

STESICHORUS, *GERYONEIS* S 11.5-26:
THE DILEMMA OF GERYON

A new era for Stesichorean scholarship has dawned since the Egyptian soil presented us with quite a few papyrus scraps of lost or unknown poems by Stesichorus. The scholarly interest centers around various aspects of Stesichorus' poetic craft, such as diction, metrics, inventiveness or originality in myth-making as well as the mode of performance of his poems¹. His image emerges slowly but

1. The issue of performance, which depends on whether Stesichorus was a solo singer, i.e., a citharode (see *Suda* s.v. Στησίχορος) or a choral poet, is beyond the scope of this present study. Yet it may be helpful in a Stesichorean study to outline, even if only selectively, the solutions proposed, especially since it is the *Geryoneis* with the assumed length of more than 1300 verses (stichometric N = 1300) that has revived the issue. The notion of U. von Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides*, Berlin 1913, pp. 238-239 n. 3, that Stesichorus was a citharode and not a choral poet like Pindar or the Locrian dithyrambic poets still prevails today. Among others, M. L. West, «Stesichorus», *CQ* 21 (1971) 309, 313, considers Stesichorus a singing poet, who sang his poems himself to the cithara and was maybe accompanied by a group of dancers, as Demodocus was (*Od.* 8.262-65). M. Haslam, «Stesichorean Metre», *QUCC* 17 (1974) 31-33, and id., «The Versification of the New Stesichorus (P. Lille 76 abc)», *GRBS* 19 (1978) 29 n. 1, reaches the same conclusion for metrical reasons: the substitution of the anceps (u) for the biceps (uu) before the clausular part —u.— (—), a practice which blurs the rhythm by producing a rhythmical slackening and thus suggests that the singing was done by the poet himself. B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece. From Homer to the Fifth Century*, transl. by A. T. Cole, Baltimore and London 1988, pp. 14-17 with p. 239 n. 51, assumes that Demodocus' song has a strophic structure since it is accompanied by a silent chorus of dancers exemplifying thus an epic-lyric type of sung performance, which antedates the recitational performance in the normalized hexameter form. The lyric narratives of Stesichorus inherit and continue this type of pre-Homeric tradition as proven by the subject matter, the strophic song construction and the meter (dactylo-anapaests and epitrites). Although an advocate of the citharodic Stesichorus, Gentili does not exclude the possibility that our poet may have composed choral songs as well; regarding the *Geryoneis*, he shares the thesis of C. O. Pavese, (*Tradizioni e generi poetici della Grecia arcaica*, Rome 1972, pp. 239ff.) that it was a citharodic rather than a choral poem (*ibid.*, pp. 122, 272 n. 11); D. A. Campbell, *The Golden Lyre*, London 1983, p. 161, comparing the *Geryoneis* with Pi. *Pyth.* 4 and the tragic choruses, admits that «we cannot say with confidence that poems of this length were beyond the capacities of a choir». After examining the lyric genres with the composition of which Stesichorus has been credited, and the conventional musical accompaniment and performance of each in my *Stesichorus and his Poetry*, Diss. University of Chicago, 1985, pp. 46-59, I also reached the conclusion that Stesichorus was an inseparable link in the chain of choral poets and

steadily out of the mist of time and his link position in the literary tradition between Homer and later poetry is confirmed though redefined: his borrowing from his great predecessor and his lending to his successors are better appreciated nowadays. In conformity with this wider comparative trend the present study has the objective to illustrate the specific way Stesichorus has used the epic material and delineated the *ethos* of Geryon in his *Geryoneis* S 11.5-26 in comparison to *Iliad* 12.322-28, which has all along been considered the matrix of the dilemmatic situation presented by the lyric poet.

A question related and preliminary to our proposed comparative enterprise is whether Stesichorus knew the Homeric work in its fixed form or an epic poetical tradition, the manner of composition and transmission of which has been illuminated by the pioneering work of Milman Parry² and elaborated on by his successors. The viewing of epic and lyric in genetical terms and the explanation of their similarities on content and linguistic level as a conscious and temporally linear mimesis of the former by the latter has been reevaluated in theories which emphasize the oral character of Greek poetry and culture and the continuity of the poetic tradition³, the origins of which are traced back to the Dark ages or the mycenaean world or even the indoeuropean times⁴.

had, in all probability, adopted the mode of choral performance exemplified by Alcman and Pindar, that is, a singing and dancing chorus. For a forceful defense of the choral performance of the Stesichorean Poetry see W. Burkert, «The Making of Homer in the Sixth Century B.C.: Rhapsodes versus Stesichoros», *Papers on the Amasis Painter and his World*, Malibu, California 1987, pp. 43-62.

2. *The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers of M. Parry*, ed. by A. Parry, Oxford 1971.

3. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public*, pp. 3-23, with reference to Stesichorus pp. 16-17 with p. 239 n. 57-59.

4. On this issue see A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, transl. by J. Willis and C. de Heer, London 1966, pp. 7-13, and id., «Homeros» *RE* Suppl. 11 (1968) col. 693-703; since the pertaining bibliography is huge I will only briefly survey part of the post-Leskian bibliography. N. S. Grinbaum, «La koiné micenea e il problema della formazione della lingua nella lirica corale greca antica», *Atti e Memorie del 1o Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia*, vol. III, Rome 1967, pp. 71-75, claims that the language of the epic and lyric poetry goes back to a Mycenaean koine that was formed in Thessalia out of aeolic, achaeian and (proto)ionic elements before it was split into (a) the continental koine, which constituted the foundation of the language of choral lyric, and (b) the koine of Asia Minor, the base of the epic poetry; cf., however, the objections of C. Gallavotti, «Tradizione micenea e poesia greca arcaica», *ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 158-82, to the view that not only the language but also the themes of epic and lyric poetry go back to the Mycenaean world. Gallavotti places the origins of Greek literature in the mystery of those centuries designated «con il nome di medioevo ellenico». This is refuted by C. O. Pavese, «L'origine micenea della tradizione epica rapsodica», *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 21 (1980) 341-52, esp. 346, 350f. Pavese p. 349, defends the theory of the mycenaean origin of the oral poetical tradition and approves of the thesis advanced by R. Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*. Wiesbaden

The theory of the continuous poetic tradition, which has its roots in the more or less remote past and its bloom into the archaic era, may account for the maturity and perfection with which the epic poetry appears in the eighth century. However, the applicability of this theory of evolution to the lyric poetry, the traces of which are discerned as early as Homer⁵ but the eponymous phase of which is witnessed about the beginning of the seventh century, is conditioned by a new parameter, the introduction of the alphabet sometime about the middle of the eighth century and the alterations it brought to the composition and transmission of poetry⁶. The

1967, and by M. L. West, «Greek Poetry 2000-700 B.C.», *CQ* 23 (1973) 179-92, and «Indo-European Metre», *Glotta* 51 (1973) 161-88, about the continuity of poetic tradition from the indoeuropean times up to the attested poems of the archaic era, although he questions the indoeuropean ascendancy of the hexameter. M. Durante, *Sulla Preistoria della Tradizione Poetica Greca*, Rome 1971, also defends the continuity of poetical tradition. C. Calame, «L'impact du passage de l'oral à l'écrit sur l'énoncé de l'énonciation dans la littérature de la Grèce archaïque», *Oralità, Cultura, Letteratura, Discorso. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Urbino 1980*, Rome 1985, p. 104, considers very doubtful the claim that the Linear B was ever used for literary purposes and impossible to discern the state of the poetic tradition before the adoption of the phoenicean alphabet. For a brief outline of this problem of origins see R. L. Fowler, *The Nature of Early Greek Lyric: Three Preliminary Studies*, [Phoenix suppl. vol. 21, 1987], 10f., 107f. with n. 20. Fowler's own position (p. 108) is that during the Dark ages there occurred many changes, including the creation of the lyric genres as we know them.

5. Homer, *Il.* 1.472-74, 7.241, 18.50f., 314-16, 493-95, 569-72, 24.720-24, *Od.* 5.61f., 8.262-65, 24.60f.; see C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry. From Alcman to Simonides*, Oxford 1961, pp. 4-8.

6. See L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, p. 21: «the date of birth [of the alphabet] was somewhere about the middle of the 8th c.»; Lesky, *History of Greek Literature*, p. 12 with n. 13, and id., «Homeros» col. 703-709. The degree of influence of writing on the composition and transmission of the Homeric poems is a controversial and complicated issue. For the idea that these poems were orally composed but constantly revised and dictated see A. B. Lord, «Homer's Originality: Oral Dictated Texts», *TAPA* 84 (1953) 124-34, and id., «Homer and Other Epic Poetry», in *A Companion to Homer*, ed. by A. Wace and F. Stubbings, London 1962, pp. 179-214; J. A. Notopoulos, «Studies in Early Greek Oral Poetry», *HCPH* 68 (1964) 1-77; cf., however, G. S. Kirk, *Homer and the Epic*, Cambridge 1965, repr. 1974, pp. 3, 11, 30f., who believes that there was achieved a fairly high standard of verbatim precision in the transmission of the Homeric epics, that the impact of writing was rapid and pervasive and there was a spate of written literature from the middle of the 7th c.; similarly id., *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. I, Cambridge 1985, pp. 14-16. Calame, p. 104, suggests that the adoption and use of the alphabet occurred in the course of the 8th century and at that time an *oidos* (or maybe two) named Homer had the idea of elaborating on and writing down the poems he used to recite and which were then edited under the name of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; for Calame's compromising view of oral performance parallel to writing for memorization purposes see *ibid.*, pp. 105f. with n. 13. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public*, pp. 15-19, argues that the epics were transmitted orally, since the wide use of the alphabet for book production and circulation did not become current until the second half of the 5th c. B.C.; for an early date of the alphabet introduction and its early use in writing the epic poetry see T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer*, New York 1964, pp. 272-75.

fluidity and uncertainty of our knowledge on this matter affects our ability to determine whether the close and undeniable thematic and stylistic affinities of Stesichorus with Homer⁷ are to be appreciated in the context of an oral culture or of a literate one, which, apart from the legacy of the formulaic technique, profits from the services of modernity, namely, a written text.

The question has become more urgent recently, since the new papyrus scraps reconfirmed the ancient criticism. In his *Nostoi* (PMG 209) Stesichorus rehandles *Odyssey* (15.160-81)⁸ with a remarkable sensitivity and an equally impressive stylistic adherence to the epos. In his *Geryoneis* S 13 he touches upon the Hecuba scene (*Il.* 22.79-89); in S 15.ii. 14-17, he employs the Homeric poppy simile (*Il.* 8.306-308) to picture the «shedding» of Geryon's heads, while in S 11 he evokes *Iliad* 12.322-28. Are we to suppose that these poems together with the *Iliou Persis* (S 88-132) and the Lille poem⁹, are the echoes of a long-standing, uninterrupted epic tradition in the work of a creative lyric poet who sustains *epici carminis onera lyra* (Quint. *Inst. Or.* 10.1.62), or the result of his being raised with Homer in particular, whose text he may have known¹⁰? Although the technical and material limitations of his era (turn of the seventh and first half of the sixth centuries) may have not permitted the wide circulation of the entire *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it is still unverifiable whether the professional poets also suffered partly or totally from this deficiency. But I think that a pro or contra writing argument may mislead or disorient us from the heart of our problem which is thus summarized: the two alternatives, that is, whether the lyric poet Stesichorus is the heir of a long epic tradition transmitted orally and with great fidelity (hence we are talking about intertraditionality) or the possessor of Homeric poetry in its written status (hence intertextuality), are not necessarily mutually exclusive and do not affect the

7. See M. Davies, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. I, Oxford 1991 [hereafter *PMGF*], TB5-TB14.

8. W. Peek, «Die Nostoi des Stesichoros», *Philologus* 102 (1958) 169, emphasizes the indebtedness of Stesichorus to Homer in language, style, metrics and content.

9. *Editio princeps* in *Étude sur l'Égypte et le Soudan anciens* [Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille, 4, 1977], 287-351; P. Parsons, «The Lille Stesichorus», *ZPE* 26 (1977) 7-36; Davies, *PMGF* 222(b).

10. This is something we cannot sufficiently document; nonetheless, the similarities of Stesichorean poetry with that of Homer have induced Burkert, p. 51, to qualify Stesichorus as «the clearest *terminus ante quem* for the text of Homer as we know it»; Fowler, p. 33, comparing Archilochus, Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus with Homer, contends that «we cannot, however, be certain that Homer's text was fixed at this time; for certainty we must wait for Alcaeus, Stesichorus and Ibycus»; yet on p. 36, comparing the *Geryoneis* S 11 with *Il.* 12.323ff., Fowler remarks that «only a general recollection of Homer's text need be supposed here; the one close verbal parallel (lines 8f.~323) does not require us to believe that Stesichorus had the exact text of Homer in mind».

obvious fact that he is well versed in the Homeric poetry in a developed and crystallized form, independently of fixation through writing¹¹. It is exactly this observation that gives legitimacy and meaning to the comparative efforts of the classicists, to what has been in fact termed by C. Meillier «Homeric Interpretation» of Stesichorean poetry, especially since the Homeric epics constitute our sole most ancient poetry and thus the only means of comparison at our disposal.

With these preliminary considerations in mind, we may now return to our text of the *Geryoneis* S 11 which reads as follows¹²:

	χηρσιν δ[τὸν	
	δ' ἀπαμ[ειβόμενος		
	ποτέφα [κρατερὸς Χρυσαόροσ ἀ-		
	θανάτοιο [γόνος καὶ Καλλιρόας·		
<hr/>			
ep.	«μή μοι θά[νατον προφέρων κρυόεν-		5
	τα δεδίκ[ε' ἀγάνορα θυμόν,		
	μηδεμελ[
	αἰ μὲν γὰρ γένος ἀθάνατος πέλο-		
	μαι καὶ ἀγή[ραος ὥστε βίου πεδέχειν		
	ἐν ᾽Ολύμπ[ωι,		10
	κρέσσον[ἐ-	
	λέγχεα δ[
<hr/>			
str.	καὶ τ[
	κερα[ἀ-	
	μετέρω[15
	αἰ δ' ὦ φί[λε χρῆ στυγερόν μ' ἐπὶ γῆ-		
	ρας [ικ]έσθαι,		
	ζώ[ει]ν τ' ἐν ἐ[φαμερίοις ἀπάνευ-		
	θε θ[ε]ῶν μακάρω[ν,		
	νῦν μοι πολὺ κά[λλιόν ἐστι παθῆν		20
	ὅ τι μόρσιμ[ον		
<hr/>			
ant.	καὶ ὄνειδε[
	καὶ παντὶ γέ[νει		

11. In this respect I essentially agree with P. Lerza, *Stesicoro. Tre Studi. Frammenti con Traduzione a Fronte*, Genova 1982, p. 34.

12. *Editio Princeps* by E. Lobel, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 32, London 1967. The text used in this study comes from D. L. Page, *Supplementum Lyricis Graecis*, Oxford 1974 [hereafter *SLG*].

ὀπίω Χρυ[ά]ρο[υ]ξί[ό]ν·
 μ]ῆ τοῦτο φ[ί]λον μακ[ά]ρε]σσι θε[ο]ῖ- 25
 σι γ]ένοιτο
].[.].κε[.].[.] περὶ βουεὶν ἐμαῖε
]
]κλεος. [

Do not endeavour to frighten my brave heart presenting chilling death to me and do not entreat me... For if I am immortal as to my *genos* and ageless, so as to share the life on Olympus, ... better ... shame ... (to see my oxen slaughtered far from my folds¹³). But if, my friend, I must reach hateful old age and live among the creatures of the day far from the blessed gods, now is much better for me to suffer what is destined [rather than leave] I, the son of Chrysaor, disgrace behind for me and for all the race. May this not become dear to the blessed gods.

The above-cited fragment contains Geryon's answer to Menoites¹⁴, the herdsman of Hades' cattle, who has already implored Geryon to avoid the duel with Heracles and think of his parents (S 10, «ne parentum immemor sit Geryoni suadet Menoites» Barrett, *ap. SLG*). As a result of the deplorably fragmentary state of the text at places, some features of Geryon's argumentation are lucid and easily comprehended, while others are rather to be inferred from contextual criteria. It suffices presently to note the overall spirit of the speech: Geryon refuses to withdraw before his formidable and cunning opponent and declares his firm resolution to defend his property rather than bring shame to himself and his *genos*¹⁵.

13. Davies, *PMGF* v. 14: κεραῖ[ζ]ομένας ἐπιδῆν βόας ἀ-|μετέρω[ν ἀπόνοσφιν ἐπαύλων; cf. Lobel, *ed. prin.* on v. 14: «The *antisigma* [which is marked before κερα] is used πρὸς τοὺς ἐνηλλαγμένους τόπους καὶ ἀπᾶλλοντας (or, μὴ συνᾶλλοντας) ad eos versus quorum ordo permutandus est. Again at fr. 19 ii.7, fr. 46 ii.6».

14. Nowadays the addressee of this speech is unanimously identified with Menoites. B. Gentili, *Gnomon* 48 (1976) 747, and in his «Eracle Omicida Giustissimo. Pisandro, Stesicoro e Pindaro», in *Il Mito Greco, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Urbino 1973*, ed. B. Gentili and G. Paioni, Rome 1977, p. 301, makes Heracles Geryon's interlocutor, but in his *Poetry and its Public*, p. 273 n. 20, he endorses the proposals of Barrett and Page; see E. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos «Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* *SLG* 15 I-II», *Ἑλληνικά* 41 (1990) 28 with n. 69. T. B. L. Webster, «Stesichoros: *Geryoneis*», *Agon* 1, 2 (1968) 7, 8, and A. Dale Maingon, *Stesichorus and the Epic Tradition*, Diss., The University of British Columbia, 1978, p. 285, identify the person to whom this speech is addressed with Callirhoe. However, this identification overlooks the presence of the article τόν (v. 1) and the vocative ὦ φί[λ]ε (suppl. Lobel, v. 16); but this is justifiable, since both scholars use the text that appears *ap. Lobel* and D. L. Page *Lyrice Graeca Selecta*, Oxford 1968, repr. 1973, 1976, *addenda* pp. 266f, in which τόν has not been supplemented yet.

15. For the story and the genealogy of Geryon see Hes. *Theog.* 274-94, 979-83, Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.10. Durante, p. 119, tracing the use of the expression βίη Ἡρακλείη theorizes that the pre- and post-Homeric tradition that relates the achievements of Heracles is composed in dactylic meter. Among his examples he also lists the «epilli lyrici» of Stesichorus, i.e., the *Geryoneis*, written in dactylic rhythm. Apart from the fluidity of the meter characterization of the *Geryoneis*,

Similarities between S 11 and Homer were first noticed by D. Page («the text recalls Homer, *Il.* 12.322-28»), who, nonetheless, cautions us that «the argument in Stesichorus is quite different» and offers a detailed analysis¹⁶. Since then scholars have insisted—in milder or stronger terms¹⁷— that Stesichorus has modelled the afore-mentioned argument of Geryon on Sarpedon’s speech to Glaucus. It seems necessary, then, to take a closer look at the Homeric text and compare it with S 11 with the purpose of exploring this issue as well as the degree of indebtedness of Stesichorus to Homer. In *Il.* 12.322-28 Sarpedon says to Glaucus:

ὦ πέπον, εἰ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε
αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ’ ἀθανάτω τε
ἔσσεσθ’, οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην
οὔτε κε σὲ στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν· 325
νῦν δ’ ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο
μυρίαί, ἅς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ’ ὑπαλύξαι,
ἴομεν, ἥε τῶ εὐχος ὀρέζομεν, ἥε τις ἡμῖν.

Man, supposing you and I, escaping this battle,
would be able to live on forever, ageless, immortal,
so neither would I myself go on fighting in the foremost

this argument may lead to a misconception of the relation between a poet and his literary model. With the same logic one may be astonished at Stesichorus’ choice of dactylo-epitrites in his Lille Poem on the Theban Saga by contrast to Homer (*Od.* 11.271-80) and the Cyclic poems (*Oedipodia* and *Thebais*). For the meter of the *Geryoneis* see Lobel, *ed. princ.*, p. 2: anapaestic; R. Führer, «Die metrische Struktur von Stesichoros’ *Γηρυονηϊς*», *Hermes* 96 (1968) 675-84, p. 675: «das Metrum besteht ... aus lyrischen Daktylen»; B. Snell, *Gnomon* 40 (1968) 116-20: «Steigende Daktylen»; D. L. Page, *Lyrica Graeca Selecta*, pp. 263f.; id., *SLG*, p. 5; id., «Stesichorus: *The Geryoneis*», *JHS* 93 (1973) 146; M. Haslam, «Stesichorean Metre», pp. 11, 14-20: dactylo-anapaestic, accompanied by the remark that «the lyric poet has an unhomeric freedom in respect of the length, the beginning and the ending of his verse» (p. 17); so also B. Gentili, *Gnomon* 48 (1976) 745.

16. Page, «Stesichorus: *The Geryoneis*», pp. 149f.

17. F. Sisti, *Lirici Greci*, Milan 1991, p. 249, c: «Il confronto più pertinente è con le parole di Glauco a Sarpedone, in *Il.* XII 322-8» (with an inversion of names). F. Bornmann, «Zur Geryoneis des Stesichoros und Pindars Herakles-Dithyrambos», *ZPE* 31 (1978) 34, speaks of «eine Abwandlung des in den Worten Sarpedons an Glaukos enthaltenen Motivs»; H. Lloyd-Jones, «Stesicoro», in *L’Epos Greco in Occidente, Atti del 19o Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto 1979*, Taranto 1980, p. 14: Geryon’s discourse retraces very closely *Il.* 12.322ff; W. Burkert, p. 50: «The syllogism of practical heroism is also copied», cf. *ib.* p. 61 note 48: «Stesichorus S 13.5; cf. *Il.* 22.83; Stesichorus S. 11.8-24; cf. *Il.* 12.322». Maingon, pp. 282-84, makes a sensible comparison of the two speeches and concludes, p. 284, that possibly «the poet intended the speech of Geryon to be reminiscent of Hector’s soliloquy [*Il.* 22.99-130] as well as to reflect Sarpedon’s speech in book XII». But the speech of Sarpedon has been singled out of many Homeric passages for comparison first because it is part of a dialogue as well as that of Geryon and second because of the immortality topic.

nor would I urge you into the fighting, where men win glory.
 But now, seeing that the spirits of death stand close about us
 in their thousands, no man can turn aside nor escape them,
 let us go on and win glory for ourselves, or yield it to others
 (Trans. R. Lattimore)

Sarpedon's speech contains one conditional clause with two apodoses: εἰ μέλλοιμεν... οὔτε κεν ... μαχοίμην οὔτε κε σὲ στέλλοιμι. This case, together with *Il.* 23.274, constitutes one of those rare cases in Homer, in which optative is employed to convey the present unreal condition¹⁸. There follow two verbs in hortatory subjunctive, ἵκομεν and ὀρέζομεν. Structurally this speech has very little in common with that of Geryon, in which two hypotheses are answered by two apodoses¹⁹.

In addition to these formal differences, the two speeches exhibit marked contextual differences as well, despite their obvious point of contact, which is the theme of immortality and eternal youth. In fact, there is a causal relation here: the different structure becomes a vehicle for a different message.

Sarpedon ponders over a utopian and imaginary dilemma, since his sole hypothesis involves an unrealistic and purely fictitious situation: he would be willing to flee from battle, if by doing so he could gain immortality and eternal youth. Sarpedon is aware of his imaginary flight to a dream land, where the gods live without suffering in contrast to mortals (see *Hymn to Apollo*, 189-193), and the temptation and reward are so great that he would even compromise the restrictive norms of the shame culture he lives in: the powerful feeling of αἰδώς and the notion of τιμή. Were he given the option of immortality, he would succumb and behave like an αἰσχρός or κακός. But he is not given the option and he knows that only too well. He is conscious of his mortal nature and even though he indulges in such a utopian wishful thinking, he never loses grasp of reality. This is proven by the type of his conditional clause and the hortative subjunctives as well as by the use of the formula ἀγήρωσ καὶ ἀθάνατος, which is used in the epos twice of men in conditional clauses so as to convey the idea of ἀδύνατον and thus strengthen an affirmation²⁰. This structural design suggests that Sarpedon's speech is not to be

18. See H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, Cambridge Mass. 1956, p. 520 § 2311.

19. For a structural and typological analysis of Geryon's speech see F. Maltomini, «Due Note Stesicoree», *SCO* 34 (1984) 67-70.

20. *Il.* 12.323-28 and 8.538-41; for the use of the formula see L. Solmsen, s.v. ἀγήρωσ in *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, ed. by B. Snell and H. J. Mette, Göttingen 1955, col. 65-67, esp. 66 1a. This formula, which qualifies mainly gods or deified mortals, seems appropriate to Geryon, who is considered a chthonic daemon associated with Himera's hot springs, whence the suggestion of P. Brize, *Die Geryoneis des Stesichoros und die frühe griechische Kunst*, Würzburg, 1980, pp. 51, 64f. with n. 358, that Stesichorus and the Chalcidean art have taken over the detail of winged

evaluated as an example of evasion from reality, a specimen of escapism, but, on the contrary, as the final strong effort of intellect to control and subdue emotion faltering in view of danger. Seeing reality with the eyes wide open and without the blurring false optimism of the unreal, Sarpedon invigorates his bravery and decisiveness. His *menos* is thus aroused so as to exhort himself and his companion, ἴομεν, ἡέ τω εὖχος ὀρέζομεν, ἡέ τις ἡμῖν.

Geryon starts from different premises. By contrast to Sarpedon, he is not aware of his real nature. Sarpedon constructs a purely hypothetical case, whereas Geryon earnestly wonders about his nature²¹. Since his divine lineage, traced back to Poseidon, Chrysaor (see S 11.3f. [κρατερός Χρυσάορος ἀ-] θανάτοιο [γόνος καὶ Καλλιρόας] or rather Callirhoe (see previous note), hovers in the background, it is plausible that he does not deal with unreal situations, but with two contrasting and equally viable realities intricately interwoven with his divine descent, with his biography, in fact. Geryon's two hypotheses actually amount to a sincere and vital existential question: Am I mortal? He will not get an answer before he engages in battle with Heracles. Until then he formulates his ignorance in two conditional clauses, counts his options and contemplates over the due course of action.

We are better equipped to talk about the second set of his assumptions, S 11.16-24: Geryon expresses his firm resolution, in case he is mortal, to fight Heracles and not humiliate himself or his *genos*. The first assumption comprised in vv. 8-15 is lost to a great extent. The text is badly mutilated, whence our uncertainty about its meaning. Page summarizes thus the message of the verses: «If I am immortal, so much the better; he cannot kill me»²². In the light of the better

Geryon from the local cults of Himera; see also Bowra, p. 92: Geryon «may once have been a god of death and the underworld»; similarly M. Davies, «Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* and its folk-tale origins», *CQ* 38 (1988) 277 n. 2, 279-81, esp. 279 with n. 16: «Geryon has many of the characteristics of a death-demon, of a deity initially the equivalent of Hades».

21. This has also been recognized by L. Carmignani, *Stile e tecnica narrativa in Stesicoro*, *Ric. di filol. class.* 1 (1981) 34, and by Nilla Prest, «Note alla *Gerioneide* di Stesicoro», *Sileno* 15 (1989) 69; it is, moreover, convincingly argued *ibid.* p. 70, that on the evidence of Hesiod *Theog.* 979-83 and 965-1020 (goddesses married to mortals) Geryon is mortal on his father's side, whence the proposed supplement of S 3f.: ποτέφα [κρατεροῦ Χρυσάορος ἀ-]θανάτοιο [τε Καλλιρόας γενέθλα.

22. Page, «Stesichorus: *The Geryoneis*», pp. 149f., where he also makes a sensible critical evaluation of Barrett's view: «it is better to endure disgrace and to allow Heracles to make away with my cattle». For v. 8-10ff. γὰρ πέπον ἀθάνατός τ' ἔσομαι καὶ ἀγήρωσ πάρ μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἐν Ὀλύμπω: Barrett, *ap. SLG*; Davies, *PMGF* on v. 8ff.: sed alia possis. On the basis of the *SLG* text, P. Lerza, p. 59, translates vv. 8ff.: «perchè se sono di stirpe immortale | e ininvecchiabile, | tanto da aver parte della vita sull'Olimpo ... | è meglio... | e il biasimo...». Similarly Sisti, p. 249: «Se la mia stirpe è immune da morte | e dalla vecchiezza, così da prendere parte | alla vita degli dèi nell'Olimpo, è meglio...». J. M. Bremer, *Some recently found Greek Poems, Mnemosyne* Suppl. 99, Leiden 1987, p. 145, comparing the dilemma of the Lille mother (v. 212) with that of Geryon

preserved part (vv. 16-24), where in so strong terms Geryon defies both his mortal life and his opponent, we may come up with an approximation of Geryon's first conditional clause: If I am immortal and ageless, then it is better for me [to fight rather than suffer] ignominious, disgraceful deeds (or prove to be a disgrace myself²³). This spirit permeates the entire passage: the repetition of *genos*, the emphatic identification in genealogical terms, Χρυσάορος γόνος or υἱός (vv. 3f., 24), the obsession with the notion of not incurring contempt, ἐλέγχεα and ὀνειδέα (two words of highly emotive impact), the concluding wish that may this disgraceful outcome be not dear to the gods (vv. 25f.) as well as the final reference to κλέος (v. 29) can be meaningfully integrated in the Homeric shame culture: Geryon is a tragic person, whose vital dilemma revolving around the preference of an honorable death to a shameful life recalls the comparable decision making of Homeric figures²⁴. In the light of this composite picture Geryon, a bold hero of divine origin, the extent or limits of which have not been defined yet, unlike Sarpedon, is entitled to deal also with his first assumption in terms of reality. «If I were» seems incongruous with his reasoning²⁵, and this subtle distinction is successfully conveyed by the supplements proposed by Page.

Coming to the end of this survey, we realize that Sarpedon does not really have a choice, while Geryon does not give himself a choice. Sarpedon hypothesizes on a quality or status —immortality— never to be attained, while for Geryon this is a

concludes that «it is clear that there, too, [sc. *Ger.* S 11.20-21] a quick death is preferred to a miserable life». Yet the key notion in the latter is that of honor.

23. Lobel, *ed. princ.*: The accent prescribes ἐ]λεγγέα, as if from the adjective ἐλεγχής (*Il.* 4.242, 24.239) meaning more or less «contemptible». But the phrase κακ' ἐλέγχεα, containing the noun ἐλεγχος, is applied to persons, «disgraces» *Il.* 2.235 (5.787, 8.228), cf. Hes. *Theog.* 26, *Il.* 24.260, so probably the accent is mistaken in this manuscript.

24. Hector in *Il.* 22.99-110, esp. 108ff., key-word ἐλεγγείην (v. 100) and αἰδέομαι (v. 105): cf. S. 11.12 ἐλέγχεα; cf. *Il.* 6.442-46; see W. Burkert, «Le mythe de Géryon: Perspectives Préhistoriques et Tradition Rituelle», in *Il Mito Greco*, p. 283. Also Gentili, *Poetry and its Public*, p. 162; Brize, p. 35; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, «Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*, *SLG* 15 I-II», pp. 22ff.

25. Cf. Lloyd-Jones, «Stesicoro», p. 14: «Se [abbandonando le mie mandrie] io potessi rimanere senza età e immortale sull'Olimpo, sarebbe pur sempre preferibile per me evitare l'onta». This rendering essentially amounts to: If I were given the option and I could remain (stay) immortal on one term, i.e., by abandoning my cattle, I would denounce this option and fight for my cattle. But the real crux of the passage is not how Geryon can remain immortal, but, whether he is immortal or not, and how his existential uncertainty may or may not influence his decision about the duel with his opponent. In either case he decides to encounter Heracles, as Lloyd-Jones later also states. It seems, judging from the choice of tenses (and the subjunctive in the Italian translation), that the syllogism of Sarpedon delivered in terms of the unreal (Irrealer Wunsch) has exercised an influence on both Lloyd-Jones and F. de Martino, «Le Mani di Eracle e l'effimero Gerione (Stesicoro, fr. S 11)», *Aevum* 56 (1982) 24: «Se fossi immortale e sempre giovane». «If I were immortal» can hardly come from a man who wonders about his nature using terms pertaining to reality (vv. 16-24).

viable and possible, but, alas, not to be confirmed, alternative²⁶. «If I were» entails restriction of freedom. «If I am» entails freedom of will and determination proven by the fact that Geryon's two apodoses amount to one and the same thing: his decision to fight bravely regardless of his nature.

For these reasons I think that we may compare these two heroes but with due caution, aware of the odds of this comparison and of the fact that what has triggered it is the subject of immortality. They, of course, share some metaphysical thoughts of a varying degree of consequence depending on the special interests and the focus of their creators. For Homer it is a device to cement and cap the deliberation and determination of his hero, which has been already displayed from the beginning of his speech to Glaucus. For Homer the immortality topic constitutes a moment in his long-stringed narrative and the wide framework of his heroic poetry. For Stesichorus the immortality subject becomes a focal point and a means of moulding a special character whose *ethos* he painstakingly portrays.

The immortality theme is not merely an epic echo, either on verbal or conceptual level, with the help of which Stesichorus intends to pay homage to the fountainhead of all poetry and suggest his poetic affiliations, but is an example of how mimesis and creativity can complement each other. The epic inheritance is infused with new meaning and function. As the Helen episode (*PMG* 209) and the poppy simile (S 15) before²⁷, so now the dilemma of Geryon is not simply a decorative item evoking the epic grandeur and creating a certain atmosphere, but is subtly integrated in the plot. Immortality is intimately and inextricably associated with the biography of Geryon, goes beyond the sphere of ἀδύνατον into that of δυνατόν and, moreover, becomes the vehicle for an artistic ethography: it enables the poet to introduce a somewhat modified heroic ideal in the person of a tricephalic, six-handed, six-legged and winged (*PMG* 186 = S 87) monstrous creature. Retouching the epic theme of immortality and youth, Stesichorus improves upon his prototype and, with a remarkable fantasy and sensitivity, channels through his poetry of heroic legends norms and values of a new awakening and critical world, as I have amply argued elsewhere²⁸. External qualities are

26. The undeniably fundamental dissimilarities between these two figures make me rather skeptical about de Martino's view that Geryon follows the noble example of Sarpedon and goes against his *morsimon* and that «Gerione sa che l'inevitabile μόρσιμον non solo è insuperabilmente quotidiano, ma è capricciosamente vario. "Tutti moriamo —dirà Pindaro in *Ist.* 7,41— ma il demone non è uguale"», p. 24. The very last sentence sounds inappropriate to the case of Geryon, who does not know yet if he is destined to die at all.

27. See my «Stesichorus and his Poetry», pp. 27-35, and «Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*, *SLG* 15 I-II», pp. 27f. For another view see Fowler, p. 36.

28. See «Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*, *SLG* 15 I-II», pp. 28-31; Burkert, p. 51, explains Stesichorean inventiveness in terms of performance, when he says that «it is wrong to censure

dissociated from the internal ones. The Homeric *καλὸς κάγαθός* is drastically curtailed. Beauty is no longer a prerequisite for bravery.

University of Thessaloniki

EVANTHIA TSITSIBAKOU-VASALOS

Stesichoros for lack of originality and slavish dependence on the Homeric epics if his real aim and achievement was to readapt these to new forms of production». Carmignani, pp. 34, 36, 38 and esp. 42-44, detects the novelty of our poet in the conscious use of the mechanism of allusion and in the perfect synthesis of and control over a tension between originality and traditionality.