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## GAZING AT HELEN WITH STESICHORUS

*P. J. Finglass*

οἱ δ' ὥς οὔν εἶδονθ' Ἑλένην ἐπὶ πύργον ἰοῦσαν,  
155 ἦκα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον·  
  
οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἑκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
τοιῆιδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·  
αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν·  
160 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς τοίη περ ἐοῦσ' ἐν νηυσὶ νεέεσθω,  
μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο.

Hom. *Il.* 3.154-60

When they saw Helen on her way to the tower, they began to speak winged words quietly to each other. 'It is no cause for anger that the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans should long suffer pains on behalf of such a woman. She is terribly like the immortal goddesses to look upon. Yet even though she is such a woman, let her go home on the ships, nor let her be left as a cause of woe to us and to our children in the future.'

In book three of the *Iliad* the sight of Helen provokes the Trojan elders to reflect on her beauty. Homer never describes what Helen looks like, not even revealing the colour of her hair;<sup>1</sup> far more effective to depict such unsurpassable beauty indirectly, by reference to its effect on the men gazing upon her. That reaction consists here not of mere exclamations of amazement, but of a remark of considerable poignancy: Helen's beauty, they say, is so overwhelming that all the suffering that the Greeks and

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<sup>1</sup> Later poets are not so restrained: cf. Stes. fr. 114.5 F., Sappho fr. 23.5 Voigt, Ibyc. fr. S151.5 *PMGF*, Finglass 2013a.

Trojans are experiencing for her sake is no reason for anger.<sup>2</sup> Helen is thereby doubly objectified, by two different groups of men: both the target of the old men's gaze, and the goal of the young men's fighting (exemplified by the duel between Menelaus and Paris, which she has just been told is about to take place). The voicing of this remark by old men, who might have been thought above such considerations, makes it all the more powerful, as Quintilian noted:

*illud quoque est ex relatione ad aliquid quod non eius rei gratia dictum videtur amplificationis genus. non putant indignum Troiani principes Graios Troianosque propter Helenae speciem tot mala tanto temporis spatio sustinere: quaenam igitur illa forma credenda est? non enim hoc dicit Paris, qui rapuit, non aliquis iuvenis aut unus e vulgo, sed senes et prudentissimi et Priamo adsidentes.*

Quint. *Inst.* 8.4.21

Another type (*sc.* of amplification) is based on something which appears to have been said for a different purpose. The chief men of Troy think it no discredit for Greek and Trojans to endure so many troubles for so long for the sake of Helen's beauty. What then must her beauty be believed to be? For it is not Paris, who ravished her, who says this, nor some young man or one of the common people, but the wise old men who are Priam's counsellors.<sup>3</sup>

Not much later in the poem Paris does in fact respond to Helen's beauty in directly erotic tones, but only once the old men have had their say, and without any specific

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<sup>2</sup> ΣΑ Hom. *Il.* 3.155b (l 387.41-2 Erbse) κάλλος γυναικὸς θαυμάσαντες τῶν ἰδίων καταφρονοῦσι κινδύνων.

<sup>3</sup> Translation by Russell 2001, III 403.

references to sight.<sup>4</sup> He too ‘describ[es] not her appearance but the overwhelming desire that it arouses . . . Like the elders on the wall, he avoids enumerating the qualities that elicit this reaction.’<sup>5</sup> Moreover, nothing is said by him, or by the old men, about Helen’s character – these reactions are provoked solely by her exceptional looks. Put positively, her mere appearance prompts the elders of the city to relax, albeit momentarily, the horror that they would normally have for war, and the hatred that they might naturally feel for its apparent cause.<sup>6</sup> And the comparison of Helen to immortal goddesses, one emphasised by the stark asyndeton introducing the line in question, certainly lends her grandeur, even if that comparison is based on looks alone. Yet the emphasis nevertheless falls on the objectification of a woman by men, an objectification which is a cause of the conflict that the poem as a whole depicts. And the limits of that objectification even in its own terms will become clear only a little later, when the audience will be confronted by the difference between a woman who looks like a goddess, and an immortal who actually is one:

415	<p>τὴν δὲ χολωσαμένη προσεφώνεε δῖ’ Ἀφροδίτη·  μή μ’ ἔρεθε σχετλίη, μὴ χωσαμένη σε μεθείω,  τῶς δέ σ’ ἀπεχθήρω ὡς νῦν ἔκπαγλ’ ἐφίλησα,</p>
420	<p>μέσσωι δ’ ἀμφοτέρων μητίσομαι ἔχθεα λυγρὰ  Τρώων καὶ Δαναῶν, σὺ δέ κεν κακὸν οἶτον ὀληαι.  ὡς ἔφατ’, ἔδεισεν δ’ Ἑλένη Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,  βῆ δὲ κατασχομένη ἐανῶ ἀργῆτι φαεινῶι  σιγῆι, πᾶσας δὲ Τρωιάς λάθεν· ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων.</p>

Hom. *Il.* 3.413-20

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<sup>4</sup> Hom. *Il.* 3.441-6.

<sup>5</sup> Blondell 2013, 55-6.

<sup>6</sup> Contrast the criticism voiced of Helen by Greeks (Hom. *Il.* 19.325) and Trojans (3.50, 3.160) alike.

In anger divine Aphrodite addressed her: ‘Do not provoke me, wretched woman, in case I go off and abandon you, and come to hate you just as much as I have given you my wholehearted friendship, in case, in the middle of both, I devise bitter hatred among the Trojans and Greeks, and you die a terrible death.’ Thus she spoke, and Helen, daughter of Zeus, was afraid, and departed in silence, wrapping herself in her gleaming white cloak, and escaped the notice of all the Trojan women. The goddess led the way.

The proximity of the episodes underlines the limitations of beauty even such as Helen’s; indeed, far from giving her the power or authority of a goddess, Helen’s looks have caused her personal disaster, separated as she is from her real family, bitterly aware of her poor reputation, and unable to defy the goddess whose ends she serves.

Just as Helen passively has her beauty appreciated by the old men, so too she features in their description as an unusually passive cause of the war. Nothing is said about her elopement with Paris; nothing about the anger felt by Menelaus at the insult done to him and his house through her choices and actions. Yet elsewhere in the epic Helen proves herself to be far from passive, but rather one of its most self-reflective characters;<sup>7</sup> and in the scene to come, far from being a silent target of male admiration and lust, she is able to advise Priam, who treats her with respect, as they look upon the warriors coming to attack his city.<sup>8</sup> The old men’s admiration for her beauty, memorably expressed though it is, does not tell us anything like the whole story.

This chapter will investigate Helen as the subject of the male gaze not in Homer, but in the first poet known to have engaged systematically with Homer’s

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<sup>7</sup> See Roisman 2007.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Priam breaks in on the elders’ murmuring to call Helen to his side, and Helen, chameleonic, reverses herself again, from spectacle to spectator’ (Austin 1994, 44).

poetry: Stesichorus.<sup>9</sup> It will consider what is distinctive about Stesichorus' portrayal of Helen in different poems, paying particular attention to issues of seeing and sight. As in the *Iliad* passage just quoted, it will become clear that such questions are bound up with moral evaluations of Helen and her actions, and the issue of to what extent she can fairly be characterised as a passive recipient of the male gaze, as opposed to a more active participant in the act of viewing even when she is its target.

By far the most famous piece of Stesichorus' poetry, cited by Plato and Isocrates, and then by countless authors ancient and modern, relates to Helen:<sup>10</sup>

ἔστι δὲ τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσι περὶ μυθολογίαν καθαρμὸς ἀρχαῖος, ὃν Ὅμηρος μὲν οὐκ ἤϊσθετο, Στησίχορος δέ· τῶν γὰρ ὀμμάτων στερηθεὶς διὰ τὴν Ἑλένης κακηγορίαν οὐκ ἠγνόησεν ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος, ἀλλ' ἄτε μουσικὸς ὢν ἔγνω τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ ποιεῖ εὐθύς·

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος,  
οὐδ' ἔβασ ἐν νηυσὶν εὐσκέλμοις,  
οὐδ' ἴκεο Πέργαμα Τροίας·

καὶ ποιήσας δὴ πᾶσαν τὴν καλουμένην Παλινωιδίαν παραχρῆμα ἀνέβλεψεν.

Pl. *Phaedr.* 243a = Stes. fr. 91a F.

There is an ancient purification for people who have committed an offence in their telling of myths, which Homer did not know, but Stesichorus did. For on being deprived of his eyes because of his abuse of Helen, he did not fail to discern the cause, as Homer had, but since he was inspired by the Muses, he recognised his error and immediately composed:

This story is not true;  
you did not embark on the well-benched ships  
nor did you come to the towers of Troy.

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<sup>9</sup> For Stesichorus' engagement with Homer see Finglass 2014a, *passim* and Kelly 2015.

<sup>10</sup> For later ancient references to the story see Davies and Finglass 2014, 338-43, and *ibid.* 312-16, 335-8 for a commentary, with further bibliography, on the passages from Plato and Isocrates cited here; for references to the story from the Renaissance onwards see Schade 2015.

And after composing the entire *Palinode*, as it is called, he straightaway recovered his sight.

ἐνεδείξατο (sc. Ἑλένη) δὲ καὶ Στησιχόρῳ τῷ ποιητῇ τὴν αὐτῆς δύναμιν· ὅτε μὲν γὰρ ἀρχόμενος τῆς ᾠδῆς ἐβλασφήμησέ τι περὶ αὐτῆς, ἀνέστη τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐστερημένος, ἐπειδὴ δὲ γνοῦς τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς συμφορᾶς τὴν καλουμένην Παλινωιδίαν ἐποίησεν, πάλιν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν κατέστησεν.

Isocr. *Hel.* 64 = Stes. fr. 91c F.

She (sc. Helen) showed her power to the poet Stesichorus, too. For when, as he began his song, he presented her in a somewhat insulting manner, he stood up deprived of his sight. But when he recognised the cause of his misfortune and composed the so-called *Palinode*, he brought himself back to the same state.

The old men in the *Iliad* are moved by the sight of Helen's appearance to compare her appearance to that of goddesses; they ignore, momentarily, her elopement or abduction, to focus on her beauty and its appropriateness as a justification for the war. Stesichorus' first poem about Helen, itself called *Helen*, evidently had no such hesitation in portraying her in more negative terms; in this work she married Menelaus and subsequently abandoned him.<sup>11</sup> In a subsequent poem, however, Stesichorus offered a more positive assessment of Menelaus' wife, asserting that she never travelled to Troy, and thus could not fairly be blamed for the war supposedly fought on her behalf. The poem in which he reversed his position was known as the *Palinode*. A further description of that song, preserved in a fragmentary work of ancient scholarship, gives an additional detail concerning her history:

[μέμ-

φεται τὸν Ὅμηρο[ν ὅτι Ἑ-

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<sup>11</sup> Stes. fr. 84-9 F; for an account of this poem see Davies and Finglass 2014, 308, Finglass 2015.

λέ]νην ἐποίησεν ἐν Τ[ροίαι  
 καὶ οὐ τὸ εἶδωλον αὐτῆ[ς, ἐν  
 5      τε τ[ῆι] ἐτέραι τὸν Ἡσιόδ[ον  
       μέμ[φετ]αι· διτταὶ γάρ εἰσι πα–  
       λινω<ι>δ[ίαι <δια>]λλάττουςαι, καὶ ἔ–  
       στιν <τ>ῆ<ς> μὲν ἀρχή· δεύρ’ αὖ–  
 10      τε θεὰ φιλόμολπε, τῆς δέ·  
       χρυσόπτερε παρθένε, [[ερ]]ώς  
       ἀνέγραψε Χαμαιλέων [fr. 29 Giordano]· αὐ–  
       τὸ[ς δ]έ φησ[ιν ὅ] Στησίχορο[ς  
       τὸ μὲν εἶδωλον]ν ἐλθεῖ[ν εἰς  
       Τροίαν, τὴν δ’ Ἑλένην π[αρά  
 15      τῶι Πρωτεῖ καταμεῖν[αι]·

. . . he finds fault with Homer, because he put Helen at Troy, and not her phantom, and in the other he finds fault with Hesiod. For there are two different *Palinodes*, and the beginning of one of them is “Come here once more, goddess who delights in song”, and of the other, “Golden-winged maiden”, as Chamaeleon wrote. For Stesichorus himself says that the phantom came to Troy, but Helen resided with Proteus.

Stes. fr. 90.1-15 F.<sup>12</sup>

Stesichorus thus placed Helen in Egypt, leaving a mere phantom or εἶδωλον at Troy over which the Greeks and Trojans fought out of fatal misapprehension.<sup>13</sup> The irony

<sup>12</sup> For the remainder of the papyrus, which gives information about the *Palinode* not relevant here, see Finglass 2013b.



that the object of the male gaze *par excellence* was hidden away in Egypt will not have been lost on Stesichorus' audience, and no doubt was part of the appeal that this account would later have for Euripides.<sup>14</sup> The story calls into question the extent to which sight can be relied on at all, if two great armies can fight it out for ten years because of something perceptible to the eye but lacking reality. It problematises the very nature of physical beauty, presenting it as a powerful but ultimately insubstantial attribute, something for which much toil and suffering is experienced in vain. Ibycus would later describe the Greeks fighting over Helen's beauty or εἶδος; and 'it is a short step from conceiving of that beauty as the cause of war to the notion of fighting over an *eidōlon* identical in appearance.'<sup>15</sup> Thus the εἶδωλον motif, although providing from one point of view a radically new take on the myth of Helen, from another perspective merely highlights an intrinsic aspect of the original story.

Given the significant part that sight and vision seems to have played in Stesichorus' *Palinode*, it is of particular interest that Plato's account of this poem and its predecessor is so bound up with the same motif. Helen, that most pleasing object to men's eyes, revenges herself on a poet who had told the conventional story of her life by taking away that poet's eyesight. Only when he recants his insults does she restore his vision. In this story the sighted Stesichorus 'sees' Helen awry; the blind Stesichorus, by contrast, appreciates her true nature, and reflects that in his poetry.<sup>16</sup> This is reminiscent of the whole idea of the blind prophet, the seer who, despite

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<sup>13</sup> For the idea of the εἶδωλον in early Greek literature see Davies and Finglass 2014, 305-6.

<sup>14</sup> See Eur. *El.* 1280-3 and *Helen*; the latter play is based on this myth.

<sup>15</sup> Ibyc. fr. S151.5 *PMGF* ξα]νθᾶς Ἑλένας περὶ εἶδει | [δῆ]ριν πολύσμον ἔχ[ο]ντες | [πό]λεμον κατὰ [δ]ακρ[υό]εντα ('[the Greeks] pursuing strife that is celebrated in song during woeful war concerning the form of blonde Helen'); Blondell 2013, 118.

<sup>16</sup> For blindness as a punishment see Davies and Finglass 2014, 336, on fr. 91a F.

physical blindness, can see the ways of the gods with clarity; this is exemplified most powerfully in the figure of Tiresias.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, we do not know what role blindness played in either of Stesichorus' poems referred to by Plato. Did Stesichorus mention his blindness? The odds are against it, since there are no such personal references anywhere else in what survives of his work; in this respect he stands closer to epic than to other archaic lyric.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, although Plato takes the trouble to cite his poem, he does not quote anything connected with blindness (this, an argument from silence, is not as weighty as the previous one). Nevertheless, blindness seems a punishment appropriate enough. The *Palinode*, as we have seen, called into question the truth of what one can see, through the εἴδωλον that took Helen's place at Troy; how appropriate that the impetus behind that poem should be the temporary blinding of the poet by Helen herself. So although the biographical tradition provided by Plato and Isocrates probably did not have any actual basis in Stesichorus' life, and is most unlikely to reflect even any first-person remark in his poem, it does nevertheless show a sophisticated appreciation of what will have been an important aspect of this poem, adapting a theme of the *Palinode* into the biographical story of the man who composed it. In the absence of any text from the work beyond the brief quotations from Plato and the papyrus above, this is all that we can say.

The portrayal of Helen is significant in another of Stesichorus' poems. In his *Sack of Troy* Helen experiences a near-stoning at the hands of the Greek army.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Soph. *OR* 370-5, 388-9, 747.

<sup>18</sup> See further Lefkowitz 2012, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Both Stesichorus' account of the sack, and the hexameter account from the Epic Cycle, have the name Ἰλίου Πέρις; for clarity I refer to Stesichorus' poem as the *Sack of Troy*, to the epic poem as the *Iliu Persis*.

ἄρα εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἑλένης κάλλος βλέψαντες οὐκ ἐχρήσαντο τοῖς ξίφεσιν; οἷόν τι καὶ  
Στησίχορος ὑπογράφει περὶ τῶν καταλεύειν αὐτὴν μελλόντων. φησὶ γὰρ ἅμα τῷ τὴν  
ὄψιν αὐτῆς ἰδεῖν αὐτοὺς ἀφεῖναι τοὺς λίθους ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.

Σ Eur. *Or.* 1287 = fr. 106 F.<sup>20</sup>

Was it because they saw Helen's beauty that they did not use their swords? Stesichorus too describes something like this concerning the people who were intending to stone her. For he says that as soon as they saw her appearance, they let the stones fall to the ground.

Stesichorus' account is apparently unique. The more familiar version, in which Helen disrobes in order to preserve herself from her estranged husband Menelaus, is described by a character in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*:

ὁ γῶν Μενέλαος τᾶς Ἑλένας τὰ μᾶλά παι  
γυμνᾶς παραφιδῶν ἐξέβαλ', οἰῶ, τὸ ξίφος.

When Menelaus saw the apples of the naked Helen, he dropped, I believe, his sword.

Ar. *Lys.* 155-6

The first probable attested appearance of the scene is found on the Mykonos pithos dated to around 675 which features the earliest depiction of the Trojan horse;<sup>21</sup> Menelaus draws his sword as he approaches Helen, and the viewer is probably to understand that Helen's beauty, and perhaps her disrobing, will cause him to spare her. A scholium on the Aristophanes passage reveals that the same version occurred

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<sup>20</sup> The fragment is not explicitly attributed to Stesichorus' *Sack of Troy*, but any other attribution is problematic, whereas it fits that poem admirably; see further Davies and Finglass 2014, 436-7.

<sup>21</sup> See Kahil 1988, §225.

both in the *Little Iliad* and in *Ibycus*.<sup>22</sup> The prose summary by Proclus of the cyclic *Iliu Persis* says only that Menelaus found Helen and brought her back to the ships, after killing Deiphobus, to whom she had been married after the death of Paris;<sup>23</sup> perhaps it offered a similar account to that of the *Little Iliad*. In the fifth century the story is mentioned in Euripides' *Andromache*,<sup>24</sup> and appears several times in visual art in the sixth and fifth centuries, which shows Helen unveiling herself rather than engaging in any more dramatic uncovering.<sup>25</sup> There is no mention of the event in the *Odyssey*, however, in any of its accounts of the sack; 'such a lurid episode', says Griffin, 'is un-Homeric in atmosphere'.<sup>26</sup>

Stesichorus' account is not found elsewhere. Although it is attested just as early as the version in which Menelaus encounters his wife, it is more likely to be secondary, for two reasons. First, the Menelaus version is attested across different types of literature (epic and lyric), as well as visual art, already in the archaic period,

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<sup>22</sup> Σ Ar. *Lys.* 155a = p. 12 Hangard; *Il. Parv.* fr. 28 *GEF*; *Ibyc.* fr. 296 *PMGF*. For Stesichorus' relationship to the epic cycle see Carey 2015. West 2013, 170 remarks with reference to this episode that 'one senses that the older conventions of heroic epic are being modified by the admission of more comical and romantic elements'; equally, however, our view of what older epic contained may be affected by the deliberate austerity of the Homeric epics, which exclude all kinds of elements attested in later epic that may well have been found in pre-Homeric epic too.

<sup>23</sup> *Il. Pers.* arg. 2 *GEF* Μενέλαος δὲ ἀνευρών Ἑλένην ἐπὶ τὰς ναῦς κατάγει, Διήφοβον φονεύσας ('Menelaus found Helen and brought her to the ships, after slaying Deiphobus').

<sup>24</sup> Eur. *Andr.* 628-31 (Peleus to Menelaus) οὐκ ἔκτανες γυναῖκα χειρίαν λαβών, | ἀλλ', ὡς ἐσεῖδες μαστόν, ἐκβαλὼν ξίφος | φίλημ' ἐδέξω, προδοτὶν αἰκάλλων κύνα, | ἥσσων πεφυκῶς Κύπριδος, ὦ κάκιστε σύ ('You did not kill your wife when you took her prisoner, but, when you saw her breast, you cast aside your sword and received her kiss, fawning over the betraying bitch, proving weaker than Cypris, you villain').

<sup>25</sup> For details and references see Davies and Finglass 2014, 437.

<sup>26</sup> Thus Griffin 2011, 336.

whereas Stesichorus' version is unique, and thus easier to explain as the creation of a single artist which was not imitated by others. Second, the encounter between husband and wife seems more fundamental and organic to the myth, especially in the context of a story where each individual hero has a particular action associated with him (Neoptolemus kills Priam, Locrian Ajax rapes Cassandra, Demophon and Acamas rescue Aethra, and so on),<sup>27</sup> and where the action associated with Menelaus can only be the recovery of Helen. The mass of the soldiery, by contrast, are not associated with any particular action other than the sack of the city itself. We should consider it a deliberate Stesichorean innovation against an already pre-existing tradition; this would suit a poem which we know was highly original from its very opening.<sup>28</sup>

Although Stesichorus' account is not explicitly attested elsewhere, there may nevertheless be two echoes of it, at whatever remove, in Euripides. First, in his *Trojan Women*, where Menelaus brusquely tells Helen

βαῖνε λευστήρων πέλας  
 1040 πόνους τ' Ἀχαιῶν ἀπόδος ἐν μικρῷ μακροῦς  
 θανοῦς, ἵν' εἰδηῖς μὴ κατασχύνειν ἐμέ

Eur. *Tro.* 1039-41

Go to the people who will stone you, and give a return for the long toils of the Achaeans in a brief moment by your death, so that you know not to put me to shame

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<sup>27</sup> Thus C. Tsagalis *ap.* Finglass 2015a, 353.

<sup>28</sup> Stes. fr. 100 F.; see Finglass 2013c.

This is a fate which the audience knows she will somehow escape.<sup>29</sup> At a greater distance from Stesichorus' poem, in *Orestes* Electra describes Menelaus' precautions about conveying Helen into his palace when returning to Greece from Troy:

55 ἦκει γὰρ ἐς γῆν Μενέλεως Τροίας ἄπο,  
λιμένα δὲ Ναυπλίου ἐκπληρῶν πλάττη  
ἀκταῖσιν ὄρμει, δαρὸν ἐκ Τροίας χρόνον  
60 ἄλαισι πλαγχθεῖς· τὴν δὲ δὴ πολυκτόνον  
Ἑλένην, φυλάξας νύκτα, μή τις εἰσιδῶν  
μεθ' ἡμέραν στείχουσιν ὧν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ  
παῖδες τεθναῖσιν, ἐς πέτρων ἔλθῃ βολάς,  
προύπεμψεν ἐς δῶμ' ἡμέτερον·

Eur. *Or.* 53-60

For Menelaus has returned to the land from Troy, and, filling the Nauplian harbour with his fleet, he is at harbour on the beach, having wandered from Troy for a long time in his meanderings. But as for Helen, responsible as she was for many deaths, he waited for night, in case anyone whose children died at Troy should see her coming during the day, and she should encounter an assault of stones, and sent her into our house.

The idea of Helen escaping a stoning may have been inspired by Stesichorus; and some of Euripides' audience may have felt such a connexion.<sup>30</sup> The former passage may be particularly close, and may have encouraged spectators to wonder whether her survival within the world of Euripides' play will result from the same cause.

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<sup>29</sup> In the lines that follow Menelaus is persuaded first by Helen not to kill her at once, and then by Hecuba to ensure that she travels in a different ship from him (1042-54); Euripides seems to be emphasising that for all his bluster, Menelaus is a man whose mind is easily swayed by forceful women. See further Croally 1994, 158-9, although he believes that the matter remains unresolved.

<sup>30</sup> For the influence of Stesichorus on tragedy see Swift 2015, Finglass forthcoming.

The familiar account of Helen's rescue pitted husband against wife in a personal, intimate encounter closely tied with an individual man's passionate desire, based on sexual jealousy, for revenge. In Stesichorus, by contrast, Helen's near-punishment takes place before a mass audience, in public, and presumably after the sack; during that grim episode the soldiers will have had other tasks assigned them, and would not appreciate laying aside their swords for mere stones. It may imply some quasi-judicial proceedings that sanctioned this punishment, but even if it this episode was more of a lynching, it does suggest at least the acquiescence of the Greek leaders in what the soldiers are doing. Moreover, Stesichorus' Helen confronts far more foes ranged against her than in the traditional tale; and this means her beauty affects not just one man, but a whole army, or a great part of one.<sup>31</sup> It was no doubt an episode of high emotion within the poem, occurring as it did towards its climax, as the woman on whose behalf the city of Troy was sacked is nearly herself killed by the very people who have paid such a price to rescue her.

The picture of a lone woman at the mercy of a whole army would be powerfully exploited in Attic tragedy. We may think of Iphigenia in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, or Polyxena in Euripides' *Hecuba*,<sup>32</sup> both of whom were sacrificed in front of the troops. Polyxena's sacrifice probably was described in Stesichorus' poem too,<sup>33</sup> but we know nothing about how it was portrayed there or whether it came before or after the near-stoning of Helen. In these the act of killing was performed by a single person, with the army as silent, consenting witnesses; the stoning of Helen, by contrast, makes them into active participants in the deed. Stoning in the ancient

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Davies and Finglass 2014, 437.

<sup>32</sup> Aesch. *Ag.* 192-247, Eur. *Hec.* 518-82.

<sup>33</sup> See fr. 105 F., the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, on which more below.

world was a punishment meted out by the community;<sup>34</sup> by arranging Helen's punishment in this way, Stesichorus expresses her total alienation from the entire people who have just sacked a city in order to recover her.

Euripides' narrative of Polyxena's death is particularly suggestive in the present context:

560 κάπει τόδ' εἰσήκουσε δεσποτῶν ἔπος,  
λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος  
ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ' ὀμφαλὸν  
μαστούς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὡς ἀγάλματος  
κάλλιστα, καὶ καθεῖσα πρὸς γαῖαν γόνυ  
ἔλεξε πάντων τλημονέστατον λόγον·  
ἴδου, τόδ', εἰ μὲν στέρνον, ὦ νεανία,  
παίειν προθυμῆι, παῖσον, εἰ δ' ὑπ' αὐχένα  
565 χρήζεις πάρεστι λαιμὸς εὐτρεπῆς ὄδε.  
ὁ δ' οὐ θέλων τε καὶ θέλων οἴκτωι κόρης  
τέμνει σιδήρῳ πνεύματος διαρροάς·  
κρουνοὶ δ' ἐχώρουν. ἡ δὲ καὶ θνήσκουσ' ὄμως  
πολλὴν πρόνοιαν εἶχεν εὐσχήμων πεσεῖν,  
570 κρύπτουσ' ἃ κρύπτειν ὄμματ' ἀρσένων χρεῶν.

Eur. *Hec.* 557-70

And when she heard this speech from her masters, she gripped her robe from the top of her shoulder and ripped it to the middle of her flank, to her navel, and revealed her breasts and most beautiful chest, like that of a statue, and sinking her knee to the ground she spoke the most wretched speech of all: 'There, young man, if you desire to strike my chest, strike it; and if you wish to strike under my neck, my throat is here for you.' But he, both unwilling and unwilling, through pity for the girl, cut the channels of her breath with the iron. Streams gushed forth. And she, as she died, nevertheless took great concern to fall in a decent manner, hiding what ought to be hidden from men's eyes.

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<sup>34</sup> For stoning in antiquity more generally see Forsdyke 2008, 37–41, Finglass 2011, on Soph. *Aj.*

253/4-256n.



Polyxena's death is dominated by nakedness. She dramatically exposes herself, with the narrator (naturally, a male) briefly dilating over the body parts that thereby become visible; yet when she died, she preserves her maiden modesty by ensuring that the Greek soldiers did not see her nakedness. This behaviour seems self-contradictory – why should she apparently invite the male gaze only to take care to block it seconds later? The answer presumably is that in her initial action she 'offer[s] up her bosom like a warrior'<sup>35</sup>; her brief semi-nakedness in front of the soldiers is an unintended consequence of this, one whose effects she takes care to limit by falling as modestly as possible. Nevertheless, the effect on the spectators of the play, as on the spectators within the play, is to eroticise the killing of a young woman; to present an uncomfortable juxtaposition of sexual attractiveness and death, at the same time as highlighting the vulnerability of the victim.<sup>36</sup>

The picture of a woman's beauty being appreciated by soldiers just ahead of the moment appointed for her demise has an obvious connexion to the episode in Stesichorus. One crucial gap in our evidence, however, stands in the way of any unproblematic comparison. Did Stesichorus' Helen disrobe? The scholium does not state that she did, only that the army was overcome by her appearance (ὄψις). That does not prove that she did not; the argument from silence has no force here, not least as the passage from Euripides on which the scholium is commenting refers to Helen's beauty (κάλλος), not her nakedness, and it would be natural for the reference to

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<sup>35</sup> Thus Loraux 1987, 60 ≈ 1985, 97.

<sup>36</sup> For discussion of the passage see further Mossman 1995, 157-60, although it will be apparent from my account above that I cannot agree with M.'s remark that 'any appeal to sexuality was unconscious on the part of author and audience' (p. 144).

Stesichorus to emphasise the aspect of the story that corresponded most closely to that. The episode which Stesichorus is adapting, Helen's encounter with Menelaus, certainly did involve disrobing. There is a reasonable chance that Stesichorus incorporated this motif in his version too; on the other hand, that might have been an aspect of the story that he changed just as he changed the identity, and the number, of Helen's intended killers, as well as (most probably) the timing of the encounter.

As a result of this uncertainty, we do not know exactly how in Stesichorus Helen's beauty saved her life. Did she stand passively, awaiting the assault, only to be surprised at the soldiers' reaction to her looks? Or did she by disrobing make use of the 'resource' of her naked body? This would emphasise the utter peril of her state, since nakedness in front of men was thought to be something especially shameful for a woman.<sup>37</sup> It would emphasise the peril of her situation, that she was forced to make such a decision. But it would also make Helen into the dominant force in the scene, actively countering the threat to her life by manipulating the male gaze of which she might usually be thought to be the victim. Such a passage would stand close to the narrative from *Hecuba* described above, where Polyxena's actions make her a commanding presence despite her defenceless state.

Whatever choice Stesichorus made concerning this crucial detail, the episode is certainly a prominent instance of the presence of the male gaze in archaic literature. We may think, and so perhaps did Stesichorus' audience, of the words of the old men from the *Iliad* with which we began, words showing an unusually mild attitude towards this woman who has brought their city into such a plight. Both the old men there, and the young men here, are softened by seeing Helen's beauty. Moreover,

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Hdt. 1.8.3 ἄμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ γυνή ('on removing her tunic a woman simultaneously removes her sense of shame too'), on which see Cairns 1996.

Helen preserves her life not through any argument (we may think of her debate with Hecuba in Euripides' *Trojan Women*), or through her force of character, but by means of her beauty, perhaps even through partial nakedness. This might be thought to objectify her, and to an extent it does; on the other hand, the resources available to a single woman in the face of a hostile army were limited, and it would be a harsh audience that did not allow Helen to make use of whatever she had to hand.

It is not impossible that Stesichorus' *Sack of Troy* featured Helen's encounter with Menelaus as well as her brush with the army. The *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, which claims to portray 'The sack of Troy according to Stesichorus', contains an image depicting the encounter between Menelaus and Helen, but nothing corresponding to the attempt of the Greeks to stone Helen. Some scholars have taken this to be inconsistent with the version found in the Euripides scholium above, since (in this view) Helen will not have narrowly escaped death twice in the same poem in a similar fashion. Even if we accept that the two stories are mutually inconsistent, the apparent contradiction can be explained by the fact that it would have been difficult to depict the near-stoning in the limited space available to the sculptor, whereas fitting in Helen's encounter with Menelaus was a simple matter; the artist was entitled to use a different version of the myth under such circumstances.<sup>38</sup> It remains possible, however, that Helen's beauty saved her not only from the army, but also from an enraged Menelaus, in the course of Stesichorus' poem; the Aristophanic scholium would then have missed a further archaic parallel for Menelaus' meeting with his wife, but such carelessness would be far from unparalleled in ancient (or indeed modern) scholarship.

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<sup>38</sup> For discussion and references see Finglass 2014b.

A passage from this very encounter may even be preserved on P.Oxy. 2619, a papyrus from the late second or third century AD which contained a copy of the poem.

It reads as follows:

ἰμερτὸν πρ[υυ—x  
 ὤδε δέ νιν [υυ—x—υυ—x  
 ὡς ἀγαπαζ[υυ—  
 δ]υκῶνυμοϛ [x—υυ—x—υυ—x  
 5 x]ῶδε τεκ[—υυ—Ϟ—  
 x]χοιϛ [υυ—υυ—  
 <=====>  
 ὡς φά]το· τὰν [δ(ἐ) υυ—υυ—υυ—

Stes. fr. 115 F.

lovely . . . thus . . . him/her/it . . . love . . . of ill-repute . . . [Thus] s/he s[poke; and] . . . her . . .

Not enough of the fragment survives for us to identify it for sure. But the possibility is worth raising that the speaker is Helen, and the addressee Menelaus.<sup>39</sup> The final line, if correctly supplemented,<sup>40</sup> indicates the end of a speech delivered by a woman, who is then addressed in her turn; that is the most likely interpretation of the accusative τὰν, and a reference to a speech-end would be well placed at the opening of a stanza, here indeed of a triad.<sup>41</sup> The speech may have begun in line 2; ὤδε δέ νιν suggests the

<sup>39</sup> Thus West 1969, 141.

<sup>40</sup> By W. S. Barrett *ap.* Davies and Finglass 2014.

<sup>41</sup> For the coincidence of speech beginning/end with stanza beginning/end see Davies and Finglass 2014, 270, on fr. 15.5-6 F.

opening of a speech, and the dotted letter which follows this expression is either gamma or pi;<sup>42</sup> thus Führer suggests π[οτέφα ‘she addressed’.<sup>43</sup> The shortness of the speech ‘may suggest urgency and/or a dialogue between two characters in which several such speeches were exchanged’;<sup>44</sup> this would suit the encounter between the once and future spouses. There is even a hypothetical reconstruction of lines 3–4 – one that falls short of proof, but which nevertheless is attractive and in no way unStesichorean – that runs πῶς ἀγαπάζ[εαι, ἄ | δ]υσώνυμος [πάντεσσιν ἀνθρώποις] εἶμι;, ‘How can you love me, I who am of ill repute among all people?’<sup>45</sup> In the following line, τεκ[ may be a remnant of τέκ[ος, which could be a reference to the child of Menelaus and Helen, Hermione; if the reconstruction of 3-4 is correct, the sense could be continued along the lines of ‘Who could have abandoned her child in the way that I did?’<sup>46</sup>

All this is plausible, if unprovable. If it is right, then Stesichorus did indeed include Helen’s encounter with Menelaus in his poem, and this episode was, most likely, one of heightened emotional tension, marked by several speeches. By the stage that our fragment may depict, Menelaus would have expressed his love to an unbelieving Helen, one who, as the Helen of the *Iliad* does so often, is gripped by passionate self-loathing as she contemplates her actions. But her apparent expression of such self-loathing – under this hypothesis – indicates that she is not currently in danger of her life; indeed, she seems surprised that Menelaus is treating her with affection rather than fearful of imminent punishment by a revengeful spouse. Did

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<sup>42</sup> Thus Lobel 1967, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Thus Führer 1971b, 253-4.

<sup>44</sup> Thus Davies and Finglass 2014, 447.

<sup>45</sup> Slings 1994, 105.

<sup>46</sup> Thus Davies and Finglass 2014, 448.

Stesichorus subvert the dominant epic portrayal of this encounter, by making Menelaus seek Helen out of love rather than a desire to kill or punish her? Helen's surprise at his reaction – one which means that she does not need to plead with him or to expose herself – then takes on a metaliterary quality, highlighting the poet's deviation from the expected account of a furious husband as much as Helen's own amazement at what had happened. Or was Menelaus initially angry, but overcome with passion for Helen once she had disrobed? Their exchange would then have progressed to the point where Helen felt safe enough to express her hatred of herself, secure in the knowledge that her beauty had secured her survival. But that might make the episode excessively long, in a poem with many different incidents to cover.

The presence of the near-stoning by the army later in the work tells us nothing either way about whether Helen's beauty was also employed here. If it was, Helen's manipulation of the male gaze becomes even more striking, if she uses her beauty, the beauty which indirectly caused the war in the first place, to avoid successive acts of violence against herself. It should again be emphasised, however, that some of these considerations are prompted by a reconstruction that, however attractive, remains hypothetical; we cannot even be certain that this passage relates to Menelaus and Helen at all. If only we had more of this tantalising scene, potentially so rich in its implications for our understanding of Helen's portrayal in early literature.

A further fragment also possibly related to an encounter between Menelaus and Helen runs as follows:

— ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ] αἶψα [ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — x                      ep. 4—ant. 7  
 — ∞ — ∪ ἐ]γαργέε  
 — ∪ ∪ — ] ἐτύμωσ αιθ[ — ∪ — x

		—υυ ά]μιόνους	
5		x—υ]γραν πρωπε[—x—υ—x	
		x—υυ κ]υπρογενής α[(υ)—	
		x—] άλιπόρφυρον άγν[—	
		<=====>	
		—υυ]αιμεν έγών λέγω [—υυ—	str.
		x—υ]ι άθανάτοι	
10		x—υ]λον Έρμιόναν τ[—υυ—x	
		—υυ]ων ποθέω νύκτ[—υυ—υυ—	
		x—υυ—]λοπόδαν	
		x—υ]ν ύφαρπάγιμον [—x—υ—	
		—υυ—].ρομέναν κνακα[υυ—υυ—	
15		x—υυ—]τα	
		<—————>	
		—υυ— κ]ορυφαΐσι νάπαις[(i) τε	ant.
		x—υυ]ων cτυγερόν	
		x—υ]δα παΐδα φίλον.[x—υ—x	
		—υυ—].ο λέγω μηδ[—υυ—υυ—	
20		x—υυ]ω.ρο.πω[[ι]]	
		x—υυ]οντο γένοιτ' [[x—υ—	
		].[	

immediately . . . clear(ly) . . . mules . . . Cyprus-born . . . of sea-purple . . . holy . . . immortals  
. . . Hermione . . . I desire . . . night . . . foot . . . secretly snatched . . . tawny . . . in the peaks  
and glens . . . dear child . . . may it be

Content makes Helen very likely to be the speaker, especially lines 9-11; compare how in the *Odyssey* she refers to the time ‘when she (Aphrodite) led me there away from my dear native land, leaving my child, bedroom, and husband’ (ὅτε μ’ ἤγαγε κείσε φίλης ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἴης, | παῖδά τ’ ἐμήν νοσφισσαμένην θάλαμόν τε πόσιν τε, 4.262-3), and how in Triphiodorus Athena asks her ‘nor do you long for your daughter Hermione?’ (οὐδὲ θύγατρα | Ἑρμιόνην ποθέεις;, 493-4). The relevant passage here (lines 9-11) might be supplemented ἀθανάτοι[σιν εἴκε]λον Ἑρμιόναυ τ[—υ—x—υ] ἐ]γὼν ποθέω νύκτ[ας τε καὶ ἄματα, ‘I long for . . . Hermione night and day, who resembled the immortals’.<sup>47</sup> ὑφαρπάγιμον might also be a reference to Helen herself, albeit probably a tendentious one, making her seem an entirely passive victim of Paris’ wiles, rather than in any way a willing abandoner of her husband.<sup>48</sup> Such a discussion of her abduction/elopement would fall naturally into an account of her encounter with Menelaus, as she reminded him of her love for their child, and attempted to present her departure from Sparta as something that took place contrary to her will; here she would be striking a more self-defensive tone compared to what we saw in the other fragment. Whether or not Helen exposed herself to Menelaus, she does not seem to be relying on beauty alone to persuade her husband; if this fragment comes from that encounter, she employs the full force of her rhetoric to achieve her ends.

<sup>47</sup> Thus Page, *SLG*, Führer 1971, 253.

<sup>48</sup> Thus Davies and Finglass 2014, 442-3.



Dealing with Stesichorus' poetry is so often a frustrating exercise: individual fragments and phrases are hard to set into any wider context.<sup>49</sup> Yet the dramatic impact of Helen's physical form on spectators nevertheless has a parallel elsewhere in his slender corpus, in a fragment of the *Geryoneis*, in which Geryon is addressed by his mother Callirhoe ahead of his battle with Heracles:

	]μ.[	ant. 9–str. 4
	<—————>	
	≈—υ] ἐγών [μελέ]α καὶ ἄλας—	ep.
	τοτόκος κ]αὶ ἄλ[α]ς]τῶ παθοῖσα	
	—≈ Γ]αρυόνα γωναζόμα[ι,	
5	αἴ ποκ' ἐμ]όν τιν μαζ[όν] ἐ[πέ]χ≈	
	—≈—υ]ωμον γ[—υ—	
	υ—]	
	—≈—υ] φίλαι γανυθ[ε≈	
	—≈—]ροσύναις	
	<=====>	
10	≈—≈—]δεα πέπλ[ον	str.
	:]κλυ...[	
	≈—≈—υ]ρευγων·	
	≈—≈—≈—]γονελ[—	

<sup>49</sup> So a further reference to Helen in the poem, at fr. 112.5-6 F., ξ]ανθά δ' Ἑλένα Πρ[ιάμοιο νυδὸς βα]σιλῆος ἀοιδιμ...[ ('golden-haired Helen, daughter-in-law of Priam the king'), is followed not long after by 8-9 δα]ίωι πυρὶ καιομέν[— | ×—]πρήσαντας 'burning with destructive blaze . . . setting on fire', but whether this is Helen talking about the sack of the city, or someone else associating the two, and whether the passage is critical or exculpatory, is not possible to say.

. . . I, unhappy woman, miserable in the child I bore, miserable in my sufferings I supplicate .  
. . ., Geryon if ever I held out my breast to you . . . robe . . .

Stes. fr. 17 F.

Geryon is addressed by his mother Callirhoe,<sup>50</sup> who implores him not to fight Heracles; this is evident from the similarity with the passage in *Iliad* 22 where Hecuba exposes her breast and begs her son Hector to avoid Achilles.<sup>51</sup>

80 μήτηρ δ' αὖθ' ἐτέρωθεν ὀδύρετο δάκρυ χέουσα  
κόλπον ἀνιεμένη, ἐτέρηφι δὲ μαζὸν ἀνέσχε·  
καί μιν δάκρυ χέουσ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·  
Ἔκτορ, τέκνον ἐμόν, τάδε τ' αἶδεο καί μ' ἐλέησον  
αὐτήν, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον,  
85 τῶν μνησαί φιλὲ τέκνον ἄμυνε δὲ δήϊον ἄνδρα  
τείχεος ἐντὸς ἐών, μὴ δὲ πρόμος ἴστασο τούτῳ  
σχέτλιος· εἴ περ γάρ σε κατακτάνη, οὐ σ' ἔτ' ἔγωγε  
κλαύσομαι ἐν λεχέεσσι φίλον θάλος, ὄν τέκον αὐτή,  
οὐδ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος· ἀνευθε δέ σε μέγα νῶϊν  
90 Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ κύνες ταχέες κατέδονται.  
ὥς τῶ γε κλαίοντε προσαιδήτην φίλον υἷον  
πολλὰ λισσομένω· οὐδ' Ἔκτορι θυμὸν ἔπειθον,  
ἀλλ' ὅ γε μὶν Ἀχιλλῆα πελώριον ἄσσον ἰόντα.

In turn his mother, on the other side, was lamenting, pouring forth tears and opening her robe, and with her other hand she took out her breast; and pouring forth tears, she addressed winged words to him: 'Hector, my child, show respect for this and pity me, if I ever offered you a soothing breast. Remember these things, dear child, and ward off the hostile man while inside the walls, but do not stand, hard-hearted man! For if he should kill you, I will not lament you,

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<sup>50</sup> Thus Lobel 1967, 10.

<sup>51</sup> For the whole motif of breast-baring in Greek literature see Castellaneta 2013.

dear shoot, on your bed, I who gave birth to you, nor will your wife, rich in her dowry. But far away from us, the swift dogs will eat you, great though you are, by the ships of the Argives.’ Thus the two of them [i.e. Priam and Hecuba] addressed their dear son, making great entreaties; but they did not persuade Hector’s spirit, but he awaited the approach of the monstrous Achilles.

Hom. *Il.* 22.79-89

Thanks to the Homeric allusion, Geryon is both elevated and humanised through the implicit comparison to Hector, turning him into a figure of considerable pathos.<sup>52</sup>

Line 83 suggests the missing verb in line 5 of the Stesichorus passage, either ἐ[πέεχον or ἐ[πέεχεθον.<sup>53</sup> In the Stesichorean fragment it seems that Callirhoe finishes speaking and unfastens her robe to expose her breast, as Hecuba does, but before rather than after her speech.<sup>54</sup> In line 10 θυώ]δεα and εὐώ]δεα (both ‘fragrant’) are possible supplements;<sup>55</sup> if θυώ]δεα is right, the phrase ὡς φαῖσα ‘speaking thus’ might have stood before it,<sup>56</sup> appropriately enough signalling the end of a speech at the start of a stanza, here of a triad.<sup>57</sup> The passage also evokes (in its language, if not its breast-baring) Thetis’ words to Achilles on two occasions in the *Iliad*: τί νύ σ’ ἔτρεφον αἰνὰ τεκοῦσα; (‘Why did I rear you, unhappy as I was in giving birth?’) and ὦ μοι ἐγὼ δειλή, ὦ μοι δυσκαριστοτόκεια (‘Alas for me in my

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Davies and Finglass 2014, 278-9.

<sup>53</sup> These were put forward by Barrett and Page respectively, both in *LGS*.

<sup>54</sup> Thus Barrett 1968, 17.

<sup>55</sup> The first is owed to Barrett.

<sup>56</sup> Führer 1977, 9.

<sup>57</sup> See n. 42.

wretchedness, alas for me, unhappy in giving birth to the best of men').<sup>58</sup> As a whole it greatly dignifies the monster.

Let us suppose that in the fragment discussed earlier, Helen did disrobe in front of the Greek soldiers. This sets up a series of fascinating parallels and contrasts with the *Geryoneis* passage. In both a woman partially disrobes as a means of persuading her male audience. But Callirhoe's breast-baring is maternal; Helen's disrobing is erotic. Callirhoe's is intended to preserve the life of her son; Helen's to preserve her own. Callirhoe's audience is a single individual (albeit one with three heads); Helen's a whole army. Callirhoe's is tragically unsuccessful; Helen's is successful, although the tragedy caused by her beauty is elsewhere in that poem only too apparent. Both episodes will have been moments of great intensity in their respective poems; both bring out the power of words to suggest the rhetorical power of the human form, perhaps the naked human form, on the spectator.

Stesichorus' account of Helen, as we have seen, was so mistaken that Helen herself deprived him of his sight. I must hope that a similar fate will not befall me for any inaccuracies in the analysis above; but if confronted by the vengeful Helen of Stesichorus, I could at least plead that the fragmentary nature of the evidence means that our own gaze at her can be only partial. Let us hope that one day the appearance of fresh material will give us a better picture.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.414, 18.54.

<sup>59</sup> A new papyrus of the *Sack of Troy* is far more likely than one of the *Palinode*; we already have two of the former, one from the late second or third century, whereas the last piece of evidence that we have for anyone reading the *Palinode* directly is from the fourth century BC. Still, it is possible that some reference could be made to it in a new papyrus of a different author, as in the case of the papyrus citing Chamaeleon above.

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