

This metope is unique both in crediting Theseus with the same high favour that Heracles had enjoyed and in showing that Theseus is by now the representative hero of Athens, just as Athena is the patron-goddess of the city.

The expulsion of the Peisistratids marks the beginning of a new heroic age for Athens, a period in which this new power will try to assert herself in every way against the established power of Sparta. This is why the Athenians now turn to the figure of Theseus. Athens had never been a great power like Sparta, and Theseus had never been a Pan-Hellenic hero like Heracles; he had always been just an Attic hero. After 510 B.C., however, he becomes *the* hero of Athens, and just as Athens will one day be the equal of Sparta, so Theseus becomes a hero capable of rivalling the Dorian Heracles himself.

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METAITIOS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOPHOKLES, TRACH. 1234

At Soph. Tr. 1233–1236, Herakles' son Hyllos, confronted with his father's demand that he marry Iole, objects. Iole, he says, has caused his mother's death and his father's mortal agony, so he would have to be mad to marry her:

τίς γάρ ποθ', ἢ μοι μητοῖ μὲν θανεῖν μόνη
μεταίτιος, σοι δ' αὖθις ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν,
τίς ταῦτ' ἄν, ὅστις μὴ ἕξ ἀλαστόρων νοσοῖ,
ἔλοιτο;

The phrase μόνη μεταίτιος causes problems which tend to be insufficiently recognized by commentators¹). To judge from its etymo-

1) Commentators with pertinent remarks on μεταίτιος (here or at line 260 or 447, where the word also occurs) are L. Campbell (Oxford 1881), P. E. Easter-

logy, μεταίτιος should mean “responsible *with* someone,” hence “jointly responsible, partly to blame.” So says the Liddell-Scott-Jones lexicon, where the word is defined as “being the joint cause of, accessory to.” Calling Iole the “sole joint cause” of Deianeira’s and Herakles’ sufferings is intelligible in dictionary terms, but not in the situation presented in the play.

The idea of a “sole joint cause” is a bit puzzling; we might expect someone to be a sole cause or a joint cause, but not both. Still, it would make sense if we could find one other party, and only one, with whom Iole could be said to share the blame. There is such a situation at lines 260 f., where we are told that Herakles “declared that Eurytos was the only one among mortals who shared the blame” for his enslavement to Omphale: τόνδε γὰρ μεταίτιον / μόνον βροτῶν ἔφρασε τοῦδ’ εἶναι πάθους. But μεταίτιον μόνον makes sense here. As the commentators generally recognize, Zeus is really responsible for Herakles’ enslavement (Tr. 251); Eurytos is the only mortal who shares in blame with the god.

At Tr. 1233 f., things are different, for the complicated events surrounding the deaths of Herakles and Deianeira leave a great deal of blame to be divided up a great many ways. There are too many suspects. We are told variously that Iole is jointly responsible with Nessos (Campbell), with Herakles (Jebb), with Deianeira (Fraenkel), with the Hydra’s poison, Nessos, and Deianeira (Easterling), or with Herakles, Nessos, Eros, the gods, and Zeus (Kamerbeek). True, they are all to blame, so Iole is at most μεταίτιος, only partly responsible. But if μεταίτιος makes sense, μόνη does not, either logically or dramatically. There is no clue in the context (as there is at lines 260 f.) as to who else is being singled out for blame, or indeed, that only one other culprit is being singled out or that there is any point in singling out only one. What is the sense in saying that Iole is the *only* person who shares blame with all those other people who share blame? So μόνη μεταίτιος does not fit the facts – certainly not as presented in the play, probably not as perceived by Hyllos when he uses the phrase.

Two of the commentators, Wunder on line 260 and Longo on lines 260 and 1234, deal with the problem by regarding μεταίτιος as

ling (Cambridge 1982), R. C. Jebb (Cambridge 1892), J. C. Kamerbeek (Leiden 1970), O. Longo (Padua 1968), G. Schiassi (Florence 1953), and E. Wunder (Gotha² 1850). In addition, see the excellent and thorough discussion of μεταίτιος by E. Fraenkel in his commentary on Aischylos’ *Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) at line 811 and some general remarks in T. F. Hoey, *Causality and the Trachiniae*, CJ 68 (1973) 306–309.

simply a synonym for αἴτιος: it means “responsible,” not “jointly responsible,” much as some commentators on Aisch. Ag. 811 gloss μεταίτιος as αἴτιος. This solution has the merit of recognizing the problem with μόνη μεταίτιος (Longo’s note is particularly sensitive on this point), but it is widely disputed; the objections of Fraenkel on Aisch. Ag. 811 are especially telling. It is also incorrect, as we can see from an examination of other occurrences of the word and its development in Greek. This examination is worth making for its own sake, in addition to the light it can shed on Tr. 1234.

Basically, μεταίτιος keeps close to its etymological meaning. It can sometimes be translated “responsible” or “to blame,” so that the idea of joint responsibility is deemphasized or attenuated. Uses of the word in such an attenuated sense become rather more frequent and varied as time goes on, although this may be partly by chance since the word is rare. Still, the idea of joint responsibility is nearly always implied, and its attenuation is rather slight, none too quick, and never complete at any time in the history of the language.

Μεταίτιος first occurs in tragedy, regularly with some notion of shared or joint responsibility. We can nearly always tell easily who is said to share responsibility with whom for what: the gods share responsibility with Agamemnon for the Greek victory at Troy and his safe return (Aisch. Ag. 811); the Chorus shares it with Elektra for deciding how to offer libations at Agamemnon’s grave (Aisch. Cho. 100); Aigisthos shares it with Klytaimestra for killing Agamemnon (ibid. 134); Apollo shares it with Orestes for killing Klytaimestra (Aisch. Eum. 465, reading Weil’s emendation for ἐπαίτιος); Eurytos, alone among mortals, shares it with Zeus for Herakles’ enslavement to Omphale (Soph. Tr. 260); Theseus is to share it, presumably with Adrastos, for burying the Seven against Thebes (Eur. Suppl. 26). The idea of joint responsibility is clearly present at Aisch. Eum. 199f., where Apollo is said to be not partly responsible but wholly responsible, οὐ μεταίτιος . . . ἀλλ’ . . . παναίτιος, for the murder of Klytaimestra. Things are a bit more complicated at Soph. Tr. 447f., where Deianeira considers Iole μεταίτια / τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ’ ἐμοὶ κακοῦ τινος. Context does not readily suggest anybody with whom Iole shares responsibility, but then, the complicated events of the *Trachiniae* provide many candidates. Furthermore, Deianeira here is trying to persuade Lichas to tell the truth, and she can do this best by minimizing her own anger and Iole’s responsibility; μεταίτιος is quite ap-

propriate²). Thus in all eight of its occurrences in tragedy except for Tr. 1234, μεταίτιος expresses the idea of joint responsibility.

Μεταίτιος first occurs in prose (it is not found in verse outside tragedy) in Herodotos, who uses it six times. As in tragedy, the idea of joint responsibility is always present, and it is easy enough to tell from context with whom responsibility is said to be shared or not shared. Interestingly, Herodotos always uses the word of groups of people (four times in the plural, twice with a collective noun), and he negates it four times. Pluralization and negation both affect the choice of μεταίτιος over the simplex αἴτιος. The two passages where μεταίτιος is used in the affirmative involve groups of people who share responsibility with each other: Queen Nitokris punishes the Egyptians who were μάλιστα μεταίτιους for the murder of her brother (2,100,3), and the Barkans refuse to surrender the people who were αἰτίους for the assassination of Arkesilaos “because the whole multitude of them had a share of the blame,” τῶν δὲ πᾶν γὰρ ἦν τὸ πλῆθος μεταίτιον (4,200,1). When Herodotos uses a negated μεταίτιος, the responsibility is real, and the true culprits are more or less definitely identified: Pheretime punishes those who were αἰτιωτάτους for assassinating Arkesilaos but hands the city of Barka over to certain nobles who were not μεταίτιοι with them for that act (4,202,2); the δῆμος of Megara was not μεταίτιος with the rich for the war with Syracuse (7,156,2); the Persians and the infantry were not μεταίτιοι with the foreign sailors for the defeat at Salamis (8,101,2); and Pausanias spared the sons of Attaginos because they were not μεταίτιοι with their father for his Medism (9,88,1). In all of these passages, οὐ μεταίτιοι, “not (even) partly responsible, not responsible at all,” is rather stronger than a mere οὐκ αἴτιοι. The compound helps emphasize the innocence of the innocent in contrast to the guilt of the guilty. So μεταίτιος is not the same as αἴτιος, but μεταίτιοι are αἴτιοι (jointly and collectively), and οὐ μεταίτιος means οὐκ αἴτιος only more so. In all of these passages in Herodotos, we could translate μεταίτιος as “responsible,” but the idea of joint responsibility is always present and relevant to the context.

2) The negatives of the passage are a further complication. Theoretically, and often actually, a negated μεταίτιος, “not (even) partly responsible,” is rather stronger than a negated αἴτιος (see text, next paragraph). But as some of the commentators (Wunder, Campbell, Jebb, and Longo) point out, μηδὲν and μηδ’ negate αἰσχροῦ and κακοῦ, respectively, not μεταίτια. It is one thing to say that Iole was not responsible for what happened; it is a bit different to say (as Deianira does) that what Iole is responsible for is not shameful or bad.

In later writings, some old uses of μεταίτιος recur. There is a nice “classic” use of the term in its precise sense as late as the *Septuagint*: at Esth. 8,12 e, Artaxerxes laments that a ruler whose subordinates abuse their power becomes μεταίτιος with his underlings in their crimes. Still later, but in keeping with classical usage, is the “Herodotean” plural at Julian, *Caes.* 313 b³), a reference to those who are μεταίτιοι, jointly and collectively responsible, for the assassination of Severus Alexander. There is a negation like those in Herodotos at Plut. *Mor.* 400 e: Herakles’ killing of the Molionidai is not μεταίτιος for the exclusion of the Eleans from the Isthmian games, for the real reason is something else. Again, the use of the compound rather than the simplex emphasizes that the blame belongs wholly to one thing and not at all to another.

At the same time, μεταίτιος after 400 B. C. or so undergoes some further developments which broaden its meaning and tend to put more emphasis on the αἴτιος part of the compound and less on the μετά. First and most important, rather as the negative οὐ μεταίτιος acts as an emphatic way of saying “not (even) partly to blame,” the affirmative comes to mean “(even) partly to blame, responsible in any way at all.” We could translate it as “responsible,” but it is a bit stronger than the simplex αἴτιος. Thus at Plat. *Rep.* 615 b, Sokrates describes the punishments in the underworld for killers, traitors, enslavers, “or those who are μεταίτιοι for any other suffering.” Xen. *Hell.* 2,3,32 has Kritias denounce Theramenes for being μεταίτιος for the deaths of many citizens in Athens during the turbulent last years of the Peloponnesian War. Not even Kritias could assert that Theramenes was wholly responsible, but he could give him at least a share of the blame. Theophrastos speaks of the exclusion from sacrifices of anyone who is μεταίτιος, even partly responsible, for shedding the blood of one of his own (*Porph. De abst.* 2,27,2⁴). Second, μεταίτιος can refer to a subordinate cause or accomplice, someone who is jointly but not equally responsible; the Liddell-Scott-Jones lexicon gives “accessory” as one meaning. Thus at Xen. *Hell.* 5,1,34, οἱ μὲν σφαγεῖς καὶ οἱ μεταίτιοι τοῦ ἔργου are “the murderers and their accomplices,” those primarily and secondarily responsible. Third, there are some

3) Julian’s *Caesars* is also known by the titles *Symposion* and *Kronia*.

4) This passage and the one from the same work cited below come in a section of Porphyry’s *De abstinentia* taken from Theophrastos’ *Περὶ εὐσεβείας* and generally regarded as quotation from that work, not merely rehash or paraphrase. Hence we shall attribute the word to Theophrastos instead of the later Porphyry.

signs that the idea of joint responsibility is becoming so attenuated that it needs reinforcing. We find two examples of semantic overkill, συναίτια καὶ μεταίτια at Hipp. De flat. 15 and συμμεταίτια at Plat. Tim. 46 e (both passages, incidentally, refer to subordinate or accessory causes). It is as if authors cannot always trust μεταίτιος to convey the idea of joint responsibility by itself.

Finally, we have one literary passage where any idea of shared responsibility is so remote that it must be left out of account⁵) – and even here the word is an emendation, although a highly attractive and popular one, and an emendation of some sort is clearly necessary. Theophrastos, as reported by Porph. De abst. 2,29,4, tells how Sopatros was found to be responsible for the first slaughter of an ox, μεταίτιου τῆς πράξεως ἀνευθεθέντος (μεταίτιου Reiske: μετὰ codd.). True, this is part of his account of the origins of the βουφόνια, that elaborate ritual exercise in shared blame, and thoughts of the ritual might have influenced the choice of μεταίτιος instead of the simplex αἴτιος. But the passage in question comes from the story behind the ritual, not the account of the ritual itself, and in the story Sopatros has the responsibility all to himself. For once, at last, the μετα- in μεταίτιος loses its force.

To sum up, μεταίτιος starts off meaning “jointly responsible, partly to blame,” and it keeps that meaning all through its history. It is no accident that eight of its nine occurrences in tragedy come in two works, Aischylos’ *Oresteia* and Sophokles’ *Trachiniai*, which present some especially complicated problems in apportioning blame. The word’s overtones of shared responsibility may also be used to add emphasis: the word can refer to people who are or are not even partly responsible for something, and in these passages μεταίτιος is a bit stronger than αἴτιος. At the same time, the word’s emphasis on shared responsibility becomes attenuated when it means collectively responsible or when it becomes an emphatic αἴτιος, and occasionally an author feels the need to strengthen the idea of joint responsibility with a συν- compound. Still, out of about two dozen occurrences in Greek literature, there is only one where the idea of joint responsibility seems to be missing altogether.

To return to Sophokles’ usage at Tr. 1233 f., the problems with μόνη μεταίτιος are every bit as serious as the opening of this

5) Besides the scholia to Aisch. Ag. 811 and Soph. Tr. 1234, which gloss μεταίτιος as αἴτιος. It is not clear that the scholiasts were equating the words; more likely they were simply trying to explain the unusual compound by the ordinary simplex.

paper made them out to be. The phrase really does mean “sole joint cause,” for μεταίτιος in tragedy is used too consistently in its etymological sense, and its attenuation outside tragedy is too slight and too late, for it to mean otherwise here. Nor is there any qualification to μόνη, as there is at Tr. 260 f., where Eurytos is “sole joint cause among mortals.” To the best of my knowledge, there is no convincing emendation to help. How are we to explain this odd phrase?

I wish to suggest a psychological solution for the philological problem⁶). It may not find universal acceptance, but at least it recognizes the gravity of the problem, and it may serve until a better explanation, or a suitable emendation, comes along. I propose that μεταίτιος qualifies or undercuts the bold accusation hurled at Iole, or prepared for hurling, by the word μόνη at the end of the previous line. Hyllos starts out to say something bold and bitter in line 1233: “She who for my mother’s death is the only . . .” The only what? Let us suppose that he checks himself and thinks the better of it. Iole is not really the *only* cause of Deianeira’s death, and besides, Hyllos does not wish to get into an argument with Herakles, who is dying slowly and painfully before his eyes⁷). Hyllos then backs off from his bold accusation and says only that Iole is μεταίτιος, partly to blame. He shows a similar bit of reserve and delicacy in what he says Iole is responsible for: in line 1233, he speaks flatly of Deianeira’s dying, θανεῖν, but in the next line Herakles’ condition is expressed by the euphemistic circumlocution “being in the state you are in,” ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν. Thus Hyllos pauses in mid-sentence at the enjambement and finishes his point in a more cautious, considerate vein. True, Greek actors, wearing masks and performing in a huge theatre, could not show the subtle inner play of thought and emotion that is possible with the intimate modern theatre. But we are not asking Hyllos to show all the nuances of an inner conflict. The audience has been watching him for some time being torn by conflicting emotions and loyalties. We only need ask him to show us the same thing once

6) Easterling is on the right track in looking for an answer in the mind of Hyllos rather than in the word alone: Hyllos, she says, knows that the disasters of the play have several causes, “but this does not lessen his horror at the particular role of Iole, hence μόνη.” Hyllos’ state of mind when he speaks the lines is capable of further analysis.

7) Hyllos throughout this scene shows an understandable delicacy in the face of Herakles’ sufferings: see Tr. 1115, 1179 f., and 1230, as well as Hyllos’ willingness to follow his father’s dying commands although he finds them so deeply repugnant.

more by his delivery: build up line 1233 to an indignant crescendo, pause a bit at the end of the line as if fishing for better words, and switch to a more moderate tone; some of the old indignation may be resumed in line 1235. This is well within the abilities of a moderately competent actor⁸).

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8) The occurrences of μεταίτιος discussed in this study were located by a word search on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae at the University of California, Irvine, in August, 1990. My thanks to the director and staff of the Thesaurus for this service, and to Karl Squitier in particular for help with questions. For the sake of completeness, I note here some passages in the Thesaurus' database that have been omitted from my text as they have nothing to add to the discussion: a fragment of Philod. Rhet. too garbled for analysis (2, 8, fr. 2 = S. Sudhaus [ed.], *Philodemi volumina rhetorica* vol. 2 [Leipzig 1896] p. 121); the lemmata to the scholia on Aisch. Ag. 811 and Cho. 100; and some duplication of texts through quotation and the like (Hdt. 4,200,1 = Suda s.v. μεταίτιος; Hdt. 7,156,2 = FGrH 577 F 6; Hdt. 9,88,1 = Const. Porph. *Excerpta historica* vol. 2,2 [Büttner-Wobst and Roos, edd., Berlin 1910] p. 28; Plat. Rep. 615 b = Stob. 1,49,64). My thanks also go to James Forrester of the Department of Philosophy, University of Wyoming, for comments on an earlier draft of this paper and for much helpful discussion; Professor Forrester is, of course, οὐ μεταίτιος for any obstinacy or bad judgment on my part that has resisted his attention.