

RICHARD GARNER

STESICHORUS' ALTHAIA: *P. OXY.* LVII 3876 FR. 1–36

aus: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100 (1994) 26–38

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

Stesichorus' Althaia: *P. Oxy.* LVII.3876.frr. 1-36

It has been thirteen years since the appearance of the the Lille Stesichorus—the longest interval without a new Stesichorean publication since the fragments of his poetry from Oxyrhynchus began to appear in 1956. Now with the publication of *P. Oxy.* LVII.3876 the number of Stesichorean fragments has grown by 84. Nothing in the latest collection is nearly as extensive as the Lille poem, nor are the fragments as amenable to reparation as were those of the *Geryoneis*. Nevertheless, despite Michael Haslam's modest and despairing claim that sorting them out is beyond him and that the "fragments defy trustworthy ascription to any particular poem or poems," his meticulous work has made it possible to see quite a lot.¹ A number of the fragments (37-77) seem to come from a Stesichorean treatment of the death and burial of Achilles.² And it is virtually beyond doubt that a number of the other fragments (1-24 and perhaps some or all of 25-36) come from a poem that dealt with the story of Meleager.³ Stesichorus' treatment of the Calydonian boarhunt and the death of Meleager has long been of interest to students of Greek poetry—of more interest, in fact, than many of his other poems. This is partly because Homeric scholars have been so concerned to understand how, in the *Iliad* Meleager's story has been adapted to Achilles' (or Achilles' to Meleager's), and partly because Bacchylides' version of Meleager's death (a version also used by Euripides, Accius, Ovid, and others) differs in important respects from the Homeric one.⁴ Because of this great interest in the Meleager myth, it seems well worth straining to extract as much as possible from what remains of the Stesichorean treatment.

The identification of the Meleager story in *P. Oxy.* 3876 is made possible first by fragments 2 and 6f. (joined by Barrett and Haslam) which give us Artemis (v. 6) and Kalydon (v. 8), and second by fr.4 in which the news (v. 6f.) is brought to a noble woman (plainly Al-

¹ See M. Haslam, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* LVII (1990) 1-2. The fragments were published simultaneously as an appendix to M. Davies, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol.1, (Oxford 1991) 307-25. Some of the fragments are included by D. Campbell (with his translation) in *Greek Lyric III: Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, and Others* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1991) 145-55.

² See R. Garner, *ZPE* 96 (1993) 153-65. Haslam (above, note 1) tentatively suggested the burial of Misenus for some of these, particularly fr.61-77. This suggestion was taken up and elaborated by H. Lloyd-Jones, *ZPE* 87 (1991) 297-8. Haslam subsequently urged caution, *ZPE* 88 (1991) 297-9, but Lloyd-Jones remains firm, *ZPE* 89 (1991) 37. Campbell (above, note 1) accepted the scene as Misenus' burial.

³ See Haslam (above, note 1) 34, (referring to fragments 2 and 6) "this gives confirmation that we are in the context of the Meleager tale."

⁴ As M. Willcock has noted, *CQ* 58 (1964) 147-52, because the discussion of Meleager is "central for the Homeric Question in this century," the story of Meleager in the *Iliad* has become one of the most discussed passages of that poem. In addition to Willcock's discussion of the myth there have been recent examinations by J. March, *The Creative Poet* (London 1987) 29-46, and J. Bremmer, "La plasticité du mythe: Méléagre dans la poésie homérique," pp. 37-56 in *Métamorphoses du mythe en Grèce antique* (Geneva 1988) ed. C. Calame. Also still valuable is J. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (Lund 1949) 11-42, 127-48, and 152-64. Two of the most recent discussions have very helpful references to the huge bibliography on this topic and are themselves both concise and clear: see S.C.R. Swain, *CQ* 81 (1988) 271-76 and B. Hainsworth, *The Iliad: A Commentary, Vol. III: books 9-12* (Cambridge 1993) 130-32.

thaia, Meleager's mother, vv. 5-6) that her brothers have been slain (vv. 7-9). Unless otherwise noted, word division and supplements in these and following fragments are those of Haslam. The spacing between words and apostrophes indicating elision of final vowels have been added by me in order to facilitate the reader's perception. All other accents and marks, including the diacritical and prosodic signs, are those of the papyrus.

fragments 2 and 6a, b

..... ] [ ] [	1	
.....] ις απεδωκε [] υς[		... gave
.....] ια δ αρ όπως[]· καλ... [		... Kalydon [?]
.....] εν αγγελια[.....] ' ευ [	4	... message
.....] πεμψε δε νιν [.....] αμ [		... [she?] sent it[?]
Αρτα] μιν ἰοχέαιρα[.....] λυμ[		... Artemis, Shooter of Arrows,
θυγατ] ηρ Διος ἀγρῆς[ι]θήρα εγ [		... daughter of Zeus, Huntress of beasts
.....] πως Κα][λυδ]ῶν εραταν [	8	... lovely Kalydon
.....] αι με[γα] μα πῆρικλ[υτ		... great [hide?] most famous

7 εγ in a smaller hand (part of a gloss?) 9 δέρ]μα

fragment 4

.....] άθάν μ[	1	
.....] λετομ[
.....] ψαμε [] υς [
.....] ποτε[ει] πε θ[	4	... addressed
.....] ευπατερει-		["] ... daughter of a noble sire,
α, τ]] αχ αγγελιας αμεγάρτου		... soon the sad news
πε] υσει εμ μεγάροις· τεθνᾶσι γ[ο]ι		you will learn in your halls; for dead are they
ημα] γτι τωιδε παρ ᾱι-	8	on this day—though it is not right—
καν] αδελφ[εοι·] εκτανε ε]δ αυτους		your brothers; he [Meleager?] killed them
.....] φ[
.....] εν[.....] α] μων		... blameless
.....]] φρενα[	12	... heart
.....] [
.....] [
.....] [
..... ] [	16	

My main aim is to flesh out as far as possible what we might now see of Stesichorus' treatment of Althaia and of her place in this story. Her role is of particular concern, for her actions lie at the center of the debate over the various versions of Meleager's death. In the

Homeric tale of Meleager (*Il.* 9.527-99) Althaia apparently brings about the eventual death of her son simply by cursing him and attracting the attention of an Erinys (9.567-72). In the Hesiodic *Catalogue* (25.10-12 M-W) and in the *Minyas* (Paus.10.31.3) Althaia may have had no responsibility: Meleager dies in battle at the hands of Apollo, apparently without prompting from Althaia.⁵ But in Bacchylides' version (5.136-54) Althaia, once she learns that Meleager has slain her brothers, causes him to die by burning the magic brand on which his life depends. This version, in which Althaia exacts vengeance for her brothers only at the cost of her own son's life, was the natural story for tragic use: Euripides employed it; before him Aeschylus had alluded to it in the *Choephoroi* (603-12); and earlier still Phrynichus had referred to the icy fate that took Meleager as fire consumed the brand (Paus. 10.31.4). It is now generally agreed that the brand is a part of an older version predating the Homeric curse.⁶ We will examine *P. Oxy.* 3876, then, to see if it yields any clues as to which version Stesichorus followed and whether we might find the Althaia of epic or of tragedy. Before turning directly to Althaia, however, I would like to discuss a problem in fragment one and then to make a few tentative suggestions about some of the other fragments. Fragment 1 seems to contain a list of gods, most likely Ares (v. 3), Athena (v. 4), and Artemis (v. 5):⁷

fragment 1

— — — — —		
]ρομε [	1	
]] αλλά νιν]α[		but it (?) ...
] αυτος Ενυα[λι		Enyalios (Ares) himself ...
] Τριτογενής [	4	Trito-born (Athena) ...
ι]πποκόα] πτολ[		Driver of horses (Artemis) ...
] μεγα δ εν φρεσ[ι		greatly in his/her heart ...
..]βιος οςτις τ [		[Blessed] is he who ...
...]πρ[] ε [	8	
— — — — —		

The difficulty in the fragment lies in verse 7. Haslam's suggestion ὄλ]βιος seems obvious, particularly since μακαρισμός is such an important feature in archaic poetry.⁸ Alcman or

⁵ Of course it is also possible that Apollo could be the agent who carries out Althaia's curse.

⁶ For the Euripidean *Meleager* see T.B.L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967) 233-6. For agreement on the priority of the brand see, e.g., Garvie *ad* Aesch. *Choe.* 603-12, Willcock (above, note 3) 151-2, and Th.K. Stephanopoulos, *Umgestaltung des Mythos durch Euripides* (Athens 1980) 17. For over fifty years E. Bethe remained the last apparent proponent of the idea that the brand was a late addition to the Meleager story, *RhM* 74 (1925) 1-12. But March (above, note 4) 40 now also maintains that the brand, although an ancient folk-tale element, was brought into Meleager's story sometime at a later stage.

⁷ At Apollodorus 1.8.2 we learn that some accounts made Ares (here Ἐνυάλιος) the father of Meleager, but I doubt whether that is relevant to these Stesichorean fragments. ἰπποκόα seems virtually certain to indicate Artemis here since it is her epithet in Pind. *O.* 3.26 and since she is an important figure in the story of Meleager. Cf. fr. 2.6 and perhaps fr. 19, discussed below. W. Luppe suggests that ἰπποσόας here indicates Diomedes, but this seems unlikely. See Luppe's review of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vols. 56 and 57, *Gnomon* 64 (1992) 295.

⁸ For a brief but useful recent discussion see A. Burnett, *Three Archaic Poets* (Cambridge 1983) 237-8. See also G. Dirichlet, *De veterum macarismis* (Giessen 1914) and C. de Heer, *Μάκαρ· εὐδαίμων· ὄλβιος· εὐτυχής* (Amsterdam 1969).

Ibycus (and later Pindar and Bacchylides) might break in with such a comment at almost any point in a song. But in all of extant Stesichorus perhaps the closest thing to such an authorial intrusion is the fragment that explains why Athena sympathized with Epeios: ὄκτειρε γὰρ αὐτὸν ὕδωρ | αἰεὶ φορέοντα Διὸς κούρα βασιλεύειν (200 *PMGF*). There is nothing remotely like Alcman's ὁ δ' ὄλβιος ὅστις εὖφρων --- (1.37 *PMGF*). In fact it is one of the striking features of the growing Stesichorean corpus that gnomic statements and authorial transitions (such as are common in Alcman, Ibycus, Pindar and Bacchylides) are virtually absent.⁹

It thus seems necessary to imagine ὄλβιος ὅστις as part of a speech made by some mortal or immortal within Stesichorus' narrative; this is easy enough to accept, since directly quoted speeches are as common in Stesichorus as authorial intrusion is rare. Further, although the list of gods in fr.1 could be cited by a mortal, it seems relatively unlikely to have been. I would suggest that Stesichorus himself gives a descriptive list of gods who are observing the mortal actors in the Meleager story and that one of these divinities, most likely Artemis—she is, after all, most closely involved, having sent the boar—has an emotional reaction indicated in v. 6.¹⁰ The close of verse 6 could include a verb of speech which would allow Artemis to begin expressing herself with the pronouncement ὄλβιος ὅστις, an appropriate opening for a speech. For such a scene in Stesichorus we can compare the council of the gods in *Geryoneis* (S14). And perhaps even more similar is the scene from Stesichorus' *Iliou Persis* (S105) in which we find Poseidon, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, and Zeus—whether this scene is a final battle of the gods before Troy is taken or a picture of the gods abandoning Troy before the Greeks sack it.

One naturally looks for clues as to how much of the tale of the boarhunt might be found in our fragments, but there is little to go on for the earlier parts of the story. Of Atalante or of the hounds that helped to bring down the boar I can find no trace.¹¹ The mention or description of

⁹ This absence (and the contrast with other choral poets) has been noted by W. Burkert, "The Making of Homer in the Sixth Century B.C.: Rhapsodes versus Stesichorus," in *Papers on the Amasis Painter and His World* (Malibu 1987) 51. As he notes, an exception would be S166, which M.L. West assigns to Stesichorus, but both Page and Davies have given the fragment to Ibycus. There are, of course, the Stesichorean comments associated with the Palinode or Palinodes. Those, however, serve a different purpose and in any case may well have been confined to the opening verses of the songs.

¹⁰ The phrase μέγα δ' ἐν φρεσί and phrases nearly like it seem to be used with verbs that express great joy or sorrow. Cf. μέγα δὲ φρεσί at *Od.* 11.195 and 24.233; and a variety of similar phrases (μέγα φρεσί, μέγα --- ἐνὶ φρεσί, μέγα δὲ φρεσί, μέγ' ἐνὶ φρεσί) in *Q. S.* 1.325, 2.357, 6.10, 6.124, 9.527, 13.83, and 14.385. In Quintus the expression may be used to introduce a speech (1.325) or early in an emotional speech (6.10).

¹¹ *P. Oxy.* XXIII.2359 has a list of men (not hounds) some of whom can be placed at the Calydonian hunt, and some scholars have therefore assigned the fragment to Stesichorus' tale of the boar hunters. However since *P. Oxy.* XXIII.2359 may well have a strophe of a different metrical structure than the one found in *P. Oxy.* 3876, it is perhaps better to assign *P. Oxy.* XXIII.2359 with its names to Stesichorus' *Games for Pelias*: this was an old suggestion made by H. Lloyd-Jones, *CR* 8 (1958) 17. Ridding Stesichorus' boarhunt of the names in *P. Oxy.* XXIII.2359 brings a certain advantage: A. Stewart has made the case that some of the scenes on the François Vase were inspired by the poetry of Stesichorus. See A. Stewart, "Stesichorus and the François Vase," 53-74 in *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (Madison 1983) ed. by W. Moon. Stewart even finds Stesichorus' name intentionally substituted on the vase for that of Terpsichore, the Muse of choral poetry and dance (p.56). But he is worried that the names of figures in the depiction of Meleager and the hunt (a scene in which men and hounds are labeled) do not coincide with those in *P. Oxy.* XXIII.2359 (p.63). With *P. Oxy.* 3876 as a candidate for Stesichorus' hunt, Stewart could add the Meleager band of the Vase as Stesichorean also.—Perhaps 255 *PMGF*, ἀπειρεσίω κυνλαγμοῖο, describes the hounds during the hunt.

conflict—either of the battle against the boar or of the subsequent fighting among the hunters — can perhaps be seen in three small fragments:

fragment 19	fragment 30	fragment 33
]ον[]λάρτ[	]ποτα][]ροφῶ[]]αλαοφ[	] κ ε ρ [.]ξ ο ι κ . ἐ]δοκευσακ . [

Haslam's supplements for fr.19, βάλ' Ἄρτ[αμικ, could make Artemis an armed participant in conflict. A likely division (though others are possible) of fr.30.3 would suggest λαοφ[όνος; this could refer to the boar, but it could also simply describe battle or strife and so apply to the eventual struggle for the boar's hide. Finally, δοκεύω is used in Homer of wary participants in battle (or of the animals they are likened to). Most notable for this context of the boarhunt is the simile (*Il.* 8.338-41) in which Hector is compared to a hound that catches hold of a boar and watches it carefully (δοκεύει, v. 340). Even so, none of these fragments would have to belong to battle context.

It may well be that our fragments begin at the point in the poem (there is no way to know how much else may have come before) when the news must be taken to Althaia that her brothers have been killed by her son Meleager. As Haslam suggested, we may have the sending of a messenger in fr. 2.4-5.

In fragment 4 (see text above) Althaia receives the sad news (ἀγγελία ἀμεγάρτου, 6) of her brothers' death. Who is the messenger? In introducing quotations Stesichorus seems to have followed the Homeric practice in which the name and description of the speaker almost always follow προέφη or προέειπε. Compare the following Stesichorean passages:

ποτέφα [κρατερὸς Χρυσαόρος ἀ-
θανάτοιο [γόνος καὶ Καλλιρόας·
"μή μοι θά[νατον προφέρων κρύεν- ... (S11)

and:

ὡς ἔφα· τ]ὸν δ' ὦδ' ἀμειβόμενος ποτέει-
πεν Ἄρῃ] φ[ίλος Ἀμφιαρητεΐ δακ·
"ὄ μὲν φ]ίλε πῖνέ τε καὶ θαλίαις ... (S148)

So we expect the speaker to have been named after ποτε[ει]πε in verse 4. But not even a breathless and distraught messenger would make so abrupt a beginning as "τ]άχ' ἀγγελία ἀμεγάρτου | πε]ύεσαι." So the epithet εὐπατέρεια] (4.5-6) must be part of the respectful vocative address to Althaia. That leaves little room for the description or name of the speaker after ποτέ[ει]πε (4.4), but he (or she) may have already been named in an earlier sentence so that a brief reference can suffice here.¹²

¹² W. Luppe (above, note 7) 296 suggests that a goddess may appear to Althaia and address her in a dream. In light of the close Homeric parallel this seems less likely than the arrival of a human messenger.

Whoever the messenger may be, there is no question about the type of scene: ἀγγελία
 --- πε]ύσει sends one directly to *Iliad* 18.15-21:

Εἶος ὃ ταῦθ' ὄρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,
 τόφρα οἱ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθεν ἀγαυοῦ Νέκτορος υἱὸς
 δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων, φάτο δ' ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν·
 ὦ μοι Πηλέος υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἧ μάλα λυγρῆς
 πεύσει ἀγγελίης, ἧ μὴ ὄφελλε γενέσθαι.
 κεῖται Πάτροκλος, νέκυος δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχονται
 γυμνοῦ· ἀτὰρ τά γε τεύχε' ἔχει κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ.

In the Homeric prototype, Antilochus the messenger (*Il.* 18.2) arrives to give Achilles the sad news (ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν, v. 17; λυγρῆς | πεύσει ἀγγελίης, vv. 18-19) that Patroclus has been slain in battle. As Haslam notes, the similarity between this passage and Stesichorus' includes both words and context. The retention of a closely related context is typical of Stesichorus' handling of Homeric material, and it is illuminating to compare the other notable instances of such adaptation in Stesichorus' poetry.

In *Geryoneis* Stesichorus borrows the Homeric simile of a drooping poppy (S15.ii.14-17), and he uses it to describe a wounded fighter (Geryon) just as was done in the *Iliad* (8.302-8).¹³ Note that although Stesichorus does not mention Geryon's mother in this passage, she figures prominently in his poem; and the Homeric passage does emphasize the mother of the victim. Also in the *Geryoneis*, and apparently even more typical of Stesichorus' method, is the speech of Callirhoe to her son Geryon (S13). Fearing that her son will be killed in battle (as he in fact will be) she pleads with him to pity her suffering and reminds him that she fed him from her breast. Her speech is modelled on that of Hecuba to Hector at *Iliad* 22.82-3: Hecuba too calls on her son to pity her and to recall that she gave him her breast. And the context of the two passages is notably similar, for Hector, like Geryon, disregards his mother's plea, faces his opponent, and dies. We know that Stesichorus had taken an interest in Hecuba. Pausanias tells us (10.27.2) that in the *Iliou Persis* Stesichorus made Apollo transport the dead Hecuba to Lycia: that is, he borrowed the scene from the *Iliad* (16.667ff.) in which Apollo transports the dead Sarpedon to Lycia. Thus, after his own fashion, Stesichorus augmented Hecuba's importance by giving her a Homeric scene originally used for a male, but reworked for her.

Stesichorus' methods are somewhat similar in his reworking of a scene from the *Odyssey*. In the Homeric poem, as Telemachus is preparing to leave the palace of Menelaus, an omen appears and, after Menelaus hesitates to speak, Helen interprets it (*Od.* 15.160-78). Stesichorus describes this same scene in the *Nostoi* (209 *PMGF*) but he makes two notable changes. First, his Helen interprets the omen immediately, before Menelaus is even consulted. Second, in Stesichorus's version Helen encourages Telemachus to make a speedy return home, apparently out of consideration for Penelope, a mother who will be longing to see her son (209.i.10-11). Thus Stesichorus has made Helen's role slightly more prominent and in so doing has indirectly emphasized connections between mother and son. In fact, all these pas-

¹³ There are, of course, differences. Stesichorus has made the comparison more grotesque — as befits the description of a three-headed monster. See R. Garner, *From Homer to Tragedy* (London 1990) 15-18.

sages in which Stesichorus has adapted Homeric material have some element of mother and son connection. And so the scene of Achilles' funeral with the arrival of his mother Thetis seems a natural Stesichorean passage elsewhere in the fragments of *P. Oxy.* 3876.¹⁴ And this interest in mothers and sons is also evident when Stesichorus is not adapting Homeric material: in the Lille fragment, the mother of Polyneices and Eteocles does her best to save her sons from their fate.¹⁵

The pattern of Homeric adaptation in Stesichorus' poetry helps us to see what he has apparently done in the case of Althaia. In the *Iliad* Achilles is brooding over the safety of his friend Patroclus, fearing he may have come to harm. Instead of a worried Achilles, Stesichorus gives us Althaia.¹⁶ She may well have been brooding, as a Stesichorean mother would, over the safety of her son. But when the messenger arrives she learns that her son—so far from being harmed himself—has in fact slain her brothers. The next task is to determine how Stesichorus' Althaia responded to this news.

In 1898 we did not yet have the remarkable Stesichorean females who were to come from Oxyrhynchus and in the Lille fragment—Jocasta, Eriphyle, Helen, Callirhoe. But we did have second-hand reports of Stesichorus' Helen (fr. 187-92) and Eriphyle (fr. 194) and also of his Skylla (fr. 220) and Clytemnestra (fr. 219). We also knew that Stesichorus had exercised a great influence on subsequent lyric and tragedy. And so Croiset brilliantly suggested that Bacchylides' Althaia, tragically burning the brand and ending her son's life, was modelled on a Stesichorean invention.¹⁷ The treatment was exactly right for Stesichorus: it made the woman a powerful figure, with the life of her son in her hands. And it made her a tragic figure as well, for she would have to debate with herself whether or not to take the life of her own son in order to avenge the deaths of her brothers. This is more or less the Althaia of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* who had been shown in Euripides' tragedy (later used by Accius); like Bacchylides, Euripides would have taken his heroine from Stesichorus. More conservatively, one might imagine that, even if Stesichorus was not, as Croiset thought, the inventor of this scene, he might well have been responsible for the first striking poetic treatment outside the epic tradition (that is, versions not only of the *Iliad* but also of the *Meleagris*).

In fact, since 1956 every publication of Stesichorean fragments or fragments of commentaries on Stesichorus has provided further evidence of the acuteness of Croiset's insight into

¹⁴ See Garner (above, note 2) 8-13 for a discussion of fr. 61, 62, 72, 64, 65, 67, and 71 as Achilles' funeral with Thetis and the Nereids present.

¹⁵ For the Lille Stesichorus see J.M. Bremmer in id., A.M. van Erp Taalman Kip, S.R. Slings, *Some Recently Found Greek Poems*, Supp. to *Mnem.* (Leiden 1987) 128-74 and A.P. Burnett, *CA* 7 (1988) 107-54. For Stesichorus' interest in mothers see P. Lerza, *Stesichoro* (Genoa 1982) 49-50.

¹⁶ It is possible, of course, that Stesichorus knew an epic *Meleagris*, and that this messenger scene was already recounted there with the formulae we find used for Achilles' scene in the *Iliad*. However, although I believe there must have been an ancient *Meleagris*, I also think it likely to have faded in importance and notoriety by Stesichorus' time. Moreover, Stesichorean adaptation of Achilles' scene for a female character would be entirely in accord with the pattern of Stesichorean emphasis on and treatment of women outlined above. And in many of these instances, e.g. the passages in *Geryoneis*, there is no proposed epic model other than the Homeric one known to us and modified by Stesichorus. For the *Meleagris*, see Swain and Hainsworth (above, note 4).

¹⁷ M. Croiset, "Sur les origines du récit relatif à Méléagre dans l'ode V de Bacchylide," in *Mélanges Henri Weil* (Paris 1898) 73-80.

the nature of Stesichorean narrative. In addition to the women and their speeches already noted above, one thinks — for the tragic side of Stesichorus— of the debate in *Iliou Persis* as the Trojans decide whether or not to take the horse into the city (S88). Another moment of tragic decision is highlighted by the speech — reminiscent of Hector's last debate with himself (*Il.* 22.99ff.) — in which Geryon considers whether or not he should fight and risk death (S11). And finally there is Stesichorus' decision to make Apollo and the Furies an important part of his *Oresteia* (fr.217), a poem which then pits son against mother and mothers' Furies against son — all elements which figure large in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* and especially in the *Eumenides*.

Fragment 4 of *P. Oxy.* 3876 draws our attention to Althaia as she hears her tragic news. Two of the smallest scraps (frr. 9 and 11) may in fact give us a glimpse of a speech — borrowed by Euripides and adapted by Accius — in which Althaia reacts to the news:

fragment 9		fragment 11	
]ωσφρενα[	so his/her heart	(a)]ςφ[
] [		] μᾶτ[ ] [	mother? ...
]χηρων [	of widows/of the be-	] ἄκο [ ] [	to find a remedy
] [	reaved (or: making	] τῶ[
] ε . [	desolate)	(b)] [
] [		] ματρ [	mother ...
3 χήρων or χηρῶν		] ολέσ[ ] [	destruction ...
		] χαλε [	difficult ...

Since, of the two, fragment 11 provides a little more to go on, we may consider it first. In a2 there may be reference to a mother; Haslam, finding ἄκος virtually certain in a3, suggests ἄκο[ς] εὐ[ρέμενοι]. Fragment 11b reads like a telegram from Kalydon about Althaia's situation: mother ... destruction ... difficult. Althaia, like Medea, must debate the difficulty of killing her own offspring. As she consults her heart (fr. 9.1?) she may consider and compare various forms of bereavement she now faces (fr. 9.3?), the nature of the grief that arises from each, and the difficulty of finding a cure (fr. 11a.3?) for the horror of killing one's own son. In the end her reasoning may have followed a line something like that later to be laid out by Antigone in Sophocles' tragedy (*Ant.* 905-12) and by Intaphernes' wife in Herodotus (3.119): a son can be replaced, but (for an older woman) there will be no replacement for a lost brother.¹⁸ Common to all three women is their devotion to a brother or brothers, and thus Althaia's

¹⁸ See Kakridis (above, note 4) who discusses the cases of Antigone and Intaphernes' wife and the choices of Althaia. For the importance of the mother's brothers see J. Bremmer, "The Importance of the Maternal Uncle and Grandfather in Archaic and Classical Greece and Early Byzantium," *ZPE* 50 (1983) 173-86.

Because of the emphasis in the Meleager story—and in particular in this Stesichorean version (fr. 4.9) on mother's brothers, it is very hard to resist bringing in fr. 26.17 as a possible reference to the uncles. This is a long fragment in which little can be made out beyond isolated words every few lines. The apparent point of relevance is in v. 17, in which we can read:] λφεῖσά [. There are in fact remarkably few ways to supplement

brothers (Meleager's maternal uncles) point to important features of the mythical material Stesichorus is handling. The maternal uncle played a prominent role in Indo-European society: in Greece he was one of the few relatives with access to the women's quarters, and this privilege helped to make him an influential person in the life of his sister's sons. He was responsible at least at some level for initiation of the young man into adulthood, typically on the hunt. Examples of this kinship tie are found in Greek poetry as early as Odysseus' boarhunt with his maternal uncles (*Od.* 19.392-466). And so the presence of Meleager's uncle or uncles during the boarhunt (an invariable part of this myth) points to venerable tradition and ancient elements in the story. The death of the uncle or uncles is in some way a peculiarity—but it points toward another important feature in the material, and this is the feature which makes Intaphernes' wife and Antigone so relevant. The story of Meleager, Althaia, and her brothers should date from a time when Althaia's obligations were as clear to her as similar ones were to Intaphernes' wife and Antigone. That is, the Althaia of the old story should have an overriding commitment to her brother or brothers and should curse or doom her son without hesitation. The Althaia who hesitates and debates belongs to a later stage of society and story-telling in which the ancient and total commitment of the mother to her brothers is weakening. What this all means is that a Stesichorean speech in which Althaia debates her choice with tragic anguish is very likely to be a Stesichorean innovation. Stesichorus' Althaia and her dilemma would then have provided a model for the tragedians of Athens and, directly or indirectly, for those who followed them.

For the complete rhetorical form that this mother's conflicting feelings might take, we have to look all the way forward to Ovid (*Met.* 8.462ff.), who gives the fullest extant version of Althaia's debate with herself. It is a highly dramatic speech (vv. 478-511) as Althaia brings herself to burn the brand. But this speech of Althaia's clearly had a long prior history even within Latin literature. Certainly this is the sort of debate we find Althaia having with her heart in the fragments of Accius' *Meleager* (fr. 443):

heu cor ita fervit caecum, amentia rapior ferorque.

Althaia is being driven mad because she knows it is in her power to end Meleager's life simply by burning the brand (Accius fr. 444-5):

eumpsum vitae finem ac fati internecionem fore
Melegro ubi torrus esset interfectus flammeus.

Like Euripides' Medea, she summons the resolve to overcome the pity and mercy which, since she is Meleager's mother, might keep her from acting (Accius fr. 446-7):

nunc si me matrem mansues misericordia
capsit ...

Of course we cannot be certain that frr. 9 and 11 of *P. Oxy.* 3876 belong to Althaia's debate with herself or even that such a debate took place in Stesichorus. But from Croiset in 1898 to March in 1987, students of the Meleager myth have held that Stesichorus' lost poem

this line, and as Haslam suggests nothing seems nearly so likely (even independent of any consideration of context) as (ματρ-, πατρ-)αδελφείοις. This would make an attractive reference to Althaia's brothers or to Meleager's maternal uncles. Still I hesitate because, as Haslam points out, there appear to be some somewhat puzzling metrical sequences in this fragment.

would be one of the places where they most expected to find Althaia thus agonizing over her choice. Surely in a set of Stesichorean fragments dealing with the Meleager story, these two are highly likely to come from the mother's speech.

What else may be contained in these fragments is even less sure. Haslam is not certain that fr. 25 belongs with fr.1-24:

fragment 25		
(a)	] ον... η... [
	]ναλκων [
(b)] ' ... [
	] λιπαράν πολ[	4
	]τον [	brilliant
	θυμ]ον ἀέξων [	... fostering his spirit
	]κυναίει· [	... by carelessness(?).
	]γοφέα σταίει [	8
	] [ ' ]χεν [
	] [ ' ' [	12

5 τον added in a larger hand where one should expect a normal line 7 μεθημο]κύναίει e.g. Garner

Certainly *στάει* (v. 8) would be an apt description of the quarrel between Meleager and his uncles. And although a city can be *λιπαράν*, there are other ways to complete *πολ* (e.g. *πολύ*), and other applications for the adjective. Heracles, for example, uses it to describe the wife he hopes he can make from one of Meleager's sisters (Bacchyl. 5.169). In v. 7 we might imagine *μεθημο]κύναίει* (cf. *Il.* 13.108), describing Meleager's carelessness (and relative innocence?), but a number of other attested Homeric nouns in *-κύνη* would do as well.

Stesichorus seems to have filled his songs with remarkable speeches, and there are small indications that there were others (besides the messenger's and Althaia's) in this song as well. In fr. 17 we may have an address to Oineus, Althaia's husband:

fragment 17

] [
] [
] [
	]ν... [	4
	]νεῦ δοκ[
] [
]... [

5 Oi]νεῦ J.Avery δοκ[έει δέ μοι e.g. Garner

Fragment 5 may come at the close of this speech or another and register someone's admiration:

fragment 5		
]θαρραλε [		... overboldly [he spoke
]μα [
μέ]γαλασθει [τ		... greatly amazed.
ὑπερ]φίαλον δέμασ [	4	... arrogant form
]ν χαριεν ταδ[		... charming
εὐρυ]βιαν σταθε [		... mighty
] [] κ ... [

1 θαρραλέω[τ ἀγόρευε e.g. Garner 5 or χαρίεντα δ[

Here in v. 1 we might have the Homeric θαρραλέος πολεμιστής or some variation on it: certainly courageous fighters are needed in this story. But Stesichorus is given to remarkable and bold speakers as well, and that suggests another Homeric formula, θαρραλέωσ ἀγόρευε. This latter seems even more likely since we have what looks like ἀγαθείς below (v. 3). Compare *Od.* 1.382 (=18.411, 20.269): Τηλέμαχον θαύμαζον, ὃ θαρραλέωσ ἀγόρευε. Perhaps ὑπερ]φίαλον δέμασ (vv. 3-4; the supplement is Haslam's) is a negative periphrasis to describe the haughty individual who has spoken so bravely that someone else is astounded.

Despite the fact that the last fragment to be considered here (fr. 35) is larger than most of the rest, it is nevertheless quite baffling:

fragment 35		
] ... [
]σ αερσιπὸ τασ[		... high-soaring
] δᾶυ τε [		... as
] στεκα ρνεα[	4	... wreaths(? scions? young shoots?)
] ... ψόλικόνδ[
] abrasum [
] εἶα [] ω[
]ν πλοκαμοικιν αλεξίδ [	8	... on his locks, protector of [youth's? consummate, delicate bloom
τέ]ρεν ακρον ανθοσ [		... -like; never other
] οσεικέλε μηποκαλλᾶ [		... having intended
]αεταν []γα μησαμενοσ[] [
στ]υγεράν τε ιδων ανοη[]ο [	12	... and having seen hateful
πο]λεων γαρ ανδρων [		... for of ... men
με]γάλωσ επε μάσσατο [		... he greatly strove
] εασ δε πλέχθεν· πλεχθ [		... and ... was woven;

στ]εφανους απαλων τε[]] σελ[ίνων 16 ... crowns of tender celery
]τε του τε ροδων τε σε̅̅̅ [... of ... and of the violet and of roses and ...
 11 ἀρ]εταν Luppe 15 πλεχθ [in a smaller hand (gloss)

This fragment may or may not belong with fragments 1-24.¹⁹ If it is a part of the narration of the Meleager story itself, it seems likely to describe a funeral — most likely that of Meleager. Haslam has well described the obscurities and difficulties in these lines; I confine myself to a few of the clearer (yet still ambiguous) elements. If something hateful has been seen (v. 12), it may be that the soft bloom (of youth? v. 9) has been lost, i.e. that a young man has died; the men in verse 13 could be a foil for the praise of the deceased; and the celery wreaths (v. 16) would be appropriate for a funeral.

On the other hand one could imagine a victory context: ἔρνεα (v. 4) was used to refer to wreaths worn by victors in games (Pind. *Nem.* 6.18, 11.29; *Isth.* 1.29), and we have the locks (v. 8) on which such wreaths might be placed. In an epinician poem the tender bloom of youth (v. 9) would be evident in victory rather than lost in death; the hateful object of v. 12 could be rejected as part of a foil for a victor; and celery wreaths (v. 16) were used to crown victors at Isthmian and Nemean games (Pind. *Ol.* 13.33; *Nem.* 4.88; *Isth.* 2.16, 8.64).²⁰ With a little imagination most of the rest of the fragment can be made compatible with an epinician context. As Bacchylides 5 shows, the tale of Meleager, with its important reminder of the limits of mortal achievement, could certainly be employed in an epinician poem for a western victor. True, without further evidence it might seem quite a leap to posit an epinician work from Stesichorus. But John Barron has recently been making the case for Ibycus as an epinician poet.²¹ He takes the end of Pindar's *Nemea* 8 to indicate that Pindar thought of epinician as quite an old genre. What Pindar says there is, "Verily, there was indeed a song of triumph, even in the olden time, even before the strife between Adrastus and the race of Cadmus." But whether or not we think that Pindar is referring to early epinician there (or that the passage indicates at least that Pindar knew of earlier epinician), it does seem reasonable that such poetry could well have been written during the time of Ibycus and Stesichorus. And Barron ingeniously suggests the possibility of at least four epinicians by Ibycus.²² If Ibycus could write epinician poetry, there seems to be no reason why Stesichorus might not have also.

¹⁹ W. Luppe, *ZPE* 95 (1993) 53-8, has reconstructed this fragment as containing a speech of invective directed against Helen. Thus in what might have constituted the insult (or part of it) that Stesichorus later retracted, the speaker praises Helen for unsurpassed external beauty (8-10), but contrasts her hateful (12) inner virtue (11). Luppe's suggestion is ingenious, and, given the fragmentary nature of the material, it must remain a possibility. However it is perhaps less likely than the funerary or epinician contexts outlined in this discussion.

²⁰ If the fragment is divorced from the Meleager group, a bridal context might be considered: see Haslam on v. 8. But the tale of Meleager killing his uncles seems unlikely for inclusion in a wedding hymn.

²¹ See J. Barron, *BICS* 31 (1984) 20-22. If *P. Oxy.* 3876 frr. 1-36 were part of an epinician or a wedding hymn, the supposed problem of ὄλβιος ὅστις in fragment 1 would disappear—with the caution that the authorial pronouncement would still remain most unusual as a Stesichorean utterance. Fragment 36, a very narrow strip, seems to contain parts of a scholium with the word νικη in one line (6) and Πυθοῖ in the next. Campbell (above, note 1) 149 suggests a possible connection between the scholium and the garlands in fr. 35. This would strengthen the case for an epinician context in fr. 35, but fr. 36 may not be directly related.

²² One for a Spartan at Sicyon, one for an athlete of Leontini, one for a Callias (perhaps from Athens), and one for an athlete from Syracuse.

In fact one of the Oxyrhynchus fragments that Barron takes as an epinician of Ibycus (S166) was assigned by West to Stesichorus. Moreover, the fragment contains authorial comment, and if it did indeed belong to Stesichorus, it would provide a parallel for an authorial makarismos in fr. 1 of *P. Oxy.* 3876. Alternatively, S166 could be assigned to Ibycus along with *P. Oxy.* 3876. In the past 35 years Oxyrhynchus fragments of the appropriate dialect have been divided between the two poets, Ibycus and Stesichorus, on the assumption largely that Stesichorus wrote Homeric, epic-like narratives and that Ibycus wrote in other genres. Lobel did not assign the erotic poetry of *P. Oxy.* L. 3538 to either poet; West assigned it to Ibycus. But we in fact have testimony that Stesichorus wrote erotic poetry too (TB 23.i.a, *PMGF*). The sobering fact is that we have a large body of poetry of which we can say that it is almost certainly by Stesichorus or Ibycus—but we may not have it sorted out as neatly as we think.

Still, it seems likely that the fragments of *P. Oxy.* 3876 are Stesichorean. If fragments 1-24 (and others) from *P. Oxy.* 3876 do not come from a Stesichorean epinician, they might well be from a song composed for performance at some rite or festival in honor of Artemis. Both Sicily and southern Italy knew the observance of rites for Artemis Phakelitis, and—if tradition can be believed—a great number of songs must have been written for her annual festival at Rhegium.²³ Since the woes of Oineus, Althaia, and Meleager arose from the failure to worship Artemis properly, Meleager's story would have been an appropriate festival reminder to those who hoped to avoid the divine displeasure of Artemis.²⁴

In any case, it now seems most likely that Stesichorus' tale of the boarhunt (at least a part of which is represented in fr. 1-24) included the deaths of Althaia's brothers and her passionate reaction that resulted in Meleager's death as well. That reaction might simply have been a mother's curse heard by an Erinys as it was in the *Iliad*, but the fragments of *P. Oxy.* 3876 hint at the anguish of the tragic Althaia as she decides to burn the magic brand and end the life of her son. The messenger speech and Althaia's reaction to it make another illustration of Stesichorus' place between Homer and tragedy: it is a messenger speech to which a Stesichorean Althaia seems bound to react with great drama. It seems quite likely that Althaia made a speech about whether or not to end the life of her child — a speech which most likely became a model not only for subsequent treatments of Althaia, but also the model for Medea's great monologue in Euripides' play. This would fit with all we know of Stesichorus as a poet and creator of dramatic characterization, and in particular as a poet with a keen interest in the bonds and tensions between mother and son.

Yale University

Richard Garner

²³ See A. Burnett (above, note 15) 144-5. For the worship of Artemis at Rhegium and her temple there see G. Vallet, *Rhégion et Zancle* (Paris 1958) 79-80, 130-1.

²⁴ Ancient tradition connected Stesichorus with pastoral (fr.279, 280) and the origin of pastoral with the worship of Artemis in Sicily: see C. Wendell, *Scholia in Theocritum Vetera* (Stuttgart 1966) 2-3, 8-9; T. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969) 32-5. But the Artemis of this literary historical tradition may well have been chosen mechanically by later scholars who needed a rural deity to preside over the genre.