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ANCIENT COMMENTATORS, such as pseudo-Longinus (*Subl.* 13.3), noted the "very Homeric" nature of Stesichorus' poetry. It is clear that in some cases the authors were referring to the content or subject matter of Stesichorus' poems, in others to the style. Before the publication of the papyrus fragments of Stesichorus found at Oxyrhynchus, these generalising statements could not be confirmed apart from the fact that titles such as *Iliu Persis* could be classified as Homeric in content, or that phrases such as *ποτὶ βένθεα νυκτὸς ἐρεμνᾶς* (SLG S17 4-5) could be paralleled with the second half of a hexameter line. From the material now provided by the publication of the papyri we may reach a greater understanding of the poet's techniques in his epico-lyric compositions, and in particular the treatment of diction and themes derived from the epic tradition.

That the Homeric epics continued to be recited in the seventh and sixth centuries, after the period of oral improvisation appears to have drawn to a close, ensured that many of the formulaic expressions of the epic tradition became part of the linguistic inheritance of the Greek-speaking people, if they were not already an inseparable part of the language. Thus a poet retelling or adapting legends from the heroic tradition would be able to imitate or alter formulaic phrases to suit his particular purpose, aware that his audience, attuned to the traditional association of a specific epithet with a specific noun, would probably be struck by the repetition of a familiar word-group in an unfamiliar context, or by the deliberate avoidance of an expected association of epithet and noun.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the poet could repeat or adapt thematic material according to his purpose. Hence Stesichorus' choice of diction and themes should be examined in terms of verbatim imitation or deliberate alteration of traditional material, for in this way I believe we may be able to approach an understanding of the poet's aims and methods in his compositions. I therefore propose to demonstrate how Stesichorus adheres to and diverges from epic convention in one of the fragments from the

<sup>1</sup>J. B. Hainsworth's theory of the "bond of mutual expectancy" that operates as a result of the continual association of one epithet with one noun, proposed in *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formulae* (Oxford 1968) 35 ff., may apply also in a situation in which a person, poet, or member of an audience has been continually exposed to the recitation of poems of the epic tradition; the mention of epithets such as "swift-footed" or "rosy-fingered" automatically generates "Achilles" or "Dawn" in his mind; similarly Achilles or Dawn, when mentioned, carry with them the expectancy of their associated epithets. It is this expectancy that is jarred when a poet chooses to replace one epithet with another, or apply the epithet to a new context.

*Geryoneis*, a poem relating the adventure of Heracles in the western reaches of the Mediterranean and beyond, when he journeyed to retrieve the cattle of Geryon.<sup>2</sup>

SLG S15 comes from that part of the poem in which Heracles mounts his successful attack against one of the three heads of the monster-warrior Geryon, having already slain the herdsman Eurytion and seized possession of the cattle.<sup>3</sup> The scrappy remnants of the first column appear to belong to an account of Heracles' hostile approach and decision to fight by stealth (lines 5, 7 and 8). He presumably calculates how best to launch the attack with his bow: Geryon will meet with a "bitter end" (line 11). There follows a description of an individual, probably Geryon, holding a shield in front of his chest. A helmet falls from his head (lines 14–16) landing on the ground (line 17). The initial attack may therefore have taken place as Page suggests: Heracles throws a stone to knock the helmet from at least one of Geryon's three heads, thus reducing his opponent's defences.<sup>4</sup>

Conclusions about the content of the first column lack certainty, but we can point to adaptation of epic phraseology in *ἱππόκομος τρυφάλεια* (found only once in Homer, at *Iliad* 12.38–39) and in *πικρὸν ὀλεθρον*. In the latter instance it is noteworthy that in Homer the epithets generally associated with *ὀλεθρος* are *λυγρός* and *αἰπύς*, while *πικρός* is applied almost exclusively to the word *οὔστός*.<sup>5</sup> In Stesichorus' manipulation of the regularly associated word-groups one can observe a transition from the physical to the metaphorical sense of the epithet *πικρός*. Since the *ὀλεθρος* planned by the hero for Geryon involves an arrow, as we see in line 10 of the second column of the fragment, the choice of the epithet is highly appropriate, transferred from the source of death to the death itself, reflecting the physical piercing and also the grief-causing potential. The poet's choice of the epithet thus relies on the audience's expectancy of the traditional association of *πικρός* with *οὔστός*, which he breaks by the unprecedented application of the epithet to *ὀλεθρος*.

With regard to the traditional elements in Heracles' attack by stealth, there are no direct parallels in the epic corpus for a hero dislodging his opponent's helmet prior to wounding him with arrow or spear. One might, however, consider the passage in *Iliad* 4.517 ff. where Diore, son of

<sup>2</sup>E. Lobel's identification of the fragments of *P.Oxy.* 2617 as part of Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*, made in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 32 (London 1967) 1 ff., is generally accepted. The text of the fragments to which I shall refer in this article is that of D. L. Page, *Supplementum Lyricis Graecis* (Oxford 1974) = SLG.

<sup>3</sup>Apollodorus 2.5.10.

<sup>4</sup>D. L. Page, "Stesichorus: the *Geryoneis*," *JHS* 93 (1973) 151.

<sup>5</sup>The epithet is applied 10 times to *οὔστός* in the *Iliad*, once in the *Odyssey*; otherwise it is applied to *βίβα* once, *ὠδῖναι* once and *βέλεμνα* once.

Amarnycean, is hit by a stone thrown by Peirous, son of Imbrasmus. The victim, struck in the leg, fell to the ground, where Peirous "finished him off" with a spear-thrust through the navel. Such tactics are not commonly part of the epic hero's repertoire,<sup>6</sup> but are quite in keeping with the Stesichorean depiction of Heracles.<sup>7</sup>

At the top of the second column of the fragment we find a description of the fatal arrow, its tip (line 3) smeared with the poisonous gall of the Hydra (lines 4–6). In the epic tradition accounts of the bow of Odysseus in *Odyssey* 21.1 ff. and that of Pandarus in *Iliad* 4.105 ff. form part of the conventional preliminaries to a contest, similar to the arming theme. The poet concentrates upon the bow rather than the arrows. In the Homeric poems, however, and in the *Iliad* in particular, combat with bow and arrow is much less frequent than encounters with sword or spear and appears to have been considered an inferior means of proving one's valour.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, in the tradition of the Hesiodic *Shield*, four lines are devoted to an account of Heracles' lethal arrows in the context of an arming-scene. In contrast with the conventional weaponry of the principal heroes of the *Iliad*, the foremost feature of Heracles' arsenal in the *Shield* is his bow and arrows (lines 129–134):

κοῖλῃν δὲ περὶ στήθεσσι φάρετρην  
καββάλετ' ἐξόπιθεν· πολλοὶ δ' ἐντοσθεν οὔιστοι  
ῥιγηλοὶ, θανάτοιο λαθιφθόγγοιο δοτῆρες·  
πρόσθεν μὲν θάνατον τ' εἶχον καὶ δάκρυσι μῦρον,  
μέσσοι δὲ ξεστοί, περιμήκεες, αὐτὰρ ὀπίσθε  
μόρφονιο φλεγύαιο καλυπτόμενοι πετέρυγεσσιν.

In his description of Heracles, Stesichorus may have employed a non-Homeric source for the motif of the arrows. We note, however, that even in the *Shield* there is only a general allusion made to the lethal power of the arrows, in line 313. Line 132 may be compared with lines 1–2 of column ii of the Stesichorean passage, but the latter concentrates upon the poison smeared on the arrow-tip, elaborating the detail in the following two and a half lines. The description of the blood and the gall as the product of the death-agonies of the Hydra is without precedent in the battle scenes in the *Iliad*.<sup>9</sup> The compound epithets describing the

<sup>6</sup>See also *Iliad* 5.297, 8.320 ff. and 20.285 ff., discussed by B. Fenik in *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (Wiesbaden 1968 [*Hermes Einzelschriften* 21]) 32–33.

<sup>7</sup>Athenaeus (512c-d) reports that Megacleides placed Stesichorus among the younger generation of poets who represented Heracles, not in Homeric fashion, but as a solitary, wandering outlaw, dressed in a lionskin and carrying a bow and club.

<sup>8</sup>See J. I. Armstrong, "The Arming Motif in the *Iliad*," *AJP* 79 (1958) 337–354.

<sup>9</sup>One might, however, compare the death agonies of the Hydra with the agonies of the dying Python in the *Hymn to Apollo* 357–358.

Hydra are alien to Homeric epic,<sup>10</sup> nor does the poet appear to have been influenced by the Hesiodic account of the Hydra in *Theogony* 313.

Thus Stesichorus has adapted the convention of giving an elaborate description of an important weapon, for which he had no immediate model in the Homeric corpus itself. The bow of Odysseus is worthy of description, in *Odyssey* 21.1 ff., but the passing reference made in *Odyssey* 1.261 to the possibility of poisoning Odysseus' arrows appears to have been forgotten, and the poet concentrates on the strength and skill of the bowman himself. In fact, apart from the single suggestion of an arrow tip smeared with *φάρμακον ἀνδροφόνον* in *Odyssey* 1.261., nowhere in the Homeric poems does a hero shoot poisoned arrows, nor does any line in the *Shield* necessarily imply more than that the arrow could inflict a fatal wound just as a sword or spear could. Stesichorus may have had the Hesiodic description of Heracles' arrows in mind when he composed the *Geryoneis*, and his coinage of *δλεσάνορος* may be reminiscent of the "man-slaying" drug with which Odysseus could anoint his arrows, but he has elaborated upon the general allusion of the former and may have been the first to employ the detail of the poison derived from the Hydra.<sup>11</sup>

Line 6 ff. described the wound caused by the arrow: *σιγαῖ δ' ὅ γ' ἐπι- / κλοπάδαν [ἐ]νέρεισε μετώπῳ*. "Silently and insidiously it thrust into his forehead . . ." <sup>12</sup> The verb *ἐνερειδω* is generally found in the context of a hero leaning on his spear, whereas the verb *πήγνυμι* occurs regularly in contexts of piercing either by spear or arrow. *ἐνερειδω* does occur once in the scene in which Odysseus and his companions blind the Cyclops (*Odyssey* 9.382–383), *μετώπῳ* in Stesichorus corresponding closely with *ὀφθαλμῶν*. There is, however, one description of a spear driving its way through armour that bears some resemblance to this Stesichorean passage. In *Iliad* 3.357 ff., Menelaus casts his spear at Paris, transfixing his opponent's shield. The spear continues onwards, buries itself in the thorax and even tears the tunic beneath. Although details such as the type of missile thrown and the armour that is pierced differ, the general structure of the passage is the same. The missile is cast and strikes its target; then the piercing of the target is described in three stages as the missile forces its way through all that it encounters. The repetition of the preposition *διά* and the use of *ἀντικρὺ* are found in both passages.

<sup>10</sup>*δλεσάνωρ* does occur in Theognis and in the late epic of Nonnus. Compare, however, *φθισήνωρ*, 5 times in the *Iliad*, and also *ἀνδροφόνος*. These two epithets may well have acted as models for the construction of a new coinage which the poet chose to replace the more commonly found formation. Similarly with *αἰολόδειρος* (col. ii.5), there are precedents for the individual elements of the compound epithet, although Stesichorus' compound as such has no precedent in epic.

<sup>11</sup>It may well be that Sophocles *Trach.* 574 was derived from the Stesichorean version; note that Sophocles elsewhere in the same play described the Hydra as *αἰόλος δράκων* (834).

<sup>12</sup>In part Barrett's translation in *JHS* 93 (1973) 152.

We may note in passing that in lines 8 and 9 of the fragment the expressions used by the poet are not commonly found in epic. *διασχίζω* has but one precedent, in *Iliad* 16.315–316, of the severing of the sinews, while the phrase *σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα* occurs twice, but in neither instance in the context of a wounded hero.<sup>13</sup>

There is one parallel expression in epic for the combination of *ἀντικρὺ* with *διέχω*, specifically in the context of an arrow passing straight through an individual. In *Iliad* 5.99–100 we find *διὰ δ' ἔπτατο πικρὸς ὀϊστός, ἀντικρὺ δὲ διέσχε*, the latter formula occurring at the beginning of the hexameter verse on two other occasions, in the context of a spear-wound (*Iliad* 11.253 and 20.416). In the phrase *διὰ δ' . . . ἀντικρὺ*, therefore, Stesichorus adopts almost verbatim a conventional expression for the straightness and sureness of the missile as it pierces its target.

In only one instance in Homer does *κορυφή* refer to the head of a creature as opposed to a mountain peak, and in that instance we find a context that is in part parallel to *ἐπ' ἀκροτάταν κορυφάν* (lines 10–11). In *Iliad* 8.78 ff. all the foremost Greek heroes have fled from Hector, except Nestor whose horse collapses from exhaustion. Paris succeeds in striking with an arrow the top of the horse's head, *ἄκρην καὶ κορυφὴν* (83). It is interesting to note that the only instance of *κορυφή* as "head" occurs precisely in connection with a bowshot; otherwise there is little similarity between the calculated shot of Heracles and Paris' straying arrow. On the other hand, the formula *ἀκροτάτη κορυφή* is restricted to the description of the topmost peaks of mountains, as in *Iliad* 1.499, and for this reason I believe that the poet has deliberately retained the epithet most commonly associated with the word *κορυφή* in the sense "mountain," employing it in its less common sense, in order to magnify the dimensions of the monster. Knowing the popular epic usage, the audience would automatically associate Geryon's head with a mountain peak, and envisage the hero faced by a grotesque mountain of a monster.

In conventional Homeric battle-scenes the hero's fall is accompanied by a description of the flow of blood on the victor's weapon or on the earth, as in *Iliad* 4.140. In lines 12 and 13 of this fragment, as in *Iliad* 5.100, it is the victim's armour that is stained by the blood. The verb *ἐμίαινε* in the Stesichorean passage may, however, be compared with *Iliad* 4.146–147 or *Iliad* 16.795–796, passages which could have provided a model for Stesichorus' depiction of the blood-stained Geryon's thorax. Stesichorus appears to have expanded the image: not only does he use the epithet *πόρφυρεος*, which has only one precedent in epic (*Iliad* 17.360–361) and is generally associated with *πόντος*, introducing connotations of vastness and the profusion of blood flowing from the wound, but he also

<sup>13</sup>*Odyssey* 9.293 and 11.219; cf. the description of the wound that created Odysseus' famous scar in 19.450–451.

includes another phrase whose noun, now lost in the lacuna, is accompanied by the epithet *βροτόεντα*.<sup>14</sup>

Few heroic encounters in the *Iliad* involve combat with the bow, and where they do occur, it is generally a Trojan who draws his bow at a Greek with little or no success. One episode, from which we have just cited certain expressions parallel with those employed by Stesichorus, is Pandarus' attack on Diomedes in *Iliad* 5.95 ff.:

Τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησε Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱὸς  
θύνοντ' ἄμ πεδίον πρὸ ἔθεν κλονέοντα φάλαγγας  
αἰψ' ἐπὶ Τυδείδῃ ἐπιταίνετο καμπύλα τόξα,  
καὶ βάλλ' ἐπαΐσσοντα τυχῶν κατὰ δεξιὸν ὤμον,  
θώρηκος γύαλον· διὰ δ' ἔπτατο πικρὸς οἶστός,  
ἀντικρὺ δὲ διέσχε, παλάσσετο δ' αἵματι θώρηξ.

The structure of the Homeric scene is as follows: (a) the Trojan hero bends his bow, shoots, and strikes his target (97 ff.); (b) the arrow flies through, i.e., through the joint at the shoulder of the thorax (99); (c) the thorax is bespattered with blood. The Stesichorean version is far more expansive than its Homeric counterpart, since I assume that the aiming and release of the arrow were described in the missing part of the strophe that preceded lines 1 and 2 of the second column. In Homer, the arrow is simply *πικρός*, whereas Stesichorus gives a prolonged account of the lethal power of the arrow-head. *διὰ δ' ἔπτατο* in line 99 has been replaced by *ἐνέρεισε* in Stesichorus, the latter verb being drawn from the image of a spear thrust (cf. *Iliad* 3.375 ff.). In both passages the missile holds its course straight through the flesh of the victim (although note that there is in fact no object of *διὰ δ' ἔπτατο*). In both passages the flow of blood ensues, but again the Stesichorean version is more detailed than the concluding half-line of *Iliad* 5.100.

Thus one may compare the two passages at the level of their basic structure: the shooting of the arrow, its piercing the target, and the inevitable flow of blood. Not only is Stesichorus' description more elaborate, but the consequences of the arrow-wound are entirely different. The ensuing death of one of Geryon's bodies, figuratively related in the simile of the poppy (to which we shall return) is totally removed from the unexpectedly speedy recovery of Diomedes after Sthenelus had extracted the arrow from his shoulder. Elsewhere too in the *Iliad* bow-shots are ineffective. In *Iliad* 13.586 f., Helenus' arrow glances off

<sup>14</sup>Page ([above, n. 4] 142) suggested the supplement *μέλεα*, which would constitute a word-group of Homeric elements in new juxtaposition. Whatever the supplement, there is evidence here of a degree of redundancy in Stesichorus' expansion of the epic formulae. The conflation of elements from various traditional phrases has resulted in repetition, a characteristic of Stesichorus' style noted critically by Quintilian: *redundat et effunditur* (10.1.62).

Menelaus' armour. Menelaus had previously survived a wound from an arrow, *Iliad* 4.134 ff., where the poet gives a detailed account of all that the arrow pierced before reaching the vulnerable flesh. Again one can observe certain points of similarity between the Homeric passage and that of Stesichorus: the repetition of *διά*, the flow of blood, and the use of a simile to elaborate the description.

On the other hand, the archer *par excellence* on the Greek side, Teucer, does succeed in mortally wounding one of his opponents, although not his original target (*Iliad* 8.300 ff.). The arrow intended for Hector flies wide and strikes Gorgythion, another of Priam's sons, and it is the dying Gorgythion who is compared to a drooping poppy in a simile that is apparently imitated by Stesichorus in this fragment. Immediately after killing Gorgythion Teucer again attempts to strike his original target, misses and strikes Hector's charioteer. On one other occasion we hear of Teucer's success with the bow (*Iliad* 15.449–451). On none of the three occasions, however, is there evidence of a traditional description of the arrow piercing its victim that might have been a direct ancestor of the passage in the *Geryoneis*.

The simile of the poppy, *ὡς ὅκα μ[ά]κρ[υ]* (lines 14 ff.), employed by Stesichorus in Homeric fashion to conclude the first part of Heracles' attack, has one direct parallel, namely *Iliad* 8.306–308:

μήκων δ' ὡς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν ἥ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ,  
καρπῶι βριθομένη νοτίησιν τε εἰαρινῆσιν,  
ὡς ἐτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πῆληκι βαρυνθέν.

Stesichorus, however, has not imitated the simile detail for detail. The bowed neck of Geryon is reminiscent of the picture of the sleeping Cyclops in *Odyssey* 9.371–373, or of Antinous slumped to one side as he is shot through the neck in *Odyssey* 22.17. The simple form *κλίνω* is far more common than any compound forms of the verb. *ἀποκλίνω* occurs only once, in *Odyssey* 19.556, but Stesichorus presumably chose this compound form to emphasise the comparison with the poppy shedding its petals, *ἀπὸ φύλλα βαλοῖσα* (line 17). The adverb *ἐπικάρσιον* (line 15) is unique, although similar to *ἐπικάρ* (*Iliad* 16.392), which apparently means "head-long." If *ἐπικάρσιον* is to be distinguished from *ἐτέρωσε* in *Iliad* 8.306 or *Odyssey* 22.16, then it may indicate that the head has slumped forwards, not sideways. Stesichorus follows the conventional epic introduction to a simile with the words *ὡς ὅκα*, where the Western dialect form *ὅκα* is equivalent to epic *ὅτε*. It is possible that no finite verb occurred in the *ὅκα* clause, as for example in *Iliad* 4.462, although the text as it stands does not permit us to determine whether a finite verb did follow the participial phrases in lines 16 and 17.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Lobel (above, n. 2) 7.

If the supplement ἀπαλόν [δέμας (line 16) is correct, then the use of the epithet ἀπαλός is interesting in view of its close association with αὐχὴν in the epic corpus.<sup>16</sup> The poet has consciously transferred the epithet that might be expected to occur with Geryon's αὐχένα (line 14) into the framework of the simile, to govern the object of comparison, the flower. In this way he binds the simile more closely to its counterpart in reality, in the same way as the use of ἀπέκλινε is reflected by ἀπὸ . . . βαλοῖσα.

In the simile in *Iliad* 8.306 ff., the falling head of Gorgythion is compared to the drooping head of a poppy that is laden with seed and with moisture from the rain in spring. Thus, although the context of the simile in Stesichorus is identical to that of *Iliad* 8, namely the collapse of an individual mortally wounded by an arrow, the principal feature of comparison is not. Stesichorus has augmented the image, although we cannot tell to what extent on account of the break in the papyrus at the end of the third line of the simile. In the Homeric version we find a simple one-to-one analogy between the head of the dying man and the head of the poppy, the one weighed down by a helmet, the other by seed and moisture. Stesichorus, on the other hand, selects another feature of the poppy with which to compare the falling head of Geryon, namely its loss of petals, whether in a storm or at the end of its cycle in late summer. To a certain extent Stesichorus' application of the simile is the more appropriate of a dying creature. The flower's head laden with seed represents not the termination of life, but promise of renewal, of rebirth, whereas the loss of petals represents the destruction of the form of the moment, the visible, tangible flower. Moreover, it seems likely that the poet had the intention of striking a parallel between the loss of the multiple heads of the monster and the petals falling from the stem of the flower, however bizarre the image may appear to our taste. Thus we can observe in this fragment the poet adapting a simile from the Homeric corpus, from a context almost identical with the episode of the shooting of Geryon in his own poem, and altering the traditional material with his own individual twist.

That the simile from *Iliad* 8 influenced Stesichorus in this passage is virtually certain. It would be too great a coincidence in view of the relative dearth of episodes in which a successful bow-shot is described in the *Iliad* if Stesichorus' simile were totally independent of the Homeric version. The poet's acquaintance with the epic tradition of the *Iliad* and and *Odyssey* is evident through his imitation and modification of formulaic expressions and his reliance on the audience's awareness of them. The alteration of the simile is best explained in terms of the poet's desire for variation and also as an attempt to suit the simile to his particular context. It is impossible to tell whether the introduction of simile was intended, as the Homeric one supposedly was, not only as a reminder of

<sup>16</sup>For example, *Iliad* 17.49 = 22.327.



the frailty of mortal creatures, but also as a contrast to the violence of the preceding scenes in the battle.<sup>17</sup> In *Iliad* 8 the sudden transition to a peaceful image tends to intensify the horrors of war. In the Stesichorean passage the simile may have been designed to create a diversion from the grim struggle between hero and monster.

The arrow-shot described in this fragment appears not to have been the final wound that destroyed the monster utterly. The poet, therefore, when considering the most appropriate simile or metaphor for the elimination of one of the heads, possibly the first, but not the entire body, could hardly select one of the more frequent similes employed in the epic corpus for the falling body of a hero or monster, that is, the simile of the falling oak tree, as in *Iliad* 16.482–484:

ἤριπε δ' ὥς ὅτε τις δρύς ἤριπεν ἢ ἀχερωΐς,  
ἢ ἐ πίτυς, βλωθρή, τήν τ' οὔρεσι τέκτονες ἄνδρες  
ἐξέταμον πελέκεσσι νήκεσι νήϊον εἶναι.

These lines are used to describe the fall of Sarpedon struck by Patroclus, as also that of Asius struck by Idomeneus (*Iliad* 13.389–391). In both cases the oak is felled by woodsmen. It is significant that in the Hesiodic *Shield* (lines 421–422) Cycnus' collapse is depicted in similar terms, except that the tree has been struck by a thunderbolt of Zeus: πλῆγείσα Διὸς ψολόεντι κεραυνῶι.<sup>18</sup> I suspect that Stesichorus may have adapted such a simile for the final collapse of the monster Geryon; it would not have been appropriate at this point in the narrative when only one of Geryon's heads has been overwhelmed.

SLG S15 thus offers us evidence of the poet's adaptation and modification of Homeric diction and thematic material, in this case within the framework of an episode that has no immediate parallel in the Homeric corpus. For his description of the arrow piercing the monster's head, Stesichorus has in part derived expressions from conventional scenes in which a Homeric warrior wounds his opponent with a spear. Since, however, the use of the bow in the *Iliad* is rare and generally unsuccessful, the descriptions of such events would not provide Stesichorus with enough appropriate material. The closest precedent for the account of a fatal, poison-bearing arrow is to be found in the post-Homeric *Shield*, although the description of the origins of famous weapons is conventional in Homeric epic. The simile of the poppy that depicts the falling head of the monster is adapted from a similar scene in the *Iliad*, but again has been altered and embellished by the poet to suit his context.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See W. C. Scott, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile* (Leiden 1974) 82.

<sup>18</sup>See also *Iliad* 14.414.

<sup>19</sup>This article is the revised version of a paper read at the meeting of the Classical Association of the Pacific Northwest in Vancouver, 1978. I should like to thank Professor D. A. Campbell for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of the article.