

Using, Refusing, and Becoming *Exempla* in *Heroides* 16-17

This paper explores the function of multiple intratextual references in the letters of Paris and Helen. Specifically, I argue that intratextual links connect these two letters to the rest of the *Heroides* and that these connections invite the reader to assess these two letters through the lens of others in the collection. In the *Heroides*, multiple letter-writers reference other heroines and their addressees, but the letters of Paris and Helen contain the greatest number of these references. Paris mentions Hercules and Deianira (16.267-8), Helen mentions Hypsipyle (17.193), and both mention Oenone (16.97, 17.196), Jason and Medea (16.347, 17.229), and Theseus and Ariadne (16.349, 17.193).

I plan to build on the work of several scholars who have considered connections between the letters and figures of the collection (Fulkerson 2005, Kennedy 2007, Spentzou 2003, Vaiopoulos 2013, and, especially, La Bua 2018). In particular, I focus on the texts of the letters referenced in *Heroides* 16-17 and how they influence the perception of Paris and Helen's exchange. Additionally, this paper considers how explicit references to Paris and Helen in other letters (specifically 19.175-8 and 20.47-50) retroactively shape the reader's impression of these two letters and the persuasive force of their arguments. I argue that the *Heroides* as a whole comment on the strength of Paris and Helen's arguments, that the other heroines anticipate Helen's position and rhetoric and reveal them as superior, and that yet Paris is successful and he and Helen become *exempla* for the two subsequent sets of double epistles.

The first section of this paper considers the different ways Paris and Helen refer to their intratextual references (Barchiesi 2001). Paris alludes to other heroes as *exempla* in his attempt to persuade Helen (16.325-30). Helen rejects Paris's use of *exempla* (17.41-50) and calls her models witnesses, evoking them to support her counter-argument against Paris (17.193-4). Paris

is the first hero to speak in the *Heroides*, so he is unable to call upon the previous men as witnesses; he can rely on their stories, but not their perspectives. Helen, however, is able to call on other women as witnesses for the reader through the previous letters of the collection.

The next sections of the paper consider intratextual connections between the letters of Paris and Helen and those of Oenone, Ariadne, and Medea. Recalling Oenone's letter undercuts the rhetoric of Paris's letter and supports Helen's skepticism of Paris's constancy. The other two letters support Helen's concerns for her future. Paris uses the *exempla* of Theseus and Jason to attempt to persuade Helen that she should not fear him, but Ariadne and Medea's laments about their own abandonment and dangers provide support for Helen's hesitation.

The final section looks at the two sets of double epistles which follow Paris and Helen's letters. Both Hero and Acontius evoke Paris and Helen as *exempla* (19.175-8, 20.47-50). Thus, despite Helen's rejection of Paris's use of *exempla* and the superiority of her argument, supported by the witnesses she calls upon, the *Heroides* confirm the version of the myth the reader already knows and portray Paris and Helen as *exempla* themselves.

In conclusion, this paper shows how the *Heroides* as a whole, through the intratextual connections surrounding Paris and Helen's correspondence, highlight a tension between the superiority of Helen's argument and the eventual success of Paris's. The success of exemplarity in their discourse highlights the imitative nature of elegiac love, even in a situation where one discursive partner attempts to identify and reject this pattern of imitation.

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