

Making & Breaking Patterns: Debating Exemplarity in *Heroides* 5 and 16-17
Ashley Walker, University of Notre Dame

Letter	Author/Addressee	Narrative Chronology
<i>Heroides</i> 5	Oenone to Paris	pre-Trojan War, after Paris and Helen arrive in Troy
<i>Heroides</i> 16	Paris to Helen	pre-Trojan War, before Helen leaves with Paris
<i>Heroides</i> 17	Helen to Paris	

Text from Knox 1995 (*Her.* 5) and Kenney 1996 (*Her.* 16-17). All translations are my own.

1) *Heroides* 16.153-162 (Paris to Helen)

*quod rapuit laudo, miror quod reddidit umquam:
tam bona constanter praeda tenenda fuit.
ante recessisset caput hoc cervice cruenta
quam tu de thalamis abstrahere meis.
tene manus umquam nostrae dimittere vellent,
tene meo paterer vivus abire sinu?
si reddenda fores, aliquid tamen ante tulissem,
nec Venus ex toto nostra fuisset iners.
vel tua virginitas esset libata vel illud
quod poterat salva virginitate rapi.*

I praise that he abducted you, but I marvel that he ever returned you: so good a prize should have been held steadfastly. This head would have departed from my bloody neck before you were dragged from my bedchambers. Would my hands have ever been willing to allow you to leave? Could I, while living, have endured you departing from my refuge? If you had to be returned, yet first I would have stolen something, and my love would not have been entirely impotent. Either your virginity would have been offered up or something which could have been taken with your virginity preserved.

2) *Heroides* 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 num propiore potes?
te rapuit Theseus, geminas Leucippidas illi:
quartus in exemplis adnumerabor ego.*

If you're ashamed and afraid you might appear to have followed me, I myself will be the guilty party of this accusation without you. For I will follow in the footsteps of Theseus and of your own brothers. You can't be influenced by any closer example, can you? Theseus abducted you; they abducted the twin daughters of Leucippus. I will be counted fourth among their examples.

3) *Heroides* 16.345-350 (Paris to Helen)

*nomine ceperunt Aquilonis Erechthida Thraces,
et tuta a bello Bistonis ora fuit.
Phasida puppe nova vexit Pagasaeus Iason,
laesa neque est Colcha Thessala terra manu.
te quoque qui rapuit, rapuit Minoida Theseus;
nulla tamen Minos Cretas ad arma vocat.*

In Aquilo's name the Thracians captured Erechtheus's child, and the Bistonian coast was safe from war. Pegasean Jason carried off the Phasian woman in his new ship, and the Thessalian land was not harmed by a Colchian force. Theseus, who abducted you too, abducted Minos's daughter; yet Minos does not call the Cretans to arms.

4) *Heroides* 5.125-134 (Oenone to Paris)

*sit facie quamvis insignis, adultera certe est;
deseruit socios hospite capta deos.
illam de patria Theseus, nisi nomine fallor,
nescioquis Theseus abstulit ante sua.
a iuvene et cupido credatur reddita virgo?
unde hoc compererim tam bene quaeris? amo.
vim licet appelles et culpam nomine veles;
quae totiens rapta est, praebeuit ipsa rapi.
at manet Oenone fallenti casta marito,
et poterat falli legibus ipse tuis.*

No matter how remarkable in appearance she may be, she is surely an adulteress. She has abandoned her marriage gods because she was enamored with her guest. Theseus, unless I am mistaken about the name, some Theseus stole her away from her fatherland before. Is it believable that she was returned a virgin by a young and lustful man? You ask how I have learned this so well? I am in love. Even if you call it force and conceal the blame with terminology, she who has been taken so often has herself offered to be taken. But Oenone remains faithful to her deceitful husband, and you yourself were capable of being deceived on your own terms.

5) *Heroides* 5.99-108 (Oenone to Paris)

*nec tibi, si sapias, fidam promitte Lacaenam,
quae sit in amplexus tam cito versa tuos.
ut minor Atrides temerati foedera lecti
clamat et externo laesus amore dolet,
tu quoque clamabis. nulla reparabilis arte
laesa pudicitia est; deperit illa semel.
ardet amore tui? sic et Menelaon amavit.
nunc iacet in viduo credulus ille toro.
felix Andromache, certo bene nupta marito!
uxor ad exemplum fratris habenda fui.*

If you're wise, don't expect that Spartan woman—who was turned so readily to your embraces—to be faithful to you. Just as the younger son of Atreus cries out about the violated bonds of his marriage-bed and grieves because he has been wronged by an adulterous love, you also will cry out. Wounded chastity can be repaired by no art; it is lost but once. Does she burn with love for you? So too she loved Menelaus. Now he lies in a bereft bed because he was trusting. Happy Andromache, well-wed to a constant spouse! I was a wife who should have been kept after the example of your brother.

6) *Heroides* 17.19-34 (Helen to Paris)

*quo magis admiror quae sit fiducia coepta
spemque tori dederit quae tibi causa mei.
an, quia vim nobis Neptunius attulit heros,
rapta semel videor bis quoque digna rapi?
crimen erat nostrum si delenita fuisset;
cum sim rapta, meum quid nisi nolle fuit?
non tamen ex facto fructum tulit ille petatum:
excepto redii passa timore nihil.
oscula luctanti tantummodo pauca protervus
abstulit, ulterius nil habet ille mei.
quae tua nequitia est, non his contenta fuisset:
di melius! similis non fuit ille tibi.
reddidit intactam minuitque modestia crimen,
et iuvenem facti paenituisse patet.
Thesea paenituit, Paris ut succederet illi,
ne quando nomen non sit in ore meum?*

All the more I wonder what assurance you have in your undertaking and what cause has granted you the expectation of my bed. Or, because the Neptunian hero roused violence with me, because I have been abducted once do I seem deserving of being abducted a second time also? It would have been my fault if I had been wooed; because I was abducted, what recourse did I have but to say no? Nevertheless he did not steal the gratification he sought from the deed: I returned after suffering nothing save fear. He, shameless, stole only a few kisses from me while I struggled, and he has nothing further of me. Such naughtiness as yours would not have been satisfied with this. May the gods will something better! He was not like you. He returned me intact and the crime was lessened by his restraint, and it is clear that he, a young man, repented of the deed. Did Theseus repent just so Paris might take his place, lest sometime my name might not be on people's lips?

7) *Heroides* 17.193-196 (Helen to Paris)

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

Hypsipyle is witness, the Minoan maiden is witness, each lamenting their unconfirmed marriage beds. And you also, unfaithful one, are said to have abandoned your Oenone, even after she was loved for many years.

8) *Heroides* 17.227-234 (Helen to Paris)

*quis mihi, si laedar, Phrygiis succurret in oris?
unde petam fratres, unde parentis opem?
omnia Medæe fallax promisit Iason:
pulsa est Aesonia num minus illa domo?
non erat Aetes ad quem despecta rediret,
non Idyia parens Chalciopæve soror.
tale nihil timeo, sed nec Medæa timebat;
fallitur augurio spes bona sæpe suo.*

Who will come to my aid on Phrygian shores, if I am harmed? Where will I look for my brothers, where a parent's help? Deceitful Jason promised everything to Medea. Wasn't she expelled from Jason's house all the same? There was no Aetes to whom she could return after she was scorned, no mother Idyia or sister Chalciopæ. I fear nothing of the sort, but Medea wasn't afraid either. Good hope is often deceived by its own prediction.

Selected Bibliography

- Barchiesi, Alessandro. 2001. *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets*. Ed. and trans. by Fox, M. and Marchesi, S. London: Duckworth.
- Belfiore, Elizabeth. 1980. "Ovid's Encomium of Helen." *Classical Journal* 76: 136-148.
- Bessone, Frederica. 2003. "Discussione del mito e polifonia narrative nelle *Heroides*. Enone, Paride ed Elena (Ov. *Her.* 5 e 16-17)." In Guglielmo, Marcella and Bona, Edoardo, eds. *Forme di comunicazione nel mondo antico e metamorfosi del mito: dal teatro al romanzo*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso. 149-185.
- Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 1995. "'Ma il giudice delle dee non era un pastore?' Reticenze e arte retorica di Paride (Ov. *her.* 16)." *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 34: 135-152.
- Davis, John T. 1980. "Exempla and Anti-exempla in the *Amores* of Ovid." *Latomus* 39: 412-417.
- Davisson, Mary H. T. 1983. "Sed sum quam medico notior ipse mihi: Ovid's Use of Some Conventions in the Exile Epistles." *Classical Antiquity* 2: 171-182.
- Davisson, Mary H. T. 1993. "'Quid Moror Exemplis?': Mythological *Exempla* in Ovid's Pre-Exilic Poems and the Elegies from Exile." *Phoenix* 47: 213-237.
- Drinkwater, Megan O. 2013. "An Amateur's Art: Paris and Helen in Ovid's *Heroides*." *Classical Philology* 108: 111-125.
- Fulkerson, Laurel. 2009. "The *Heroides*: Female Elegy?" In Knox, Peter E., ed. *A Companion to Ovid*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. 78-89.
- Fulkerson, Laurel. 2005. *The Ovidian Heroine as Author: Reading, Writing, and Community in the Heroides*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenney, E. J. 1996. *Heroides: XVI-XXI*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knox, Peter E. 1995. *Heroides: Select Epistles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- La Bua, Giuseppe. 2018. "Intratextual Readings in Ovid's *Heroides*." In Harrison, Stephen J.; Frangoulidis, Stavros; and Papanghelis, Theodore D., eds. *Intratextuality and Latin Literature*. Berlin; Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter & Co. 243-255.
- Patti, Marianna. 2001. "Enone, Paride, Elena. La 'triplice verità' (a proposito di Ov. *Her.* 5; 16; 17)." *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 31: 25-42.
- Watson, Patricia. 1983. "Mythological Exempla in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*." *Classical Philology* 78: 117-26.
- Whitaker, Richard. 1983. *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy: A Study in Poetic Technique*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.