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GERYON THE HERO, HERAKLES THE GOD

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Abstract: This paper re-evaluates the narrative roles occupied by Geryon and Herakles in Stesichoros' *Geryoneis* in the light of contemporary thinking about Herakles' apotheosis. It proposes that Stesichoros activates his audience's awareness of Herakles' fated divinity in order to reframe the hero versus monster encounter not as a duel between two mortal heroes – the usual interpretation – but as a showdown between a hero and a god. This reorientation destabilizes an audience's sympathies and self-identification, forcing a re-evaluation of the nature of both heroism and humanity. Following a discussion of the potential narrative roles in play, the prominence of Herakles' apotheosis in the sixth century and its salience for Stesichoros' audience is established. The apotheosis is then applied as a complementary lens to the long-recognized Iliadic intertexts in a reinterpretation of the encounter between Geryon and Herakles on Erytheia. Finally, the use of the apotheosis as a lens for interpreting two fragments beyond Erytheia is considered.

Keywords: Stesichoros, Geryon, Herakles, apotheosis, heroism

What could possibly be the point of representing a monster in such a favorable light?
Is this simply Stesichorean fantasy?
Maria Noussia-Fantuzzi[1]

I. Orientation

The protagonist of Stesichoros' *Geryoneis* is, with apologies to Pindar, a ἥρως τέρας: a hero-monster.[2] Equipped with an excessive supply of body parts – three heads, three sets of limbs and wings for good measure – he also possesses a noble soul and a robust code of honour. In this mash-up of form and philosophy, Stesichoros' Geryon confounds two classes regularly deployed to orient an audience's sympathies and self-identification: a hero is like us, a monster is not.[3] The confusion of usually well-defined and mutually exclusive categories is, moreover, a quality he shares with his opponent, Herakles, whose movement from humanity to divinity provoked the original Pindaric designation of ἥρως θέος.[4] Between the two of them, Stesichoros' antagonists bring three potential narrative roles into play: monster, hero and god.[5]

Despite this potentially fertile stew of conflicting identities, Herakles' divine aspect has been neglected. While interpreters have long been fascinated by the tension between Geryon's familiarizing heroism and alienating monstrosity,[6] Herakles' heroic identity has been widely received as a fixed point which anchors Stesichoros' unexpected narrative.[7] On these readings, Geryon's

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[1] Noussia-Fantuzzi (2013) 237.

[2] I use τέρας here with an emphasis on its Greek valences of hybridity and disorder, with due recognition that neither it nor any other Greek word maps simply onto our 'monster'. On the problem of Greek monster terminology, see Baglioni (2013).

[3] *Cf.* Buxton (1994) 205–06.

[4] Pind. *Nem.* 3.22. On Herakles' complicated identity in myth and ritual, see Stafford (2005).

[5] I use these categories not to indicate a self-evident (much less universalizing) division of beings in the world, but as a set of heuristic categories at work in Greek literature and thought, and thus available for manipulation: *cf.* Clay (1993) on monsters in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

[6] A lens which is potentially useful for new historical and colonial readings – for example Franzen (2009); Noussia-Fantuzzi (2013) – but should not be the end of the story.

[7] For example Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990); Rozokoki (2009); Lu (2013), who all analyse the ethical and situational distinctions between the two figures but nonetheless begin from the premise of Herakles' status as human champion.

unlooked-for heroization shifts the generic expectations that frame the fight: a Heraklean exploit at the end of the world becomes an epic battle between two champions. This approach rightly accepts Stesichoros' invitation to epic play, but it does not push the implications of that invitation far enough. By diminishing or disregarding the potential divine identity that Herakles introduces into the mix, we misread the stakes of the showdown and dodge a question at the heart of Stesichoros' narrative: what if the monster is the only hero on the field?

My reading positions fragments of the *Geryoneis* at the intersection of intertext and cultural context in order to show that an engagement with the latter necessarily reshapes our understanding of the former. Since the extant fragments of the *Geryoneis* constitute a tiny percentage of the original text, caution is required to avoid overstepping the limitations of our evidence.[8] Nevertheless, it is worth trying to think about the strategies of the poem as a poem and not only as bits and pieces. Discussions of Iliadic intertexts in Stesichoros have emphasized that we can see our poet adapting Homeric passages with the expectation that his audience will use their knowledge of the source and its narrative context to refine their interpretation of the new poem.[9] This approach helps us to understand the problem of narrative identity and the construction of heroism if we recognize that Stesichoros' Iliadic intertexts cluster around Geryon and contextualize his actions while decontextualizing Herakles'. Their deployment stages an epic battle on the distant shores of Geryon's island, but the imported resonances construct a heroic identity for Geryon alone while challenging the audience to reconceptualize Herakles' role within the new narrative topography. What tools were available for doing so?

I propose that context fills the gaps that intertext leaves. Herakles' apotheosis, famously excluded from the *Iliad* but prominent in literature, art and cult of the sixth century, constitutes a super-salient Heraklean discourse that Stesichoros could activate with a touch so light as to be nearly invisible if we retain our Homeric blinkers. By recognizing the space that Stesichoros makes for his audiences' awareness of apotheosis, however, we can integrate the poem's Iliadic constructions into an appreciation of the complex generic play that Stesichoros deploys in order to work within competing representations of heroism, divinity and humanity.[10] Even as Stesichoros' elaborations of Geryon's unlooked-for humanity shift the monster into the role of the epic hero, the poet's intimations of Herakles' impending immortality disqualify him from that same heroic identity and proleptically manoeuvre him into the status of a god.

Through this musical-chairs approach to available mythical roles, Stesichoros articulates a third potential narrative model: rather than being (a) a hero/monster showdown or (b) a heroes' duel, the battle for Geryon's life becomes (c) a no-exit contest pitting a mortal hero against the implacable power of a god. Thus, Stesichoros' innovation consists not only of rendering Geryon sympathetic but also of 'stranging' Herakles by insisting on the divine aspect of his nature. The effect is nuanced; since Herakles is not yet a god at the time of the encounter, Geryon does not become a Lykourgos-like *theomakhos* brashly setting his own capacities against the might of the divine.[11] The narrative shift renders him something more recognizable: the human actor defined by inextricable aspiration and limitation. By activating Herakles' divinity, then, Stesichoros does not prompt simple pity or even sympathy for Geryon, but a movement into full empathy, forcing his audience to recalibrate their definitions of heroism and humanity.

[8] A new edition and commentary – Davies and Finglass (2014) 243–51 – offers an accessible description of the fragments' survival and arguments for their original order and metrical structure.

[9] A. Kelly argues that in Stesichoros we can see a shift to intertextuality proper as opposed to the deployment of shared motifs that he posits for earlier lyric. He does not, however, endorse all the intertexts that I propose here: Kelly (2015).

[10] De Sanctis (2011) suggests that Hes. *Theog.* 979–83 anticipates the humanizing shift.

[11] Hom. *Il.* 6.128–43.

II. Apotheosis as context

The extant fragments give us no reason to think that Herakles himself is meant to be aware of his fated immortality or even certain of his success against his formidable opponent.[12] It is Stesichoros' framing of the narrative that plays on the audience's expectations of Herakles' success and his ultimate Olympian existence. The animation of this potentially resonant material depends on the relevance and immediacy of the apotheosis motif for the consumers of Stesichoros' composition. The availability of the motif to sixth-century audiences is not in doubt, but it is necessary to recognize its increasing popularity and status as a focus of mythological innovation during this period in order to appreciate its relevance – what we might even call its 'super-salience' – for the *Geryoneis*.

Material evidence reveals a surge of interest in the apotheosis from the second quarter of the sixth century, with Herakles' introduction to Olympos proliferating on vases from about 570 BC to the early fifth century.[13] Representations of Herakles' exploits had been popular from the beginning of mythological representation in Greek art, but prior to the third quarter of the sixth century, visual depictions of the apotheosis are very rare, with a few examples from the end of the seventh century and one potential appearance *ca.* 640.[14] Wildly increased interest in the apotheosis motif develops in the sixth century, mostly on Attic black-figure vases, but also on vases from elsewhere in the Greek world and on the more public medium of a contemporary pediment from the Athenian acropolis.[15] The newly popular motif shows Herakles approaching the home of the gods on foot or on a chariot, usually accompanied by Athena and sometimes other divinities, often coming into Zeus' presence. If we think of the apotheosis as a sort of border crossing, these representations focalize Herakles' experience as immigrant rather than emigrant and emphasize Herakles' integration into the community of the gods as he assumes his own divinity. Pausanias' description of a clearly related scene which he saw in the carvings decorating the Amyklai throne echoes this emphasis; it showed 'Athena leading Herakles to live together with the gods from that point on'.[16] Pausanias' interpretation is necessarily coloured by his own expectations of Heraklean traditions, but the outward-bound nature of the image on the throne, like those on the vases, points to a Heraklean framework available to Stesichoros' audiences that foregrounds the divine terminus of Herakles' trajectory.[17]

The problem of dating the development of Herakles' apotheosis in the literary record is thornier. One line of argument takes it as a product of the sixth century, with the necessary implication that when reference to the event appears in earlier texts, as it does in our *Odyssey*, *Theogony* and Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, we must be dealing with interpolations provoked by the motif's subsequent popularity.[18] On this line of argument, the *Homeric Hymn to Herakles* represents a

[12] Thus Lu (2013) 53.

[13] For overviews, see Schefold (1992) 33–46; Gantz (1993) 461–63; Stafford (2010) 239–44 and *cf.* Stafford (2012) 164–65.

[14] Late seventh/early sixth century: Stafford (2012) 173–74 (Samian krater = *LIMC s.v.* Herakles 3330; Corinthian aryballos = *LIMC* 3331); potential appearance on the Kynosarges Amphora (Athens NM 14497) *ca.* 640: Doronzio (2013).

[15] Black-figure: *LIMC s.v.* Herakles 2847–58, 2877–906 for a selection; Lakonia: NY 50.11.7; Ionian: 'Ricci Hydria' (= *LIMC* 2908); Corinthian (but of uncertain identification): Athens NM (no accession number: *LIMC* 2864); pediment: 'Introduction Pediment' (Akropolis 9). The geographically disparate find-spots of the Attic vases – including, for example, Vulci (*LIMC* 2849, 2851, 2879), Gela (*LIMC* 2857) and Taranto (*LIMC* 2877) – prove the wide dissemination of the motif and may also suggest its popularity.

[16] Paus. 3.18.11: Ἀθηνᾶ δὲ ἄγουσα Ἡρακλέα συνοικήσοντα ἀπὸ τούτου θεοῖς. A representation of the Geryon adventure follows at 3.18.13. The throne is usually dated to the late sixth century: Hurwit (1985) 227 n.26.

[17] In contrast, representations of what we might think of as the 'emigration' side of the story, the departure from mortality, appear via representations of the pyre beginning *ca*. 460: Boardman in *LIMC* s.*v.* Herakles' death and apotheosis; Brommer (1984) 93.

[18] Hom. *Od.* 11.601–04; Hes. *Theog.* 950–55; Hes. *Cat. fr*. 25 M-W. On dates and interpolation, West (1985) dates the *Catalogue* to the sixth century, in part because of Herakles' divinity (130) and takes the *Odyssey* passages as an interpolation 'probably no earlier than the sixth century' (134); Gantz (1993) 463 dates all these elements after the late seventh century.

newly important dichotomy between Herakles' mortal life with all its attendant effort and suffering and his idyllic and enduring existence on Olympos.[19] If the sixth-century apotheosis model is correct, the motif in both visual and literary representations would constitute a newly developed and thus (super-)salient context for Stesichoros' audiences.

An opposing camp, however, understands the apotheosis as part of the earliest mythological traditions about Herakles and argues that its inclusion in or absence from any given literary text is a matter of the poet's choices and attitudes.[20] As Paul Dräger rather acerbically observes, just as no one would expect a poet to say everything he knows, one can also not assume ignorance based on what he does not say.[21] His comment is aimed particularly at the arguments that the apotheosis must be a post-Homeric development because Achilles holds Herakles up as an example of the inevitability of death for even the most powerful hero.[22]

Elton Barker and Joel Christensen have recently taken this very passage as a starting point for an argument about intertraditionality and interformularity in early epic, that is, for seeing competing traditions, or tension between traditions, as important tools for the production of meaning.[23] They propose that Herakles' exemplarity is deployed in the *Iliad* in ways which deform or reform source traditions, drawing attention to the gaps between Herakles' world and the world-view promoted by the *Iliad*. Johannes Haubold takes a related tack when he compares Herakles' appearances in the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue*, arguing that the poems play on different possible views of Herakles – either as agent of cosmic order or as rogue strongman – which depend on the mythical chronology to which they belong. If the world is still wild, Herakles brings order; if we have entered the age of heroes and heroic warfare, he becomes an odd man out.[24] For Haubold, as for Barker and Christensen, this flexibility in Heraklean personae becomes a tool for generic self-definition and intra-generic competition.

This line of argument proves at least as suggestive for my proposal of super-salience; an audience's expectation of this sort of intertraditionality, coupled with the increased popularity of the apotheosis in visual media in the sixth century, prepares them not only to recognize allusions to the motif but also to use those allusions as interpretative tools. It requires no particular stretch of the imagination, moreover, to see Stesichoros inheriting and developing this sort of Heraklean play from the Homeric and Hesiodic poems. The *Geryoneis* is clearly positioned with a foot in each tradition; the *Theogony* is the only extant pre-Stesichorean source for the tradition of Herakles' encounter with Geryon, while the fragments' Iliadic debts (as well as Stesichoros' general tendencies toward Homeric stylings) are inescapable.[25]

It is tempting, then, to see Stesichoros' Heraklean play as a response to and development of the competing traditions articulated by his poetic predecessors.[26] If, instead, Martin West and others are correct and Heraklean traditions were undergoing sixth-century revision to accommodate the new concept of apotheosis, then Stesichoros is participating in a contemporary conversation. In either case, the apotheosis, whether or not it explicitly featured in the *Geryoneis*, certainly framed its contemporary reception. In the remainder of this article I turn to the *Geryoneis* itself in order to re-read the well-read fragments through the proposed lens of Herakles' impending immortality.

[19] *Hymn. Hom.* 15.6–8: πολλὰ μὲν αὐτὸς ἔρεξεν ἀτάσθαλα, πολλὰ δ' ἀνέτλη·/ νῦν δ' ἤδη κατὰ καλὸν ἕδος νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου / ναίει τερπόμενος καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον Ἥβην (He did many reckless deeds and he endured many / and now in the noble seat of snowy Olympos / he dwells delighting and has as wife lovely-ankled Hebe). The dating of the *Hymn* is problematic: Faulkner (2011) 15 commits only to 'probably between ... 700 and 500 BC'.

[20] For example Dräger (1997) 11; Haubold (2005).

[21] Dräger (1997) 10.

[22] Hom. *Il.* 18.117–19.

[23] Barker and Christensen (2014), borrowing terminology from Bakker (2013) 157–69.

[24] Haubold (2005).

[25] Hes. *Theog*. 287–94, 979–83; Stesichoros' Homeric stylings: [Longinus] *Subl.* 13.3; *AP* 9.184.2–3; Dio Chrys. 55.7; and – infamously – Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.62 who sees his potential to be a close rival of Homer if only he could have restrained himself a little.

[26] On the transmission and adaptations of Heraklean myth writ large, see Galinsky (1972).

I deal first with the fragments narrating the build-up to battle and the battle itself in order to argue that the Iliadic framing of the contest activates the play on the potential narrative roles of the two antagonists and constructs a discourse of contrasted heroism and divinity. I then suggest that recognizing the salience of the apotheosis can also help us to perceive a different mode of intertraditionality in two fragments that recount Herakles' activities on his way to Geryon's island and on the road home.

III. Iliadic intertexts: hero versus god

(a) The fragment dubbed 'Geryon's Dilemma' (15 D–F = S11+S31) demonstrates that problems of mortality and immortality were on the mind of both Stesichoros and his Geryon. In response to an apparent (and now lost) assertion by his interlocutor that death is the most likely result of standing up to Herakles,[27] Geryon rejects the appeal to fear and articulates instead a framework of competing ethical models dependent on the issue of his mortality or immortality rather than an emotional reaction to death.

χερσὶν δ[τὸν
δ'ἀπαμ[ειβόμενος
ποτέφᾳ [Χρυσάορος ἀ-
θανάτοιῳ [
"μή μοι θά[νατον
τα δεδίσκ[ε(ο)
μηδε μελ[
αἰ μὲν γὰ[ρ ἀθάνατος
μαι καὶ ἀγή[ραος
ἐν Ὀλύμπ[ωι
κρέσσον[ἐ
λέγχεα δ[
καὶ τ[
κεραϊζομεν
μετέρω[ν
αἰ δ' ὦ φί[λε γῆ-
ρας [ἱκ]ἑσθαι,
ζώ[ει]ν τ' ἐγ ἐ[παμερίοις
θε θ[ε]ῷν μακάρω[ν,
νῦν μοι πο̣λ̣ὺ κ̣ά̣[λλιόν
ὅ τι μόρσιμ[ον
καὶ ὀνείδε[
καὶ παντὶ γέ[νει
ὀπίσω Χρυσ[άο]ρο[ς υ]ἱό̣ν·
μ]ὴ τοῦτο φ[ί]λ̣ον μακά̣[ρε]σσι θε[ο]ῖ-
σι γ]ένοιτο
....].[.].κ̣ε[..].[.] περὶ βουσὶν ἐμαῖς
]κ̣λεο̣ς.[

15 D–F = S11+S31

with his hands ... him
answering ...
spoke ... [of Chrysaor im-
mortal ...
'Do not to me death ...

[27] Barrett (2007b) 13 proposes Menoites, Geryon's herdsman, as the speaker.

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... frighten
and do not ...
For if ...[immortal]
... and ageless ...
on Olympos
better ...
reproaches ...
and ...
being slaughtered ...
our ...
But if, my friend, ...
to reach old age ...
and to live among [creatures of a day] ...
[apart] from the blessed gods,
now nobler by far for me ...
whatever is fated ...
and rebukes ...
also for my whole race ...
afterward the son of Chrysaor.
May this not be dear to the blessed
gods
... concerning my cows[28]

Geryon's speech asserts that two distinct sets of ethical considerations obtain for mortals and immortals, and intimates that the distinction centres on the experience of reproach or shame ([ἐ]λεγχέα (12); ὀνείδε[α] (22)). If one is to live forever then reproaches are to be borne; if not, it is better to fight than to risk reproach falling on one's descendants.[29] Geryon's own orientation between these two alternatives is problematic. Evanthia Tsitsibakou-Vasalos proposes that Geryon is posing a real question with his first condition and is uncertain about whether he can be killed; W.S. Barrett proposes that he enjoys a conditional immortality and would live forever if unmolested; Alexandra Rozokoki believes that as a full-grown monster he must be aware of his own mortality.[30] Barring further discoveries we cannot answer this question with any certainty, but more important for my purposes are the possibilities articulated by Geryon's speech and his own self-orientation to the mortal side of the equation. By establishing mortality and immortality as the relevant criteria for his own programme of action he (inadvertently) invites an audience to apply that framework to Herakles as well.

Geryon figures immortality as an existence on Olympos (10) and mortality as a lifetime spent among short-lived humans (if we accept Barrett's supplement) and apart from the blessed gods (18). It is not incidental, I think, that Geryon's version of immortality offers a précis of Herakles' post-apotheosis status as we see it developing in the visual representations of his welcome to Olympos and his marriage to Hebe, the embodiment of youth. Katherine Lu proposes that Geryon's representation reminds the audience that this immortal future is a possibility for Herakles that is contingent upon his success;[31] I suggest rather that this configuration of immortality activates the audience's awareness of Herakles' established destiny which, in turn, alters the implications of Geryon's ethical modelling. Even though Herakles is not yet immortal and may be justifiably

[28] All translations are my own. For the *Geryoneis* fragments I draw on the commentaries of Curtis (2011); Davies and Finglass (2014).

[29] This interpretation of the first condition follows Barrett *apud* Page (1973) 150; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1991) 254 and Rozokoki (2008) 69 *pace* Page himself.

[30] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1991) 253–55; Barrett (2007a); Rozokoki (2008) 68. Curtis (2011) 118–19 is profoundly sceptical about the possibility of interpreting this passage at all.

[31] Lu (2013) 52–53.

fearful as he comes face to face (to face) with a three-headed opponent, Geryon's rhetoric begins to manoeuvre him into his future identity as a god. As a result, the stakes of the contest shift: Herakles' future apotheosis establishes him on the immortal side of Geryon's equation, leaving Geryon alone to make the quintessentially mortal choice between glory and survival.

The effect is deepened when we add our first Iliadic echo into the mix: Sarpedon's speech to Glaukos in *Iliad* 12.[32] Like Geryon's solitary deliberations, Sarpedon's exhortation to his friend frames the impetus to fight in terms of the mutually exclusive states of mortality and immortality.

> ὦ πέπον εἰ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε
> αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ᾽ ἀθανάτω τε
> ἔσσεσθ᾽, οὔτέ κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην
> οὔτέ κε σὲ στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν·
> νῦν δ᾽ ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο
> μυρίαι, ἃς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ᾽ ὑπαλύξαι,
> ἴομεν ἠέ τῳ εὖχος ὀρέξομεν ἠέ τις ἡμῖν.
>
> *Il.* 12.322–28
>
> O my companion, if fleeing this war
> always we were destined to be ageless and immortal,
> neither would I myself fight in the front lines,
> nor would I send you into the battle that gives men glory:
> but now – for as things are the spirits of death stand around us
> countless, which a mortal can neither flee nor escape –
> let us go and grant someone their prayer – or let them grant us ours.

The resonances between the speeches in conjunction with the grammatical and contextual asymmetry between them underscore the import of Geryon's own orientation toward mortality and the existential distance between Geryon and his opponent.[33] Sarpedon's acceptance of danger is predicated on the recognition that he, his comrade and his enemies are facing the same stakes; let us go and grant someone their prayer, he says, or let them grant us ours. By invoking the impossibility of agelessness and immortality as a spur to battle he highlights the shared code that unites two human combatants in a contest of grim reciprocity; all that will ultimately survive of either fighter is their remembered identity, an identity conditioned for each party by the act of killing and dying. Geryon, in contrast, by articulating for himself and his interlocutor two alternative models for his own experience, foreshadows for Stesichoros' audience the divergent fates awaiting him and his opponent. Even as Geryon orients himself within the model of mortal heroism with a determined νῦν (20), drawing on the same ethos that drove Sarpedon to battle, the alternate model of immortality anticipates Herakles' divinity and his corollary exclusion from the calculus of battlefield glory.

Geryon's emphasis on the deciding role the gods will play in his gamble is congruent with his orientation to the ethical parameters of mortal heroism. When he prays that this – his defeat, we assume, though the substance of the wish is obscured – should not be dear (φίλον) to the blessed gods (25–26), he expresses a hope that the audience knows to be in vain. Once again he designates himself as someone distinct from the θεοὶ μάκαρες and, moreover, subject to their will. If the intertext from *Iliad* 12 is prominent, the prayer may also recall Sarpedon's death and the divine discussion that precedes it. There Zeus expresses his desire to snatch Sarpedon, his beloved son, from battle, and is roundly shut down by Hera who criticizes him for wishing to save a man 'long ago

[32] First recognized by Page (1973) and widely developed; *pace* Kelly (2015), which sees in Geryon's speech 'no trigger for specific interaction with Sarpedon's speech' (42).

[33] *Cf.* Page (1973) 149–50. For a different reading of the intentional asymmetry, see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1991).

destined to his fate' (*Il.* 16.441) and urges that if Sarpedon is truly dear to him (ἀλλ' εἴ τοι φίλος ἐστί: *Il.* 16.450) then Zeus should allow him to die at Patroklos' hands before personally ensuring burial for his corpse in the earth of his homeland. We know that Geryon's fate, too, is at hand – but he will fall to another son of Zeus who receives the very consideration that Sarpedon is ultimately denied.

When Geryon explicitly embraces a mortal's inability to anticipate what the future holds – 'now nobler by far for me … whatever is fated …' (20–21) – he uses a word with particular Iliadic resonance. In the *Iliad* μόρσιμον is repeatedly used of the preordained circumstances of a hero's death and once of a god's inability to die, when Apollo, disguised as the Trojan Agenor, lures Achilles away from the Trojan walls.[34] Revealing his true identity, Apollo taunts Achilles: 'you will not kill me for I am not fated to die' (οὐ μέν με κτενέεις, ἐπεὶ οὔ τοι μόρσιμός εἰμι).[35] The contextual knowledge of Stesichoros' audience tells them not only that Geryon's μόρσιμον ἦμαρ is at hand, but also that his life will be taken by an opponent whose own fate will more closely resemble Apollo's than Achilles'.[36]

The existential distinction between the two combatants might have been further emphasized by a cult at the Sicilian town of Agyrion, if it can be dated back to the sixth century.[37] Diodoros tells us that Herakles, when he passed through Agyrion driving Geryon's cattle, set up a sacred precinct to Geryon as a hero (ἥρωι Γηρυόνηι).[38] In the same passage Herakles also accepts divine honours for himself for the first time. These honours to Herakles, consisting of sacrifices and athletic competition, continue into Diodoros' time at a site called the Heraklean Gate.[39] If these were familiar elements of local cult practice – as they may have been for Stesichoros and his Sicilian audiences[40] – the modes of worship offered to Geryon and Herakles respectively are poised to underscore the contrasting possibilities expressed by Geryon's two models: Herakles' status as a god contextualizes and defines the cultic identity of hero accorded to the fallen Geryon.[41]

With Geryon's self-orientation to mortality, Herakles – whatever his own fears as he approaches the fight – is manoeuvred by Geryon's bifurcated system of mortality and immortality into a proleptic divinity. As a pending immortal he is deprived of the characteristic that would allow him to engage with Geryon as an equal, as Patroklos to Geryon's Sarpedon: Herakles is denied the ability to die. The contrast evoked by Stesichoros' framing brings the weight of the human condition to bear on Geryon alone and, rather than eliciting detached pity for a suffering monster, invites the audience into empathy and self-recognition.

(b) As we move into the battle proper (19 DF = S15+S21), our view shifts from Geryon's perspective to a narration of the developing action. Explicit deliberations on mortality and immortality give way to narratorial emphases that further the play between potential narrative archetypes by evoking Geryon's embodiment of multiplex Iliadic models and Herakles' incongruity within those paradigms. The surviving text is challenging and has not yielded full consensus even as to the

[34] Human fates: Hom. *Il.* 5.674, 15.613, 19.417; *cf.* Hom. *Od.* 10.175, 16.392, 21.162; Apollo as 'not fated': Hom. *Il.* 22.13.

[35] *Cf.* LSJ *ad loc.*

[36] While Achilles enjoys heroization and worship on Leuke (and elsewhere) from the sixth century BC, his post-mortem identity – on which see Hedreen (1991); Burgess (2009) 98–131 – should not be equated with the Olympian existence shared by Apollo and Herakles; *pace* Burgess (2009) 102–03 which overemphasizes the centrality of the pyre to Heraklean apotheosis traditions.

[37] Curtis (2011) 38–45 takes the possibility of cult seriously but understands it as a way of managing Greek colonial anxiety. Noussia-Fantuzzi (2013) 241 n.42 questions the antiquity of the practice.

[38] Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 4.24.3: τέμενος κατεσκεύασεν ἥρωι Γηρυόνηι, ὃ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν τιμᾶται παρὰ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις, 'He established a precinct for the hero Geryon, who up to the present day is honoured by the locals.' Geryon's mortal remains continue to be of interest in much later texts: Paus. 1.35.7-8; Philostr. *Her.* 671.

[39] Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 4.24.6.

[40] On the problem of Stesichoros' audiences, see Bowie (2013); Davies and Finglass (2014) 23–32.

[41] The existence of a Temple of Herakles at Akragas in western Sicily – the only extant temple of Herakles in the Greek world (Stafford (2012) 193–94) – contributes further to an available Sicilian sense of his divine status.

sequence of events it narrates, but a minimal summary looks something like this: Herakles decides on an ambush rather than a frontal attack; somehow knocks Geryon's helmet to the ground; strikes him a fatal blow to the forehead with an arrow (or at least a blow fatal to that head); Geryon's head falls.[42] Summarized in this way we might have an Iliadic scene in which one hero falls and one lives to fight again, but to summarize is to flatten Stesichoros' epic play.

Let us consider first Herakles' stealthy tactics and the way in which his decision to ambush Geryon (λάθραι πολεμε[ῖν: 8) flirts with multiple narrative roles before its consequences – the knocking off of Geryon's helmet – orient the reader to a particular Iliadic paradigm. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos proposes that we can see Stesichoros playing here, through verbal and conceptual parallels, on an Odyssean episode: the blinding of the Cyclops.[43] If this is right, the Odyssean intertext evokes the hero/monster paradigm filtered through the lens of the crafty hero and thus renders Herakles' subterfuge an appropriate response to the inhuman opponent he anticipates. If Geryon had not stood to fight in grand Iliadic style the shoe would have fitted. Since Geryon does stand his ground, we are shifted into the potential for a hero-versus-hero match-up, only to find that this too is destabilized by Stesichoros' poetic choices.

The second layer of destabilization is not so much occasioned by Herakles' strategy itself as its dissonance with Geryon's response, just as in the previous case. As Tsitsibakou-Vasalos reminds us, Iliadic archers are happy to ambush their targets and there is no shame in stealth.[44] Awareness of Iliadic battle strategy, however, reveals the operative incongruity: Iliadic archers depend on the cover provided by the shields of their fellow soldiers. Herakles here acts alone. In Iliadic terms, then, the tableaux created by the two antagonists evokes a confused layering of potential battlefield strategies. Geryon pursues an easily recognizable strategy of one-on-one duelling, a strategy rendered even more jarring by the representations in the visual record that arrange his three helmeted heads and three armoured bodies into a sort of one-man phalanx.[45] In contrast, the solitary Herakles, frequently marked in visual art by his unwarlike outfit of lion skin and not much else, undertakes a strategy whose success depends on the cooperation of one's fellow soldiers.[46]

The tension between the strategies of Stesichoros' two combatants opens a space for our third narrative type of human versus god. An Iliadic resonance framing Herakles' first strike activates this possibility. After Geryon takes a defensive stance we see – now in strobe-like flashes thanks to the state of the text – the helmet falling from one of his heads, a focus that neatly isolates a single human feature from the monstrosity of his whole body. The language is reminiscent of one of the pivotal evocations of mortality in the *Iliad*: Patroklos' loss of *his* helmet immediately before his own death.[47] Critically, in Patroklos' case, the individual responsible for his disarming is not Hektor, who will ultimately kill him, but Apollo himself, in what Derek Collins calls the most direct intervention of a god in a hero's death in the *Iliad*.[48]

[42] *Cf.* Page (1973) 150–53; Davies and Finglass (2014) *ad loc.*

[43] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990).

[44] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990) 24–26; *cf.* Hom. *Il.* 4.112–25, 8.266–72.

[45] On Geryon as a phalanx, see Brize (1980) 41–51 which traces the phalanx model and highlights two Chalkidian representations that – like Stesichoros, according to the scholion to Hesiod 287– show Geryon with wings but also retain elements of the phalanx (three shields, three armoured heads), nicely underscoring Geryon's hybridity; *cf.* Brommer (1986) 41. For the relationship between visual representations and Stesichoros' narrative, see Shapiro (1994) 71–77.

[46] For Herakles in lion skin, see *LIMC s.v.* Herakles 2468, 2470, 2472, 2476, 2484, 2486, 2487, 2489. Interestingly, the Chalkidian vases with winged Geryon are divided on this point: one (2464) has Herakles in lion skin, the other (2479) in armour. *Cf.* Schefold (1992) 121–29 for an overview of the motif's development. Herakles appears in the lion skin in Stesichoros, according to Megakleides (*fr.* 281 D–F), but whether the latter is referring to the *Geryoneis* is unclear.

[47] M. Davies and P.J. Finglass (2014) adduce the Homeric passage in their commentary *ad loc.*, but do not develop its implications beyond the immediacy of death in both passages.

[48] Collins (2007) 131.

]ẹτο· τοῦ δ’ ἀπὸ κρα-
τὸς] 15
ἱπ]πόκομος τρυφάλει’·
] ẹ̀πὶ ζαπέδωι·
19.14–17 DF =
S15, col. 1.14–17

from his head
horse plumed helmet
on the ground

τοῦ δ’ ἀπὸ μὲν κρατὸς κυνέην βάλε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων·
ἡ δὲ κυλινδομένη καναχὴν ἔχε ποσσὶν ὑφ’ ἵππων
αὐλῶπις τρυφάλεια, μιάνθησαν δὲ ἔθειραι
αἵματι καὶ κονίῃσι:
Il. 16.793–97

From his head Phoebus Apollo struck the helmet
which rolled and resounded under the horses’ feet
the helmet with its socket for the crest, and the plumes were soiled
with blood and dust.

If the resonance between the texts invites Geryon into a Patroklean role, then Herakles’ action echoes Apollo’s first strike and Geryon becomes, once again, the mortal hero facing an immortal god. Like Herakles, Apollo deploys stealth, but his stealth is the supernatural invisibility of a god; wrapped in mist he comes up behind Patroklos and slams him on the back, knocking his armour to the ground. Thus disarmed and susceptible, Patroklos is famously attacked first by Euphorbos and then by Hektor, a fact that he holds against the Trojan hero when Hektor taunts him in his final moments.[49] Herakles – as far as we can tell – manages his attack alone, without the personal intervention of a god, but Stesichoros’ staging intimates the divinity that will come to define him and tinges his fighting tactics with the effortless animosity of the gods rather than the desperation of a mortal’s struggle for dominance – a desperation that ultimately defines Hektor as much as Patroklos, but distinguishes Stesichoros’ two antagonists.[50]

After a break of eight lines,[51] a close-up of Herakles’ arrow in flight, smeared with the blood and gall of the hydra, further insists on Herakles’ future divinity by challenging an audience to recall that other monster and its role in Herakles’ apotheosis.[52]

]ων στυγε[ρ]οῦ
θανάτοι]ο τ̣ẹ́[λος
κ]ẹφ[αλ]ᾶι πέρι̣ [ ] ἔχων, πεφορυ-
γ]μένος αἵματ[ι]ι τε χολᾶι,
ὀ̣λεσάνορος αἰολοδε[ίρ]ου 35
ὀδύναισιν Ὕδρας· σιγᾶι δ’ ὅ γ’ ἐπι-
κλοπάδαν ἐνέρεισε μετώπωι·
διὰ δ’ ἔσχισε σάρκα [καὶ] ὀ̣[στ]ẹ́α δαί-
μονος αἶσαι·
19.31–39 D–F = S15. col. 2.1–10

the end of hateful death
with ... around (its) head,[53] smeared
with blood ... and gall,
of the man-destroying shifting-necked
Hydra, with its pains, in silence

[49] Hom. *Il.*16.849–50.

[50] Griffin (1980) 136–37 emphasizes that the pathos of the scene is greatly increased by audience knowledge of Hektor’s imminent death.

[51] Lazzeri (2008); Davies and Finglass (2014).

[52] If we wish to think of other paradigms, the same incongruities emerge that we saw above: Odysseus’ poison arrows (Hom. *Od.* 1.258–65) are given to him in the context of social exchange while Herakles’ derive from an isolating act of violence against a creature outside the bounds of human civilization.

[53] The subject here and at line 9 (ὅ γ΄) is disputed: Davies and Finglass (2014) *ad loc.* follow Page (1973) in taking the arrow as subject; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos ((1990) 13) objects on the grounds that κεφαλή is not regularly used of arrows.

it stabbed from slantwise in his forehead
sliced through flesh and bone
by divine will.

Earlier interpreters have highlighted the hydra's post-mortem cameo as a way of nodding to an alternate mode of monster, a previous victim – and another multi-headed one, no less – of Herakles' strength, but one whose death, unlike Geryon's, substantially improved people's lives.[54] These arguments recognize the hydra's function in activating an important backstory, but apply the resonances to Geryon rather than to Herakles, thus noting the evocation of one potential narrative model (hero versus monster), but missing the multivalence of the hydra's presence. By dilating on its poison, Stesichoros introduces a payload of mythological tradition that not only looks back to the hydra's death, but also ahead to the end of Herakles' mortal life. The same substance, applied to each of our protagonists, confirms their existential difference. Its emphatic presence at this point in Stesichoros' song pushes an audience to activate that context.

Sophocles' *Trachiniae* is the earliest extant narrative that explicitly brings together the hydra's blood and Herakles' destruction at the hands of his wife, Deianeira. After the centaur Nessos, in the process of simultaneously carrying Deianeira across a river and attempting to rape her, is fatally wounded by Herakles' arrow, he gives Deianeira some of his blood, now tainted with the hydra's poison (ᾗ μελαγχόλους ἔβαψεν ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναίας ὕδρας: *Trach.* 573–74), as a love philtre.[55] When she applies it to a shirt for Herakles, years later, agony drives him to death or apotheosis on the pyre, depending on one's interpretation of the play.[56] We must, of course, contend with the fact that Sophocles' myth postdates the *Geryoneis* by a century or more and includes innovations that we are hard pressed to distinguish from earlier traditions, but this is reason to tread carefully rather than to avoid the path entirely. Deianeira's role in Herakles' (mortal) end appears already in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* with the apotheosis following immediately on the notice of Herakles' death.[57] Bacchylides in *Dithyramb* 16 alludes to Deianeira's envy and the monstrosity (τέρ[ας: 35) she receives from Nessos in a way that suggests he expected the audience to be able to connect the dots.[58] The representation of Herakles' showdown with Nessos is popular in the visual record throughout the sixth century, with the first extant examples from the mid-seventh century.[59] The weapon used by Herakles varies extensively and the club is predominant, but one of the earliest examples, from the Argive Heraion, shows the centaur trying to pull an arrow from his back.[60] The smoking gun – the explicit involvement of the hydra's poison – is not present in these literary accounts, but it does appear as a through-line in the versions of both Apollodoros and Diodoros: Herakles dips his arrows in the hydra's gall after he kills it, is later done in by Deianeira's application of Nessos' gift and promptly apotheosizes from the pyre.[61] One black-figure lekythos from the second quarter of the sixth century may relate the encounter, which appears on its shoulder, to the apotheosis, which takes pride of place on its belly.[62] We cannot exclude the possibility, then, that Sophocles developed an existing motif.[63]

[54] Lu (2013) 60–61; *cf.* Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990) 20.

[55] '... where he dipped the black-biled arrows, the offspring of the Lernaian Hydra'. Davies (1991) *ad loc.*: 'Surely ... when we encounter the verb [ἔβαψεν] in this context we are bound to think of the famous story of Heracles' literal dipping of his arrows into the hydra's gall.'

[56] *Cf.* Finkelberg (1996).

[57] Hes. *Cat. fr.* 25.23–24 M-W.

[58] Bacchyl. *Dith.* 16.23–35.

[59] Schefold (1966) 38–39, pls 22, 23; *LIMC s.v.* 'Nessos', especially 89 for a seventh-century example.

[60] *LIMC s.v.* 'Nessos' 89 (our early example above) and *cf.* a seventh-century dinos from the Sanctuary of Herakles at the Archaeological Museum of Thebes depicting the arrow about to enter Nessos' back.

[61] Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.2, 2.7.6–7; Diod. Sic. 4.11.5, 4.38.1–5. The fact that in these texts Deianeira kills herself by hanging rather than with a sword as in *Trachiniae* may suggest that Sophocles is not the only source for the narrative.

[62] Thus F. Diez de Velasco in his commentary to 'Nessos' in *LIMC* (844).

[63] *Contra* J.R. March ((1987) 52–56), whose desire to prove Sophocles' origination of the arrow motif leads her to underplay the possibility of earlier variants.

But is the weight of this whole tradition too much to put on Stesichoros' few and fragmentary lines about the hydra's poison? When modern scholars feel a need to explain Stesichoros' dilation on the hydra or see it as overkill on the poet's part to emphasize the fact that the arrows are poisoned when – in our extant passage at least – the poison does not seem to be especially operative, they are responding to a poetic invitation to pay closer attention to the implications of the (unwonted) elaboration.[64] If the Nessos narrative already involved hydra poison by Stesichoros' time, then Stesichoros' detailed evocation of the poisoned arrow meant for Geryon is poised to recall Herakles' earlier arrow strike against a monstrous opponent. Stesichoros may even offer an interpretative push by describing the hydra as ὀ]λεσάνορος (man-destroying), a partial echo of Deianeira's near-synonymous name.[65] With this mythological allusion baked in, the pains (ὀδύναισιν: 6) of the hydra not only look backwards to that monster's death but also forwards to the agony that Herakles will suffer when he comes into contact with its venom. And thus the contrast emerges: if the application of poison is overkill (literally) for Geryon whose flesh and bone yield immediately to the arrow's blow, it is insufficient to finish off Herakles and leads instead to his immortalization. The punctuation of the arrow's flight by an assertion of divine dispensation – δαίμονος αἴσαι (8–9) – nods to a predetermined fate, however unknown to the two principals, that makes Geryon's death as inevitable as Herakles' is impossible.

As the struck head takes the fatal impact of the blow and Geryon's neck falls limp, Stesichoros manoeuvres away from the increasingly unbearable detailing of the wound and diverts into the famous poppy simile which makes a delicate flower of Geryon's monstrous anatomy. The unlooked-for comparison reworks a Homeric simile describing the death of the Trojan prince Gorgythion by Teukros' arrow.[66]

ἀπέκλινε δ' ἄρ' αὐχένα Γ̣ᾳ̣ρ[υόνας
ἐπικάρσιον, ὡς ὅκα μ[ά]κ̣ῳ[ν 45
ἅτε καταισχύνοισ' ἀπ̣α̣λ̣ὸ̣ν̣ [δέμας
αἶψ' ἀπὸ φύλλα βαλοῖσα̣ ϙ
19.45–47 DF = S15, col. 2.14–17

he inclined his neck then – Geryon –
angled, just as when a poppy,
which shaming its soft body
swiftly letting fall its petals

μήκων δ' ὡς ἑτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἥ τ' ἐνὶ κήπωι
καρπῶι βριθομένη νοτίῃσί τε εἰαρινῇσιν,
ὣς ἑτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πήληκι βαρυνθέν.
Il. 8.306–08

As a poppy to the side lets drop its
head, which in the garden
is weighted down with fruit and spring dew,
thus to one side sank his head weighted down
with his helmet.

Scholarly attention has focused on the characterization of Geryon effected by the simile and its Homeric resonances, dealing with an incongruity activated at two levels: the comparison of Geryon to the epic warrior – a possibility considered less jarring – and the comparison of Geryon's hulking physique to the fragility of the poppy. At the heart of this inquiry is the problem of whether the imagery can stretch to encompass Geryon and retain its pathos or whether Stesichoros stretches the limits of comparison too far in order to fragment them into mockery.[67] The question bears

[64] For example, Page (1973) 152; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990) 24; Lazzeri (2008) 227–45.

[65] For the etymology of ὀλεσάνορος, see Lazzeri (2008) 240; the same root (-ήνωρ) in Homer has feminines in -άνειρα: Davies and Finglass (2014). Thus Δηϊ-άνειρα: man/spouse-destroyer.

[66] Kelly (2015) 35–37 endorses the intertext and notes its widespread support (n.78). For an analysis of the divergences between the two, see Curtis (2011) 147.

[67] Pathos: Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1990) 27–28; Robbins (1997) 238; Kelly (2015) 37 specifically resonates with sympathy for the Trojans. Complexity: Maingon (1980) 107: 'a diversion from the grim struggle'; Davies and Finglass (2014) 54: 'The picture is more violent than Homer's; its emotional impact is complicated by Geryon's surviving heads.' Shameful depiction of Geryon: Rozokoki (2009) 6–7. Segal (1985) 190 questions whether Stesichoros himself is aware of the incongruity.

directly on the same problems of narrative identity that have occupied us to this point: does the representation of Geryon's death confirm him as monster or hero? Or, put another way, as someone like or unlike us?

Rozokoki, coming down on the side of mockery, argues that the speed and ease of Geryon's destruction evoked by the poppy comparison elevate Herakles' achievement and guide the audience away from what she sees as a potentially problematic reaction to the two antagonists. I quote in full to capture the conflicting representations she balances:

> Yet, since the poet does not wish the audience's ultimate feeling to be both pity for the unjust loss of Geryon and disgust or reproach for Heracles' action, he changes the audience's disposition with the pejorative simile (S 15 ii.l5ff.). Now the audience is insensitive, ironic and joyful (maliciously) over Geryon's death, and filled with conceit and admiration for Heracles' feat. This not only because Heracles is obliged to execute this Labour, but for one additional reason: Stesichoros is ultimately writing for a Greek audience, and he must not displease them.[68]

Her emphasis on the audience's Greek identity as the cause of their pre-programmed Heraklean sympathies occludes a profound implication of her reading. If we take the simile as pejorative, it allows the audience to confirm their ultimate likeness to Herakles, with admiration for the hero's deed blending with 'conceit' because that deed has implications for their own self-conception. I propose, however, that the audience's inclination to identify with Herakles is precisely the target that Stesichoros has in his sights.

The poppy's signification of weakness is not a particular – or barbed – critique of Geryon's failed strength but an expression of the transience and capacity for destruction that inheres in every mortal being. Paul Curtis is surely right to note that Stesichoros' reworking of the simile to showcase the fallen φύλλα, here the petals shed by the poppy (17), echoes the seasonal cycles of vegetation that recur in early Greek literature as markers of mortality.[69] The transience of the poppy is an extreme expression of a mode of existence inhabited by Gorgythion and his killer Teukros, by Geryon and by every audience Stesichoros' song would ever have – but not by Herakles. Far from offering the audience a way to disengage from the conflicts created by their sympathy for Geryon, the simile holds up to them a mirror in which they cannot avoid seeing Geryon's face reflected.

While the presence of the poppy draws Geryon into a shared matrix of mortality, the intervening Iliadic figure of Gorgythion invites him into the company of heroes. Moreover, Gorgythion's status and the manner of his death serve to generalize this category beyond the towering champions such as Hektor and Achilles. Gorgythion, one of Priam's sons, appears only here in the *Iliad* and his death is almost accidental – in the sense that Teukros was actually aiming for Hektor but his badly aimed arrow found Gorgythion instead. In his likeness to Gorgythion as well as to Patroklos, we can see Stesichoros' Geryon not merely reflecting the Iliadic models that mark our fragments but refracting them, becoming a universalizing figure whose singular experience evokes multiple modes of inhabiting the narrative identity of the hero. The shared prerequisite is humanity.

(c) The process of heroic refraction is at work again in Stesichoros' representation of Geryon's mother Kallirhoe as she supplicates her son, apparently before battle is joined (17 D–F).

[68] Rozokoki (2009) 7.

[69] Griffith (1975) 75–77; Curtis (2011) 148–49.

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]ἐγὼγ [μελέ]α καὶ ἀλασ-
τοτόκος κ]αὶ ἄλ̣[ασ]τ̣α̣ π̣α̣θοῖσα
Γ]αρυόνα γωνάζομα[ι,
αἴ ποκ' ἐμ]ό̣ν τιν μαζ[ὸν] ἐ[πέσχ 5
]ωμον γ[
17.2–6 D–F = S13.2–6

I [miserable] and suffering unbearably [for my child],
suffering unbearable pains
beseech [you] Geryon,
[if ever] to you [I held out my] breast

The substance of the plea is not preserved, but the image of a mother baring her breast elicits irresistible comparison to Hekabe's supplication of Hektor with the same gesture.[70] The context is *à propos* and it is usually, and reasonably, taken that Kallirhoe here endeavours to stop her son from standing against Herakles just as Hekabe sought to dissuade Hektor from facing Achilles. But Hekabe is not the only epic mother on the field.[71] When Kallirhoe characterizes herself as suffering unbearably (ἄλ̣[ασ]τ̣α̣ π̣α̣θοῖσα: 3) her language recalls Zeus' address to Thetis when he receives her in his court. You have come, he says, although you are suffering unbearable grief (πένθος ἄλαστον).[72] If we accept Barrett's emendation of ἀλασ-[τοτόκος] as I have reproduced it above,[73] we may hear an echo of Thetis' lament when she perceives her son's grief in the face of Patroklos' death: ὤ μοι ἐγὼ δειλή, ὤ μοι δυσαριστοτόκεια ('O, alas for me, I who am wretched, o alas for me, most unfortunate in my child!').[74] Like Thetis, Kallirhoe is the daughter of an ocean god – Ocean himself, in fact – and knows the pain of fearing for her (potentially) mortal son.

As Malcolm Davies and Patrick Finglass note, the presence of both epic figures in Kallirhoe is remarkable.[75] *Contra* Rozokoki, however, the result is not merely a broadly epic nod to two heroes who, like Geryon, are doomed to fall in battle, much less a caricatured invitation to mockery.[76] By uniting in Kallirhoe the two mothers who stand on opposite sides of one of the *Iliad's* great enmities, Stesichoros challenges his audience to recalibrate the organizational categories they bring to his song. If the epic characterization of Kallirhoe brings both Hektor and Achilles onto the allusive stage and identifies them both simultaneously with Geryon, what role remains for Herakles? By excluding him from the balanced calculus of achievement and loss that makes Hektor and Achilles ultimately more alike than they are different – and both appropriate models for his multi-headed protagonist – Stesichoros implicitly urges his audience to seek another model for Herakles' participation in the encounter. When half-gods go – to violently recontextualize Emerson – the gods arrive.[77]

Herakles' impending exclusion from mortality throws Geryon's mortal status into high relief and underscores his inclusion in the paradox that makes loss as much as victory an element of both humanity and heroism.[78] In a few fragmentary lines, Stesichoros expresses the same insight that is the source of the *Iliad's* profound humanity: Geryon can simultaneously echo both Hektor and Achilles because they are united by the burden of their shared mortality.

[70] Hom. *Il.* 22.79–81.

[71] Thus, for example, Castellaneta (2005) 34–49; Rozokoki (2009) 4–5.

[72] Hom. *Il.* 24.104–05.

[73] Barrett (2007b) 16.

[74] Hom. *Il.* 18.54. Thus Rozokoki (2009), despite concerns about the supplement; Castellaneta (2005) 36.

[75] Davies and Finglass (2014) 289.

[76] Rozokoki (2009) 4–5 (dramatization of doom), 17 (potential caricature).

[77] Emerson (1904) 48–49.

[78] *Contra* Noussia-Fantuzzi (2013) 250 who sees 'Stesichoros mak[ing] Geryon a new Hector, which means that he makes him a victim and a loser'.

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(d) I have argued that the Iliadic resonances deployed in the *Geryoneis* fragments invite Stesichoros' audience to redraw the narrative frameworks that orient the two principals within available mythical paradigms in order not only to heroize the monster but also to humanize him. An initial recognition of the text's Homericizing tendencies orients an audience away from the paradigm that pits a hero against a monster and into a paradigm of equally matched mortal heroes fighting, as it were, on the same field. However, as I have shown, the heroic reflexes of the Homeric scenes cluster around Geryon, our erstwhile monster, rather than the erstwhile hero, Herakles. The unequal application of Homeric resonances provokes the audience to seek a further reorientation that can accommodate the allusive imbalance. Stesichoros' play on traditions redolent with apotheosis offers a productive alternative. By playing Herakles' impending immortality against the mode of heroic achievement commemorated – and potentiated – by the Homeric models, Stesichoros leaves Geryon as the only hero on the field while edging Herakles proleptically into the identity of invincible and implacable god. This new match-up, entirely familiar from Homer's epic, rewrites the stakes of the contest and refracts through the isolated and marginalized Geryon the universal human confrontation with death and fate.

IV. (Re/De)contextualization

In this section I turn to two fragments which concentrate on Herakles to the exclusion of Geryon, both apparently narrating moments in his journeys to or from Geryon's island of Erytheia. One depicts his use of the sun's bowl as a vessel for trans-Oceanic travels (8a D–F = S17), while the other offers a glimpse of him sharing a drink with the centaur Pholos (22a D–F = S19). We are severely limited in what we can say about the effect of these fragments within the poem, and even the question of whether they belong to the *Geryoneis* at all is not fully settled.[79] Therefore, the following suggestions are necessarily speculative. With due awareness of these limitations, however, I propose that by recognizing Stesichoros' play on Herakles' impending immortality, we can also better appreciate the logic that brings these extra-Erytheian events into conversation with the showdown itself.

Peisandros is our first extant source for the idea that Herakles, unable to cross the ocean under his own power, managed to get temporary use of the golden bowl in which the sun made his daily journey across those waters.[80] Subsequent reports vary in their details – did he make a deal to borrow it with Nereus' help? did he hijack it? – but retain the central claim that Herakles is able to obtain and control a divine vessel in order to venture into a geography usually inaccessible to humans.[81] To an extent, Stesichoros' deployment of the motif would fit unsurprisingly into an elaboration of Herakles' journeys, highlighting the extremity of his travels and the quintessentially heroic capability of finding one's way temporarily beyond the edges of the world.[82] Indeed, the narrative of the ride in the sun's bowl might resonate with a Heraklean mode of action familiar from the *Theogony* and excluded from the *Iliad*: the isolating travels of an almost superhuman mortal bringing order and good governance to the still-unordered pockets of the world.

If we embrace the possibility that the showdown on Erytheia was framed by accounts of Herakles' travels, then we might take Herakles' disembarkation from the sun's bowl – especially if that disembarkation is on the way to Erytheia and not the end of the return journey[83] – as staging a generic encounter between the parameters of heroism in a Theogonic and an Iliadic cosmos.

[79] Hesitations about the pertinence of Pholos: Curtis (2011) 160; for an overview of the question, see Lazzeri (2008) 385–86.

[80] *PEG* 5 Bernabé.

[81] Ath. 11.38–39 collects traditions of the sun's bowl, including Herakles' use of it; the quasi-hijacking narrative is there attributed to Pherekydes (=*FGrH* 3 F18a); *cf.* Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.10.

[82] *Cf.* Davies (1988) on Herakles' Stesichorean journey as *Jenseitsfahrt.*

[83] Journey to Erytheia: Davies and Finglass (2014) 257, though the logic with the cattle is not unimpeachable; (cautiously) Lazzeri (2008) 34–37, 379–80. Return journey: Page (1973) 149.

Specifically, by recognizing the discourse of impending immortality that informs the representations of Herakles on Erytheia, we can read our fragment as a moment of Heraklean heroism configured to highlight the indeterminacy of his mortal status and his future trajectory into divinity, elements as at home in a Theogonic cosmos as they are inadmissible in an Iliadic one.

†ἅλιος δ' Ὑπεριονίδας†
δέπας †ἐσκατέβαινε† χρύσεον ὄφ-
  ρα δι' Ὠκεανοῖο περάσας
ἀφίκοιθ' ἱαρᾶς ποτὶ βένθεα νυκ-
  τὸς ἐρεμνᾶς
ποτὶ ματέρα κουριδίαν τ' ἄλοχον
  παίδας τε φίλους
  ὁ δ' ἐς ἄλσος ἔβα δάφναισι †κατάσ-
  κιον† ποσὶ παῖς Διὸς.
8a D–F = S17
Helios, son of Hyperion
stepped down into the golden cup so that
crossing Ocean
he might arrive at the depths of holy
black night,
to his mother and his wedded wife
and his dear children
But he made his way into the grove shadowy
with laurel, on foot, the son of Zeus.

Stesichoros' collocation of Herakles' return of the bowl to Helios with the divergent paths taken by the two figures thereafter constructs competing resonances around Herakles' superhuman efforts. From a diachronic perspective, Helios' continuation of his journey beyond the edges of the world anticipates Herakles' future Olympian trajectory. His daily commute to a domestic space populated by his mother, wife and children not only paints a charmingly cosy picture[84] but also nods, if my proposal of the super-salient apotheosis is correct, to Herakles' future reception on Olympos into the domestic space of his new home, where Hebe waits to become his wife and Hera, years of animosity set aside, embraces him as her new son-in-law.[85] The hint of a future transition to divinity follows naturally on the centrifugal trajectory of the journey in the golden bowl and, in the Theogonic cosmos, confirms Herakles' superheroic status. Synchronically, however, Helios' movement into his own domestic space contrasts starkly with Herakles' disembarkation on a delocalized shore, highlighting his isolation from both the divine and human spheres.

The designation of Herakles as the son of Zeus (πάϊς Διὸς: 9) further emphasizes the indeterminacy of his existential status. The fact of divine paternity, of course, places him in good heroic company, but the specific formulation pushes him once more towards the divine status that awaits him. By a wide margin, the designation πάϊς Διὸς in early Greek literature is most often used of Olympians, figures who are divine by birth: Apollo, Athena, Hermes, Aphrodite, the Muses and – in direct connection with Herakles' impending apotheosis – Hebe, his future wife.[86] Herakles himself claims the phrase in the Hesiodic corpus.[87] In contrast, the same phrase appears only twice in the *Iliad* – in both instances applied to Hektor, once as a reported boast and once as a counter-

[84] Davies and Finglass (2014) 257: 'the sun himself, like any weary mortal, returns from his day's work to his family'.

[85] Thus Hom. *Od.*11.601–04; Hes. *Theog.* 950–55; Hes. *Cat. fr*. 25 M-W; *Hymn. Hom.* 15.6–8.

[86] Divinities: Hom. *Od.* 8.488, 11.604; Hes. *Theog.* 952; Hes. *fr.* 25.29, 229.9; *Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 214, 230; Archil. *fr*. 94.2 West; Mimn. *fr*. 5.3 = 3b 578 F Jacoby; Sapph. 1.2 Lobel-Page; Alc. 307a.1 Lobel-Page, S262.23 Page, S264.5 *SLG*; Anac. 3.2 *PMG*.

[87] Hes. [*Sc.*] 371, *fr*. 33a.28 M-W.

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factual, in both cases highlighting his human commitments.[88] Even as we see a still-human Herakles moving through the groves on his way to Geryon's destiny, the anticipation of immortality surrounds him, asserting an interstitial identity befitting a figure who tames the edges of the earth. As the narrative develops and constructs a (very small) Iliadic society on Erytheia, however, Herakles' identity as an individual between worlds will be denormalized and the implications of his proximity to immortality subjected to re-evaluation. Our fragment, on this reading, offers us not only a glimpse into the narrative scope of the poem, but also into the epic play that Stesichoros deployed in the project of Geryon's heroization.

The four lines that preserve Herakles' stopover at the home of Pholos the centaur are, at first glance, less readily integrated into the likely narrative scope of the *Geryoneis* than the journey in the sun's bowl.[89] Pholos is consistently located in Arcadia, a stop that Herakles could have made on his journey, but not one consistently affiliated with Geryon's western world. Paola Lerza has suggested that Pholos' presence makes sense within the mythological structures of the composition because he, like Geryon, was a victim of secondhand hydra venom via the vehicle of Herakles' arrows.[90] The tradition, in brief, put Pholos in possession of a very strong wine that he opens when Herakles comes to call – the event preserved by our fragment. When the wine is opened its scent attracts centaurs from the surrounding area who converge on the scene with violent intent, to which Herakles responds by deploying his poisoned arrows. Pholos is collateral damage; according to Diodoros he is scratched by an arrow while he is busy about the burial of the fallen centaurs and subsequently succumbs to the incurable wound.[91] The event appears in the visual record from the end of the seventh century with a prominent sixth-century example on the metopes of a treasury at Foce del Sele.[92] Lerza's suggestion, then, points us in the right direction, but I propose that a reader with an ear pricked for apotheosis can follow the mythical tracks a little further.

In the same passage in Diodoros, the historian adds that Herakles, in similar fashion, accidentally killed Cheiron with one of his arrows. The addition matters for us because Cheiron, in traditions outside of the rationalizing Diodoros, is the only figure in Greek tradition to renounce his immortality and that renunciation is provoked by Herakles' venom-laden arrow. The problem of the immortal Cheiron and the venom-laced wound already appears in *Trachiniae*: Deianeira realizes the power of Nessos' poisonous gift when she remembers the effect of the poison on 'Cheiron the god' (θεὸν Χείρωνα).[93] Sophocles' brief reference to the event suggests that it was already familiar in the fifth century and may have been available to sixth-century audiences as well. In Apollodorus, Cheiron comes into the Pholos narrative when the marauding centaurs rush from Arcadia to take shelter with him at Malea. As they cluster around him, Herakles' arrow passes through the arm of one Elatos and into Cheiron's knee, leaving the immortal centaur with a problematically incurable wound.[94] The stalemate is resolved when Prometheus volunteers to take on Cheiron's immortality, allowing the centaur to find escape from his pain in death.[95] We cannot know how or to what extent the concatenation of Pholos and Cheiron motifs appeared in the *Geryoneis*, but the episode is poised to either introduce or allude to a rich tradition that draws Heraklean violence and hydra venom into a larger conversation about both the loss and acquisition of divinity.

[88] Hektor: Hom. *Il.* 13.54, 825.

[89] 22a D–F = S19:
σκύφιον δὲ λαβὼν δέπας ἔμμετρον ὡς
  τριλάγυνον
πί' ἐπισχόμενος, τό ῥά οἱ παρέθη
  κε Φόλος κεράσας
taking as his cup a vessel measured at three flagons,
he raised up and drank what Pholos had mixed
and offered to him.

[90] Lerza (1981) 20.

[91] Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* 4.12.8.

[92] Brize (1980) 146–50; Schefold (1992) 134–38; Gantz (1993) 390–91; vases: Brommer (1985) 216.

[93] Soph. *Trach.* 714–15.

[94] Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.4.

[95] *Cf.* Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.11: Herakles and Cheiron have an audience with Zeus in which Cheiron, though immortal, declares himself willing to die in exchange for someone else (θνήσκειν ἀθάνατον ἀντ' αὐτοῦ θέλοντα). *Cf.* Gantz (1993) 147, which argues that Herakles himself must be the beneficiary of the exchange.

I have proposed that by reading these two fragments through the lens of Herakles' apotheosis, we can glimpse a mode of mythological play distinct from the Iliadic stylings of the encounter on Erytheia. The journey in Helios' cup sketches Herakles' travels to (or from) the edge in a Theogonic mode which accommodates Herakles' status as a figure outside the order of the human world and on his way to immortality. The Pholos episode looks to Herakles' sojourn among the non-human community of the centaurs and the violence he brings to it with his hydra-anointed arrows, including Cheiron's 'reverse apotheosis'. On these readings, Stesichoros draws on Heraklean experiences from narrative contexts in which Herakles' status between human and divine is less jarring than it would be in a world shaped by an Iliadic ethos of mortal excellence. The juxtaposition of these representations with the showdown on Erytheia contributes to the destabilization of narrative roles when the monster-hero meets the hero-god.

V. Conclusion

Stesichoros' Geryon has always been seen as a rather un-monstrous monster operating in a surprisingly heroic mode. Interpretations of Stesichoros' construction of Geryon between monster and hero have, however, failed to appreciate that the poet is also activating Herakles' complicated orientation between hero and god, an orientation whose salience for Stesichoros' sixth-century audiences was heightened by a contemporary surge of interest in Herakles' apotheosis. I have argued here that by understanding the apotheosis as an interpretative framework available to Stesichoros' audiences, we reclaim a context that should refine our interpretation of Stesichoros' epic play. The Iliadic intertexts that shape the showdown on Erytheia invite the audience to reconceptualize Geryon's island as another Troy. The resonances, however, do not apply to the two combatants equally; echoes of heroism conditioned by mortality cluster around Geryon, while Herakles' actions and purposes diverge from the Iliadic models. The contrasting application of the intertextual elements to the two combatants requires a re-evaluation of Herakles' place on an Iliadic battlefield, a provocation which points to his impending immortality. As Geryon becomes every Iliadic hero, his opponent, displaced, becomes a god. Herakles' movements beyond Erytheia, too, comment on his incongruity within the parameters of a shared mortal heroism, establishing him as a figure made for the edges of a younger and wilder world. The heroization of Geryon, then, is not 'simply Stesichorean fantasy'. It is, instead, part of a complex reorientation of narrative identities that demands from the audience a corollary re-evaluation of the nature of both heroism and humanity and the recognition that, give or take a head or two, Geryon's dilemma is their own.

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