

Polysomatic Allusion in Stesichorus' Death of Geryon

Some relevant terms:¹

- tenor: “the literal object under consideration”
- vehicle: “the thing to which the metaphor suggests some comparison”
- ground: “what the tenor and vehicle share in common”

I. Stesichorus, *Geryoneis* fr. 19, 30-47:²

.....]ων στυγε[ρ]οῦ
θανάτοι]ο τέλος
κ]εφ[αλ]ᾶι πέρι [...] ἔχων, πεφορυ-
γ]μένος αἷματ[ι]ι τε χολᾶι,
ὀλεσάνορος αἰολοδε[ίρ]ου
ὀδύναισιν Ὑδρας· σιγαῖ δ' ὄ γ' ἐπι-
κλοπάδαν ἐνέρισε μετώπωι·
διὰ δ' ἔσχισε σάρκα [καί] ὀ[στ]έα δαι-
μονος αἴσαι·
διὰ δ' ἀντικρὺ σχέθεν οἱ[σ]τὸς ἐπ' ἀ-
κροτάτον κορυφάν,
ἐμίαινε δ' ἄρ' αἷματι πορφ[υρέ]ωι
θώρακά τε καὶ βροτόεντ[α μέ]λεα
ἀπέκλινε δ' ἄρ' αὐχένα Γαρ[υ]όνας
ἐπικάρσιον, ὡς ὄκα μ[ά]κω[ν]
ἄτε καταισχύνοισ' ἀπαλὸν [δέμας
αἴψ' ἀπὸ φύλλα βαλοῖσα...

English translation:³

[the arrow of Herakles,] hateful
death's finality
held around [its] head, sullied
with blood [.....] and bile,
in the throes of the man-slaying,
nimble-necked Hydra—in silence
it snuck its way into his brow
through skin [and] bone cleaved
by divine decree—
the arrow held its course straight through
to his head's peak,
and stained with blood of purple
his chest and gore-steeped limbs;
and so gives way the neck of Geryon,
aslant, as when a poppy
as if to shame its own soft [body]
at once shedding its petals off...

II. Homer, *Iliad* 8.300-308:

ἦ ῥα καὶ ἄλλον οἴστὸν ἀπὸ νευρῆφιν ἴαλλεν
Ἔκτορος ἀντικρὺ, βαλέειν δέ ἐΐετο θυμός:
καὶ τοῦ μὲν ῥ' ἀφάμαρθ', ὃ δ' ἀμύμονα Γοργυθίωνα
υἷὸν ἐὺν Πριάμοιο κατὰ στήθος βάλεν ἰῶ,
τόν ῥ' ἐξ Αἰσύμηθεν ὀπυιομένη τέκε μήτηρ
καλὴ Καστιάνειρα δέμας εἴκουῖα θεῆσι.
μήκων δ' ὡς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἦ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ
καρπῶ βριθομένη νοτίησί τε εἰαρινῆσιν,
ὡς ἐτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πῆληκι βαρυνθέν.

English translation:

So another arrow from his bow he let fly
against Hector, and his heart aimed to hit him—
and missed. He hit instead blameless Gorgythion,
Priam's good son, through the chest with an arrow,
born from a mother married off from Aisyme,
lovely Kastianeira, alike in body to gods—
a poppy, when it casts its head aside, or in a garden
and laden with fruit and springtime rainfall:
just so, he bowed his head aside, heavy with his helmet.

¹ Garner 1990, 4-7.

² Stesichorus text from Davies & Finglass 2014, adapted slightly for readability.

³ Translations are my own.

III. Vergil, *Aeneid* 9.431-437:

English translation:

...viribus ensis adactus
transabiit costas et candida pectora rumpit.
Volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus
it cruor, inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:
purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
languescit moriens lassove papavera collo
demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.

...driven with force, the sword
penetrated his ribs and broke his unblemished chest.
Euryalus is spun in death, and over pretty limbs
goes blood, and on his shoulders a neck, collapsed, reclines:
purple, just like when a flower, cut down by a plow,
languishes in death or when poppies on a tired neck
let fall their head, burdened with chance rain.

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