

## Hercules' honor and dishonor: Deianira in Ovid Heroides 9

Ovid Heroides 9 is an epistle from Deianira to her husband Hercules, which is composed in elegiac couplets and consists of 168 lines. It is when Hercules conquered Oechalia and got Iole, princess of Oechalia, and sent her as his lover to Trachis where Deianira lived that she wrote this epistle. Therefore, this epistle seems to insist on disadvantages from Iole at a glance. Certainly, on line 1-26 and 119-136 Iole is referred to, but through 64 lines (55-118) Deianira refers to Omphale, queen of the kingdom of Lydia, whom once Hercules served as a slave for some years. Some scholars these lines are awkward and regard Heroides 9 as spurious.

In this presentation, about this problem I examine the structure and the unity by clarifying how Deianira thinks of Iole, Omphale, and Deianira herself. In this relation, I focus on what Deianira regards as honor or dishonor for Hercules. On line 1-6, she refers to labours of Hercules and the existence of Iole. Here she regards labours through Hercules' power as honor and regards Iole who conquered Hercules as dishonor. This contrast of honor and dishonor is the base of Heroides 9 and Deianira feels uneasy about that dishonor would spoil honor. When referring to Omphale, Deianira regards her as dishonor for Hercules because she made him submit to her and spoiled his labours. Then Deianira recognizes Iole is more serious dishonor than Omphale, because it is Deianira herself that Iole is going to ruin. Therefore she tries to remind Hercules that he married her as a result of defeating the river god Achelous and he defended her from a centaur named Nessus (137-142). Here Deianira combines the battle for her with the labours of Hercules, and she regards herself as honor for Hercules. In Heroides 9, Deianira, using the frame that Omphale spoiled labours of Hercules, expresses that Iole would ruin Deianira, a proof of Hercules' power.