A marble bust of Herakles, showing his curly hair and muscular physique. The bust is set against a background of a classical building facade with columns and a pediment. The text is overlaid on the bust.

Herakles and the Panhellenic Idea in Ancient Greek Culture

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Panhellenism in Ancient Greece

- Panhellenic war enterprises
 - The Trojan War (mythical)
 - The Persian Wars (historical: 490/480 B.C.)
- Supra-regional institutions
 - The Oracle at Delphi
 - The Olympic Games
- Rhetoric: political speeches
 - Demosthenes, *Philippica* (351–341 B.C.)

Herakles in the *Iliad*

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα,
ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι·
ἀλλὰ ἐ μοῖρα δάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.
ὥς καὶ ἐγών, εἰ δὴ μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται,
κείσομ' ἐπεὶ κε θάνω. [...] (*Il.* 18.117–121)

For, not even the powerful Herakles escaped the doom [of death],
although he was dearest to king Zeus, the son of Kronos;
but destiny and the painful wrath of Hera overcame him.
Such I too, if a similar destiny is meant for me,
will be lying there once I've died. [...]

Herakles in the *Odyssey*

τὸν δὲ μέτ' εἰσενόησα βίην Ἡρακληεῖην,
εἶδωλον· αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
τέρπεται ἐν θαλίῃς καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον Ἥβην,
παῖδα Διὸς μεγάλιοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπέδιλου. (*Od.* 11.601–604)

After this one [= Sisyphus] I saw the powerful Herakles,
[that is to say,] his shadow: he himself is enjoying himself
among the immortal gods
at festivities and has Hebe with the fair ankles [as his wife],
a daughter of the great Zeus and of Hera with the golden shoes.

Herakles as the Forefather of the Ptolemaic Dynasty

Ἐκ πατέρων οἶος μὲν ἔην τελέσαι μέγα ἔργον
Λαγείδας Πτολεμαῖος, ὅτε φρεσὶν ἐγκατάθοιτο
βουλάν, ἂν οὐκ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ οἴος τε νοῆσαι.
τῆνον καὶ μακάρεσσι πατὴρ ὁμότιμον ἔθηκεν
ἀθανάτοις, καὶ οἱ χρύσεος θρόνος ἐν Διὸς οἴκῳ
δέδμηται· παρὰ δ' αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρος φίλα εἰδῶς
ἔδριάζει, Πέρσαισι βαρὺς θεὸς αἰολομίτρας.
ἀντία δ' Ἡρακλῆος ἔδρα κενταυροφόνοιο
ἴδρυται στερεοῖο τετυγμένα ἐξ ἀδάμαντος·
ἔνθα σὺν ἄλλοισιν θαλίας ἔχει Οὐρανίδησι,
χαίρων υἰωνῶν περιώσιον υἰωνοῖσιν,
ὅττι σφεων Κρονίδης μελέων ἐξείλετο γῆρας,
ἀθάνατοι δὲ καλεῦνται ἐοὶ νέποδες γεγαῶτες.

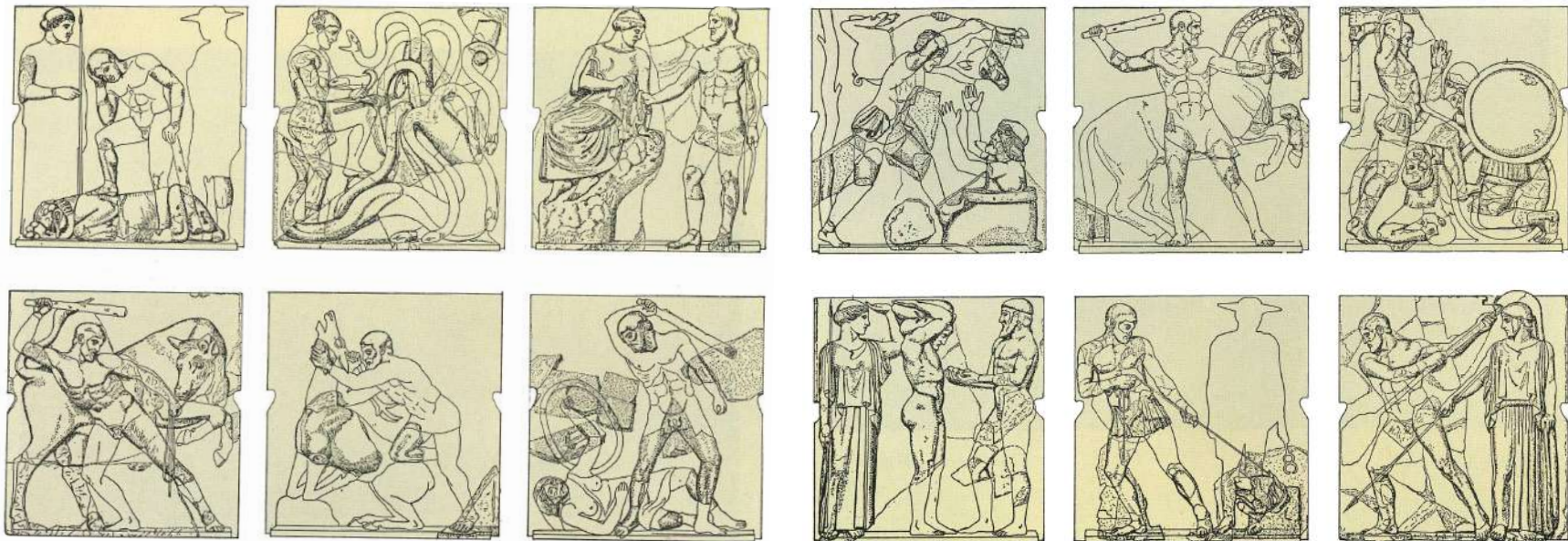
ἄμφω γὰρ πρόγονός σφιν ὁ καρτερός Ἡρακλείδας,
ἄμφοτεροὶ δ' ἀριθμεῦνται ἐς ἔσχατον Ἡρακλῆα.

By lineage what a man was Ptolemy son of Lagus to accomplish some mighty deed when in his heart he had laid up a plan which none other could have conceived. Him the father made of equal honour even with the blessed immortals, and for him is fixed in Zeus's halls a golden throne; and by his side in friendship sits Alexander, god of the gay diadem, the Persians' bane. Over against these, and wrought of stubborn adamant, is stablished the chair of Heracles who slew the Centaurs, and there with the other gods he keeps festival, rejoicing exceedingly in the sons of his sons, in that the son of Cronos has lifted age from their limbs, and that they, his offspring, are called immortals. For to both of these the mighty son of Heracles was forbear, and both in the end trace back their birth to Heracles.

Theocritus, *Idyll* 17.13–27

Greek text and English translation: Gow 1952

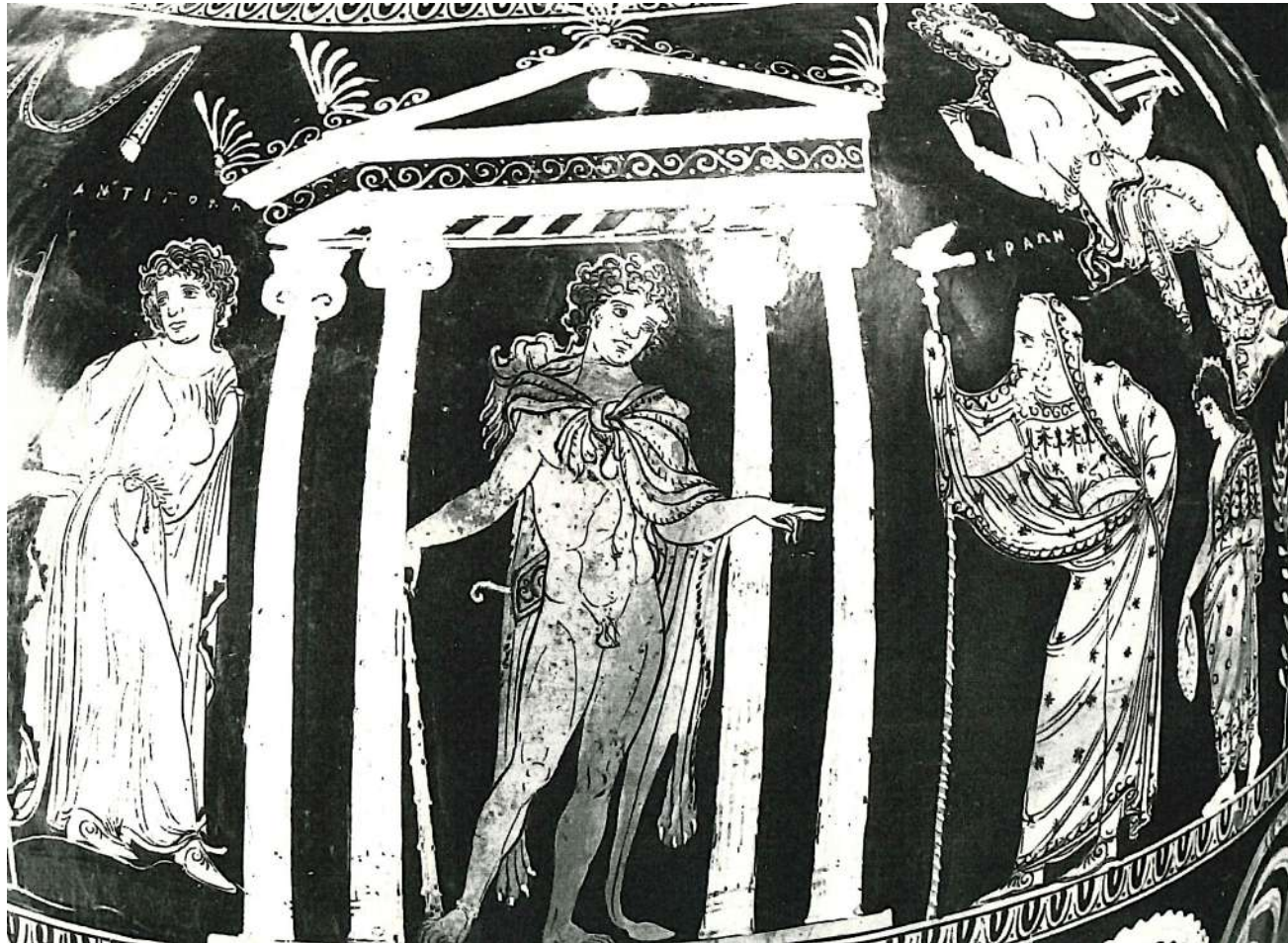
Metopes of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia: The 12 Deeds of Herakles



Olympia, c. 470–457 B.C. (Olympia, Greece and Louvre, Paris)

Source: Yalouris, A. and N. Yalouris. 1997. *Olympia: Das Museum und das Heiligtum*. Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 130

Herakles as a *deus ex machina*



Apulian amphora, mid-4th century B.C. (Ruvo, Museo Jatta)

Source: *LIMC* I.1, 823 ("Antigone" n. 14)

Herakles as a God on Thasos



Silver tetradrachm from Thasos

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Tetradrachm_Herakles_Thasos_MBA_Lyon.jpg

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