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VIEWING FROM THE WALLS, VIEWING HELEN: LANGUAGE AND INDETERMINACY IN THE TEICHOSKOPIA

1. *Introduction*

When we discuss the role of Helen in the *Iliad*, we should always keep in mind that she is situated in the midst of the Iliadic war and myth which differs in its plot from the Trojan one, albeit their obvious connection[1]. The Iliadic myth is not simply a miniature of its Trojan predecessor but a sophisticated selection and reworking of certain episodes with a change of emphasis and scope. To this extent, the case of Helen is paradigmatic; for in the Trojan myth Helen was the protagonist (since both beginning and end of the war were connected to her) whereas in its Iliadic version her importance became secondary[2].

The literature on Helen in the *Iliad* is extensive but it has been mainly concerned with questions of a genetic nature; scholars have been interested in the dilemma between her innocence or guilt, trying to examine and trace its mythological origin; even very recent efforts have adopted the basis of the dilemma although they prefer to interpret it in terms of its poetic function.

The aim of this study is to examine the language of Helen in the Teichoskopia in an effort to determine its poetic mechanics and disclose Helen's status and function in this episode. In other words, how does the diction of Helen reflect her thematical marginalization within the Iliadic plot?

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1. See Maronitis 1995, 55-73. After its first citation, every work will be referred to by the name of the author and the year of publication. All translations are taken from Hammond 1987. The text used for the *Iliad* is that of West 1998-2000. For the *Odyssey* I have consulted the OCT edition by Allen 1917-1919.

2. Cf. Zagagi 1985, 63.

It is no novelty to argue that speech is not uniform in the *Iliad*.
Although the oral nature of the Homeric poems seems nowadays fairly
well established, the language of the poems shows what I would like to
call a *fluctuating regularity* as every song is completely traditional and
completely new. This paradoxical term is imbued with an oxymoronic
tone; it refers not only to the formularity and regularity of Homeric
speech but also to the personal language style of different characters, not
to speak about the differences between narrator and characters[3]. All of
these use language in different ways according to the content of their
speech and the audience they address. Moreover, different sub-genres
incorporated within the greater super-genre of epic have their own for-
mulaic characteristics, the more so since they mirror corresponding social
occasions of performance within a given community.

Under this theoretical perspective, I will try to show that the lack
of consistency characterizing Helen's language in the *Iliad* is not only a
reflection on the level of diction of her thematical marginalization but
also the result of the older epic's preoccupation with the tradition of
epic poetry. Helen's language in the Teichoskopia reveals that the whole
episode is not just a view from the walls but a view at Helen herself and
through her a glance at the genre of epic poetry. I will argue that Helen's
language is imbued with genre-mixing, formulaic misuse and intertextual
references which have a profound effect in the way the whole poem views
the rest of the tradition as represented by key-epic heroes described by
Helen in this episode. This interpretation elevates Helen from the status
of a character of the plot to that of an internal commentator of the tradi-
tion making her layered language equal to the *Iliad's* metapoetic criticism
about its own art.

2. *Genre-Mixing and Formulaic Misuse*

Helen's Figurative Death

When Priam tells Helen to identify a huge Achaean warrior in the
battlefield looking like a king, Helen replies with a lengthy speech that

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3. See Griffin 1986, 36-57.

has, in its larger part, nothing to do with the question the Trojan king
asked her (*Il.* 3.172-180)[4]:

αἰδοῖός τέ μοί ἐσσι, φίλε ἑκυρέ, **δεινός** τε.
ὡς ὄφελεν / **θάνατός** μοι ἀδεῖν κακός, / ὁππότε δεῦρο
υἱέϊ σῷ ἑπόμην, θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιποῦσα
π α ι δ ά   τ ε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὁμηλικίην / *ἐρατεινήν.*
ἀ λ λ ὰ   τ ά γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο· τὸ καὶ κλαίουσα τέτηκα.
τ ο ῦ τ ο   δ έ   τ ο ι   ἐ ρ έ ω, ὅ μ' ἀ ν ε ί ρ ε α ι   ἠ δ ὲ   μ ε τ α λ λ ᾷ ς·
οὗτός γ' *Ἀ τ ρ ε ΐ δ η ς   ε ὐ ρ ὺ   κ ρ ε ί ω ν   Ἀ γ α μ έ μ ν ω ν,*
ἀμφότερον βασιλεύς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερός τ' αἰχμητής.
δαὴρ **αὖτ'** ἐμὸς ἔσκε / **κυνώπιδος,** *ε ἴ   π ο τ'   ἔ η ν   γ ε.*

«Dear father-in-law, you are a man I honour and revere. Oh, if only
vile death had been my choice when I came here with your son, leaving
behind the house of my marriage, and my family and my darling child
and the sweet company of friends! But this did not happen, and so I am
wasted with weeping. But as for the question you ask me, I shall tell you.
This man is the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, both a good king
and a strong fighter with the spear: and he was once my brother-in-law,
whore that I am — if those times were ever real».

Helen begins her speech by addressing her father-in-law (ἑκυρὲ)[5] with
the epithets αἰδοῖος (3.172) and δεινός (3.172), which only here and in 18.394
are attested together[6]. In *Il.* 3.172, the constituent items of the formula

4. I am following Martin's (1989, 164-166) classification of formulas into «para-
digmatic» and «syntagmatic». Therefore bold characters indicate «paradigmatic»
formulas, spaced italics indicate «syntagmatic» and simple italics Iliadic hapax le-
gomena.

5. The word ἑκυρὲ (metrically * σϜεκυρὲ) cf. Chantraine 1953, 146 is a family
term. Helen constantly uses such terminology in her speeches (see especially her im-
provised lament for Hector in *Il.* 24). She calls Hector in Books 6 and 24 of the *Iliad*
δαήρ (6.344 and 24.761) as well as Agamemnon in 3.180.

6. Αἰδοῖος is attested 14 times in the *Iliad*. Here is a full inventory of αἰδοῖος in
the *Iliad*: παρθένος αἰδοίη, ὑπερώϊον εἰσαναβᾶσα (2.514); αἰδοῖός τέ μοί ἐσσι, φίλε ἑκυρέ,
δεινός τε (3.172); αἰδεσθεὶς βασιλῆος ἐνιπὴν αἰδοίοιο (4.402); κοιμῶντο Πριάμοιο παρ' αἰ-
δοίης ἀλόχοισιν (6.250) = (21.460); ἀλλὰ φίλον περ ἐόντα καὶ αἰδοῖον Μενέλαον (10.114);
αἰδοῖος νεμεσητός, ὅ με προέηκε πυθέσθαι (11.649); αἰεί κέ σφι φίλη τε καὶ αἰδοίη καλεοί-
μην (14.210); αἰδοίη τε φίλη τε, πάρος γε μὲν οὔ τι θαμίζεις (18.386) = (18.425); ἦ ῥά νύ
μοι δεινή τε καὶ αἰδοίη θεὸς ἔνδον (18.394); ἀντί τοί εἰμ' ἱκέταο, διοτρεφές, αἰδοίοιο (21.75);
ἀλλὰ χολωσαμένη Διὸς αἰδοίη παράκοιτις (21.479); αἰδοίης ἑκυρῆς ὀπὸς ἔκλυον, ἐν δέ μοι
αὐτῇ (22.451). Of the 14 attestations of the epithet αἰδοῖος three observations can be
made: 1) Only once (10.114) it modifies a proper name. In all the other cases it is used

αἰδοῖός τε... δεινός τε have been separated by the family term (ἑκυρὲ) they
notionally refer to (albeit in a different case) and present a new combina-
tion of the formula αἰδοίη τε φίλη τε[7]. This lexical amalgam is an innovative
use of traditional material triggered by the use of the family term ἑκυρέ
because the dictional allomorph φίλη τε καὶ αἰδοίη/αἰδοίη τε φίλη τε is never
employed with family terms. Αἰδοῖος acquires here a specific emotive force
since it does not simply mean 'revered'[8] but expresses a new coin that
connotes a state of intimacy, not just veneration and respect, emphasi-
zing that *Helen forms an integral part of Priam's family*[9]. Moreover, this
expression of feelings unfolds a poetic strategy characterizing Helen's
language throughout the poem: she constantly indicates her preference
for Priam and Hector who are the only people in Troy showing her re-
spect despite the pain and grief she had caused to the Trojan people.
Formulaic reshaping gives a personal touch to the beginning of her speech
as it underscores her apologetic tone which will acquire a climactic self -
abusive pitch by the end of her speech[10].

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as the complement of either a family term (6x), or a simple noun (3x), or together
with φίλη without a noun (3x), or finally on its own (1x); 2) The epithet αἰδοῖος is
used in the formula φίλη τε καὶ αἰδοίη or inverted as αἰδοίη τε φίλη τε and 3) The epi-
thet αἰδοῖος is also employed in the formula δεινή τε καὶ αἰδοίη or inverted in separation
as αἰδοῖός τε ... δεινός τε.

7. The terms are almost antithetical. The scholiast [b(BCE³E⁴)T] carefully
notes: «εὐφυῶς τὰ τῆς δυσαρεστήσεως ἰάσατο, φάσκουσα τὰ μὲν αἰδεῖσθαι, τὰ δὲ φοβεῖσθαι
αὐτόν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ αὐτὸς «τέκος» (Γ 162) αὐτὴν εἶπε, καὶ αὐτή φησιν· πατρικὴν αἰδῶ καὶ φό-
βον σῴζω περὶ σέ· ἡ γὰρ ὑπερβάλλουσα τιμὴ ἐν αἰδοῖ καὶ φόβῳ κεῖται». See Erbse, 1969-
1988 ad loc.

8. Cf. Kirk 1985, 289.

9. See Autenrieth 1984 s.v. It should be noted that Priam has just addressed
her as φίλον τέκος (Il. 3.162). The whole verse δεῦρο πάροιθ' ἐλθοῦσα, φίλον τέκος, ἵζευ
ἐμεῖο (Il. 3.162) expresses Priam's intimacy with Helen who is treated like a guest.
Sitting next to the host is also an act pertaining to a hospitality scene. This is ano-
ther paradox concerning this presumed *xenia* and Helen being a member of Priam's
family. Priam and the elders of Troy see her as a guest, albeit a special and beloved
one, but Helen constantly employs family terms as a new member of the old king's
family. Mackie (1996, 38 and ft. 80) rightly claims that: [t]he *Teikhoskopia* itself has
the atmosphere of an Odyssean visit» and that Helen «abducted by Paris, whether
willingly or unwillingly, and the cause of all the trouble at Troy, preserves her dig-
nity by assuming the manners of a guest when she sits among the elderly Trojan
men». Mackie is right when she notes that the formula ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς which is
an Iliadic hapax (but attested five times in the *Odyssey* [1.231; 7.243; 15.390; 15.402;
19.171]) is typical of guest scenes when the host asks the guest about his identity,
his origin etc.

10. See Worman 2001, 21-22.

The next line begins[11] abruptly with the heavily charged phrase ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἁδεῖν κακός constituting a death-wish[12] which is a trademark of a special kind of speech in the *Iliad*, namely the γόοι or spontaneous laments[13]. Helen employs the death-wish in all of her three speeches in the *Iliad* (3.172; 6.345-347; 24.764) and so it seems that this extreme form of self-blame is particular to her language and style. In order to explore the full depth of meanings innate in a death-wish, one has to consider first its function and significance as a type of self - reproach and opprobrium.

By uttering a death-wish a speaker wishes his/her own death expressing a level of anxiety and desperation that virtually annulls the very notion of existence, the primary precondition for the utterance of speech. The speaking «I» adopts a self-destructive stance which results in its own effacement suggesting his/her eradication from life and, in particular, since a poetic figure is the one who is verbalizing his/her thoughts, his/her poetic death. Nagy[14] drawing on the path-breaking work of Dumézil[15] in the field of Indoeuropean studies and of Detienne[16] in the area of Greek culture has convincingly shown that the old Indoeuropean polarity between praise and blame is also at work in Homeric poetry which confers praise and blame to various heroes. Keeping these observations in mind, one can see how Helen takes a paradoxical stance since she constructs her fictive death by means of language; as a creature of speech she blames herself while being, *ipso tempore*, immortalized through the medium of poetry[17].

In the phrase quoted above (ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατος) the word θάνατος is modified by κακός; this is not the only use of the adjective κακός with

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11. Furthermore, by wishing that she had died not only does she establish a pattern of diction pointing to self-blame and self-reproach but she also introduces a stereotypical way of speaking which actually doesn't answer other people's questions.

12. For the death-wish in Homeric speeches, see Lohmann 1970, 96-97.

13. See Tsagalis 1998, 21-64 and Worman (2001, 24, note 32) who points to the use of the ὄφελον expression in taunts and verbal counts. The death-wish is not restricted to the spontaneous laments but shows a remarkable persistence in the γόοι.

14. Nagy 1979, 222-242.

15. Dumézil 1943.

16. Detienne 1973², 18-27.

17. Helen seems to be well aware of her poetic immortality. Cf. *Il.* 6.357-358: οἶσιν ἔπι Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόρον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω / ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' ἀοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισιν.

θάνατος[18] but it is the only expression of a death-wish accompanied by the nominative of a noun qualified by an adjective[19]. The use of the aorist infinitive ἀδεῖν in juxtaposition to the phrase θάνατος κακός creates an oxymoronic effect; for ἀνδάνω means to «please», to «delight», to «gratify»[20]. In the *Iliad* ἀνδάνω is used (in *Il.* 1.24: οὐκ ᾿Ατρείδῃ ᾿Αγαμέμνονι ἥνδανε θυμῷ and *Il.* 1.378 = 15.674 οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔτ᾽ Αἴαντι μεγαλήτορι ἥνδανε θυμῷ) with a negative[21] indicating that something is not pleasing to one's heart. By speaking of Helen's imagined death the *Iliad* looks back at her picture and reads it anew[22]; for Helen is supposed to be the mythical paragon of beauty bringing pleasure when people look at her. Some lines earlier in the same book of the *Iliad*, the Trojan old men, when they look at Helen, stress her beauty: αἰνῶς ἀθανάτῃσιν θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἔοικεν (*Il.* 3.158)[23]. She recalls in their mind the picture of Aphrodite, the divine paragon of beauty. And yet, she who is the most beautiful woman in the world, who is famous for a concept regarded as ἀρετή and praised accordingly, she is destined to bring grief to both Greeks and Trojans. The phrase θάλαμον

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18. The word θάνατος is attested 75 time in the *Iliad* (22x in the nominative, 29x in the genitive, 24x in the accusative). It is accompanied only 19 times by an adjective (9x in the nominative, 8x in the genitive and 2x in the accusative). Θάνατος is modified by δυσηχής (3x in the genitive), θυμοραϊστής (3x in the nominative), κακός (2x in the nominative and 2x in the accusative), καταθύμιος (2x in the nominative), μέλας (3x in the genitive), πορφύρεος (2x in the nominative), τανηλεγής (2x in the genitive).

19. An unfulfilled wish is often expressed in Homer by the formula ὤφελ(λ)ον / ὄφελες(ν) + infinitive. There are 6 death-wishes verbalized by this pattern in the *Iliad*. but only in 3.40 and in 3.173 a nominative accompanies the infinitive construction. and only in 3.173 the nominative of a noun is employed (θάνατος). On the use of the ὤφελ(λ)ον / ὄφελες(ν) + infinitive construction, see Chantraine 1953, 228.

20. LSJ⁹ s.v.

21. The imperfect ἥνδανε is also used in *Il.* 18.510 without a negative particle but there it means «acceptable». Εὔαδε (*Il.* 9.173) and ἅδε (*Il.* 12.80 & 13.748) are also accompanied by datives without a negation.

22. This deviation from formulaic standards observed in Helen's language can be also traced in the use of δεῦρο in 3.173 which, as Kirk (1985, 290) notes, «occurs only here at the verse-end out of 22 Iliadic uses (and only 1/21x *Od.*)».

23. There is a brilliant wordplay between (3.158: ἀθανάτῃσιν) and (3.172: θάνατος) contrasting the immortality of Aphrodite and the mortality of Helen. But the contrast is not a simple one but rather multileveled; for it points to an oblique, even sinister aspect of things since Helen has been actually compared to Aphrodite! (3.158). The whole *Todeswunsch* acquires here an oxymoronic, not to say, ironic tone. See Constantinidou (1990, 49) who correctly notes that ἄλγεα πάσχειν in *Il.* 3.157 and πῆμα in *Il.* 3.160 «suggest the destructive nature of the extraordinary beauty which is meaningfully developed in lines 159-160».

γνωτούς τε λιποῦσα brings forward further associations triggered by the abundant use of lament terminology and inspires a tone reminiscent of funerary epigrams as the phraseology employed by Helen alludes to the description of somebody who has passed away; it recalls an epitaph dedicated to a woman who has left behind husband, family, daughter and friends[24]. IG II/III² 9057 strikes a similar note:

["Η]δ' ἔθανεν προλιπῶσα πόσιν καὶ μη[τέρα σεμνὴν]
[κ]αὶ κλέος ἀθάνατον σωφροσύνης [ἔλαβεν][25].
᾽Αριστοκράτεια Κορινθία. Θεόφ[ιλος].

The participle προλιπῶσα like the Homeric λιποῦσα is a marked term employed for leaving behind dear ones or something belonging to the cycle of life when departing to Hades. It (λιποῦσα) is attested three more times in the entire poem (Il. 16.857, 22.363, 24.144):

"Ὣς ἄρα μιν εἰπόντα τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψεν·
ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη ᾽Αϊδόσδε βεβήκει,
ὃν πότμον γοόωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην.

(Il. 16.857)

"Ὣς ἄρα μιν εἰπόντα τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψεν·
ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη ᾽Αϊδόσδε βεβήκει,
ὃν πότμον γοόωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην

(Il. 22.363)

βάσκ' ἴθι, ᾽Ίρι ταχεῖα, λιποῦσ' ἕδος Οὐλύμποιο

(Il. 24.144)

In the first two cases the participle λιποῦσα is used in reference to the departure of Patroclus' and Hector's souls to Hades whereas in the third (Il. 24.144), it takes a literal object (ἕδος). In Helen's speech in Il. 3.172 the participle λιποῦσα is used in reference to her own advent to Troy and the participle's localization at the hexameter's end is deviating from its

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24. For more examples supporting the claim that these two lines of her speech (174-175) recall funerary epigrams, see Peek 1955. In particular, for λιπῶσα, ὁμηλικίη, γνωτός, ἐρατεινή, θάλαμος see Peek's index.

25. Pircher (1979, 22) rightly says that «Der Hexameter diese künstlerisch kaum beachtlichen Gedichtes erwähnt, dass die Frau gestorben ist und ihren Gatten sowie ihre Mutter (?) zurückgelassen hat».

typical placement right after the trochaic caesura. Helen once more mis-
uses an expression by shifting its position within the verse and changing
its function; This localization-shift is accompanied by a semantic one,
namely that by saying she has left behind family and friends, Helen
virtually implies that she has gone to Hades, that Troy is *mutatis mu-
tandis* a by-word for her figurative death[26].

It seems that Helen like Penelope in the *Odyssey* ravels and unravels
her own figurative web with her past memories and present sufferings,
employing lamentation terminology and family vocabulary in an intri-
cate verbal game that makes her speech remain endlessly suspended and
unfinished; she oscillates between two representations equally plausi-
ble[27], that can be resumed in the latent polarisation between θάνατος and
θάλαμος which introduce a key opposition in her speech.

The semantic fields expressed by both θάνατος and θάλαμος are ex-
tensive as both terms contain a large number of allusive references that
shade their light upon the particular lexical use of the term. Θάνατος is
always masculine[28] and like its divine representation (Θάνατος) does not
incarnate a horrible power of destruction[29] but expresses a state, a con-
dition beyond the grave, a point of no return; the *Iliad* is also familiar
with the other side of death, the horrible Κήρ, expressing the inexorable,
pitiless divinity that incarnates a radical alterity and brings destruction
to mortals; in the *Shield of Achilles* (*Il.* 18.535 ff.) Κήρ is represented as
«holding either a warrior still alive, despite his recent wound, or another
still not wounded, or another already dead whom she drags by his feet
into the fighting while she is wearing a cloth on her shoulders, made red

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26. The Aeolic equivalet of λιποῦσα (λίποισα) is used with reference to Helen in
lyric poetry as well. Cf. Alcaeus 283.7-8 (Cambell): παῖδά τ' ἐν δόμ[ο]ισι λίποισ' [ἐρή-
μαν / κάνδρος εὔστρωτον [λ]έχος and Sappho 16.7-11: ... Ἐλένα [τὸν] ἄνδρα / τὸν [πα-
γάρ]ιστον / καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροΐαν πλέοι[σα / κωὖδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων /
πά[μπα]ν ἐμνάσθη ... It is clear from these uses that there is no metaphoric use of the
expression λίποισα + accusative object. I do not think that this observation under-
mines the argument stated above because both Sappho and Alcaeus intend (and
brilliantly achieve) to present and explain Helen's abandonment of her family as a
result of the power of love. On the other hand, in *Iliad* 3.173 Helen nowhere refers
or alludes to her falling in love with Paris. This is done only later on, in the scene
with Aphrodite, and even then a polemical tone emerges in her language as she bla-
mes the goddess of love for her present sufferings.

27. On Penelope in the *Odyssey*, see Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994, 113-116.

28. I am hereafter basing my approach to θάνατος on Vernant 1996, 131-152.

29. See Vernant 1996, 132.

by human blood»[30]. The death Helen is wishing for herself is rather a point of no return and not a horrible end at the hands of furious, bloodthirsty deities[31]. This distinction is important for understanding the intricate nexus between θάνατος and θάλαμος as the opposition upon which their polarisation is based is an antithesis of different conditions of being and not being, not of contradicting powers; θάλαμος encompasses a semantic field which includes a nuptial dimension on two distinct but complementary levels (that of her marriage and of her bridal competition) and also an erotic one. Θάλαμος alludes not only to Helen's nuptial chamber, her conjugal status as Menelaus' wife but also to her bridal competition which will soon be repeated in front of her eyes in Troy[32]. The juxtapositon of these two terms bespeaks their interconnection. Once the θάλαμος of Helen and Menelaus is abandoned, Helen must die, albeit a pleasing death.

Her bridal competition[33] is a *heterodiegetic* event lying outside the Iliadic plot since it has taken place long before even the beginning of the Trojan War; the *Iliad* would, by definition, exclude the commemoration of such an event; but what will happen before the audience's eyes is a second contest for Helen, this time between her two husbands, Menelaus (the legitimate husband) and Paris (the illegitimate one). This second contest may have acquired an ironic tone since Helen is the wife of both these men but the *Iliad* does not seem to bother so much with the oxymoron of this situation; Helen herself considers her marriage with Paris illegitimate and seems to inhabit two different worlds: that of her desire and that of reality; on the level of desire she would prefer not to have left her husband and family, in other words to have remained Menelaus' lawful wife but on the level of reality she blames herself for having followed Paris to Troy; her desire remains suspended and does not find its resolution within the *Iliad*[34].

Her speech alludes through the use of the word θάλαμος to a second

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30. See *Il.* 18.535 ff.

31. Cf. Hesiod *Sc.* 248 ff.

32. It is tempting to see in θάλαμος an allusion to death since this word also means death chamber; but this meaning is nowhere attested in Homer; its first attestation is in Aeschylus' *Persae* 624 in the phrase θάλαμοι ὑπὸ γῆς (the realms below).

33. For her bridal competition, see the Catalogue of Women in *Fragmenta Hesiodea* (Merkelbach-West 1967, 204).

34. See Maronitis 1995, 60. Worman (2001, 22) is right to argue that her self-abuse is due to her tactics of cementing a good relationship with her interlocutor (esp. Priam and Hector) even if she has to employ covert seduction.

contest for Argive Helen and in fact the Teichoscopia may be seen as the
preparation for the reenactment of the bridal competition for the most
beautiful woman in the world[35]; but this time there is a funerary finality
emerging from Helen's speech, a finality reinforced by the specific Iliadic
context as the competition may end with the death of one of the two
contestants. What in the pre-Iliadic tradition was an event of happiness
has acquired in the *Iliad* a death-inspiring tone; *the θάλαμος (marriage)*
has taken the mask of impending θάνατος (death).

Formulaic deviation from the standard norm is also at work in the
case of ὁμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν. ὁμηλικίην is attested five times (5x) in the *Iliad*
(3.175; 5.326; 13.431; 13.485; 20.465) but only here accompanied by an
epithet[36]; ἐρατεινὴν is employed thirteen times (13x) in the entire epic
but it usually (9 times)[37] modifies a place-name at verse-terminal posi-
tion whereas it accompanies a simple noun (ὁμηλικίη, ἠνορέη, ἀμβροσίη
twice) only four times. So ὁμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν (3.175) is a new coin based
on the combination of two paradigmatic formulas which attribute to
Helen's language a special color, that of the unusual[38]. The determination
of the specific semantics of this formulaic deviation coincides with my
previous claim about the figurative death of Helen. Through pattern dei-
xis which springs from formulaic localization at a specific slot within the
hexameter and also from the context-specific use of the cluster ὁμηλικίην
ἐρατεινήν[39], one comes to the conclusion that this expression offers a glance

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35. Clader (1976, 9) points to the oddity of Helen in presenting the Achaean
heroes to Priam; but who else (among the Greeks) could know all the Achaean heroes
and be *available to the poet by being already in Troy* (without having to invent an-
other episode to justify his presence next to Priam, say a captive) *but Helen herself*?
The poet also uses this occasion for a presentation of Helen to his audience; despite
the fact that in the Iliadic myth Helen's role remained secondary, she had to be
introduced in some way to the audience as her importance for the Trojan War as a
whole was fundamental. Clader believes that Helen's «catalogue of the troops» re-
presents her own bride competition back in Sparta, a long time ago and that the
absence of Menelaus and Achilles from her list may be consonant with the fact that
these two heroes were also absent in the original bride contest. On the reshaping of
the Teichoscopia as a traditional catalogue of warriors see Edwards 1980, 81-105.

36. The case of *Il.* 5.326 (δν περὶ πάσης / τῖεν ὁμηλικίης) is somewhat different
due to the fact that πάσης does not function like a real epithet.

37. Modifying a place-name: *Il.* 2.571; 2.591; 2.607; 3.239; 3.401; 3.443; 5.210;
14.226; 18.291. Without a place-name: *Il.* 3.175; 6.156; 19.347; 19.353.

38. In (3.239) Helen uses the epithet ἐρατεινῆς according to its standard function
namely modifying the place-name Λακεδαίμονος.

39. The expression refers, at all probability, to her pre-marriage life. Cf. Theo-
critus' term θῆλυς νεολαία (23.24) in Ἑλένης ἐπιθαλάμιος.

at Helen's allusive language; her affinity with her age-group[40] brings in mind the endearment that is typical of one's fatherland[41] (as is denoted by the exemplary use of the epithet ἐρατεινή with a toponym) but introduces in this specific context a paradox. Helen has left behind her daughter[42] who is fully grown or, rather, born long ago. Both epithets refer to the chronemics[43] of Helen's language; not simply to time, but to its manipulation and perception by the speaker who makes both temporal distality (τηλυγέτην)[44] and proximity (ὁμηλικίη) operate together for the same purpose, namely to create a sorrowful tone reminiscent of funerary epigrams which abundantly employ time as a device for producing grief (mors immatura). Helen's chronemics are based on the innovative combination of two paradigmatic formulas: the feminine form of τηλυγέτη and the cluster ὁμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν which specify that her perception of time is not linear but rather circular and mixed, underscored by emotional factors.

Helen's painful memory of her past impels her to utter another illogical, but poetically efficient, expression denoting the eradication of her past life. This is the second time[45] she employs an expression describing her deep resentment for the past that is expressed by an imaginary annulment of her past life. Lattimore translates the first part of verse 176 as «it did not happen that way»[46]. But what exactly «did not happen»? No doubt, what she has just mentioned. Helen's memory is a self-torture that contrary to the epic code not only does not confer κλέος

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40. See Edwards (1991, 341): «This natural affinity with an age-group, perhaps arising from shared puberty-rites, is often stressed in Homer, e.g. 3.175, 5.325-6, Od. 3.363-4, 6.23, 15.197, 22.209».

41. The epithet ἐρατεινός which is employed four times in Book 3 of the Iliad (3.175, 239, 401, 443) suggests «a memory of a lost peace and fatherland» as Scully (1990, 134) correctly suggests. Scully quotes Bowra (1960, 17) and Vivante (1982, 121) who both uderscore the emotional weight of the above epithet as well as its special application to cities. Thus, according to Scully (1990, 133) it is «particularly suited to the Catalogue of Book 2 and its invocation of the Greek homeland (cf. 2.532, 571, 583, 591, 607)». Scully also offers some euphonic reasons observable in the use of this epithet (see page 203, note 6 and compare his point with mine concerning the use of the epithet in Helen's speech in the Teichoskopia proper).

42. It is attested 6 times in the Iliad but only here in the feminine, as Kirk (1985, 290) notes.

43. For the term chronemics and its function in Homeric poetry, see Lateiner 1995, 291-296.

44. For τηλυγέτη in the Odyssey, see Kakridis 1971, 49-53.

45. The first being her death-wish in verse 173.

46. Lattimore 1951, 105.

to her but is a constant source of grief, finally turning out to be self-de-
structive. τά γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο is a second, albeit disguised, death-wish ex-
pressed by Helen herself as if she wanted to set apart the dark side of
past events.

The introduction of an Iliadic *hapax legomenon* (κλαίουσα τέτηκα)
marks her language with a sorrowful tone expressed at the right moment
when this self-addressed part of her speech comes to its destined end.
κλαίουσα is a lament term, suitable for funerary epigrams and abundantly
employed in the formulas capping the Iliadic γόοι. This is the only at-
testation of the verb τήκω in the *Iliad* whereas in the *Odyssey*[47] it is widely
employed, always metaphorically, in lament contexts. The use of a mar-
ginal and rare lament expression[48] brings the first part of her speech to
its end.

Helen and Achilles

A significant part of Helen's linguistic marginalization in the Tei-
choskopia proper is founded upon the use and function of the metanastic
term τηλυγέτην. Achilles is the κάλλιστος and ἄριστος among the Achaeans
in the masculine form, Helen is the most beautiful and the best in the
woman's form[49], they are both marginal figures in the sense that they
both are secluded and excluded from the main action for the biggest
part of the poem, Achilles in his hut and Helen within the walls of Troy;
they both have partly divine parentage (Helen is the daughter of Zeus
and Achilles the son of Thetis) and as Helen is the cause of the Trojan
war, Achilles is the cause of its destructive change against the Achaeans.
If we compare Achilles' γόος for his dead friend Patroclus (*Il.* 19.315-337)
to that of Helen in *Il.* 3.172-180 we can point to certain features they
share: Achilles remembers his father as Helen recalls her γνωτούς; he too

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47. See *Od.* 5.396; 8.522; 11.200-201; 19.136 and the famous simile of 19.204-
209; 19.211.

48. Notice the absence of the most current diction of lament in this speech:
ὀδύρομαι, στεναχίζω, ἄλγος, κῆδος, ὀλοφύρομαι etc. For lament terms, see Anastassiou
1971; Alexiou 1974; Mawet 1979; Derderian 2001.

49. Austin (1994, 27 n. 5) argues that κάλλιστος and ἄριστος are synonymous in
Homer and brings as evidence *Il.* 3.124 where Iris in the form of Laodike is described
as εἶδος ἀρίστη (best in physical form). For non-Homeric references to Helen's beau-
ty, see *Ilias Parva* fr. 19 (Bernabé), Herodotus 6.61, Ibycus fr. 15, Stesichorus 201
(*PMG*), Schol. in Eurip. *Androm.* 629 and *Or.* 1287, Aristoph. *Lys.* 155 (250 b 14
Dübner) and Pausanias 3.7.7.

remembers his son Neoptolemus (who is long-born —like Helen's daugh-
ter— to such an extent that Achilles wonders even if he is alive). Of course,
Achilles' speech is more elaborate, imbued with what has been happily
called *the expansion aesthetic*[50], a tendency of the Homeric text to ex-
pand and refine ideas and feelings when they are attributed to Achilles;
in this way the best warrior becomes the best speaker, as if the poet of
the *Iliad* has reserved for the poem's main hero the privilege to distin-
guish himself not only through his might and subsequent marginalisation
within the action, but also through the medium of speech, thus making
his liminality not only warlike but also poetic. Helen shares a similar
poetic and dictional liminality which does not find the overflowing out-
burst of sensitivity that characterizes Achilles' diction but distinguishes
itself by its abruptness of tone, its wavering hesitancy between past and
present, its family-orientated wording and, finally, its blameful autore-
ferentiality. Under this perspective, I am inclined to read among the
lines when Achilles in *Il.* 19.324-325 uses such an emotionally weighty
phrase as: ὁ δ' ἀλλοδαπῷ ἐνὶ δήμῳ/εἵνεκα ῥιγεδανῆς Ἑλένης Τρωσὶν πολεμίζω.
Helen is ῥιγεδανή (shrilling/bringing ῥῖγος) not only dictionally[51] but also
poetically; Achilles is found ἀλλοδαπῷ ἐνὶ δήμῳ, in a foreign land where
the horror of a woman has made him fight an endless war; likewise, he
and Helen realise that they are *exiled* in a foreign land not only virtu-
ally but also figuratively; not only in reality but also in diction.

The metanastic poetics[52] of the *Iliad* are centered around Achilles
and his pedigree: both Phoenix (9.478-482) and Patroclus (23.89-90) were
μετανάσται, gracefully welcome by Achilles' father, Peleus, in his palace
in Phthia. Phoenix (9.285) employs the term τηλύγετος (growing son)
when referring to Orestes «who is brought up there in abundant luxury»[53]
(ὅς οἱ τηλύγετος τρέφεται θαλίη ἔνι πολλῇ)[54]. The same term (καί μ' ἐφίλησ',
ὡς εἴ τε πατὴρ ὃν παῖδα φιλήσῃ / μοῦνον τηλύγετον πολλοῖσιν ἐπὶ κτεάτεσσι)[55]
is used by Phoenix later on when speaking about himself being raised by
Peleus. Phoenix's use of these *metanastic politics* is a rhetorical means for
convincing Achilles to become Agamemnon's adopted son, cherished
equally with his true son Orestes and married to one of his beloved daugh-

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50. Martin 1989, 206-230.
51. Cf. Helen's own words in *Iliad* 24.775: ... πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν.
52. For the term metanastic poetics I am indebted to Martin 1992, 11-33.
53. Lattimore 1951, 205.
54. Mackie 1996, 147.
55. Il. 9.481-482.

ters (9.283 ff.). Mackie[56] drawing on the status and function of μετανά-
στης in Hesiodic poetry examines the threats imposed by μετανάσται such
as Phoenix and Patroclus on Achilles. She concludes that Achilles uses
Hesiodic language aiming at various targets the most important of which
is «to question the very ideology of heroic epic»[57].

The metanastic politics of Helen, like those of Achilles, are based on
the perception and symbolic function of the key epithet τηλύγετος. When
this term was used for Orestes and Phoenix[58], there was an aristocratic
coloring[59] as well as a love-caring tone which Achilles inscribed within
the framework of his monumental preoccupation with his treatment of
the heroic code. Achilles is determined not to adopt Agamemnon's pro-
posal, he will not become his adoptive son, Phoenix or Patroclus-like
because his metanastic hermeneutics are of a rather different kind, figu-
rative rather than literal. In the same way, Helen's world is that of a με-
τανάστης[60]; she employs the marked term τηλύγετος which has almost
acquired a metonymic force as it points to her adopting a stance of a fo-
reigner and a stranger at the same time towards her new home in Troy.

This approach revolutionizes the very foundations of the classical
dilemma of her innocence or guilt. Helen refuses to abide by the epic rules
and concur in pidgeonholing herself in Iliadic or Odyssean nomencla-
ture; for it is generally assumed that the *Iliad* depicts Helen as guilty,
since she is presented as having deliberately followed Paris to Troy (whence
her language of self-blame as well as her insults toward Paris), whereas
the *Odyssey* promotes a different view, that of Helen's innocence. This
taxonomical dichotomy reflects a canonistic model made up by scholars
who are willing to see a correspondence between a poem and the repre-
sentation of a character; this diachronic approach with its innate linea-
rity aims at accounting for the evolution of a poetic persona but consi-
derably fails to dovetail with that synchronic multifariousness epic poe-
try is so fond of. By employing the term τηλυγέτην Helen objects to her
classification and expresses her negation towards the role of Menelaus'

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56. Mackie 1996, 148-152.
57. Mackie 1996, 151.
58. For a detailed discussion of the figure of Phoinix in the *Iliad*, see Βοσκός
1974, 47-69 (= Voskos 1997, 91-122).
59. Mackie 1996, 147 note 77.
60. This observation is consonant with that of the *xenia* (Mackie 1996, 38, ft.
80). The picture becomes now more clear; Helen is not simply a *xenos* (guest) but a
xenos (stranger) who has come to stay permanently at Troy. See also Martin 1992,
11-33.

good wife back in Sparta. The memory of the past is painful and sweet at the same time and this deliberate paradox that Helen herself ingenuously concocts makes her a *xénos*, both literaly and metaphorically, to the world of the *Iliad*.

In this foreign, hostile world both Achilles and Helen are isolated and liminal as they oscillate between life and death, past and present. And if in the case of Achilles this marginalisation has been turned by the Iliadic tradition into a dictional overexpressiveness[61], in the case of Helen it has been shifted into what I would like to call «the oscillation principle», a tendency of her language to escape through the lines as she escapes as character every effort of categorization; this can be seen in the way Helen uses diction belonging to different genres of speaking in order to remain marginal and elusive as a poetic persona.

Genre-Mixing

The second part of her speech begins with an Odyssean formula used as a naming pattern[62] (τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω, ὅ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς) which should key the following lines for the Homeric audience with an Odyssean color, in particular with that color which is typical in the O-dyssean *xenia* scenes[63]. But surprisingly enough the description of Agamemnon that follows in the next two lines is done in Iliadic terms with a typical naming formula occupying the first line and a new coin referring to his majestic grandeur in the second.

The whole part of this second line describing Agamemnon stands in apposition to his name and modifies it through its chiastic order:

| βασιλεύς τ' | ἀγαθός |
| κρατερός τ' | αἰχμητής |

The noun-adjective/adjective-noun construction implies both a strong parallelism but also alludes to a contrast which has —after Book 1— become a *locus communis* in the *Iliad*: Agamemnon is a great king

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61. I am referring to the well known *expansion aesthetic* characterizing the language of Achilles. See Martin 1989, 166-205.

62. Higbie (1995, 73) has shown that the naming pattern embedded in typical scenes like that of *xenia* in the *Odyssey* contains —among other formulas— both τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω, ὅ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς and the more flexible formula νημερτ- + ἐννέπω / εἶπον employed by Helen and Antenor respectively. For Odyssean overtones in Helen's language in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, see Kirk 1990, 206.

63. Higbie 1995, 85-86.

but not a great warrior. Helen on the contrary says that he is both; but
I think one is not mistaken should he argue that this line looks back at
the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in Book 1 and so Helen's
words would at once help the Homeric audience to recall what had hap-
pened before. Moreover, Helen describes Agamemnon in this way because
she is ignorant of the quarrel. She has in mind the picture of Agamemnon
that she knew before the war and in this way she remains attached to the
past, even when she has to speak about the present. These observations
become all the more important since they have been introduced by a
truthtelling formula such as τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω, ὅ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς.
Not only does Helen present Agamemnon in a manner that recasts the
events of Book 1 but also corroborates her presentation as if she was a
guest that replied truthfully to the questions of her host.

The Teichoskopia proper does indeed contain elements which pertain
to the *xenia* scenes of the *Odyssey*; on the other hand, the use of a *xenia*
formula (τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω, ὅ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς) creates an interplay
between the disguised language of Helen and the potential tuning of her
speech on an Odyssean note; but this remains only a possibility that is
not exploited. On the contrary, the description of Agamemnon in Iliadic
terms brings on the surface the intertextual play between the *Iliad* and
the *Odyssey*. Iliadic Helen winks at Odyssean Helen who in Book 4 is also
ready to talk about the Greek heroes in Troy. Was Helen particularly
linked to catalogues in epic poetry? And if the authority whom epic poe-
try regards as suitable par excellence for recounting the past (that is
what catalogues really are) is the ἀοιδός, is it not sound to argue that He-
len is presented with the abilities of an ἀοιδός[64]?

The term κυνώπιδος (180) points to the language of self-abuse[65] ma-
king Iliadic Helen special among the rest of the poem's characters in that

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64. Cf. *Od*. 4.277-279: ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους, / πάντων
'Αργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν. In addition, in Book 6.358 of the *Iliad* it is Helen
who says that she and Paris will be the subject of future songs for mankind. See
Kirk 1990, 207 ad loc.

65. Nagy (1979, 226) convincingly argues that «the language of praise poetry
presents the language of unjustified blame as parallel to the eating of heroes' corpses
by dogs. Significantly, the language of epic itself quotes the language of blame wi-
thin the framework of *narrative quarrels* (cf. *Il*. 1.159 = κυνῶπα) and a prominent word
of insult within such direct quotations is κύων 'dog' and its derivatives». See also
Faust (1970, 8-31) who examines the function of κύων in Homer according to the
kind of text it belongs to. In narrative, dogs are presented as hunters, watch-dogs
or pets, in the similes as hunters and in the speeches (as well as the proem) as carion -
eaters. See also Vodoklys 1992, 20-21.

she is «the only character in the Homeric poems to engage in self-abuse;
no one else turns such barbs against themselves»[66].

Dog-epithets are often used as flyting tools employed in verbal due-
ling which forms a typical context in epic poetry. Verbal dueling in the
Iliad has become a highly conventionalized process, mainly intermale[67],
suiting the need for triumph and self-confirmation, particularly felt
within a male-dominated warrior society. Helen's language thus mimics
«the aggressive challenge of the hero in the battlefield»[68] and transfers
her to an intermediate state of being as she oscillates between male and
female. Helen as a female cannot, obviously, take part in the fighting in
the battlefield. Heroic flyting is for her, by definition, only verbal, not
martial; yet her venomous autoreferential insults reveal the shared speech
patterns she is capable of using in accordance with the larger frame of
the *Iliad* (dogs being a metaphor of death since they are linked to Hades).

Moreover, Helen's dog-language may have generic affiliations al-
luding to other competitive versions of the Trojan War where she was
presented in a negative way. Graver[69] thinks that negative portrayals of
Helen may have figured in the ancient kitharodic narrative and that her
(Helen's) representation in Homeric epic reflects a defaming tradition
that the *Iliad* is aware of but tries to avoid. It is likely that in *Il.* 6.357
Helen is exactly referring to this tradition. Thus, dog-language functions
also on a metapoetic level since it marks the *Iliad's* preference for a dif-
ferent treatment of Helen on purely generic terms.

The sophisticated interplay between male and female language ado-
pted by Helen acquires new dimensions since it refers not only to gender
but also to nationality. The idea of Trojan feminization is not new. Mackie
has argued that the *Iliad* feminizes Troy and the Trojans[70]; Nagler[71] has
claimed that the rape of Troy is personified in the gestures of Hector and
Andromache in 22.468-472 and 22.405-407; Rabel[72] has also maintained
that the rape of the female by the male is transferred to both an image
of youths and maidens depicted on Achilles' shield and to the pursuit of
Hector by Achilles in Book 22.

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66. Worman 2001, 21.
67. Parks 1990, 12-13.
68. Worman 2001, 26.
69. Graver 1995, 41-61.
70. Mackie 1996, 80.
71. Nagler 1974, 53-54. I have found this reference in Mackie 1996, 80.
72. Rabel 1989, 90. I have found this reference in Mackie 1996, 80.

Helen's language is double-binded, mirroring her effort to assimilate herself with the community but retain at the same time her independence. The radical instability of her language fluctuating between praise for Hector and Priam and self-blame mimes the languages of both Greeks and Trojans in the *Iliad*. She adopts a defensive stance, Trojan-like, for her dear ones but an aggressive, Greek-like, for her own self refusing to abide by the epic rules and employing a language that reflects her idiosyncratic disavowal against any effort of classification.

In this way, she avoids the dilemma of choosing sides and oscillates between not only the Achaean and Trojan communities but also between male and female characteristics. In a nutshell, *by employing the language of blame with an autoreferential character Helen shifts nationality and gender at the same time*. Nationality, because the language of νεῖκος is akin to the aggressive Achaean style, and gender, because it is particular to the male warrior society.

Equally aenigmatic is the expression εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε filling the terminal adonic after Helen's self abuse. This expression is used in both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and «regularly refers to irretrievable and irreparable loss, and most often that associated with death»[73]. Referring to lost happiness the above formula constitutes a liminal phrase resounding the blurred voice of Helen whose life fluctuates between reality and imagination making the Teichoskopia an indeterminate, ambiguous account whose truthfulness and validity are put into doubt by its own internal narrator[74]. One can hardly find a more appropriate way for an ambiguous figure like Helen to bring her speech to a halt; her speech is stopped but not finished by the use of such a formula that puts into doubt the very validity of Helen's being, revealing the discontinuity of her account. Elusiveness of language becomes a key-term for Helen's postponed and incomplete speech that introduces her personal outlook at the world of heroes (i.e. the world of the *Iliad*) while underscoring «that incomprehensible contradiction between memory and non-existence»[75] that speaks for her displacement within the *Iliad* itself.

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73. Katz 1991, 142. The same formula is used by Nestor in *Il.* 11.762, by Priam (*Il.* 24.426), by Penelope (*Od.* 19.315), by Telemachus (*Od.* 15.268) and by Laertes (*Od.* 24.289).

74. Helen's account in the Teichoskopia is by no means complete. See Lynn - George 1988, 33.

75. Lynn-George 1988, 37.

3. The Silent Voice

After Agamemnon it is the turn of Odysseus to be described by He-
len (Il. 3.199-202):

Τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειθ' Ἑλένη Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα·
«οὗτος δ' / αὖ / Λαερτιάδης / π ο λ ύ μ η τ ι ς Ὀ δ υ σ σ ε ύ ς,
ὅ ς τ ρ ά φ ε ν / ἐ ν δ ή μ ῳ Ἰ θ ά κ η ς / κραναῆς / π ε ρ ἐ ο ύ σ η ς,
εἰδὼς / παντοίους τε / δόλους / κ α ὶ μ ή δ ε α π υ κ ν ά».

Then Helen, offspring of Zeus, answered him: «This is the son of
Laertes, resourceful Odysseus, who was bred in the land of Ithaka, rug-
ged country though it is, and is master of all kinds of trickery and clever
plans».

Helen's answer strikes one for its laconic style. Her dictional thrift
is at once opposed to Antenor's eloquence who describes in detail both
Menelaus[76] and Odysseus (3.204-224) and elaborates on the presentation
of the king of Ithaca. The basic question that has to be asked is concerned
with Helen's inability to talk minutely about Odysseus, a problem that
the poem solves by giving Antenor, one of the Trojan elders, the oppor-
tunity to fill this gap. A close look at Helen's answer speaks for the form-
ularity[77] of her response as these verses of «compressed biography and
characterization»[78] are opposed to the rarity of giving Odysseus' patro-
nymic in a case other than the vocative in the Iliad[79].

Helen and Odysseus constantly engage themselves in disguise, ver-
bal and literal alike. These two paragonal beguilers meet within Troy

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76. By giving Antenor the opportunity to talk in detail about Odysseus, the
Iliad brilliantly avoids an important «technical» obstacle, namely making Helen talk
about Menelaus (who is of course her husband and ready to fight Paris in a duel that
will take place in the plain of Troy). Thus, both Odysseus and Menelaus are well
presented in the Teichoskopia despite Helen's inability to talk about them in detail
(Odysseus) or at all (Menelaus).

77. Kirk 1990, 293 ad loc. conviningly argues for the formularity of lines 201-
202, the former being paralleled in the Odyssey and the latter «being an ad hoc amal-
gam of formular elements elaborating his [Odysseus'] description as πολύμητις» (294).

78. Kirk 1990, 293.

79. Higbie 1995, 106 (note 36). The uneconomical speech introductions of Il.
3.171, 199 and 228 (all in the Teichoskopia) have been observed by Edwards 1969,
81-7. Edwards thinks this is due to variation but Kirk (1990, 293) explains the mat-
ter as a «rather tiresome departure, not perhaps to be imitated or repeated, from an
established formular rhythm».

when Odysseus had attempted to steel the Palladium (*Od.* 4.240 ff). He
was recognized by Helen who did not betray him to the Trojans. Some-
thing similar happens when she mimicked the voices of the wives of those
Achaeans hidden within the Trojan Horse (*Od.* 4.266 ff)[80]. Odysseus is
the one who recognized her and advised his companions not to fall in her
trap. Both Helen and Odysseus are paired as clever, eloquent and verb-
ally exceptional figures, each one being a match for the other[81]. They
could very well have been rivals but both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* make
this potential rivalry a congenial analogy as they are both able to recog-
nize and destroy each other (in the Palladium story and the Wooden
Horse) but turn this dormant enmity into a silent, mutual understanding
as if sharing some special code akin only to themselves[82].

Helen and Odysseus just like Helen and Achilles are mutually ex-
clusive. There is no single scene they can be together. When it comes to
Helen to describe Odysseus she does that in a brief, laconic manner which
is highly formulaic and colored with Odyssean formulas. In this descri-
ption, in opposition to her first speech, Helen employs paradigmatic and
syntagmatic formulas in equal numbers which shows that she is not so
innovative as before and relies more on the repeated phrase. Helen is in-
capable of developing her own language for Odysseus and follows the

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80. Kakridis (1971, 47) plausibly argued that the poet of the *Odyssey* imagines
Helen calling each Achaean warrior hiding in the Trojan Horse in his local dialect.
He also called attention to the fact that the virgins in Delos (*HHApollo* 156 f.) were
known to have mimicked the voices of pilgrims. For Helen's «polyphonic ability»,
see Martin's forthcoming article «Synchronic Aspects of Homeric Performance: The
Evidence of the *Hymn to Apollo*», Proceedings of the First International Conference
on Hellenism at the End of the Millenium, La Plata, Argentina. I owe this reference
to Martin 2001, 56 (ft. 5).

81. Worman 2001, 34.

82. The locus classicus for Helen's mimic ability is of course *Od.* 4.279, as Wor-
man (2001, 21) rightly suggests. I would like to argue that her mimic capacities should
not only be taken literally but figuratively as well. Helen in the Teichoskopia mimes
the heroes she describes using language that corresponds to her own perception of
each of them. It is no coincidence that the two heroes (Menelaus and Odysseus)
whom Antenor describes in detail in the Teichoskopia are the ones (together with
Diomedes) who are inside the Trojan Horse when Helen mimics the voices of the
wives of the Achaeans (*Od.* 4.266 ff). Menelaus in *Od.* 4.266 ff. frames his own tale
in a way similar to the one Helen had used just before. Ford (1992, 72-74) and Wor-
man (2001, 33) emphasize the importance of the analogy between *Il.* 2.488 and *Od.*
4.240 attributing to Helen the authority of both Menelaus and the poet. Menelaus
adopts a similar strategy attempting to invigorate his own story. All three characters
(Helen, Menelaus and absent Odysseus) share a preoccupation with speech either in
epic tradition in general (Helen & Odysseus) or in the specific scene.

more secure but also less creative solution of using ready-made formulas; she is incapable of describing Odysseus in detail because he is the par excellence hero of speech and so she has no language to rival him; she withdraws when the gifted speaker comes to mind borrowing the tradition's voice to simply mention his name, his place of origin and his well known epic qualities. Antenor is then summoned by the *Iliad* to do what Helen herself cannot do, namely to state, albeit indirectly, that Odysseus excells among other heroes in respect to his outstanding speech ability (3.221-224):

> ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὄπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἵη
> καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίῃσιν,
> οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆΐ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος.
> οὐ τότε γ' ὧδ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀγασσάμεθ' εἶδος ἰδόντες.

But when he let the great voice go from his chest, and the words came drifting downlike the winter snows, then no other mortal man beside could stand up against Odysseus. Then we wondered less beholding Odysseus' outward appearance. (Translation by Lattimore, 1951).

4. Int(e)r(a)textual Helen

Helen's third reply to Priam's question is, like the first, a long one (3.229-242):

> Τὸν δ' Ἑλένη τανύπεπλος ἀμείβετο δῖα γυναικῶν·
> «οὗτος δ' / Αἴας / ἐστὶ / π ε λ ώ ρ ι ο ς, ἕ ρ κ ο ς ᾿Α χ α ι ῶ ν.
> Ἰδομενεὺς / δ' ἑτέρωθεν / ἐ ν ὶ Κ ρ ή τ ε σ σ ι θ ε ὸ ς ὥς
> ἕστηκ', / ἀ μ φ ὶ δ έ μ ι ν / Κρητῶν ἀγοὶ / ἠγερέθονται.
> πολλάκι / μιν / ξείνισσεν / ἀ ρ η ΐ φ ι λ ο ς Μ ε ν έ λ α ο ς
> ο ἴ κ ῳ ἐ ν ἡ μ ε τ έ ρ ῳ, / ὁπότε / Κρήτηθεν / ἵκοιτο.
> νῦν δ' / ἄ λ λ ο υ ς μ ὲ ν π ά ν τ α ς / ὁρῶ / ἑ λ ί κ ω π α ς ᾿Α χ α ι ο ύ ς,
> οὕς / κ ε ν ἐ ΰ / γνοίην / καί τ' / οὔνομα / μυθησαίμην,
> δ ο ι ὼ δ' / ο ὐ δ ύ ν α μ α ι ἰ δ έ ε ι ν / κ ο σ μ ή τ ο ρ ε λ α ῶ ν,
> Κ ά σ τ ο ρ ά θ' ἱ π π ό δ α μ ο ν κ α ὶ π ὺ ξ ἀ γ α θ ὸ ν Π ο λ υ δ ε ύ κ ε α,
> αὐτοκασιγνήτω, / τ ώ μ ο ι μ ί α γ ε ί ν α τ ο μ ή τ η ρ.
> ἤ' οὐκ ἐσπέσθην / Λ α κ ε δ α ί μ ο ν ο ς ἐ ξ ἐ ρ α τ ε ι ν ῆ ς,
> ἤ / δεύρω / μὲν / ἕποντο / νέεσσ' ἔνι ποντοπόροισιν,
> νῦν αὖτ' / οὐκ ἐθέλουσι / μάχην / καταδύμεναι / ἀνδρῶν,
> αἴσχεα / δειδιότες / καὶ / ὀνείδεα / πόλλ' / ἅ μοί ἐστιν».

Long-dressed Helen, queen among women, answered him: «That is the huge Aias, a great defence for the Achains. And over there is Idomeneus, standing among his Cretans like a god, and the Cretan leaders gathered around him. Many times the warrior Menelaos entertained him in his house, when he would come from Crete. And now I can see all the other bright-eyed Achaians whom I could recognise and name for you. But there are two marshals of the people I cannot see, Kastor the horse - breaker and the boxer Polydeukes, my own brothers, born with me to the same mother. Either they did not join with the others from lovely Lakedaimon, or they did come here in the seafaring ships, but now do not want to enter the fighting, for fear of the shame and the curses that are heaped upon me.

Helen's reply is virtually completed in the very first line of her speech with the description of Ajax (3.330). The mention of Idomeneus who is standing in a close distance is merely a pretext for what might seem, in the eyes of a conservative critic, an unnecessary autobiographical addition with no bearing on the situation. A closer look though shows that the reference to Idomeneus transfers Helen's thoughts back to Sparta as she recalls that Menelaus had often offered hospitality to Idomeneus in their palace at home.

The *xenia* scene relic plays a prominent role as it gives Helen the opportunity to refer to Menelaus who is presented in his typical Iliadic verbal vestiture, that of a great warrior. Helen ingeniously picks up ἀρηΐφιλος that Antenor had just used (3.206: σὺν ἀρηϊφίλῳ Μενελάῳ) thus deliberately mimicking his language:

Antenor: 3.206-207

... σὺν ἀρηϊφίλῳ Μενελάῳ·
τοὺς δ' ἐγὼ ἐξείνισσα καὶ ἐν μεγάροισι φίλησα,

Helen: 3.232-233

πολλάκι μιν ξείνισσεν ἀρηΐφιλος Μενέλαος /οἴκῳ ἐν ἡμετέρῳ

There are further examples corroborating the idea of a response or rather a reflection coming from Antenor's previous speech:

(a) *Antenor*: 3.205 & 209

ἤδη γὰρ καὶ δεῦρό ποτ' ἤλυθε δῖος 'Οδυσσεύς (205)
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ Τρώεσσιν ἐν ἀγρομένοισιν ἔμιχθεν (209)
στάντων (210)
στάσκεν (217)

(b) *Helen*: 3.231 & 233

    ἕστηκ᾽, ἀμφὶ δέ μιν Κρητῶν ἀγοὶ ἠγερέθονται (231)

    ... ὁπότε Κρήτηθεν ἵκοιτο (233)

These textual analogies are a clear sign of intratextual mirroring
between Antenor's and Helen's speeches[83]; but, since it is Helen who
speaks after Antenor and not vice versa, only her speech is indirectly al-
luding to the one that has preceded it. One can even speak of an indirect
reply because Helen skillfully uses the language of *xenia* in a highly so-
phisticated way to reshape and reformulate her past life. Helen consi-
stently attempts to redefine her image by insisting on presenting her
past in her own terms; in this way, she fosters the stance of the external
narrator as if she was rivaling a competitive song-tradition that was
fond of disparaging her through a negative portrayal[84].

The blissful past, exactly as in her initial reply to Priam, is counter-
balanced by a painful present to which she decides to return abruptly
(νῦν δ᾽). The sudden change from paradigmatic formulas (which she em-
ployed when referring to Ajax and Idomeneus / 3.230-232) to syntagma-
tic (when recalling her two brothers / 3.236-239) mirrors her emotional
shift; she uses the ready-made phrase to bring to the narrative surface
those she herself, not Priam, wants to mention. But as the names of Ca-
stor and Pollux become a pretext for her divulging «the nemesis that
others do not and cannot speak»[85] she resorts to paradigmatic formulas
(3.240-242) showing her laborious effort to find the right words that can
express her shame.

Helen has been watching a spectacle organized and performed for
her own sake[86] but at the same time decides to question its validity, its
very raison d'être. The typical blame-vocabulary (αἴσχεα-ὀνείδεα: 3.242)
that she employs should not be simply taken at face value. By accusing
and condemning herself, cause and end of the war but also spectacle and
viewer during the Teichoskopia, Helen endorses a metapoetic effect.

This last observation is of profound importance for understanding
the level of self-knowledge epic poetry exemplifies. The dazzling question
one is allowed to ask after the Teichoskopia concerns the value inherent

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83. Mirroring, Framing, Juxtaposition and *mise en abyme* form the main intra-
textual associations. For intratextuality, see Sharrock and Morales (2000) and in
particular Martin's contribution (2000, 43-65).

84. Graver 1995, 59.

85. Ebbott 1999, 15.

86. Austin 1994, 48.

in listening to a song-tradition that deals with the strugge of two armies for the possesion of a woman (Helen) who is the symbol of blame. The Iliadic tradition thus questions the very ontogeny of its subject-matter and, by extension, of the genre it belongs to. Skillfully enough, there is a way out of the impass. As only Helen can blame Helen[87], so only the *Iliad* is allowed to question its own validity[88].

By referring to her brothers (3.237) Helen joins the end of the Tei-choskopia to its beginning (3.144) and opens a window to intertextual[89] associations which conjure up other competitive song-traditions. The *Iliad* offers a hint to a variation of the Theseus story as an abductor of Helen[90] but keeps this version marginalized. Helen is looking for her own brothers to «save herself from the ignominy of epic»[91], from the position she has placed herself in the *Iliad*[92]. These variants remain a possibility the *Iliad* is well aware of but keeps it in the corner. At the end of the scene, the external narrator caps Helen's words by putting an end to her vain effort to escape via another tradition: her brothers are dead in their fatherland (3.244).

The effect of all this interplay is remarkable; Helen's language picks up the poet's vague reference to Aithra (3.144) and links it to her bro-thers. Through this allusive hint to a possible para-narrative[93] that is inextricably linked with the role Helen plays in the Teichoskopia, as an evaluating factor of epic poetry, a metapoetic comment is being shored up. In the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2 peoples and cities are *localized and placed* with the specific taxonomy of epic memory[94]. Helen's *Cata-*

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87. Achilles is a marginal exception (cf. 19.325: εἵνεκα ῥιγεδανῆς Ἑλένης Τρωσὶν πολεμίζω) even if we regard this term as derogatory.

88. Collins (1988, 57) has neatly put it: «only Helen can blame Helen without exposing the paradox that the poem wishes to remain hidden, that the very act which necessitates a war over her also condemns her from the poem's point of view, and renders her an unworthy object of struggle».

89. For intertextuality, see Pucci 1987.

90. Herodotus 9.73; Apollodorus 3.107 and the *Epitome* 1.23. According to the A scholia in *Il.* 3.242 there was a version by the poet Alcman in which Theseus had abducted Helen. Euphorion of Chalkis and Alexander of Pleuron recited also this tale. See Jenkyns 1999, 209 (fr. 5).

91. Jenkins 1999, 220. See also Austin 1994, 48.

92. See Stesichorus *PMG* 192.1; Pausanias 3.19.11.

93. For para-narratives in the *Iliad*, see Alden 2001.

94. For the resources of memory used by the Homeric poet to weave his tales, see Minchin 2001; for the performance of lists and catalogues, see in particular chap-ter 2.

logue of Heroes in Book 3 constitutes a brief reenactment of the beginning
of the whole Trojan myth. But this attempt to offer a catalogue of heroes
is abruptly cut short by Helen's «ignorance of the mortal fate of those
most clearly related to her, now most remote to her»[95].

This disturbing coda decreases the authoritativeness of Helen's speech
as the external narrator decides to take the floor again and put an end
to the Teichoskopia. It is time for Helen, the dictional outside, the «poe-
tic immigrant» of the Iliad to recede into the background, now that her
role has been completed. After all, the poet's goal has been fulfilled: the
«View from the Walls» has become a «View of Helen» and through this
beguiling and vague figure a *self-conscious view to the genre of epic poetry.*

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