

From the mountains to the sea: Colluthus' *De Raptu Helenae* 7

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IN COLLUTHUS' small poem on the events leading up to the Trojan War,¹ the narrator calls upon the Trojan nymphs of the river Xanthus to tell him what Paris did (5–10):²

δεῦτε, θεμιστοπόλοιο νοήματα μηλοβοτῆρος
ἔσπετέ μοι, κελάδοντος ἀπορνύμεναι ποταμοῖο,
†ἠνορέων† πόθεν ἦλθεν, ἀήθεα πόντον ἐλαύνων,
ἀγνώσσων ἀλὸς ἔργα· τί δὲ χρέος ἔπλετο νηῶν
ἀρχεκάκων, ἵνα πόντον ὁμοῦ καὶ γαῖαν ὀρίνη
βουκόλος;

Come and tell me the thoughts of the shepherd judge,
depart from the noisy river and tell me
how he †bravely† came, sailing the unfamiliar sea
ignorant of the labours of the deep! Why the need of ships,
the source of disaster that made him stir both sea and land,
a cowherd?

In recent editions of *The Rape of Helen*, the editors³ have followed the reading ἠνορέων of M (*Paris.gr. Suppl.* 388), instead of the reading ἐξ ὀρέων of b (the MSS. stemming from Bessarion's MS.,

¹ For a general introduction, see Cosetta Cadau, *Studies in Colluthus' Abduction of Helen* (Leiden 2015).

² I cite the text from Orestis Karavas, *Κόλλουθος: Ἑλένης ἀρπαγή* (Athens 2015). All translations are my own.

³ F. J. Cuartero i Iborra, *Col·lut, El Rapte d'Helena* (Barcelona 1992): “per què vingeú, baronívol”; Karavas, *Κόλλουθος*: “τὴν ἀνδρεία ποῦ τὴ βρήκε.”

called β by Livrea) adopted by earlier editors.⁴ It has been argued⁵ that if we read ἡνορέων and understand it as being applied to the subject (sc. Paris), it would be a metapoetic and ironic judgement on Paris by the narrator. Although ἡνορέων is indeed the *lectio difficilior*, there are some objections, I believe, against following this principle in this case.

First, the noun ἡνορέη⁶ occurs elsewhere in the poem (140, 145, 164, 277), and there Colluthus follows the practice in Homer, as it is always used in the singular and as an abstraction, as in 140 where Athena calls herself ἡνορέης ἐπίκουρον. This makes perfect sense in terms of the Homeric usage of the word, as she offers to teach Paris about wars and ἡνορέην (145), just as the gods gave Bellerophonτες ἡνορέην in *Il.* 6.156–157, and precisely this Homeric passage becomes the target of Colluthus' erudite playing: in 163 Aphrodite offers Paris Helen instead of ἡνορέη (ἀντὶ μὲν ἡνορέης ἐρατὴν παράκοιτιν ὀπάσσω) echoing Homer's ἡνορέην ἐρατεινὴν of Bellerophonτες⁷—not wittingly but

⁴ Such as A. W. Mair, *Oppian, Colluthus and Tryphiodorus* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1928); E. Livrea, *Colluto, Il ratto di Elena* (Bologna 1968); P. Orsini, *Collouthos, L'enlèvement d'Hélène* (Paris 1972); O. Schönberger, *Kolluthos, Raub der Helena* (Würzburg 1993), although he strongly considers M's reading (57 ad loc.). F. Possebon, M. Marques Júnior, A. L. Albertim, *Colutos, O rapto de Helena* (João Pessoa 2005), and M. Baumbach, *Griechische Kleinfik* (Berlin 2019), retain the reading of *b*. For other readings consult Livrea, *Colluto*.

⁵ G. Giangrande, review of Livrea, *Colluto*, *JHS* 89 (1969) 149–154, at 149 (see below); S. Kotseleni, *Colluthus, The Rape of Helen, A Stylistic Commentary* (diss. KC London 1990) 118–119; Cuartero i Iborra, *Col·lut* 97 n.4; Karavas, *Κόλλουθος* ad loc.

⁶ On the meaning of this word see B. Graziosi and J. Haubold, “Homeric Masculinity: ἡνορέη and ἀγνηνορή,” *JHS* 123 (2003) 60–76. But as the authors clearly show, ἡνορέη denotes the sort of bravery that confirms the social cohesion of the soldiers, not “power, strength, audacity” as in Kotseleni, *Colluthus* 118.

⁷ Colluthus' ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες (162) neatly echoes Glaucon's boast (*Il.* 6.208, αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων), the earliest instance of the verb ἀριστεύειν; Aphrodite will grant (ὀπάσσω) Paris Helen as the gods had granted (ὄπασαν 6.157) Bellerophonτες his abilities.

tragically, for Bellerophon's ἦνορή ἐρατεινή causes his disastrous *ménage à trois* with Proetus and Anteia, parallel to Paris, Helen, and Menelaus. Colluthus stresses the tragic by focusing on the ἐρατὴ παράκοιτις, Helen, not the more positive ἦνορή among the Homeric heroes.

Colluthus clearly plays with Homer, but even when Achilles in Colluthus' pre-Trojan War world is known for his ἦνορή (275), Colluthus expects his reader to know what Achilles in the *Iliad* is (or rather will become): "As the ἀγῆνωρ man *par excellence* (cf. 9.699: ὁ δ' ἀγῆνωρ ἐστὶ καὶ ἄλλως), he does not have sufficient consideration for others."⁸ Colluthus' poem may seem light and witty on the surface, but his intertextual ironies often revel in the uncanny.

If we follow the ironic/metapoetic reading as introduced above and take ἦνορέων as an adjective or participle, i.e. "the brave Paris came...", the form ἦνορέων becomes difficult to explain. Adjectives from the ἦνορ- stem seem to prefer the third declension -ῆνωρ ending (e.g. εὐῆνωρ, ἀγῆνωρ), and though we find the adjective ἀνόρεος in Sophocles (fr.436), the ending -έων would thus seem to signal a genitive plural rather than a nominative singular. A genitive seems at first glance the most obvious form when taken together with πόθεν ἦλθεν,⁹ but then Colluthus would be talking about Paris' forebears, not Paris, and nothing in the text supports such a thought. The plural use of ἦνορή meaning "manly exploits" as found in Pindar (dative ἀνορέαις *Pyth.* 8.91, *Nem.* 3.20, *Isth.* 4.11) has its merits here, but the construction ἦλθεν with a genitive seems strange with ἦνορέων ("coming from manly deeds"). Furthermore, in contemporary

⁸ Graziosi and Haubold, *JHS* 123 (2003) 67.

⁹ M. Minniti Colonna, "Sul testo e sulla lingua di Colluto," *Vichiana* 8 (1979) 70–93, proposes ἐξ ὀρέων ποθεν, but πόθεν ἦλθεν is a variation of the Homeric formula τὶς εἶη καὶ πόθεν ἔλθοι (*Od.* 15.423, 17.368), though Colluthus tends to follow Nonnus' more flexible placement of πόθεν within a dactylic hexameter (e.g. *Dion.* 23.79, 30.170, 40.338) than that of the Homeric meter. πόθεν here means "why" or "how" as it often does in Nonnus (e.g. *Dion.* 1.24, 8.78), see Livrea, *Colluto* ad loc.

epic, the genitive plural is always ἠνορέων, not ἠνορέων, e.g. Christod. 2.399, Dioscorus fr.2.13. Thus, the genitive plural is out of the question.

Colluthus then could have created a hitherto unrecorded verb ἠνορέω by analogy with ἀγνορέω and the form ὑπερῆνορέων, but this seems to me a desperate course, since his hapaxes are always composita, not the undoing of composites.¹⁰

As noted above, Giangrande opted for an ironic use of ἠνορέων and argued that ἐξ ὀρέων is a “*lectio faciliior* and trivialisation.”¹¹ I agree about the former, but it is not a trivialisation, for even without ἠνορέων, the narrator passes judgement on Paris: the ἀήθεα sea is ἀήθεα only to Paris,¹² and coming from the mountains, he is of course ignorant (ἀγνώσσω)¹³ of the sea and of ships, with disastrous results. Here Colluthus follows the wording of Nonnus (*Dion.* 1.101 of Zeus stealing Europa), but the motif of Hesiod (*Op.* 659), who relates his only experience of sailing from Aulis, from which, Hesiod reminds us, the Greeks set out for Troy, just as the inexperienced Paris sets out for Greece.¹⁴

¹⁰ This is clear from the list in Cuartero i Iborra, *Col·lut*, 58.

¹¹ *JHS* 89 (1969) 149.

¹² For related passages see Nonn. *Dion.* 23.179 (ἀήθεα πορθμὸν), 38.409 (ἀήθεος Ὠκεανοῖο), and perhaps 39.366. It is possible that Colluthus also had in mind Quintus Smyrn. 2.638 (γαῖαν ... ἀήθεα) and 6.267 (ἀήθεα χῶρον) for the obvious contrast between earth and sea in 9. The Trojans were warned against seafaring (Hellanicus *FGrHist* 4 F 142), but Colluthus might also be alluding to Jason and the Argonauts, traditionally the first sailors (cf. n.17 below). In *Dion.* 4.232 we may see in Cadmus (preparing to sail off with Harmonia) a contrast to our Paris: ναυτιλίας νοέων πατρῶιον ἠθάδα τέχνην, and 4.286–287, where in contrast to Paris, Cadmus gives up his seafaring to travel by land.

¹³ Colluthus plays with Nonn. *Dion.* 1.424–425 ἄρκυν ὀλέθρου / ἀγνώσσω and Triph. 312, 585, all of which portray unawareness of the impending doom.

¹⁴ On Colluthus’ Hesiodic borrowings see Enrico Magnelli, “Colluthus ‘Homeric’ Epyllion,” *Ramus* 37 (2008) 151–172, esp. 152–156.

Furthermore, if we read *b*'s ἐξ ὀρέων, Colluthus cleverly emphasizes Paris' future failure by echoing the simile in *Il.* 16.384–392,¹⁵ where Patroclus puts Hector and the Trojans to flight: as when Zeus in anger at the judgements of crooked judges (σκολιάς κρίνωσι θέμιστας)¹⁶ creates a violent river from the mountains (ἐξ ὀρέων) to the sea (ἐς δ' ἄλλα), destroying what men have built (μινύθει δέ τε ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων).

It is no coincidence that Cheiron leaves the mountains and goes to the sea in order to celebrate the departure of the Argonauts, together with none other than Thetis and baby Achilles saying farewell to Peleus (Ap. Rhod. 1.553–558).¹⁷ This sort of trans-mythical and trans-chronological narrative is a typical feature of Colluthus' intertextuality.

But the intertextuality is extended further, since Colluthus clearly knows and expects his reader to know Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica*. The four instances of ἐξ ὀρέων in this work (three in the same sedes, one in second foot, all of which echo Homeric similes) generate a sequence of destruction from the death of Paris to the end of Troy: at 10.173 Philoctetes rushes against the Trojans before wounding Paris fatally, like a river from mountains; at 12.410 the demented Laocoon tries to warn his fellow Trojans about the wooden horse, crying like a river from mountains; at 13.45 Odysseus crawls out of the wooden horse as a wolf coming down from the mountains;¹⁸ and finally at 14.6 the Greeks enter Troy like a river from the mountain destroying everything in its path. Thus, the destruction of Troy is created by Paris exactly by leaving his mountains (ἐξ ὀρέων).

¹⁵ On this simile see Richard Janko, *The Iliad. A Commentary IV* (Cambridge 1994) 364–367.

¹⁶ Paris has been called θεμιστοπόλοιο in 5 and will judge (θεμιστεύωσι) in 11.

¹⁷ Colluthus uses Jason extensively as a model for his Paris, see Cadau, *Studies* 74–77, 186–187, 198–204. The wedding of Peleus and Thetis is of course the first episode told by Colluthus.

¹⁸ See S. Renker, *A Commentary on Quintus of Smyrna, Posthomerica 13* (Bamberg 2020) 65 ad 44–49 and 68 ad 45.

Therefore, with ἐξ ὀρέων the narrator offers a far more subtle and (sinister) ironic judgement on Paris, who is about to embark with his fatal ships (8–9 νηῶν ἀρχεκάκων) towards Sparta, to the destruction of his own home, as the river crushed everything made by men in the Homeric simile cited above. He is indeed τὸν ἀρχέκακον πολίτην (392) and his movement is the cause of the disaster.¹⁹

Furthermore, retaining ἐξ ὀρέων gives verses 7 and 9 the chiasmus ἐξ ὀρέων ... πόντον (7) / πόντον ... γαῖαν (9),²⁰ where the use of γαῖαν for the earth in general instead of the specific mountains around Troy imbues the passage with a disquieting feeling of universal doom (cf. *Cypria* fr.1.4).²¹ The contrast between the mountains and the sea is emphasized later (201, ἄρτι μὲν Ἰδαίων ὀρέων ἠλλάξατο πόντον),²² but the mountains here also enable the reader to notice the pastoral atmosphere that the narrator seeks to create.²³ The movement of Paris, from mountains to sea, contrasts with the movement of the Trojan

¹⁹ On this theme see Orestis Karavas, “Immobility and Motion in Colluthus’ *The Abduction of Helen*,” *Trends in Classics* 12 (2020) 126–133.

²⁰ This is clearly intentional since it is modelled on the Homeric formula γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ’ οὐρανόθεν νύξ (*Od.* 5.294, 9.69, 12.315), while Colluthus plays with Quintus Smyrn. 3.707 and Nonn. *Dion.* 41.397. Like Quintus Smyrn. 3.707, he also switches γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον to πόντον ὁμοῦ καὶ γαῖαν. Instead of the Homeric ὀρώρει, he echoes the sound ὀρ- (emphatically in the Homeric precedent ὀρώρει ... οὐρ-) by using the verb ὀρίνω (from *Il.* 2.294 ὀρινομένη τε θάλασσα, 9.4 πόντον ὀρίνετον ἰχθυόεντα). Note how he transfers the Homeric πόντον ὀρίνει (*Il.* 11.298) to γαῖαν ὀρίνη.

²¹ And once again at 22 from the perspective of the gods: Ζεὺς μὲν ἅπ’ Οὐλύμπιοι, Ποσειδάων δὲ θαλάσσης. A similar chiasmus is found in Clem. Al. *Strom.* 14.131: τρέμει δ’ ὄρη καὶ γαῖα καὶ πελώριος / βυθὸς θαλάσσης καὶ ὀρέων ὕψος μέγα (*TrGF* II 617; Aeschylus, according to Clement).

²² The narrator emphasizes that the paths on Mt. Ida are *familiar* to Paris (110 ἦθεα) as opposed to the sea, which is only emphasized by the Homeric formula βῆ δ’ ἐξ Ἰδαίων ὀρέων (six times, e.g. *Il.* 8.410, 15.79).

²³ Cf. Cadau, *Studies* 37–42. Colluthus may also allude to Callimachus’ sepulchral epigram on the goatherd Astakides: Ἀστακίδην τὸν Κρήτα τὸν αἰπόλον ἤρπασε Νύμφη / ἐξ ὄρεος (*Callim. Epigr.* 22 Pf.).

nymphs, whom the narrator summons from the river, the Xanthus, their father, which they often²⁴ leave in order to dance on Ida (4 ἐς χορὸν Ἰδαίησιν, 7 ἐξ ὀρέων). It is indeed because of their coming so often to Ida, the mountains which Paris leaves, that they saw how Paris celebrated with Aphrodite after the beauty contest (13–16).

Thus, Colluthus can create the chronological connection between his poem and the fall of Troy through specific echoes of Homer, Apollonius, and Quintus Smyrnaeus, while simultaneously creating the pastoral atmosphere of the Theocritean idyls, but how and to what effect is outside the scope of this note.

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²⁴ πολλάκι, as opposed to Paris' lack of experience of the sea.