the world in understandable and familiar terms by illustrating a whole spectrum of characteristics and behaviors that the Greeks encounter in their own world, transferring some of the negative ones to non-Greek adversaries and places. However, at times the visual imagery suggests that Herakles himself embodies less desirable qualities, which suggests an ongoing process of coming to terms with, and categorizing these elements as well as imposing order by maintaining the equilibrium between opposites.[27]

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[26]Vidal-Naquet (1986), 3.

[27]In fact, the process is never-ending. According to Alan Lloyd (1988), 243-4, this equilibrium was not regarded as a static condition and its establishment and maintenance necessitated continuous effort. He translates Heracleitus (*Vorsokr.* 22 B 80)"One should know that war is a general principle, and that order consists in strife, and that all things come into existence by virtue of strife and necessity." Lloyd also states that "One of the most insistent of these

In the imagery of archaic vase painting, Herakles illustrates both Greek and un-Greek behavior, while confronting various manifestations of both in his adversaries in an attempt, on the part of the artists, to establish and maintain a sense of common Greek identity.

At this point the distinction between Greek and non-Greek is still ambiguous, but what takes shape in this century, and specifically in its images, is a formula not only for determining and explicating Greekness but for idealizing that Greekness. It takes shape through comparison with and definition of non-Greekness, that which is deemed bad and unacceptable in human behavior, by Greek standards. Such artistic exploration is indicative of a system of polarizing and analogical reasoning concerning difference which has been identified in this period.[28]

Although we do not yet have the fully developed construct of the Greek/ barbarian antithesis, antitheses of a slightly broader nature, yet of similar content, are important during the sixth century. This work concentrates on the artistic representations of uncivilized

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polarities [which were deeply rooted in the Greek world view], was that between Greeks and *barbaroi* which presented itself to Greek consciousness as a matter of continual confrontation." As we shall see below, images of Herakles' never-ending struggles and conflicts with his various adversaries suggest this concept of continual confrontation.

[28]G.E.R Lloyd (1966), 41, discusses this phenomenon in his work on ancient modes of thinking "..whether or not the pairs of terms are contraries, and whether or not apparent interconnections exist between all the various pairs, a single complex system is built up in which the dominant motif is the recurrent antithesis between what is superior, pure and holy, and what is inferior, impure and unholy."

and savage phenomena in Herakles and his anthropomorphic and non-human adversaries that pervade the iconography of Herakles' mythical biography. What emerges is an idea of the way in which the Greeks conceived of the opposing forces in their world and the threat inherent in their confrontation. From this investigation we can detect the characteristics of the non-Greek or 'other' in the sixth century, characteristics which are analogous to those of the barbarian of the fifth century.

4. Note on Literary Sources

In the discussion of the iconography that follows I shall often refer to relevant literary sources to support an analysis of the visual representations of specific deeds. For this study, I have confined myself to literature that dates from the archaic period, with some exceptions such as the victory odes of Pindar.[29] However, in many cases, the details we have about deeds of Herakles illustrated on vases come from literary sources later than the archaic period. In such cases, I do not consider the specific details of the story as related in later sources, considering instead the myth in its most general terms, and as it is reflected on the vases.

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[29]Pindar's career spans roughly fifty years from about 500 B.C. to as late as 446 B.C. Although his work does not technically remain within the historical dates by which we identify the archaic period, Pindar still represents a distinctly archaic world view.

5. Herakles and Athens

Finally, I would like to address briefly here a peripheral question: Herakles' extreme popularity on Athenian vases as compared to those from other workshops in Greece during the sixth century. Although it is not necessary for the present argument to explain this phenomenon, this argument does concern the meanings that this rich collection of images may signify. Indeed, this popularity is a primary reason why the iconography of Herakles should be studied. The problem is cyclical; possibly the popularity of Herakles as a subject for vase painters was based on other reasons (which I explore below), and this in turn led to an expansion in the uses of his imagery to convey meaning. On the other hand, the messages conveyed by the mythology may have been so compelling as to warrant a proliferation of scenes on vases (the chicken or the egg?).

There are a number of ways to explore the reasons for Herakles' popularity in Athens. As I have mentioned above, the meaning suggested by his imagery at Athens may have been of particular interest, but this argument must wait for a fuller exploration of that meaning later. However, there is evidence to suggest that Herakles enjoyed popularity in Athens for many reasons. In addition to his more controversial hypotheses, John Boardman has claimed that Herakles "...became the most popular mythological figure in Athenian black figure vases probably because his patroness was Athena who was the city goddess and is regularly

shown with him."[30] Alan Shapiro has suggested that much of Herakles' popularity in archaic Attic art may be due to the influence of now lost epic poems as well as the simple joy of telling stories of high adventure.[31] Still another consideration is the literary tradition that states that Athenians were the first to worship Herakles as a god.[32] Although we do not know when this first took place, it further emphasizes the importance of Herakles in Athens and makes the great number of representations of the hero here seem less significant in a political sense and more related to religious factors. In fact, during the fifth and fourth centuries, cults of Herakles were plentiful in Athens and Attica,[33] and, although there is little evidence to indicate any cults were active in the sixth century, it remains possible. While no scenes associating Herakles with cult worship appear on archaic vases, there is a group of scenes that illustrate his special relationship with Athena that may support the existence of cult worship in the sixth century.[34] Remains of sculptural pediments on the Acropolis from the late sixth century depicting Herakles suggest at least religious appropriateness if not a more concrete presence of the hero there. This evidence would call into question associations postulated by Boardman and others between Herakles

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[30]Boardman (1974), 221.

[31]Shapiro (1989), 158.

[32]Isocrates 5.33; Diodoros 4.39.1; Pausanias 1.15.3, 1.32.4.

[33]See Woodford (1971) and Shapiro (1989) for discussion of and evidence for cults of Herakles in Attica.

[34]Shapiro (1959), 159.

and the Peisistratids. Part of the argument depends on the decline in the numbers and variety of images of Herakles on vases during the fifth century as proof of a more general decrease in the popularity of the hero after the demise of the Peisistratid tyranny. However, later cults, as well as the popularity of Herakles in tragedy and comedy of the fifth century, indicate only that, while perceptions of the hero may have changed, his popularity appears to have persisted intact. In any case, it would seem that the importance of Herakles during the sixth century could not have been as directly linked to associations between Herakles and the Peisistratids as has been suggested.[35]

There appear to be many possible reasons why Herakles was so popular in Athens during the sixth century. Without further evidence it is hazardous to extrapolate and hypothesize. I believe, however, that we can accept the numerous images of Herakles as interesting and provocative without having to find political or other external motivations to explain them. There were fashions and fads in the ancient world just as there are in our own society; many of them defy explanation. After considering, however briefly, the limited evidence, it does not seem so remarkable after all that Herakles became a highly popular artistic character in sixth century Athens.

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[35]Boardman (1972), (1975b), and (1989).

Chapter 1
Herakles as Civilizer

It has been often commented upon that six of Herakles' canonical twelve labors required the hero to travel outside of Greece, and many other of his exploits also required travel to non-Greek locations. These exploits may have served aetiological or foundation myth purposes, but they also place Herakles at the remote edges of the world, bringing with him Greek culture. Based upon such travels and deeds, commentators and interpreters, starting with the ancient authors down to scholars of today, have recognized Herakles as a civilizing force and culture hero. In discussing this aspect of the hero, scholars have concentrated on the literary evidence for Herakles' actions. Little consideration has been given to the way in which archaic depictions of Herakles' deeds reinforce and supplement popular interpretations. Although there are few images in which Herakles is identified explicitly as a culture hero, illustrations of many of the episodes of Herakles' mythical biography in archaic vase painting provide a unique commentary on the way in which Greek artists and viewers conceptualized this role of the hero.

1. Herakles as Colonizer

One aspect of Herakles' role as civilizer is to colonize. Edith Hall has stated that in epic poetry, "...colonization myths expressing conflict with the ethnically other, often conceptualize the enemy as

subhuman, bestial or monstrous."[1] Greek victories over these adversaries legitimize colonization. Images in archaic vase painting of Herakles' encounters with such creatures in remote lands and his triumphs over them serve as a model for the actions of colonizers.

Herakles served to represent, promote and facilitate the establishment of Greek culture in these remote lands. He was the "ideal protector of Greek settlers" and "often preceded Greek settlers and cleared the land."[2] G.S. Kirk has in part explained the "far flung" nature of the Herakles' myths in connection with colonization and a need to establish cultural and ritual links with Greece proper.[3] Through his actions, Herakles illustrates the act of colonization, travelling to distant lands, removing threatening forces and making these regions safe for the establishment of Greek culture.

One image that may speak to this function of the hero is on a white ground lekythos by the Sappho Painter that I shall return to often (fig. 1). The vase is discussed in some detail by Gloria Pinney and Brunilde Ridgway.[4] They refer to a passage from the *Theogony* to explain the location of the scene:

> ...here stand the terrible houses
> of dark Night,
> and the buildings are sheathed in the dark
> of the clouds. Before them

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[1]Hall (1989), 50.

[2]Galinsky (1972), 22 n. 20.

[3]Kirk (1975), 204.

[4]Pinney and Ridgway (1981).

> Atlas, son to Iapetos, stands
> staunchly upholding
> the wide heaven upon his head
> and with arms unwearying
> sustains it, there where Night and Day
> come close to each other
> and speak a word of greeting
> and cross on the great threshold
> of bronze, for the one is coming back in
> and the other is going
> outdoors, and the house never at once
> contains both of them...[5]

What we see depicted on this vase is the place where Night and Day can be near each other: the Underworld. This interpretation is supported in the *Odyssey*: "They went along and passed the Ocean stream, and the White Rock,/ and passed the gates of Helios the Sun, and the country/ of dreams, and presently arrived in the meadow of asphodel./ This is the dwelling place of souls, images of dead men."[6] Pinney and Ridgway read the scene on the vase as follows: "...since one goes when the other comes, and there is but one door, their chariots can move only in opposite directions. precisely as they do on the vase. On the narrow body of the lekythos they may well be seen facing each other rather than back to back."[7]

Between Night and Day, Herakles appears, sacrificing before undertaking to capture Cerberus, who guards the entrance to the house of Hades in a cave below the hero. The authors suggest that

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[5]Hesiod *Theogony* 744-751. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 168.

[6]Homer *Odyssey*, 24.11-14. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 345.

[7]Pinney and Ridgway (1981), 143.

Herakles is imploring the gods on Olympus for divine help. Since Greek sacrifice is a form of mediation between gods and men, Herakles reveals his mortality and limits. He must ask the gods for help. Yet, regardless of why Herakles sacrifices it is also the performance of the act itself at the extremes of the world that illustrates explicitly Herakles' role as civilizer/colonizer, bringing distinctively Greek ritual practices to the boundaries of the known world. Although this is an uninhabitable place, essentially a non-human place, Herakles introduces a very human and especially Greek ritual act.

The depiction of Herakles on this vase, at the "Ends of the Earth",[8] is related to other scenes showing the hero travelling to or already present at the boundaries of the Greek world. They include images of Herakles in remote places, as with Geryon, the Garden of the Hesperides, images of Herakles freeing Prometheus or freeing Theseus in Hades, and Herakles with Atlas.

If we turn to the images themselves, we see that Herakles is shown confronting an unnatural and monstrous being, Geryon, most often shown triple-bodied, who lives at the boundaries of the known world in the far west (figs. 2-7). The vases uniformly show armed combat between the two antagonists,[9] suggesting Herakles' role of

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[8]Pinney and Ridgway (1981), 141.

[9]It is quite common for archaic vase painters to show two antagonists in combat. Such a solution offers a simple yet dynamic and dramatic composition while maintaining a balanced and sometimes almost symmetrical scene. The neck amphora signed by Exekias in the British Museum on which Achilles is represented in single combat with Penthesilea (London, British Museum B 210, ABV 144, 7) illustrates well the kind of dramatic tension that can be achieved in such a composition. Although the choice to portray Herakles and Geryon in combat may have arisen from such compositional considerations, it is striking

making the land safe by removing forces threatening to Greek civilization.[10] The emphasis on combat may also reflect the role of conquest and subjugation in episodes of colonization.

Once Geryon is dead, Herakles drives the cattle through many lands, particularly marginal territories where the Greeks establish colonies and introduce Greek civilization. In fact, some of the images show Herakles with the cattle (figs. 3, 8 and 9), stressing such a role for the hero. On an oinochoe attributed to the Leagros Group, Herakles appears alone with the cattle, his present possession alluding to his previous victory (fig. 9). Herakles driving the cattle in such an image illustrates the spread of Greek culture in general terms, and specifically, cattle rearing, once Geryon, an obstacle to Greek colonization and civilization, is removed by the hero.

Another deed illustrated in vase painting that takes Herakles to the extremes of the world is his quest for the apples of the Hesperides. We know from Hesiod that the garden of the Hesperides is at "...the gloomy great hidden limits of the Earth,"[11] in the farthest west. The vase paintings demonstrate two versions of the myth: Herakles, himself in the garden, slays the dragon that guards the apples, (figs. 10-12), or he sends Atlas to retrieve the apples while

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that the goal of the deed is actually the retrieval of the cattle, which is of secondary importance in the combat scenes.

Other schemes where Herakles is shown in combat, such as against the Amazons or Kyknos, may also be to some extent dependent on artistic and compositional concerns, but as I shall discuss, an interest in the nature of the confrontation, its meaning and significance in Greek terms, is also expressed in the way in which such deeds are represented visually.

[10]In Chapter 3, I shall explore more thoroughly why Geryon is threatening .

[11]Hesiod *Theogony*, 334-5. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 143.

Herakles takes his place supporting the burden of the sky (figs. 13-15). Although nothing in the images themselves indicates a location at the edge of the world, an amphora by the Acheloos Painter in the Vatican Museum, which depicts Herakles running with the apples in hand, is unusual for its elements of landscape, suggesting that the setting of this deed is important and unique (fig. 12).

Either in his journey to the garden of the Hesperides or to the land of Geryon, Herakles travels through other non-Greek lands and encounters more non-Greek adversaries. In order to find the well hidden garden, Herakles had to wrestle with the sea god Nereus to learn of its location. He passed through Libya where he fought the giant Antaios. In Egypt Herakles encountered king Busiris, who attempted to sacrifice the hero and was killed by him before completing this awful act. All of these encounters are represented by archaic vase painters. (I shall discuss the specific iconography of these exploits in another context.)

The importance of the appearance of these events in archaic iconography is that they illustrate the tendency of archaic artists to portray Herakles traveling to non-Greek places where his encounters result in serious consequences. He confronts inhuman beasts as well as human beings who perform 'barbaric' non-Greek rituals. We can contrast scenes on archaic vases of Busiris' thwarted attempt to sacrifice Herakles and the resulting chaos because of Herakles' revolt and triumph (figs. 30-35), with the pious act of Herakles sacrificing in standard Greek fashion at the ends of the Earth (fig. 1). In both of these artistic examples, Herakles is represented as the embodiment of Greek civilization, brought to non-Greek places.

Finally, there is a small group of vases showing Herakles travelling in the bowl of the Sun (figs 16-17). These scenes are generally taken to be related to the myth of Herakles' journey to the land of Geryon.[12] Again, Hesiod refers to this deed:

> ...Geryon was killed by the great strength
> of Herakles
> at sea-circled Erytheia
> beside his own shambling cattle
> on that day when Herakles drove
> those broad-faced cattle
> toward holy Tiryns, when he crossed
> the stream of the Ocean
> and had killed Orthos and the oxherd Eurytion
> out in that gloomy meadow
> beyond the fabulous Ocean.[13]

In these images we see that the emphasis is on the far-away or remote world, whether it is in fact depicted or implied by Herakles' unusual means of transportation. In fact, scenes of Herakles in the bowl of the Sun sailing across the ocean are quite striking for their lack of action, drama or narrative. On a red figure cup in the manner of Douris, Herakles looks almost comical with his upper body protruding above the large caldron (fig. 17). The artist seems to have taken pleasure in depicting sea creatures afloat beside the bowl. Such images suggest extraordinary travel by unique means. They may also emphasize "deep swirling Okeanos the ocean

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[12]Galinsky (1986), 20.

[13]Hesiod *Theogony*, 289-94. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 140.

stream,"[14] both boundary of the world, and grandfather of Geryon. These scenes may have been depicted solely because of their emphasis on travel to extreme and even unknown places,[15] reinforcing the interpretation of Herakles as a traveller to and conqueror of the unknown, much as the first colonists must have been.

2. The Expeditions of Herakles

Another way in which archaic vase painting illustrates Herakles in his role of civilizer/ colonizer is through depictions of his expeditions. Although strictly speaking, the images do not suggest that Herakles travels to these distant lands to 'colonize' them, representations of his confrontations may allude to Greeks abroad

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[14]Hesiod *Theogony*, 133-4. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 131.

[15]Another of Herakles' labors also emphasizes travel to remote places, the Kerynitian hind. Although the artistic scenes depicting Herakles' pursuit and capture of the Kerynitian hind do not suggest the idea of wide-ranging travel, one of our earliest literary sources for this deed, Pindar, does:

> ...his heart stirred to convey him
> back to the Danube where Leto's daughter,
> driver of horses, once had received him
> when he came from Arkadis's cliffs
> and from its winding recesses
> under compulsion from Zeus
> and Eurystheus' dispatches, to catch
> and bring away the golden-horned doe
> that once Taygeta had dedicated
> Sacred to Artemis Othosia.
>
> And in pursuit of her he saw that land
> behind the gusts of icy Boreas,
> and stood in amazement at its trees.
>
> *Olympian* 3, 25-32. Translated by Nisetich, (1980), 95.

encountering barbarians, and his triumphs in such scenes represent the triumph of Greek civilization.

Herakles' expedition to Troy is rarely depicted by ancient artists. We know from later literary sources that in the course of some other expedition (against the Amazons or the Argonautica), Herakles visited Troy. King Laomedon promised Herakles his divine horses if Herakles would kill the sea monster or ketos sent by Poseidon. Herakles defeats the ketos and frees Hesione, the king's daughter, who was bound to a rock as prey. Laomedon denies Herakles the reward and after completing whatever the original mission was, Herakles returns and sacks Troy, killing Laomedon and giving Hesione to Telamon.

The only scenes related to this expedition which appear with any frequency are of Herakles and the ketos, which are generally treated as depicting a separate episode. On a black figure cup in Taranto, Herakles grasps the tongue of the ketos to save Hesione, who can be seen just to the left with hand raised to head in distress (fig. 18). Here we see Herakles performing a deed which will precipitate the destruction of Troy. The confrontation with this inhuman and savage monster in the imagery alludes to the destruction of the city, and the king who has transgressed the bounds of Greek hospitality and friendship. Troy and her king, who acts in a truly uncivilized and therefore un-Greek way, are equated with the monstrous ketos of the cup in Taranto. Hence the ketos is a metaphor for Troy. Herakles destroys them both.

The literary sources support this interpretation of the iconography by emphasizing not only the destruction of Troy but the

unacceptable behavior that precipitated it, behavior as 'monstrous' as the ketos that stands in for Troy in the imagery.

> [Herakles] came here [Troy] on a time for the sake of Laomedon's horses,
> with six vessels only and the few men needed to man them,
> and widowed the streets of Ilion and sacked the city; "
>
> ....."In truth, Tlepolemos, he did destroy Ilion the sacred through the senselessness of one man, the haughty Laomedon,
> who gave Herakles an evil word in return for good treatment
> and would not give up the horses for whose sake he had come from far off.[16]

Centuries later we see a similar emphasis on the destruction of Troy and the transgression of her king in Pindar's odes.

> ...Herakles
> with whom mighty Telamon
> once subdued Troy[17]
>
> ..Telamon...
> whom Alkmena's son
> brought with the Tirynthians
> to bronze-loving war, an eager ally
> aboard ships for Troy,
> that toil of heroes, to avenge the treacheries of Laomedon.
> And he took the citadel...[18]

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[16]Homer *Iliad* 5.640-42 and 648-51. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 145.

[17]Pindar *Nemean* 4.25-6. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 246-7.

[18]Pindar *Isthmian* 6.27-31. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 316.

Herakles' battle with the Amazons is popular in archaic vase painting. Such scenes refer to a labor performed in the service of Eurystheus whereby Herakles was to bring back for the king the belt of the queen of the Amazons. Gathering a small force, Herakles embarked on an expedition to the city of the Amazons. Through the intervention of Hera, what might have been a simple task became a full-scale battle. On the vases, battle scenes showing a series of single combats with Herakles in the center and later, the single duel of Herakles and the Amazon queen, are extremely popular in both black and red figure vase painting (figs. 19-27). It is interesting that the belt does not appear until much later in the chronology of the vases. The emphasis seems always to be on combat and Herakles' victory.

In the artistic representations, the Amazons are shown wearing Greek armour, using Greek weapons. The contrast of the familiar Greek equipment with the white female skin is often striking (see figs. 20-25). On a hydria attributed to the Leagros Group in Munich, Herakles, just left of the center of the scene, has just dispatched one Amazon who is falling to the ground, while he engages another who approaches from the right (fig. 24). To the hero's left, an Amazon carries a wounded or dead comrade from the battlefield. All Amazons in this scene have the white added paint used to color female skin in Attic black figure vase painting. They wear Greek cuirasses and helmets, and one even wears greaves. The Amazons are not portrayed as foreigners (as they will be later with oriental

dress), but as paradoxical, vehicles through which 'male' and 'female' are conflated. Clearly the stress is laid on the subversion of a typical armored male combatant. In later literary accounts, much will be made of their rejection of marriage, their commitment to battle and killing and their overall denial of traditional Greek femaleness. However, in the images of the archaic period, the Amazon is 'other' because as a woman she subsumes the panoply of the male Greek warrior.

Much has been written about the significance of the Amazons for the Greeks. As adversaries they are of considerable importance to the Greeks throughout the archaic period, as well as into the classical period where the Amazonomachy takes on a new significance with reference to the Greeks' defeat of the Persian Empire.

References to battles with Amazons prior to the Trojan War in the *Iliad* affirm the longevity and significance of the tradition.

> He killed the Chimaira, obeying the portents of the immortals.
> Next after this he fought against the glorious Solymoi,
> and this he thought was the strongest battle with men that he entered;
> but third he slaughtered the Amazons, who fight men in battle.[19]

Here the Amazons are grouped with a monstrous beast and a fierce tribe of men. They are clearly meant to be seen as formidable

[19]Homer *Iliad* 6.183-86. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 158.

foes. In another passage Priam looks with foreboding upon the Achaian forces and compares them to his past war experiences.

> Once before this time I visited Phrygia of the vineyards.
> There I looked on the Phrygian men with their swarming horses,
> so many of them, the people of Otreus and godlike Mygdon,
> whose camp was spread at that time along the banks of Sangarios:
> and I myself, a helper in war, was marshalled among them
> on that day when the Amazon women came, men's equals.
> Yet even they were not so many as these glancing-eyed Achaians.[20]

The Amazons are worthy opponents who become an index of heroic achievement. There is a special status acquired from defeating the Amazons.[21] In the heroic episodes of the archaic period they serve primarily as a foil for the hero. Although there is little remaining evidence that stresses their 'otherness' in this period, this must have been an important aspect of the myth from early on. In both passages from the *Iliad*, the fact that the Amazons are a match for men is emphasized. This certainly unusual fact suggests a rejection and subversion of the Greek norms of female behavior. Thus, the Amazons are both a threat to the individual Greek himself and to Greek civilization as a whole. They perform this function in the imagery as well, where, through contrast with the Amazons,

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[20]Homer *Iliad* 3.184-90. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 105.

[21]Hardwick (1990), 16.

Herakles' prestige as a Greek culture hero is highlighted. Although not detectable in the vase painting scenes themselves, it is worth noting that like many of Herakles' other subversive adversaries, the Amazons are encountered in a remote land.[22]

The defeat of the Amazons in artistic representations alludes not only to the defeat of the non-Greek but also the anti-Greek. The Amazons exist on the edges of the Greek world both geographically and culturally. Greek civilization triumphs through the image of Herakles conquering the Amazons and, as with colonization, the extent and influence of the Greek world is enlarged.

3. The Boundaries of the Greek World

Scenes of Herakles traveling to or present at the remote edges of the world, define its boundaries. Particularly concerned with this aspect of Herakles, Pindar promoted the hero as determining such boundaries, which the poet acknowledges as the civilized Greek world.[23]

> But if
> this son of Aristophanes-handsome in looks
> and deeds to match-has reached the peak of manliness,
> to go on from there is no light matter, crossing
> the pathless sea beyond the Pillars of Herakles,

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[22]Here I am making a distinction between those adversaries that merely pose some physical threat, and those that threaten Greek civilization by overturning or transgressing some cultural norm. Amazons fall into this second category along with foes like Busiris, King Laomedon or Diomedes, all of whom are found outside of Hellas, as it was understood in the archaic period.

[23]*Olympian* 3; *Nemean* 3; *Isthmian* 4.

which that hero god set up in glory
to mark the limits of our voyaging-
Herakles, who overcame
monsters of the deep and, on his own,
explored the shallow straits, his journey's end
and turning point: he had shown
the world's boundary.[24]

In the iconography, this idea is reinforced by an extremely interesting Laconian cup in the Vatican Museum (fig. 28) which shows Atlas on the left supporting the sky and Prometheus on the right bound to an undersized column with the eagle at his chest and blood dripping to the ground.[25] The juxtaposition of the two sufferers is not surprising, given that they are brothers and are mentioned together in Hesiod:

But Atlas, under strong constraint,
at earth's uttermost
places, near the sweet-singing Hesperides,
standing upright
props the wide sky upon his head
and his hands never wearied,
for this was the doom
which Zeus of the counsels dealt out to him.
And in ineluctable, painful bonds
he fastened Prometheus
of the subtle mind, for he drove a stanchion
through his middle. Also
he let loose on him the wing-spread eagle,
and it was feeding
on his imperishable liver, which by night

[24]Pindar *Nemean* 3. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 240-241.

[25]Mary Jane Rein pointed out to me that it may be of some significance that the usual rock which Prometheus is bound to is replaced here with a column, once again suggesting the effects of Greek culture.

would grow back
to size from what the spread-winged bird
had eaten in the daytime.
But Herakles, the powerful son
of lightfooted Alkmene,
killed the eagle
and drove that pestilential affliction
from Iapetos' son, and set him free
from all his unhappiness,
not without the will of high-minded Zeus
of Olympos
in order that the reputation
of Thebes-born Herakles
might be greater even than it had been
on the earth that feeds many.
With such thoughts in mind he honored his son
and made him glorious,
and angry as he had been before,
he gave up his anger;
for Prometheus once had matched wits
against the great son of Kronos.[26]

We have depictions of Herakles with each of these brothers individually (see figs. 13-15 and figs. 36-38). Since they appear together in figure 28, they may be interpreted plausibly as representing the extreme places to which Herakles has travelled. Although the pillar depicted below the ground line, in the tondo of the cup, is most likely meant as a pillar representing the earth, as we know it from Anaximander[27], it is provocative, if highly speculative,

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[26]Hesiod *Theogony,* 517-34. Translated by Lattimore 154-5.

[27]Hippolytus *Ref.* I, 6, 3, tells us that Anaximander described the earth as follows: "Its shape is curved, round, similar to the drum of a column; of its flat surfaces we walk on one, and the other is on the opposite side." Translated by G.S. Kirk and J. E. Raven in The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 134.

to take the pillar to be one of the Pillars of Herakles. Read in this way, all three major pictorial elements in the cup are linked through the journeys and deeds of Herakles. In fact, the snake to the left of Atlas suggests the serpent that guards the apples of the Hesperides: "Keto, joined in love with Phorkys, mothered the youngest/ of the deadly snakes, that one who at the gloomy great hidden / limits of the Earth guards the all-golden apples."[28] (see also fig. 10 which shows the serpent wrapped around the trunk of the apple tree in the garden of the Hesperides). Thus we see represented on this cup the borders of the Greek civilized world as visited and thus defined by Herakles.

For Pindar, however, the journey to the far west, represented by images such as Herakles in the Garden of the Hesperides (figs. 10-12) and Herakles with Atlas (figs. 13-15), and missing from archaic imagery, Herakles erecting the Pillars, is more than a demarcation of geographical boundaries. The journey becomes a symbol of the limits of the civilized human sphere. To go beyond this point, either literally, or figuratively by transgressing what the Greeks view as civilized behavior, is dangerous.

> ...Theron has journeyed
> to the world's end and grasped
> the Pillars of Herakles
> in his success. What lies beyond
> neither the wise nor the unwise can explore.
> Let the fool attempt it. I will not.[29]

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[28]Hesiod *Theogony,* 333-5. Translated by Lattimore 143.

[29]Pindar *Olympian,* 342-45. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 96. See also *Nemean* 3 above.

Images of Herakles in remote lands define the limits of Greek culture. The space enclosed by these boundaries is where Greek civilization exists and thrives, and Greek cultures' existence is in turn symbolized and promoted by the tangible artistic image of Herakles.

4. Ensurer of Civilization

In the vase paintings of the archaic period, Herakles makes the uncivilized world he encounters safe for civilization by dispatching all kinds of savage phenomena. He is illustrated slaughtering or taming numerous and varied savage beasts and monsters. Vase painters illustrate such canonical deeds as Herakles encountering the Nemean Lion (figs. 77-88) , the Lernaean Hydra (figs. 63-68), the Erymanthian boar (figs. 69-76), the Kerynitian hind (figs. 58-62), the Stymphalian birds (figs. 39-41), the Cretan bull (figs. 52-57), the man-eating horses of Diomedes (figs. 106-108), and Cerberus (figs. 42-52). In some cases he is not required to slay the monster but only capture and deliver it, an aspect of the mythology and iconography, where the theme is clearly supported, that will be explored in Chapter 2. Outside of the canonical deeds, artists portray Herakles' encounters with monsters and quasi-human beasts such as the ketos that he must conquer for Hesione (see above, Chapter 1.2, fig. 18), Nessos and the other centaurs (figs. 89-105). In addition to these well-known scenes, there is a group of vases that illustrate

Herakles with an unidentified monster, usually on a leash and therefore subdued and captured by the hero (fig. 29).[30]

Such scenes attest to the appropriateness of Herakles' mythical biography for illustration. They provide great opportunities for the imagination of the vase painters. The threatening forces as manifested in the artistic fabrications that Herakles is portrayed as killing and subduing on archaic vases, although clearly representative of the non-Greek in their savagery and monstrosity, are more ominous because they lack a fundamental quality of Greek civilization: justice (*dike*).

> He summoned his townsman, great prophet to Zeus of high, unerring Teiresias, who told him and the entire company what lay in wait for Herakles- how many savage beasts he would slay on land and sea, beasts with no sense of justice.[31]

The great popularity of scenes of Herakles divesting the world of these threatening forces, creatures who do not partake of the essentially Greek quality of justice, suggests the need to affirm pictorially Herakles' preparation of the world for civilization and an anxiety about the real threat of these savage forces in the archaic period.

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[30]See the discussion of some of these scenes in Vermeule (1977).

[31]Pindar *Nemean* 1. 55ff. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 236. See also chapter 2.4 and the discussion of Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 276-280, in which the poet speaks of how the lack of *dike* and *nomos* among the animals sets them apart from mankind.

In addition to actual beasts, Herakles is represented on vases confronting quasi-divine, quasi-beast and quasi-human adversaries: Antaios (figs. 129-135), Alkyoneus (figs. 122-128), the Kerkopes (figs. 136-139), Geras (figs. 147-150), and Giants (figs. 115-121). There is also a class of human adversaries, depicted in the iconography, who exhibit savage, non-human or non-Greek behavior: Kyknos (figs. 109-114), Busiris (figs. 30-35), Eurytos (figs.140-144), and even Diomedes, who transgresses proper 'civilized' behavior by owning man-eating horses.[32] The artists seem to delight in depicting the hero confronting enemies who disregard the generally accepted ethical and moral guidelines for Greek behavior.

Busiris, the king of Egypt, whom Herakles encounters on his way to the garden of the Hesperides, is a good example of a creature who makes a mockery of human and divine law. Egypt had been plagued by drought; upon the advice of a seer, Busiris sacrificed a stranger to Zeus in an attempt to alleviate the situation. The remedy was so effective that Busiris proceeded to sacrifice every traveler who came to Egypt.

The vases illustrating this myth emphasize the thwarted sacrifice by including the appropriate implements and altar (figs. 30-35). On a red figure hydria by the Troilos Painter, Herakles grasps the neck of an attendant, who seems still to be holding a table with his left hand, while he holds the sword he has just used to slay the

[32]All of these deeds and their related iconography will be considered in other sections of this work. They are mentioned here to illustrate the preponderance of Herakles' encounters with adversaries who are all linked by being non-Greek whether through origins or behavior.

figure at his feet, possibly Busiris, in his right hand (fig. 34). One attendant flees to the left with a hydria; and another runs to the right with what look like spits.

Herakles is always shown triumphant. Here, depicted in his role as civilizer, Herakles rids the world of the practice of human sacrifice, an act that the Greeks regarded as 'barbaric', which we shall see more fully below.

Herakles' role as civilizer is further attested in the vase paintings of the archaic period by his connection to Prometheus, father of the arts. While the Laconian cup discussed above (fig. 28) hints at such a connection, there are a number of vases showing Herakles clearly engaged in the act of freeing Prometheus (figs. 36-38). On a skyphos krater by the Nessos Painter in Athens of the late seventh century, Prometheus is bound to a pole and the eagle is behind him, pierced with an arrow (fig. 36). Herakles approaches from the left armed with bow and arrow, about to untie Prometheus.

Herakles, as a mediating force between gods and men frees Prometheus, a deity, who although trying to aid mankind, ended up causing a division between men and gods. While Herakles cannot mend this rift, representations of the hero freeing Prometheus affirm for the Greeks a re-establishment of goodwill and the possibility for a renewed and successful relationship between the gods and men. Scenes of Herakles sacrificing (such as fig. 1) confirm the viability of this relationship.

The idea of Herakles as a bestower of civilization raises an interesting question. Lovejoy and Boas have stated that "...the anti-

primitivistic tendency came into sharp contrast with a religious idea deeply rooted in the Greek mind, that of the god's jealousy of men, their unwillingness that an upstart race of mortals should encroach upon the divine powers and prerogatives."[33] How can the Greeks reconcile the belief that the tools of civilization originated among the gods, who are reluctant to share them, and yet they are given to men to make use of? In some sense, Herakles seems to be the perfect solution to this problem. If the gods are traditionally seen as the givers of the arts of civilization, then it may be that Herakles' eventual divine status works to equate him with those immortal providers of civilization and thus avert the jealousy of the gods. As a mortal hero characterized by both divinity and bestiality, he becomes a mediator between the life of gods and the primitive life of beasts, which lack the means with which to achieve civilized culture.

The ultimate Greek culture hero, Herakles provides a link to Greek civilization when he is depicted at the ends of the earth. Archaic vase paintings stress Herakles' role as the exemplar of Greek civilization contrasted with artistic renditions of the most non-Greek creatures of the world. Such images express the desire both to understand and to eliminate those forces that threaten Greek culture both literally by causing harm, and metaphorically by their very existence. Representations of the deeds and travels of Herakles in the imagery of vase painting, translate the world of the unknown

[33]Lovejoy and Boas (1965), 192.

and un-Greek into terms comprehensible to Greeks. Artists of the archaic period place Herakles at both the geographical boundaries of the civilized world and the figurative boundary between 'civilized' and 'savage' in order to explore and define these boundaries.

Chapter 2

Herakles and the Beasts

Herakles is unique among Greek heroes in that he is not distinctly a warrior. Although he takes part in a few expeditions, against Troy, the Amazons and Oichalia,[1] he is much more commonly portrayed as a doer of great individual deeds, which rarely have to do with armored combat against other men or heroes.

Herakles is probably best known as a slayer of monsters and beasts. However, as illustrated clearly in vase paintings of the archaic period, this is not entirely accurate. Quite often, Herakles is shown merely subduing and capturing the beasts he encounters. Of the beasts he must face in the twelve canonical labours, he kills only

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[1]It is in Oichalia that Herakles wins the King's daughter, Iole, as a prize in an archery contest. Because her father, King Eurytos, refuses to give up his daughter, Herakles destroys the town. The ancient sources disagree over its exact location. Possibilities include Arcadia, Euboea, Eretria, Thessaly and Messenia. Homer mentions Oichalia in the *Iliad* :

> They who dwelt about Pylos and lovely Arene,
> and Thryon, the Alpheios crossing, and strong-built Aipy;
> they who lived in Kyparisseeis and Amphigeneia,
> Pteleos and Helos and Dorion, where the Muses
> Encountering Thamyris the Thracian stopped him from singing
> as he came from Oichalia and Oichalian Eurytos.
>
> Homer *Iliad*, 2. 591-96. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 91-2.
>
> Those who held Trikke and the terraced place of Ithome,
> and Oichalia, the city of Oichalian Eurytos.
>
> Homer *Iliad*, 2. 729-30. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 95.

For ancient sources and bibliography see "Eurytos I" by Ricardo Olmos in LIMC IV, p. 119.

two, the Nemean Lion and the Lernaean Hydra.[2] As reflected in the iconography, in six of the labors he brings beasts back alive: the Erymanthian boar, the Kerynitian hind, the Cretan bull, the horses of Diomedes, the cattle of Geryon, and Cerberus. An examination of artistic renditions of these deeds leads to greater a understanding of Greek concerns about the confrontation with the savage and bestial forces of their world.

1. Hunter and Tamer

As both a destroyer and tamer of savage beasts, Herakles is portrayed in the imagery of the archaic period both pursuing the beasts and bringing them back alive. These two roles seem to express some ambivalence in the Greek imagination about Herakles as a civilized and civilizing force.

As Vidal-Naquet tells us in The Black Hunter, "...the hunt is the prime example of the break with nature, and the 'culture heroes' of the Greek legends are all hunters and destroyers of wild beasts, but the hunt also reflects the savage part of man..."[3] In all of the depictions of Herakles as destroyer and killer, the hero represents this savage part of man. Yet this aspect of humanity seems too

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[2]The Stymphalian birds might be grouped with these labors, since Herakles presumably kills some of them. Vase paintings show Herakles armed with bow and arrow, shooting at the birds or attacking with his club (figs. 39-41). However, the literary sources claim that his task was to drive them away, and so 'killing' was not a requirement of the deed. In fact, in some literary versions he merely scared them away with noise (see Diod. 4.13.2; Apoll. Rhod. 2, 1052-57; Apollod. *bibl.* 2.5.6).

[3]Vidal-Naquet (1986), 3.

threatening. Thus, the savagery inherent in the hunt and slaughter of wild beasts is both admitted and resisted in scenes of Herakles on archaic vases. At times, the hero is shown to exhibit savage behavior in slaughter. At other times he is represented bringing back his quarry alive. In the latter scheme, instead of killing the quarry to eliminate the negative aspects of 'animality', Herakles is illustrated suppressing his own savage nature by resisting the impulse to kill. Consequently, he is not depicted destroying the savagery in the beast, but 'taming' it, thus performing a civilizing act. The artists of the archaic period use Herakles to express a desire to bring the forces of nature and savagery under control both in the external world, by showing the hero's encounters with savage phenomena, and within man himself, by illustrating Herakles suppressing his own impulses to destroy.

This act of 'taming' is a preoccupation in archaic vase painting because it is a necessary step for man in his effort to become civilized and Greek. The importance of the antithesis between 'savage' and 'tame' in ancient Greece, and the desire for the triumph of the latter, is traceable from the work of Homer on.[4] Archaic scenes of Herakles express a similar concern with the triumph of civilization over savagery as expressed through images of 'taming' the bestial.

Scenes of Herakles and Cerberus are dominated by the image of Herakles reaching out to subdue or stroke the dog (figs. 42-45).

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[4]See Segal (1974) 296 ff., for a good discussion of this antithesis in early Greek literature.

Other schemes represent Herakles leading or driving the dog (figs. 46-51), or approaching Eurystheus with the beast (fig. 52). In a red figure scene by the Andokides Painter, Herakles crouches down and pats Cerberus on the snout (fig. 42). Herakles stands and touches the beast's snout on a hydria in the manner of Lysippides in Boston(fig. 43). Such images of Herakles subduing the dog are particularly interesting in light of the description of the deed in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Iliad, Athena speaks of Zeus:

'He is hard, and forever wicked; he crossed my high
hopes,
nor remembers at all those many times I rescued his own
son,
Herakles, when the tasks of Eurystheus were too much
for his strength.
And time and again he would cry out aloud to the
heavens,
and Zeus would send me down in speed from the sky to
help him.
If in the wiliness of my heart I had had thoughts like his,
when Herakles was sent down to Hades of the Gates, to
hale back
from the Kingdom of the Dark the hound of the grisly
death god,
never would he have got clear of the steep-dripping
Stygian water."[5]

Odyssey, Herakles speaks to Odysseus in the underworld:

'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
unhappy man, are you too leading some wretched destiny
such as I too pursued when I went still in the sunlight?
For I was son of Kronian Zeus, but I had an endless

[5]Homer *Iliad*, 8. 361-369. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 191-2.

> spell of misery. I was made the bondman to one who was far worse
> than I, and he loaded my difficult labors on me. One time he sent me here to fetch the dog back, and thought there could be
> no other labor to be devised more difficult than that one, but I brought the dog up and led him from the realm of Hades,
> and Hermes saw me on my way, with Pallas Athene.'[6]

Capturing Cerberus is singled out in each account as representative of the extreme difficulty of the deeds of Herakles. In these cases at least, it is deemed more challenging to subdue a beast than to kill one.

Two other representations of the deeds of Herakles support the idea that the act of subduing makes for a more meaningful image than the depiction of outright destruction. Herakles must capture the Cretan Bull and bring him to Eurystheus. The bull is subsequently set free. Images of the deed generally show Herakles wrestling or tying the bull (figs. 53-55). On a neck amphora in New York, the bull falls to the ground as Herakles pulls tight the tethers fastened to the animal's legs (fig. 55). As with Cerberus, we sometimes see the hero leading or driving the animal (figs. 56-57). Herakles runs alongside the bull, which he controls with some kind of lead on a red figure cup by the Delos Painter (fig. 56). Again, the emphasis is clearly on Herakles as a tamer and master of animals.[7]

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[6]Homer *Odyssey,* 11. 617-627. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 184.

[7]Karl Schefold (1992), 111, has suggested that these scenes are related to the idea of colonization: "All of these myths which deal with the Kretan bull-creature, including that of the minotaur, probably reflect buried memories of the conquest of Krete by the Mycenaean Greeks." Although this is a provocative suggestion, it is more likely that scenes of Herakles mastering the

Scenes of the pursuit and capture of the Kerynitian Hind represent another case where we see Herakles as a tamer of beasts, (some literary versions of the deed have Herakles killing the Hind[8]). Artistic images tend to concentrate on three schemes: Herakles and Apollo fighting over the hind (as on a neck amphora in Würzburg, where Herakles appears to have the deer slung over his back and Apollo attempts to remove it [fig. 59, see also 58]); Herakles catching and/or struggling with the hind, or breaking off an antler, as he has already done on an amphora in London (fig. 62, see also 60 and 61); Herakles attacks the hind with weapons. Sometimes ambiguous or contradictory, these images do little to clarify the incomplete stories of the deed in literature.[9] However, for this argument, it is significant that, regardless of the facts of the story, the images portray Herakles in a struggle of some kind for mastery over the beast. According to Karl Schefold, "Early and high archaic artists avoided depicting the actual killing of the animal because they could only conceive of such a mighty hero dispatching mighty adversaries."[10] Yet, given what we have seen in depictions of other

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bull are manifestations of the civilizing effects of Greek culture as represented by Herakles.

[8]See Euripides *Herakles*, 375-379.

[9] Wassiliki Felton conjectures that some of the artistic treatments of the event are so different from the literary accounts that there may be a lost literary version of the story to account for the discrepancies. Conversely, it has been suggested that not all images including a hind and Herakles represent an episode from the pursuit and capture of the Kerynitian Hind. See the LIMC V entry on the Kerynitian Deer by Wassiliki Felton, pp. 52-54, and Brommer (1986), 21-25.

[10]Schefold (1992), 106.

deeds, it is more likely that the desire of the artist was to emphasize Herakles' role as hunter and tamer. Scenes of Herakles and Apollo disputing over possession of the deer may in some sense represent the transfer of the mastery of animals from the divine realm to the mortal realm with Herakles, the mortal antagonist in this context, acting as mediator.

Finally we should consider the cases in which Herakles kills his animal adversary. As we shall see below, the depictions of the struggle with the Nemean Lion represent an affirmation of Herakles' bestial side. However, representations of the Lernaean Hydra represent something quite different. Hesiod is our earliest literary source for this deed:

> And third again [Echidna] bore
> the grisly-minded Hydra
> of Lerna, whom the goddess
> white-armed Hera nourished
> because of her quenchless grudge
> against the strong Herakles.
> Yet he, Herakles, son of Zeus,
> of the line of Amphitryon,
> by design of Athene the spoiler,
> and with help form warlike
> Iolaos, killed this beast
> with the pitiless bronze sword.[11]

Unlike the other beasts that Herakles must face, the Hydra is a monster unrelated to any real animal in existence. Depictions of the deed vividly illustrate this fact, showing Herakles, and often Iolas,

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[11]Hesiod *Theogony*, 313-318. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 141-2.

with a multi-snake-headed monster (figs.63-68). These artists seem to be attracted to the challenge of depicting such a creature, and the images tend to be quite imaginative. In both a lekythos by the Diosphus Painter and a cup in the manner of the Lysippides Painter, the twisting, curving snaky heads of the monster create an intricate pattern on the vase (figs. 64 and 67 respectively). Other artists seem to delight in illustrating the gore dripping from the severed heads of the hydra (fig. 63). In any case, the hydra is always depicted as uniquely monstrous and unlike any familiar animal.

Most likely adapted from the Near East,[12] the image of such a monster probably represented a terrifying supernatural power, emphasized by the fact that it is poisonous. The beasts that Herakles does not kill but tames serve as examples of wild, savage nature in all of its ability to threaten and terrify. Boars, bulls, hounds, birds and deer are part of the natural world and are usually depicted in a naturalistic way (excluding of course Cerberus). Although 'monstrous', such images are more accurately described as imaginative renditions of familiar and often hostile creatures. Because the hydra, on the other hand, is a truly unnatural foe and represents forces in nature that cannot be controlled or tamed, it is rendered in fantastic artistic terms. For the same reasons, it must be destroyed.

[12]See both Schefold (1992), 101, and Brommer (1986), 12.

Taming represents the creation of a world in the service of man.[13] By killing Geryon, Eurytion and Orthos on archaic vases, Herakles obtains mastery over Geryon's cattle. Herakles becomes a 'cattle rustler', gaining control over and bringing back animals which feed man. According to Walter Burkert, we are to view deeds like this, in which Herakles secures food, as the intervention of a supernatural helper who provides whatever is lacking. He suggests that many of the myths of Herakles grew out of hunting rituals and shamanism used in an effort to ensure the procurement of food.[14] However, the images suggest something else.

The artistic representations of Herakles' quest for the cattle emphasize the conflict with Geryon (figs. 2, 4-6). As with Herakles' struggle with Apollo for the Hind, these images represent the transfer of control of the animals from a quasi-divine master to a mortal one. Herakles proves his worthiness through strength, courage and persistence. Hesiod's account is close to many of the images:

> Chrysaor, married to Kallirhoe,
> daughter of glorious
> Okeanos, was father
> to the triple-headed Geryon,
> but Geryon was killed by the great strength
> of Herakles
> at sea-circled Erytheia
> beside his own shambling cattle

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[13] As Walter Burkert (1979), 95, puts it: "Heracles, in all these exploits, plays the same role: he transfers the mastership of animals to man, animals difficult to get, dangerous, and cared for by superhuman owners."

[14] Burkert (1979), 95-6.

on that day when Herakles drove
those broad-faced cattle
toward holy Tiryns, when he crossed
the stream of Ocean
and had killed Orthos and the oxherd Eurytion
out in that gloomy meadow
beyond the fabulous Ocean.[15]

A few vases emphasize the transfer of possession of the cattle by showing both the battle with Geryon and the cattle, the mastery of which is in dispute, as in a Chalcidian neck amphora in Paris (fig. 3) and a red figure cup by Euphronios in Munich (figs. 7 and 8). Other images of this deed, such as a black figure oinochoe in Boulogne (fig. 9), show Herakles alone with the herd of cattle, stressing his newly-won position of mastership. The cattle are now in the service of the Greek hero; by extension, the depiction of this episode secures abundance and prosperity for all Greeks.

As in artistic images of many of the encounters between Herakles and beasts, the hero is depicted on vases struggling with and mastering the Erymanthian Boar, as in a concave pyxis of the Haimon Group in Berlin (fig. 69) and an oinochoe by the Lysippides Painter in London (fig. 70). However, the most interesting scenes of Herakles with the Erymanthian Boar show Herakles carrying the boar into the presence of Eurystheus, who hides in a pithos.

Images of Herakles returning to Eurystheus with the captured boar provide an interesting commentary on the themes of subduing,

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[15]Hesiod *Theogony*, 287-294. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 140.

taming and servitude. As is true for all twelve labors, Herakles is in the service of Eurystheus when he pursues the Erymanthian Boar. Many of the vases show Herakles carrying the boar into the presence of Eurystheus, who hides in a pithos (figs. 71-76). In an Attic black figure neck amphora in Syracuse, we see Herakles still struggling with the beast while Eurystheus is just climbing into the jar (fig. 71). More typical of this group of images is a neck amphora by the Antimenes Painter in Naples which shows Herakles holding the boar menacingly over Eurystheus, who is almost completely submerged in the pithos as he reaches upward with his hands in what looks like a plea for mercy (fig. 74). What is interesting in such scenes is that Herakles appears in a position of physical superiority, whereas we know that the reverse is actually true: Herakles serves Eurystheus.

Herakles has done this deed by order of Eurystheus, placing the boar in service to the king, just as is Herakles, and creating an equation between beast and hero. The equation can be taken further; Eurystheus is clearly portrayed in the imagery as afraid of the savage boar, reflecting the similar threat he feels from Herakles. By sending Herakles to perform these deeds, Eurystheus had hoped that Herakles himself would be 'subdued'. Instead, Eurystheus is now shown confronted with two threats. Although he can try to diminish the threat of Herakles, he is not able to subdue or tame the boar, so he hides. Eurystheus' ineffectuality as a king and 'master' in the presence of such savagery is vividly depicted and is contrasted with Herakles' success.

Artistic images of Herakles hunting, subduing and destroying beasts illustrate the Greek struggle to come to terms with the relationship of culture to nature. As a hunter, Herakles is kept outside the city, where ordered culture reigns, and inhabits the remote areas of the Greek world. However, the artist brings him within the city in scenes on vases to express the desire to understand the savage realm of the borderlands. Artists envision the triumph of civilization at the edges of the known world by representing Herakles 'taming' the wild forces of nature that he encounters there.

2. The Nemean Lion

One of the most interesting aspects of representations of Herakles' encounters with monsters is that they are not always clearly representative of the theme of man against beast. Instead, a comparison is often made between the antagonists, which serves to illustrate the overlapping of the two. Herakles' bestial, savage side is brought into more precise focus by this contrast. Through depictions of his exploits with monsters or beasts, the hero can be seen to embody characteristics equally opposed to order, civilization and humanity. We can see this aspect of the mythology especially clearly in vase paintings representing Herakles' encounter with the Nemean Lion.

The struggle with the Nemean Lion is the most common scene of Herakles combating a beast in Attic vase painting. Obviously, the scenes of Herakles wrestling with the Nemean Lion can be

interpreted as an embodiment of the conflict of civilization and humanity against savagery and bestiality. However, there are many more subtle messages to be gleaned from the artistic imagery, which can be supplemented with the literary record of this deed.

Let us begin with Hesiod:

> ...the Nemeian Lion [*sic*]
> whom Hera, the queenly wife of Zeus,
> trained up and settled
> among the hills of Nemeia [*sic*],
> to be a plague to mankind.
> there he preyed upon the tribes
> of the indwelling people,
> and was as a King over Tretos
> and Apesas and Nemeia.
> Nevertheless, the force of strong Herakles
> subdued him.[16]

The threat posed by the lion is his appetite for human flesh. A divine force nurtures the lion and grants him his domain. Only Herakles himself, offspring of the divine, has the strength to subdue the lion. Although there is no mention here of how Herakles accomplishes this, the imagery seems very much concerned with this point.

The images of the encounter are fairly straightforward; their patterns and forms have been discussed by others.[17] In his struggle with the lion, Herakles is forced to strangle the beast since its skin is impenetrable. In some images we see the hero thrusting a knife into

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[16]Hesiod *Theogony,* 327-332. Translated by Lattimore, (1957), 142.

[17]See the LIMC V entry by Wassiliki Felton on Herakles and the Nemean Lion, pp. 16-34.

the beast, but more often the two foes are shown wrestling. On vase after vase, Herakles is depicted grappling with the lion (fig. 77-83). He may be standing, as in a scene on an amphora by the Painter of Berlin 1686 (fig. 79) or wrestling on the ground, as on a cup by the Charops Painter (fig. 82). Even when he does use a weapon, he is still shown gripping the lion with the other arm (fig. 84-88). On a pseudo-Chalcidian neck amphora in Paris, Herakles holds the lion steady as he plunges his sword into its chest (fig. 84). More typical are a cup by Sakonides (fig. 85) and a neck amphora near Exekias (fig. 88), where Herakles has one arm wrapped around the lion's neck while he uses the other arm to attack with a club or sword. It would appear that he had to master the beast physically in some way, and subdue it, before he could use the weapon.

These images reveal that Herakles is able to wrestle on equal terms with the lion, suggesting his strength is that of a monster. As with archaic scenes of combat between two antagonists, one cannot discount the desire for a dramatic and balanced composition which is achieved by depicting two antagonists wrestling. However, the antagonists in this case are a man and a beast, beings normally not considered equally matched foes. By showing Herakles and the lion wrestling, the artist in some sense equates the two. Herakles mastery is not overtly stressed as it is in representations of his encounters with other beasts. In addition, these scenes indicate more than a simple wrestling match by so uniformly stressing strangulation, probably to suggest the impenetrable skin. Herakles' subsequent adoption of this lionskin as a garment reinforces the

hero's resemblance to the beast. It becomes an important and ubiquitous identifying attribute. Pindar mentions it.

> Herakles is speaking:
>
> "bring to birth from Eriboia a mighty son,
> destined to be my guest-friend, for Telamon here, a son
> unbreakable in body, even as the hide
> that winds about me now, the skin of the lion
> killed at Nemea..."[18]

By appropriating the lionskin, Herakles both gains some of that invincibility and demonstrates that he already shares in it. More importantly, the lionskin, representing bestiality and ferocity, is appropriate for a hero who certainly, at times, exhibits these qualities in his own behavior. The lionskin, which is so prevalent in images of Herakles in the archaic period, may symbolize what is most savage and in fact 'other' in the beast. On the beast, it contains the subversive forces of nature. When Herakles puts it on, he acknowledges, in part, his own animality and therefore 'otherness'. Herakles not only vanquishes the raw nature and savagery of the lion, but by taking on the guise of the beast, Herakles also acknowledges qualities similar to those that characterize the monster, or more broadly, the non-Greek, in his own nature.

Herakles in his lionskin is the 'beast'-hero. However, Homeric heroes were also known to wear animal skins. In a few passages in Book 10, heroes put on animal skins in the night as they prepare for some task other than war. Menelaos, unable to sleep, dresses before

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[18]Pindar *Isthmian,* 6.45-48. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 317.

he seeks out Agamemnon to discuss the plight of the Achaians at Troy:

> So likewise trembling seized Menelaos, neither on his eyes
> had sweet slumber descending settled, for fear that the Argives
> might suffer some hurt, they who for his sake over much water
> had come to Troy, bearing their bold attack to the Trojans.
> First of all he mantled his broad back in a leopard's spotted hide, then lifting the circle of a brazen helmet placed it upon his head, and took up a spear in his big hand.[19]

A few lines later, at the command of Nestor, Diomedes goes off to waken some of the other warriors:

> He spoke, and [Diomedes] wrapped his shoulders in the hide of a lion
> glowing and huge, that swung to his feet, and took up a spear.[20]

And in preparation for a reconnaissance mission, Dolon

> ...put on about him the pelt of a grey wolf, and on his head set
> a cap of marten's hide.[21]

The animal skin is not a part of the Homeric hero's battle gear, rather it is the appropriate garment for the hero as he prowls about in the dark. It belongs to the heroes of the remote past, a time when divine intervention and interchange were commonplace. It also

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[19]Homer *Iliad*, 10.25-31. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 218-9.

[20]Homer *Iliad*, 10.177-8. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 223.

[21]Homer *Iliad*, 10.334-5. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 227.

befits the 'beast'-hero of the archaic period, reinforcing Herakles' association with a lost past and the time when the distinctions between gods and men were less pronounced. At the same time, in his lionskin, Herakles harkens back to a time before the effects of culture, the prehistory of man, and images of the hero clad in the pelt suggest feelings of ambivalence on the part of the Greeks about the confrontation and juxtaposition of nature and culture.

Ken Dowden has elaborated on this idea in his book The Uses of Greek Mythology: "Lionskin and club are not marks of civilization, but of the outside: the lion skin matches the deer skins of Dionysos' savage maenads, and the club (and even bow) contrasts with the spear, sword and shield of the Greek hoplite that the *polis* sent into battle - in groups..."[22] An essential point here is the isolation of the hero, which sets him apart from the idea of the armed *polis* and the hoplite phalanx. It would appear that Herakles is not a citizen of the *polis*. His ambivalence makes him a liminal figure. As we shall see in Chapter 4, his own behavior often reveals savage and 'barbaric' tendencies. These aspects of the hero, not appropriate for city life, must remain on the outside. The mythical biography of Herakles may express ambivalence by keeping savagery and bestiality, as represented by Herakles in his lionskin, outside of the *polis* and often at the edges of the Greek world. Nevertheless, the images of that mythical biography are permitted in the *polis*, on the vases, because they are static and apotropaic.[23]

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[22]Dowden (1992), 135.

[23]Page DuBois (1982), defines this phenomenon as a reality in fifth century Athens: "The citizen and the city celebrated themselves in resistance to these

3. Centaurs

Scenes of Herakles in archaic vase painting include many renditions of encounters with centaurs. G.S. Kirk has interpreted the regular recurrence of such encounters in the mythical biography of Herakles, as representative of a close link between the hero and these half-beast, half-human creatures. Indeed, it is a centaur's deception that ultimately brings about the death of Herakles.

As seen clearly in all artistic representations of them, the centaur represents the mixture of human and animal. The creature is imagined to embody both good and bad aspects of each. Although most centaurs are portrayed in mythology as lawless and bestial, there are a few important exceptions: Cheiron and Pholos. Cheiron, and to a lesser extent Pholos, represent the extreme of culture versus the rest of the centaurs, who are characterized as opposed to culture.[24]

Even the beast half of the creature, the horse, is an ambiguous animal. It can represent both the wild and benign aspects of nature. On the one hand we have its shagginess, difficulty to control, and sexual potency. On the other hand, the horse is friendly to man,

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threats by exposing the others' chaotic bestial qualities, their invasive, disruptive intentions, by setting them in static, frozen forms at the boundaries of the living process of the city's ritual, as on the Parthenon," 71. I see no reason why we cannot detect the same or a similar process on vases of the sixth century. The struggle for Greek self-definition is a process begun long before 500 B.C.

[24]Kirk (1970), 160.

impressive and dignified in appearance, quite docile and submissive once tamed, and a mark of social standing.[25] The iconography of Herakles and his encounters with centaurs continues the process of defining and investigating 'civilized' and 'savage'.

If we turn to the scenes themselves we find emphasis on an important aspect of the centaurs' character: their inability to tolerate culture. Scenes of Herakles and Pholos often show the hero and the centaur with a container of wine which they are either about to open, as on a neck amphora in Rome (fig. 89) or on a black figure lekythos in New York (fig. 90). In figures 91 and 92, Herakles takes wine from the open container as Pholos looks on. Once the wine is opened and offered to Herakles, the other centaurs, smelling it, descend upon the scene and attack. This is evidenced by vases which show Herakles with the open wine and one or more centaurs approaching with aggressive postures (figs. 93-96). On a black figure neck amphora in the Vatican, Herakles struggles with Pholos and two other centaurs beside the open wine jar whose lid rests against its rim (fig. 94). Such a scene emphasizes the open wine as a catalyst for the attack. The centaurs cannot tolerate the wine, and their attack results in their slaughter by Herakles, who also accidentally kills his host, Pholos, as well.

The presence of the wine, an agricultural product, in the vase painting scenes, is provocative. It is a potent symbol of culture for the Greeks. Not only is wine important for libations and ritual, it is a

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[25]Kirk (1970), 161.

"civilized product par excellence".[26] Instead of focusing on the outcome of the pouring forth of the wine (which is shown on some vases, see below), the iconography here exhibits the Greek's concern with the products of culture and their meaning in the context of civilized behavior. Herakles can open the wine; he is a 'civilized' Greek (at least he is portrayed as such here). Even Pholos can open the wine because he enjoys a special status among the centaurs. The opening of the wine becomes a defining moment in which an aspect of civilized 'Greekness' is revealed to us: the ability to tolerate wine, a symbol of cultivation and therefore culture.

Another anti-culture aspect of the centaurs is their violation of the relations of *xenia*. To be sure, this is not explicit in the iconography. Scenes of Herakles battling centaurs, such as those illustrated in figures 97, 98 and 99, with no wine container, are taken to refer to the assault that resulted from the opened wine while Herakles was a guest of Pholos. Clearly, Pholos has not been able to use the special provisions of the guest-friendship relationship to prevent the centaurs from committing such an offense. The story of the battle of the Lapiths and the centaurs confirms the tendency of theses creatures to violate the terms of *xenia*.

When the centaurs caused an uprising at the wedding of Peirithoös, they assaulted the Lapith women. This is another way in which centaurs are unable to tolerate the terms and conditions of culture. Marriage is an important founding and sustaining act of

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[26]Segal (1974), 299 where he discusses the 'tame' and 'cooked' diet as opposed to the 'raw' and the significance of these value-words in Greek literature.

culture.[27] There is no marriage for centaurs. They disregard this ritual by disruption and the attempted usurping of women. The centaurs cannot tolerate the rituals of culture, nor can they practice restraint in the presence of human women.

The iconography of Herakles' encounter with Nessos includes scenes of Deianeira seated on the centaur's back. She rides him as she would a horse in the tondo of a cup by the Ambrosios Painter (fig. 100, see also figs. 101-103). The scenes do not suggest any human relations of a sexual or intimate nature between them. Instead, the scenes emphasize the contradiction of the female human being and the male beast. Nessos cannot possess her as a man would. On a belly amphora in Munich, Nessos must carry Deianeira who reaches back towards Herakles in pursuit (fig. 104).

The centaur's lust for Deianeira is uncontrollable and leads to his death at the hands of Herakles. Some versions of the story suggest that the centaur was so excited that he ejaculated before dying. The resulting semen mixed with his blood (tainted with the poison from the hydra on Herakles' arrow) became the instrument of Herakles' death. This is a very suggestive story. The uncontrollable sexual appetite of this centaur ultimately causes the death of a hero who is also known for his uncontrollable sexual appetite. Nessos' demise anticipates Herakles' own end. For it was the act of bringing his mistress before his wife, an act which can only have been spurred by limitless lust, that led to Deianeira's use of the false love

[27]DuBois (1982), 5.

potion. Herakles' death is brought about by the bestial and 'uncivilized' aspects of his character.[28]

The more canonical scenes of Nessos' transgression include Herakles in pursuit or attacking as in figures 101-104. The name piece of the Nessos Painter illustrates Herakles and Nessos alone in close combat (fig. 105). The obvious interpretation is to see this as another expression of the man against beast theme. But, as we saw with the Nemean Lion, these scenes also stress the connections between the two adversaries. Herakles shares many characteristics with centaurs. He embodies both human and bestial qualities. "At least Herakles himself, with his skins, his hairiness, his club, his poisoned arrows, his treachery and lust and nobility, his association with healing and oracles, makes the ideal heroic counterpart to the centaurs - exemplifies in one person their duality of role as a species."[29] These similarities are reinforced and confirmed in the iconography.

Herakles is a match for a half-man half-beast foe because he resembles this foe. Herakles' savage side is implied by this association. Depictions of the struggle between the two is an expression of the ambivalence of the Greeks toward the role of animality in their world. They are still working out the boundaries

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[28]It is interesting to note that a similar fate befalls Agamemnon, who brings his mistress into his home. It is significant that in Aeschylus' version, Agamemnon takes on the airs of a luxurious, oriental despot. As Edith Hall would have it, he is portrayed with the recently invented "vocabulary of barbarism," to highlight his departure from normal Hellenic modes of behavior. See Hall (1989), 201ff.

[29]Kirk (1970), 162.

of savage and civilized; what better way than to portray in vase painting their culture hero, better yet, a culture hero with a savage side, in combat with a marginal creature, to see how that hero qualifies.

Herakles is connected to the centaurs in another important way. Just as one of these half-beast, half-man creatures, Cheiron, can serve as a symbol of the best side of human culture, so too can Herakles by being both bestial and yet the supreme culture hero. As discussed above, this ambivalence is important and pervasive in the iconography. The emphasis is on defining and demarcating differences and similarities. Depictions of Herakles' contacts with creatures symbolizing the boundaries between 'civilized' and 'savage' provided a way in which the Greeks could explore and test such boundaries.

The most revealing aspect of Herakles' involvement with the centaurs is how it somehow always leads to their destruction. Even Cheiron is forced to trade away his immortality in order to escape the pain of the wound inflicted by Herakles. Ultimately, despite all of his uncivilized and savage behavior, in the iconography Herakles is the successful representation of Greek culture, since the centaurs, who for the most part personify anti-culture, do not prevail.

4. The Horses of Diomedes

One of the most provocative of Herakles' encounters with beasts to be illustrated on vases during the archaic period is his labor to fetch the man-eating horses of Diomedes. The deed is compelling

for a number of reasons. In the first place, Diomedes is truly a barbarian: a Thracian, son of Ares, and king of the Bistones. Although Diomedes himself is not described explicitly as a savage or uncivilized character, he owns and nurtures beasts that transgress Greek cultural norms. They are not 'cannibalistic' in the strict sense of the word, that is an animal that eats its own kind, but the image of presumably domesticated horses, normally herbivores, in the service of man, eating raw human flesh, must have been evocative of true cannibalism.

Cannibalism is a difficult topic to deal with, since there is often very little factual evidence to discuss and what there is comes from the distant past or remote geographical locations. In his book, The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy, W. Arens does not believe that there is adequate documentation of cannibalism as a custom in any form for any society, excluding survival conditions.[30] His discussion centers on accounts of the discovery of the New World and the encounters of early missionaries, colonizers and conquerors. His investigations suggest that the *idea* of cannibalism exists prior to and independent of the evidence.[31] He concludes that reports of cannibalism reflect an almost universal fear on the part of the peoples doing the discovering and reporting. There are accounts from non-western peoples claiming that the western peoples they encounter practice cannibalism, but these are, of course, dismissed by those Westerners accused of such an act. It is always something

[30]Arens (1979), 21.

[31]Arens (1979), 22.

that the other people do. As Arens puts it "Beliefs of this sort about representatives of our own cultural tradition [that we practice cannibalism] are dismissed out of hand as prejudice and racism, while similar notions about others already defined as categorically different from us are treated as facts."[32] It is acceptable that peoples who are unfamiliar to us and 'other' could and do perform such acts.

Because the number of surviving vases from the archaic period illustrating Herakles and the horses of Diomedes is so small, ancient literature will be used here to supplement the argument. Although Homer does not refer to an actual occurrence of cannibalism, the threat of such an act is found at moments of great and uncontrollable emotion. The desire to eat an offender 'raw' signifies excessive rage and marks a transgression of the limits set by civilization.

> Zeus speaks to Hera:
> "Dear lady, what can be all the great evils done to you
> by Priam and the sons of Priam, that you are thus furious
> forever to bring down the strong-founded city of Ilion?
> If you could walk through the gates and through the
> towering ramparts
> and eat Priam and the children of Priam raw, and the
> other
> Trojans, then, then only might you glut at last your
> anger."[33]

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[32]Arens (1979), 19.

[33]Homer*Iliad*, 4.31-36. Translated by Lattimore (1961), 114. See also 24.205-14.

For Hesiod, cannibalism is the practice of beasts, and is contrary to the laws of man. Man does not perform such deeds because he lives within a civilized world with justice, *dike*.

> Here is the law (*nomos*), as Zeus established it
> for human beings;
> as for fish, and wild animals, and the flying birds,
> they feed on each other, since there is no idea
> of justice (*dike*) among them;
> but to men he gave justice (*dike*), and she in the end
> is proved the best thing
> they have.[34]

The idea of cannibalism was such a taboo for the Greeks that it only appears in their remote mythological past and then, often, only as a result of deception. For Herodotus, there were peoples at the very remote edges of the world who practiced this custom, but that is almost all he knows about them:

> These farmer Scythians inhabit the land to the east for a distance of three days' journey as far as the river called Panticapes and , northward, a journey of eleven days by boat up the Borysthenes. North of this land are the Man-Eaters (Androphagoi), a tribe that is entirely peculiar and not Scythians at all. Beyond that is truly desert, and not a tribe of mankind lives in it, as far as we know.[35]
>
> The Man-Eaters have the most savage manner of life of all men; they believe in no justice nor use any law. They are nomads, wear clothing like that of the Scythians, but

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[34]Hesiod *Works and Days*, 276-280. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 51.

[35]Herodotus *Histories*, 4.18. Translated by Grene (1987), 286.

> have a language all their own. They are the only one of these people who eat human flesh.[36]

I shall take up Herodotus in a more expanded discussion in Chapter 5. For the present discussion, a few points must be made. First, the Androphagoi are geographically remote and isolated. They are not compared to Greeks, but to a better-known barbarian people, the Scythians, whom they do not even resemble except in the clothing they wear. The most distinguishing feature of the barbarian, namely language, is not only other than Greek, but one other than the Scythians' language, a people whom Herodotus has already defined based on their 'otherness' in contrast to the Greeks. The historian keeps the Androphagoi at a distance by denying them any criterion of comparison to Greeks. It is a careful equation: Greeks are different from Scythians; Scythians are different from the Androphagoi; therefore, Greeks and Androphagoi cannot even be discussed together. There is no way that one can understand them in Greek terms. In this way, Herodotus goes to great lengths to locate these people who are said to eat human flesh on the periphery of Greek awareness, that is, the only place where the Greeks can tolerate their existence.

The Greeks are clearly uncomfortable with any suggestion of cannibalism. Artistic representations of man-eating horses are one way to express anxiety about this practice without being explicit. In

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[36]Herodotus *Histories*, 4.106. Translated by Grene (1987), 319. Compare this passage to Hesiod *Works and Days*, 276-280 above. Both authors mention law (nomos) and justice (dike) as factors whose absence permits cannibalism. I shall discuss this connection further in Chapter 5.

a cup by Psiax and fragments of a cup by Oltos associated with this deed of Herakles, a horse is depicted with human body parts dangling from its mouth (figs. 106 and 107). These vases stress the 'raw' man-eating act in a horrifyingly graphic way. Other scenes associated with the deed merely show Herakles with one or more horses, in the act of subduing or driving them away with his club, as on the lekythos by the Marathon Painter in Syracuse (fig. 108).[37] As we have seen above, this is a primary function of the hero and in this context reinforces the idea that Herakles has brought the destructive forces which can result in monstrous behavior, such as cannibalism, under rational control.

Since this latter scheme was clearly a satisfactory allusion to the deed, the choice actually to depict the man-eating aspect of the horses is a deliberate one. As with other scenes of Herakles' encounters, these images represent the contrast of the civilized Greek hero and the savage 'other'. Here, the 'other' is a conflation of a specific barbarian, the Thracian Diomedes, and a barbarian act, cannibalism, as represented by the actions of the horses.

Later literary sources tell us that Diomedes fed his mares with the flesh of passers-by.[38] He is himself a 'monster', behaving savagely and transgressing the laws (*nomos*) of man. Because the number of surviving vases from the archaic period illustrating Herakles and the horses of Diomedes is so small, we may turn to the

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[37]See my discussion above of the significance of Herakles as a 'tamer' of wild beasts.

[38]Diod. 4.15.3.

earliest literary reference to this labor of Herakles, in Pindar Frg. 169, which supports this view of Diomedes, describing the deed in terms equivalent to the more graphic depictions in figures 106 and 107:

> Law [nomos], king of all mortals and immortals, leads, bringing violence to justice, with highest hand. I judge from Heracles' deeds. For Geryon's cattle he seized and drove to the Cyclopean doorway of Eurystheus[39] without price paid, and Diomedes' [fierce] mares [he subdued, after he had slain] near the Bistonian marsh the chief of the Cicones, terrible son of [bronze]-armed Enyalius, [rousing] his great [anger], not with battle lust, but with valor. For [he preferred] to be dead, [his] goods being seized away, rather than to be a coward.
>
> Having entered the large [mansion, the hero quickly] at night found a way of force; he took a man aloft and threw him into the stone cribs, [to divert the fierce] mares' [alert] senses, and they [devoured] him. Forthwith a noise cracked through the shattered white bones. He thereupon tore off, from underneath the animals' tables, the entwined bronze, fastened to links along the stable, and stung them with his club, while one was carrying off a leg, one a forearm, another in her teeth the head, by the root of the neck.[40]

The implication is that both Geryon and Diomedes are 'most violent' (*to biaiotaton*) monsters who must be suppressed. In many

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[39]Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1972), 45, translates these lines as follows:

> Law the king of all, of mortals and immortals, leads them, making just what is most violent with arm supreme. My witness is the acts of Heracles; for he drove the cattle of Geryones to the Cyclopean portal of Eurystheus.

[40]Pindar Frg 169 (Bergk), 1-32. Translated by Pavese (1968), 85. This translation depends on conjectured restorations by Pavese and is far from definitive. For an alternative view, see Lloyd-Jones (1972).

of his works, Pindar praises Herakles as a benefactor of mankind, ridding the world of 'beasts with no sense of justice'.[41] In a similar way, Herakles, envisioned as an instrument of justice, destroys both Geryon and Diomedes.

At this point, let us return to Hesiod (*Works and Days*, lines 276-80) as quoted above. Here, *nomos* is a fundamental rule in the life of men, originating with Zeus. Zeus granted that man should have justice (*dikê*) and the beasts should not. Justice itself seems to be a condition for the existence and acceptance of *nomos*.

Cannibalism is contrary to *nomos*, however we specifically define the term. Because Diomedes and his horses violate *nomos* , they are punished by Herakles. By illustrating Herakles performing this deed, artists remove the threat they pose to the Greek sense of justice, that which sets men apart both from the beasts and from savage barbarians.[42] The artists hope to enforce the order of the universe by representing Herakles safeguarding *nomos*.

Whether *nomos* originates with Zeus or not, man is expected to adhere to its terms. In the case of the passage in Hesiod, men must not eat the flesh of other men. In Pindar's fragment, it is violence that must be brought to justice, presumably the violence of transgressors of justice, who figure prominently in iconography of Herakles. The vase painters repeatedly portray Herakles punishing

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[41]Pindar *Nemean* 1, 63. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 336.

[42]Charles Segal (1974), 305, states: "Cannibalism breaks down the differentiation between man and beast and confounds *physis*, the state of nature, with *nomos*, the ordered structure of human society.".

and subduing adversaries lacking in justice.[43] Man does not universally accept justice as the Greeks define it, and beings such as Geryon and Diomedes, and as we shall see, others including Busiris and Kyknos, do not act with justice and do not adhere to *nomos*. The desire for justice and for a warning to those who transgress it may help to explain why artists painted so many scenes of Herakles bringing these 'men' to justice.

By illustrating Herakles' encounters with monsters and beasts in the particular way that they do, archaic Greek vase painters provide us with insights into the way in which they conceive of man's relationship to the savage and destructive forces that these creatures represent.[44] The images of Herakles involved with animal adversaries not only express an interest in exploring the distinction between living with justice and transgressing *nomos*, or, between what is civilized and what is savage, they attempt to define those distinctions. The visual imagery defines qualities and types of behavior that are undesirable by illustrating them manifested in the beasts that Herakles' encounters as well as in the hero himself. The archaic Greek artists transform and equate Herakles' mastery over beasts with civilized man's superiority over the savage 'other', who eventually becomes the barbarian in the fifth century.

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[43]See Chapter 1.4.

[44]As Charles Segal (1974), 290, puts it "...the Greeks are hesitant and ambivalent about fusion or identification with the animal energies of the earth. Their concern is rather with delimiting those energies within fixed boundaries."

Chapter 3

Herakles and Anthropomorphic Adversaries

Herakles encounters many human, quasi-human and anthropomorphic adversaries throughout his struggles. Often the visual representations of these encounters are more provocative and informative than those of Herakles' struggles with beasts, and there is much we can learn from examining such images.

1. Kyknos

The battle of Herakles and Kyknos is one of the most popular scenes in Attic vase painting of the archaic period, being the subject of about 120 known Attic vase paintings between 570-480 B.C.[1] One reason for its popularity may have been the existence of two literary traditions relating the story, which still survive in some form. The first tradition includes the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Herakles* which is mirrored in the later writings of Apollodorus (2.5.11) and Hyginus (31). The second version is believed to be related in a lost poem of Stesichoros (the content of this poem is known only from a brief summary of a scholiast to Pindar)[2] and is reflected in Euripides' *Herakles* (389-93), Diodorus (4.37), Pausanias (1.27.6) and Apollodorus (2.7.7). The version by Stesichoros adds the detail that

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[1]Shapiro (1986), 211.

[2]See Shapiro (1984) and (1986) for a fuller discussion of the literary versions of the legend and their relationship to the artistic images.

Kyknos would behead strangers approaching the sanctuary of Apollo and used the skulls of his victims to build a temple to his father, Ares.

Images of the combat on vases focus on the encounter between Herakles and Kyknos, often with attendant figures representing Athena, Ares, charioteers and others, as in an Attic red figure cup by Oltos (fig. 109) and a black figure amphora by the Amasis Painter (fig. 110). In some instances, Kyknos is shown already dead or wounded and falling to the ground, while Ares moves to engage Herakles (figs. 109, 111-114). These images, considered on their own, suggest the role of Herakles as a warrior. However, H.A. Shapiro has demonstrated a close link between the artistic images and the literary sources,[3] which may indicate that the artist and viewer were aware of the larger context of the engagement itself. These images must certainly have evoked recollections of the reasons why this combat was necessary and the monstrous nature of Kyknos.

In the *Shield of Herakles* we are given insight into the figure of Kyknos.

> It was he, Herakles, who killed Kyknos,
> high-hearted son of Ares,
> for he came upon him in the precinct
> of Apollo, who strikes from afar,
> himself and his father, Ares
> insatiable in battle, blazing
> both of them like light of burning fire
> in their armor... 57-60
>
> ..and handsome Kyknos was joyful

[3]Shapiro (1984).

in his hope of slaughtering the warlike son
of Zeus with the bronze
spear, and his driver with him,
and stripping their glorious armor;
65-67[4]

Like his father Ares, Kyknos is eager for battle for its own sake. He is envisioned as a fierce and zealous warrior who takes pleasure in killing. The might and ability of Kyknos are further suggested in a line by Pindar: "Even champion Herakles/recoiled once, in battle with Kyknos."[5] Here he is portrayed as a real threat to Herakles.

The *Shield of Herakles* does not ascribe to Kyknos any motive for combat other than sheer delight in fighting and bloodshed. However, Herakles is given a clear motive:

but Phoibos Apollo would not listen
to [Kyknos'] prayers and promises,
since he himself had set powerful Herakles
against him. 68-69[6]

Herakles is an ally of Apollo. He fights with divine sanction against one who has transgressed against a god. The pseudo-Hesiodic poem makes this clear in the final lines:

But Kyknos was buried by Keyx
and the numberless people
of that glorious King, those who lived
in the cities thereabouts,
in Anthe, the city of the Myrmidons,

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[4]Translated by Lattimore (1957),194-195.

[5]Pindar *Olympian* 10.15. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 131.

[6]Translated by Lattimore (1957), 195.

and famous Iolkos,
Arne and Helike, and a great multitude
was assembled
doing honor to Keyx who was the friend
of the blessed immortals.
But the river Anauros, swollen
with winter rain, obliterated
the barrow and the grave;
for this was the will of Leto's
son, Apollo; because Kyknos had waylaid
and forcibly
robbed the glorious hecatombs,
as men brought them to Pytho.
472-480[7]

Not only did Apollo enlist the help of Herakles to dispatch Kyknos, the crimes of the transgressor were deemed so atrocious as to warrant the obliteration of his grave, a miserable fate by Greek standards.

Although Kyknos is a human adversary, and the son of a god, he is portrayed in the literary accounts as a veritable 'monster'. In fact, in the classical period, Euripides uses just such imagery to describe Kyknos: "[Herakles'] shafts brought Cycnus down,/ that stranger-slaying monster".[8] Using the skulls of victims to construct a temple seems truly barbaric and sacrilegious. A story such as this must have been offensive to the Greek sensibility.

Although I shall consider Herodotus in more detail in Chapter 5, it will be useful for the present discussion to look at some aspects of his description of the religious practices of the Scythians.

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[7]Translated by Lattimore (1957), 220.

[8]Euripides *Heracles*, 391-2. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 74.

Human sacrifice, a barbaric act, is associated with the quintessential barbarians of Herodotus' *Histories*, the Scythians. Moreover, it is practiced to honor the god Ares. Herodotus also tells us that the Scythians do not make images, altars or shrines for the worship of their gods except in the case of Ares.[9]

> That is how they sacrifice to the other gods, and such are the beasts sacrificed. But to Ares they do it thus: in each of the districts of the governmental divisions there is a shrine established to Ares. Bundles of faggots are heaped up for three furlongs in width and length but less in height. On this is built a square, quite level, with three of its sides sheer and one that can be ascended. Each year they pile one hundred and fifty wagons' worth of firewood upon this, for each year some of it gradually wastes away, from the winter seasons. On this pile is set an ancient iron sword for each of the peoples sacrificing, and this is the image of Ares. To this sword they bring yearly sacrifices of smaller cattle and of horses; indeed, they offer to these images more victims than to other gods. Of such of their enemies as they take alive they sacrifice one out of every hundred, not in the fashion in which they handle the beasts, but differently. They pour wine on the men's heads and cut their throats into a bucket. This they then carry up on to the pile of firewood and pour the blood on the sword.[10]

This account illuminates the story of Kyknos, for whom it was appropriate to decorate Ares' shrine with the products of deliberate human slaughter. Just as Herodotus intends us to view the Scythians, we are meant to see the actions of Kyknos as barbaric and un-Greek. In the archaic period, vase painting reflects the role of Herakles as

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[9]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.59.

[10]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.62. Translated by Grene (1987), 302-303.

the hero responsible for ridding the Greek world of these forces. By the time of Herodotus, such practices cannot and do not exist in the civilized Greek world, but are identified and located in the sphere of the 'real' barbarian. In either case, the desire is the same, to come to terms with un-Greek, savage behavior. For Herodotus, the solution is to describe and transfer all that the Greeks felt threatened their humanity and civilization beyond the literal boundaries of the Greek-speaking world, using physical distance to diffuse the danger. Herakles destroys the threat on the surface of an archaic vase.

In returning to the artistic representations, the images themselves do not suggest the underlying motives or themes of transgression and barbarism. Their primary emphasis seems to be on Herakles' struggle against a formidable human adversary and in the case of Ares, a divine adversary, seen clearly in combat with Herakles in the Attic black figure oinochoe by Lydos (figs. 113 and 114). We are meant to see Herakles as equal to the challenge. However, the larger context of the battle suggests that Herakles is able to triumph against such threatening foes because he represents the just and civilized cause.

2. Giants

Herakles' encounters with human and quasi-human adversaries are particularly provocative given the status in Greek art of the human form, whose moral and aesthetic superiority is

validated by the anthropomorphic beauty of the Olympian gods.[11] This fact makes variations on the ideal human form grotesque and threatening. One of the most common variations is in size. Many figures in Greek mythology are characterized by great size, a phenomenon often accompanied by great strength.

Several of the anthropomorphic adversaries that Herakles must face are described as 'giants'. The most obvious case is when he fights alongside the gods against the race of Giants. There is little mention of the Giants in the earlier literature apart from their genealogy and their threat to and defeat by the Olympian gods, but we will consider a few passages nonetheless.

In the *Odyssey*, King Alkinoos tells us that, although they are 'savage', the Giants enjoyed a special status with the gods:

> 'But if he is one of the immortals come down from heaven,
> then this is a new kind of thing the gods are devising;
> for always in time past the gods have shown themselves clearly
> to us, when we render them glorious grand sacrifices,
> and they sit beside us and feast with us in the place where we do,
> or if one comes alone and encounters us, a wayfarer,
> then they make no concealment, as we are very close to them,
> as are the Cyclopes and the savage tribes of the Giants.'[12]

Hesiod makes a point of describing the Giants as warriors, possibly underscoring their threat in battle:

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[11]Segal (1974), 290.

[12]Homer *Odyssey* 7. 196-206. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 116.

> [Gaia] brought forth the powerful Furies
> and the tall Giants
> shining in their armor
> and holding long spears in their hands;[13]

Pindar makes mention of the battle of gods and Giants and Herakles' role in it:

> And when the gods should face the giants
> in battle on Phlegra's plain, he spoke
> of bright hair fouled in the dust
> beneath the arrows sprung from Herakles' bow.[14]

It would seem that the Giants began as rather obscure figures, on the one hand, a destructive force, yet of divine birth and 'close to' the gods. They are another example of ambiguous creatures, like centaurs and Amazons, that serve to explore the contrast of human and non-human or civilized and savage.

In the earliest depictions of the battle of gods and Giants on black figured vases, there are no real distinctions between the two races in physical type, weapons or mode of fighting, suggesting that originally the Giants were not conceptualized as a particularly alien threat. In an Attic black figure amphora in the manner of Exekias, for example, Herakles fights with the gods against Giants who wear Greek armor and are therefore difficult to distinguish from their Greek adversaries (fig. 116, see also figs. 115, 117 and 118 which show Herakles fighting with the gods). Later vases, however, tend

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[13]Hesiod *Theogony* 185-186. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 134.

[14]Pindar *Nemean* 1. 66-68. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 236.

to show the giants in a wilder and more bestial guise.[15] A red figure cup by the Brygos Painter in Berlin shows the Giants naked with some body hair and long beards and locks (fig. 119). Fragments of a stamnos in Paris attributed to the Kleophrades Painter reveal Giants no longer outfitted with Greek armor, but dressed in animal skins, a custom which becomes associated with the barbarian in Herodotus and which Herakles himself practices.[16] By 480 B.C., the Tyszkiewicz Painter portrays Giants hurling boulders, a practice common to the half-beast centaurs (compare fig. 121 to fig. 99) It would appear that this conflict, although always an allegory for the confrontation of chaos and order, became associated more and more in the sixth century with 'barbarism' and with the familiar theme of civilized versus uncivilized, and thus, it was only appropriate that Herakles be included in the battle.

Herakles encounters other foes of larger stature such as Alkyoneus and Antaios. Alkyoneus' great size is described twice by Pindar:

> ...Herakles,
> with whom mighty Telamon
> once subdued Troy, the Meropes,
> and awesome Alkyoneus, huge and murderous,
> who, before he fell,
> crushed with a stone twelve four-horse chariots
> and twice as many horse-mastering heroes

[15]Sanford (1941), 55.

[16]See Chapter 5.1d.

riding upon them.[17]

And he took the citadel
and with Telamon at his side
he slew the tribes of the Meropes
and the ox-herder,
Alkyoneus, huge as a mountain, whom he found at Phlegra,
and the loud bow's string
twanged unceasing in the hands of Herakles.[18]

Depictions of the confrontation usually show Alkyoneus asleep (figs. 122-126),[19] but in every case his great size is indicated. In some scenes, Herakles is so dwarfed by the giant that one wonders if the hero would have a chance at all with the giant fully conscious. In fact, in an unusual composition by the Theseus Painter, Herakles is wrestling a fully conscious Alkyoneus who is almost the same size as he is (fig. 128). The emphasis on the 'giantness' of Alkyoneus is another way to express his otherness. He represents a deformation of the human body, which, as I stated above, was held in high regard by the Greeks. Is it possible that a giant was felt as a mockery of or even a threat to the Greek ideal of human beauty and aesthetics? Although 'larger than life' was acceptable as witnessed by the abundance of over life-size kouroi in the sixth century, often these statues were associated with the gods, if not actually depicting them.

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[17]Pindar *Nemean* 4. 24-30. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 246-7.

[18]Pindar *Isthmian* 6. 30-34. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 316-7.

[19]An exception is a Caeretan hydria in the Vatican (16521) which shows Alkyoneus semi-reclining (probably due to the limited space of the pictorial panel and the artists desire to emphasize his great size) and fully awake and alert with Herakles upon him, armed with bow and club (fig. 127).

Representations of a mortal human figure the size of Alkyoneus must have appeared monstrous next to such an exemplar of Greek manhood as Herakles.

Herakles encounters Antaios in Libya on his way back from the Hesperides. This foe was a giant son of Poseidon and Earth who was able to beat all antagonists because of the great strength he derived from contact with his mother Earth. In order to defeat Antaios, Herakles lifted him off the ground and choked him. Pindar gives us some particularly interesting information about this giant:

> For his is not the bulk of an Orion-
> no,
> he's unimpressive to look at
> but grim to fall in with.
> A man, small in build
> but adamant in spirit,
> once went from Kadmeian Thebes to wheat-bearing Libya
> to the house of Antaios, to wrestle him
> and put an end to his roofing Poseidon's temple
> with the skulls of strangers-
> it was he, Alkmena's son.[20]

Antaios' transgression is very similar to that of Kyknos. Although nothing in the artistic representations suggests this action,

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[20]Pindar *Isthmian* 4. 49-55. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 308-9.
It may be that a mysterious episode in Nemean 1.63-65 refers to Antaios and his slaughtering of passers-by:

> ...[Herakles] would put an end
> to a certain creature, loathsome, lurching
> with perverse glut of men.

In any case, this passage once again affirms Herakles role as purger of savage creatures who perform monstrous acts.

as with scenes of Herakles and Kyknos, one would expect the Greek viewer to associate the contest between Herakles and Antaios with the broader mythological context, and recall the monstrous act of using skulls for roofing tile. This passage is also interesting in that Pindar contrasts the average size of Herakles, which does not detract from his strength and ability at all, with the giant Antaios, who is described only as a man who commits monstrous acts.

Representations of this conflict uniformly show the two antagonists wrestling on the ground, possibly stressing the relationship of Antaios to the Earth by showing him in contact with it (figs. 129- 135).[21] The Greek images do not tend to indicate that Herakles had to lift Antaios into the air. Unlike scenes of Herakles and Alkyoneus, the huge size of Antaios, in relationship to Herakles, is not represented. The two men are shown as equals in size and strength. Antaios is differentiated by a long and often shaggy beard suggesting his 'savage' nature. A hydria in Munich attributed to the Leagros group is a particularly fine example of the general scheme. Herakles stands here, while in other scenes he may be on the ground, but Antaios is shown at a clear disadvantage, close to the ground (fig. 131). The giant also has his typical longer beard and locks than Herakles, possibly suggesting bestiality. On the well-known calyx-krater by Euphronios in the Louvre, Antaios is shown with a mop of

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[21]A few scholars have noted that scenes of Herakles and Antaios wrestling do not become popular until enthusiasm for competitive athletics reaches its height during the late sixth century. [Schefold (1992), 142] H.A. Shapiro suggests that since Herakles is the athlete par excellence, scenes of the hero wrestling with Antaios may become more popular in late sixth century Attic vase painting because they embody the ideal of well-rounded education offered by the Athenian gymnasium. [Shapiro (1989), 160.]

blond hair and a straggly beard (fig. 135). His dark, furrowed brow and bared teeth give him an almost sinister look, especially compared to the serene face of Herakles with his well-groomed hair.

3. Diomedes and Geryon

Depictions of Herakles' deed involving the capture of the horses of Diomedes show only Herakles and the horses and not their master, Diomedes (figs. 106-108). However, Diomedes is still an important human adversary for Herakles according to Pindar frg. 169 (Bergk).[22] In this poem, Diomedes and Geryon are portrayed as paradigms of the type of transgression of justice that Herakles punishes in his deeds. In the case of Diomedes, although not explicit in the Pindar fragment, the crime is his rearing of the man-eating horses. Son of Ares and brother of Kyknos, another of Herakles' adversaries who commits barbarous acts, Diomedes is located in Thrace, which was considered the distant north by early Greeks, just as Scythia was for later Greeks,[23] and thus a true barbarian.[24]

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[22]See Chapter 2.4 for the text of this poem and a discussion of Herakles and the horses of Diomedes.

[23]Fontenrose (1959), 99.

[24]Euripides play, *Alcestis*, is later than the period covered by this investigation, but provides more insight into the nature of this deed:

> Chorus: But tell us, what is the errand that brings you here to Thessaly and the city of Pherae once again?
> Herakles: I have a piece of work to do for Eurystheus of Tiryns.
> Ch: Where does it take you? On what far journey?
> H: To Thrace, to take home Diomedes' chariot.
> Ch: How can you? Do you know the man you are to meet?
> H: No. I have never been where the Bistones live.
> Ch: You cannot master his horses. Not without a fight.

Geryon is also considered a violent transgressor of justice in the Pindar fragment. Hesiod offers only a brief description of Geryon's physical appearance:

> Chrysaor, married to Kallirhoe,
> daughter of glorious
> Okeanos, was father
> to triple-bodied Geryon,
> but Geryon was killed by the great strength
> of Herakles.[25]

A triple-bodied human being must have appeared truly monstrous to the Greeks. Clearly interested in this aspect of Geryon,

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> H: It is my work, and I cannot refuse.
> Ch: You must kill him before you come back; or be killed and stay.
> H: If I must fight, it will not be for the first time.
> Ch: What good will it do you if you overpower their master?
> H: I will take the horses home to Tiryns and its king.
> Ch: It is not easy to put a bridle on their jaws.
> H: Easy enough unless their nostrils are snorting fire.
> Ch: Not that but they have teeth that tear a man apart.
> H: Oh no! Mountain beasts, not horses, feed like that.
> Ch: But you can see their mangers. They are caked with blood.
> H: And the man who raises them? Whose son does he claim he is?
> Ch: Ares'. And he is lord of the golden shield of Thrace.
> H: It sounds like my life and the kind of work I do.
> It is a hard and steep way always that I go,
> having to fight one after another all the sons
> the war god ever got him, with Lycaon first,
> again with Cycnus, and now here is a third fight
> that I must have with the master of these horses.
>
> lines 479-504. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 25-26.

Diomedes is only mentioned once by name and subsequently referred to in his capacity as master of the horses, a narrative device that serves to closely associate the unnatural acts of the horses with Diomedes. The last lines of Herakles also stress Diomedes' relationship to his father Ares and to his brothers, whom Herakles has already dispatched. As noted above, it is of particular interest that Kyknos and Diomedes are bothers who are destroyed by Herakles, since they are both responsible for the 'inhuman' slaughter of innocent men.

[25]Hesiod *Theogony*, 287-8. Translated by Lattimore (1959), 140.

the vase painters almost always show him with the three bodies (figs. 2-7).[26] Typically, one body of Geryon is hit and sometimes, between the opponents, Eurytion the shepherd or his dog Orthos lie already dead. In Euphronios' rendition of the deed on a cup in Munich, one of Geryon's bodies has been shot through the eye and slumps behind the other two bodies. Orthos lies prone, with an arrow in his chest between Herakles and his opponent (fig. 7). Although the goal of the deed was not the death of Geryon but the capture of the cattle, Brommer argues that the artist could not depict the hero with one of the herd of cattle alone (a scheme that would be similar to showing Herakles with one of the man-eating horses of Diomedes instead of his master, whom Herakles also kills) because this might lead to confusion with the Cretan Bull episode.[27] However, it is more likely that the artist chose the combat episode because it so dramatically illustrated the theme of Herakles fighting monstrous and unnatural forces, as manifested in the grotesquely deformed Geryon.

Indeed, it is interesting that Herakles' goal in both deeds mentioned by Pindar in frg. 169 is not to kill the opponents that are specifically mentioned, Diomedes and Geryon, but rather to steal

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[26]Denys Page (1973), 145-6, believes that the great increase in the number of portrayals of Herakles and Geryon from the middle of the sixth century onwards reflects the popularity of Stesichorus' *Geryoneïs*. He cites a few points which may indicate influence of the poem on vase painters: a couple of vases portraying Geryon with wings as does Stesichorus; the presence of a distressed female on a couple of vases that Page identifies as Geryon's mother, Callirrhoa, who is prominent in the poem; the figure of Iris behind Athena and Herakles in a scene by Oltos who may be a messenger from a council of the gods, an event which is included in the *Geryoneïs*.

[27]Brommer (1986), 43.

their animals. For Pindar, these men represent the destructive forces that Herakles must conquer, suggesting that Pindar perceived the dispatching of these antagonists as Herakles' primary function. The images support this interpretation by emphasizing the most threatening details of each deed: the 'cannibalistic' horses and the monstrous Geryon.

4. Busiris

As we saw briefly in Chapter 1.4, Herakles encounters the Egyptian king Busiris on his way to the garden of the Hesperides. This king, in following the instructions of a seer in an attempt to end a drought which plagued his land, sacrifices a stranger. The results are so promising that the king repeats the ritual with all strangers entering his country, leading eventually to his attempt to perform a blood sacrifice of Herakles. Vase painters started to illustrate this story at the end of the archaic period in a fairly consistent fashion. The images show Herakles at the altar, having freed himself, attacking Busiris and his attendants (figs. 30-35). The emphasis is clearly on the thwarting of the act of human sacrifice, since altar and implements for the deed are shown. In a cup by Epiktetos in Rome, the attendants are running from the altar still carrying the sacrificial knives and spits (fig. 33). In this scene, as is usually the case (see figs. 31,32, 34 and 35) Busiris himself is on the altar as Herakles is

about to deliver the final blow, suggesting a "human sacrifice to end all human sacrifices."[28]

Many scholars have addressed the problem of whether or not human sacrifice actually occurred in ancient Greece. The most recent account is by Dennis Hughes, Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece. Here, Hughes considers the literary and archaeological evidence for human sacrifice with skepticism, and concludes by discussing the roles human sacrifice may have played in the thoughts of the Greeks, asserting that,

> ...whatever opinion we may form about the extent of the practice in actuality, clearly many of the ancients themselves believed that human sacrifices had been performed on Greek soil in the past, and clearly human sacrifice enjoyed a thriving existence as an idea throughout antiquity.[29]

It is the *idea* of human sacrifice that informs the interpretation of these vases. Like so many of the other adversaries of Herakles, Busiris is shown to be a creature who transgresses a Greek sense of acceptable behavior. Uniquely, artistic representations of the thwarted sacrifice actually suggest the atrocity which Busiris attempts to commit.

Scholars such as Albert Henrichs have shown that the Greeks were uncomfortable with the practice of human sacrifice.

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[28]Hughes (1991), 188.

[29]Hughes (1991), 188.

> Human victims in Greek religion are primarily an ideal construct of the imagination. They represent the most extreme form of sacrifice, which was rarely if ever realized. Whether actually practiced or merely imagined, human sacrifice was invariably considered abnormal and deviant, and was kept at a safe distance.[30]

This 'safe distance' was achieved by locating the occurrences of human sacrifice in the remote past or at a great geographical distance. Herodotus' writings abound with stories of the ritual killing of human victims and cannibalism as practised by peoples at the boundaries of the Greek world.[31] These ritual practices serve to differentiate the Greeks from the world around them and form part of a definition of uncivilized behavior. Of course, it is 'uncivilized' because it is opposed to the behavior of the Greeks with their own 'civilized' ritual practices.

The myth of Busiris, a foreign king, both defines uncivilized barbarian behavior in terms of human sacrifice, and successfully removes this threat to a safe distance temporally and spatially. In the myth, human sacrifice is located long before and outside the civilized Greek *polis*, during the age of heroes and in Egypt. The artistic renditions of this myth on vases clearly reinforce this conception by representing Busiris and his attendants as physically distinct and therefore non-Greek.[32] This is evidenced by the

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[30]Henrichs (1980), 232.

[31]For accounts of cannibalism see 1.216, 3.38, 3.99, 4.18, 4.26, 4.106. For human sacrifice see 4.62, 4.103, 5.5, 7.114.

[32]This aspect of the images is particularly interesting when we consider that the Greeks appear to have had little if no interest in describing the physical characteristics of foreign peoples in their literature. Even the great ethnographer Herodotus did not include many physical characteristics of the peoples he describes. According to Alan Lloyd (1988), 243, "[Herodotus], like

elongated and shaved heads of the men in another cup by Epiktetos in London (fig. 32) or the distinctive facial features and attempt at depicting short, curly hair on a red figure stamnos in Oxford (fig. 35). The Egyptians are illustrated attempting to perform a ritual which is considered opposed to Greek practices. It is through the depiction of inappropriate ritual action associated with a non-Greek people on these vases that the idea of the 'barbarian' is made manifest. Artistic representations of Herakles triumphing provide a comforting image of the destruction of a barbarian threat. In such scenes, Greek culture and sacrificial practice are seen to prevail.

5. Servitude

Although Herakles does not face Eurystheus as an adversary, the two figures are connected in an important way and are sometimes seen together in the artistic images. According to the *Iliad*, because of Hera's stratagems, Zeus's declaration that the first male child of his blood, born that day, would be a great ruler of men, led to the supremacy of Eurystheus over Herakles.[33] In one variant of the story, as atonement for the murder of his own children, a

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other Greeks, did not regard this issue as an important part or his perception of the non-Greek, and racial prejudice, in the strict sense of the term, became an impossibility." It would appear that on the vases, physical details serve to differentiate and identify the king and his attendants and suggest no value judgement. It is their actions that serve as markers for their savagery.

See also Snowden (1970) for a discussion of depictions of the physical characteristics of non-Greeks, and specifically Ethiopians, in ancient art and literature.

[33]Homer, *Iliad* 19.95-133.

crime committed in a fit of madness sent by Hera, Herakles was instructed by the oracle at Delphi to live in Tiryns and to serve Eurystheus, king of Mycenae. Eurystheus, feeling threatened by Herakles' strength and ability, devised a series of difficult tasks for the hero which, the king hoped, would lead to Herakles' death.

Eurystheus appears in images with Herakles in connection with these deeds. Most numerous are representations of the king attempting to hide, with Herakles carrying or leading in a menacing beast (figs. 52 and 71-76). In Chapter 2.1, I discussed the significance of scenes of Herakles confronting Eurystheus with the Erymanthian Boar, concluding that they suggest a contrast between Herakles' mastery over forces of savagery and the ineffectuality of Eurystheus. A scene like that on a Caeretan hydria of about 520 B.C., showing Herakles terrorizing Eurystheus with a particularly frightening-looking Cerberus, while the king is hiding again in a jar, probably borrows from the pictorial scheme of the boar scenes and certainly suggests the same interpretation (fig. 52).

It is interesting that there are not more scenes which include Eurystheus. Those that do include the king never show him in a position of superiority to or even equality with Herakles. Although the artist and viewer knew that according to the myth, Herakles served Eurystheus, the artist seems to go out of his way to show a different conception of the relationship between the hero and the king.

As in many representations of the deeds of Herakles, a contrast is suggested by the composition, but it is not the one that we expect. Herakles' enslavement and inferiority are ignored and instead the

situation is reversed. This reversal suggests that no matter what the position of Herakles is with relationship to other humans, it is to be understood that he will always prevail.

In the mythical biography of Herakles, servitude is an unusual motif.[34] The hero serves Eurystheus and later Omphale, both sentences an atonement for an act of murder.[35] Although there are no artistic representations of Herakles' enslavement to Omphale in the archaic period and literary sources are later, a brief consideration of the myth provides some commentary on the theme of servitude in general.

The story of Omphale is a variation of the theme of servitude and means for Herakles a reversal of his role as exemplar of a Greek male ideal. However, it is not that simple. Although during his enslavement to Omphale, Herakles dressed as a woman, this is not to be taken merely as a sign of some effeminacy in his nature, or the exploration of the male vs. female.[36] To the contrary, it is in some sense an assertion of the hero's manhood. In archaic Greek societies dressing up as a woman was sometimes a feature of rites of passage

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[34]Kirk (1970), 185.

[35]G.S Kirk (1970), 185, conjectures that the motif of enslavement was caused by a combination of motives: "intentional paradox (the strongest man becomes a slave... to a woman), narrative convenience (how to subject him to so many dangerous and distant quests), and historicizing reminiscence (for his city of Tiryns was probably a dependency of Eurystheus' Mycenae)."

[36] See Loraux (1990), for further discussion of this interpretation. On the frequency in the myths with which one encounters Herakles in the service of women, or at least in the service of female will, Loraux says "...one must recognize that there is some necessity that drives Herakles and requires that he receive everything, even his heroic stature, from women," 27. Loraux concludes that the "Greeks... used the story of Herakles to pose the problem of their status as sexed creatures endowed with political power," 49.

and signaled that a man had reached the age of maturity and marriage.[37] It should also be remembered that it was as a consequence of Herakles' unbridled lust and excessive violence (desire for Iole and murder of her brother Iphitos, violating laws of guest friendship), qualities that mark Herakles as "the ultimate man, hyperendowed with testosterone,"[38] that the hero ended up enslaved to a woman. Although Herakles was required by Omphale to perform tasks normally carried out by slave girls, he continued to use his great strength to function in his usual capacity as a civilizing male hero by performing deeds dispatching foes such as Syleus.[39]

Herakles becomes inferior to one who is considered inferior by Greek society's standards. This position of weakness is thereby contrasted with the great strength of the hero. Not only are the oppositions of slave and master, strong and weak, male and female highlighted, but these same oppositions are shown to be contained within the hero himself as contradictory aspects of his nature.

Thus, for Herakles, servitude is a way in which both the internal contradictions of the hero's own nature are explored and an external contrast is created between the position and meaning of master and slave. Returning to the images of Eurystheus and Herakles, the artist has suggested many levels of meaning by subverting a relationship that already embodies a reversal.

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[37]Vidal-Naquet (1986), 116.

[38]Dowden, (1992), 140.

[39]See Brommer (1984), 28-37, for a brief discussion of the deeds that Herakles performed in the service of Omphale.

Although he is the slave to this king, Herakles transcends the human power struggle and is the master of forces of much greater significance than Eurystheus could ever control.

With Eurystheus and Omphale, two human antagonists, Herakles does not triumph in the usual way, by destruction or subjugation. Instead, he survives his position of servitude intact by virtue of his heroic qualities.

6. Other Encounters

Like Kyknos, the home of the Kerkopes lay to the north en route to Thrace and the horses of Diomedes. As Herakles was sleeping, the Kerkopes tried to steal his weapons. Herakles awoke, caught the two trouble-makers and tied them upside down to a pole from which they dangled as he carried it over his shoulder. From such a vantage point, the Kerkopes had a good view of Herakles' black, hairy bottom, and joked so relentlessly about it, that even Herakles laughed and let them go.[40]

The artistic images show Herakles with the pole over his shoulder and the Kerkopes hanging upside down (figs. 136-139). The Kerkopes are always shown smaller than the hero. On a volute krater by the Geras Painter in Munich, the Kerkopes are so small so

[40]Since the literary accounts of this deed date from later than the archaic period, I have not considered the specific details of the story which they relate. Instead, this discussion is confined to a consideration of the myth in its most general terms as it is reflected in vases depicting the episode surviving from the archaic period. See Brommer (1984) 28-32 for bibliography and brief discussion of the literary sources.

as to appear childlike by comparison with the big, burly Herakles depicted (fig. 139).

The depictions emphasize Herakles' strength and may even suggest an interest in a burlesque view of the hero's deeds (a view that is certainly important in fifth century comedy). In general, there is a striking contrast between the large and powerful Herakles and the smaller and helpless Kerkopes, suggesting once again Herakles' inevitable triumph over human adversaries committing crimes. However, in this lighthearted myth, the crime is only the theft of some weapons, and the perpetrators are subsequently released. The artist chose the moment when Herakles was in control, yet the viewer may have guessed that the Kerkopes were already telling their lurid jokes, creating a scene with the same light mood as the myth.

Herakles visited Oichalia and in an archery contest won the right to marry the daughter of famed archer Eurytos, king of Oichalia.[41] The king refused to give the promised prize and was destroyed along with his sons. Herakles returned home with the daughter, Iole, whose presence aroused the jealousy of Herakles' wife Deianeira, which ultimately led to the death of the hero.

There are only a few images of Herakles and the sons of Eurytos on late archaic vases (figs. 140-144). Herakles is always shown attacking his hosts in Oichalia, usually with the bow and arrow which won him the denied prize. Clearly these scenes

[41]On the location of Oichalia see Chapter 2, n.1.

emphasize Herakles' strength and ability. Alone, he can dispatch a whole series of enemies.

In two scenes, on a black figure amphora in Madrid by the Sappho Painter (fig. 140) and on a red figure stamnos by the Eucharides Painter in Basel (fig. 141), the archery contest is conflated with the subsequent slaughter. In the Madrid amphora, Herakles takes aim at a target full of arrows beside the neck of Iole. Two sons have already fallen to the ground and a third son rushes towards the hero with Eurytos, whose gestures indicate a plea for mercy. The other scene shows the target with an arrow in it at Iole's breast. Both of these schemes seem odd for their placement of the target, but Iole may be so closely associated with the target because she represents Herakles' deprived *timé.* The arrow in the target on Iole's breast may allude to the winner's immediate possession of the maiden/prize.[42] The composition equates the maiden with the target, increasing the dramatic tension of the scene by emphasizing the validity of Herakles' claim.

Herakles is seen to slaughter Eurytos and his sons because they have committed a crime by depriving the hero of his rightful prize and therefore his *timé,* as well as having violated the *xenos* relationship. These are both serious transgressions of civilized Greek custom and tradition. Although these adversaries are not 'monstrous', as are many of the other human opponents whom Herakles encounters, they are still worthy of punishment for their failure to exhibit proper civilized behavior.

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[42]Richard Olmos, 'Eurytos I' in LIMC IV, 119.

This aspect of the story is further emphasized in the latest archaic representations of this episode which show members of Eurytos' family with certain Asian features (Phrygian cap, gortyos, long tunic, mottled skin), possibly derived from the attributes and costumes of Scythian archers, suggesting their status as barbarians and providing an explanation for their 'ungreek' behavior. On a cup in Palermo (fig. 143), and on the stamnos in Basel discussed above (fig. 141), Eurytos' sons wear some pieces of clothing associated with Asian dress, such as the caps and animal skins. Richard Olmos has suggested that, because these vases date roughly to the time of the Persians wars, these events "may have influenced a particular reinterpretation or use of the myth, which would have served as a paradigm of the opposition between Greeks and barbarians. Thus Herakles alone was capable of defeating a disordered and chaotic crowd of antagonists."[43]

The only other scene of this episode shows Herakles at a banquet with Iole and Eurytos (figs. 145 and 146). It is interesting in that it shows Herakles rapt with desire for Iole, hinting at the reason Herakles found it necessary to kill Eurytos and his sons when he was denied this prize and to risk the (lethal) ire of his wife by bringing Iole home with him. Herakles' desire is invoked on this vase as a motive for his own eventual destruction.

Although there are no surviving literary sources for Herakles' encounter with Geras, Alan Shapiro suggests a reconstruction of the

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[43]Richard Olmos, 'Eurytos I' in LIMC IV, 119.

basic elements of the narrative based on the artistic representations on vases. The story appears to run as follows: Herakles and Geras meet and converse; there is an exchange of verbal threats (fig. 147); Geras tries to escape and is pursued by Herakles (fig, 148); Geras is caught and physically menaced or subdued by Herakles (figs. 149 and 150). There is no indication as to how the story ended.[44]

It would appear from the artistic images, which show Geras as a deformed and feeble opponent, that the defeat of such a pathetic creature is anything but heroic. On a red figure pelike in Rome, Geras is small and frail and appears bent and deformed (fig. 147). Geras looks even more grotesque and helpless on a pelike by the Geras Painter in Paris, where he is walking with a cane and appealing to Herakles, who is about to club him, with an outstretched hand (fig. 150). To explain this incongruity, scholars suggest that Geras actually prevailed in the end with skillful speaking, a resolution not unlike the escape of the Kerkopes, who used humor to reverse their fortunes. If these scenes are based on a comedy or satyr play, they may not indicate the triumph of the hero but rather reflect the comic possibilities of such an encounter.[45] In three of the images illustrated here (figs. 147, 149 and 150), Geras' genitalia are grossly exaggerated, enhancing the comic effect as well as possibly suggesting Geras' true potency as an adversary.

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[44]H. Alan Shapiro, 'Geras' in LIMC IV, 181-2.

[45]See H. Alan Shapiro's article on Geras in LIMC IV, 181-2, for a survey of interpretations and bibliography.

Like depictions of some of Herakles' other human adversaries, Geras represents a threatening image of deformity of the ideal human form. This is more ominous because depictions of him vividly illustrate the fact that he personifies the effects of the passage of time on man, suggesting that a similar distortion will effect everyone. Geras' appearance is frightening because it represents the future in terms of grotesque realism. However, Herakles escapes this fate by means of early death and immortality on Olympos. In fact, once there he marries Hebe, the personification of youth.[46] Given the fate of Herakles, it seems reasonable to assume that whatever the narrative that these images represent, Herakles must have prevailed in his encounter with Geras. Using the images as evidence alone, the contrast of the vigorous and youthful hero with the decrepit Geras suggests once again the triumph of Greek ideals, as embodied in Herakles, over the forces that threaten them.

Representations of Herakles' encounters with anthropomorphic adversaries on archaic Greek vases offer a unique view of the meaning of such episodes in the Greek imagination. Depictions of these human foes can be used to represent the most threatening and divisive aspects of human nature. Unlike visual representations of

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46 ...[Herakles] himself among the immortal
gods enjoys their festivals, married to sweet-stepping
Hebe, child of great Zeus and Hera of the golden sandals.

Homer *Odyssey* 11.602-4. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 183. These lines may be later additions to the text. See the LIMC V, 131-2, 'Herakles Death and Apotheosis,' by John Boardman.

beasts, through which the artist can indulge his imagination and create manifestations of natural savage phenomena, artistic renditions of human foes can represent threats that are more immediate and dangerous because of the greater physical correspondence between the imaginary perpetrator and the Greek man. The Greek artist and viewer found in the images of Herakles confronting and battling anthropomorphic opponents an opportunity to understand better the destructive impulses inherent in human beings. Such visual expressions signify an active exploration of the conditions of humanity and the boundaries of civilized behavior in archaic Greece.

Chapter 4

Herakles' Behavior

Until now, I have concentrated on visual representations of Herakles' encounters with other creatures and the external conflicts these episodes represent. However, as I stated in the Introduction, Herakles is an especially appropriate vehicle through which to explore the opposition of Greek and non-Greek, not merely because of his encounters with provocative adversaries, but because this hero embodies so many contradictions within his own character.

Because few visual images explicitly indicate the more negative side of Herakles' characterization, it requires a more subtle investigation of the artistic representations to detect hints of the less ideal Herakles that we know from later literary accounts.[1] In this section I shall deal less with the specific iconography, concentrating on analysis of the overall characterization of Herakles as we know it from literary and artistic sources.

As we have seen, artistic representations of Herakles' actions tend to show the hero performing some deed which illustrates or emphasizes his own heroic and Greek qualities, while often serving to define what is non-Greek by comparison. Inherent in these images is

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[1]I am referring here, for example, to Herakles' slaughter of his own family, his violation of the *xenos* relationship, and his grossly exaggerated sexual desires and appetite for food, events and behavior that become the subject of both comedies and tragedies during the fifth century.

the idea of opposition, an idea that can, with the help of other ancient sources, be extended to the character of the hero himself.[2]

1. Ancient Literature

The ancient literary sources tend to show many aspects of the hero, both positive and negative. In the *Odyssey*, Herakles is portrayed as a 'barbaric' transgressor who commits horrible acts of hubris and violence.

> Iphitos was there in search of his horses, twelve mares
> he had lost; hard-working mule colts were with them,
> nursing.
> These mares presently were to mean his doom and
> murder,
> at the time when he came to the son of Zeus, strong
> hearted,
> the man called Herakles, guilty of monstrous actions,
> who killed Iphitos while he was a guest in his household;
> hard man, without shame for the watchful gods, for the
> table
> he had set for Iphitos, his guest; and when he had killed
> him
> he kept the strong-footed horses for himself in his palace.
> ...the son of Zeus killed
> Iphitos, son of Eurytos, one like the immortal gods.[3]

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[2]I consider only briefly the ancient literary sources, since extensive work has been done on this topic. The broadest surveys can be found in Galinsky (1972) and (1986), Mullen (1986) and Murray (1946). In addition, my bibliography includes many references to other, more specific, works dealing with ancient literary sources for Herakles. For the present discussion, I rely on the unanimously accepted interpretation of these sources, that Herakles is a hero characterized by many contradictions. Fuller discussions of these conclusions can be found in Kirk (1970), (1975) and (1977) and Loraux (1990), all of which will be referred to in this chapter.

[3]Homer *Odyssey* 21.22-38. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 309-10.

In these lines, Herakles violates the *xenos* relationship. He is characterized as one who commits 'monstrous actions', with no regard for the gods. Thus, his behavior is clearly contrary to the customs and expectations of a civilized Greek. As a result, he is judged harshly and condemned.

In Book 11, Odysseus encounters Herakles in Hades, and the author describes Herakles' baldric and its decoration in such a way as to suggest that the scenes depicted upon it are too horrible for viewing. In essence, the hero is defined by the images on this baldric. The fierceness of Herakles is transferred to the decoration on his armor.[4] He is characterized as a purely destructive force. There is no mention of motive or consequence; no beneficial result or justified killing:

> There was a terrible belt crossed over [Herakles'] chest, and a golden
> baldrick, with marvelous works of art that figured upon it,
> bears, and lions with glaring eyes, and boars of the forests,
> the battles and the quarrels, the murders and the manslaughters.
> May he who artfully designed them, and artfully put them
> upon that baldrick, never again do any designing.[5]

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[4]Galinsky (1972), 13.

[5]Homer *Odyssey* 11.609-614. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 183-4.

In the *Theogony* Herakles is mentioned in digressions, where the emphasis is on the hero as a monster slayer, but in such a way that he is portrayed as a savior through these deeds. Herakles is mentioned in connection with Geryon (289-294, 982-3), the Hydra (313-318), the Nemean Lion (327-332), and Prometheus (526-532).[6] Much as in the visual representations of these deeds, in every case, Herakles is seen as a beneficent force, ridding the world of harmful monsters and in the last case, relieving Prometheus of his suffering. Towards the end of the *Theogony*, (in a section considered by some 'post-hesiodic'),[7] we are told of Herakles' reward for the life of hardship he endured and the great deeds he accomplished:

> Herakles, the strong and courageous son
> of light-stepping
> Alkmene, after he had completed
> his sorrowful labours,
> took the daughter of great Zeus
> and Hera of the golden
> sandals, Hebe, as his modest wife
> on snowy Olympus,
> blessed he, who having ended his long work,
> lives now
> among the immortals, without sorrow,
> ageless all his days always.[8]

Hesiod's *Theogony* provides our first glimpses of Herakles as the civilizing culture hero, performing acts that benefit mankind. His

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[6]English translations of these lines can be found in sections of this work dealing with the specific deed referred to.

[7]See LIMC V entry on 'Herakles' Death and Apotheosis' by John Boardman, 131-2, for a discussion of the value of the ancient sources referring to Herakles' introduction to Olympus.

[8]Hesiod *Theogony* 950-5. Translated by Lattimore (1957), 181-2.

tendencies toward extreme and sometimes savage behavior have little place here. With the *Shield of Herakles*, we see the hero in an overwhelmingly positive light. He fights for a just cause, divinely sanctioned, against a 'monstrous' foe.[9]

I have referred to Pindar many times in order to establish a broader mythical context for some of the images of Herakles' deeds. Most of the passages cited describe Herakles as a force for good and an exemplar of the Greek ideals of physical strength and ability. Primarily, he is a doer of great and praiseworthy deeds, although these deeds may have varied connotations to them. In some odes Herakles' violence is emphasized through his role as manslaughterer and monster-slayer, while in others he is the civilizing hero who clears the land, establishes sacred spaces and founds festivals. This contrast is especially clear in *Olympian* 10, where several acts of violence committed by Herakles are described before we are told that it was this very hero who founded the Olympic Games.

> A few have won joy without effort,
> a radiance on life
> outshining every achievement.
> But Zeus' sacred right moves me to sing
> of his favored contest,
> which Herakles established
> to be held in six events
> near Pelop's ancient barrow.
> It was after he had cut down
> Kteatos, Poseidon's unblemished son,
> and Eurytos-willing work for his hand,

[9]Karl Galinsky (1972), 19, says of *The Shield of Herakles*: "Using Homeric form, it discards the negative heritage of the hero and establishes him as the resplendent victor.".

> to make proud Augeas pay
> unwilling wages for a slavish task.
> In the wood beneath Kleonai
> Herakles waited, and when
> Molione's arrogant sons passed along the road,
> he slew them, avenging the destruction they had wrought
> on his Tirynthian army, as it lay encamped
> in the deep vales of Elis.
>
> Then Zeus' warlike son drew his entire host
> together in Pisa,
> all the booty skimmed
> from the heap of battle.
> He marked out a precinct sacred
> to his father,
> fenced the Altis apart in the clear
> and made the plain around a place for feasting.[10]

Pindar also envisions Herakles as a god, having received immortality on Olympus and the bride Hebe as a reward for a life of service to mankind:

> [Teiresias] prophesied he would enjoy unbroken peace
> for all time,
> repose in the god's blissful hall,
> a perfect reward for his vast labors,
> with lovely Hebe for his bride;
> and that, having celebrated his wedding at the side
> of Zeus, son of Kronos, he would praise the sacred law.[11]

As this brief survey of literature suggests, Herakles could be and was envisioned as a beneficent savior, triumphant victor and

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[10]Pindar *Olympian* 10. 22-33, 43-48. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 131-2.

[11]Pindar *Nemean* 1.69-72. Translated by Nisetich (1980), 236. See also *Nemean* 10.17-18 and *Isthmian* 4.55-60.

powerful adversary, as well as a transgressor of Greek custom and law and perpetrator of excessive violence. Although the actions of the hero do not change, the perceptions and descriptions of them do change from one ancient source to the next.

2. Artistic Images

The artistic images do not share an interest in the negative aspects of Herakles' behavior with the literary sources. However, both images and literature do agree in portraying the hero, at times, clearly as a destructive force. Yet destruction and violence can have both good and bad results. In many acts of violence, Herakles kills innocent victims for no reason. In some instances, his strength seems to overwhelm him and he becomes crazed.[12] But these are not the episodes that interest the artists. In the images, most of Herakles' violence is directed towards visual manifestations of forces that threaten Greek civilization in one way or another. In such scenes, it is difficult to detect any negative characterization of the hero.

Herakles' mythical biography is full of instances where the hero is put into positions of inferiority and weakness. This tendency seems to be in direct opposition to the expected position of a hero characterized by great strength and ability. Although the iconography rarely suggests Herakles' inferiority, it may be possible

[12]Kirk (1975) 198.

to detect some hints of a less advantageous position for the greatest of all Greek heroes.

As we saw in Chapter 3.5, Herakles is sometimes put in servitude to a master. Eurystheus, the only such master illustrated on the archaic vases, is always depicted in a setting suggesting that he is somehow inferior to his own servant, Herakles (figs 52 and 71-76). Although the images suggest that in the world of deeds, Herakles is superior to Eurystheus, the very presence of Eurystheus is a reminder of Herakles' servitude and inferior position in this relationship.

Herakles' encounter with Geras constitutes another ambiguous image. As discussed in Chapter 3.6, there is no indication as to how this meeting was resolved in the presumably now lost narrative of the event. Although I concluded that we should regard Herakles as ultimately triumphant, these images may in fact refer to an episode in which the hero is overcome by the personification of old age. In any event, the fact that we have no hint of resolution in the imagery, although this may possibly be a result of the vicissitudes of preservation, suggests that there was no clear-cut triumph of the hero in the story (figs. 147-150). At the time of their encounter, it appears that Geras was actually a threat to Herakles. As long as he was mortal, Herakles was certainly subject to the effects of this opponent, and therefore in a position inferior to him.

The Kerkopes represent another instance where the hero does not triumph in the traditional way; instead, he succumbs to the jests of two absurd creatures. The images of this episode always show Herakles as larger than, and therefore presumably superior to, the

Kerkopes (figs. 136-139). Yet we know that Herakles released. These scenes may be merely lighthearted references to one of the more comic episodes in Herakles' mythology, but, as with scenes including Eurystheus, the relationship represented in the imagery is a reversal of the actual situation. Although Herakles is clearly in control and triumphant here, the viewer knows that the Kerkopes escape unharmed in the end, essentially making a fool of Herakles.

When Herakles visits Oichalia and is denied his prize won fairly in an archery contest, his response is to kill the man who has denied it to him, along with all of his sons. Although this man, Eurytos, was clearly in the wrong, Herakles' reaction is excessive. In my discussion of this encounter in Chapter 3.6, I mentioned that Eurytos had violated the *xenos* relationship, but Herakles too might be considered to have violated this Greek practice. His reaction is impulsive and extreme. The artistic images support this view by showing the hero alone facing numerous adversaries (figs. 140, 141,144 and particularly 142). Although this may be regarded as a sign of Herakles' extraordinary physical ability and even an affirmation of his response, if one reads the fact that Herakles can subdue so many foes alone as suggesting that he fights with right on his side, it also suggests that the hero cannot stop his rampage of slaughter until every last relative of Eurytos (save the daughter, Iole) is destroyed. Karl Schefold sees this act as one of hubris that is in keeping with the kinds of uncontrollable, destructive behavior that result in the hero's demise. "In the Herakles legend, the winning of Iole through the slaying of Eurytos and his sons is the most savage

expression of the hero's passionate nature, which must inevitably lead to his death."[13]

The Corinthian krater where Herakles catches sight of Iole at the banquet (fig.146) suggests the adulterous lust that leads to the slaughter of Eurytos as pictured in other scenes. Later authors, such as Sophocles and Euripides, focus on Herakles' inordinate sexual desire as the motivation for this act of violence.[14]

3. Contradictions in Herakles' Nature

The composite picture we get of Herakles from ancient sources is of a hero full of contradictions. As G.S. Kirk maintains in

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[13]Schefold (1992), 161.

[14]In Sophocles' *The Trachinian Women*, Herakles is clearly implicated as a transgressor who has used deception and excessive force to attain Iole, an inappropriate prize to bring home to his wife and family.

> ...for the sake
> of this girl Heracles destroyed Eurytus
> and his high-towered Oechalia; and, of the Gods, it was
> Love alone who bewitched him into this violence-
> not his laborious service in Lydia for Omphale,
> nor the fact that Iphitus was hurled to his death-
> it was Love, whom he brushes aside in this new version.
> But the truth is that when he could not persuade the father
> to give the child to him for his secret bed,
> he fabricated a petty complaint, an excuse
> to campaign against the girl's country, and sacked
> the city. And now, as you see, he is coming home
> and has sent her here, not without a reason, lady,
> and not to be a slave. You must not expect that!
> It would not be likely if he is inflamed with desire.
> 352-368
>
> Translated by Jameson (1969), 85.

See also Euripides *Hippolytos* 545.

"Methodological Reflexions on the Myths of Heracles", although all Greek heroes are contradictory to some extent, Herakles represents a more markedly contradictory nature.[15] In an earlier work, Kirk states that he believes that later literary interference "...can and often does completely alter the purports of a traditional myth."[16] Yet for all the careful scrutiny and organization to which the biography of Herakles was subjected by later authors, the numerous, distinctive contradictions remained intact. Kirk concludes that "...the contradictions were so conspicuous in the pre-Homeric oral tradition, were so obviously felt to be an essential part of his mythical persona, that little attempt was made to reduce or suppress them."[17] Kirk provides a useful summary list of some important contradictions:

humane	bestial
serious	burlesque
sane	mad
salutary	destructive
free	slave
human	divine[18]

(to which Nicole Loraux adds

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[15]Kirk (1977), 286.

[16]Kirk (1970), 50.

[17]Kirk (1977), 286.

[18]Kirk (1977), 286.

virile feminine)[19]

Herakles is clearly comprised of a complex mix of paradoxical qualities. It is this mixture that appears to be most characteristic of the hero. Because contradictions and inconsistency are so prevalent in his nature, they suggest some underlying thematic unity that may reveal deeper meanings.

To uncover these meanings, we may concentrate on those contradictions that appear to be most pronounced in the hero. Herakles is the brutish, excessive 'beast'-hero. As evidenced in the iconography, he is often compared to or even equated with animals. Some of the features of Herakles' characterization that are especially pronounced in the visual imagery are Herakles' ability to wrestle on equal terms with monsters, the fact that he at some point adopts the "dress" of a lion, and he carries a club which is reminiscent of centaurs. In later literary sources, particularly fifth century comedy, we are told of the hero's hairiness, and his great appetite for food, drink and sex, all qualities and characteristics which are more reminiscent of a great beast than of a hero approaching divinity.

Although such a 'beast'-hero characterization of Herakles is not explicit in the artistic images of the archaic period, he is often seen to encounter beasts, human beings and quasi-human adversaries that embody the qualities of bestiality, savagery and animality that have also been associated with the hero's behavior. In some cases, these

[19]Loraux (1990), 24. See the Introduction.1 for a brief discussion of this article.

encounters serve equally to represent Herakles' connection to these qualities as well as his opposition to them.

Confrontations between the hero and these savage 'others' suggests that Herakles himself is characterized by similar non-Greek and uncivilized behavior. In particular, we have seen that this is the case with visual representations of Herakles' struggle with the Nemean lion.[20] In addition, a special relationship between Herakles and the centaurs seems to exist, based on the number and frequency of Herakles' encounters with these creatures, as attested to by the artistic images of the sixth century.[21] It is through association with the centaurs, who themselves serve as vehicles through which to explore ambivalence about animality, savagery and the relationship between Nature and Culture, that Herakles comes to represent similar concerns.[22] Given these specific examples, it may be that visual representations of the enemies of Herakles who threaten Greek civilization, juxtaposed with the image of the hero, suggest more than a simple contrast but also certain negative qualities that we are meant also to recognize in the hero himself.

4. Herakles as a Model for Hellas

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[20]Chapter 2.2

[21]See Chapter 2.3 and Kirk (1977) 287-288 for a fuller discussion of such a relationship.

[22]See Chapter 2.3 for a brief discussion of the role of centaurs in Greek mythology.

Herakles, a Greek himself, transgresses the 'unwritten' laws of Greece and performs acts of excessive 'hubris' because he is a hero and subject to standards different than those for ordinary Greek men. As he surpasses ordinary men in excellence he does so in aberrations as well.[23] Therefore he represents a model of two extreme possibilities for human behavior. Herakles' Greek identity allows the messages that his actions and characterization convey to be phrased in recognizable terms. The Greeks benefit from the example of another Greek, whether he serves as a paradigm or warning.

The same concern with recognizability is evidenced in the opponents of Herakles. The 'alien' adversaries that he confronts are never purely imaginary fabrications, but are always grounded in reality. Realistic and familiar ingredients combined in such a way as to create a monstrous effect, provoke more fear because of their recognizability. As François Hartog put it "....a monster is always a combination of elements which are familiar, and it is even desirable that every single element should be familiar so that the combination of them will be altogether monstrous."[24] Familiarity takes precedence over the monstrous effect.

Both literary and artistic depictions of Herakles illustrating his dual nature, underline an exploration of the division of man and beast, 'civilized' and 'savage'. Such depictions express real anxiety

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[23]See Dowden (1992), 140 on the Greek idea of an "awful and extreme model of heroism."

[24]Hartog (1988), 250.

about the narrow gap between the world of men and that of beasts, as the Greeks recognize the ease with which man can behave like a beast, and 'civilized' can revert to 'savage'. The iconography of Herakles is infused with this ambivalence. The artist portrays the hero, who himself internalizes the conflict of civilized and savage, on vases as an example for all Greeks, and through the vivid renditions of his actions, suggests to the viewer that the result is destructive.

The literary sources and the artistic representations agree in presenting the hero as a potentially destructive force. It may be that visual renditions of Herakles serves as a warning of the dangers of the mixture of uncivilized and human that is manifest in his characterization. In her study, "The Herakles Motif in Classical Art," Jaimee Uhlenbrock claims that "...Herakles served to illustrate the consequences of transgression and virtue; and representations of him in art were a constant reminder of these opposing elements of human nature."[25] Herakles' savage side, although only hinted at in the artistic imagery, is a necessary part of his nature, in order for the Greeks to explore the extremes of uncivilized behavior more fully, and by contrast understand and explicate what it is that defines civilized behavior.

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[25]Uhlenbrock (1986b), 7

Chapter 5

Herakles, Herodotus and Fifth Century Poetry

With the fifth century comes an increasing awareness for all Greeks of what it means to be Greek and non-Greek as well as increasing exploration of this opposition in literature. The two poles are more clearly differentiated, creating for the first time a concrete, encapsulated definition of the non-Greek, the barbarian. This dichotomy can be detected in both the poetry and prose of the period which either explore and describe the nature of the uncivilized and savage barbarian, or elaborate more fully on the qualities of the civilized Greek.

What is interesting for the present examination is the way in which, during the fifth century, the barbarian comes to embody so many of the qualities that were central to the characterization of both Herakles himself and his encounters with others in the archaic period. It was these qualities which the iconography illustrating Herakles' mythical biography in that period seemed designed to explore. In addition, Herakles himself is divested of his more offensive and threatening qualities, as they are increasingly transferred to the barbarian.

1. Herodotus

In the fifth century, Herodotus' *Histories* provide evidence of a growing interest in defining the 'barbarian'. In the *Histories* we can detect in Herodotus the formulation of more definitive boundaries

between the Greek and the non-Greek. What is particularly interesting in light of this study are the details which Herodotus emphasizes when describing the customs, rituals and characteristics of certain non-Greek peoples. Many of these details overlap or coincide with aspects of Herakles' behavior and mythical biography. I believe that this is not an accident and that instead, given the process of exploration of differences between Greek and non-Greek as witnessed in the vase painting of the archaic period, Herodotus was inclined or predisposed to notice certain kinds of details and phenomena and record these as keys to understanding the 'barbarians' he describes.

a. Kyknos

We have already seen in Chapter 3.1 that there are ways in which we can relate the story of Herakles and Kyknos to later accounts in Herodotus. According to Herodotus, the Scythians worshiped Ares by performing human sacrifice. In addition, Ares' special status among the Scythians is indicated by the fact that alone of the gods they worship, he has a shrine and image dedicated to him.[1] It may be that Ares can be identified as so central for the Scythians because he is marginal in Greece.[2] It would be more difficult for Herodotus to report such practices as human sacrifice in association with a more prominent and primary Greek deity.

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[1]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.59,62.

[2]Hartog (1988), 192.

In returning to the story of Kyknos, son of Ares, and according to literary sources, inclined to practice his own form of human sacrifice in honor of his father, we may detect in this figure a 'proto-Scythian'. Given that in the sixth century, according to Stesichoros, Ares could be associated with the slaughter of strangers and the dedication of their skulls, it is not unreasonable that Herodotus would identify an almost similar ritual for the worship of Ares among a barbarian people noted for their brutality and mutilation of war victims and enemies.[3]

b. Human Sacrifice

When he is describing the Egyptians (see passage A in Appendix), Herodotus actually recounts the story of Herakles and Busiris. Based on his observation of the sacrificial practices of the Egyptians, he is skeptical about the veracity of the account . For Herodotus, the account serves as an example of the inaccuracies that abound in the stories of the Greeks. He is criticizing their ability to reconcile such stories with observable fact. He treats the story of Busiris as though it was believed by the Greeks to reflect historical reality. It is worth noting that Herodotus does not object to the story because of the practice of human sacrifice per se, but because, based on his observations, the Egyptians in particular do not practice it.

The *Histories* contain other references to and accounts of human sacrifice; and in almost every case it is practiced by a non-

[3]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.64-5.

Greek.[4] An accepted practice for 'others', it serves to differentiate Greeks from non-Greeks. In fact, Herodotus pays a great deal of attention to the differences in sacrificial practices of most of the peoples he discusses with any detail. In every case, Greek ritual provides the absent model whereby the Greeks can come to understand alien practices and interpret their 'otherness'. The necessity of comparison to Greek practices suggests that the sacrificial rituals of the Greeks are one important being Greek is defined.[5] Thus, Busiris' attempted sacrifice of Herakles, promoter and ensurer of Greek civilization, was particularly threatening in the sixth century. The action hit 'too close to home', so to speak. However, during the fifth century, when the Egyptians are no longer as distant and strange, the proximity of such a ritual is too uncomfortable, and this story loses credibility. Thought of the practice of human sacrifice is made tolerable by transferring actual practice of it to real barbarians, peoples less understood and further away, or, as in the case of the Persians, peoples felt to be of a particular threat to the Greek way of life.[6] Thereby Herodotus neutralizes its immediate threat.

c. Cannibalism

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[4]See for example 4.62, 4.103, 5.5, 7.114.

[5]We have seen in Chapter 1.1 that Herakles is depicted sacrificing on a white ground lekythos by the Sappho Painter in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 1). In this image the hero is seen at the boundaries of the Greek world performing a specifically Greek ritual and thereby introducing and establishing Greek civilization.

[6]In fact, the Persians become 'The Barbarian Threat' in the fifth century.

There are many accounts of cannibalism in Herodotus; most notably, a whole people, the Androphagoi, is named for the practice.[7] In Chapter 2.4, I argued that the interpretation of Herakles' killing of Diomedes and capture of his man-eating horses is informed by the Greek perception of cannibalism as a barbaric and monstrous act. Herodotus does not tend to judge the practice one way or another when he encounters and describes it, except in the case of the Androphagoi.

> The Man-Eaters have the most savage manner of life of all men; they believe in no justice [*dike*] nor use any law [*nomos*].[8]

This people, which is primarily identified by its practice of cannibalism, is described as without *dike* or *nomos*, two essential elements of Greek civilized life.[9] They are characterized as almost opposed to the Greeks, a rhetoric for constructing 'others' that is not uncommon in Herodotus (see passages B, C and D in Appendix).[10]

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[7]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.18, 106.

[8]Herodotus *Histories,* 4.106. Translated by Grene (1987), 319.

[9]Herodotus certainly agreed with this idea, and it characterizes his explanations of historical phenomena. Alan Lloyd (1988) offers this summary: "To Herodotus the universe was dominated by a moral order (*dike*) which had two interpenetrating dimensions, the human and divine. According to this concept all things and all beings had their allotted time and place, their assigned spheres of action outside which they must not break. Any attempt to upset this order would be visited sooner or later with retribution (*tisis*). It was the obligation of all men to recognize this situation, regulate their behavior by it, and integrate themselves with the cosmic order. If they did so they were *dikaioi*; if they did not, they were *adikoi*. The most common failure was the transgression of boundaries which is often motivated by attitudes which modern writers conventionally, though not perhaps always accurately, described as *hubris*." 233.

[10]Lloyd (1988), 241, describes the whole account of Libyan tribes at 4.168 ff. as "permeated by an acute sense of cultural difference. Indeed, it might be said to

Herodotus' experiences of cannibalism are restricted, as one would expect, to foreign peoples at the boundaries of the Greek world.[11] However, none of the accounts in Herodotus can compare to the graphic description in Pindar frg. 169, and the few vases which show body parts dangling from a horse's mouth (figs. 106 and 107). It would seem that for Herodotus, cannibalism, when geographically remote, is just one more way to distinguish the Greek from the non-Greek. It is not felt to be as threatening now as it was in the sixth century because it has been successfully removed from the Greek world through association with the barbarian.

d. The Nemean Lion, Strangulation and Flaying

Herakles kills the Nemean lion by strangling it because its skin is impervious to weapons. Herodotus, presents one noticeable account of strangulation: as the means by which the Scythians kill sacrificial animals (see passage E in Appendix). This mode of sacrifice is in stark contrast to the Greek practice of blood sacrifice; once again, the detail that Herodotus chooses to include serves to differentiate the two peoples.

Strangulation as a mode of killing is unusual in the literary evidence for ancient Greece. The most notable early example from literature is found in the *Odyssey*, where it is considered a disgraceful form of death and is used for those who have committed particularly shameful acts. In Book 22, Telemachos proposes to hang

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be redolent of paradoxography. Most of what Herodotus chooses to describe is spectacularly at variance with Greek custom."

[11]See for example 1.216, 3.38, 3.99, 4.26.

the women who collaborated with the 'suitors' during his father's absence:

> Now the thoughtful Telemachos began speaking among them:
> 'I would not take away the lives of these creatures by any
> clean death, for they have showered abuse on the head of my mother,
> and on my own head too, and they have slept with the suitors.'
> So he spoke, and taking the cable of a dark-prowed ship,
> fastened it to a tall pillar, and fetched it about the round-house;
> and like thrushes, who spread their wings, or pigeons, who have
> flown into a snare set up for them in a thicket, trying
> to find a resting place, but the sleep given them was hateful;
> so their heads were all in a line, and each had her neck
> caught fast in a noose, so that their death would be most pitiful.
> They struggled with their feet for a little, not for very long.[12]

In the *Histories*, strangulation is only evidenced a few times; in these instances, it is practiced by non-Greeks or tyrants (see passages F, G and H in Appendix).[13] The fact that Herodotus makes the effort to record the means of killing in these accounts suggests that strangulation has a specific value and serves as a marker for certain individuals or peoples, indicating that they are wont to use particularly violent and non-Greek modes of execution. By this

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[12]Homer *Odyssey* 22.461-472. Translated by Lattimore (1991), 333.

[13]Hartog (1988), 181.

equation, strangulation becomes indicative of barbarism, and is one more way in which the 'other' is described and differentiated.

It may be that, already in the sixth century, strangulation had similar connotations, and Herakles' employment of this method of slaughter may suggest his own violent and uncivilized nature. If this is true, then we can surmise that Herodotus was merely adhering to a preconceived notion of strangulation and so was more inclined to relate incidences of it among barbarians.

The same hypothesis can be applied to the practice of flaying. Having killed the Nemean Lion, Herakles flays it with its own claw and wears the skin, which subsequently serves as his most prominent attribute. In the *Histories*, Herodotus describes many instances of the flaying of both sacrificial animals and human enemies, and the wearing of flayed skins (see passages I, J, K and L in Appendix). For the Scythians, displaying the scalps and the flayed skins of the enemy is a sign of valor. The Ethiopians and Thracians, allies of the Persians, wear animal skins as a part of their armament, suggesting that the skins may have apotropaic qualities or they may impart to the human wearer some of the savagery and fierceness original animal. In any event, flaying, scalping and the wearing of animal and human skin are practices of barbarians.

Once again we have an example of an act of Herakles, one extremely popular in the art of the archaic period that provides the hero with his most distinguishing feature, that in the fifth century becomes located emphatically among the barbarians. There are also passages in Herodotus where we find barbarians who wield clubs either for the purpose of sacrifice, or along with animal skins, as war

gear, and thereby they appear equipped just like Herakles himself (see passages M and N in Appendix). What is more, Herodotus even provides an account in which flaying, the wearing of animal skins, barbarians and Herakles are all brought together, suggesting a more concrete association between them (see passage O in Appendix).

e. Excessive Behavior

As we saw in Chapter 4, Herakles behavior was excessive at times. Although the Greek ideal for human conduct was moderation, Herakles' excessiveness is an important aspect of the hero. In the *Histories*, Herodotus often characterizes barbarian peoples as acting in excessive ways. We have already seen many examples of such behavior in his accounts of strangulation, human sacrifice and cannibalism. There are also many more specific examples of excessive behavior in Herodotus' *logoi* that deserve individual consideration (see passages C, P, Q, R and S in Appendix).

One of the indices of 'otherness' or of barbarism in the *Histories* is sexual excess, the extreme manifestation of which is sexual intercourse in the open or in public.[14] In 3.101 (passage C), Herodotus compares the sexual behavior of Indians to animals, suggesting that sex in public is somehow bestial, and certainly contrary to Greek practice. Although there appears to be no value judgement here, this is another way of distinguishing non-Greek peoples, by explicating their excessive and therefore non-Greek

[14]Martin (1991), 518.

behavior. This type of excessive behavior is related to other negative, yet relatively benign examples of excessive behavior in the *Histories*.

In the story of the tent and furnishings of Mardonius (passage P), the Spartan king Pausanias is reported to have made a comparison of Greek simplicity and moderation with Persian extravagance, making the Persians out to be fools. The message is clear: a race with such luxurious practices could not possibly defeat the Greeks and are surely inferior to them.

Herodotus also tells us of cases where excessive behavior has negative consequences. As an explanation for Cleomenes' madness, Herodotus gives the opinion of the Spartans, that heavy drinking, as the Scythian are wont to do, was the cause (passage Q). This account tells us both that the Scythians are characterized by excessive drinking, and that the Spartans believe that such excessive behavior has quite harmful effects on a people such as the Greeks who (ideally) practices moderation in all things. The assumption is that heavy drinking does not have adverse effects on a barbarian people because their behavior is always excessive.

It is also interesting to note that madness is used to explain Cleomenes' excessive violence and abuse of power (see 6.75-83). The only other figure in the *Histories* whose madness is dwelled on is the Persian, and therefore barbarian, tyrant Cambyses, who is also accused of excessive violence and sacrilegious behavior (3.27-37). These two instances of madness have interesting implications when we consider that Herakles was also subject to fits of madness that resulted in excessive violence. For Herodotus, madness is the mark of a despotic ruler who is guilty of multiple transgressions. In the

sixth century, Herakles' madness is one more manifestation of the forces that are felt to threaten the Greek way of life.

Although in many cases, barbarians are characterized by excessive behavior that is negative, they can also be described as excessive with regards to positive behavior, such as their observance of religious practices (passage S). It is also the case that barbarian peoples are sometimes found to live a life of ease and plenty, or inhabit land rich and abundant that gives forth food of itself, and so are not subject to the hardships that the Greeks must endure (see passages in T, U, V, W and X in Appendix). The idyllic utopianism that Herodotus creates represents another way of seeing the barbarians as promulgators of an extreme way of life.

The barbarians of the *Histories*, like Herakles before them, represent for the Greeks examples of excessive behavior and its consequences in both its negative and positive manifestations. By the fifth century, when the ideal of moderation (*sophrosyne*) became more prominent, it was safer to remove excessive behavior from the Greek culture and attribute it to the barbarians.[15]

f. The Founding of Scythians

In some of the passages considered so far, one can detect some subtle associations between the mythical biography of Herakles and the Scythians. Herodotus makes this connection explicit in one of his

[15]Of course, Herakles could slaughter his family in Euripides' *Herakles* , but only if the brutality could be explained away (he was afflicted with a madness sent by Hera), and the hero was left innocent. See below 6.2c.

accounts of the foundation of the Scythian people (see passage Y in Appendix).

The account starts with a tie in to the deed in which Herakles must kill Geryon and take his cattle. This mention of Geryon indicates 'distantness' temporally, geographically and culturally. The foundation of the Scythian race is connected with a bygone age, the age of monsters and heroes.[16] Geographical distance is suggested in the passage itself by references to the place where Geryon dwelled, and beyond the passage, the Greeks knew that, while driving Geryon's cattle back to Mycenae, Herakles travelled far and wide and had many and varied encounters.

Once in Scythia, Herakles encounters a creature, half-woman, half-snake, who dwells in a cave, Mixoparthenos, a replica of Echidna from Hesiod's *Theogony*.[17] Herakles had to sleep with this creature in order to retrieve his cattle. He fathers three children by her, the youngest of whom, Scythes, becomes the eponymous founder of the Scythian race.[18] It is extremely interesting that this exemplar of Greek culture can father a barbarian race, and the episode serves to emphasize Herakles' 'barbaric' side. Herakles appears to be an

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[16]Hartog (1988), 25.

[17]See Hesiod *Theogony*, 297-302.

[18]François Hartog (1988), 25, has noted the following reversal: in the *Theogony*, Echidna gives birth to three children whom Herakles kills, the Nemean Lion, Orthos and the Hydra (306-315, 326-327), while in the *Histories*, Herakles fathers three children by an Echidna-like creature. However, Hartog does not elaborate on the significance of the reversal except to say that the question of why the Black Sea Greeks, who tell this version of the foundation of the Scythian people, introduce this reversal has implications beyond the books of Herodotus that deal with the Scythians.

appropriate mate for the snake-woman because he himself partakes of many bestial qualities. He is the 'animal hero' whose behavior is marked by excess, and although he is primarily portrayed as a purger of monsters and a dispenser of civilized life, he is sometimes not even civilized himself.[19] Thus, with an equally ambiguous mate, Herakles can found a race as different from the Greeks as Herodotus tells us the Scythians are.

Both the mythical biography of Herakles as expressed in archaic iconography and Herodotus' *Histories* show an attempt to represent and define the forces at work in the world and how they affect man, and to render these phenomena comprehensible.[20] With Herakles, we have internalized in the hero and externalized in his conflicts manifestations of important opposing forces. The sixth century solution has Herakles conquer, subdue and master any threats. Ultimately for Herodotus, the solution is to deny any place in the Greek world to most aspects of human behavior felt to be threatening, and to locate them instead in the realm of the barbarian. In either case, the hope is that if these forces can be explained and measured, than they can be understood and controlled.[21]

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[19]Hartog (1988), 26.

[20]In fact, according to Jean-Pierre Vernant (1980), p. 202, "[myth] expresses in a different, allegorical or symbolic form the same truth as the logos expresses directly."

[21]Alan Lloyd (1988), 244, describes this dimension of the *Histories* as follows: "On the one hand, the work presents historical manifestations of the cosmic *polemos* to maintain order; on the other, it takes the form of an intense enquiry into the fundamental nature of the two categories of being into which

2. Poetry

In assessing the messages of Herakles' mythical biography, we have looked at many passages from the literature of the archaic period. In general, we obtain a picture of a complex and composite hero who could be many things, both negative and positive. The narrative is usually focused upon the deeds and behavior of Herakles, that is, his external achievements. In the fifth century we see a new development, a growing interest in understanding the motivations of the hero and humanizing him. His internal makeup is carefully explored. Through this process, the hero is stripped of his impulsive and savage side, as it is explained away with the civilizing tendencies of the classical period.[22]

a. Lyric Poetry

The lyric poetry of the fifth century marks a turning point in the characterization of Herakles. The lyric poet turned from the

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the human element in the cosmos was seen to divide [Greek and *barbaros*] and by such mechanisms as *interpretatio Graeca,* the detection of similarities, and the predilection for diffusionism attempts to bring about an accommodation between the two. The subject to the work is, therefore, ultimately neither war nor ethnography; it is the exploration of a major element amongst the dualities which, to Herodotus and countrymen, were built into the very fabric of the universe." As I have attempted to show, the iconography of Herakles in the sixth century presents essentially the same exploration in strikingly similar terms.

[22]As in Chapter 4, I will consider selected examples of 5th century literature only briefly. See Chapter 4 n. 2, for bibliographical recommendations.

without to the within. The hero's inner experiences and values were considered more important than the deeds that led to external fame and glory.[23]

Throughout this work, I have treated Pindar as a poet of the archaic period. But Pindar's treatment of Herakles does add new, post-archaic dimensions to the conception of the hero.[24] In any case, for Pindar, Herakles was the paradigm of true nobility. The poet could strip the hero of his violence and make his motives pure. Although it is Bacchylides who first gives us Herakles as a tragic figure, it is Pindar who begins to justify Herakles' behavior, to 'white-wash' the motives for some of his exploits and to make him a citizen of the *polis*. However, ultimately Pindar uses Herakles in his victory odes as an example, a superhuman 'idol' set up for emulation and inspiration.[25]

It is in Bacchylides' odes that we find the first strong indications of the transformation of the hero from a mere strong man with no morality to an ethical ideal.[26] We see a new conception of the hero as an individual man, and interest shifts to his feelings and motivations as a human being.

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[23]See Galinsky (1972), 23 for a fuller discussion.

[24]In fact, Kevin Lee (1986), 24 claims that Pindar's treatment of Herakles may have contributed to the creation of a figure appropriate for tragedy.

[25]Galinsky (1972), 30. According to Galinsky, Pindar uses myth "to impress upon the winners in the athletic contests the permanence of those values in which they had come to share by their virtues."

[26]See the discussion of Bacchylides by Galinsky (1972), 28.

They say Amphitryon's bold-
  shouting son only this once
wet his eye in pity
  for a suffering man. Then,
answering, he said:
  "For mortals, never to be born
were best--never to have looked
  upon the sun."[27]

In Bacchylides' Ode 5, which relates the encounter of Herakles and Meleager in Hades, Herakles sheds tears of grief and sympathy for Meleager's suffering and the plight of man in general. He is also seen to be vulnerable and to react as any ordinary man would when he takes fright at the shade of Meleager.

A single ghost among them
  overshadowed all-Porthaon's heir,
  bold to resist and ready with his spear.
Alcmene's wondrous hero son saw him
  as he glimmered in his armor; at once
he fit the shrieking string into his bow,
  opened up his pouch,
made choice, and took
  a bronze tipped arrow out. Close
came Meleager's recognizing ghost
  and spoke:
"Son of highest Zeus,
  hold off, placate your heart
and do not send a vain
  swift arrow from your hand
among these wasted souls!
  They is no cause for fear."[28]

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[27]Bacchylides Ode 5, 155-162. Translated by Burnett (1985), 138.

[28]Bacchylides Ode 5, 68-84. Translated by Burnett (1985), 136.

Bacchylides employs a 'tragic' treatment of Herakles as opposed to the previous epic treatments. He introduces 'noos' and gives a purpose for Herakles' suffering, the will of the gods.[29] This is apparent in the fragmentary Dithyramb 15, where Bacchylides marks a moment on the eve of catastrophe which is made more dramatic and evocative by leaving the rest of the story untold.[30]

> Then it was that the God with whom none may strive wove for Deïaneira a shrewd device, fraught with sorrow; when she learned the bitter tidings that the dauntless son of Zeus was sending to his goodly house the white-armed Iole, his bride.
>
> Ill-fated, hapless one, what a plan did she conceive! Potent jealously was her bane, and that dark veil which hid the future when, on the rose-clad banks of Lycormas, she received from Nessus his fateful gift of wondrous power.[31]

We may detect in this more dramatic treatment of the myth the seeds for the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles. In the lyric poetry of Bacchylides, Herakles starts to become more than a strong man. Instead, we see the emergence of the complex human portrait of Herakles that would be developed and endure in the later tradition.

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[29]Galinsky (1972), 28.

[30]See Jebb (1967), 222, for commentary.

[31]Bacchylides Dithyramb 15, 23-35. Translated by Jebb (1967), 373.

b. Sophocles

Most scholars agree that Sophocles, in *The Trachinian Women*, offers a more traditional, almost archaic portrait of the hero.[32] The purification and idealization of the hero begun by Pindar and Bacchylides and completed by Euripides, was rebelled against and reversed by Sophocles, who created a hero more in line with the previous archaic characterization.

In *The Trachinian Women*, Sophocles affirms the more archaic view of Herakles as a hero characterized by savagery and prone to uncivilized behavior. His violent reactions (772-802), his passion for Iole (351-68, 488-9), his blind thirst for revenge (1066-69, 1107-1111, 1124-37), and his brutality (772-782), are all reminiscent of the hero whom we encountered in archaic images and literature. An example of Herakles' bestiality is found in his fight with Achelöos, where the battle is between two equally matched monsters:

> Then there was thudding of fists and clang of bows
> and confusion of bull's horns;
> and there was contorted grappling,
> and there were deadly blows from butting heads
> and groaning on both sides.[33]

The robe that brings about Herakles' sickness and suffering serves as a powerful symbol of his own bestiality. It signals connections with the monsters, Nessos and the Hydra, who are

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[32]See Murray (1946), Galinsky, (1972), Segal (1986) and Holt (1989).

[33]Sophocles *The Trachinian Women*, 517-22. Translated by Jameson (1969), 91.

responsible for the poison. But it also creates an association between these monsters and the monstrous nature of the hero himself. After all, it was Herakles' unbridled and destructive lust for Iole that triggered his suffering and death, just as it was Nessos' lust for Deianira that led to his death. It may also be that the external sickness brought about by the robe is a manifestation of Herakles' own inward disease.[34] In fact, the hero compares himself in sickness to the beasts he has destroyed:

> O most ungrateful of the Greeks, where are all you
> for whom I destroyed myself purging so many beasts
> from all the seas and woods? Now when *I* am sick,
> will no one turn the beneficial fire, the sword on me?[35]

Herakles' treatment of the messenger and gift bearer Lichas offers a particularly vivid example of the hero's unrestrained violence:

> Now he shouted for that unfortunate Lichas, who was
> in no way guilty of your crime, demanding
> to know the plot behind his bringing him this robe.
> Unlucky man, he knew nothing and said it was
> a gift from you alone, just as you had sent it.
> And at that moment,, as Heracles listened to his answer,
> a piercing, tearing pain clutched at his lungs; he caught
> Lichas by the foot where the ankle turns
> and threw him against a wave-beaten rock that juts from the sea.
> It pressed the pale brains out through his hair,
> and, split full on, skull and blood mixed and spread.[36]

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[34]Galinsky (1972), 50.

[35]Sophocles *The Trachinian Women*, 1011-14. Translated by Jameson (1969), 109.

[36]Sophocles *The Trachinian Women*, 772-782. Translated by Jameson (1969), 100.

Sophocles reveals the sheer savagery of the hero. The civilizing tendencies of the fifth century are not allowed to prevail and are instead shown to be vulnerable to the uncivilized forces at work in the world.[37] Sophocles, in the scene cited above, instead of evoking admiration and awe for the hero, as do the lyric poets, evokes horror at the savagery of Herakles. Herakles does not triumph but commits suicide and forces his own son to be an accomplice (1179-1215). The hero is defeated by the forces of savagery and bestiality at work in the world and within his own nature.[38]

c. Euripides

In the *Heracles* , Euripides provides a portrait of the hero quite different from what we saw in *The Trachinian Women.* Euripides is credited with humanizing Herakles and directing our attention

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[37]In a structuralist reading of the play, Charles Segal (1986), recognizes a system of analogies based on the underlying opposition of god and beast, civilization and savagery. He sees the action of the play as a series of failed mediations between the poles of bestiality and divinity. He concludes that "The play then appears not just as the domestic tragedy of a doomed house, nor as the personal tragedy of a man and woman whose lives have carried them in opposite directions, but as the tragedy of civilized values disintegrating under the impact of those powerful forces that always threaten civilization from without and within," 68.

[38]For Segal (1986), the pyre symbolizes the ritual act meant to mediate between god and man. At the end of the play, the pyre becomes the focal point of the 'inbetweenness' or ambiguity that is felt to surround Herakles and that makes up the most problematical part of his existence, his suspension between the highest and lowest extremes, 60. "His pyre on Mt Oeta is the place of both his triumph and his defeat. It hints at his immortalization as a god, but also marks his subjection to the still-unconquered bestiality in himself, symbolized by the monsters of his past, the Hydra and Nessos, who have, in a sense, vanquished him," 58.

towards the internal achievements of the hero and not his external deeds.[39] Herakles becomes an ideal figure whose savage side is tamed and subsumed by Euripides' more civilized conception of the man.

Such a conception means that Euripides must strip the hero of his irrational and impulsive tendencies and rework his characterization in such a way as to make the hero subject to the same ideal of moderation for human behavior as the ordinary Greek man. Within the first few lines of the play, Euripides purifies the motives for Herakles' deeds, telling us that the hero acted out of filial piety.

> Then my son left home, left Megara and kin,
> hoping to recover the plain of Argos
> and those gigantic walls from which I fled
> to Thebes, because I killed Electryon.
> He hoped to win me back my native land
> and so alleviate my grief. And therefore,
> mastered by Hera or by necessity,
> he promised to Eurystheus a vast price
> for our return: to civilize the world.[40]

Euripides goes further by creating a sensitive, truly humane and compassionate man; Herakles is domesticated. Through both Megara's and the hero's own words we get a picture of a kind, caring and almost nurturing family man who is devoted to his wife and children.

Megara:

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[39]See Murray (1946), Arrowsmith (1969), Galinsky (1972) and Fitzgerald (1991).

[40]Euripides *Heracles*, 13-20. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 61-2.

It was upon your head he sometimes threw
the skin of tawny lion that he wore.

Sometimes in play, he put in your right hand
that carven club he kept for self-defense.[41]

Herakles:
Put your fears away,
and stop those tears that well up in your eyes.
And you, dear wife, gather your courage up,
tremble no more, and let my garments go.
I have no wings to fly from those I love.
Look: They will not let me go, but clutch my clothes
more tightly. How close you came to death!
Here, I'll take your hands and lead you in my wake,
like a ship that tows its little boats behind,
for I accept this care and service
of my sons. Here all mankind is equal:
rich and poor alike, they love their children.[42]

Herakles is no longer the 'beast'-hero. The emotion and concern he feels for his family, his wife, children and father, are unique to mankind and are not found among the wild animals that Herakles was so closely associated with in the artistic imagery and literature of the archaic period. Herakles, by becoming a character of tragedy, has been placed into an entirely human realm. Although Sophocles resisted this move by retaining some of the hero's savagery, Euripides has successfully 'humanized' and 'civilized' the former 'beast'-man.

Herakles is also seen to denounce the labors of his past in the face of the threat to his family. He therefore metaphorically

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[41]Euripides *Heracles*, 465-66, 470-71. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 76.

[42]Euripides *Heracles*, 624-34. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 83.

abandons the world of animals, monsters and bestiality to become assimilated into the human sphere. He recognizes that human emotion and attachment play a part in determining motives and actions. His previous deeds are meaningless to him because they did not partake of any human bond of affection and devotion. He is no longer a savage strong man accomplishing great things for Hellas, but a civilized individual, infused with humanity, who must save his family. This task above all others has real meaning and import for him.

> What should I defend if not my wife and sons
> and my old father? Farewell, my labors!
> for wrongly I preferred you more than these.
> They would have died for me, and I should die
> in their defense. Or is this bravery,
> to do Eurystheus' orders and contend
> with lions and hydras, and not to struggle
> for my children's lives? From this time forth,
> call me no more "Heracles the victor."[43]

An aspect of the play which receives much attention is the madness sent by Hera.[44] Hera's agency justifies the hero's outburst and absolves him of responsibility. Although this type of excessive violence is not uncharacteristic for the hero, it can no longer be said to arise from the hero himself as in the archaic period, when

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[43]Euripides *Heracles*, 574-82. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 81.

[44]G. J. Fitzgerald (1991),91-2, believes too much attention has been given to the outside agency for madness in *Herakles* with the result that Herakles ends up absolved of guilt. He believes Herakles does not behave uncharacteristically and that his behavior is compatible with his usual modes which are referred to in the beginning of the dramatic action. I view Hera's agency as significant evidence for the desire to neutralize Herakles as a threatening force.

Herakles' own nature, which could be savage and extreme, and his divinely inspired strength, were thought to overwhelm him at times and lead to some of his acts of hubris. But for Euripides this is not a possibility. He makes Hera's responsibility clear by referring to her part in the plot many times (831-2, 840-2, 847-50, 858-9,1227-8, 1191, 1253, 1303-1312). In one of these passages, Hera's motives are given and Herakles' innocence is stressed.

> Let the noble wife of Zeus begin the dance,
> pounding with her feet Olympus' gleaming floors!
> For she accomplished what her heart desired,
> and hurled the greatest man of Hellas down
> in utter ruin. Who could offer prayers
> to such a goddess? Jealous of Zeus
> for a mortal woman's sake, she has destroyed
> Hellas' greatest friend, though he was guiltless.[45]

Once the awful crime has been committed, Herakles considers suicide to escape the grief that he feels. Yet Theseus questions this choice, appealing to Herakles newly emphasized identity as a rational man. Theseus does not refer to Herakles' external achievements so much as he calls upon Herakles' inner strength and endurance; again Herakles' uniquely human qualities are stressed.

> Theseus: You saved me then, and now I pity you.
> Heracles: A man to be pitied: I slew my children.
> Th: My tears, my gratitude, I mourn your grief.
> H: Have you ever seen more misery than this?
> Th: Your wretchedness towers up and touches heaven.
> H: Then where it touches heaven. I shall strike.
> Th: What do you think the gods care for your threats?
> H: Heaven is proud. And I am proud to heaven.

[45]Euripides *Heracles*, 1303-10. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 110.

Th: No more: your presumption will be punished.
H: My hold is full: there is no room for more.
Th: What will you do? Where does your passion run?
H: To death: to go back whence I came, beneath the earth.
Th: These are the words of an ordinary man.
H: Will you, who did not suffer, preach to me?
Th: Is this that Heracles who endured so much?
H: Not so much. Endurance has an end.
Th: Mankind's benefactor, man's greatest friend?
H: What good are men to me? Hera rules.
Th: *You* die so mean a death? Hellas forbids it.[46]

Euripides brings Herakles to a new point, a point at which the hero must draw upon a different kind of strength and courage, that which is derived from the conditions of humanity. His physical strength and ability, qualities which are often associated with his savage and destructive side, are useless now. Unlike the archaic hero, Euripides creates for Herakles a victory that has nothing to do with his 'animality', illustrating once again the poets' desire to give Herakles a fuller characterization which now includes his intellectual and emotional capacities. The hero's struggles and glory are made entirely human.

Theseus: Have you forgotten your labors so far?
Herakles: All those labors I endured were less than these.
Th: If someone sees your weakness, he will not praise you.
H: I live: am I so low? You did not think so once.
Th: Once, no. But where is famous Heracles?
H: What were you when you were underground?
Th: In courage I was the least of men.

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[46]Euripides *Heracles*, 1236-44. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 107-8.

H: Then will you say my grief degrades me now?
Th: Forward![47]

The play ends with this acceptance and affirmation of Herakles' humanity, not with the deification of the hero, because by now this is meaningless and an external achievement. Euripides' treatment of Herakles is the culmination of all efforts to purge the hero of his objectionable qualities and deeds.[48] Although he is still the great civilizing hero, he is no longer the symbolic hero with savage and bestial tendencies that we encountered in archaic renditions. Herakles is now a thoroughly civilized individual, a noble and tragic *man*.

d. Comedy and Satyr Plays

In addition to being the subject of tragedy, Herakles was also an appropriate character for comedy and satyr drama. It appears from artistic evidence and fragments that Herakles was an extremely popular character in these plays.[49] The excess that marked Herakles and the fact that he fought against the strangest creatures that could be imagined made him particularly ideal for such genres.[50]

As one would expect, comedy was more concerned with exploiting the external aspects of the mythical biography of Herakles'

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[47]Euripides *Heracles*, 1410-6. Translated by Arrowsmith (1969), 114.

[48]Galinsky (1972), 65.

[49]Galinsky (1972), 81.

[50]See Lee (1986), 23 and Galinsky (1972), 82.

and not the inner workings of the hero's mind. Herakles could be portrayed as a muscle-bound buffoon with insatiable appetites for food and sex. Interestingly, there is much evidence to suggest that Herakles fighting against some barbarian despot was a prevailing theme in satyric drama.[51] This plot combined the comedic aspects of the hero with his traditional role as a civilizing force. Other plays, such as Ion's *Omphale.*, might emphasize the hero's gluttony.[52] In some cases we have little more than titles, but they can be enough to demonstrate an interest in more exotic and spectacular themes like *Busiris, Geryon, Antaios* and *Kerkopes.* Herakles' negative aspects, his excessive behavior, his tendency towards extremes, become the raw material of humor. However, even in comedy, Herakles could remain a champion of justice and Greek civilization.

We get a hint at the type of characterization that would have appeared in a satyr play or comedy in the Herakles of Euripides' tragicomedy *Alcestis.*[53]

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[51]Galinsky (1972), 84. "The frequent choice of this kind of theme in the fifth century can be attributed to the Greek dislike of tyrants and barbarian kings. When Herakles gave them their whacks, amid all the concomitant horseplay, he merely continued *sub specie ludi* his role as the purifier, saviour, and bringer of justice and Greek standards to oriental lands." Galinsky cites as examples *Syleus, Hesione, Harvesters* and the numerous Busiris plays.

[52]Galinsky (1972), 84.

[53]Lattimore (1955), 5. Lattimore acknowledges the puzzling nature of the 'comic' qualities of the *Alcestis,* and believes that although it was played fourth in its set, in the position usually given to a satyr-play, "attempts to explain the play as a modified satyr-play are not convincing, and the comic elements are not highly significant," 4. He concludes that the *Alcestis* is a tragicomedy "which in part anticipates the lighter escape dramas(*Iphigeneia in Tauris, Helen*) still to come," 5.

> Then, he refused to understand the situation
> and be content with anything we could provide,
> but when we failed to bring him something, demanded it,
> and took a cup with ivy on it in both hands
> and drank the wine of our dark mother, straight, until
> the flame of the wine went all through him, and heated
> him,
> and then he wreathed branches of myrtle on his head
> and howled off key. There were two kinds of music now
> to hear, for while he sang and never gave a thought to
> the sorrows of Admetus, we servants were mourning
> our mistress...
> So now I have to entertain this guest inside,
> this ruffian thief, this highwayman, whatever he is.[54]

Appeals to Herakles as a rational human being are useless. He shuns respectful behavior and drinks to excess. One is reminded of the behavior of the centaurs at Peirithoös' wedding or satyrs in Dionysos' retinue. Herakles is made to look selfish, greedy and hedonistic. Euripides gives us here a superficial and buffonish character, devoid of compassion and the ability to grasp the true situation at hand.

> Let all this business go and do as I prescribe
> for you, that is, if I seem to talk sense. Do I?
> I think so. Well, then, get rid of this too-much grief,
> put flowers on your head and drink with us, fight down
> these present troubles; later, I know very well
> that the wine splashing in the bowl will shake you loose
> from these solemn people and these people who scowl,
> the whole parcel of them, if I am any judge,
> life is not really life but a catastrophe.[55]

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[54]Euripides *Alcestis*, 753-66. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 37.

[55]Euripides *Alcestis*, 792-802. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 38.

Of course, Herakles has been misled and does not know the true nature of the troubles at hand, but his eagerness to drink and celebrate are not unexpected features of the 'beast'-hero who too readily gives in to the desires of the flesh.

Once he learns of the true nature of Admetus' problem, Herakles' solution to the crisis requires the physical strength derived from his bestial nature; there are no strategems using human intellegence, no attempt at verbal negotians.[56] Once again we get a glimpse of the familiar figure from archaic representations.

> I must go there and watch for Death of the black robes,
> master of dead men, and I think I shall find him
> drinking the blood of slaughtered beasts beside the
> grave.
> Then, if I can break suddenly from my hiding place,
> catch him, and hold him in the circle of these arms,
> there is no way he will be able to break my hold on his
> bruised ribs, until he gives the woman up
> to me.[57]

> Admetus:
> How did you bring her back from down there to the
> light?
> Heracles:
> I fought a certain deity who had charge of her.
> A: Where do you say you fought this match with death?
> H: Beside the tomb itself. I sprang and caught him in my
> hands.[58]

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[56]The best example of such a solution is Orpheus' appeal on behalf of Eurydice in Hades, especially as related by Ovid in Book 10.18-52 of the *Metamorphoses*.

[57]Euripides *Alcestis*, 843-50. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 40-1.

[58]Euripides *Alcestis*, 1139-42. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 52.

But finally, the Herakles we see is one of noble resolve who recognizes the wrong he has done in pursuing pleasure in a house in mourning and wishes to repay the kindness of his host (even if that kindness should not have been extended by Admetus in the first place). The hero's violent and almost animal impulses are subsumed by his commitment to human ritual and law, and the bonds of the civilized Greek *xenia* relationship.

> ...and I have confidence I shall bring
> Alcestis back, and give her to the arms of my friend
> who did not drive me off but took me into his house
> and, though he staggered under the stroke of
> circumstance,
> hid it, for he was noble and respected me.
> Who in all Thessaly is a truer friend than this?
> Who in all Greece? Therefore, he must not ever say
> that, being noble, he befriended a worthless man.[59]

From this brief consideration, we get some sense of the way in which Herakles could be portrayed outside of strict tragedy. According to Karl Galinsky, Euripides' *Alcestis*, and his depiction of Herakles in particular, are a reaction against a trend in over-civilization, prevalent in fifth century Athens, which resulted in a portrait of the hero as overly simplistic and rationally motivated.[60] Atlthough this Herakles gives in to hedonistic yearnings and uses brute force to accomplish his goal, in the end he is portrayed as truly

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[59]Euripides *Alcestis*, 853-60. Translated by Lattimore (1955), 41.

[60]Galinsky (1972), 69.

human and concerned for the welfare of a friend. Such a characterization is one of the most uniquely complex and many-sided portraits of the hero which survives in fifth century Athenian poetry.

Throughout his many manifestations in comedy and satyr plays, Herakles remains thoroughly Greek and human. He is often made humorous by the authors' exaggerating his most human desire for pleasure.[61] He is rarely made to appear bestial or savage, merely harmless and ineffectual. It would appear that even in a genre primarily interested in external qualities and deeds, Herakles has become tame and innocuous.

In the fifth century, in order to maintain his position as the greatest pan-Hellenic hero, the poets had to civilize Herakles and bring his behavior more in line with the ideal of moderation (*sophrosyne*). Therefore, fifth century poetry presents a portrait of Herakles quite different from that which we find in archaic literary and artistic depictions. Although Herakles could still exhibit excessive and brutal behavior, it must now be explained by external forces or become the subject of comedy so as to neutralize any possible threat. There is a shift away from his external achievements and 'animality' to his internal constitution and his humanity. Once humanized, Herakles had also to be civilized in order

[61]According to Mahader Apte (1985), 229, humor provides a cathartic release through the triumph of the 'pleasure principle'. Thus Herakles may express a very human need for a vicarious outlet for pure hedonism in a society that viewed moderation in human behavior as the ideal.

to achieve a conception of the hero that could be reconciled with an increasingly clearer distinction between the civilized Greek and the uncivilized barbarian. Only in this way could Herakles be put on the stage within the walls of the *polis*.

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In the few examples of fifth century literature explored here, we get a sense of the way in which attitudes toward Herakles and barbarians have changed. As Edith Hall explains in her work Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy, tragedy was an important vehicle through which the Greek/barbarian antithesis was developed. But Herodotus also offers an important contribution to the evolution of this antithesis by creating a rhetoric of 'otherness' based on the comparison of non-Greek rituals and behaviors with Greek models. In either case, it appears that, as the realm of the barbarian is explored, qualities and behavior felt to be antithetical to Greek civilization are located there and become markers of unacceptable and uncivilized behavior. Therefore, their presence in the mythical biography of Herakles, Greek hero par excellence, must be either eradicated or explained, and this is precisely what we see taking place in the poetry of the classical period.

Conclusion

Herakles' mythical biography represented many aspects of man's encounters with the world around him in the archaic period. In vase paintings of this period, Herakles and his adversaries embody both ideal qualities of the Greek hero and those qualities, viewed as undesirable in or threatening to Greek civilization, which will later come to characterize the barbarian in fifth century literature.

Greek artists felt that Herakles was the appropriate vehicle for the exploration of the opposition of civilized and savage in visual imagery because of his role as exemplar, protector and provider of Greek civilization. Not strictly a warrior, as are many other Greek heroes, or hunter, Herakles is often a 'tamer' who brings monsters back alive and subdues what is savage and therefore anti-Greek. Herakles can also represent the internalized antithesis of civilized vs. savage or Greek vs. barbarian. In certain of his exploits, Herakles behaves in ways that will be considered 'barbaric' in the next century, best illustrated in the descriptions of barbarians given by Herodotus in his *Histories*. However, those negative qualities most associated with the barbarian in the fifth century are externalized in many of Herakles' deeds as understood in the archaic period, confusing and confining the antithesis. The 'monster' or beast was almost a 'proto-barbarian', and particular deeds bring Herakles into contact with the 'barbaric' behavior of anthropomorphic foes.

All of these elements of Herakles' mytholgy were vividly illustrated, some more than others, on the vases of the archaic

period, creating an artistically unique characterization of the hero. Through the particular ways in which the artists of this period chose to render their subjects, we detect how the Greeks conceptualized the opposing forces contained therein as tangible threats. The visual representations of Herakles mythical biography in the archaic period provide today's viewer with a glimpse of the powerful meaning that such stories had in the remote past.

In the literature of the fifth century we can see a clear transformation of Herakles from the action hero of archaic imagery to a more complex and symbolic figure. The most significant change we behold is the way in which Herakles is explored and presented as an individual man with human emotions and motivations. Herakles is no longer the wild, impulsive 'beast'-hero of destructive excess. Instead, he is characterized with compassion and rendered in fifth century Greek terms. He is stripped of many of the negative, savage qualities that both enabled him to combat and conquer the external forces threatening to the Greek way of life and which made the hero himself so threatening. His savagery is diluted, made almost ineffectual.

It is more difficult to detect a similar phenomenon in the artistic representations of the classical period. The most pronounced change in representations of Herakles in this period, at least in Attic vase painting, is the decline in the frequency of images of scenes involving Herakles. Arguments for this decline in popularity of scenes featuring Herakles have referred to a new interest in scenes of Theseus in fifth century Attic vase painting, suggesting a political

motivation dependent on the association of Herakles and the Peisistratids.[1] Such arguments overlook the possibility that sixth century scenes with Herakles revealed an image of the Greek hero that was no longer useful after the 'invention' of the barbarian in fifth century literature.

Aside from the decline in numbers, most scenes in vase painting featuring Herakles after 450 B.C. are non-violent, whereas they had been quite violent and dramatic in the archaic period. The metopes from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia illustrate a transformation similar to what we have seen in the literature, in that they attempt to give us a glimpse of the inner life of the hero, his exhaustion and suffering.[2]

Only three subjects achieved significant popularity for the first time in vase painting of the classical period: the gigantomachy, the Busiris encounter, and Herakles with satyrs.[3] Interestingly, each case represents Herakles with a well defined 'other'. Scenes that remain popular often show Herakles pitted against a clearly designated barbarian or take him to the edges of the Greek world: Herakles and the Amazons; Herakles retrieving the Apples of Hesperides. Distinctions between Herakles and his adversaries are made less ambiguous, reflecting a growing dichotomy between Greek and non-Greek. Generally, images of Herakles at this time tend to be

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[1]See Boardman's articles (1972) and (1975b).

[2]See Ashmole, Bernard and Nicholas Yalouris (1967) Olympia: The Sculptures of the Temple of Zeus. London: Phaidon Press, 22-30.

[3]Vollkommer (1988), 92.

more sedate and concentrate less on overt displays of physical strength and aggressiveness in his actions and deeds, as witnessed in the archaic period.[4]

What has happened in the Greek world to warrant such a change in both literary and artistic representations of Herakles? The most common explanation cited is a growing interest in exploring the hero's humanity, and a fifth century propensity for a more refined and civilized hero.[5] However, we can examine this change in light of elaborated and expanded Greek attitudes about the 'barbarian' in fifth century literature and art.

Philosophical developments and historical events such as the Persian Wars, and growing contact with other parts of the world necessitated a more clarified and concrete conception of the barbarian. These perceptions were most easily expressed through a developing Greek/barbarian antithesis which became characterized by specific *topoi* and conventions of representation most pronounced in the literature of the fifth century. As we have seen, Herodotus

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[4]Philip Holt (1989), 79, sees the transformation as follows: "Generally speaking, the second half of the fifth century sees Herakles losing much of his old ruggedness and becoming more refined and moral, more a man of the polis. The vase painters concentrate more on showing his cult or his repose in the afterlife; They pay less attention to the labors by which that repose was won. Philosophers begin to transfer his greatness from the physical to the moral plane."

[5]See for example Jaimee Uhlenbrock (1986b), 9-10 who states, "The focus on Herakles' exploits was less emphatic in the Classical period than it was in the archaic, especially in vase painting. For the Greeks of the Classical period, with their strong moral and ethical codes of behavior, Herakles' expansive and rather defiant character, and his propensity for fits of rage and almost unbridled violence, were excessive." Jean-Pierre Vernant (1982), 51, suggests that maybe the popularity of Herakles declined due to his tendency towards excess. With the ideal of *sophrosyne*, hubris was to die out.

locates and defines the 'barbarian' by translating his 'otherness' into comprehensible Greek terms, primarily based on preconceived notions of what is and is not acceptable as civilized, and therefore Greek, behavior.[6] In tragedy, the barbarian becomes the foil for the civilized Greek, and comes to stand for behavior and qualities that are unacceptable within the *polis*.[7] In essence, the barbarian is defined, externalized and made an outsider, both non-Greek and antithetical to Greek culture.

This development would appear to have important implications for the hero whose characterization and visual representations had so encapsulated the conflict of civilized and savage, Greek and non-Greek, up until now. With the 'invention' of the barbarian in the fifth century, Herakles no longer must internalize the complex and contradictory qualities of the earlier tradition. Nor need he combat monstrous manifestations of these same threatening forces. Most negative qualities of the archaic Herakles and his adversaries can now be found externalized and transferred to the barbarian of the fifth century. The hero himself is humanized, tamed and rendered harmless.

If this is indeed true, then sixth century depictions of Herakles reveal an image of the Greek hero that was no longer useful, popular or necessary. The advent of tragedy and the juxtaposition of the Greek and the barbarian provided a new and less ambivalent way to illustrate the varied nature of humanity. Once these negative

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[6]See Hartog (1988).

[7]See Hall (1989).

qualities are reassigned, the fully developed Greek/ barbarian antithesis becomes a way to edify and celebrate what it means to be Greek more clearly. The transformation of myth and the introduction of a 'vocabulary of barbarism' in tragedy to serve this purpose, negates the necessity to express such an antithesis in the iconography of vase painting scenes featuring Herakles.

During the archaic period, the visual representations of Herakles performing his deeds were an important vehicle through which the Greeks could explore what it meant to encounter and master savagery in both nature and in man himself. Through depictions of Herakles' mythical biography, the Greek artists could render their world intelligible. In the fifth century, however, the Greeks felt an increasing desire to remove such threats from their self-perception and found the barbarian to be the appropriate construct for this. Herakles was thus transformed into a more refined and moral hero whose previous usefulness as a definer of non-Greek traits declined significantly. This change effectively accounts for the overall decline in the number of images of the hero performing his deeds during the fifth century.

Appendix

Passages from Herodotus. All English translations are from Grene (1987) and page numbers refer to this text.

A 2.45 p.150-1

The Greeks tell many stories that show no manner of thought. In particular, there is the tale they tell of Heracles to the effect that he came to Egypt and that the Egyptians put garlands on his head and led him in procession, with intent to sacrifice him to Zeus; that for a while he held quiet, but when they brought him near the altar itself and had started the first rites on him, he took himself to his valor and slaughtered them all. In my opinion, the Greeks who tell this story know absolutely nothing about the nature of the Egyptians and their customs. Here is a people for whom the sacrifice of beasts themselves is unholy, except for pigs, bulls, bull-calves -- that is, such as are pure -- and geese; how could they sacrifice human beings? And furthermore, since Heracles was still only one, and also only a human being, as they themselves say, how can it accord with nature that he should slaughter that many tens of thousands? That is what I have to say about the matter; as I do so, may both gods and heroes view me kindly!

B 2.35 p.145

Just as the climate that the Egyptians have is entirely their own and different from anyone else's, and their river has a nature quite different from other rivers, so, in fact, the most of what they have made their habits and their customs are the exact opposite of other folks'.

C 3.101 p. 256

Among the Indians I have spoken of, sexual intercourse is quite public, as it is among the animals; their skin is as black as that of the Ethiopians. The seed that they ejaculate into their women is not, like the rest of mankind, white but black, as their skin is. The seed of the Ethiopian is likewise black. These Indians live furthest from the Persians, toward the south, and they were not subjects of King Darius.

D 2.91 p. 167
The Egyptians avoid following Greek customs and, to speak in general, the customs of any people other than their own.

E 4.60 p.302
In all their sacred rites they all conduct the sacrifice in the same way. The victim stands there, his front feet entangled in a rope. The sacrificer stands behind the animal and pulls the end of the rope to bring him to the ground. While the victim is falling, the worshiper invokes whatever god may be involved in his sacrifice. He then throws a noose about the animal's neck, inserts a small stick to tighten the rope, twists it round,and so throttles the victim. He lights no fire, nor offers firstfruits, nor pours libations. When he has choked the animal and frayed it, he turns to cook it.

F 2.169 p. 205
It had, it is said, been Apries' opinion that no one, not even a god, could cast him from his throne, so firmly did he think he was established. So now he fought and was worsted and was taken prisoner and carried to the city of Saïs, to what had formerly been his own house but was now the palace of Amasis. There, then, they kept him in the palace for a while, and Amasis treated him well. But at last the Egyptians objected that Amasis did unjustly in so keeping one who was their bitterest foe-and his own. So he turned Apries over to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians strangled him and, after, buried him in his ancestral grave.

G 3.150 p. 274
When the [Persian] fleet had gone to Samos, the Babylonians revolted, having laid their preparations very carefully. For during the rule of the Magian and after the insurrection of the Seven--for all this time, when everything was in confusion--they prepared for a siege and, for some reason or other, were able to do so unnoticed. After their revolt came into the open, they took the following action: they sent away the mothers, and then each man chose, out of his own household, one woman, whichever he pleased; all the rest they gathered into one place and strangled. The one that each chose he chose for a breadmaker, and the others were strangled that they might not use up the supply of bread.

H 4.160 p. 340-1
This Battus had a son Arcesilaus, who, as soon as he became king, was at feud with his brothers until they quit the country and went off to another region of Libya...Arcesilaus led an army against these Libyans who had received his brothers and revolted against himself. The Libyans, who were afraid of him, ran away to the eastern Libyans. But Arcesilaus followed their flight until, in his pursuit of them, he came to Leucon in Libya, and there the Libyans determined to attack him. They fought and beat the Cyrenaeans so heartily that seven thousand of the Cyrenaean men-at-arms fell there. After that defeat, Arcesilaus, who was sick and had taken a drug against the sickness, was strangled by his own brother, Haliarchus.

I 4.64 p. 303
As concerns war, this is how it is among them. When a Scythian kills his first man, he drinks his blood; of all those he kills in battle he carries the heads to the king. When he has brought in a head, he takes a share of whatever loot they have obtained, but without bringing a head he has none. The warrior scalps the head thus: he cuts it in a circle round the ears and, taking the head in his hands, shakes it loose. Then he cleans out the flesh with the rib of an ox and kneads the skin with his hands. When he has softened it all, he has got himself, as it were, a napkin. He hangs the napkin from the bridle of the horse he rides himself and takes great pride in it. The man who has most skins as napkins is judged the greatest man among these people. Many of them also make garments, to wear, out of the scalps, stitching them together like the usual coats of skin. Many Scythians also take the right hands of their enemies, when dead, and stripping the skin off, nails and all, make of them coverings for their arrow quivers...Many of them, too, flay whole men and, stretching the skins upon a frame, carry them round on their horses.

J 5.25 p. 366
...King Cambyses, for an unjust judgment Sisamnes was bribed to render, had had his throat cut and flayed off all his skin. He made strips of this skin into straps and stretched them on the chair in which Sisamnes had sat to give judgment.

K 7.70 p. 494
These Ethiopians of Asia were for the most part equipped like the Indians, but they wore on their heads the skins of horses' foreheads, flayed off along with the ears and the mane.

L 7.75 P. 495
The Thracians served with foxskins on their heads and tunics on their bodies and were all wrapped round with cloaks of different colors, and on their feet and shins they wore doeskin boots.

M 4.103 p. 318
Of these peoples, the Taurians have the following customs. They sacrifice to the Maiden such shipwrecked folk and those of the Greeks whom they have taken in their pirate raids. They make the preliminary rites of the sacrifice, and then they smash the victim's head with a club.

N 7.69 p. 494
The Ethiopians wore leopard and lion skins;...They also carried studded clubs.

O 2.42 p.149
But those who possess a shrine of Mendes or are of the province of Mendes, these sacrifice sheep but will have none of goats. The Thebans and those who will not sacrifice sheep, through the influence of the Thebans, declare that this custom has been established among them for this reason: they say that Heracles had most earnestly desired to see Zeus, but the god would not be seen by him. But in the end, because Heracles was so insistent, Zeus made a contrivance of flaying a ram, taking off the ram's head and using it as a mask, and entering the fleece of the sheep and so displaying himself to Heracles. It is from this act that the Egyptians make an image of Zeus with a ram's head...It is because of this, too, that the Thebans will nor sacrifice rams, but the animals are sacred for them. But on one day of the year, at the festival of Zeus, they chop up one ram and flay it and dress the image of Zeus in the hide, as in the

story, and thereafter bring the other image, that of Heracles, close to that of Zeus.

P 9.82 p. 648

Pausanias looked at Mardonius' tent and its furnishings of gold and silver and richly colored curtains, and he ordered the bakers and the cooks to serve up a meal exactly as they had done for Mardonius. They did so, on his orders; and when Pausanias looked at the couches of gold and silver, so richly covered, and the tables of gold and silver and the magnificent preparation of the dinner, he stood amazed at all the good things so set out. Then, for the laughter of it, he told his own servants to prepare a Laconian meal. When this meal was ready (and the difference was great), Pausanias broke out laughing and sent for the Greek generals. When they assembled, Pausanias pointed to the two meals and said, "Men of Greece, the reason I have summoned you together is because I want to show you the stupidity of the leader of the Medes. He had daily meals like *this*, and came upon us to take from us the miserable fare we have *here*."

Q 6.84 p. 441

They say that Cleomenes, when the Scythians came to Sparta to discuss this, had more that ordinarily to do with them and, in the process, learned from them the habit of very heavy drinking. The Spartiates think that this it was that drove Cleomenes mad. Ever since, when they want to drink more strongly than usual, they call for a 'Scythian cup." That is the story the Spartiates tell of King Cleomenes.

R 7.34-35 p. 482

To this headland, then, starting from Abydos, they built the bridge, those who were instructed so to do...But when the strait had been bridged, there came a great storm upon it and smashed it and broke it all to pieces. (35) On learning this, Xerxes was furious and bade his men lay three hundred lashes on the Hellespont and lower into the sea a yoke of fetters. Indeed, I have heard that he sent also branders to brand the Hellespont. He told those who lay on the lashes to say these words, of violent arrogance, worthy of a barbarian: "You bitter water, our master lays this punishment upon you because you have wronged him, though he never did you any wrong. King Xerxes will cross you, whether you will or not; it is with justice that no one sacrifices to you, who are a muddy and briny

river." So he commanded that the sea be punished, and he ordered the beheading of the supervisors of the building of the bridge.

S 2.37 p. 146
In their reverence for the gods, they are excessive, more than any others in the world, witness the following customs: they drink out of bronze cups and scour these every day--not one man doing so and another not, but every Egyptian. They wear linen clothes that are always new-washed--they are especially careful about this. [The passage continues with similar details of meticulous behavior]

T 3.106 p. 257
Somehow the furthest parts of the world have the finest things in them.

U 3.114 p. 259
To the southwest of the world, Ethiopia is the furthest of all inhabited lands. It has much gold and abundant elephants, and all manner of wild trees and ebony, and the tallest, handsomest, and longest-lived men.

V 3.100 p.255-6
There are other Indians, again, and another style of life. These will not kill any living thing, nor do they sow or possess houses; and what they eat is herbs. There is among them a grain about the size of millet within a husk, and this grain grows unsown out of the earth. The people collect it and boil and eat it, husk and all. When one of these falls sick, he wanders into the desert and lies down, and no one troubles about him, whether he is sick or dead.

W 3.18 p. 219
This is what they say the Table of the Sun is. There is a meadow in the outskirts of the city, and it is full of the boiled meat of every four footed thing. To this meadow, those of the citizens who on each occasion are in authority bring the meat by night; by day anyone who pleases may come and eat there. But the people of the place declare that the earth of itself continuously renews the food.

X 5.16 p. 362
For they have such a plenty of fish that when a man opens his trapdoor and lets down into the lake an empty basket by a cord, in no time he can draw it up full.

Y 4.8-10 p. 282
Heracles, driving the oxen of Geryon, came into this country, which now the Scythians inhabit but was then desolate. Geryon, they say, lived west of the Pontus in what the Greeks call the Red Island near Gadira, outside the Pillars of Heracles, and on the shore of Ocean. They declare that Ocean flows from the east all round the world, but they cannot show that this is so in fact. From there, so they say, Heracles came to what is now called Scythian country, and the winter and the frost overtook him, so that he drew his lion's skin all over himself before he went to sleep; and his mares, which were grazing under the yoke, at that time were spirited away by some divine intervention. (9) When Heracles woke up, he looked for them and, searching every part of the country, at last he came to the land called Woodland; and there he found, in a cave, a monster, half-woman, half-snake; from the haunches up she was woman and, below, snake. He saw and marveled at her and asked her whether she had anywhere seen his mares straying about. She had them herself, she said, and would not give them back to him until he had lain with her. This was her price, and on these terms Heracles lay with her. But she kept postponing the return of the mares because she wanted to stay with Heracles as long as she could, and she knew that, once he had the horses back, he would be off again. At last she did give them back and said: "These horses of yours that came here I saved for you -- and you paid me a fee for saving them; for I have three sons from you. Now tell me, when they are grown up, what I should do with them. Shall I settle them here -- I have the lordship of this land -- or send them to you?" That was what she asked, and he answered her, "When you see these boys grown to manhood, do as I shall tell you and you will make no mistake. That one of them that you see stringing this bow, thus, and girdling himself with this belt, thus, him make to be a dweller in this country. but whichever of them fails in these tasks I have set, send him out of the land. If you do this, you will be glad of it yourself, and you will carry out my commands."....(10) But she, when the boys had grown to manhood, gave them their names--Agathyrsus to the one, Gelonus to the

second, Scythes to the third. And mindful of her charge, she carried out all she had been bidden. The two of the boys, Agathyrsus and Gelonus, were not able to reach the extent of their required task, and so they were expelled by their mother and went out of the country. But the youngest, Scythes, was successful and stayed where he was. And so, say the Greeks, all kings of the Scythians are descended from Scythes, the son of Heracles.

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List of Illustrations

In illustrating this study, I have emphasized vases illustrated in the LIMC in order to make it easier for the reader to refer to better quality reproductions than I am able to provide here. Since the LIMC is at present incomplete, I have supplemented illustrations reproduced from the LIMC with reproductions taken from a few other sources, most notably Frank Brommer's two works on Herakles, (1984) and (1986). Unfortunately, Brommer does not provide detailed information about the vases he illustrates, which is reflected in the following list.

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5. Belly Ampora, Group E. New York, MMA 56.171.11. About 540. ABV 133, 2. After LIMC V Herakles 2484.

6. Belly Ampora, near Painter of Berlin 1686. Munich, Antikenslg. 1379 WAF (J81). 540-550. ABV 303. After LIMC V Herakles 2487.

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8. Cup, Attic red figure, Euphronios. Munich, Antikenslg. 8704 (2620 WAF, J 337). About 510. ARV2 16, 17. After LIMC V Herakles 2501.

9. Oinochoe, Attic black figure, Leagros Group. Boulogne, Mus. 476. Late 6th cent. ABV 377, 245. After LIMC V Herakles 2535.

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15. Shield band relief, bronze. Basel Antikenmus. 540. LIMC II Atlas 3.

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125. Cup, red figure, Nikosthenes. Melbourne, Vic. Gallery 1730/4. 510. ARV2 125, 20. After LIMC I Alkyoneus 11.

126. Cup, red figure, Makron. Munich 2617 (J605). 500-490. ARV2 480, 1. After LIMC I Alkyoneus 13.

127. Hydria, Ionian in Caeretan style, Busiris group. Vatican 229. 520-510. After LIMC I Alkyoneus 31.

128. Skyphos, Theseus Painter. Taranto Mus. Naz. 7030. About 500. ABV 518, 17. After LIMC I Alkyoneus 17

Antaios

129. Amphora, Leagros Group. Munich, Antikenslg. 1417 (J3). 515-500. ABV 367, 86. After LIMC I Antaios I 1.

130. Amphora, Leagros Group. London, BM B222. 515-500. ABV 370, 126. After LIMC I Antaios I 2.

131. Hydria, Leagros Group. Munich, Antikenslg. 1708. 515-500. ABV 360, 5. After LIMC I Antaios I 5.

132. Oinochoe, 'Class of Vatican G47'. Munich, Antikenslg. 1761 (J1107). 500-480. ABV 430, 22. After LIMC I Antaios I 8.

133. Column krater, Attic black figure, group of Vatican 424 (Leagros Group). Naples Naz. Mus. 2519. 515-500. ABV 377, 237. After LIMC I Antaios I 9

134. Oinochoe, 'the Keyside class'. Stanford Mus. 61.69. 500-480. *Para* 183, 23 *bis*. After LIMC I Antaios I 13.

135. Calyx krater, Attic red figure, Euphronios. Paris, Louvre G103. 515-500. ARV2 14, 2. After LIMC I Antaios I 24.

Kerkopes

136. Lekythos, Attic black figure, Gela Painter. Agrigento Mus. ABL 205, 2. After Boardman (1974), 234.

137. Lekythos. Oxford 1889, 1010. After Brommer (1984) Abb. 9.

138. Amphora, Boulogne. After Brommer (1984) Abb. 10.

139. Volute krater, Attic red figure, Geras Painter. Munich, Antikenslg. 2382. ARV 287, 27. After Boardman (1975a), 181.

Eurytos and Iole

140. Amphora, black figure, Sappho Painter. Madrid 10916. After 500. ABV 508. After Brommer (1984) Abb. 7.

141. Stamnos, Attic red figure, Eucharides Painter. Once Basel market. 490-480. After LIMC IV Eurytos I 7.

142. Cup, Attic red figure, Onesimos. New York, MMA 12.231.2. ARV319, 6. After Boardman (1975a), 231.

143. Cup, Palermo. After Brommer (1984) Abb. 8.

144. Cup, frgs. Attic red figure, Brygos Painter. Athens NM 288. 490-480. ARV2 370, 7. After LIMC IV Eurytos I 5.

145. Column krater, Corinthian. Paris, Louvre E 635. 600-590. After LIMC IV Eurytos I 1.

146. Detail of fig. 145. After Schefold (1966) 60.

Geras

147. Pelike, red figure. Rome, Villa Giulia 48238. 480. ARV2 284, 1. After LIMC IV Geras 5.

148. Nolan amphora, Attic red figure, Charmides. London, BM E 290. About 470. ARV2 653, 1. After LIMC IV Geras 1.

149. Lekythos, black figure, class of Athens 581. Adolphseck 12. 490-480. ABV 491, 60. After LIMC IV Geras 3.

150. Pelike, red figure, Geras Painter. Paris, Louvre G234. 480. ARV2 286, 16. After LIMC IV Geras 4.