Stesichorus *PMGF* S21.1–3 (*Geryoneis*): A Textual Proposal

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AFTER THE MURDERS of herdsman Eurytion and of his dog Orthos, Heracles needs to kill Geryon in order to accomplish his tenth labour, fetching the cattle of the monster from Erytheia. This is the core of the story of Stesichorus’ *Geryoneis*, a long (more than 1300 lines) narrative poem, preserved principally by *P.Oxy. XXXII* 2617.

The fragment here taken into account, *PMGF* S15 + S21, describes the beginning of the duel between the hero and the monster: Heracles attacks Geryon by stealth, striking his brow with a missile, likely a stone (S15 i.1–14). As a result, the helmet falls from the first of the three heads of the monster and remains on the ground:

(S15 i.14–17: ant. 6–9)

(S21: ep. 1–5)


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As Page saw, the beginning of an epode and the top of a column,” can be adequately inserted at the top of fr. 4. ii (= S15. ii), where ep. 1–8 + str. 1–5 are missing. Moreover, “ἐπὶ χθόνα and κεφαλά’ seem appropriate to the context,” i.e. the description of Geryon and Heracles’ duel, and the very beginning of S21 might recall S15 i. 16 τρῡφάλει(α), if restored as καὶ τάν (or simply τάν).

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For the other gaps, Page did not suggest anything and confessed to have “no idea who or what the ‘swift-flying’ female subjects may be, or what they are doing.”

After Page, many scholars have thought it likely to put S21 soon after S15 i. 17 (and before ii. 1), and tried to supplement the fragment in different ways: all proposals agree in identifying the female plural subject with the Moirai or the Keres, but

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2 JHS 93 (1973) 154, also Supplementum Lyricis Graecis p.14 ad loc.
3 Otherwise, it should be placed 390 lines earlier or later than the present position: cf. Page, JHS 93 (1973) 146 (“if the triad [of the Geryoneis] consists of twenty-six lines and the [papyrus’] column of thirty lines, every fourteenth column will repeat the metrical pattern of the first”), with the table at 148.
4 For the possible meaning of the word in this context (the head of Geryon? the head of a weapon?) see Lazzeri, Studi 225–227.
they disagree on the purposes of these entities.\(^6\)

According to Lerza\(^7\) they strike Geryon’s helmet to make it fall on the ground, just as Apollo did with Patroclus’ helmet in \textit{Il.} 16.788–793.\(^8\)

\[\text{kai } \tau'\nu \mu\epsilon\nu [\sim \delta\alpha'i]\mu\omicron\nu\varepsilon\theta\nu \omega\kappa\upsilon\pi\epsilon\tau\alpha[i]
\]

\[\sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim 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\sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \sim \si...
Esso dunque (scil. l’elmo) le dee dal veloce volo, avendo (= recando) appunto la morte funesta, … lo avevano colpito, tanto da gettarlo a terra.

In the view of Lazzeri, after S15 i.17 the helmet was of no concern. He proposes e.g. that the actions of the Moirai and the Keres concern Geryon falling to the ground after Heracles’ first attack:

\[
\tauο \nu \mu \epsilonν [\deltaολιό]φρονες \ οικυπέτα\iota
\]
\[
\tauοκα \ Μοιραι (vel \ Κῆρες) \ πότυ\iota \ον \ \epsilon\chiο\ιαι
\]
\[
pι\iota πουντ’ \ αμφ\iota \epsilon\pi\iota \\alphaζαν \ \epsilon\pi\iota \chi\thetaονα.
\]

Allora le Moire insidiose dal rapido volo, che hanno il destino, afferrarono quello (scil. Gerione) che cadeva a terra.

A different interpretation of the Keres’ presence has been offered—indeedendently of De Martino—by Irvine, who suggested that in S21 “the well-known motif of the Kerostasia was introduced in a brief compass as Homer was wont to do.”

Keres are objectified here, as the individual doom of Geryon:

\[
\tauοι\iota \nu \mu \epsilonν [\deltaαμασι]φρονες \ οικυπέτα\iota
\]
\[
\rhoε\piον \ α\iota\psiα \ τάλαντ\iota \ον \ \epsilon\χο\iota\ιαι
\]
\[
Γαρνόνα \ κα\iota] \ \epsilon\pi[\l]\αζαν \ \epsilon\pi\iota \ \chi\thetaονα.
\]

10 BollClass SER. III 16 (1995) 93: “se consideriamo come conclusi con il v. 17 del fr. 4 col. I (= S15 i) i versi che riguardano l’elmo (sia perché sembra una ripetizione eccessiva dedicarvi otto versi, per quanto si tratti di un motivo efficace e funzionale alla narrazione; sia perché l’elmo, da quanto si legge, è ormai caduto a terra) ci potremmo attendere nuovi sviluppi, identificabili in un mutamento di soggetto dopo il v. 17.”

11 As for the weapon used by Heracles, Lazzeri (92 n.24) thinks it was more likely to be a missile than the famous club: “esce rafforzata l’idea che generale che lo scontro avvenga … con l’uso di armi che implichi, almeno in questa fase, una distanza tra i combattenti che non sia quella utile ad un corpo a corpo.”


And, in the case of the twain (Heracles and Geryon), straightway did the swift-flying conquerors of the spirit who had control of the balance pertaining to Geryon incline downwards, dashing it to the earth.

Though plausible, Lerza’s and Irvine’s proposals face serious objections. Lerza’s restoration misrepresents the papyrus evidence (see n. 9 above), presents the particles ῥά γε in unusual positions, and causes the Keres’ action to obliterate Heracles’ action. In Irvine’s case, the subject is expressed only in an allusive way through the epithets δαμασίφρονες ὤκυπέται (= κῆρες), is not preceded by the definite article, and appears too cryptic and ‘enigmatic’, not in line with the Stesichorean style. The role of the Keres seems ambiguous. On the one hand, they are objectified and appear to be the equivalent of the Homeric αἴσιμον ἡμαρ, since they hold the scales of Zeus’ balance and incline downwards (ῥέπον, cf. Il. 8.72 ῥέπε δ’ αἴσι-μον ἡμαρ Ἀχαιῶν, 22.212 ῥέπε δ’ Ἐκτορος αἴσιμον ἡμαρ). On the other hand, the Keres are personified and appear to act like deities or daemons, since they “have control of the balance pertaining to Geryon” (τάλαντον ἐχοίσαι / Γάρυονα) and dash (ἐπλάξαν) it to earth. In the Homeric poems, Zeus generally

14 Cf. e.g. Il. 1.330, 3.7, 9.511, Od. 2.12, 17.63, and see R. J. Cunliffe, A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect (Norman 1924) 5152 s.v. ἀρα; for post-Homeric examples, J. D. Denniston, Greek Particles (Oxford 1954) 43, 50.


16 Cf. Lazzeri, Studi 224–225 with n.500.


18 Cf. n.13 above.
controls the balance and holds it (cf. Διὸς ἴρα τάλαντα, Il. 16.658). Here, the father of the gods is absent, and we do not know who holds the balance.19

More satisfactory is Lazzeri’s restoration: in sum, he thinks that the Keres/Moirai, “che recano la morte, e che afferrano Gerione costretto a terra dall’attacco. Si realizza in tal modo un intervento divino in favore di Eracle contro Gerione, dopo la rinuncia di Poseidone a difendere il nipote: la creatura tricipite viene così abbandonata al suo destino, che si compirà attraverso la forza e l’accortezza di Eracle, figlio e protetto di Zeus.”20 Rightly, he rules out that the Keres/Moirai’s action entails Geryon’s death: the fight continues after S21 with a second attack from Heracles, this time by arrow.21 As a parallel for the direct intervention of the Keres/Moirai in the battle, Lazzeri (Studi 218–219) adduces Il. 18.535–540, [Hes.] Scut. 156–159 and 248–259: in the first and second of these passages “esse intervengono ad afferrare un guerriero ferito ma non ancora morto” (258; emphasis mine).22 In particular, the Scutum—or, better, a previous version of the Scutum—would be known to

19 Cf. Irvine, ΖΠΕ 115 (1997) 45. For these and other objections to Irvine’s restoration see Lazzeri, Studi 221–225.

20 BollClass SER. III 16 (1995) 95; see now Lazzeri, Studi 217–218.

21 S15 ii.1 ff.: an arrow shot by Heracles goes clear through Geryon’s first head. S16: according to the likely reading of Barrett (Greek Lyric 20), Heracles uses his club on Geryon’s second head. For a full discussion of these fragments and their interpretations, cf. Lazzeri, Studi 227–270, who takes into account the iconographic evidence too (in part: Barrett’s reading of S16 seems to be supported by many vase paintings dating from the sixth to third century B.C., where Heracles attacks by club the second head of Geryon, the first being already by bow).

22 For a discussion of the passages see Irvine, ΖΠΕ 115 (1997) 39–40: “Keres are not elsewhere envisaged as active participants in specialized warfare—but all we have before us is a visual description of the very activity with which they are elsewhere associated, namely conveying the dead (or, by the same token, those fated to die) to Hades.” See also Lazzeri’s reply, Studi 218–220.
Stesichorus,\textsuperscript{23} and could perhaps represent “un riferimento per il tentativo di ‘innovare’ in una scena di duello, in particolare nei confronti dei modelli omerici (che ... sono richiamati con attenzione in un processo di sapiente modifica dei nessi)” (219).

Undoubtedly all this is true, but note that in the last of the three parallels adduced and the most similar to S21 as restored by Lazzeri (\textit{Scut.} 252–253 \textit{ον δὲ πρῶτον μεμάστειν κείμενον ἃ πιπτοτα νεώτατον ~ S21.3 πιπτοτ' ἀμφεπάξαν ἐπὶ χόνα}), the intervention of the Keres entails the immediate death of a warrior \textit{falling} to the ground\textsuperscript{24}—which is difficult to accept in our fragment, where Geryon is not dying at this point in the narrative.\textsuperscript{25} The association ‘Keres-warrior falling / immediate death’ is absent in the other two passages (\textit{Il.} 18.535–537 = [\textit{Hes.}] \textit{Scut.} 156–158 \textit{ἐν δε άλοη Κήρ, / ἄλλον ζωόν έχονα νεώτατον, ἄλλον άοτον, / ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατά μόθον ἐλκε ποδοῖν})\textsuperscript{26}, which are therefore less close to the restored S21: the \textit{νεώτατος} warrior is not described as falling, and the action of the Ker is generically designated by the verb \textit{ἔχω}, ‘to hold’.


\textsuperscript{24} As a mere formal parallel, see also \textit{Il. Parv.} fr.20.5 Davies (21.5 Bernabé, 29.5 West) \textit{τὸν δὲ πεσόντα / ἔλλαβε πορψυρεος θάνατος καὶ μοίρα κραταῖη, where the person falling is the young Astyanax, thrown from a battlement. The case is here very different from the restored S21, but the formal similarity with our fragment is nevertheless interesting.

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. Page, \textit{JHS} 93 (1973) 151: “Geryon will not fall while two of his three heads are uninjured.”


\textsuperscript{27} So the majority of translators: cf. e.g. P. Mazon, \textit{Hésiode} (Paris 1928) 137 n.2 (“la pernicieuse Kère tenait là, vivants, un guerrier frais blessé, un autre sans blessure, et, en même temps, par les pieds trainait un cadavre au travers de la mêlée”); H. G. Evelyn-White, \textit{Hesiod} (London 1929) 231 (“and deadly Fate was there holding one man newly wounded, and another
but also ‘to have charge of’, ‘to have control of’.28

In light of these considerations, it is perhaps preferable to assign the Keres a different action. Three supplements are possible for line 3 επὶ[π.]άξαν, as Lobel noted (P.Oxy. XXXII p. 3): “if birds are in question, I suppose [π] is the likeliest supplement [v. Aristoph. Lys. 770 ἀλλ’ ὅσταν πτήξωσι χελιδόνες εἰς ἑνα Χέρωνον] with Blaydes’ note). Other possibilities which might be considered are (κατ-)[επὶ[π.]άξαν and επὶ[π.]άξαν (Hdn. π.µ.λ. ii 44).” If the Keres are depicted as winged demons, πτήσσω seems appropriate to them.29

Moreover, if the famous speech of Sarpedon at ll. 12.322ff. is alluded to by Stesichorus in Geryon’s reply to Menoites’ speech (S11), as has long been recognized,30 it is plausible to expect that somehow Sarpedon’s description of the Keres as ‘standing

unwounded; and one, who was dead, she was dragging by the feet through the tumult’); A. Colonna, Opere di Esiodo (Turin 1977) 319 (“assieme alla Kere funesta, che teneva un uomo da poco colpito, un altro ancora illeso, un altro, morto, trascinava per i piedi attraverso il tumulto”); G. Paduano, Omero. Iliade (Turin 1997) 605 (“la Morte funesta, che ora prendeva un ferito, ora un uomo ancora incolore, ora un morto, e lo tirava per i piedi in mezzo alla mischia”); G. Arrighetti, Estoido. Opere (Turin 1998) 241 (“Ker funesta che teneva un uomo da poco colpito, un altro ancora illeso, un altro, morto, trascinava per i piedi attraverso il tumulto”); G. W. Most, Hesiod (London 2007) 15 (“upon it deadly Fate was dragging men by feet through the battle, holding one who was alive but freshly wounded, another who was unwounded, another who had died”).

28 So e.g. K. F. Ameis, Homers IIias II.21 (Berlin 1908) 142 (“ἔχουσα γεφαστ haltend’); and, more recently, G. Cerri, Omero. Iliade (Milan 1999) 1019 (“la Morte funesta, che sovrastava ad un vivo non ancora ferito, ad un altro, ferito, ed un altro già morto trascinava via per i piedi”). On the passage see also Onians, Origins 401 n.1.


by’ or ‘standing in wait for’ (Il. 12.326–327 νῦν δ’ ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστάσαν θανάτου / μυρίαι, ἂς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ’ ὑπαλοξία) could have influenced the Himerean poet—indeed, it seems to have influenced more than one poet. Consequently, I suggest exempli gratia the following restoration:

βὰν μὲν [π’ ὀλοὶ]φρονεῖ ὠκυπέτα[i]
Κῆρες κατὰ πότιμον ἐχοίσαι
πάρ δὲ οἱ αἰφ['] ἐπ[τ]άξαν ὑμ[ι] χόνα·
moved the baleful swift-flying
Keres, holding destiny of death,
and near him (i.e. Geryon) suddenly cowered on the earth.

1. βὰν: cf. Il. 2.302 οὐκ μὴ κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτου φέρ reklαι, and Od. 14.207–208 ἀλλ’ ἔτοι τῶν κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτου φέρουσαι / εἰς Ἀἴδαο δόµους. If the restoration is right, Stesichorus reworked Sarpedon’s description by contaminating it with the traditional image of the Keres coming to carry away victims. Note that the Keres’ intervention could have been decided by the Olympian gods during the assembly described at S14; indeed, that Geryon’s death is decided by the gods emerges clearly from S15 ii.8–9 διὰ δ’ ἐσχίσει σάρκα [καὶ] ὁ[στ]έα διαί/μονος αἰών: cf. Lazzeri, BollClass SER. III 16 (1995) 95 with n.32 and Studi 218.

μὲν [π(α): for this combination see Denniston, Greek Particles2 43 (some examples: Il. 2.1, 48, 211; Od. 1.127; Hes. fr.25.30 M.-W.; Hym.Hom.Merc. 132).

31 For the absolute use of ἐφιστήμει with hostile sense see LSJ s.v. B.III. Leaf, Iliad I 548–549 notes that here “the sense of ἐπὶ is the same as in ἐφεδρος.”


33 Thanks to C. Neri for calling my attention to these passages.
όλοφρονες ὀκυτέτα: for the Stesichorean use of two epithets for one noun, see S15 ii. 5–6 ὀλεσάνορος aisolode [w] / ὀδύναιν ὅδρας, and cf. Lazzeri, Studi 240.

όλοφρονες: ὀλοαί is one of the Keres’ traditional epithets in archaic epic tradition (cf. Il. 13. 665 ὅς ἐν ἐν ἔδωκε βήμ' ἰδῆν ἐπὶ νηὸς ἔθαλα, 18. 355 = [Hes.] Scut. 156 ῥοη ᾧρ, Hes. Op. 745 ῥοη γάρ ἐπ' ἀυτῷ μοίρα τέτυκται, and see also fr. 280 Μοῖρ’ ὀλό [9]). The ἰωκατωμα ἀλφρονες ... Κήρες instead of ὀλοαί ... Κήρες can be explained as a way of innovating epic phraseology and is consistent with Stesichorean style: “Stesichorus employed word-groups (… primarily … noun + epithet groups) reminiscent of epic formulae, but … in two out of every three cases (56 as opposed to 29) the individual elements, derived as they were from epic, appeared in expressions that are unprecedent in extant poems.” In the present case, the poet gave the Keres an epithet attributed to wild beasts in the Iliad (2. 723 a snake, 15. 630 a lion) and to fear some characters in the Odyssey (1. 52 Atlas, 10. 137 Aetes, 11. 322 Minos), a procedure which can be entered in the second of the four categories of Stesichorean word-groups defined by Maingon (“word-groups whose individual elements occur in the epic tradition”). As for the prosody, the treatment of plosive + liquid in ὀλοφρονες follows the epic tendency, as often in Stesichorus: cf. R. Fuhrer, “Muta cum liquida bei Stesichorus,” ZPE 28 (1978) 180–186; G. Comotti, “Muta cum liquida nel nuovo Stesicono,” QUCC 26 (1977) 59–62; and M. Haslam, “The Verification of the New Stesichorus,” GRBS 19 (1978) 29–57, at 49–51

34 Other epithets in archaic epic are κακῇ (ll. 12. 113, 16. 687, Od. 2. 316, 23. 332), μέλαναι (ll. 2. 859, 3. 360, 5. 22, 652, etc.; Od. 2. 283, 3. 242, 15. 275, etc.; Hes. Theog. 211) and σταγείᾳ (ll. 23. 79); for further epithets, used in the later poetical tradition, see C. F. H. Bruchmann, Epitheta Deorum (Roscher, Lex. Suppl. [1893]) 163–164.

35 A. D. Maingon, “Form and Content in the Lille Stesichorus, QUCC 31 (1989) 31–56, at 39. This is true particularly for the Geryones, while the case of the Lille poem— the so called Thebais—is partly different: cf. Maingon 45, “in the case of the Lille fragment … almost 50% of the phrases are verbatim imitations of epic precedents.”

36 For the adjective see S. West, Omero. Odisea I (Milan 2002) 196.

(who effectively sums up the question: Stesichorus “uses the long scansion except where it suits him to use the short”). For other -φρον compounds in Stesichorean poems see S222.9 Ἐλληνικά δαήφρονος, S14.4–5 ποτὲ ὁ κρατερό/φρονα πάτρω ἢ ποικέλευθον (i.e. Poseidon), and cf. M. Nöthiger, Die Sprache des Stesichorus und des Ibykus (Zurich 1971) 137–138, 164 with n.7.

οἰκυπέτα[ι: see n.4 above. Note that Okypete was the name of one of the two Harpies in Hes. Theog. 267; this however does not necessarily imply that the Harpies are the female subject here, as thought by E. Gangutia Elicegui, “‘Gerioniedas’. Desarrollo literario griego en contacto con el Proximo Oriente,” Emerita 66 (1998) 231–256, at 242 (cf. Irvine, ZPE 115 [1997] 38, and Lazzeri, Studi 222).

2. Κῆρες κατὰ πότμον ἐχοῦσαι, i.e. πότμον κατεχοῦσαι (for an analogous tmesis see Stesich. S15 ii.17 ἀπὸ φόλλα βαλοῖσα)38: cf. Pind. Ol. 2.35–36 σύνῳ δὲ Μοῖρ, ἀ τε πατρῶν / τόν ηὲ χει ὁν εὔφρονα πότμον, adduced by Lazzeri, BollClass SER. III 16 (1995) 97. For the image of Keres having or bearing human fate, cf. Minn. fr. 2.5–7 Κῆρες δὲ παρεστήκασι μέλαναι, / η μὲν ἐχουσα τελος γύρας ἄργαλεον, / η δ’ ἐτέρη θανάτοιο; see also Quint. Smyrn. 3.615 Κῆρες τ’ ἐγγύς ἐσι τελος θανάτου φέρουσαι. The epic formula is κῆρες θανάτοι (e.g. Il. 2.302, 834, 12.326, Od. 14.207). For the image of winged beings bringing death, cf. the crane simile at Il. 3.2–6 (4–6: αὖ τ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν χειμῶνα φύμον καὶ ἀθέσφατον οἴμβρον / κλαγγῇ ταί γε πέτονται ἐπ’ ὁκεανοῖο ροάν / ἀνδράι. Πυγμαίοις φόνον καὶ κήρα φέρουσαι).

Κῆρες: the η form occurs in Simon. PMG 533(b), in Pind. fr.223 M., and in tragic choruses (e.g. Aesch. Sept. 1055, Soph. Trach. 133, OT 472, Eur. El. 1252, Tros. 771, Phoen. 950), while in Alcm. PMGF 88 and Alcae. fr.38.7 V. we find respectively κάρα (Bast: κάραν cod. Apol. Dysc. Pron.39) and κάρα. It is not clear whether the original vocalism was the first or the second: cf. H. Frisk, Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch I (Heidelberg 1960) 842–843; J. Pokorny, Indogermandisches etymologisches Wörterbuch I (Bern 1959) 578; P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique (Paris 2009) 505; Nöthiger, Die Sprache 64 n.1; Hinge, Die

38 I owe the suggestion of the tmesis κατ’ ... ἐχοῦσαι to L. Fiorentini and to C. Neri (independently).

39 But cf. Alcm. PMGF 1.54 = fr.3.54 Cal. ἀκήρατος, with the comments of G. Hinge, Die Sprache Alkmans (Wiesbaden 2006) 9.
Sprache 9; R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary I* (Leiden 2010) 689. The second possibility seems perhaps preferable because of the discovery of the sixth-century *polyandron* inscription at Arta, written in the Corinthian alphabet: here the form *Kár* (line 10) is used together with *ἄγγελον* (3), *κορμαν* (6), and *μάν* (9), words whose [a:] vocalism is original. In the case of Stesichorus, the epicizing form *Κάρα* is at home (cf. e.g. S88 i.21 ῥήγαρον) as well as the form *Κάρα* (e.g. S15 ii.5 ἀλεσάνρος). In fact, the original [a:] vocalism is far more frequent in Stesichorus fragments than Ionic-Attic [e:] (cf. Nöthiger 60–61; R. A. Felsenthal, *The Language of Greek Choral Lyric: Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus and Simonides* [diss. U. Wisconsin] 54–55; A. Willi, *Sikelismos. Sprache, Literatur und Gesellschaft im griechischen Sizilien* [Basel 2008] 58–59), but we cannot exclude the influence of the epic model, also on the level of dialect (see S88 i.21 cited above).


*αἰψ*: the adverb conveys the same idea of rapidity expressed by the epithet ὀκτυπέταυ. For other occurrences in Stesichorus see S104.1 and 222(b).291. For the correptio in hiatus before the adverb see e.g. *Od. 8.226 τὸ ρά καὶ αἱψ ἑθανεν μέγας Εὔρυτος οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ γῆρας.*

*ἐπὶ [π]άξαν*: as the Keres are here ὀκτυπέταυ, cowering on the earth seems a suitable action: cf. Ar. *Lys.* 770, quoted above, but also Aesch. *Pers.* 209 and Soph. *Aj.* 171, all concerning birds. In these three passages, however, *πτῆσαυ* means ‘crouching in fear’, which is hardly acceptable in the *Geryones*. The sense ‘crouching in ambush’


appears much more satisfactory. If so, Sarpedon’s description of the Keres as ‘standing by’/‘standing in wait for’ has been reworked by Stesichorus, and the presence of the death-daemons is made more threatening. For the imagery of the Keres assailing a man who is about to die, cf. [Hes.] Scut. 252–257, also the description of the Erinyes by the raving Orestes in Eur. Or. 257 αὔται γὰρ αὔται πλησίον θράκεσκου’ ἐμοῦ.

After Heracles’ first attack by ambush, the Keres cower on the earth near Geryon ready to bring him to Hades at the proper time of the duel, in keeping with their traditional role. If this restoration is correct, they are depicted as assailants crouching in ambush: they wait for Geryon’s death, in order to drink his blood and bring his corpse to Hades (cf. e.g. [Hes.] Scut. 248 ff.). In this way, the representation of the Keres given at Il. 12.326–327 appears to be vividly reworked by Stesichorus, and the scene is wrought with dramatic tension: the deadly fates evoked by Sarpedon are personified in the Geryoneis, and their dreadful presence hangs over the outcome of the fight—another possible instance of Stesichorus’ creativity in matters of myth, and particularly of his “fondness for theatricality.”

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42 Cf. Lerza, Stesicoro 47: “Che Stesicoro abbia fatto nascere per primo Atena armata dalla testa di Zeus, che abbia per primo attribuito a Eracle l’arco, la clava e la pelle di leone, che abbia presentato Gerione alato e a sei piedi sono innovazioni che riguardano la ‘coreografia’ del mito … Si tratta di espedienti atti a stimolare la fantasia popolare ..., ma se risalgono davvero a Stesicoro indicano un poeta altrettanto dotato di fantasia, oltre che di notevole inventiva, non senza un certo gusto per la teatralità” (emphasis mine).

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