Stesichorus in Context

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they are not exclusive, since almost all of them could
...ple, in Alcaeus. Nonetheless, it may not be coinci-
...stages are well exampled in the material from the
...ove, whilst before Stesichorus there are only a few
last stage.

...esichorus' differences from Sappho are still notice-
...wing on Homer, it takes a range of marquee-episodes
...ombines them into something new, suggesting a
...rent Homeric episodes into a coherent continuum,
...has to do with the same characters and events as in
...opposite end of their story. Stesichorus does this too
...so takes less familiar episodes and expressions, and
...rely different story in the *Geryoneis*. So perhaps we
...aching a more developed stage in a continuum of
...g further and more systematically the potentialities
...essors and contemporaries. Certainly, if we grant to
...omeric recomposition, then Stesichorus still stands
...ater extent and placing it at the centre of his poetic

...clusion remains the same: Stesichorus' interaction
...ns is something new, as far as we can now see, in
...the archaic Greek world. This chapter opened with
...have become recently (re)acquainted with a highly
...between Homer and his predecessors, Greek and
...mination of the supposed Homeric interactions in
...ichorus does not support such a picture. Textual
...c period is a story of evolution, not revolution, and
...k a pivotal stage in what we can reconstruct of that

In a much-cited *obiter dictum* the author of the treatise *On the Sublime* (13.3) described Stesichorus as 'supremely Homeric':

μόνος Ἡρόδοτος Ὁμηρικώτατος ἐγένετο; Στησίχορος ἔτι πρότερον ὅ τε Ἀρχίλοχος

Was Herodotus alone supremely Homeric? Stesichorus [was] still earlier and Archilochus . . .

Though the characteristic is shared with others in this passage, the association of Stesichorus with Homer is made repeatedly in ancient sources.[1] The relationship with Homer, more visible since the papyrus discoveries from the 1950s until the 1990s, has naturally attracted considerable interest. My present scope has more in common with Quintilian's looser generic description of Stesichorus as broadly epic rather than specifically Homeric in manner (*Inst.* 10.1.62 = Stes. Tb42 Ercoles):

Stesichorum ... clarissimos canentem duces et epici carminis onera lyra sustinentem.

Stesichorus ... singing of famous leaders and bearing with the lyre the weight of epic song.

My aim in this chapter is to explore the complex relationship of the Stesichorean corpus to the archaic hexameter epic tradition more generally, both the Homeric texts and the remains of the heroic epic narrative tradition.

I should start by defining my terms. Our earliest fully articulated definition of the cycle as an entity comes from Photius' summary of a *Chrestomatheia* by a shadowy figure of uncertain date named Proclus, though the term may go back to the classical period.[2] Proclus uses the term *epikos kyklos* to designate the whole mass of hexameter epic texts known to writers of the classical period dealing with heroic myth and to a lesser extent

[1] Stes. Tb39–46 Ercoles.

[2] Phot. *Bibl.* 319a.22–34. For the definition, cf. Burgess (2001) 7–46, (2005) 344–5. For Proclus, see West (2013) 7–11.

poems dealing with the gods. The upper chronological/mythological limit is the birth of the gods and the lower is the death of Odysseus. Since Photius quotes Proclus to the effect that the poems do not owe their survival to their quality, the term clearly excludes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which were acknowledged classics from the archaic period onward,[3] even though these form part of a broadly continuous narrative sequence with the other heroic epic poems. This definition also excludes the vast quantity of local poetry produced by the emerging city states in the archaic period. It further excludes the didactic and (narrative but non-linear) catalogue poetry that makes up the corpus later ascribed to Hesiod; this is difficult to fit into the chronological schema which, together with theme, is the other defining feature of the corpus. Though Proclus' starting point ('it begins with the coupling of Ouranos and Gaia') would make Hesiod's *Theogony* a possible applicant for membership, his dismissive remark about the quality of the Cycle suggests (given the status of Hesiod in the subsequent cultural tradition) that it might not qualify and that he has other texts in mind.[4] My interest here is specifically in the hexameter epics dealing with heroic myth, which make up a set of mythic cycles with themes determined by (sometimes overlapping) criteria of geography (the stories of Troy and of Thebes, Thessalian myth), event (the Calydonian boar hunt), or the exploits of an individual (Heracles).

But that does not quite bring the level of clarity we need. The picture is further complicated by modern attempts to define the relationship between the Homeric poems and this large amalgam, which sometimes confuse the post-Homeric written texts available to Aristotle with the oral epic tradition (pre- and post-Homeric) from which they emerged. This caused confusion in particular for the early Neoanalysts.[5] We know from the text of Homer that the monumental composers of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were familiar with a large performed corpus of heroic hexameter

narrative dealing with the Trojan War and earlier events, including the wars at Thebes, the Argonauts, the deeds of Heracles, the Calydonian boar-hunt, and the resultant war. As more recent neoanalytical criticism recognises, behind Proclus' *Epic Cycle*, that is, behind the epic poems which survived as written texts with specific titles and (usually) named authors, there lies an 'epic cycle',[6] that is, a series of now irrecoverable performances and narratives which existed as fashioned text (as distinct from a mental storyboard) only as long as the words were heard by the audience. The two cycles differ roughly (but only roughly) as *histoire* and *récit* differ in narrative theory, as the virtual potential of the story and the instantiation at any moment in time.[7] How the texts came to be written down is ultimately unknowable. But in a world without a significant body of readers the motivation is likely to have been connected with performance, most obviously the Athenian Panathenaea and other festival venues for epic recitation; the existence of the latter is largely conjectural but logically inescapable, since rhapsodes could not make a decent living from a single festival.[8] Our sources tend to associate the Panathenaea exclusively with the Homeric poems;[9] but this simply reflects the eventual cultural dominance of those texts. Homer, both as author and as corpus, was an evolving concept, and even into the fifth century the distinction between the authors of archaic epics was fluid.[10]

Burgess has suggested that the other Trojan War epics were part of the civic competitions.[11] Though this is ultimately unprovable, inclusion in the festivals may at least partly explain the familiarity of the tragedians with the myths of the cycle. And we may have a trace of evidence in the obscure reference in our sources to a Cyclic *Odyssey*.[12] Any attempt to make sense of this puzzling datum must be conjectural. But it *may* point to an *Odyssey* purged of some components which would be otiose in a larger sequence, in order to allow it to be narrated together with other *Nostoi*;[13] or reorganised to form a chronological narrative sequence (perhaps shorn of the extensive

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[3] See Carey (2007).

[4] Hence the form of Photius's notice (319a17–23): γεγόναςι δὲ τοῦ ἔπους ποιηταὶ κράτιστοι μὲν Ὅμηρος, Ἡσίοδος, Πείςανδρος, Πανύαςις, Ἀντίμαχος. διέρχεται δὲ τούτων, ὡς οἶόν τε, καὶ γένος καὶ πατρίδας καὶ τινας ἐπὶ μέρους πράξεις. διαλαμβάνει δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ λεγομένου ἐπικοῦ κύκλου ... ('[Proclus says that] the best epic poets have been Homer, Hesiod, Peisander, Panyasis, Antimachus. He narrates their birth as far as possible and country of origin and their lives to some extent. He also treats the components of the so-called Epic Cycle ...') Similarly Eustathius (*Praep. Ev.* 1.10.40 = Philon of Byblos *FGrHist* 790 F2), in speaking of the *Theogonies*, *Gigantomachies*, and *Titanomachies* composed by 'Hesiod and the Cyclic poets'. For the Cyclic *Theogony* and *Titanomachy* (to which we need to add the *Gigantomachy*) see PEG I 8–16.

[5] For a useful summary of the evolution of neoanalytical criticism, see Willcock (1997). For a recent summary of the *status quaestionis*, see Montanari *et al.* (2012).

[6] I use the upper and lower case as a crude but useful way of distinguishing between the narrative content and the ultimate textualised forms.

[7] For *histoire* and *récit*, see e.g., Genette (1972) 71. Alternative formulations of this division include *histoire* and *discours* (Chatman (1978) 19), 'story' and 'discourse' (Culler (2001) 189).

[8] We know of at least one other archaic rhapsodic festival, at Sikyon in the sixth century: Hdt. 5.67.1.

[9] See especially [Pl.] *Hipparch.* 228b, Anon. *A.P.* 11.442 = 1182–7 *FGE*, Dieuchidas *FGrHist* 485 F 6.

[10] Useful discussion in Graziosi (2002) 164–200; see also West (2013) 26–39.

[11] Burgess (2001) 14, (2004).   [12] See PEG I 99–100 ('Odyssea cyclica').

[13] Burgess (2001) 16. Potential exclusions would be the *Nostoi* narratives told to Telemachus, even the *Telemachy* as a whole.

speeches); or it could be an alternative version of the myth, such as the Cretan variant hypothesised by Reece and Marks.[14] But whatever we make of the Cyclic *Odyssey*, the generation of texts of the non-Homeric hexameter epics may be related to the rhapsodic competitions.

The textualisation produced a bifurcation in the Cycle which has a bearing on Stesichorus. It is here that the limitations of ancient and modern terminology manifest themselves. The terms *kuklos* and *kuklikoi* bundle together a lot of disparate material under a single heading. Both Aristotle, in his cursory discussion of archaic epic in the *Poetics*, and Callimachus, in his passing dismissal of what he calls 'cyclic poems', present a misleading impression of unity and consistency:

μῦθος δ' ἐcτὶν εἷc οὐχ ὥcπερ τινὲc οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἕνα ᾖ· πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄπειρα τῶι ἑνὶ cυμβαίνει, ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδέν ἐcτιν ἕν· οὕτωc δὲ καὶ πράξειc ἑνὸc πολλαί εἰcιν, ἐξ ὧν μία οὐδεμία γίνεται πρᾶξιc. διὸ πάντεc ἐοίκαcιν ἁμαρτάνειν ὅcοι τῶν ποιητῶν Ἡρακληΐδα Θηcηΐδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα πεποιήκαcιν· οἴονται γάρ, ἐπεὶ εἷc ἦν ὁ Ἡρακλῆc, ἕνα καὶ τὸν μῦθον εἶναι προcήκειν. ὁ δ' Ὅμηροc ὥcπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει καὶ τοῦτ' ἔοικεν καλῶc ἰδεῖν, ἤτοι διὰ τέχνην ἢ διὰ φύcιν· Ὀδύccειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίηcεν ἅπαντα ὅcα αὐτῶι cυνέβη, οἷον πληγῆναι μὲν ἐν τῶι Παρναccῶι, μανῆναι δὲ προcποιήcαcθαι ἐν τῶι ἀγερμῶι, ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενομένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸc θάτερον γενέcθαι, ἀλλὰ περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν οἵαν λέγομεν τὴν Ὀδύccειαν cυνέcτηcεν, ὁμοίωc δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα.

A plot is not single, as some think, if it is about a single person. For many and limitless things happen to a single person, some of which make no single entity. Likewise there are many acts of a single person which do not make up a single action. For this reason it seems that all those poets are mistaken who have composed a *Herakleis* or a *Theseis* or poems of the sort. For they think that, since Heracles was a single man, so the story should be single. But Homer just as he stands out in other respects seems to have understood this correctly, either through skill or through natural ability. For in composing the *Odyssey* he did not tell of everything which befell him, for instance that he was struck on Parnassos and pretended to have gone mad at the gathering, none of which occurred as a necessary or probable result of the occurrence of another, but he created his plot around a single action of the sort we call the *Odyssey*, and likewise when he composed the *Iliad*. (Arist. *Poet.* 1451a16–30)

ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν, οὐδὲ κελεύθωι
χαίρω, τίc πολλοὺc ὧδε καὶ ὧδε φέρει·
μιcέω καὶ περίφοιτον ἐρώμενον, οὐδ' ἀπὸ κρήνηc
πίνω· cικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόcια.

[14] Reece (1994), Marks (2008). I owe the suggestion to Adrian Kelly.

I detest a cyclic poem, nor do I enjoy a road
which carries many people this way and that.
I hate too a promiscuous lover; nor do I drink
from a fountain. I hate all common things.
Call. *A.P.* 12.43.1–4 = 1041–4 *HE*

There is more than one critique implied in the latter. The one that matters for our present purpose, and the one on which Aristotle and Callimachus agree, is lack of unified narrative focus; together they suggest a corpus consisting of long, rambling, and poorly focused poems. Neither source can be dismissed lightly, but the criticism is only partly justified. Though Aristotle singles out epics on Heracles and Thebes, the complaint applies especially to the *Cypria*. In the search for a monumental narrative, the *Cypria* poet has produced a compendium with a sharply focused beginning but a truncated ending. It ends where the *Iliad* begins and evidently owes its final shape to the need to accommodate the latter. It relates to the *Iliad* as Xenophon's *Hellenica* relates to Thucydides, as a deliberately contrived supplement, though in this case a prequel. This inorganic quality, so repugnant to Aristotle, is true to some degree of a number of the Trojan War poems in the form in which they were known during and after the classical period. But the *Cypria* took the tendency to an unusual length by incorporating a large quantity of material united solely by the need to take us from the cause of the war through to the end of the ninth year.

The problem was much less acute in the other poems. The hexameter *Thebaid* and *Epigoni* each had 7,000 lines, we are told,[15] perhaps not much shorter than the *Cypria* but (despite Aristotle) rather better focused, since each seems to have dealt with its own clearly defined part of the mythic tradition of civil war at Thebes without the compendiary quality of the *Cypria*. But all these poems are substantial in length. The other epics which make up the Trojan Cycle go for a much more circumscribed period and theme and a carefully limited scale. The *Little Iliad* occupied four books according to Proclus. The *Sack of Troy* amounted to two books.[16] The *Aithiopis* had five books, likewise

[15] *Thebaid* fr. 1 *GEF*, *Epigoni* fr. 1 *GEF*.

[16] There is some highly ambiguous evidence in one of the *Tabulae Iliacae* that the *Sack of Troy* may have had 9,500 lines; see Tomasso (2012) 381 n. 35. But apart from the unreliability of the source it is quite uncertain which poem is intended; see McLeod (1985). Though it is entirely possible that the texts of the Cycle as they emerged in the archaic period were subsequently trimmed to fit together more neatly (see Burgess (2001) 135–48, Dowden (2004) 197–8), there is no solid evidence for a wholesale redaction on any large scale (cf. West (2013) 22). The problem is complicated by Proclus' tendency on occasion to ignore narrative overlap in the cyclic texts, as with the *Little Iliad* (for which see Kelly (2015) 322), but it is important to

the *Nostoi*. The scale of the works gives the appearance of being driven by performance considerations. We cannot turn book counts into precise line counts, especially given the diversity in the length of books of Homer. But on the basis of an Iliadic average of 654 lines[17] we might guess at about 3,000 (at most 4,000) lines each for the *Aithiopis* and the *Nostoi*, while at two books the *Sack of Troy* was probably no longer than a tragic play, even if we imagine books of over 800 lines, as with Books 2 and 24 of the *Iliad*, and conceivably as few as 1,000 lines in total. Any of the smaller epics could have been performed in a morning, afternoon, or evening, to provide a thematically complete experience, well within the normal practice of the fictionalised bard we meet in the *Odyssey*.[18] And some may have been designed for variable performance. The *Aithiopis* builds its narrative by combining two distinct themes, Penthesileia and Memnon. The title points towards Memnon as the core component, with the story of the Amazon prefixed by a process of accretion.[19] Presumably the *Aithiopis* could be performed as a single long poem or either section could be extracted for performance to give a *Penthesileis* (or an *Amazonia*) or an *Aithiopis* (i.e., the story of Memnon) proper.[20]

Any attempt to map Stesichorus on to what we know of cyclic epics is inevitably tentative, since we know virtually nothing about his life or movements. But we can draw some deductions from what we have. We are told that the Alexandrian edition of his works was divided into twenty-six books.[21] There is no reason to distrust this figure; it was easily ascertainable and this kind of basic information is generally correct where we can check it. Since everything we know points to a specialisation in long narratives, there is much to recommend the view that we have either a book per poem or long poems split between books, like the *Oresteia* which filled

two volumes.[22] This is a substantial output, but not implausibly so. Pindar for instance, active throughout the Greek world and across the full range of lyric forms, was edited into seventeen books. Alcman, with a virtual monopoly on Spartan maiden songs, managed six books. Stesichorus, on simple arithmetic of this sort, is significantly more productive than either. If however we turn this into outputs or commissions, then the Stesichorean corpus looks less swollen. Compared with the output of tragic and comic poets where we know it – approximately 90 for Aeschylus, 123 for Sophocles, 92 for Euripides – it is a modest figure.[23]

I am however less interested in biography than occasions, places, and movements. Before the age of the book, lyric song comes into being for an occasion. It requires an audience, and, in the case of long narrative lyric, an audience prepared to sit, listen, and watch for hours. One obvious possibility is a local context which would stimulate repeated demand for long lyric epics. Athenian tragedy and comedy offer an immediate analogy, since whatever view we take of the frequency of reperformance and scale of circulation of plays as text, the primary market was performance before the Athenian theatre audience; and during the fifth century alone we can reasonably posit 900 tragedies produced for this market. It is conceivable that we have in the Stesichorean corpus the product of a lifetime of composition aimed in the first instance at a local market in the manner of Alcman's *partheneia*. But the developed panhellenic dialect used in the poems does not favour the hypothesis of purely parochial performance.[24] Likewise, the corpus draws on the whole array of Greek myths, not on themes specifically catering for the interests of the west Greek diaspora. It is difficult to take the further step of tying specific poems to particular external locations. Though performative context can and did influence content, it is always risky extrapolating context from mythic narrative. The treatment of Helen in the *Palinode*, however we understand that composition, may point to performance in a location with strong attachment to Helen, as has been suggested;[25] Sparta is the most obvious candidate, or perhaps Tarentum. But

distinguish between selective reporting by Proclus and editorial intervention in circulating texts. There is therefore no good ground to dispute Proclus' book count either for his own or for earlier periods.

[17] Thus Heiden (2008) 67 n. 1.

[18] The Hesiodic *Shield*, whether or not it was ever thought of as part of the (or a) Cycle, represents the likely lower limit on the scale, since it could be performed in an hour or so.

[19] See West (2013) 133.

[20] Separate circulation of the story of Penthesileia may be implied by the Hesychian *Life of Homer* (§6): ἀναφέρεται δὲ εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ποιήματα· Ἀμαζονία, Ἰλιὰς Μικρά, Νόστοι, κτλ. A possible parallel, as Ettore Cingano observes to me, is the Ἀμφιαράου ἐξέλασις attributed to Homer by the same source, which may have been a detachable incident within the *Thebaid*; cf. Severyns (1928) 164. My formulation describes the process of accretion and the prospect for uncoupling; not the *Aithiopis* itself as a narrative. It need not imply that the two incidents were merely juxtaposed in the poem; it would have been perfectly possible to integrate two originally separate stories thematically, since both fall (with the case of Hector) into a story pattern whereby a single champion checks the Greek advance, only to fall in battle.

[21] *Su.* c 1095 = Stes. Tb2 Ercoles. For the corpus, see Finglass (2014a) 18–23.

[22] Stes. frr. 175a, 176 F.

[23] For the ancient evidence, see Sommerstein (2010) 13, (2012) 191–3, L. Parker (2007) xx n. 27.

[24] The classic argument for a mobile Stesichorus is Burkert (1987) 51–2 = (2001–11) I 209–11 = Cairns (2001) 106–8. His idea of mobile Stesichorean *choruses* is an unnecessary refinement; with the exception of theoric performances the norm seems to be a combination of external poet and local chorus.

[25] See especially Bowra (1934) 115–116 = (1961) 106–7, (1936) 124–9, (1961) 111–16, though the idea goes back to the nineteenth century (see Finglass and Kelly, Chapter 1, this volume, p. 3). The suggestion of Beecroft (2006) that the terminology of fr. 91a itself suggests a rejection of the panhellenic version for an epichoric version would be consistent with this; I find nothing in the language used which points in either direction, whether in content or in performance.

the passionate rejection of the journey to Troy which opened the revisionist version at fr. 91a F. could as easily be a rhetorical bid for audience attention as a reflection of piety or geographical partisanship.[26] Stesichorus' interest in Athenian myth may allow us to tie some of his compositions to performance in Athens.[27] But the rewriting of *Helen* had sufficient panhellenic appeal (as did Helen herself) to interest Herodotus and Euripides (and their audiences). Myth travelled around the Greek world and struck a chord far beyond its place of origin. Much localised myth (and most myth is localised) has panhellenic appeal. One did not have to be Theban or Epirote to enjoy the *Thebaid* or the story of the Calydonian boar hunt. Despite their preference for local myths, the clients of Pindar and Bacchylides (and their audiences) were also interested in other Greek myths irrespective of origin. And some of Stesichorus' output makes no sense if one tries to tie it to a specific geographical market – there is no obvious local demand for the *Geryoneis*.[28] But though we may hesitate to tie particular compositions to particular locations away from Himera or its vicinity, we can conclude that the narrative content does not suggest an author focused solely on a local market in the west.[29]

Probably therefore we have a poet active in multiple locations, not just in and around Himera. If we accept (as I do) the case for choral performance, then we have to assume that the works were performed on a highly formalised occasion. But the reconstruction of the occasion does not rest on the manner of performance. The opening of the *Oresteia* gives us a clue to some at least of the occasions:

τοιάδε χρὴ Χαρίτων δαμώματα καλλικόμων
ὑμνεῖν Φρύγιον μέλος ἐξευρόντα<ς> ἁβρῶς
ἦρος ἐπερχομένου.

Such are the lovely-haired Graces' gifts to the public
that we must sing, devising an elegant Phrygian melody,
at the arrival of spring.

Stesichorus fr. 173 F.

[26] Similarly Morgan (2012) 45–6, Finglass (2014a) 27–9.
[27] See Finglass (2013c) on fr. 90.15–30 (he is however cautious on this point, p. 47), and Bowie, Chapter 7, this volume.
[28] Caution is perhaps needed here, since Curtis (2011) xi suggests a local festival of Heracles, which cannot be disproved; his other suggestion, a cult of Geryon, is less convincing.
[29] The point is noted by Burkert (n. 24). His further observation, that the lack of a deictic frame in what survives tying the narratives to a performance context (the nearest we get is the reference to a season in frr. 173–4 F.) points to poetry which is designed to travel, has little force when taken alone (since it need only indicate design to accommodate widespread reperformance). But it combines with the lack of local specificity in the myths to create an overall impression of a strategic detachment from any one location.

The noun *damōmata*, as the Aristophanic scholia rightly note immediately after citing our fragment, must designate objects composed for public performance (δαμώματα δὲ τὰ δημοσίαι διδόμενα); the verb from which it derives must mean 'give to the people', 'make for the people' or the like.[30] This is a text for the whole population, not something for an elite context. In this case at least we are evidently dealing with a civic festival. And the generalising τοιάδε δαμώματα suggests that this mode of performance is not unusual. How far we can press this passage is uncertain. It is entirely possible that we are dealing with works commissioned for performance on their own at public festivals. The obstacle here is that the lyric songs that we have in textual form which were certainly created for such contexts, whether they consist of free-standing narrative or contextualised myths in the manner of Alcman or the later panhellenic choral composers, are invariably far shorter than the long narratives of Stesichorus. It is therefore on the whole easier to imagine competitive performances. Though our ancient sources treat the work of Stesichorus as a singlehanded transposition of epic material into lyric form, we should probably imagine a number of rivals, most of whom are now nameless.[31] The parallel which suggests itself inevitably is the performance of hexameter epic at the Athenian Panathenaea. How far this comparison extends is uncertain. If we push the analogy to the limit, we can posit competitions in epic-lyric (either choral or citharodic) along the lines of the rhapsodic contests or the dithyrambic competitions in Athens. And Athens itself may have been a significant (though not exclusive) market.[32] The silence of our sources is not an insuperable barrier, since we do not have to suppose that such competitions were long-lived. Indeed, since (unlike the rhapsodic competitions) as choral songs they occupy the same narrative and performative space as tragedy, such performances were competing with tragedy for popularity (both with poets and with the public) and were unlikely (at least in Athens) to survive the rise of tragedy as the Athenian form *par excellence*. They might (on this hypothesis) form part of the cultural amalgam from which tragedy eventually emerged as a distinct performance mode. Our knowledge of recitation competitions in other Greek states is limited, but it is sufficient to indicate that Athens was

[30] The verb occurs at Pind. *I.* 8.8.
[31] See on this subject Burkert (1987) 51–2 = (2001–11) I 209–11 = Cairns (2001) 106–8; two lyric poets who may fall into this category and who are named are Xanthus and Xenocritus (or – ates), for whom see Kelly, Chapter 2 and West, Chapter 4, this volume.
[32] For Athens as a venue for Stesichorean performance see Bowie, Chapter 7, this volume, and for possible evidence for performance in Athens, see p. 52.

far from unique in fostering a culture of recitative or performative competition in civic festivals.[33]

If there were competitions of this sort for longer lyric narratives, the stimulus may have come from the rhapsodic competitions. The extension to lyric would reflect the increased significance attached to lyric song in the early archaic period. If so, this attempt of lyric to invade the territory of epic was one of a number of short-lived evolutionary developments in the public role of lyric; the victory ode, though it differs dramatically from the Stesichorean corpus in scale and its explicit occasionality, offers an analogy of sorts as a lyric form which emerged from the vibrant performance culture of the archaic period but whose life cycle spanned no more than a century. We cannot rule out the possibility that the lyric epics were themselves offered in direct competition with epic performances on the same programme. But on any reconstruction of the original mode of performance, whether choral or solo, this is on balance unlikely, since our evidence for Greek musical and poetic competitions suggests that they do not usually mix different forms together in this way.

This is then, as far as we can tell, a lyric-epic poet operative across polis boundaries. Though he gets only passing mentions in the recent collection of essays on the wandering poets of early Greece,[34] Stesichorus represents an evolutionary leap. As far as we can see, he is the point where poetic mobility leaps the genre gap. Though we have some evidence for lyric poets, especially from western Greece, operating in mainland Greece as early as the seventh century,[35] it is in the sixth century that the phenomenon of lyric poetic mobility becomes widespread. This is in a sense the missing link between the rhapsodes as international performers of epic and the panhellenic lyricists. After Stesichorus, lyric mobility accelerates. The divide between the lyric poets, even Stesichorus, and the rhapsodes is great. It is relatively rare that we get names for rhapsodes. And though we should be sceptical of neat divisions between creative poets and reproductive rhapsodes,[36] the rhapsode, unlike the lyric poet, is working with material which is traditional to a much greater extent and in a much more obvious way than the lyric poet; and in the sixth century, as texts are solidifying, the gap between producer and performer is widening. In contrast lyric poets have

names, origins, and biographies (however distorted and misconstrued), and their work is both incontrovertibly and often assertively original in form as well as in content. There is also a shift in prestige,[37] since mobile lyric poets are personally invited to the courts of the powerful to add the lustre of their name; there is probably also (though this is harder to verify) a shift in socio-economic status. But despite the differences in form, in standing, and in the relationship between poet and content, ultimately it is probably the rhapsode who helps us to explain the dramatic increase in the movement of lyric poets.

Though ancient sources describe Stesichorus as 'most Homeric', it is not the Homer text as we understand it but the cycle (with lower case) as the body of heroic narrative before, after, and around Homer which leaps out when one looks at the surviving titles/themes of the lost works. Troy is prominent: *Helen*, *Palinode* (whether we take these as one poem or two), *Sack of Troy/Wooden Horse* (probably one poem[38]), *Nostoi*, *Oresteia*. Heracles: *Geryoneis*, *Cerberus*, *Cycnus*. Theban myths: *Thebais* (or whatever the poem on the Lille papyrus was called) and *Eriphyle* between them handled the tale of the Seven and presumably some at least of the story of the Epigoni, while *Europa* took the myth back to the origin of Thebes. Peloponnesian myth was more thinly covered, with the tale of *Scylla* for Megara. North-western Greece (Calydon) was covered in the *Boarhunters* (*Syotherai*) and Iolkos in the *Games for Pelias*. Collectively these poems excerpted from all the major mythic cycles of Greece and all the major centres represented in heroic hexameter epic poetry. In terms of the geographical distribution of mythic content there is a visible concerted attempt to generate a narrative corpus which at least touches on all the major cycles across the whole of Greece.

However, the relationship with the various mythic *thesauroi* which made up the performed hexameter narrative corpus is both more precise and more subtle than this, in that the corpus indicates a careful positioning in relation to the strands in the tradition. Though in his use of specific motifs Stesichorus often seems to be gesturing overtly towards the Homeric epics, in scale and to some degree in focus he aligns himself with the non-Homeric archaic epic poems. And this takes us from the epic cycle as *histoire* to the Epic Cycle as *récit*. As noted above, if we exclude the *Cypria*, the Trojan cyclic epics in their final form vacillate between two and five books, taking up on the Homeric model perhaps 1,000 to 3,000

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[33] For a case for choral competitions in the west from the archaic period, see Morgan (2012); for the Greek world more generally, see Rhodes (2003) 108. For rhapsodic competitions outside Athens, see p. 47 above.

[34] Wilson (2009) 69, Bowie (2009) 105, 123, 124.

[35] See West, Chapter 4, this volume.

[36] So rightly Hunter and Rutherford (2009b) 6.

[37] See on this especially Goldhill (1991) 115–19.

[38] For this poem, Finglass (2013a).

(at most 4,000) lines. How the two books of Stesichorus' *Oresteia* relate to books of Homer as later understood is difficult to say. But 1,000 to 1,500 lines would seem a good bet, since it is unlikely that the scale was widely divergent. Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* would seem to support this. We know from line numbering (a stichometric letter N opposite fr. 25.36 F.) that it contained at least 1,300 lines. In performance time these poems would occupy an evening or half a morning. Choral performance presumably slows down the delivery significantly; so a choral Stesichorus will take longer than a monodic or rhapsodic performance. But either way Stesichorus seems to mirror the average performance scale of many if not most[39] of the songs which turned into what we know as the Epic Cycle as we (do not quite) have it.

Stesichorus' narrative method also follows the pattern of the smaller epics belonging to the Cycle and the building blocks which make up the slightly larger poems. He likes to choose sharply defined moments in a larger narrative, like the cyclic *Sack of Troy* or the separable but conjoined stories of the *aristeiai* and deaths of Memnon and Penthesileia.

It is impossible to say whether Stesichorus knew from personal experience any of the poems which Aristotle knew as the Cycle.[40] But it is striking that Stesichorus composed a *Sack of Troy*. Whether he called it by this title or not is immaterial since, regardless of who imposed it, the title (here and elsewhere in the corpus) reflects the content of the poem and in this case it overlaps with a known Cyclic Epic (upper case). He also probably composed a *Nostoi*.[41] From the title[42] we can be sure that it was not an *Agamemnonos nostos* or *Menelâou nostos* or any other single return from Troy which might have claimed its own distinct narrative treatment. The overlap in title and theme is highly suggestive. It suggests that the texts of what became the Cycle were already crystallising or had crystallised at the time he wrote. This is consistent with the evidence from iconography. If Stesichorus did know of something like these poems, then it is worth noting that the Stesichorean text positions itself as much against as alongside the Cycle. Though his poems are comparable in length with a significant strand of the Cyclic poems, they seem in general to lack the episodic quality which offended Aristotle. Instead he opts for a sharp narrative focus. His Heracles poems, for instance, take

a single exploit which can be told in detail, the encounter with Geryon or Cycnus, the abduction of Cerberus; they avoid the mistake castigated by Aristotle of trying to tell the whole story. We can see why Stesichorus had such a profound influence on the tragic playwrights,[43] since the narrative principle (tight timescale, elaboration of a single incident) is broadly the same. Also important for tragedy is the Stesichorean focus on moments of choice, which his tight narrative frame allows: Geryon deciding whether to face Heracles, the Trojans deciding whether or not to admit the wooden horse to the city, the sons of Oedipus faced with a choice between fratricidal strife and peaceful resolution. There was also potential for these moments of what Aristotle would later term *prohairesis*[44] in the lost poems (Orestes and Alcmaeon faced with the choice between matricide and betrayal of a father), though here we cannot be sure if the potential was exploited.

Here, however, the existence of a *Nostoi* complicates the picture. We do not know the scale or contents of Stesichorus' poem. The name suggests something more diverse in theme than the rest of the Stesichorean corpus and therefore possibly on a scale comparable with the Cyclic poem.[45] It seems that we have a flirtation with more than one of the narrative models offered by the cycle, despite the dominant trend noted above.

When we turn from the cyclic poems to Homer, the picture becomes more complicated still. One very striking feature which the Stesichorean corpus shares with the Epic Cycle (upper case) in the form in which we have it is a tendency to avoid overlap with the Homeric epics, by which I mean simply the tale of Achilles and the tale of Odysseus. The natural conclusion is that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in some form have established themselves already as significant works and that there is a disinclination, at least when the texts of the Cycle are assuming their monumental form, to invade the narrative space occupied by the Homeric poems. As a cultural phenomenon this persists through late archaic lyric with few exceptions and into Greek tragedy, again with relatively few exceptions. There is one striking exception in the case of Stesichorus. The fragment attributed to his *Nostoi* draws on a narrative very close to our *Odyssey*. The incident narrated in the papyrus fragment relates to Telemachus' stay in Sparta:

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[39] I return to this question below.

[40] If so, his choice of form may involve a pointed rejection of the scale of a *Thebaid* or a *Cypria*.

[41] The title is restored by a seemingly inescapable conjecture in fr. 169 F.

[42] Again it is immaterial whether this title was given by Stesichorus or an Alexandrian editor, since in either case it must derive from the content.

[43] For more on Stesichorus and tragedy, see Swift, Chapter 8, this volume.

[44] Arist. *Poet.* 1450b8–10; cf. *EN* 1113a10–11 ἡ προαίρεσις ἂν εἴη βουλευτικὴ ὄρεξις τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ('*prohairesis* is a deliberate choice of things within our power').

[45] Finglass (2014a) 18–19 identifies fourteen poems, at least two of which occupied at least two books, giving us a total of sixteen known books. This would theoretically allow a *Nostoi* of five books. See however n. 47.

θε[τ]ον ἐ[ξ]αίφνας τέρας ἰδοῖσα νύμφα.
ὣδε δ'ἔ[ει]φ' Ἐλένα φωνᾶι ποτ[ὶ] παῖδ' Ὀδύ<ειο[ν·
"Τηλέμαχ', [ἢ] τις δδ' ἁμὶν ἀγγελ[ο]ς ὠρανόθεν
δι' αἰθέρο[c ἀτ]ρυγέτας κατέπτατο, βᾶ δ[
5   ].. φοινᾱικεκλαγώ[c
   ]...c ὑμετέρους δόμους προφα.[......]υc
      ]...αν.υc ἀνήρ
βο]υλαῖc Ἀθάνας
      ].ηιc αυτα λακέρυζα κορώνα
10   —ᴗ—x—ᴗ].μ' οὐδ' ἐγώ c' ἐρύ[ξ]ω
   —ᴗᴗ Παν]ελόπα c' ἰδοῖcα φίλου πατ[ρ]ὸc υἱὸν
      ]co.[.]τ...c ἐcθλ[
      ] [.] θειον μ[

Seeing the sudden portent from the gods the lady
Helen spoke thus to the son of Odysseus:
Telemachus, this is some messenger to us from heaven
that darted through the boundless air and went
shrieking with bloody ...
Just so] to your halls ...
............] the man
.........] by the contrivance of Athena
...........?no] chattering crow this
...............] nor will I keep you
......Pen]elope seeing you, the son of a dear father

Stes. fr. 170.1–13 F.

Enough of the text survives to make clear that Helen responds to an eagle por-
tent with a prophecy much as in *Odyssey* 15.160–78. From Proclus' summary
it seems that any link with the *Odyssey* in the hexameter *Nostoi* was fleeting.
Odysseus is given a cameo role in this epic in Proclus' summary, where he
narrates the homecoming of Achilles' son Neoptolemus (arg. 4 *GEF*):

Νεοπτόλεμος δὲ Θέτιδος ὑποθεμένης πεζῆι ποιεῖται τὴν πορείαν· καὶ παραγενόμενος
εἰς Θράικην Ὀδυccέα καταλαμβάνει ἐν τῆι Μαρωνείαι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἀνύει τῆc
ὁδοῦ καὶ τελευτήcαντα Φοίνικα θάπτει.

Neoptolemus on the advice of Thetis makes his journey on foot. And arriving in
Thrace he catches up with Odysseus in Maroneia, and completes the rest of his jour-
ney and buries Phoenix on his death.

This serves to anchor the narrative to the *Odyssey* by creating a link with the
narrative of Odysseus' return as told in Homer.[46] But it seems that Odysseus

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[46] Hom. *Od.* 9.196–211. The encounter also (because of the use to which Odysseus eventually
puts the wine he receives in Thrace) offered scope for an elegant piece of intertextual
foreshadowing, though we cannot tell if this opportunity was grasped.

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played only an incidental role in this poem, and if Odysseus had no more
than a tangential part, there was no room for Telemachus. Stesichorus how-
ever clearly includes at least one incident from our *Odyssey* in his narra-
tive. How this fitted in is impossible to say. One possible reconstruction
is that Telemachus' visit was focalised in Stesichorus through Menelaus'
return in a kind of inversion of the *Odyssey* focus. Another possibility is
that the returns of the heroes were framed by Telemachus' visit to Sparta in
the manner of Homer's *Telemacheia*.[47] In this case Telemachus' visit served
as the narrative anchor by providing a starting point and end point of the
poem. But apart from this detour into Homeric airspace, Stesichorus obeys
the unspoken rule of the Trojan epics which survived through the classical
period, which is to work around and with the Homeric texts rather than
invade their narrative space.

The problem with my story so far is that Homer is a constant unspoken
presence in Stesichorus. If his scale and focus is Cyclic, Stesichorus' nar-
rative technique is fundamentally Homeric. Some of the features which
strike us as Homeric are probably generic, and modern scholars still strug-
gle to distinguish the two. But even if we exclude as generic components
shared features such as divine councils and feasts which recur as typical
scenes in Homer, we are left with a pronounced Homeric residue. Aristotle
is emphatic that one feature which distinguished the two Homeric epics
from the other archaic material was the extensive use of direct speech,[48]
which pushed the primary focaliser into the background and through char-
acter focalisation in speech allowed for more complex characterisation and
more sustained exploration of emotion and motivation. Again we need
to be a little cautious in evaluating Aristotle's testimony. Evidence drawn
from the fragments of the Cycle which seem to support Aristotle is actually

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[47] I was encouraged to see that the same idea had occurred independently to Martin West;
see Chapter 4. If this approximates to the truth, then if much of the story was dealt with
through character speech, as in Books 3 and 4 of the *Odyssey*, it becomes easier to fit the
narrative within the known maximum for Stesichorus of two books, with careful selection of
returners and differential allocation of narrative space to different returns; on this tentative
reconstruction, the probability raised above that the Stesichorean *Nostoi* achieved something
like the scale of the Cyclic *Nostoi* recedes.

[48] Arist. *Poet.* 1460a5–11 Ὅμηρος δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἄξιος ἐπαινεῖcθαι καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅτι μόνος
τῶν ποιητῶν οὐκ ἀγνοεῖ ὃ δεῖ ποιεῖν αὐτόν. αὐτὸν γὰρ δεῖ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐλάχιστα λέγειν· οὐ
γάρ ἐcτι κατὰ ταῦτα μιμητής. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι αὐτοὶ μὲν δι' ὅλου ἀγωνίζονται, μιμοῦνται
δὲ ὀλίγα καὶ ὀλιγάκιc· ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φροιμιαcάμενος εὐθὺς εἰcάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι
ἦθος, καὶ οὐδέν' ἀήθη ἀλλ' ἔχοντα ἦθος. ('Homer among his claims to praise is the only poet
who is not ignorant of what he must do. For the poet himself must say as little as possible. It
is not in this respect that he represents. The others do the performing themselves throughout,
while they represent on a small scale and rarely. But he after a brief introduction immediately
brings in a man or woman or some other, and none characterless but all with character'.)

ambiguous.[49] We can detect at least one possible exception in the *Sack of Troy*, where the Trojans evidently debate before bringing the wooden horse within the walls.[50] We are looking at a difference of degree, not simple presence or absence. But Aristotle was both widely and deeply read in Greek literature and he had a full text, where we have only fragments and summaries. So the contrast must be broadly sound, even if exaggerated to make a point. One of the most noteworthy features of the Stesichorean fragments is the high density of direct discourse. The *Geryoneis*, in the small amount which survives, has no fewer than three character speeches (frr. 13, 15, 16–17 F.) and implies more; the *Eriphyle* has two (fr. 93), as does the *Sack of Troy* (fr. 103, possibly a third at fr. 115); the *Nostoi* (if that is what it is) has one (fr. 170), the Theban poem (fr. 97) at least two, conceivably three. This is a remarkably high density for such a small sample. One cannot rule out the possibility, as always with fragmentary corpora, that our perception is skewed by the accident of survival. But the consistency across the fragments suggests rather that the frequency of direct speech is a defining feature of Stesichorean narrative, another factor which goes some way to explaining Stesichorus' profound influence on the tragedians. It is even possible, if unprovable, that the ratio of speech to action approximated to Homer's one-to-one.[51]

This impression that Stesichorus is profoundly influenced by Homer is increased by the identifiable intertextual gestures towards Homer in something like the form in which we have them,[52] however this form may have been experienced by Stesichorus or his audience.[53] The *Geryoneis* contains three such forms, again in a very short compass. Stesichorus fr. 15

F. (Geryon's contemplation of his possible mortality and its implications for his choice) has visible affinities with Homer's *Iliad* 12.322–8, Stes. fr. 17 (his mother's appeal) with *Il.* 22.79–89, Stes. fr. 19 (the death of the first of Geryon's bodies) with *Il.* 8.300-8;[54] the *Nostoi* passage has a pronounced similarity to our *Odyssey*, noted above. The obvious way to avoid the imperative of Occam's Razor, which would make something like our Homer *the* intertext, is to argue for a stock motif. But none of these looks like a stock motif. Here, for the sake of argument, I will single out one, the simile which marks Geryon's death. The Homeric epic has a stereotyped way of expressing the death of a warrior, the falling tree. Its recurrence suggests that we are dealing with an element drawn from the tradition. It falls into the formalistic (not quite formulaic) tendency ably studied by Scott,[55] as part of the epic stock of serviceable *topoi* to be reshaped and recycled. The poppy image shared by Homer with Stesichorus is visibly an extension of this formalistic usage; but it is nonetheless a one-off in the Homeric text. Though one could counter that we have here a common motif otherwise unattested in surviving epic, Homer's general practice does not favour this alternative, since there is a pronounced tendency to generate unique images alongside the standard motifs. So the presence of a theme or motif in a simile is not in itself indicative of a traditional background. And the agreement with Homer on the use of speeches suggests (again by a not unreasonable application of Occam's Razor) that we should not be looking for an unattested lost source when there is otherwise reason to believe that Stesichorus knew something like our Homer.

The combination of Cyclic scale and Homeric effects and echoes strongly suggests that I have so far understated the boldness of the Stesichorean corpus. What we seem to have is a poetic project which involves not merely stretching lyric modes for epic manner and content but also a strategic attempt to bridge the perceptible divide within the epic tradition. As often, one is struck by the impression that a poetic sensibility often associated with the Hellenistic poets is already present in the archaic period.[56] More importantly for my present purpose, we are looking at a complex positioning within the options offered by the heroic narrative tradition, a strategy of combining elements from different strands in a creative synthesis.

All of this shows a calculated and sophisticated engagement with the oral mythic tradition as represented in hexameter poetry in order to map on to the full range of the rhapsodic repertoire. When one combines this with

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49 Griffin (1977) 49 (in a section omitted, however, from the reprint in Cairns (2001)) contrasts the spare dry narrative of Oedipus' curse in *Thebaid* frr. 2–3 *GEF* with the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1. Though seemingly reasonable, the comparison fails to note that the *Thebaid* almost certainly focused on the fratricidal quarrel (as indicated by fr. 1). The curse was probably a framing epanalepsis. If so, the appropriate comparison would be with the encounter between Agamemnon and Chryses, not that between Agamemnon and Achilles.

50 *Iliu Persis* arg. 1 *GEF* †ὡς† τὰ περὶ τὸν ἵππον οἱ Τρῶες ὑπόπτως ἔχοντες περιστάντες βουλεύονται ὅ τι χρὴ ποιεῖν· καὶ τοῖς μὲν δοκεῖ κατακρημνίσαι αὐτόν, τοῖς δὲ καταφλέγειν, οἱ δὲ ἱερὸν αὐτὸν ἔφασαν δεῖν τῆι Ἀθηνᾶι ἀνατεθῆναι· καὶ τέλος νικᾶι ἡ τούτων γνώμη. ('The Trojans being suspicious of the horse stand around it and deliberate what action to take. Some wish to hurl it over the cliffs, others to burn it, while others said it was sacred and should be dedicated to Athene; and in the end it was the view of the last that prevailed.')

51 Griffin (1986) 37, citing Schmid (1929) 92–3 n. 7, gives the following figures for direct speech: 45 per cent in the *Iliad*, 67 per cent in the *Odyssey*, 55 per cent overall.

52 See further Carey (2007) 144 n. 12.

53 My use of the term 'intertextual' does not imply the circulation or even the general availability of physical texts, merely the emergence of a fixed form. I do however suppose that there were written texts in existence; see Carey (2007) 136–8.

54 See further Kelly, Chapter 2, this volume.

55 Scott (1974) 70–1.   56 Contrast Kelly, Chapter 2, this volume.

the mythic range, one is struck by the ambitious nature of the corpus. At this point, however, it is worth underlining the formal differences between Stesichorus and the hexameter epic narratives, both the Homer text and those which became what we know as the Cycle. We do not know how long the creative stage of Greek oral epic lasted. Probably it continued into the fifth century and there was no clear transition point between creative and reproductive. But all the hexameter epics which Stesichorus will have encountered were the product of an oral culture, whether the performers he saw composed or recited from memory or both. They used the oral formulaic system, as did Homer. Stesichorus' poetry is rich in Homeric-epic terminology but it is not formulaic; and it is difficult to see how a formulaic system would work as comfortably in the complex periods of Stesichorus as it did in archaic hexameter epic with its built-in metrical predictability; nor can one see what it could add to the process of composition. We are used to the notion from the study of oral poetry that each performance is unique, in that the poet lacks the notion of a canonical version. But each Stesichorean composition is unique in a way that no two hexameter performances can ever have been, since in each song not just the version of the story given but the metrical form and the language – at a granular level – are distinctive. The alignment with the hexameter heroic tradition also pointedly draws attention to the distinctiveness of the lyric offering. It is difficult not to feel that some of what we are seeing is a generic rivalry of the sort we find, for instance, in Aeschylus when he retells the story of the wrath of Achilles (usually avoided by tragedy) in his *Myrmidons* trilogy. That is, alongside a bold experimentation with form we may have not merely a bold statement of the poetic ingenuity of the author but also a claim for the superiority of the medium, where each composition is more than a conduit (however innovative) for the tradition. The boldness of the experiment will not have been lost on the original audience(s), whose encounter with the epic tradition was mediated through recurrent exposure to performance in real time and space. But even for the modern who is compelled to simulate that experience by sifting through the fractured *tesserae* in edited collections of fragments, it is difficult to miss.

4 | Epic, lyric, and lyric epic

M. L. WEST

In discussing classical literature we constantly operate with the concept of genre. It has heuristic value, or as we used to say, it is good to think with; and it is also good for the avoidance of thought. It is not a concept of modern devising. It is something we have inherited from ancient literary criticism. And it is something that, to some extent, obviously reflects reality. When Callimachus in his thirteenth *Iambus*, in reply to a critic, asks 'Who has said, "You are to compose elegiacs, you hexameters, and you have drawn tragedy in the divine lottery"?',[1] the premise is that these various genres exist and that a poet commits himself to writing in one or another of them, and generally limits himself to one. Callimachus is speaking up for the freedom to write in several genres, but not challenging the notion of genres as givens.

Indeed, there are many works of Greek literature that we can assign to a genre without a moment's thought. The *Iliad* is an epic, Sophocles' *Ajax* is a tragedy, Aristophanes' *Birds* is a comedy, Xenophon's *Hellenica* is history. But things are not always clear cut. What are the boundaries of epic, for example? The *Iliad* is an epic, but what about the *Shield of Heracles*, a poem of 480 lines? Is it an epic, or is it not big enough? Should we recognise a separate category of epic lay or epyllion? Paley's edition of the Hesiodic poems bore the title *The Epics of Hesiod*. They are similar to the Homeric poems in metre and language, but few nowadays would call them epics. Nor would we apply this label to the hexameter poems of Parmenides and Empedocles. The formal features of extension, hexameter metre, Ionian dialect, and a more or less traditional style of morphology and diction are clearly not sufficient to define epic. An epic must be narrative in form, and it must be a coherent narrative, not a series of separate tales. It is usually a story from the mythical period, but this is not essential: we do not deny the title of epic to Choerilus' poem on the Persian Wars or to Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. What about the *Korinthiaka* attributed to Eumelus, which told the story of Corinth's origins and the history of its kingship over several generations? In my Loeb edition of Greek epic fragments (*GEF*) I assigned it to a category of

[1] Call. *Ia.* fr. 203.30–3 Pfeiffer.

'Genealogical and antiquarian epics', and it would have been churlish and antisocial to exclude it from the volume. But it lacked the kind of unity that Aristotle called for, and it was not really an epic as we would understand it.

Our histories of Greek literature, after dealing with epic and other early hexameter poetry such as the Homeric Hymns and the Hesiodic corpus, often go on to something labelled Lyric Poetry. They can claim some ancient backing for 'lyric' as a genre. Just as there was an ancient canon of five principal epic poets (Homer, Hesiod, Pisander, Panyassis, Antimachus), there was a canon of nine λυρικοί: Alcman, Alcaeus, Sappho, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Bacchylides, and Pindar. All of these are what we sometimes call melic poets. But modern collections or selections or discussions of 'the lyric poets' often herd the melic poets together with the early elegists and iambographers. There may be some excuse for this if all sung poetry is 'lyric', as elegy does seem to have been sung, and the same will have been true of the epodes of Archilochus and Hipponax, if not their trimeters. But sung delivery is not something distinctive enough to define a genre, and it is clearly right to treat iambus and elegy as separate genres; with elegy one may debate whether further subdivision is called for.

As for melic poetry, we already find Pindar recognising different genres within it. His third *Dirge* (fr. 128c S–M) begins:

ἔντι μὲν χρυσαλακάτου τεκέων Λατοῦς ἀοιδαί
ὥριαι παιανίδες· ἔντι [δὲ] καὶ
θάλλοντος ἐκ κισσοῦ στέφανον Διο[νύ]σου
ο[   ]†βρομιπαιόμεναι†.

There are, for the children of gold-distaff Leto, songs
of seasonal paean type; there are also
ones that seek(?) a garland from the springing ivy of Dionysus.

That is, there are paeans, and there are dithyrambs. The text here becomes very corrupt, but there followed a reference to three types of song established in commemoration of deceased sons of Calliope: Linos, Hymenaios, and Ialemos, this last perhaps representing the type of dirge that Pindar is writing at the moment. Then something was said about Orpheus, but the survey of lyric genres seems to be taken no further. It is not comprehensive, as it omits, for example, epinikia, hymns, and partheneia, but so far as it goes it is remarkable enough. Pindar distinguishes five lyric genres, and he speaks of them not as constructs of human convention but as givens: *there are* songs of paean type, *there are also* ones that weave a garland of ivy. He seems to say that three further types of song were established by the Muse herself, or by another deity on the Muse's behalf.

We find a much more elaborate anatomy of melic poetry, distinguishing more than two dozen types, in the *Chrestomathy* of Proclus as summarised by Photius (*Bibl.* 319b32–320a9):

περὶ δὲ μελικῆς ποιήσεώς φησιν (*sc.* ὁ Πρόκλος) ὡς πολυμερεστάτη τε καὶ διαφόρους ἔχει τομάς. ἃ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς μεμέρισται θεοῖς, ἃ δὲ <ἀνθρώποις, ἃ δὲ θεοῖς καὶ> ἀνθρώποις, ἃ δὲ εἰς τὰς προσπιπτούσας περιστάσεις. καὶ εἰς θεοὺς μὲν ἀναφέρεσθαι ὕμνον, προσόδιον, παιᾶνα, διθύραμβον, νόμον, ἀδωνίδια, ἰόβακχον, ὑπορχήματα· εἰς δὲ ἀνθρώπους ἐγκώμια, ἐπίνικον, σκόλια, ἐρωτικά, ἐπιθαλάμια, ὑμεναίους, σίλλους, θρήνους, ἐπικήδεια· εἰς θεοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπους παρθένια, δαφνηφορικά, τριποδηφορικά, ὡσχοφορικά, εὐκτικά … τὰ δὲ εἰς τὰς προσπιπτούσας περιστάσεις οὐκ ἔστι μὲν εἴδη τῆς μελικῆς, ὑπ' αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν ποιητῶν ἐπικεχείρηται· τούτων δέ ἐστι πραγματικά, ἐμπορικά, ἀποστολικά, κωμολογικά, γεωργικά, ἐπισταλτικά.

Concerning melic poetry he (Proclus) says that it has very many parts and different subdivisions. Some of it is apportioned to gods, some to <men, some to both gods and> men, and some is for occasional circumstances. To the gods are referred the hymn, prosodion, paean, dithyramb, nome, Adonidia, Iobacchos, hyporchema; to men, encomia, epinicians, skolia, erotica, epithalamia, hymenaea, silloi, threnoi, epikedeia; to men and gods, parthenia, daphnephorika, tripodephorika, oschophorika, euktika … while those for occasional circumstances are not (established) forms of melic but have been undertaken by the poets themselves. They include pragmatika, emporika, apostolika, gnomologika, georgika, epistaltika.

Proclus, not the Neoplatonist but a compiler of probably the second century AD,[2] appears to have taken all this over from Didymus' work Περὶ Λυρικῶν Ποιητῶν, since his sections on elegy, hymn, and prosodion, as reported by Photius, correspond very closely to fragments of Didymus' work quoted in lexica. Didymus made his distinctions on the basis of a poem's performance context and apparent purpose. We cannot suppose that each of his types was marked by unique formal features.

So there were genres recognised by ancient poets, and genres recognised by ancient scholars. We modern scholars are not bound to use the same categories. We can invent our own if it seems useful to do so. And we are not bound to assign everything to a definite category, ancient or modern.

To return to epic. We think of the hexameter metre as being one of its essential formal features. But it is a contingent feature. If the *Odyssey* had happened to be composed in elegiacs, we would still have recognised it as being an epic, but we would have formed a different concept of the defining

[2] West (2013) 7–11.

features of epic. We would say that epic was composed in hexameters or elegiacs.

In fact we know of three elegiac poems that were quasi-epic in substance, though we would not be inclined to call them epics: the poem of Mimnermus that bore the epic-style title *Smyrneis*, and Simonides' elegies on the battles of Artemisium and Plataea. Mimnermus' poem, according to Pausanias (9.29.4 = Mimn. fr. 13 *IEG*), was about the Smyrnaeans' heroic battle against the Lydians under Gyges, which took place a generation before Mimnermus was writing, and it had a prooimion in which the poet distinguished older Muses born from Ouranos from the younger ones born from Zeus. Another fragment (fr. 13a *IEG*) implies an ample narrative with speeches:

ὡc οἳ πὰρ βαcιλῆοc, ἐπε[ὶ ῥ’] ἐ[ν]εδέξατο μῦθον,
ἤ[ϊξ]αν κοίληι[c ἀ]cπίcι φραξάμενοι.

So when the king had given his command
they charged, protected by their convex shields.

This *Smyrneis* must have been of some considerable length. Of the two Simonides elegies, we know more about the Plataea poem (frr. 10–17 *IEG*) than the other. Like Mimnermus' poem, it began with a prooimion, and this prooimion, like that of an epic rhapsode, took the form of a hymn (surprisingly, a hymn to Achilles) which was linked to the following narrative by a farewell and transition on the same pattern as those seen in many of the Homeric Hymns and in Hesiod's *Theogony*. The hymn occupied some thirty lines at least, and the link passage ten (fr. 11.19–28 *IEG*). The narrative part must have been much longer, hardly less than a hundred lines, perhaps several hundred.

As I say, we would not call these poems epics. They are elegies, in view not only of their metre but also of their probable performance context and dimensions: they may have been some hundreds of lines long, but not thousands. Yet they are elegies that have been endowed with the form and spirit of epic, albeit on a reduced scale. If we felt the need to create a genre name for them we might call them examples of epic elegy (rather than elegiac epic).[3]

What now about Stesichorus? He was one of the nine canonical λυρικοί, and we can agree that he was a lyric poet.[4] So which of the twenty-eight types of lyric listed by Didymus did he practise? It is not obvious that his work fits any of them. His famous Palinode is described by Conon as 'hymns to Helen':

κἀκεῖθεν ἐξιόντα ἀπαγγέλλειν αὐτὸν Στηcιχόρωι Ἑλένη κελεύει τὴν εἰc αὐτὴν ἄιδειν, εἰ φιλεῖ τὰc ὄψειc, παλινωιδίαν. Στηcίχοροc δ’ αὐτίκα ὕμνουc Ἑλένηc cυντάττει καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἀνακομίζεται. (Conon *FGrHist* 26 F 1.xviii = Ta30(a) Ercoles)

And when he departed from there, Helen instructed him to give Stesichorus the message to sing the Palinode to her if he valued his eyesight. Stesichorus without delay composed hymns to Helen and recovered his sight.

In the *Suda* entry on Stesichorus (fr. 91d F.) the poem is characterised as an 'encomium' of Helen. But it clearly belonged neither to the genre of 'hymn' as generally understood nor to that of 'encomium' as seen in the works of Pindar and Bacchylides. Athenaeus, perhaps following the Peripatetic Chamaeleon, says that Stesichorus, being οὐ μετρίωc ἐρωτικόc, invented the type of songs anciently called παίδεια or παιδικά.[5] But again this makes no sense in relation to our other evidence for his work.

We have only a small fraction of his œuvre. But we have enough to form a clear impression of its character. So far as we can see – and disregarding a few titles that may belong to his fourth-century namesake[6] – Stesichorus' compositions were very long narrative poems on mythical themes, often themes that we know had been treated in epic, such as exploits of Heracles, the quarrel of Oedipus' sons, the sack of Troy, the story of Orestes. By 'very long' I mean much longer than any other lyric poems of which we have any knowledge. The *Geryoneis* contained at least 1,300 verses,[7] perhaps closer to 2,000. The *Oresteia* was divided into more than one book. In fr. 170 F. we have a fragment of a narrative about Telemachus' visit to Sparta that was clearly on an ample scale: a portent appeared, and Helen interpreted it in a speech extending over many lines. Extended speeches in the Homeric manner also appear in the fragments of the *Geryoneis*, *Eriphyle*, *Iliou Persis*, and *Thebais* (to use that unattested title for the poem of the Lille papyrus, fr. 97). There were debates among the gods (fr. 18), and Homeric-type similes: 'Geryon bent his neck aslant, even as a poppy whose delicate structure

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[3] On this question see further Sider (2006).

[4] The term λυρικοὶ ποιηταί goes back at least to the first century BC (cf. Cic. *Or.* 183 and Didymus, as mentioned above). For Stesichorus as one of the *nouem lyrici*, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.61–2 = Stes. Tb42 Ercoles, Anon. *A.P.* 9.184, 9.571 = 1194–1203, 1204–11 *FGE* = Stes.

Tb3(a), Tb3(b) Ercoles. He personally is designated as a λυρικόc in his *Suda* entry (c 1095 = Stes. Tb2 Ercoles). Earlier writers call him a μελοποιόc.

[5] Athen. 13.601a = Stes. Tb°7 Ercoles.

[6] West (1970) 206 = (2011–13) II 109–10.

[7] See Finglass and Kelly, Chapter 1, this volume, p. 7.

decays, and its petals soon fall' (fr. 19.44-7, on which see Kelly, Chapter 2, this volume, pp. 35-7).

The style and diction too have much in common with the epic. Formulaic phrases and ornamental epithets abound, very often paralleled in Homer. The sentences flow in an easy and unforced manner, not knotted up with elliptical syntax or challenging metaphors.

Stesichorus' affinity with epic is a recurrent motif in the ancient testimonia. Simonides (fr. 273 Poltera) cited Homer and Stesichorus together as authority for Meleager's record-breaking javelin-throw at the funeral games for Pelias. Antipater of Thessalonica in an epigram claims Stesichorus to be a reincarnation of Homer, and in an anonymous epigram on the nine lyric poets he is described as drawing from the Homeric stream; 'the obvious thing to say about Stesichorus' is Page's jaded comment.[8] Dio of Prusa represents Alexander as having commended Stesichorus and Pindar, Stesichorus because he imitated Homer and gave a worthy account of the sack of Troy, Pindar because of his grandeur of spirit and because he praised Alexander's homonymous ancestor.[9] In another place Dio refers to a settled view among the Greeks that Stesichorus was an imitator of Homer and wrote very similar poetry.[10] Quintilian speaks of him as

singing of mighty wars and famous kings, and sustaining on his lyre the weight of epic song; he gives his characters the due dignity in action and speech, and if he had only held himself in, he might have been Homer's closest rival, but he floods and overflows. This is something to be criticised, but it is a fault of abundance.[11]

I have mentioned elegies of Mimnermus and Simonides with an epic character, one feature of which was the presence of an epic-style prooimion. How did Stesichorus' poems begin? Chamaeleon recorded the incipits of what he claimed were two divergent Palinodes (fr. 90.6-11 F.). One began δεῦρ' αὖτε θεὰ φιλόμολπε, the other χρυσόπτερε παρθένε, or as we may easily supplement it, χρυσόπτερε παρθένε <Μοῖϲα>.[12] In both cases, then, an invocation of the Muse. Another exordium, closely imitated by Aristophanes, comes from the *Oresteia*:[13]

> Μοῖϲα, cὺ μὲν πολέμουϲ ἀπωϲαμένα πεδ' ἐμέο
> κλείοιϲα θεῶν τε γάμουϲ ἀνδρῶν τε δαίταϲ
> καὶ θαλίαϲ μακάρων.

[8] Ant. Thess. *A.P.* 7.75 = 483-6 *GP* = Stes. Tb39 Ercoles; Anon. *A.P.* 9.184 = 1194-1203 *FGE* = Stes. Tb3(a) Ercoles; Page, *FGE* p. 342.
[9] Dio *Or.* 2.33 = fr. 98 F. [10] Dio *Or.* 55.7 = Stes. Tb1 Ercoles.
[11] Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.62 = Stes. Tb42 Ercoles. [12] Thus West (1969) 137.
[13] Ar. *Pax* 775-80. For the attribution to Stesichorus, see Bowie, Chapter 7, this volume.

> Join me, Muse, in rejecting stories of battle,
> and celebrate weddings of gods and banquets of men
> and feasts of the blessed.
>
> Stes. fr. 172 F.

An appeal to the Muse and an indication of subject-matter, which was no doubt narrowed down in what followed. Somewhere else (fr. 278) Stesichorus called the Muse ἀρχεϲίμολποϲ, 'beginner of song', no doubt at the beginning of a song.[14] Patrick Finglass has recently made an *exempli gratia* reconstruction of most of the opening triad of the *Sack of Troy* (fr. 100), using a fair amount of conjectural supplement but achieving a persuasive overall result.[15] The Muse Calliope is called upon to sing of the sack of Troy and to inspire the poet, whose heart(?) is yearning to sing. He urges her to tell of how, beside the waters of Simois, a man endowed with skill by Athena won glory by finding a way to take the citadel without man-breaking battle. (This was Epeius, the man who built the wooden horse.) The daughter of Zeus elevated him to honour after taking pity on him as he served the proud kings as a menial water-carrier. It is a prooimion thoroughly epic in manner, except that the person of the poet emerges a little more prominently than in the Homeric poems. It led in to the story: the building of the horse was the essential preliminary to the sack of Troy.

So were Stesichorus' poems essentially nothing but epics written in lyric metre? If they were to be rewritten in hexameters and in Ionic dialect, would they be indistinguishable from epics? Not altogether. Besides the heroic narrative they seem to have contained some elements that would not have been at home in an epic. We do not see these elements breaking in on the narrative; once the story was in progress, so far as we can see, it continued uninterrupted on its course to its end, or to whatever stopping-point Stesichorus chose to make. But before and after the narrative he seems to have exercised the lyric poet's freedom to speak of other matters. I have mentioned Aristophanes' quotation of what was probably the opening of the *Oresteia*, Μοῖϲα cὺ μὲν πολέμουϲ ἀπωϲαμένα πεδ' ἐμέο, etc. Aristophanes makes it, with slight adaptation, the beginning of a lyric strophe of his own. He begins the antistrophe with a sentence embodying two more fragments from the *Oresteia*, the first of which presumably responded in the original to the previous quotation as it does in Aristophanes, and so was

[14] For other Stesichorean invocations of the Muse, again probably at the start of their poems, see frr. 277 and 279 with Finglass (2013a) 4-5.
[15] Finglass (2013a) 14-15.

still part of the prooimion. The scholiast provides the correct Stesichorean wording (frr. 173–4):

τοιάδε χρὴ Χαρίτων δαμώματα καλλικόμων
ὑμνεῖν Φρύγιον μέλος ἐξευρόντα<ϲ> ἁβρῶϲ
ἦρος ἐπερχομένου . . .
        ὅκα ἦρος
ὧραι κελαδῆι χελιδών.

Such are the lovely-haired Graces' gifts to the public
that we must sing, devising an elegant Phrygian melody,
at the arrival of spring . . .
            when the swallow in
springtime rings out.

The prooimion of this poem, then, mentioned the circumstances of performance, a springtime occasion on which a crowd came together to listen to the song, and it referred to the poet's composition of a melody in a particular mode, the Phrygian. This goes rather beyond what could be found in an epic prooimion, though it is true that in the Homeric Hymns, which served as prooimia for the epic rhapsode, there are occasional references to the festival or contest at which the poem was being performed.[16]

Much more interesting is a papyrus text that does not appear under Stesichorus' name in any edition, though in my opinion it should: P.Oxy. 2735 fr. 1. When Lobel published the fragments of this papyrus in 1968 he saw that it had to be either Stesichorus or Ibycus, and of the two he 'incline[d] towards Stesichorus, on the general ground that manuscripts of his poems have turned up in Oxyrhynchus many times more often than those of Ibycus ... and for the particular reason that there is a chance that fr. 11 has a connexion with the Ἆθλα ἐπὶ Πελίαι which Stesichorus wrote'.[17] In the following year I published a discussion in which I assumed Stesichorean authorship, observing that the metrical scheme of the strophe appeared to be largely identical with that of the strophe of the *Iliou Persis*.[18] Denys Page, however, favoured Ibycus. In *SLG* he printed the fragments under Ibycus' name as S166, and a series of other scholars have followed his lead.[19] I shall return to the question of authorship after discussing fragment 1 of the papyrus. Here is the text.

[16] *Hom. Hym.* 3.146–76, 6.19–20, 26.12–13.
[17] Lobel (1968) 9.
[18] West (1969) 142–9 = (2011–13) II 98–105 (with supplementary note on p. 106).
[19] Barron (1984) 20, Cavallini (1993) 38–40, 49–50, 64–5, (1997) 117, Davies in *PMGF*, Wilkinson (2013) 88–93; Finglass (2014b) mentions it among 'fragments conjecturally ascribed to Stesichorus'.

        —⏑⏑—⏑⏑—] δᾶκτον ἐχω[
5   —⏑ ὑπ' α]ὐλητῆρος ἀιδο[ν
      ⏑⏑—⏖] ἁβρὰ π[α]γτῶϲ
      ⏑⏑— πό]θος οἷά τ' ἔρωτος [

      —⏑⏑ ο]ιο κατ' αἶϲαν ὡϲ [⏑—————⏑⏑—   str.
      ⏑⏑—⏑]ατον τέλος ἀϲφ[⏑——
10   —⏑⏑]ᾱ δύναϲιϲ· κρατ[—⏑⏑—⏑⏑——
      —⏑]ύγοι μέγα δαί-
        ——-] πολὺν ὄλβον ἐδώ[καν ἄφθιτον
      οἷϲ κ' ἐθ]έλωϲιν ἔχεν, τοῖϲ δ' α[ὔτ' ἀνὰ πάντ' ἐβάλον
      βουλα]ῖϲι Μοιρᾶν.

15   οἳ δ' ἄρα] Τυνδαρίδ[αι]ϲι λαγέ[ται ϲυνηλύθον ἐϲ-   ant.
      ϲυμέν]οι, ϲάλπιγγος ὅκ' ἐν κε[λευϲμόν
      Κάϲτορί] θ' ἱπποδάμωι καὶ π[ὺξ ἀγαθῶι Πολυδεύκει
      πρόφρον]εϲ ἀντιθέοι
        ποιπνύο]ν ὀπάονεϲ, οἷϲιν ἕϲπ[ετο
20   —⏑⏑]εῖ μεγάλα Χρύϲαιγιϲ [ἰοῖϲι μάχαν
      ἐϲ πωλυ]καδέα.

      καὶ τὸ] μὲν οὐ φατόν ἐϲτιν ε[ep.
      —⏑⏑]ων τεκέεϲϲι· ϲὲ δ' αὖ[
      —⏑⏑]εν καταδέρκεται ἀ[έλιος
25   —⏑⏑']τα κάλλιϲτον ἐπιχθ[ονίων
      ἀθανάτ]οιϲ ἐναλίγκιον εἶδο[ϲ
      ⏑⏑⏖]ϲ ἄλλος οὕτωϲ
      ⏑⏑ οὔτ'] ἀν' Ἰάονας οὔτ' ᾳ[

      —⏑⏑ κ]υ διάνειραν α[ἰ]ὲν [————⏑⏑—   str.
30   —⏑⏑ Λακ]εδαίμονα ναίο[——
      —⏑⏑]ε̣ϲ τε χοροῖϲ ἵππο[ιϲί τε —⏑⏑——
      πὰρ μὲν ὄρ]ᾶν βαθὺν Εὐ-
        ρώταν, περ]ί τ' ἀμφί τε, θαῦμα [κάλλεος,
      —⏑⏑ ἄ]λϲεα λαχνάεντ' ἐλ[ατᾶν ⏑⏑—
35   ——⏑ κ̣ᾱ]πιοuϲ·

      ἔνθα παλαι]μοϲύνᾱι τε καὶ δρ[όμωι ——⏑⏑—   ant.
      ⏑⏑— ταχ]υτᾶτ' ἐϲ ἀγῶν' ἐπᾶϲ[κ —
      —⏑⏑—]ν πατέρων ἰϲήρα[τ ⏑—⏑⏑——
      —⏑⏑—⏑]νια
40   ——⏑⏑—]γε θεῶν [π]άρ', ἔϲτι δὲ [
      —⏑⏑] ἰϲϲα[μένα] Θέμιϲ κα[⏑—⏑⏑—
      ——⏑—]

Up to line 21, which ends an antistrophe, a narrative is in progress. A military expedition is being prepared under the leadership of the Tyndaridai (15–21). At the trumpet's summons various leaders (λαγέ[ται) come to join Castor and Polydeuces, and the goddess of the golden aegis, Athena, escorts them as they go to battle.

But the narrative is taken no further. In the epode the poet declares (22–3) that 'that cannot be told properly by the children of mortals', or perhaps it was 'except by the children of immortals'. Then comes a second-person pronoun, cὲ δ' αὖ or αὖτε: Stesichorus is turning to address an individual, something that no epic poet ever does (except when he apostrophises a character in his narrative such as Patroclus or Eumaeus, which is clearly not what is happening here). Then in 24 we have 'the sun looks upon',]εν καταδέρκεται ἀ[έλιος, and in 25–6 'most handsome of earthly men, like in appearance to immortals', κάλλιστον ἐπιχθ[ονίων, | ἀθανάτ]οις ἐναλίγκιον εἶδο[ς, accusatives that apparently agree with the cὲ in 23. The wondrously good-looking man or boy is the person that the poet is addressing.

In the following strophe and antistrophe, probably the last of the poem, we discern remnants of what looks like a more general encomium of Sparta and its beauties. There is mention of Lacedaemon (30), of χοροί, of horse-racing (31), of the Eurotas (32–3), of leafy groves and gardens (34–5), of wrestling and foot-races (36–7), of the gods and Themis (40–1). The poet evidently visited Sparta at a time of games that had musical as well as athletic components, and he performed a song on a legend of local interest, involving the Tyndaridai.

What was the military undertaking that they were to lead? Eleonora Cavallini has persuasively identified it as the expedition to Attica to recover the young Helen, whom Theseus abducted.[20] We know that Stesichorus dealt with this story, though all we know of his version is that Theseus made Helen pregnant and she gave birth in Argos to Iphigeneia, whom Clytemnestra adopted (fr. 86). Herodotus mentions that the Tyndaridai invaded Attica to recover their sister with a large force,[21] and the situation described in the papyrus is in accord with this. If it seems strange that Athena should be supporting the Dioscuri in an invasion of Attica, it is to be remembered that she was a major goddess at Sparta too. It was said that her bronze-faced temple there was begun by Tyndareos and that the Dioscuri planned to develop it using the spoils from Aphidna (Paus. 3.17.2). Her Spartan festival, the Athanaia, had games associated with it, at least in the fifth century (IG V/1 213.10), and this would be one among other possibilities for the occasion of our poem's performance.

To come back to the question of authorship. Shortly after the papyrus was published, Page remarked that of the two contenders, Stesichorus and Ibycus, 'Love … and handsome young men … would seem a little more at home in Ibycus'.[22] Two years later he added further arguments. Firstly: more than one poem is represented in the fragments of 2735, but a single poem of Stesichorus would have filled a roll, or more than one. But then he notes: 'Mr Lobel thinks that the fragments may indeed represent more than one roll; if they do, this argument loses its force.'[23] Secondly: fragment 11 of the papyrus contains allusions to two Stesichorean themes, the Games for Pelias and Geryones, but the brevity of the references does not fit Stesichorus' diffuse style.

It is certainly true that the fragment does not appear to be a fragment either of the Games for Pelias or of the Geryoneis, and it is hard to explain what the two subjects are doing in close proximity. It still seems at least as likely that Stesichorus referred to two themes of his own as that Ibycus referred to them. If Stesichorus did so, it will have been in a non-narrative section of one of his compositions, probably at the beginning or end; and it is just such non-narrative sections that we are looking for.

As regards fr. 1 of the papyrus, several considerations speak in favour of Stesichorus. The metrical scheme of the strophe, as mentioned above, is largely the same as that of the strophe of the Sack of Troy.[24] We have other evidence of Stesichorus' interest in Sparta, but none of Ibycus'. Stesichorus placed Agamemnon's palace at Sparta (fr. 177), and he described Telemachus' stay in Sparta with Menelaus and Helen (fr. 170). We have even more evidence of Stesichorus' interest in Helen, who formed the main subject of more than one of his poems, and we know that he told of her abduction by Theseus (fr. 86). Nothing of the sort is attributed to Ibycus.

When Page says that love and handsome young men would be more at home in Ibycus, he forgets that Stesichorus is said to have been οὐ μετρίως ἐρωτικός and to have invented the type of songs anciently called παίδεια or παιδικά (Athen. 13.601a = Stes. Tb°7 Ercoles, cited above). The fragments did not seem to give any support to this statement, and it has been suspected

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20 Cavallini (1993) 49, (1997), (1999).

21 Hdt. 9.73.2 cὺν cτρατοῦ πλήθεῖ. According to Apollodorus (Epit. 1.23), it was an army of Lacedaemonians and Arcadians. This must be connected with the statement in Steph. Byz. ε 23 (II 130 Billerbeck) that Echemos of Tegea (the husband of Helen's sister Timandra) took part in the expedition.

22 Page (1969) 71.   23 Page (1971) 93.

24 Wilkinson (2013) 88–93 makes no reference to the metre of the piece.

of being erroneous, prompted merely by the common association of Stesichorus with Ibycus.[25] Stesichorus' poetry seemed to be all heroic narrative. But the fragment we are concerned with was a heroic narrative. If at its close it turned into a tribute to Sparta and to a handsome young patron, we should not lose faith in Stesichorus' authorship but rather welcome this revelation of how he ended a poem. We see a reflection of the same technique in Ibycus' Polycrates ode (fr. S151 *PMGF*), which seems to have been a small-scale essay in the Stesichorean manner, with triadic structure and dactylic rhythms. Ibycus breaks off his narrative with the Achaeans gathered to attack Troy. Just like Stesichorus, he excuses himself by saying that the story would require more than mortal powers to tell, and he ends with a direct address to Polycrates and praise of his good looks.

Stesichorus' heroic poems, then, were differentiated from epic poems in having opening and concluding sections that related to the poet's immediate surroundings, as lyric compositions commonly do. In at least two works he named earlier poets as authorities for the subject-matter: this is again something that can be paralleled in other lyric poets but would be out of place in epic. In the Argument to the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield*, in a discussion of the poem's authenticity, it is stated that 'Stesichorus too says it is by Hesiod' (Stes. fr. 168 F.). This must certainly refer to Stesichorus' *Cycnus*, which, like the Hesiodic poem, gave an account of Heracles' defeat of the brigand Cycnus, a son of Ares. Stesichorus, presumably in either the opening or the closing section of his poem, must have mentioned Hesiod as an authority for the tale. Elsewhere we hear of an obscure melic poet named Xanthus, from whom, according to Megaclides of Athens, Stesichorus adapted much, including the *Oresteia*. Megaclides said that this Xanthus was older than Stesichorus, 'as Stesichorus himself testifies' (frr. 171, 281). The implication is that Stesichorus somewhere named him as a predecessor.

What about the epic material itself: did its treatment differ in any significant way from what a rhapsode would have done? Here we are seriously hampered by having only fragments. They give the impression that Stesichorus is telling his stories in a fairly thorough and leisurely way, scene succeeding scene, with ample dialogue. But did this thoroughness and continuity obtain on the large scale, or were there leaps and omissions? The *Iliou Persis* began with the making of the wooden horse by Epeius (fr. 100 F.), and we have Dio of Prusa's statement that, according to Alexander, Stesichorus gave a worthy account of the sack (fr. 98). Other testimonia indicate that it contained plenty of detail of the fates of individuals, and the

artist of the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina* represented it as being his major literary source for the event (fr. 105).

On the other hand, what are we to make of the Telemachus narrative, fr. 170? It is based on an episode of the *Odyssey* (15.160–78), but Stesichorus cannot have composed a whole *Odyssey*, or we should certainly have found mention of it somewhere. Did he write a separate Telemachy? But a Telemachy does not make much sense as a free-standing entity; there was certainly never an epic Telemachy independent of the *Odyssey*. The only attested Stesichorean title with which anyone has been able to associate the Telemachus fragment is *Nostoi*. But it is impossible to conceive a comprehensive Stesichorean *Nostoi* that had a similar coverage to the Cyclic *Nostoi* and also took in Odysseus' return, with Telemachus' Spartan visit as part of that. In the *Odyssey* Telemachus hears part of the story of the Returns from Menelaus and another part from Nestor in Pylos. Might Stesichorus have used Telemachus' journey as the frame for his whole account of the *Nostoi*, as a means of linking Odysseus' return with them?[26] Alternatively, since in the Cyclic *Nostoi* the story of Agamemnon's homecoming and his avenging by Orestes formed the frame of the whole poem, could what Pausanias refers to as Stesichorus' *Nostoi* have been the same as his *Oresteia*? But that would leave the Telemachus fragment unaccounted for.

One further observation about Stesichorus' narrative style. In the piece about Sparta discussed above, the closing stretch of narrative is interrupted in lines 11–14 by a fragmentary passage of gnomic reflection, apparently something on the lines of 'the gods give great prosperity to those they wish to have it, whereas for others they bring failure by the will of the Fates'. This is something we never find in epic, where sententious remarks are often enough put in characters' speeches but never made in the poet's own persona. It is another lyric feature.

So what Stesichorus wrote, even if we disregard the lyric metre and Doric dialect, was not exactly epic. If we call it lyric epic, that will suggest the right kind of qualification.

What sort of tradition, if any, lay behind it? Was it Stesichorus' unique invention, or was he developing something that others had done? And how should we judge its relationship to hexameter epic? Did it represent a regional offshoot or a parallel growth from Mycenaean or Submycenaean roots?

In the Telemachus fragment we can see that Stesichorus is adapting a passage of the *Odyssey*. There can be no doubt about the relationship: the

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[25] See especially Cingano (1990) 204–8.

[26] Cf. Carey, Chapter 3, this volume, p. 59.

epic model is primary, the lyric poem is secondary and derivative. We have seen that in his *Cycnus* too Stesichorus acknowledged an epic predecessor, a Hesiod, whether or not what he had in view was the *Shield* that has come down to us under Hesiod's name. No doubt there were other cases too in which he based his poems in whole or in part on particular epic poems. On the other hand, he named Xanthus as one of his forerunners, and this Xanthus, according to Megaclides and Aelian, was a lyric poet, a μελοποιός, and quite a major source for Stesichorus. Here perhaps is faint evidence for an earlier tradition of extended lyric narrative on heroic themes.

Another name too comes into the picture: a poet from Locri called Xenocritus or Xenocrates. Whereas with Xanthus we have a couple of scraps of information about things that were said in his poems, with Xenocritus we have nothing at all. But pseudo-Plutarch, who is reproducing sources from the fourth century BC, here probably Heraclides Ponticus, describes him as a poet of heroic narrative songs (*De mus.* 1134ef):

περὶ δὲ Ξενοκρίτου, ὃς ἦν τὸ γένος ἐκ Λοκρῶν τῶν ἐν Ἰταλίαι, ἀμφισβητεῖται εἰ παιάνων ποιητὴς γέγονεν· ἡρωικῶν γὰρ ὑποθέσεων πράγματα ἐχουσῶν ποιητὴν γεγονέναι φασὶν αὐτόν· διὸ καί τινας διθυράμβους καλεῖν αὐτοῦ τὰς ὑποθέσεις.

As to Xenocritus, who was a native of Italian Locri, it is disputed whether he was a poet of paeans. For they say he was a poet of heroic themes embodying action; so some call his narratives dithyrambs.

These songs of Xenocritus did not fit easily into conventional genre classifications. He was anyway a lyric poet and musician. He is said to have been the inventor of the Locrian mode, and blind from birth. Glaucus of Rhegium, writing around 400 BC, discussed him in a treatment of early musical history (ps.-Plut. *De musica* 1134bc, f). He considered him to be later than Thaletas of Crete, who was active sometime in the seventh century. That he came from south Italy, from Locri, is significant, seeing that Locri is one of the places with which Stesichorus is most closely associated.[27] We do not know where Xanthus hailed from, but the fact that Xenocritus and Stesichorus both came from the same area may suggest that their genus of heroic narrative lyric was a regional phenomenon. Ibycus came from the same part of the world, from Rhegium, and although his Polycrates ode was

27 Cf. West (1971) 302–5 = (2011–13) II 79–82. My statement there that Matauros, said to have been Stesichorus' birthplace, was a Locrian foundation should be modified. It was originally founded from Zancle (thus Solinus 2.11 *a Zanclensibus Metaurum locatum*) and then taken over by Locri in the sixth century, perhaps in Stesichorus' lifetime (cf. Willi (2008) 54 n. 16, Finglass (2014a) 13 n. 82).

composed in Samos, its echoes of Stesichorean poetry may be supposed to reflect his Italian roots.

When we find what appears to be a local tradition in archaic Greek literature we have to ask whether that was the only locality where the type of literature in question existed, or rather the only locality where it was written down. We recognise a distinctive Lesbian lyric because Alcaeus and Sappho made large collections of their songs in written form. It would surely look less distinctive if a dozen contemporary lyricists in Cyme, Phocaea, Smyrna, and Chios had done likewise. Still, with Stesichorus we are dealing with a poet of the mid-sixth century, a time when the practice of writing poetry down was well established and its benefits for the poet who sought wide and enduring celebrity were thoroughly appreciated. Of course, we have lost much of the greater part of the poetry that was written down during that period. But we know that hexameter epic was being produced in many places in Ionia and mainland Greece. There is no sign that anyone from those parts was producing lyric epic. So the probability is that it really was a local development in south Italy.

However, there is some evidence for a kindred phenomenon that was more widespread: the performance of hexameter epic by citharodes.[28] The typical and traditional performer of epic song was the rhapsode who accompanied himself, if at all, on a rude four-stringed phorminx and, as I believe, used its four notes as a frame upon which to melodise the text according to the word accents. Now, according to pseudo-Plutarch's *De musica*, that magpie's nest of ancient musicological learning, Terpander, the famous Lesbian musician to whom so many innovations were ascribed, composed citharodic prooimia in hexameters: 1132d, πεποίηται δὲ τῶι Τερπάνδρωι καὶ προοίμια κιθαρωιδικὰ ἐν ἔπεσιν. A couple of pages later (1133c) we read that the ancient citharodes, after discharging their duty to the gods as they pleased (that is, with a prefatory invocation or short hymn), passed at once to the poetry of Homer and the rest, 'and this is clear from Terpander's prooimia'. In another passage, at 1132c, Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 157 Wehrli = Stes. Tb22 Ercoles) is given as the authority for the more explicit statement that Terpander, when he composed citharodic nomes, used melody as a clothing for verses, both his own and Homer's.

All this must be taken not as evidence for Terpander's personal achievements but for classical citharodes' practices that were supposed to go back to Terpander and may indeed have gone back to the seventh century. The 'prooimia of Terpander' were the citharodes' counterpart to the 'Hymns/

28 For what follows, cf. West (1971) 307–9 = (2011–13) II 86–90.

prooimia of Homer' with which the rhapsodes prefaced recitations of epic. The citharodes likewise used prooimia addressed to the gods, closing with formulae of transition, to preface excerpts from the epics. But while in the rhapsodes' performances the musical aspect was subsidiary and remained undeveloped, the citharodes, being skilled in making more elaborate and interesting music, applied their art to the performance of excerpts from epic, perhaps keeping strictly to the hexameter form, perhaps varying it from time to time. It was presumably this kind of performance that Heraclides Ponticus had in mind when he treated Homer's Phemius and Demodocus as citharodes ([Plut.] 1132b = fr. 157 Wehrli = Stes. Tb22 Ercoles), whereas Plato (*Ion* 533b) calls Phemius at least a rhapsode. Chamaeleon (fr. 27 Giordano = Stes. Tb21 Ercoles), writing about Stesichorus, recorded that people – he must mean citharodes – used to set to music not only Homer but also Hesiod, Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Phocylides.

But this melodising of Homer was not the citharode's most typical activity. And it was different in kind from what Stesichorus was doing. Although he used epic models, he was creating poems of his own, with individual introductions and concluding sections, in architectonic musical structures with large, repeating strophes, varied by epodes at every third stop.

What is the significance of this triadic structure? The traditional assumption is that it has an essential connection with dancing and that Stesichorus' poetry was choral lyric, sung and danced by a chorus. His very name seemed to imply, did it not, that he wrote for and directed choruses.

In the penultimate paragraph of a paper on the *Geryoneis* delivered at the Oxford Triennial in 1968, Spencer Barrett raised his voice in protest against this view. These were his words:[29]

And now I would like first to say very briefly something that I have felt for a long time and become convinced of after working on these fragments: that I do not believe for a moment that this was choral lyric, as it has so often been said to be. Choral presentation of a work of this kind and this length would surely be intolerable. It will have been delivered, surely, like the epic on which it is based, by a single performer, accompanying himself doubtless on the lyre.

I have argued for the same view,[30] pointing out that in one of the *Oresteia* fragments (fr. 173) Stesichorus identifies composer and singer:

τοιάδε χρη Χαρίτων δαμώματα καλλικόμων
ὑμνεῖν Φρύγιον μέλος ἐξευρόντα<ς> ἁβρῶς

Such are the lovely-haired Graces' gifts to the public
that we must sing, devising an elegant Phrygian melody

Barrett's argument from the immense length of Stesichorus' poems is also weighty. The *Geryoneis* at least contained fifty triads or more and must have taken well over an hour to perform. For Stesichorus to hold the whole text in his head and to sing and play his instrument for that length of time would have been an impressive feat. For a chorus to sing it while dancing without a pause would surely have been beyond human stamina. The triadic structure can be understood as a purely musical principle of composition, an alternation of melodies to alleviate the monotony of monostrophy.

Wilamowitz thought that 'Stesichorus' was a surname applied to more than one poet, and that it did not necessarily imply writing for a singing chorus, perhaps only for a dancing one:

Wenn Στησίχορος erst Beiname ist, besagt es nicht, daß dieser Mann Reigen gestellt hat, sondern der, nach welchem er benannt war. Darin braucht noch nicht die Abfassung von Liedern für den Chorgesang zu liegen, wie die Scene im θ lehrt … Der Name beweist also durchaus noch nicht die Existenz der späteren chorischen Lyrik. Die Suidasvita hat einen Nachtrag ἐκλήθη δὲ Στησίχορος ὅτι πρῶτος κιθαρῳδίαι χορὸν ἔστησεν, ἐπεί τοι πρότερον Τεισίας ἐκαλεῖτο. Darin ist eben jene homerische Art der Verbindung von Kitharodie und Reigen gut bezeichnet.[31]

When he refers to 'die Scene im θ' he means Demodocus' second song in *Odyssey* 8 (258–369), the one about Ares and Aphrodite, throughout which the young Phaeacian dancers appear to be performing. However, a series of scholars, beginning with Thiersch (1821) 63–9, have argued that the song is interpolated – not in my view by an alien hand but by the original poet.[32] Before it begins, Demodocus takes his place in the middle of the arena, the dancers form up round him and dance, and Odysseus admires the spectacle (264–5). Then the bard launches into his song of Ares and Aphrodite. When it ends, Alcinous calls upon two individual dancers to do a special display, which they do while the others clap to the rhythm (379 ἐπελήκεον). If the song (266–366) is taken out, this follows straight on from the first dance, for which Demodocus was evidently supplying a musical accompaniment on his lyre but not singing. A number of late eighth- and early seventh-century vase-paintings show groups of dancers accompanied by

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[29] Barrett (2007) 22–3.
[30] West (1971) 309 = (2011–13) II 89–90. For more recent discussions of the question, see Willi (2008) 76–82, Finglass (2014a) 30–2.
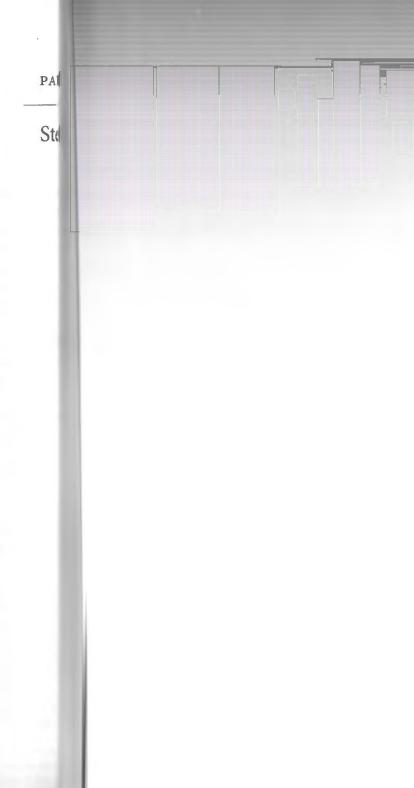[31] Wilamowitz (1913) 238, citing Su. c 1095 = Stes. Tb2 Ercoles.
[32] Explained more fully in West (2014) 135.

hand-clapping and by a lyre-player or an aulete;[33] the lyre-player might be singing, but the aulete cannot be.

So evidence for a soloist with a cithara accompanying non-singing dancers but singing himself reduces to that sentence in the *Suda* about the origin of Stesichorus' name. But I do not rule it out as the form that his performances took. He does after all mention χοροί as a feature of Sparta and so perhaps of the occasion on which he performed there.

[33] Wegner (1968) 23–4 with plates II, III, V, VI.

5 | Stesichorus, master of narrative

P. J. FINGLASS

Stesichorus' long mythological narratives offered great scope to the poet to develop plots, characters, and themes beyond what would have been possible in shorter works. These lengthy lyrics also required considerable planning and organisation on the part of the poet, in order to prevent them from becoming diffuse or meandering. They thus offer us a particular opportunity to assess and appreciate Stesichorus' poetic technique. In a discussion of Bacchylidean artistry, Fearn refers in passing to 'the already narratologically complex lyric narratives of Stesichorus, especially evident in the Lille fragment':[1] yet to date there has been no real attempt to investigate this aspect of his oeuvre. A full study of this subject would demand a small monograph; this chapter concentrates on three of Stesichorus' works, *Cycnus*, *Thebais*, and *Helen*, and attempts to discover glimpses of narrative artistry that have survived from the wreckage of his poetry.[2]

Cycnus

The Pindaric scholia preserve a narrative from Stesichorus' *Cycnus*.[3] Cycnus, son of Ares, lives in the approaches to Thessaly, where he spends the time beheading passing travellers in order to build a temple to Apollo out

[1] Fearn (2012) 331 n. 37.

[2] I have not discussed the *Geryoneis*, although it offers considerable scope for such an analysis, because it is by far the best known of Stesichorus' works, and it is partly my aim to emphasise that the less familiar poems have much to offer too. The narrative of the *Sack of Troy* also deserves investigation: for this poem, see Finglass (2013a), which shows how this narrative began and analyses possible reasons for its remarkable opening. Some narrative features in the *Games for Pelias*, *Boarhunters*, and *Oresteia* are discussed in Finglass (2014a) 58–60.

[3] Stes. fr. 166a F. ἐτράπη δὲ καὶ ὑπεχώρησεν ἐν τῆι πρὸς τὸν Κύκνον μαχῆι ὁ μέγιστος Ἡρακλῆς, παρορμήσαντος Ἄρεος τὸν Κύκνον. ἐμαχέσατο δὲ Ἡρακλῆς ὅτι κακόξενος ἦν Κύκνος καὶ ἐν παρόδωι τῆς Θεσσαλίας οἰκῶν ἀπεκαράτόμει τοὺς παριόντας ναὸν τῶι Ἀπόλλωνι βουλόμενος ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν οἰκοδομῆσαι, καὶ αὐτῶι παριόντι ἐπεβουλεῦσαι ἠθέλησε. συστάσης οὖν αὐτοῖς μάχης ἐφυγάδευσεν Ἡρακλῆς, συμβαλλομένου Ἄρεος τῶι παιδὶ Κύκνωι. ἀλλ' ὕστερον Ἡρακλῆς καὶ τοῦτον ἀπέκτεινε. Στησίχορος ἐν τῶι ἐπιγραφομένωι Κύκνωι ἱστορεῖ.

of their skulls. As Heracles approaches his home, Cycnus attacks and puts him to flight with the assistance of his father Ares. Later, however, Heracles encounters Cycnus alone, and defeats him. The scholia provide a further detail, unattributed to any poet: Athena causes the fleeing Heracles to recover his valour.[4] Since this fits what seems to be a distinctive element of Stesichorus' version of the myth, and since the Pindaric scholia to this poem are already known to cite Stesichorus' poem, we may infer that this detail too is taken from Stesichorus.

The myth of Heracles and Cycnus was extremely popular in archaic art: so popular that it has recently merited an Italian monograph of no fewer than 665 pages.[5] The epic *Thebaid* makes reference to a version of the story; in the course of an account of the history of Adrastus' horse Arion, it describes how Heracles rode the steed to victory against Cycnus in a horse-race in the sanctuary of Pagasaean Apollo.[6] But in its most famous occurrence, the meeting of Heracles and Cycnus is entirely violent. In the *Aspis* attributed to Hesiod, Heracles and Iolaus are travelling to Trachis when they encounter Cycnus and his father Ares, who are mounted on chariots, in the sanctuary of Apollo at Pagasae. Cycnus prays to Apollo to help him kill Heracles, but so far from listening to his request, the god urges on the son of Zeus to attack him. A conversation between Heracles and Iolaus is followed by the arming of the former; the description of his shield forms the longest section of the poem. As Iolaus drives Heracles into battle on a chariot drawn by Arion, Athena prophesies his victory against Cycnus and advises him on to deal with Ares. Heracles warns Cycnus not to fight with him, but to no effect; a succession of similes marks the beginning of the conflict. Cycnus' spear-cast is warded off by the great shield, and Heracles kills him with a blow under the chin. Now Ares enters the fray, again to the accompaniment of similes. Athena fails to persuade him to withdraw; she then assists her protégé by taking the force from the god's spear, which falls harmlessly on Heracles' shield. As earlier instructed by Athena, Heracles strikes Ares under his shield, on his thigh; Phobos and Deimos take up their wounded master into their chariot and transport him to Olympus. Heracles despoils Cycnus and travels on to Trachis. The king of that city, Ceyx, buries Cycnus, but his tomb was later washed away by the river Anaurus. This was Apollo's punishment, because Cycnus used to rob pilgrims of their offerings on the way to Delphi.

Thanks to the Pindaric scholia, we are in a position to compare at least the broad narrative outline of Stesichorus' poem with that of the *Aspis*. We do not know which poem was written first. The Argument to the *Aspis* claims that Stesichorus said that the poem was by Hesiod.[7] This information may involve reckless inference from some aspect of Stesichorus' treatment of the same myth; we cannot be certain that Stesichorus actually referred to the poem as Hesiod's. But it at least suggests that Stesichorus' account came later. We might think of the papyrus which describes how Stesichorus blamed Homer in one of his *Palinodes*, Hesiod in the other:[8] whether or not Stesichorus actually named these poets, this still implies that he drew attention in some way to his own distinctive treatment of myth. It seems more likely than not that Stesichorus' poem came after the Hesiodic *Aspis*.

The most obvious difference between the two versions is the flight of Heracles. This apparently trivial detail is significant from the point of view of the poem's narrative. In the *Aspis* the encounter between Heracles and Cycnus is brief in the extreme – merely two blows.[9] The poet's emphasis falls instead on the arming before the battle, and in particular on a single piece of Heracles' gear: ecphrasis takes priority over narrative. Stesichorus makes the battle more interesting by incorporating a reversal of fortune. Such a simple choice may not immediately seem like a stroke of narrative genius. Yet it allows the poet considerably more scope for a sophisticated structure: say, something like the following. Heracles sets out to kill Cycnus, and is confident of victory against him. But the intervention of Cycnus' father makes the battle more evenly matched, and in the end fighting against the god is too much even for Heracles. He retreats, but the goddess Athena appears to him (perhaps spontaneously, perhaps in answer to his prayer), revives his valour, and tells him how he can attack Cycnus without his father intervening.[10] This may involve some form of trickery on Heracles' part, or Athena herself may ensure that Ares is kept out of the fight. The climactic encounter ensues, and this time Heracles is victorious.

Such a narrative may not be complicated enough: Stesichorus could have introduced still more twists in the plot in his quest for an interesting story. But the key factor was probably his decision to have Heracles retreat,

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[4] Stes. fr. 167 F. Ἡρακλέα τραπέντα ἀνέρρωσεν ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ.
[5] Zardini (2009).   [6] *Thebaid* fr. 11 GEF.

[7] Stes. fr. 168 F.   [8] *Ibid.* fr. 90.1–6.
[9] 'As often in epic combat narrative, actual encounters are exceedingly terse' (ADK).
[10] Compare how in the *Iliad* Diomedes prays to Athena after being wounded; she heals and encourages him, and advises him on how to deal with the gods on the field of battle (5.114–32); a similar pattern occurs a few hundred lines later (793–836).

which allows (or rather, requires) considerable narrative elaboration, as well as, perhaps, a greater level of characterisation. The audience sees Heracles' reactions to good and bad fortune, making him potentially a figure of greater depth. Narrative variation and depth of characterisation thereby replace the massive ecphrasis which so dominated the epic *Aspis* to the exclusion of these other aspects. *Mutatis mutandis*, we might compare how Euripides and Sophocles, faced with the problem of how to react to Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* when writing their *Electra* plays, omitted the great static *kommos* scene and instead placed greater emphasis on the psychology of a character comparatively neglected by Aeschylus. So too the long description of the individual warriors and their shields in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* is conspicuously omitted by Euripides in his *Phoenissae*.[11]

Heracles' victory against Cycnus at the second attempt is paralleled in several myths when he has to return to a foe to defeat him, usually with a bigger force.[12] His escape from Cycnus does not brand him as a coward, given Ares' support for his son. In *Nemean One* Pindar excuses Amphiaraus' flight during the assault on Thebes by noting that 'amid panics caused by divinity, even the sons of gods take flight'.[13] In the *Iliad* Aeneas, son of Aphrodite, retreats from Achilles, blaming the gods' favouritism.[14] In general, prudent warriors avoided conflict with divinity, as Diomedes notes in *Iliad* 6, admittedly after recently violating this very principle by fighting Ares and Aphrodite.[15] Stesichorus may have portrayed Heracles' flight as a deliberate tactic to encourage Cycnus to pursue and thus separate himself from his father. This is unlikely, however, if Athena's intervention (mentioned above) is Stesichorean: a Heracles sufficiently self-possessed to engage in such calculation would not have needed a goddess to restore his fighting spirit. Athena's involvement would give the fight a pleasing symmetry: at

first Heracles is driven back by Cycnus assisted by Ares, before he encounters his own divine supporter and vanquishes his foe.

Thebais

Let us now turn to the fragment of the poem preserved on the Lille papyrus, and which for want of a better name I will call the *Thebais*.[16] This fragment describes a single key event in the Theban myth: the division of Oedipus' property by lot between his sons Eteocles and Polynices. The extant part of Stesichorus' poem begins at line 176 and ends at line 303, although almost no text is preserved until line 201. Before the beginning of the papyrus, Tiresias prophesies a grim future for the two princes: conflict over the succession will lead to their mutual slaughter. The Queen then delivers a speech of which thirty-one lines are preserved, but which may be much longer. She urges on her sons the uncertainty of the future and the mutability of mortal affairs, and prays that the gods will not fulfil all Tiresias' predictions. She proposes that one brother should rule the city, while the other takes Oedipus' property and departs.

After the Queen's speech, Tiresias supports her proposal, and her sons obey: a section of some fourteen lines repeats in more elaborate form the division advocated by the Queen. The actual sortition lasts only half as long; Eteocles is evidently the winner. There follows a substantial speech from Tiresias, of thirty-eight lines. The division features again here: perhaps the seer orders the brothers to abide by their agreement. He also refers to Polynices' future connexion with Adrastus, king of Argos. After the speech Polynices swiftly departs, and the final thirteen lines of the papyrus describe his journey into the Peloponnese as far as Cleonae.

This substantial fragment allows us some ground from which to speculate about the rest of the content of the poem; having done that, I will consider the style and pacing of the narrative in the fragment that actually survives.

So, first, the content. It has been noted that the Queen's speech probably begins shortly before line 201, because the strong negative commands in 201–3 probably come towards the start of what she has to say.[17] Allowing,

[11] See Eur. *Phoen.* 751–2. For this issue, see Mastronarde (1994) *ad loc.*, Torrance (2013) 102–4.

[12] I owe this point to Malcolm Davies. So, e.g., Laomedon denies Heracles his wages for building the walls of Troy, and so he returns later with an army and sacks the city (Hom. *Il.* 5.638–42, 648–51, Finglass (2011) on Soph. *Aj.* 434–6, Apollod. 2.5.9, 2.6.4); Heracles gets into a fight with the Meropes on Cos and is forced to flee from their superior numbers (λέγεται τῶι πλήθει καταπονούμενος … καταφυγεῖν) before returning to defeat them (Plut. *Quaest. Gr.* 304de; the source is late, but the myth may have been pre-Stesichorean). Cf. Archil. fr. 259 *IEG*, Pher. fr. 79a *EGM* with Fowler (II §8.4.2), Paus. Att. ο 30 (p. 201 Erbse) οὐδὲ Ἡρακλῆς πρὸς δύο, π 32 (p. 205 Erbse), Davies (2004) 35.

[13] Pind. *N.* 9.27 ἐν γὰρ δαιμονίοισι φόβοις φεύγοντι καὶ παῖδες θεῶν.

[14] Hom. *Il.* 20.89–102, 188–94 and cf. *Cypria* arg. 11 *GEF*, compared by Braswell (1998) on Pind. *N.* 9.27.

[15] Hom. *Il.* 6.128–41; at 5.129–32 Diomedes had been given permission by Athena to attack Aphrodite. For epic and elegiac attitudes to flight, see further Swift (2012) 147–51 (discussing among other texts the Archilochus Telephus elegy, P.Oxy. 4708).

[16] Stes. fr. 97.

[17] Cf. Maingon (1989) 49: 'it is possible that the beginning of the speech lies not much before line 201, given that … it is common for epic speeches to commence with a strong prohibition or negative statement concerning an adverse situation that requires correction.' In support of this view, Hutchinson (2001) compares lines 201–3 with the negative imperatives at fr. 15.5–7 F., from the start of Geryon's reply to his mother. This is not to say that imperatives occur only at

say, only five more lines for the Queen's speech beyond what is preserved on the papyrus, and, say, thirty for Tiresias', that leaves just 165 lines at the beginning of the work, some of which will have been taken up by the proem and scene-setting.[18] Under the latter heading, the audience would need information about the parentage of Oedipus' sons and the disasters that had befallen his family; Stesichorus will have had to indicate in some way at a relatively early stage the version of the myth that he has chosen from the competing variants. It is here that the identity of the Queen will have been clarified: is the mother of Oedipus' children also Oedipus' mother, or a woman whom he marries after his mother's suicide?[19] The latter option seems much more likely.[20] It is improbable that an archaic poet could have portrayed a woman who had committed incest (albeit unknowingly) exercising moral and/or political authority within the state: this is Stesichorus, not Euripides.[21] Here too the audience will have learned about Oedipus' death. This would provide impetus for the plot, immediately presenting the characters with an insoluble dilemma: which of the two ambitious sons is to succeed their father? Oedipus is unlikely to have appeared as a character, however, as opposed to being mentioned in the narrative or by the characters. If he had, he would have had to appear on his deathbed, delivering a final speech; such a speech would have expressed anger against his sons, perhaps including a paternal curse. This would have overshadowed Tiresias' prophecy to an unacceptable degree; in particular, it would be odd for the Queen to refer only to Tiresias' words and not to Oedipus'.[22]

Tiresias may have been summoned to the palace to give advice, as in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, or he may have come of his own volition, as in *Antigone*. Whichever is the case, the ferocity of his prophecies surprises and distresses the Queen: her sons are to die at each other's hands, and the city is to be captured.[23] The readiness with which the brothers accept the division of property proposed by her and supported by Tiresias suggests that their enmity is not yet at irrational levels. They are still capable of reaching an agreement, temporary though it will turn out to be.

By the end of the fragment, the poem is little more than 300 lines old, and Polynices has only just left Thebes. It is hard to imagine that the work as a whole was shorter than, say, 1,000 lines, and it was probably much longer.[24] Polynices' arrival at Argos was presumably followed by his encounter with Adrastus, and with his daughter. This was probably a major episode in the work: Polynices' arrival in Argos will have contrasted with his *de facto* banishment from Thebes. At some point between Polynices' reception at Argos and his decision to muster an army against his native city, the agreement between him and Eteocles must have broken down. The reason for this is unknown. Polynices may have chafed at losing out to his brother; or Eteocles may have withheld some part of Oedipus' possessions, whether the flocks and herds, or the cup of Laius,[25] or some other item, and thus provoked an attack;[26] or he may have been persuaded by an ambitious Adrastus or by Tydeus.[27]

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the start of speeches; but the Queen's forceful response to Tiresias will not have long delayed her contradiction of his prophecy.

[18] Cf. fr. 100 (the start of the *Sack of Troy*), where the invocation to the Muse takes up the first eight lines, and where by line 20 only one piece of the plot, Athena's appearance to Epeius, is in place; and frr. 172–3 (from the opening of the *Oresteia*), where the poet's introduction of his poem lasts at least into the first antistrophe.

[19] This point must have been made clear early on; it has a fundamental impact on the nature of the Queen's relationship with her sons, and thus on her response to Tiresias.

[20] The former option is not attested before Pherecydes (fr. 95 *EGM*), where however the four children who are the products of incest (with his wife and mother Jocasta) do not include Polynices and Eteocles; Pherecydes makes these his offspring from a subsequent marriage, to Euryganea. The latter option is implied by Hom. *Od.* 11.271–80, where Oedipus' wife and mother Epicaste kills herself shortly after her marriage (see Finglass (2014c)), and is explicit in the *Oedipodea* (fr. 1 *GEF*) and the Pisander scholium (*PEG* I 17–19), which, like Pherecydes, make Euryganea the mother of Eteocles and Polynices.

[21] See further Finglass (2014c); contrast the presentation of Jocasta in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, compared with Stesichorus' Queen by Finglass (forthcoming 1).

[22] Cf. Burnett (1988) 111: 'it is plain that no curse is in question, for it is specifically Teiresias's prophecy ... not some damaging word from Oedipus, that the queen hopes to render ineffective.'

[23] Lines 211–17; thus MacInnes (2007) 98. The disjunction at 216–17 does not mean that Tiresias predicted that either the brothers would die or the city would be captured, but that for the Queen, seeing either of these events, which were both predicted by Tiresias, would be equally abhorrent.

[24] Burnett (1988) 111 claims that 'the storytelling part of the poem finds its formal termination in the notion of Polyneices' arrival in the city of the Seven [*sic*: not all the Seven were from Argos]. And if this is so, then the poem too is probably near its end. A prayer for divine favor, some praise of a present occasion, and the music can cease.' But this would be a bizarre place to end a work – at least, a work by an archaic rather than a postmodernist poet. It is not so much that the plot is incomplete (since from at least the *Iliad* onwards poets did end works in counterintuitive places), as the fact that nothing significant has happened yet; there has been almost no development of either the characters or the plot. A poem as short as the one that Burnett posits would also be inconsistent with what we know about the length of Stesichorus' works: the *Geryoneis* lasted at least 1,300 lines, and the *Helen* and *Oresteia* both took up at least two books in the Alexandrian edition. As for the closing prayer and/or praise that Burnett posits, we do not have the ending of any Stesichorean poem and so cannot comment on whether such material featured in the conclusions to his works.

[25] Thus Robertson (1986) 50.

[26] Line 283 can be restored so that Tiresias warns Eteocles to respect Polynices' portion, which would suggest that he later fails to do so; but the supplement is far from certain.

[27] I owe this suggestion to Alan Sommerstein; persuasion of Polynices by Tydeus is implied in Aesch. *Sept.* 570–5.

The actual siege by the Seven will have been the climax of the poem. Let us put this the other way round – is it possible to imagine the poem finishing before Polynices launches his attack? Hardly – it would be bizarre to have all these warnings from Tiresias, and the Queen's impassioned pleas, only for the work to break off before we witness the fight and its consequences, however these were actually described. Nor is it clear where any earlier end point would fall. We may guess that the poet paid attention to both perspectives during the attack: that of the Argive attackers (whom the audience will have got to know in the scenes involving Polynices and Adrastus) and of the Theban defenders (Stesichorus will not have neglected the impact of the war on the Queen, whose anguish over the potential conflict between her sons is so movingly portrayed in our fragment). Speculation beyond this point is unfruitful: for example, we have no way of knowing whether figures like Tydeus, Capaneus, and Amphiaraus were prominent in Stesichorus' narrative.

If the above suppositions are correct, the basic plot will have shown similarities to, and differences from, that of the epic *Thebaid*. Both poems describe how the enmity between Oedipus' sons leads to the destruction of Thebes. But Stesichorus' poem will have begun at a later stage than the epic does: after the death of Oedipus. Moreover, his focus is not on any curses uttered by Oedipus against his sons, but on the dire prophecies of Tiresias. These crucial differences suggest that Stesichorus' poem was no mere lyric version of the epic, and there were no doubt more differences in the parts that we lack.

Since the papyrus is the longest individual fragment of Stesichorus' poetry, it affords us a valuable chance to appreciate his poetic technique. In particular, we can observe the interplay between speech and narrative. In 103 lines (i.e., from 201 until 303), there are fully 69 lines of speech: 66 per cent of the surviving text. This exceeds the proportion of speech found in the Homeric poems, which is 55 per cent in all (45 per cent in the *Iliad*, 67 per cent in the *Odyssey*).[28] The speeches cover a range of emotions. Tiresias' speech before the start of the fragment is presumably horrifyingly certain in its predictions. The Queen passionately rejects Tiresias' prophecy, employing strong imperatives and a forceful statement about the nature of the universe in order to deny his version of the future (201–8). But her prayer to Apollo to avert Tiresias' predictions (209–10), and her claim that she would prefer death

to seeing the mutual slaughter of her sons (211–17), indicate that she is far from certain that Tiresias is wrong. In the final part of the speech (218–31) she sets out her plan to avoid the evils prophesied by Tiresias;[29] she relies not on prayers (which might not be answered), or overconfidence (which would be misplaced), but on a practical plan aimed at preventing the conflict.[30] Her words recall Homeric speeches where an initial problem is set out and the speaker then proposes what can be done about it.[31] Throughout she is direct and focused; the speech has no digressions, despite its length, as if to emphasise the gravity of the situation, the intensity of her emotion, and the efficient manner in which she acts on that feeling.[32]

Tiresias' subsequent speech (254–90) is mostly lost, but seems to have offered a more hopeful version of the future than his earlier contribution. He predicts Polynices' favourable reception in Argos (254–80), and, perhaps, warns one or both of the brothers to abide by the agreement (281–90). The irony is that, despite the Queen's wise proposal and Tiresias' support for it, Tiresias' original prophecy will hold: the subsequent elaborate speeches might just as well not have been delivered.

Despite the high proportion of speech in the fragment, a surprising amount of action takes place: the agreement to divide the property by sortition, the sortition itself, and reaction to it, including Polynices' departure and journey into the Peloponnese. All these events are covered in merely thirty-four lines. Someone less concerned with speeches could easily have described them in greater detail; the absence of such detail reflects the poet's choice.

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[*] Burnett (1988) 112 and Massimilla (1990a), elaborating Peron (1979) 81–2, argue that the Queen's sortition proposal was inspired by a dream from Zeus, but this is unlikely. Such a dream would have allowed her to counter Tiresias' prophecy with greater confidence, and would have been mentioned in what survives of her speech.

[*] Maingon (1989) 51–2 compares exchanges in Homer such as *Il.* 18.249–309, where Polydamas' anticipation of disaster unless the Trojans retreat is contemptuously dismissed by Hector. But there Polydamas' prediction is conditional, and he himself offers an escape route from disaster; Hector rejects his judgement. The Queen is faced by an unconditional prophecy of woe; her reaction is not simply to silence Tiresias (despite 201–3), but to offer an apparent way out of future trouble. Therefore she does not show the arrogance and foolhardiness that make Hector an unattractive character at this point. Cf. MacInnes (2007) 99: 'although [the Queen] attempts to silence the prophet, she does not chide him, as Agamemnon does Calchas ..., nor bully him, as Hector does Polydamas ... Instead she will attempt to seduce him and the audience with her logic.'

[*] Thus Maingon (1989) 50–1, citing Hom. *Il.* 12.61–79 (Polydamas' plan for crossing the ditch).

[*] Cf. Burnett (1988) 113: 'the lines reflect the mental dynamism of a woman engaged in making a crucial decision while under the pressure of strongest emotion.' Contrast Maingon (1989) 52, who goes too far in attributing to the Queen 'a confidence, perhaps hybristic, that her solution will prevail' and in claiming 'there is no element of pathos here'.

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[28] For the figures, see Griffin (1986) 37, citing Schmid (1929) 92–3 n. 7. The figure for the *Odyssey* includes Odysseus' *Apologoi*, four books consisting almost wholly of speech.

If the restriction of narrative proper to a third of the total is surprising, so is the pacing of that narrative. A significant section merely repeats and elaborates content from the Queen's speech concerning the proposed division. A key point of the plot, the moment of sortition, is covered in almost no time at all. There is barely any description of the brothers' emotional reactions to Eteocles' success: the loser, it seems, merely leaps up in annoyance. Thus line 251, perhaps to be restored along the lines 'Polynices' lot leapt out of the helmet, and he himself jumped up in anger'.[33] By contrast, Polynices' journey south attracts considerable detail; the names of the towns through which he travels are lavished on the audience, despite the relative lack of importance of such information. Polynices' decision to accept the result of the sortition, and his emotional state as he leaves, go unelaborated.

More generally, the brothers appear strangely passive throughout. The speeches are delivered by Tiresias (before the start of the fragment), by the Queen, and then by Tiresias again. One or both of the brothers may have spoken before Tiresias' first speech, but there is no guarantee of this; the poem may reach its 300th line without either actually saying anything. They meekly acquiesce in the suggestions made by their elders.

Without the rest of the poem, it is impossible to explain the unusual content and pacing of the fragment. It is possible that Stesichorus is simply a bad poet (or that this is not one of his better works); that he has failed to note the capacity of his subject-matter to generate interest and emotion in his audience. But it is also possible to imagine why Stesichorus chose to write this section in the way that he did. The swift acquiescence of the brothers in their mother's proposal, so swift that it does not even require words, may contrast with later recriminations and insults during their conflict over the city. Silent for now, the pair will later be only too voluble. Similarly, their current extreme passivity will yield to a headstrong rush to battle. Perhaps they will ignore their mother's later pleas for them to come to terms, just as they now obey her suggestions unquestioningly. The rapid agreement might also underscore the irony of the situation: a problem that appears to have been solved with surprising ease will turn out to be fatal. In other words, the explanation for the brothers' lack of prominence in this fragment may lie in the shaping of the poem as a whole. This is necessarily speculative; but it is worth speculating if the alternative is to assume that the unusual features of our fragment are merely the result of Stesichorean incompetence.

Helen

We turn finally to the *Helen*. This poem is almost always considered alongside the *Palinode* or *Palinodes*, because of the fascinating problems involved in Stesichorus' apparent retraction of his earlier work.[34] Such investigation is important, but it has diverted scholars from considering the *Helen* as an independent lyric in its own right. This was a long poem, taking up at least two books of the Alexandrian edition. The wedding of Helen and Menelaus, which probably concluded with an epithalamium song (fr. 84 F.), took place in the first book; here too probably occurred the joyful procession which presumably came from the account of the ceremony (fr. 88). From fragments not specifically attributed to the *Helen*, but likely to have appeared there on grounds of sense, we learn that Helen's father, Tyndareus, forgot to make offerings to Aphrodite at a sacrifice, thereby incurring the goddess's wrath, which manifested itself in the affliction of his daughters with promiscuity (fr. 85); that the young Helen bore Iphigenia to Theseus after being abducted by him, gave Iphigenia to her sister Clytemnestra to adopt, and was rescued by her brothers, the Dioscuri (fr. 86); and that Tyndareus forced Helen's suitors to swear to help her husband, whosoever that should be, to rescue her if she was abducted after her marriage (fr. 87). These fragments are probably from the first book, since they refer to events that occur before the wedding.

The poem also featured Helen's abduction by Paris and arrival at Troy, as we can infer from the likely relationship between the *Helen* and the *Palinodes* (since the latter explicitly rejects Helen's arrival at Troy, the former is likely to have included that very element of the myth). The reference to the suitors' oaths supports this reconstruction, since in narrative terms their mention makes it likely that they will have to be acted upon, rather than simply featuring as a loose end. Perhaps the first book finished with Helen's marriage, with the second describing her seduction by Paris: a wedding would make a suitable point for a Hellenistic editor to insert a book division, but that is just an educated guess. According to several sources, Stesichorus offended Helen by his portrayal, and wrote a *Palinode* ('Retraction-song') by way of apology, in which he denied that Helen ever came to Troy. The poem which featured the original offence is never specified, but the *Helen* is overwhelmingly the most likely candidate.[35] Indeed, it is probably not

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[33] Thus Finglass (2013b). Bakker (2012) argues that the lot itself is the subject of the verb ἀνέθορεν, but then αὐτός is hard to understand: what does 'the lot itself' mean?

[34] See Kelly (2007c), although I do not follow him in every detail; see Davies and Finglass (2014) *ad loc.*

[35] Of other possibilities among titles known to us, the *Oresteia* is not likely to have concentrated on Helen's wickedness when Clytemnestra's would make a more relevant target; and the *Sack of Troy* contained too much other material for Helen's offence to have been especially prominent.

named in our sources because they already mention Helen when describing Stesichorus' offence, and so adding the homonymous title would seem unnecessary.

Hence the *Helen* covered many episodes in the life of the protagonist: her father's incurring of the disfavour of Aphrodite, her abduction by Theseus and giving birth to Iphigenia, her wooing by the suitors, her marriage to Menelaus, her abduction by Paris, her journey from Sparta, and her arrival at Troy. The beginning of the effort to recover Helen is likely to have featured too. The suitors who swore the oath were presumably asked to act on it, and the reference to the young Iphigenia would be more effective if the sacrifice was to feature somehow; both of these point to the inclusion of the troops' mustering at Aulis. It is conceivable that the poem then briefly covered the Trojan War, the death of Paris, Helen's marriage to Deiphobus, and her recovery by Menelaus. This would involve a marvellously swift account of an entire conflict after Homer had devoted a lengthy epic to a tiny part of it, and would contrast not only with Homer's already classic version, but also with the detailed account of Helen's early life in Stesichorus' own poem. Nevertheless, we cannot rule it out – we have already seen how in terms of pacing Stesichorus can surprise us. Alternatively, Stesichorus brought the story to an end not long after the arrival at Troy of Helen, or of the Greek forces. That would not be such a natural end point for the story, but would allow for a more manageable poetic prospectus, and so is probably the likelier option.

Enough content survives to suggest some broader narrative principles.[36] Through her three lovers, Theseus, Menelaus, and Paris, Helen's sexual experience encompasses the pre-marital, the marital, and the extra-marital.[37] Her legitimate relationship with her husband is thus balanced by less salubrious relationships both before and after her wedding. But these two other associations are not exactly parallel. In the case of the former, Helen's culpability is partially limited because of her youth,[38] and the

conflict that directly results from her rape is brief and small scale (although see below for the role of Iphigenia at the beginning of a much greater war). The latter, by contrast, involves the adult Helen's willing participation in the act of seduction, as well as a breach of the marriage contract and the laws of hospitality; and her departure for Troy precipitates the greatest war of the age of heroes. The former event thus foreshadows the latter, which in turn takes up and intensifies motifs first found earlier in the poem; Helen's precocity portends her later immoral conduct.[39] The placing of the two affairs on either side of her union with Menelaus allows for a still more elaborate development: through her marriage, Helen seems at first to have recovered from her youthful escapade, only to fall subsequently into a much graver offence. The impressive detail of the wedding pageant would have been heavy with irony: what was intended as the beginning of a new life for Helen would turn out to be merely a temporary respite in her colourful career.

Such narrative foreshadowing, which ensures that Helen's abandonment of her husband takes place within a broader framework, is visible in other ways. The emphasis on Tyndareus' forgetfulness and its effects on his daughters prepares us for a narrative centred on a woman of easy virtue. So too the oath that Tyndareus makes the suitors swear both makes sense after her abduction by Theseus, and anticipates her elopement with Paris. The two episodes show contrasting sides to Tyndareus: his initial lapse of memory causes disaster, but his forethought will in time help to avert the consequences of that catastrophe. At the same time, that 'averting of the consequences' (i.e., the recovery of Helen) leads to unimaginably greater suffering for Greeks and Trojans alike, and an even more appalling loss of reputation for his daughter; from this perspective, then, we see 'not so much contrasting sides, but continuity in error: indeed, the deepening of its consequences, despite his attempts to obviate them'.[40]

This intriguing relationship between father and daughter may have been paralleled by the relationship between Helen and her daughter, Iphigenia. As argued above, the sacrifice of the latter may well have occurred in the poem; the unusual account of Iphigenia's parentage suggests that she is being included in the work for some definite purpose, not as a narrative dead end. Tragedy would later exploit the horrific paradox that one sister's

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[36] See Finglass (2013c) 46–7.

[37] The combination of lovers is paralleled by the *Cypria*, but that poem may be later than Stesichorus: West (2013) 63–5 suggests a date between 580 and 550 (West (2012) 228, 240, a paper written six years before West (2013), had put it as late as 520 on linguistic grounds), whereas Finglass (2014a) 1–6 argues that poems by Stesichorus might date to any time between 610 and 540. Moreover, it was so full of different events and narrative lines that any shaping would have been tricky.

[38] Stesichorus' Helen is at least old enough to bear a child to Theseus, contrary to other accounts which make her a child at the time of the abduction (e.g. Hellan. fr. 168b *EGM*, Diod. 4.63.2, Apollod. *Ep.* 1.23). This fact, together with the double standard which ensured that women were judged more harshly than men in matters of sexual morality, makes it likely that she incurred at least some blame for the incident.

[39] This may in fact 'increase the likelihood that Stesichorus is not trying to exculpate Helen's earlier encounter with Theseus because of her youth, by in effect showing that her behaviour after marriage was foreshadowed by her earlier escapade' (ADK).

[40] Thus ADK.

crime led to the killing of the other sister's daughter, and that a father had to sacrifice his daughter to recover his brother's wife.[41] Stesichorus confronts his audience with a story at least as disturbing. A daughter is sacrificed in order to recover her adulterous mother; that daughter is herself the product of a precocious and premarital relationship on her mother's part. The fruits of one offence are thus offered up to deal with the consequences of another. A woman doomed to promiscuity by the sin of her father herself dooms her offspring by still more culpable misconduct.[42] The line of moral causation is more direct than in tragedy: 'Helen's offence means that Helen's daughter (and presumably Helen herself as the mother) pays the price'.[43]

Such preparation gives welcome shaping to the narrative, but in addition encourages consideration of the moral issues at stake. To what extent has Tyndareus doomed his daughter by his conduct? Is this a case not so much of foreshadowing as of predestination? Is Aphrodite herself to blame, for an excessive and mistargeted response to Tyndareus' offence, and for (we may presume) assisting Paris to win Helen from her husband? How does the relationship between Tyndareus and Helen compare to that between Helen and Iphigenia? Stesichorus is unlikely to have presented Helen as beyond reproach; but we need not assume that his portrayal was as biased against her as is implied by accounts of the composition of the *Palinode*. On the contrary, the remains of the *Helen* suggest a work of considerable sophistication in terms of both narrative and ethics.

Conclusion

The great majority of the poems discussed in this chapter has been lost, never to be recovered. But in each case, enough survives to allow some controlled speculation concerning the content and shaping of the works in question. This analysis sheds light on how Stesichorus organises his poems in order to achieve particular literary effects, and on themes and characterisation within those poems. If at least some of the hypotheses ventured in this chapter are not far from the truth, we can perhaps agree that Stesichorus' lengthy narratives deserve a more positive assessment than Quintilian's often quoted remark *redundat atque effunditur*.[44]

By way of a codicil, it is worth emphasising that papyrus evidence survives for only one of the three poems discussed in this chapter. The Lille papyrus is a great boon for anyone interested in Stesichorean narrative, as are the other papyri; but the poems attested only in quotations remain a rich hunting-ground. This may sound paradoxical, since the latter fragments have been available to scholars for centuries, and are less extensive than the papyri. Yet they have often been neglected by scholars investigating Stesichorus' literary qualities, and are largely unfamiliar to scholars working in other areas of the subject whose expertise might shed light on their interpretation. Sometimes the glamour of new papyri can unfairly outshine the treasure to be found in the fragments that we already have.

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[41] See Finglass (2007) on Soph. *El.* 539, referring to Eur. *El.* 1041–5, *Or.* 658–9, *IA* 1201–2.
[42] Cf. Grossardt (2012) 10 with Finglass (2013d).
[43] Thus ADK.   [44] Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.62 = Stes. Tb42 Ercoles.