

Using, Refusing, and Becoming *Exempla* in *Heroides* 16-17
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Text and translation from Showerman's 1997 Loeb. Passages not discussed in presentation marked with asterisk (*).

Paris's Use of *Exempla*

16.153-158 (Paris to Helen)*

*quod rapuit, laudo; miror, quod reddidit umquam.
tam bona constanter praeda tenenda fuit.
ante recississet caput hoc cervice cruenta,
quam tu de thalamis abstrahere meis.
tene manus umquam nostrae dimittere vellent?
tene meo paterer vivus abire sinu?*

His stealing you away I commend; my marvel is that he ever gave you back. So fine a spoil should have been kept with constancy. Sooner would this head have left my bloody neck than you have been dragged from marriage-chamber of mine. One like you, would ever these hands of mine be willing to let go? One like you, would I, alive, allow to leave my embrace?

16.325-330 (Paris to Helen)

*si pudet et metuis ne me videre secuta.
ipse reus sine te criminis huius ero;
nam sequar Aegidae factum fratrumque tuorum.
exemplo tangi non propiore potes.
te rapuit Theseus, geminas Leucippidas illi;
quartus in exemplis adnumerabor ego.*

If you feel shame and fear lest you seem to have followed me, I myself will meet this charge without you; for I will imitate the deed of Aegeus' son and of your brothers. You can be touched by no example nearer than these. Theseus stole you away, and they the twin daughters of Leucippus; I shall be counted fourth among such examples.

16.347-350 (Paris to Helen)

*Phasida puppe nova vexit Pagasaeus Iason,
laesa neque est Colcha Thessala terra manu.
te quoque qui rapit, rupuit Minoida Theseus;
nulla tamen Minos Cretas ad arma vocat.*

Pegasean Jason in his new craft carried away the Phasian maid, and the land of Thessaly was never harmed by the Colchian band. Theseus, too, he who stole you, stole Minos' daughter; yet Minos called the Cretans ne'er to arms.

Helen's Refusal of *Exempla*

16.249-252, 293-294 (Paris to Helen)*

*Prodita sunt, memini, tunica tua pectora laxa
atque oculis aditum nuda dedere meis—
pectora vel puris nivibus vel lacte tuamve
complexo matrem candidiora Iove.*

Your bosom once, I remember, was betrayed by your robe; it was loose, and left your charms bare to my gaze—breasts whiter than pure snows, or milk, or Jove when he embraced your mother.

...
*vix fieri, si sunt vires in semine morum,
et Iovis et Ledaе filia casta potest.*

...
If power over character be in the seed, the existence of a chaste child of Jove and Leda is scarce possible.

17.41-50 (Helen to Paris)

*At peccant aliae, matronaque rara pudica est.
quis prohibet raris nomen inesse meum?
nam mea quod cisa est tibi mater idonea, cuius
exemplo flecti me quoque posse putes,
matris in admissio falsa sub imagine lusae
error inest; pluma tectus adulter erat.
nil ego, si peccem, possum nescisse, nec ullus
error qui facti crimen obrumbret erit.
illa bene erravit vitiumque auctore redemit.
felix in culpa quo Iove dicar ego?*

You say that others yield to sin, and the matron is rare that is chaste. Who is to keep my name from being among the rare? For, as to my mother's seeming to you a fit example, and your thinking you can turn me, too, by citing it, you are mistaken there, since she fell through being deceived by a false outside; her lover was disguised by plumage. For me, if I should sin I can plead ignorance of nothing; there will be no error to obscure the crime of what I do. Her error was well made, and her sin redeemed by its author. With what Jove shall I be called happy in my fault?

Helen's Use of Witnesses

17.193-196 (Helen to Paris)

*Hypsipyle testis, testis Minoia virgo est,
in non exhibitis utraque lusa toris.
tu quoque dilectam multos, infide, per annos
diceris Oenonen destituisse tuam.*

Hypsipyle is witness, witness is the Minoan maid, both mocked in their unacknowledged marriage-beds. You too, faithless one, they say have abandoned your Oenone, beloved for many years.

17.229-233 (Helen to Paris)

*omnia Medeae fallax promisit Iason:
...
tale nihil timeo, sed nec Medea timebat*

All things false Jason promised to Medea:
...
Naught like this do I fear—but neither did Medea fear!

Oenone's Letter

16.95-98 (Paris to Helen)

*nec tantum regum natae petiere ducumque,
sed nymphis etiam curaue amorque fui.
quam super Oenones faciem mirarer? in orbe
nec Priamo est a te dignior ulla nurus.*

And not only have the daughters of princes and chieftains sought me, but even the nymphs have felt for me the cares of love. Whose beauty was I to admire more than Oenone's?—after you, the world contains none more fit than she to be bride to Priam's son.

17.195-198 (Helen to Paris)

*tu quoque dilectam multos, infide, per annos
diceris Oenonen detituisse tuam.
nec tamen ipse negas; et nobis omnia de te
quaerere, si nescis, maxima cura fuit.*

You, too, faithless one, they say have abandoned your Oenone, beloved for many years. Nor yet do you yourself deny it; and if you do not know, to inquire into all concerning you has been my greatest care.

5.9-12 (Oenone to Paris)

*Nondum tantus eras, cum te contenta marito
edita de magno flumine nympa fui.
qui nunc Priamides—absit reverentia vero!—
servus eras; servo nubere nympa tuli!*

Not yet so great were you when I was content to wed you—I, the nymph-daughter of a mighty stream. You who are now a son of Priam—let not respect keep back the truth!—were then a slave; I deigned to wed a slave—I, a nymph!

5.157-158 (Oenone to Paris)*

*sed tua sum tecumque fui puerilibus annis
et tua, quod superest temporis, esse precor!*

but I am yours, and I was your mate in childhood's years, and yours through all time to come I pray to be!

Paris's Anticipated Concern vs. Helen's Actual Concern

16.341-344, 347-350 (Paris to Helen)

*Nec tu rapta time, ne nos fera bella sequantur,
concitet et vires Graecia magna suas.
tot prius abductis ecqua est repetita per arma?
crede mihi, vanos res habet ista metus.
...
Phasida puppe nova vexit Pagasaeus Iason,
laesa neque est Colcha Thessala terra manu.
te quoque qui rapit, rupuit Minoida Theseus;
nulla tamen Minos Cretas ad arma vocat.*

And do not fear lest, if you are stolen away, fierce wars will follow after us, and mighty Greece will rouse her strength. Of so many who have been taken away before, tell me, has any one ever been sought back by arms? Believe me, that fear of yours is vain. . . . Pegasean Jason in his new craft carried away the Phasian maid, and the land of Thessaly was never harmed by the Colchian band. Theseus, too, he who stole you, stole Minos' daughter; yet Minos called the Cretans ne'er to arms.

17.213-219 (Helen to Paris)

*tu quoque, qui poteris fore me sperare fidelem,
et non exemplis anxius esse tuis?
quicumque Iliacos intraverit advena portus,
is tibi solliciti causa timoris erit.
ipse mihi quotiens iratus “adultera!” dices,
oblitus nostro crimen inesse tuum!
delicti fies idem reprehensor et auctor.*

You, too, how will you be able to hope that I shall keep faith and not be troubled by your own example? Whatever stranger shall have entered the harbours of Ilion will be the cause of anxious fears for you. You yourself, how often in anger will you say to me: “Adulteress!” forgetful that your own reproach is linked with mine! You will be at the same time the censor and the author of my fault.

17.226, 233-236 (Helen to Paris)*

*quis mihi, si laedar, Phrygiis succurret in oris?
...
tale nihil timeo—sed nec Medea timebat!
fallitur augurio spes bona saepe suo.
omnibus invenies, quae nunc iactantur in alto,
navibus a portu lene fuisse fretum.*

Who will succor me on Phrygian shores if I meet with harm? . . .
Naught like this do I fear—but neither did Medea fear! Fair hope is often deceived in its own augury. For every ship tossed now upon the deep, you will find that the sea was gentle as it left the harbour.

Ariadne & Medea’s Letters

10.93-108 (Ariadne to Theseus)*

*si mare, si terras porrectaque litora vidi,
multa mihi terrae, multa minantur aquae.
caelum restabat—timeo simulacra deorum!
destitutor ravidis praeda cibusque feris;
sive colunt habitantque viri, diffidimus illis—
externos didici laesa timere viros.*

When I have looked on the sea, and on the land, and on the wide-stretching shore, I know many dangers threaten me on land, and many on the waters. The sky remains—yet there I fear visions of the gods! I am left helpless, a prey to the maws of ravening beasts; and if men dwell in the place and keep it, I put no trust in them—my hurts have taught me fear of stranger-men.

12.161-166 (Medea to Jason)

*deseror amissis regno patriaque domoque
coniuge, qui nobis omnia solus erat!
serpentis igitur potui taurosque furentes;
unum non potui perdomuisse virum,
quaeque feros pepuli doctis medicatibus ignes,
non valeo flammam effugere ipsa meas.*

I am abandoned; I have lost my throne, my native soil, my husband—who alone for me took the place of all! Dragons and maddened bulls, it seems, I could subdue; a man alone I could not; I, who have beat back fierce fire with wise drugs, have not the power to escape the flames of my own passion.

The Double Letters

19.175-178 (Hero to Leander)

*ut semel intravit Colchos Pagasaeus Iason,
inpositam celeri Phasida puppe tulit;
ut semel Idaeus Lacedaemona venit adulter,
cum praeda rediit protinus ille sua.*

Once had Jason of Pagasae entered Colchis, and he set the maid of the Phasis in his swift ship and bore her off; once had the lover from Ida come to Lacedaemon, and he straight returned with his prize.

20.49-50 (Acontius to Cydippe)

*si non proficient artes, veniemus ad arma,
inque tui cupido rapta ferere sinu.
non sum, qui soleam Paridis reprehendere factum,
nec quemquam, qui vir, posset ut esse fuit.*

If art will not serve, I shall resort to arms, and you will be seized and borne away in the embrace that longs for you. I am not the one to chide Paris for what he did, nor any one who, to become a husband, has been a man.

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