THE ABDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF HELEN

ICONOGRAPHY AND EMOTIONAL
VOCABULARY IN ATTIC VASE-PAINTING C. 550-350 BCE

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'We can never understand a picture unless we grasp the ways
in which it shows what cannot be seen.'

Mitchell 1987: 39

'I have gazed so much on beauty
That my eyes overflow with it.'

Cavafy (trans. A. Sharon)

ABSTRACT

The antics of Helen of Sparta, famous both for her beauty and her adultery, have fascinated ancient and modern audiences alike. The subjects of her abduction from Sparta and recovery from Troy are explored in various ancient discourses. This study investigates the iconography of Attic vase-paintings, c. 550-350 BCE, that show (or have been identified as depicting) these two events in the life of Helen. My approach seeks to investigate their subtexts or metanarratives of emotion through a rigorous methodology. This process first involves engaging in a close reading of the vase scenes in order to identify their visual language, especially their emotional vocabulary. The second process contextualises the vases in the society that produced and used them. By reading them in their original context of production and reception, one can extrapolate a range of meanings these scenes could have had for their original audience. In doing this, there are two main goals: to establish which emotions are pertinent to the ancient audience in these two episodes (emotional content), and how emotions – in essence invisible – are communicated in the vase images (emotional language).

Applying this methodology to the scenes yields significant results. The identification of the most typically emotional indicators includes the following: gesture; stance; gaze; clothing, physical attributes and icons; divinities and personifications; and contextual icons or information. The emotional content that emerges includes, in particular, the emotion of *eros* – its potentially destabalising and emasculating consequences – and the appropriateness of *orgē* and revenge. Another significant result is in relation to the traditional identification of the scenes. While most of the traditional identifications of Helen's recovery stand firm, the opposite is true for the abduction. My rejection of the majority of images identified as Helen's abduction by traditional scholarship is necessary due to a lack of evidence – inscriptional or iconographic – and the marked incongruity of these depictions with their context. These results demonstrate the merits of a solid methodology that takes the language of images seriously, as well as the social, political and ideological context in which the vases were produced and viewed.

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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Add	Burn, L. & Glynn, R. 1982. *Beazley Addenda. Additional references to ABV, ARV^2 & Paralipomena*.
Add^2	Carpenter, T.H., Mannack, T., & Mendonca, M. 1989. *Beazley Addenda: Additional references to* ABV, ARV^2 *and* Paralipomena, 2nd edition.
ABFV	Boardman, J. 1974. *Athenian black figure vases.*
ARFV (Archaic)	Boardman, J. 1975. *Athenian red figure vases: the Archaic period.*
ARFV (Classical)	Boardman, J. 1989. *Athenian red figure vases: the Classical period.*
ABV	Beazley, J.D. 1956. *Attic black-figure vase-painters.*
ARV	Beazley, J.D., 1942. *Attic red-figure vase-painters.*
ARV^2	Beazley, J.D. 1963. *Attic red-figure vase-painters*, 2nd edition.
Burn	Burn, L. 1987. *The Meidias Painter.*
CAVI	Immerwahr, H. 1998. *A corpus of Attic vase inscriptions.*
Ghali-Kahil (1955)	Ghali-Kahil, L. B. 1955. *Les enlèvenments et le retour d'Hélène*.
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.*
Para	Beazley, J.D. 1971. *Paralipomena. Additions to 'Attic black-figure vase-painters' and 'Attic red-figure vase-painters'.*
CVA	*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum.*

Abbreviations of the titles of ancient texts and names of authors used in this thesis are those of the *Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon* (LSJ).

MUSEUM ABBREVIATIONS

Athens	National Archaeological Museum of Athens
Athens, Kerameikos	Kerameikos Museum
Basel	Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig
Berlin	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz
Bologna	Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna
Boulogne	Musée Communale, Boulogne
Boston	Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Brauron	Archaeological Museum of Brauron
Cambridge	Fitzwilliam Museum

Cincinnati	Cincinnati Art Museum
Ferrara	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara
Florence	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze
Genoa	Museo Civico di Archeologia Ligure
Harvard	Arthur M. Sackler Museum
Hildesheim	Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum
Krefeld	Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Museum
Madrid	Museo Arqueológico Nacional
Malibu	J. Paul Getty Museum
Munich	Staatliche Antikensammlungen
Naples	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli
New York	Metropolitan Museum of Art
Odessa	Odessa Museum of Western and Eastern Art
Paris	Musée du Louvre
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles	Musée du Cabinet des Médailles et Antiques
Plovdiv	Regional Archaeological Museum – Plovdiv
Princeton	Princeton University Art Museum
Providence	Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design
Rome, Villa Giulia	Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia
Rome, Torlonia	Museo Torlonia
San Simeon	Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument
St Petersburg	State Hermitage Museum
Tarquinia	Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese
Toledo (Ohio)	Toledo Museum of Art
Toronto	Royal Ontario Museum
Tübingen	Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Archaeological Institute
Vatican	Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano
Vienna	Kunshistorisches Museum
Würzburg	Martin-von-Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg

INTRODUCTION

Mythological narratives about the famed Helen of Sparta – and of Troy – abound on ancient Greek painted pottery. Helen's miraculous birth, abductions by Theseus and Paris, marriage(s), life at Troy, recovery by Menelaus and afterlife at Leuke with Achilles all appear in the repertoire of Attic artists across the Archaic and Classical eras. The interest in the Trojan saga as a whole, from the Judgement of Paris to the *Ilioupersis* to the *nostoi* of the heroes, is well known to be consistent in Greek visual culture in general, ranging from episodes on the Chest of Kypselos to Polygnotos' paintings in the Lesche at Delphi to the northern metopes of the Parthenon.

Also prevalent are scenes on Attic vases that have been interpreted as Helen's 'abduction' by Paris and her ultimate 'recovery' by her first husband, Menelaus, ten long and violence-filled years later. From the first possible extant scenes – a late geometric 'abduction' in the eighth century[1] and a 'recovery' on a pithos from Mykonos of c. 675[2] – to the Eros- and Aphrodite-filled versions in the later fifth and fourth centuries, it is not hard to imagine why this particular series of events would receive such extensive attention. These two mythological narratives encompass the themes of rape, desire, betrayal, adultery, war, repentance, revenge and return, topics that were of great interest to the ancient Greek audience and are no less to a modern one.

The ancient interest in these mythological figures and their narratives had much to do with the fact that they are excellent stories. However, as important – or probably more so – is their relevance to their audience as paradigms of their own human experience. It is only in the last few decades that the abyss between 'mythological' scenes on ancient Greek vases and scenes depicting 'everyday life' has narrowed, or has even been done away with altogether in some

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[1] Late geometric krater, London 1899.2-19.1. All dates in this thesis are BCE, unless specifically stated as CE.
[2] Relief pithos, Athens MYK67.

scholastic quarters.[3] Past scholarship had clearly separated the two groups of subjects, regarding painters as intending to render stories from 'myth' or 'genre' scenes from life, but with minimal overlap. Mythological interpretations were sought wherever possible, and if none could be found, scenes were simply considered to be 'generic'.

There is now consensus that Attic black-figure and red-figure vase-painters depict moments or narratives that can often operate comfortably on the level of myth and real human experience. In fact, ambiguity between these two registers is even found to enrich the interpretation of scenes on painted pottery.[4] Either way, whether the content is overtly 'mythological' or seems less securely so, the types of stories or moments depicted are certainly drawn from human experience, since it is human experience that often sets the paradigm for mythological experience in the ancient Greek world. Vase-painters indeed depict a broad range of human experience – from murder and mayhem, suicide, rape, and mourning, to the more positive human experiences of love, friendship, celebration and marriage. Since such experiences are deeply emotional, one would expect the painters to exploit the emotional potential of such content. And they do, to varying extents, in different ways, to various ends and with diverse and fascinating effects.

Against the backdrop of increased interest in the emotions of the ancient world in general,[5] and specifically coinciding with work recently and currently being done on anger[6] and love,[7] my intention is to examine the emotional vocabulary of Attic vase-painting scenes that show (or have been identified by scholars as depicting) the abduction and recovery of Helen. It is my intention to analyse the visual language of scenes related to these two specific episodes, exploring any signifiers of emotional undercurrents or subtexts in the iconography of the scenes. The chronological range – from the mid-sixth century to the mid-fourth century – has been selected so as to take into account notable periods of change. While the interest in the Trojan saga as a whole is fairly consistent, the emphasis or preference for a part of the story changes over time. In particular, the manner in which these specific episodes – the abduction and the recovery – are portrayed, including their emotional subtexts, also changes over time.

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[3] See Ferrari (2003) on this division of subject matter in the perception of scholars. Ferrari is one of the scholars advocating an abandonment of this distinction.

[4] Beard 1991: 20-21. This point is also argued by Hoffman (1997: 71-75) in his discussion of a Sotedean ram's-head *rhyton* in Boston (Boston 95.38, *ARV* 766.6).

[5] For example Konstan 2006; Sorabji 2000; Braund & Gill (eds) 1997; Nussbaum 1996; and Rorty 1996, to name a few.

[6] For example Harris 2001; Braund & Most (eds) 2003; and Cairns 1993 and 2001.

[7] For example Kolosky-Ostrow & Lyons (eds) 2000; Konstan 1994 and 1997; Calame 1999; Halperin, Winkler, & Zeitlin (eds.) 1990; Stewart 1997; the *Eros* in Ancient Greece conference, 28-31 March 2009. University College London; and E r o s: From Hesiod's *Theogony* to Late Antiquity, Exhibition, 10 December 2009-5, April 2010, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens.

The goal of this study is twofold. First, I am interested in exploring the emotional *content* of the scenes, asking what spectrum of emotions is associated with these narratives concerning Helen. What are the issues that these scenes evoke for their audience, and what is the interest or appeal of these emotions for the users of the vases? Before naming emotions with confidence, any modern study of ancient emotion must begin with another question: to what extent are ancient emotions equivalent to our own? To what extent can we apply our own 'emotion-words' to describe the ancient categories of emotion? The preoccupation not to universalise and essentialise emotion – to see it as something that is essentially 'human' and therefore to map the ancient emotions through our own experience – has entered the scholarly discussions on emotion since the 1990s (as in the work, for example, of Konstan, Nussbaum, *et al.*[8]). These discussions have problematized assumptions in the interpretation of emotion by exploring – productively – the cultural construction of emotion. This has also led to an examination of the role of the emotions in the construction of identity, itself a complex process and also a recently burgeoning subject in scholarship on the ancient world.[9]

Other scholars have warned against models that take no account of biological factors.[10] Cairns favours a moderate view that allows for both the construction of emotion and the likelihood that this structuring will also be connected to the physical nature of human beings.[11] He therefore problematizes the 'biology versus culture' antithesis since 'the biological must be experienced and constructed in a cultural context and […] shared cultural categories draw on our nature as a physically embodied social species'.[12] While it is critical that the potential mismatch between ancient and modern emotions be borne in mind when putting names to emotions in texts or in images, it does not mean that the emotional life of the modern interpreter is so alien so as to render him/her unable to identify them.

The study of emotion in the Classical world is, then, both exciting and topical, and a project that is being explored with great success by literary critics and cultural historians.[13] The study of emotion in Greek art, however, has not yet been conducted in a systematic manner and as a topic in itself. While individual vase scenes have been previously explored for their emotional content,[14] this has happened more satisfactorily for scenes that are more traumatically and

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[8] Konstan 1994, 1999, 2006; and Nussbaum 1996, 2001.
[9] For example Whitmarsh 2011; Lomas (ed.) 2004; Hall 1997; and Morgan 1991, to name a few.
[10] Cairns (2003: 13) for example criticises Meullner 1996.
[11] Cairns *op cit*: 13.
[12] Cairns *op cit*: 14.
[13] By scholars such as Fortenbaugh 2003; Konstan 2006; Cooper 1999; and Toohey 2004.
[14] Mackay (2002) has however considered emotional substructures in certain vase-painting scenes.

horrifically emotional (e.g. various scenes from the *Ilioupersis*).[15] Especially, the issue of violence in Greek vase-painting has received much attention recently,[16] though not necessarily in terms of the pictorial means that characterise the emotions involved. Some headway has been made in the conveyance of the more gentle and subtle emotions of affection and love. Homoerotic (particularly pederastic) scenes,[17] and scenes of marriage[18] have been analysed in order to identify social norms and rituals involved in these events but little attention has been given to the question of whether emotions are depicted in these scenes at all, and if so, which emotions these are. Sutton, however, has made a considerable foray into erotic discourse in marriage scenes, and in particular, the ways in which gestures, touch and eye-contact evoke the emotions of the bride and groom.[19] His view that the abduction of Helen set the paradigm for marital scenes is not supported by the evidence however; in the course of my investigations I have called into question the identification of most of the scenes previously labelled as Helen's abduction.

My investigative approach to the selected scenes gives preference not to the narratives themselves – which have been studied – but to what could be called the metanarratives of emotion. This study, then, first sets out to identify and explore the emotional discourse of the images. Second, I am interested in the *means* by which these emotions are communicated on vases. This involves establishing how this language of emotion operates, how it acquires meaning, and how and why it evolves over time. In recent years, scholars have taken seriously that images are constructions; that they are not self-evident nor inherently meaningful but operate according to a system or 'visual language'.[20] There is still work to be done in this area; in particular, no study has yet comprehensively analysed the visual language of scenes specifically involving anger, love and erotic desire.

Furthermore, where changes and developments in iconography and scene composition have been already observed, the changes have mostly been explored in relation to narrative content (i.e. which 'version' of the story the painter seems to follow or 'illustrate'), and narrative method (i.e. how does he tell this story within the conventions of the art form).[21] These changes have not, for the scenes in question, been adequately explored in terms of narrative

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[15] Connelly (1993) successfully examines subtexts in Ajax and Cassandra scenes.

[16] There has been much German scholarship on war and violence on vases in the last decades; the scholarship is summarized in Borg 2006: fn. 1.

[17] For example Lear & Cantarella 2008; Shapiro 1992; and Dover 1978.

[18] Oakley & Sinos 1993.

[19] Sutton 1997/1998.

[20] Scholars such as Mitchell 1987; Borg 2005; Stewart 1997; Bérard 1989; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991; Hoffman 1997; Beard 1991; Ferrari 2002; and Steiner 2007.

[21] For example by Hedreen 1996; Clement 1958; and Ghali-Kahil 1955. The *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)* also follows this approach.

context and their relationship to societal conditions and general cultural discourse. As the ensuing chapter on theory and methodology will elaborate, my approach to the language of images is emphatically contextual. By re-embedding the images in the wider discourses of which they were a product we can begin to come to terms with the language and meaning of such discourses and better understand the language and meanings of the images themselves.

This thesis is structured in the following way. After this introductory chapter, Chapter 1 outlines the conceptual and theoretical framework through which I have constructed my methodology, and then delineates this methodology. Thereafter Chapter 2 analyses the iconography and emotional subtexts of black-figure scenes described as Helen's abduction and her recovery from the sixth century, discovering that it is the recovery that seems to dominate the imagery from this era. The following two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4, explore the recovery narrative and its emotional discourses: Chapter 3 considers examples from the late Archaic and early Classical period in Attic pottery (c. 520-480) while Chapter 4 looks at scenes drawn from the remainder of the fifth century, the Classical period proper. Chapter 5 focuses exclusively on abduction scenes on two vases by the same painter, Makron. They are the first extant – and only securely identified – abduction of Helen scenes in all Attic pottery. Chapter 6 reconsiders various scenes from the middle of the fifth to the mid-fourth century that have widely been accepted as Helen's seduction by Paris. In this chapter I interrogate whether these scenes actually represent the narrative of Helen and Paris at all. The final chapter presents a synopsis of the results of the study and outlines the conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

IMAGES CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The statement by Mitchell that introduces this thesis[1] highlights a straightforward premise which is now mostly accepted by scholars of ancient art: images cannot speak for themselves. This basic but essential principle is worth reiterating: images need interpretation.[2] A common misconception in the last centuries of art historical scholarship was the assumption that images can be understood intuitively, that they speak to us across the chronological, geographical, cultural and ethnological boundaries to convey their essential (singular) meaning.[3] Perhaps such scholars, in seeking to understand Greek images (or texts for that matter) intuitively, were unconsciously claiming continuity with the world and ideology of the Greeks, aligning themselves with what has been perceived as the pinnacle of Western civilization, and positioning themselves as inheritors of it.

What such intuitive or 'common sense' analyses of ancient images, artefacts or texts do not take into account is the lens or filter through which we, as viewers or interpreters, look. This filter consists of our own culturally produced points of reference and biases; we are products of our own environment, with our own assumptions, associations and expectations that influence our intuitive responses. The result is what Stewart aptly calls 'a... disingenuous kind of ventriloquism'.[4]

1. Theoretical framework: 'Reading' images on Greek vases

After the intellectual revolutions created by structuralist and post-structuralist theories of anthropology, language and aesthetics, the idea of inherently meaningful signs and fixed, singular meanings is no longer tenable. I follow the scholarly position that no image is self-evident or inherently comprehensible, especially outside its immediate context of production

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[1] See cover page.
[2] A recent example: Walsh (2009: 2) asserts that he will try to allow the images to 'speak for themselves'.
[3] Sourvinou-Inwood (1988: 16-18; 1991: 4) and Stewart (1997: 3-7), among others, discuss this outdated empiricist approach to ancient Greek culture and imagery.
[4] Stewart 1997: 3.

and reception.[5] This view is essentially post-structuralist, especially in its approach to the processes of meaning-production and in its shift from singular meaning and the primacy of the author, to the primacy of reception and the availability of multiple meanings or 'readings'.[6]

In describing images as *not* 'solid, straightforward, and transparent to the understanding', Ferrari reiterates the need for an active and nuanced process of interpretation of images.[7] The term 'reading' was already used by Gombrich in the 1960s,[8] and it has recently been applied also to the process of looking at Greek vases.[9] More specifically, it is used to describe a process of interpreting vase scenes that goes beyond aesthetic appreciation to hermeneutic investigation. 'Reading' vases articulates the quest for meaning, or more accurately, meanings. 'Reading' in this sense has been applied to several archaeological and art historical topics in the last 20 years,[10] and it has been received somewhat controversially by certain scholars who find the analogy that the term draws with linguistics and the analysis of literary texts to be inexact. The sceptics argue that while meanings in verbal language are specific and unambiguous, when it comes to imagery, the links are more elusive and open-ended, or endlessly polysemic or ambiguous. However, language is also polysemic, and inherent in words and literary works is a similar possibility for ambiguity. 'Reading' remains a useful term that can help to characterise the theoretical framework of this present work, and its processes, so it is retained and will be elaborated here.

1.1 Semiotic and post-structuralist principles

The linguistic analogy that the term 'reading' implies when applied to imagery is instructive in the implication that the process of 'reading images' means actively engaging with the image as a type of 'text' or cultural document in order to access meaning. Words on a page do not communicate their meaning without the active engagement of the recipient or reader. In a similar way, images do not offer meanings to their audience unless the audience actively engages with them. In linguistic models, the process of meaning-production involves coming to terms with, to use the basic Saussurian terminology, 'signifiers' (forms) which give rise to 'signifieds' (meanings).[11]

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[5] This is the perspective of scholars such as Borg 2005; Stewart 1997; Bérard 1989; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991; Hoffman 1997; Beard 1991; Ferrari 2002; and Steiner 2007.
[6] It will emerge that my position is a modified, less sceptical post-structural one.
[7] Ferrari 2002: 3.
[8] Gombrich 1960.
[9] For example Steiner 2007; Mertens 2010.
[10] For example Hodder & Hutson (1986, 1991 and 2003) whose book is entitled *Reading the past.* In the field of Classical archaeology the term has been used by scholars such as Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) and Steiner (2007).
[11] Saussure 1916: 99 ff, discussed by Joseph 2004: 60. The interpretive processes applied by Steiner, Ferrari, *et al.* are rooted in semiotic theory (*a la* Saussure and Jakobson), which in turn has influenced the fields of structural and post-structural linguistics.

Another useful aspect of a structural linguistic approach is that meanings are not inherent to the signifiers,[12] but determined by codes or sets of conventions, to which the society using them subscribes. In language these codes refer to grammatical rules and a system of linguistic conventions that are tacitly agreed by its users. Language is understandable precisely because it is systematic and, therefore, to a large extent, predictable. However, its predictability and adherence to rules does not preclude some ambiguity from arising, nor does it ensure that meanings, once assigned, are fixed for eternity.[13] Meanings shift over time and according to varying conditions, and ambiguity adds texture and richness to the process of meaning production and interpretation.

In a similar way, semiotic theory asserts that within an art-form (and visual culture in general) there are also visual signifiers of meaning. In the field of vase-painting, these would include pictorial icons, gestures, gaze, facial expression, compositional formulas, etc. The use of such signifiers also evokes associated signifieds or meaning/s through subscribing to the code or conventions tacitly agreed by the artists using them and the (majority of) the members of the original target audience (the viewers).[14] In a similar way to language, the meanings only 'communicate' through a process of being decoded. The signifiers must be read in combination, firstly, with each other and, secondly, in conjunction with an understanding of the context, i.e. the conditions of the original frame of reference (aesthetic, social, philosophical, literary, and even political environments).

This last point directs us towards post-structuralist theory, and in particular, its emphasis on meanings in context and the primacy of reception. For Sourvinou-Inwood, Stewart, *et al.* it is necessary to 'anchor' the images or texts in a context to arrive at particular perceived meanings of that time and place.[15] This is of paramount importance when working with relics of antiquity in whatever form; ancient Greece is a world and society very different from our own. To avoid readings that are contaminated by our own expectations and biases – including our own culturally determined preconceptions about emotions – one must attempt to recover as much cultural (and other) information about the specific context in which the work was originally created and received as possible. This contributes to an attempt to understand how an ancient viewer may have interpreted the works. This process remains ventriloquism: we

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[12] Saussure's concept of the arbitrariness of the sign (1916: 101, in Joseph 2004: 60).
[13] Saussure's principle that the relationship between the signifier and signified changes over time (Saussure 1916: 103-109, in Joseph 2004: 60).
[14] Bérard & Durand 1989: 26-27.
[15] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 9-10. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 16-18 and Stewart 1997: 3-7.

cannot *be* the ancient viewer. Further, even rigorous attempts to recover the context will always be imperfect. Not only is the distance in temporal terms vast, and the literary and material remains fragmentary, the very possibility of recovering an objective 'past' has long been problematised by historians and theorists.[16] However, by remaining aware of the pitfalls of empiricist and positivist views of the past, avoiding intuitive readings of artefacts, and adopting a rigorous methodology, it is possible to engage in discourse about the past which is of significant interpretive value.

1.2 Communication event and Jauss' 'horizons'

Reception theory is useful as an analytic tool when approaching the imagery on Greek vases as modes of communication. Images are not inert, but offer meanings to their responsive audience. The shift from the primacy of the author or the artist who 'inscribes' meaning into the work, to the primacy of the viewers of the work, and their perceived meanings, has already been explicated. However, while post-structuralists may celebrate the so-called 'death of the author',[17] scholars such as Jakobson[18] and Jauss[19] would not want to do away with him/her altogether. Jakobson's 'communication event' explains the process of communication in more detail: to fully interpret any mode of communication, we need to access information about elements such as the addresser, the addressee, the message, the channel, the context, the frame of reference and the code.[20] In this way, meaning is not inscribed by a single source – not by author, by viewer or by an autonomous object – but by the complex interaction of elements during each communication event.

Jauss' concepts of the 'horizon of expectation' and the 'horizon of experience' are more helpful still.[21] For Jauss there is a clearly definable and objectifiable system of expectations that predisposes and directs an individual in the process of the reception of a text. This 'horizon of expectation' is constituted by various conventions of the art-form: rules, beliefs, and generic considerations that are 'transsubjective'[22] (i.e. not specific to the individual but generalised and collective). In this model, such received ideas and expectations, acquired through experience of the genre, provide a background against which individual receptions of the text will occur. Jauss also describes a wider horizon of 'experience of life' or 'lived praxis' which also affects the process of reception of a work, prefiguring the viewer or reader's

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[16] Collingwood 1946 and Blake 1955.
[17] To use Roland Barthes' (1967) famous phrase.
[18] Jakobson 1981.
[19] Jauss 1982.
[20] The communication event described by Jakobson (1981: 21-27), and discussed by Ferrari (2002: 5).
[21] Jauss 1982: 20-45.
[22] Jauss 1982: 23.

perception of it.[23] This is also recoverable to an extent since it is possible to generalise and differentiate the life experiences of different categories of human beings in a society. To state obvious categories from ancient Greek society of the fifth and fourth centuries: the expectations and experience of Athenian women can be distinguished from those of Athenian men, those of *politai* from *metoikoi*, those of elderly men from *epheboi*, etc.

The boundaries between Jauss' two horizons blur at times, and it makes sense that that they could do so, since expectations certainly arise out of experience. Against both of these backgrounds or horizons, Jauss positions specific receptions or 'concretisations of the work', based on the particulars of each individual event of reading the work, in the particular historical moment.[24] According to this model, while the countless individual readings of texts are not recoverable, the 'horizons' *are,* and so, Jauss argues, it is possible 'to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work'.[25] Each reading will in turn contribute to the future horizon of expectation against which the work or future works will be read.

This aspect of Jauss' theory is particularly useful and I have adopted his idea of horizons of experience and expectation in a broad sense. It is my position that while the meaning of an image is not fixed, singular, or unambiguous, it is possible to recover a range of likely readings through situating the works within their objectifiable horizons. Using a rigorous methodology against the theoretical framework outlined above, it is possible to bring the modern viewer and interpreter more in line with potential original readings of scenes on Greek vases.

1.3 A contemporary case study: ZUMA

In recent years a T-shirt was produced that featured the slinky silhouette of a woman leaning with her knee on a word inscribed in capitalised, bold type: ZUMA (fig. 1.1). Let us imagine a person 2500 years into the future coming across this 'artefact'. The absence of any information about the T-shirt – such as its date and place of manufacture and by whom, for whom and why it was made – means that, at best, the viewer could resort to purely aesthetic observations. These would depend on his/her own aesthetic principles (horizon of expectation) constructed in accordance with those of his/her personal and cultural biases, ideologies and life history (horizon of experience). The woman's silhouette could be read as attractive and sexy, or perhaps, if the viewer's aesthetic preferred Rubenesque-like figures, the woman may appear

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[23] Jauss 1982: 24; 39-41.
[24] Jauss 1982: 28.
[25] Jauss 1982: 28.

malnourished and therefore unattractive. Assuming the written script was still known and recognisable to our hypothetical reader, without any other reference, the word 'Zuma' may seem exotic or simply onomatopoeically pleasant.

However knowing even a small amount of information about the 'text' and its context makes it possible to predict a likely range of readings for the T-shirt's intended audience. That the T-shirt was produced in South Africa in 2006 by a company called Laugh it Off, known for their range of satirical T-shirts, sets up a particular expectation about the tone or intention of the message: it is likely to be ironic and provocative.[26] That it was produced during the controversial trial of a high-profile South African politician, Jacob Zuma, who was being prosecuted for rape, gives the slinky silhouette of the woman a sinister twist.[27] We also understand more about the message when we recognise the cross-reference to the branding of a well-known, hip and sexy sports-ware range, Puma (conveniently rhyming with Zuma), the logo of which is a slinky silhouette of a black panther, also often called a puma, leaping onto the inscription 'PUMA' (fig. 2.2). It is not by accident that the word ZUMA replicates PUMA's typeface.

The reception of this image is also informed by the number of opinions regarding this alleged act of rape. Although Zuma was eventually acquitted of the rape charge, vastly differing opinions were held at the time of the trial and in its aftermath. The prosecution painted him as a sexual predator, arguing that the polygynous (and polygamous) Zuma had no respect for women and their bodies. Women's rights activists saw the fact that the woman had to disclose details about her sexual history to be prejudicial and meant *she* was in fact put on trial. Her character was called into question and ultimately she was brought into disrepute. Zuma supporters, on the other hand, defended his honour and believed the entire trial had been a smear-campaign and that the woman had been responsible for bringing entirely false charges against him for political motives.

Within such horizons of expectation and experience, the readings of the T-shirt are not singular, but also not endless; they would fall within a range of predictable meanings. The potential readings include making a definitive statement, such as 'Zuma is guilty of rape' or 'he treats women as his sport'. Other viable readings could more tentatively ask 'is the *woman* perhaps to blame?'; 'did *she* seduce *him*?' or 'why does society often make the woman

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[26] The T-shirt was created by Laugh it Off Promotions, as part of the Brandspanking range.
[27] Jacob Zuma became president of the country in 2008. A time-line of the trial can be found at http://mg.co.za/article/2006-03-21-timeline-of-the-jacob-zuma-rape-trial.

blameworthy for rape?' So the recovery of the context, expectations, and visual and cultural signs or code inform our understanding of how the image or text may have been read.

The Zuma T-shirt example also illustrates another premise that is essential to this thesis: the image is another means of thinking about an issue, and it taps into and reflects the wider cultural discourse that is circulating. We think through images. And in the same way that understanding the context informs our reading of the text, the text (or image) also contributes to our understanding and recovery of that context. The T-shirt is part of the discourse that circulated around this controversial moment in South African history, and therefore contributes to the horizons of expectation and experience of its audience. Ancient Greek images work in much the same way and the issues that they raise are no less pertinent, sensitive or even controversial. An important objective, therefore, in reading the images of Helen's abduction and recovery in context, is to explore what they may tell us about that context in which they were produced and viewed.

1.4 Images and texts

It is also necessary, by way of a conceptual framework, to confront a bias of a previous era of scholarship which gave primacy to written texts. This textual hegemony is apparent in the general approach of the human sciences to regard the textual and linguistic systems of signification as dominant, and visual or material cultural documents as secondary. In Classical scholarship this is evident in the common assumption that images are intended as illustrations of particular literary works.[28] An extreme example of this preoccupation with locating literary antecedents is the 'Homerist hypothesis': the idea that the Homeric poems exerted such profound influence over ancient Greek society that all visual works must refer in some way back to them. Snodgrass is one scholar who tested this hypothesis, and found it unsound.[29]

Ferrari describes images, or visual texts as being 'on the same interpretive plane' as written or literary texts rather than being illustrations or versions of literary works.[30] She refers to 'the verbal and visual signs having the same status as projections of thought', and says that 'both verbal and visual signs communicate ideas pertinent to the same discourses, circulating in the

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[28] Scholars that demonstrate such an approach are Ghali-Kahil (1955) and *LIMC* IV, 'Helene'; Clement (1958) who talks of the vase-painter as 'illustrator' and Lowenstam (1992) whose paper on 'The uses of vase-depictions in Homeric studies' had a section entitled 'Why painting sometimes deviates from poetry' (as pointed out by Hedreen 1996: 155). See also Lowenstam (1997). Hedreen (1996: 155) also cites Beazley's (1986: 32) remark on Kleitias' depiction of the funerary games of Patroklos on the Francois Vase: 'Oddly enough,' says Beazley, 'Kleitias departs widely from the Homeric account...'
[29] Snodgrass 1998.
[30] Ferrari 2002: 61-62.

same social contexts'.[31] This egalitarian approach frees the interpreter of the image from the need to track down specific literary antecedents for each image. This too characterises my investigation of imagery on Greek vases. I will emphatically avoid, so far as is prudent, purely literary interpretations of images, but rather consider the images as existing at a level parallel with the written texts. I will attempt to show that images intersect with other forms of discourse (poetry, drama, philosophy, politics, etc.), and in doing so, table, discuss, and debate issues of topical or universal importance to the Greek mind. All of these discourses contribute to the horizons of expectation and experience against which each cultural document would be read. It is my assertion therefore that an image on a Greek vase was one mechanism through which the ancient Greek painter and, of course, his audience could think.

1.5 Helen's 'abduction' and 'recovery': Terminology

The final task, by way of elaborating on a conceptual framework for the study, is to also define two key terms of reference: 'abduction' and 'recovery'. The English word 'abduction' is regularly used by scholars to describe the transference of Helen from Sparta to Troy, which is the significant action that ignited the animosity between Greeks and Trojans and, despite diplomatic efforts to allay hostilities, ultimately lead to the Trojan War. This word is of course semantically loaded, and like the term *entführen* used by German scholars in the same way, it immediately connotes forceful removal, lack of consent for her removal, and implies suffering on the part of the abductee. This term 'abduction' is also used by scholars to describe other removals of women which have sexual overtones. Other examples are the abductions of Oreithyia by Boreas, Thetis by Peleus, Persephone by Hades, Antiope by Theseus, the Leucippides by the Dioscuri and Europa by Zeus, as well as Helen's first abduction by Theseus and Peirithoos. Its use by classical scholars is not restricted to the removal of women but the term is also used to describe 'abductions' of youths, such as those of Cephalos by Eos, and Ganymede by Zeus – also sexual in implication.

However, the English term is not necessarily suited to the way the Greeks consistently described the process of Helen's passage to Troy, the perception of which varied across time periods. In the ancient Greek mind of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries there are distinctions to be made between first, Helen's forceful abduction (*harparge*) at the one extreme, second, Paris' persuasion or seduction of her and third, at the other extreme, her willing or complicit elopement. The complexity of 'the narrative' is better understood when one remembers that '*the* narrative' does not really exist at all. There is no singular nor coherent, canonical 'myth' of

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[31] *Ibid*.

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the abduction of Helen, but there are only instances of it in both literary and visual sources alike.

In the extant sources the definition of the action of Helen's passage to Troy is certainly an important and worthy topic. In particular, the insult paid to Menelaus' honour through this 'theft', Paris' motivations for 'taking' Helen, as well as the character of Helen (whether she is complicit or innocent, shameful or rehabilitated, to be pitied or to be scorned) are all discussed in various ways in the different discourses. However, if Helen was seduced by Paris or went to Troy willingly can we really talk about an 'abduction'? This implies a different set of emotional dynamics, particularly on the part of Helen.

Helen's motivations may also be imagined to have an impact on her so-called 'recovery' by Menelaus, and its concomitant emotional discourse. This term 'recovery' is consistently applied by scholars to describe Helen's return, though the ancient Greek descriptions of Helen being taken back to Sparta do not seem to use any such equivalent term consistently. The English word 'recovery' would normally apply to the getting back of some inanimate thing (property or possessions, for example), but not, usually, to people, except perhaps in morbid situations, where one does speak about the recovery of a corpse.

The potential mismatch between the English words that are typically used, and the ancient Greek ideas on how things unfolded, should be borne in mind. However both terms are useful as generic descriptions of the two events, and have therefore been retained to an extent. Where it is clear that the ancient sources had an alternative in mind (persuasion or elopement rather than abduction for example) an attempt will be made to use English terminology more precisely.

2. Towards a methodology for reading emotion on Greek vases

The preceding section has established the need to situate the selected abduction or recovery of Helen scenes on Greek vases within their original contexts of production and reception, in order to attempt to read their emotional content. It is here argued that as the ancient reader's response to the imagery is culturally determined, so too – as numerous scholars have pointed out – is the process of modern scholarly analysis also susceptible to culture determination.[32] Though one can never be 'wholly free of culture determination'[33] it is possible to construct an approach that will attempt to minimise such intrusion, and result in a rigorous and informed methodology.

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[32] For example Sourvinou-Inwood (1988; 1991) Stewart (1997); Bérard 1989; Hoffman 1997; Beard 1991; Ferrari 2002; and Steiner 2007, etc.
[33] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 14.

2.1 The selection of the imagery

The process of selecting the imagery for this study is at the same time deliberate and to an extent, arbitrary. The 'arbitrariness' that affects the selection processes is dictated by the obvious ravages of time: the simple fact of the survival of certain vases and the non-survival of others. If Beard is correct in speculating that the total number of Athenian vases that survive from the late seventh to the fourth centuries – some 50 000 or so – is probably only one per cent of the original output of Athenian wares from that period,[34] then the corpus available for study has necessarily been drastically honed down before the process of deliberate selection can begin.

Having come to terms with the lacunose nature of the source material, the choice of the two subjects – the abduction and recovery of Helen – arose out of the expectation that such scenes would provide a representative enough sample of emotionally expressive and interesting scenes, across the time period in question, to render convincing results. The second consideration in selecting these themes was the availability of material, mainly in the form of photographs of sufficient quality with which to work. Having established these subjects to be viable and the imagery to be accessible, the corpus of material was chosen and drawn.

A comprehensive corpus of scenes concerning Helen is available in Ghali-Kahil's monograph on the abduction and return of Helen in Greek vase-painting, *Les enlèvements et le retour d'Hélène: dans les textes et les documents figures,*[35] and in the 'Hélène' entry of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (*LIMC* IV), also authored by Ghali-Kahil.[36] These two works present difficulties in their now outdated approach to the imagery, such as in the desire to seek mythological explanations for images at all costs, or to anchor the images to specific literary precedents. However these collections are valuable in gathering together an extensive corpus of imagery with which to work. Approximately 90 Attic vase-painting scenes that could be interpreted as abductions of Helen by Paris, or Helen and Menelaus, are collected in Ghali-Kahil,[37] while the *LIMC Hélène* entry increases the earlier sample to illustrate approximately 140 potentially relevant Attic vase-painting scenes.[38] These are not all securely identified by inscriptions or unambiguous iconography, however they provide an extensive sample worthy

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[34] Beard 1991: 15.
[35] Ghali-Kahil 1955.
[36] Ghali-Kahil 1988, abbreviated in this thesis as *LIMC* IV 'Hélène'.
[37] Ghali-Kahil 1955.
[38] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 515-552.

of examination.[39]

2.2 How to read a Greek vase

The process of reading the selected vase-painting scenes requires coming to terms with the language or the system of signs used by the vase painters (the iconography), and through this, the identification of potential indicators of meaning. These signs must then be read against the horizons of expectation and experience of the original cultural-semantic context in which they operated. The more specific process of 'the reading of emotions' may appear challenging because it looks at a (potentially) more elusive category of iconographic meaning. In investigating emotion on Greek vases, we are striving to discern in the imagery the intangible workings of the human psyche, the essentially unseeable, while remaining aware that the ancient and modern emotion may not necessarily be equivalent. It is necessary to investigate how emotion is made visible in imagery in a readable form and to explore how these emotions reflect a discourse. Once we are alerted to the signs and become immersed in the contexts within which the images were produced, we see that the emotional content is also readable.

2.3 Investigating the vase

Before investigating the iconography, for each scene selected for study the following aspects should be observed and noted about the vase itself since they also have potential significance. The vessel shape is important for two clear reasons: firstly shape determines in which contexts the vase was likely to have been used, and therefore who its likely viewers were. It makes a difference to the range of meanings of the vase if the vessel was a *kylix* viewed mainly by men in the sympotic context, or an *epinetron* used by women in the working of thread. Secondly, as Kousser has shown, all imagery on the vessel should be explored in relation to its shape (as well as the other imagery on the vase), since form, use and imagery often have a close connection.[40] Technique should also be noted, since black- or red-figure, or white ground techniques apply different conventions related to their technical capabilities or restrictions.

The vessel's approximate date is also key. Situating the vases within an approximate chronological framework is important since the patterns of change over time will also potentially be significant. Traditional chronologies for the late Archaic era, and for early red-figure vase-painting, in particular, received criticism in the 1980s, with the result that some

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[39] Other sources that have been a valuable complement to the Ghali-Kahil samples, are the Beazley Archive Classical Art Research Centre (online); *Pandora – Women in Classical Greece* exhibition catalogue (Reeder 1995); E r o s: From Hesiod's *Theogony* to Late Antiquity, Exhibition, 10 December 2009-5, April 2010, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens, and Oakley & Sinos' well-illustrated monograph on Athenian weddings (1993).

[40] Kousser 2004. Webster (1972) was interested in form, function and decoration but this has not been explored properly until more recently.

scholars have proposed adjusting the chronology of the work of the early red-figure painters and potters downwards by a maximum of fifteen years.[41] This theory was supported by comparative archaeological evidence, including sculptural parallels, and deposits from the Marathon mound, the Acropolis *Perserschutt* and the Agora wells.[42] This means, for example, that the dating of the group called the Pioneers is shifted towards the beginning of the Classical period, rather than stopping in the last decades of the sixth century. While this proposed new dating does affect close stylistic analyses, such precise dating is not key to the general shifts in iconographic and emotional vocabulary observed in this thesis. Precise dating of the vases, even if it is achievable, is not of crucial importance here, and adjusting the chronology by fifteen years or not does not seriously affect the contextual discussions set forth here. For this reason I have retained traditional dating of painters and vases.

Findspot should also be noted in cases where this information is available. Greek vases were popular items that were exported and have been recovered as far afield as Russia. However despite appealing to a diverse foreign market, the imagery remained emphatically Athenian. Says Neer, 'indeed, [the vases'] exotic Hellenism seems to have been part of their value to Etruscan and other "barbarian" consumers'.[43] Finally, if known through an inscription or attributed by connoisseurship techniques, the painter's 'name' should be noted. Of these four aspects of the vase, the identity of the painter is possibly least important for the purposes of this study, which is not especially concerned with artistic personalities or style per se. However the authorship of the vases should not be considered irrelevant since certain painters, such as Makron, for example, have been shown to stand apart from their tradition and can potentially explain anomalies in the 'language'.

2.4 Investigating the iconography

The following is then noted about each specific scene: its personnel; the presence or absence of inscriptions (identifying the figures or other inscriptions); the stance, gestures, body language, and gazes of the figures (including whether the figures make eye contact, whether they both look in the same direction with what can be termed 'parallel gazes', or avert their eyes); facial expression; the type and configuration of clothing worn or carried by the figures; other pictorial items or elements of setting such as furnishings, accessories, animals,

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[41] This discussion around chronology is well summarised by Neer (2002: 186-205). Neer's discussion of chronology isolates two main challenges to the traditional dating of Attic pottery: Francis & Vickers (1981) proposed a radical shift of late Archaic vases downwards to the second quarter of the fifth century (elaborated in several articles, including 1982 and 1988) while Tölle-Kastenbein (1983) presented a more modest shift of about 15 years downwards (Neer 2002: 186, notes 2 and 4).
[42] Neer 2002: 186-205.
[43] *Ibid*: 9.

vegetation, architecture; and the presence of personifications of abstract concepts (usually only recognised through inscriptions). After looking at these components of the scenes, it is also necessary to look at the image matrices, i.e. the specific configuration of the scene including the positioning of figures and icons in relation to each other. Where certain icons are used, the other possible options can also be considered: i.e. what alternatives could have been used and were not chosen. This selection or non-selection of icons or matrices by the painter is also potentially meaningful.

During the second process – the interpretation of the imagery in the context of its reception – the icons or signs will not only be interpreted literally, but their potential metaphorical or symbolic meanings will be considered. Such an approach allows for polysemy and the potential for ambiguity implicit in systems of language. Icons or figures will be explored for their meaning on both literal and metaphorical levels: it will be asked whether every detail should be taken at face value, read as 'actually happening' or actually present in a literal sense within the narrative depicted, or whether some visual elements are symbolic of something that cannot be expressed otherwise, and thus to some extent external to the narrative.

Other scenes on the vessel should also be noted, where this information is retrievable, to allow for the possibility of the existence of 'intertextual' references between the scene and other narrative or decorative elements. This is in keeping with more recent 'holistic' approaches to Greek vases that look at vases as cultural documents in their entirety, rather than only looking at individual scenes, detached from the vessel and its other decoration.[44] One particular limitation of the *LIMC* series is that, in the search for the identification of mythological scenes and figures, the picture fields from the same vase are usually treated separately, denying any possible dialogue with each other. Scholars have now become more interested in how scenes on the same vessel potentially complement each other. Shapiro, for example, sees the subsidiary scenes of chariot races as informing the prominent *prothesis* scenes on the same vessels, with the purpose of 'heroising the dead'.[45] Steiner shows how the deliberate duplication of scene matrices in two scenes on a *pelike* by Euthymides/Euphronios only makes sense with reference to both scenes.[46] Kousser's discussion of the *epinetron* by the Eretria Painter[47] convincingly shows that a reading of this artefact is enriched by considering the vessel in its entirety. She explores how all three picture fields, in conjunction with the three-dimensional bust of a woman projecting from the end of the characteristic cylindrical shape,

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[44] Shapiro 1991; Kousser 2004; and Steiner 2007.
[45] Shapiro 1991: 629-656.
[46] The vase explored by Steiner (2007: 1-4) is Boston 1973.88, *Add²* 397.
[47] The vase explored by Kousser (2004) is Athens 1629, *ARV²* 1250.34, 1688.

amount to a complex iconographic programme and discourse.[48]

From the close observation and the documentation of these aspects of the scenes certain patterns of similarity and differentiation become apparent. These patterns alert us to the likelihood of meanings that are encoded in the specific icons and in the image matrices as well. The potential range of meanings for such signs will be informed by the second process of investigation, explicated below, and should not be supplied intuitively. Further, it is ideal, at least initially, to consider all signs as potentially significant, since as Sourvinou-Inwood points out, the process of the selection of potential signifiers, i.e. the decisions taken to arrive at which signifiers are in fact 'significant', can result in an unwitting manipulation of the results.[49]

However, while it would be ideal from a methodological perspective to consider all signs, it will not be possible in this present study to examine each vase in such exhaustive detail. Logistical constraints have therefore dictated that certain indicators of meaning be taken at face-value. For example, well-established iconographic conventions of Attic vase-painting – such as the use of white paint in black-figure scenes to denote female flesh, and icons or attributes such as Hermes' caduceus – recur with enough consistency so as to be read without any problems as components of the visual language.

Within the context of the established 'visual language', particular indicators will be sought for specifically emotional vocabulary. Selection of these indicators should be arrived at through sound scholarly *rationale* and later checked against the cultural-semantic context and its horizons. For example, it might be expected that facial expression, widely acknowledged as a primary indicator of emotion in human beings as a species,[50] may also be an indicator in vase-painting scenes. However, for the majority of vase scenes selected – and in Attic pottery in general – facial expression remains bland and emotionless. This is the case regardless of whether the subject is emotive or calm, and the figures are animated or at rest. This finding is in itself significant and will be interrogated in Chapter 7. However this lack of facial expression should not lead to the assumption that these scenes are devoid of emotion; it simply means that within the conventions of the particular genre, one should look beyond one's own expectations, arising from one's own frame of reference.

Another expectation based on our own experience and observations – that gesture is an

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[48] Kousser 2004.
[49] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 6-7.
[50] Dating back at least to Darwin and his book on *The expression of the emotions in man and animals* (1872).

indicator of emotion in Greek vase-painting scenes – is more fruitful. This hypothesis is based on several factors. First, the observation of the extensive use of gesture, and especially the repetition of particular types of gestures in vase-painting scenes, alerts the interpreter to the likelihood of its significance as a meaningful sign.[51] Again, the expectation that gesture would be an emotional indicator is also based on the use of gesture by human beings to show emotion in general (anthropological *rationale*). However, one should remain cautious of immediately recognising gestures on the basis of their 'universality', even if some continuity is observable. Testing the primary evidence with the help of scholarship that explores the uses and meanings of gestures in antiquity makes it possible to look for the meanings implied by these visual signs.[52]

There are numerous references to physical motions and expressive gestures as non-verbal means of communication in the ancient sources; however as Boegehold points out, the vocabulary used usually does not provide 'extensive and subtle distinctions between the ways head, arms, hands, fingers, and torso speak'.[53] The Greek term *schēma*, for example, seems to describe a multitude of postures, whereas *cheironomia* can refer to a range of gestures. A further term, *kinesis*, similarly refers to a range of movement, not necessarily obvious from the text without engaging in a process of interpretation.[54] Some gestures and movements are described in texts in such a way that their 'meaning' is easier to read in the imagery, for example the gesture of supplication. However, as Boegehold cautions, no gesture is 'neutral' or unambiguous, and each instance must still be read in context since it is in context that it transmits its specific message.[55]

2.5 Investigating the context: the horizons of expectation and experience

The second process of analysis involves an immersion into the contexts of the production and reception of the vases – Athens between the mid sixth century and the mid fourth century – to investigate the other discourses that were circulating around the subjects chosen for study. To access the discourses around Helen's abduction and recovery, and particularly around the emotions associated with these subjects, means engaging with other cultural material – literary, visual, philosophical, legal, political, and archaeological. The abduction and recovery of Helen is mentioned or discussed in a variety of texts across the Archaic and Classical eras, including epic and lyric poetry, historiography, drama and oratory. These discourses each

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[51] McNiven 2000.
[52] For example Cairns 2005; Bremmer & Roodenburg (eds) 1991.
[53] Boegehold 1999: 13.
[54] *Ibid*.
[55] *Ibid*: 17, 31.

present their own diverse challenges of interpretation; when considering such evidence the nature of the genre and its peculiarities must be taken into account.

In order to investigate the issues and emotions that appear to be tabled in the literary texts and images, it is also necessary to understand social norms and dynamics of the day. For example, a simple narrative element of the story of Helen's abduction and recovery is the fact of her rape or her adultery. The images on the vases, though ostensibly about 'Helen', are also, or rather, about issues that go beyond the specifics of the narrative itself. They are not only about whether Helen was an adulteress to be blamed or vindicated, but about general concerns around adultery. That these discourses can be discerned in both the imagery and the other cultural material points to the presence and wider discussion of these issues.

In particular, during this process of interpretation, and as stated previously, when investigating emotions one should avoid 'contaminating' the result by universalising the emotions and applying modern emotion-words without careful scrutiny of their applicability. A modern identification of an emotion in the imagery, then, must first be measured against the ancient discourse related to the narrative or its issues and emotions. An important source on the ancient emotions is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in which he provides a list of emotions (*pathē*) and discusses them. As Konstan points out, it is significant that this text is a treatise on rhetoric, and that Aristotle's interest is in how the emotions affect argumentation.[56] This context is important and may have implications for the kinds of emotions that are selected and how they are regarded. The identification of the ancient emotions that are likely to be foregrounded in the imagery should therefore also be mediated through scholarship that has explored the ancient construction of such emotions and mapped them against the modern conception of the emotion.

Guided by the scholarship I have identified emotions, where possible, using an ancient and a modern lexical term.[57] A potential mismatch may occur through the inadequacy of lexical equivalents since ancient Greek can have several emotion-words that are all usually translated into English with one term. For example there are numerous Greek words that are typically translated by the English word 'anger'; these include *mēnis*, *cholos*, *nemesis*, *thumos* and *orgē*. However the ancient usages of these terms imply that there are subtle differences between them, for example *thumos* and *orgē* , Harris argues, are particularly intense and furious kinds

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[56] Konstan 2006: 27.
[57] Harris 2001, Cairns 2003, Konstan 2006 and Calame 1999.

of anger.[58] The ancient use of terminology also varies between authors and across time periods. *Mēnis*, *cholos*, *nemesis*, and *thumos* are typical in Homeric Greek, for example, but Classical Greek prefers *thumos* and *orgē*.[59]

In a similar way, the terminology of love requires more precise lexical equivalents than simply using the English word 'love'. Four Greek terms that are commonly translated as 'love' – *erōs*, *philia*, *storgē* and *agapē* – refer to emotions that differ from each other. The common noun *erōs* is usually best translated as amorous desire or sexual passion, though Calame points out that 'the field of application of *erōs* itself was not limited solely to sexual desire: *erōs* could also be a desire for war…'[60] Ancient political theorists also conceptualised love for the city as a kind of civic *erōs,* beneficial to the bonds of the community.[61] *Philia* on the other hand refers more specifically to an aspect of love that is not 'libidinous' but emphasises mutual trust. [62] *Philia* can refer to friendship and filial love, but Aristotle also lists other varieties of *philia* such as *hetaireia* (comradeship), *oikeiotes* (familiarity) and *sungeneia* (kinship).[63] However, *philia* is not necessarily excluded from an amatory context.[64] *Storgē* is different yet again; it refers more specifically to the love of parents for their offspring. The verb *agapaō* means 'to be fond of', though the noun *agapē* does not seem to exist in Greek before the New Testament.[65] Such terminology was effortlessly understood by an ancient audience, but a modern interpreter must work harder to recover its meaning/s.

The various discourses contribute to the horizons of expectation and experience of the original makers, buyers and viewers of Athenian vases. It is against such a 'thought-world' that the images would have originally been viewed and received, and therefore the images should be read having been re-embedded in this context. While the literary discourses related to the narrative itself and other social discourses are by no means separate from each other, I have examined the context using a two-phase approach. In each chapter I have examined first the literary-narrative context evoked by the images before considering the broader cultural-semantic context. Such a boundary is artificial but the study does not, in my opinion, suffer because of it. This structure facilitates rather than impedes the goal: which is to achieve nuanced readings of the images and to recover potential emotional subtexts in scenes of Helen's abduction and recovery.

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[58] Harris 2001: 63.
[59] Cairns 2003: 21-22.
[60] Calame 1999: 22.
[61] Ludwig 2002.
[62] Calame 1999: 22.
[63] *Rhet.* 1381b34, quoted in Konstan 2006: 175.
[64] Calame 1999: 25-26.
[65] Konstan 2006: 169.

Fig. 1.1: Zuma T-shirt produced by Laugh it Off Promotions, as part of the Brandspanking range

Image source: http://www.liomarket.com/pZUMA/Zuma.aspx

Fig 1.2: Puma sportswear branding logo

Image source: http://logos.wikia.com/wiki/Puma

CHAPTER 2

HELEN ABDUCTED OR RECOVERED? BLACK-FIGURE SCENES C. 560-510

The study of Helen's abduction by Paris and her recovery by Menelaus begins with a problem briefly acknowledged but not resolved in previous scholarship: whether these scenes exist in Attic black-figure at all.[1] It is noteworthy and perhaps surprising that the first – and in fact only – surviving inscribed scenes involving the abduction of Helen by Paris are both on red-figure vessels by Makron which date to around 490-480.[2] The first securely identified scenes of the recovery are three early red-figure scenes by Oltos,[3] who predates Makron by roughly 20 years. There are however other earlier scenes which may show Helen's abduction: a small group of black-figure scenes dated between 560-510 have been tentatively labelled by Ghali-Kahil as '*Enlèvement d'Hélène ou retour*?'[4] A more extensive group of vases are less problematically recovery scenes,[5] though no inscriptions either disprove or confirm this identification. Other scenes that Ghali-Kahil describes as '*Type dérivé* (*dégénérescence du motif*)'[6] use similar iconography and scene matrices to those used in the first two groups, and while they vary in certain ways that make them less easy to identify as either story, they should be considered in conjunction with these types. Together, the black-figure scenes that can be interpreted as potentially involving Helen's abduction or her recovery, amount to at least 83 vases.[7]

1. Abduction?

1.1 Investigating the vases

The small group proposed by Ghali-Kahil consists of scenes on amphorae; this includes two

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[1] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 558.
[2] Boston 13.186, *ARV²* 458.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' catalogue entries (hereafter abbreviated as cat.) 166 and 243; Berlin 2291, *ARV²* 459.4, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 167.
[3] Paris G 3. 1618, *ARV²* 53.1, *Add* 79, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 237, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 49.2; Odessa 0.577, *ARV²* 67.137, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 82.2; and Malibu 80.AE.154, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 336 *bis*.
[4] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 157-161.
[5] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 210-319.
[6] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 320-357.
[7] This number is based on the *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' catalogue of images.

type B belly amphorae, both painted by the Amasis Painter (fig. 2.1[8] and fig. 2.2[9]), scenes on two neck amphorae (fig. 2.3[10] and fig. 2.4[11]) and two amphora fragments (fig. 2.5[12] and fig.2.6[13]). These vases date to the second half of the sixth century, roughly between 550-520.

1.2. Investigating the iconography

These scenes involve a well-dressed woman who wears a *pharos* veil[14] on her head and holds it in front of her with the gesture referred to by scholars as *anakalypsis* ('unveiling').[15] This gesture will be discussed in more detail; however the more neutral term 'veil-gesture', as proposed by Llewellyn-Jones will be used here.[16] The veiled woman is being led away on foot by an armed and helmeted hoplite soldier who walks in front of her. He turns back to look at the woman he is leading. He does not touch the woman or lead her by the hand or wrist, but holds his sword prominently in front of him. He does not seem to directly threaten the woman with the sword; in Ghali-Kahil's description, it is rather being brandished as if to open the path or clear the way in front of them.[17] This is perhaps an over-interpretation; his motives are impossible to read here. The movement may be to left or to right across the picture field. In all cases hoplite armour and weaponry are present and in the case of the four intact scenes, there are other male figures present. These take the form of a single soldier in figs 2.3 and 2.4; a soldier and two naked youths in fig. 2.1 and a naked youth and a bearded and partially draped man in fig. 2.2.

The female figures in these examples could certainly be Helen, but the fact that her iconography, as well as that of most female figures in black-figure painting, is not very distinctive is unhelpful for the purposes of identification. In an inscribed scene on a hydria from Basel,[18] Helen wears *peplos* and decorated *himation*, and on a lekythos by the Amasis Painter in Athens (fig. 2.7)[19] her *peplos* is decorated, her *himation* is striped with incised border and there are details of jewellery. Ariadne, Deianeira, Hera, Semele, Polyxena and Aphrodite,

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[8] Munich 1383 (J.75) from Vulci, *ABV* 150. 7, 687, *Para* 63, *CVA* Munchen 1, 22-23, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 157.
[9] Great Britain private collection, ex Riehen, Hoek, *Para* 65, *Add²* 43, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 158.
[10] Florence 3777; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 3.1, 76. 1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 159.
[11] Paris 10236 *bis*; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 161.
[12] Oxford G 137.54, *CVA* 2 pl. 3, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 80.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 160.a.
[13] Bollingen, private collection, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 160.b.
[14] Though the term *himation* has been used to describe this kind of veil, Llewellyn-Jones (2003) differentiates the *himation* veil from the *pharos* veil. The *pharos* veil tends to mainly cover the head and shoulders, while, according to Llewellyn-Jones, the *himation* veil 'was draped around the torso and hung over a shoulder from whence it was frequently pulled over the head' (2003: 54).
[15] Llewellyn-Jones discusses the inadequacy of the term (2003: 98-114). See also Cairns 1996: 153, n. 22; Blundell 1998: 38; Oakley & Sinos 1993: 30; Keuls 1983: 222.
[16] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 104.
[17] Ghali-Kahil *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 558.
[18] *LIMC* III 'Dioscouroi' cat. 180, simply given as 'Bâle, Antikenmuseum'.
[19] Athens 404 (CC 674), *ABV* 155.62, *Para* 64, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 101, 2.

to name a few, are all depicted on contemporary vases in similar costume. The veil-gesture in these black-figure examples is not distinctive for Helen either; but it can be used across various media by a variety of women, both mythological (Hera, Deianeira, Ariadne for example) and not clearly mythological (brides in marriage scenes on black- and red-figure vases for example, and women on funerary stelai, etc.).

The contemporary iconography of Paris in Attic black-figure, on the other hand, is more varied and interesting. In Judgement of Paris scenes he appears as a shepherd figure, as in a scene on an amphora in Munich where he is bearded, wears a *chiton* and *himation* and carries a kind of sceptre or staff.[20] A hydria, also in Munich,[21] presents a similar Paris and a belly amphora near the Antimenes Painter shows him in comparable clothing but playing the lyre.[22] An inscribed hydria in Paris, however, shows Paris dressed more opulently in a tunic and patterned himation, with long locks of hair falling down his back.[23] This pastoral or leisurely Paris is offset by those depictions of him as an 'oriental' archer. On a hydria by the Priam Painter[24] Paris is shown in archer's costume, wearing the typical eastern 'Phrygian' bonnet, patterned tunic and leggings. The inscription '*Pari kalos*' makes the identification more secure. The eastern archer hastily exiting the scene on an amphora showing Ajax with the corpse of Achilles is probably Paris.[25] He wears the bonnet, tunic and trousers and a quiver containing arrows. A cup in Würzburg[26] may show a crouching Paris simply as an archer (i.e. not 'eastern') under one handle. The archer wears a *chitoniskos* and high crested helmet, and he aims with his bow and arrow but the scene bears nonsense inscriptions so the identification is not secure.

Paris does however appear as a hoplite in at least one – and potentially two – other black-figure scenes. On an amphora in Würzburg (fig. 2.8)[27] a male figure dressed as a hoplite is being greeted by a female figure. This has been interpreted as Paris conversing with Helen who exhorts him to bravery,[28] and in terms of the overall scheme of the scene (which may show the departure of Menelaus and Deiphobos from Andromache) this is a credible but by no means certain identification. The hoplite figure on a belly amphora in Munich (fig.2.9) [29] is however securely identified, through an inscription, as Paris fighting Menelaus. Paris wears a crested helmet, bell cuirass, scabbard and greaves and raises his shield while brandishing a spear. This

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[20] Munich 1545, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 7.
[21] Munich 1722, *ABV* 269, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 8, by the Antimenes Painter.
[22] Munich 1392, *ABV* 281.16, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 9, near or by the Antimenes Painter.
[23] Paris F287, *CVA* Paris, Louvre 6, III.HE.48, III.HE.49, pl. (408) 69.4.
[24] Madrid 10920 (L68) *ABV* 332.17 by the Priam Painter, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 71.
[25] Munich 1519 *ABV* 394.4, by the Painter of Munich 1519, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 95.
[26] Würzburg L419, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 74.
[27] Würzburg L 247, *ABV* 134.17 Group E, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 69.
[28] *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 69.
[29] Munich 1415 (J.380), *CVA* Munchen 1 pl. 45 (139), *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 78,.

example shows Paris as a hoplite; however the existence of this singular secure example of such iconography does not amount to secure identification of this figure in a different context. This example shows that Paris can, depending on the context, be depicted as a hoplite, but it does not compel any conclusions related to hoplites in other scenes. For this reason, the example does not help to identify these problematic scenes as the abduction of Helen by Paris.

1.3 Reading the vases: The literary-narrative context

Having established that the iconography of the two protagonist figures, in general conception do not contradict a reading of Helen and Paris, though not strongly, the question must be asked whether the image matrix makes sense in terms of what we know of the story from other sources. Ghali-Kahil cites a problem in the implicit context of hostility in these 'abduction' scenes, since she says that the texts do not specifically mention an obstacle to their departure.[30] Again, one ventures into challenging terrain. It is necessary to strike a balance between using literary sources and misusing them, i.e. exploring them but avoiding the temptation of tying specific texts to specific images. One needs to be well acquainted with the texts and make use of them – but in a more approximate way.[31] The kind of scholarly approach used by Ghali-Kahil (and the *LIMC* in general) stands testament to the past preoccupation with finding close correlations between vase-painting scenes and particular literary accounts. As Hedreen's discussion of recovery scenes has pointed out, past scholars worked hard to classify and catalogue painted scenes according to those 'following' particular epics or poems, and relentlessly looked for iconographic details that would 'prove' these identifications.[32] Seeking such specific correlations neglects the principle stated in Chapter 1; that the images use their own language and they tell the stories – in the common domain – in their own way, using codes or visual signifiers to convey meaning and discuss issues. Yet the literary sources remain valuable indicators of the kinds of discourses that circulated around the stories and as such, cannot be discarded.

Ghali-Kahil is convincing in her assertion that the presence of hoplite panoply and the brandishing of a sword in these potential 'abduction' scenes are evocative of something and are not extraneous details.[33] The panoply and sword may suggest force is being used to 'abduct' the woman or a dangerous context may be implied through these icons. Is either idea present in the literary sources, by way of support for the identification of these as abduction of Helen scenes? The narrative element that Helen was taken from Sparta to Troy is central to what scholars such as Austin call 'the traditional account', as occurring in Homer, the cyclic

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[30] Ghali-Kahil *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 558.
[31] Hedreen 1996: 155.
[32] *Ibid.*: 154-155.
[33] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 558.

epics, the lyric poets, the orators Gorgias and Isocrates and the dramatists.[34] This is to be differentiated from the 'revisionist account' where Helen did not ever make it to Troy, as apparently told by Steisichoros in the *Palinode*[35] and Euripides in his *Helen*. Herodotus sits between the two accounts; in Book 1 of his *Histories* he refers to the abduction in the context of reciprocal abductions of women between West and East.[36] In Book 2 his Helen is abducted by Paris but does not arrive in Troy, being confiscated from Paris in Egypt by Proteus.[37] Within the so-called traditional accounts as well as the Herodotean version, how and with what motivation she was taken are contentious issues, and in some sources even ambiguous.

No extant source explicitly or unambiguously describes Paris dragging Helen away from Sparta. However we *can* find traces of the idea in the literature. In the Homeric text of the *Iliad* there is both the implication of forceful abduction, and the possibility of danger to Paris' person in carrying out the act. In Homer, Paris is presented as a shameful aggressor and wrongdoer. He not only took a Greek woman to Troy as his own, but he took the θαλερὴν παράκοιτιν – 'buxom', or 'sturdy wife' – of a man whose 'kin were warriors' (ἀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων)**.**[38] His crimes, according to the poem include lust; in Hektor's words Paris is 'woman-crazy' (γυναιμανές),[39] theft (Helen was stolen from Menelaus with countless other possessions),[40] and transgression of the rules of *xenia*.[41] In his own description of what happened in Sparta, Paris describes himself as 'snatching' (ἁρπάξας) Helen and taking her away in the ships.[42]

Menelaus and the Greeks at Troy seem to think of Helen in these terms too: that she was abducted, reluctant, and probably raped. In Book 2 Nestor urges the Greek soldiers to fight on until each has bedded a Trojan woman in revenge for Helen's 'longing to escape' and 'groans' (τίσασθαι δ᾽ Ἑλένης ὁρμήματά τε στοναχάς τε);[43] the same expression is used by Homer to describe Menelaus' mission at Troy.[44] Roisman argues that we can infer from the type of vengeance proposed by Nestor, that he regards Helen as having been 'abducted and raped'.[45] Despite the implications of Nestor's words, and the descriptions of Helen as both war captive and possession at Troy, Helen in fact uses words more fitting for elopement than abduction. In *Iliad* 3.174, Helen says that she 'followed' (ἑπόμην*)* Paris, using, as Roisman points out,

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[34] Austin 1994: *passim.*
[35] Reported by Plato in the *Phaedrus* 243a-b and *Republic* 586c.
[36] *Hist*. 1.3.
[37] *Hist*. 2.113-117.
[38] *Il*. 3.53. All translations in this thesis are my own unless otherwise specified.
[39] *Il* 3.39.
[40] *Il* 3. 285-9.
[41] For example at *Il*. 3.351-354, 620-29.
[42] *Il*. 3.441.
[43] *Il*. 2.355-56.
[44] *Il* 2.589-90 as pointed out by Roisman 2006: 3.
[45] Roisman 2006: 3.

'language of a wife who follows her husband'.[46] The element of divine manipulation in the affair, particularly that of Aphrodite, is also strong in Homer, where it is made clear that Helen's behaviour is influenced by Aphrodite's machinations. Her orchestration of the 'abduction' of Helen in the first place is another important narrative element in the Homeric version. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Aphrodite's involvement in bringing the pair together is vital. In the *Odyssey* Helen attributes her original feeling for Paris to a blindness sent by Aphrodite.[47] Much later Penelope is of the same opinion, saying that Helen would not have gone to Troy but for the intervention of Aphrodite.[48]

The subject of the abduction is therefore highly nuanced in Homer; the poems evoke both possibilities of an abduction by forceful means *and* a seduction or elopement. Nor do later poets necessarily agree. While the late seventh/early sixth-century lyric poet Alcaeus portrays the event as a seduction by Paris, but is highly critical of Helen at the same time, Sappho's vignette paints it as willing elopement and, it seems, celebrates her for it.[49] In both poems Helen acts under the influence of Aphrodite. Later fifth-century sources, such as Herodotus and Gorgias,[50] again unambiguously mention the abduction by forceful means. In Herodotus the Greek uses a series of forms related to the verb 'to snatch' (ἀρπάσαντος … τῆς ἀρπαγῆς… τὴν ἀρπαγήν) to describe a series of reciprocal attacks.[51] In Gorgias' case force (βίᾳ ἁρπασθεῖσα) is only one of four possibilities but it is there nevertheless, alongside the influence of the gods, persuasion by words and love – i.e. the forces of Aphrodite.[52] In Euripides' *Orestes* however, Helen sails to Troy compelled by a divinely sent 'madness' (θεομανεῖ πότμῳ).[53] The threat against Paris' person at the moment of abduction, though not explicitly discussed in any extant literary version, still makes sense whether the act is forceful or complicit. It is the magnitude of this crime against *Menelaus*, regardless of the fault or complicity of Helen, especially as discussed in the Homeric poems and the versions of Alcaeus and Herodotus, that renders Paris in mortal danger.

Menelaus is not a major character in the *Iliad*, yet 'his quarrel' with Alexandros – the dispute over Helen – is the broader context against which the main conflict of the poem – the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilleus over a woman (Briseis) which arose out of the removal of yet another woman (Chryseis) – will play out. The subject of dishonourable removals of

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[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Od.* 4.260.
[48] *Od.* 23.218ff.
[49] Alcaeus fr. 283 and 42; Sappho fr. 16. Fragment numbers for Sappho and Alcaeus are those of Lobel & Page (1955).
[50] *Encomium of Helen.*
[51] Hdt.1.3.
[52] *Hel.* 6.
[53] *Or.* 80.

women and their effects are crucial to the action of the poem. In particular the loss of honour (*timē*) caused through such actions motivates the heroes to act in different ways, out of anger. This emotion is extremely prevalent in the *Iliad* where the two most common anger-words are *cholos* and *mēnis*, though several others are also used in the text.[54] Cairns describes these two terms as virtually synonyms, though *mēnis* seems to have an additional dimension of gravity and intensity. In both cases however, the emotion is a strong reaction to a perceived outrage that requires retaliation of some kind, usually of a violent nature.[55] The *cholos* of epic seems equivalent to Aristotle's *orgē*, as defined in the *Rhetoric*, which also manifests as a desire for revenge for a perceived slight.[56]

In Book 3 of the *Iliad*, neither anger-word is specifically used to describe Menelaus' emotional state or his demeanour, although two predator similes that compare him to a lion and wild beast hunting Paris, surely do serve to evoke an emotional subtext.[57] During his duel with Paris and after killing Peisandros in Book 13, he expresses his outrage at the crime which he perceives as having been committed against him.[58] He also expresses his desire for retaliation. This is precisely the kind of anger-response that is typical in epic poetry. In the heroic code of honour, anger is something that is both appropriate and necessary (within limits), because it will lead to retaliation for wrongs committed.[59] Both honour and anger are essential to Menelaus' cause, and to his *andreia* – his masculinity; these concepts are closely entangled in the heroic mentality, as Van Wees shows.[60] Helen's involvement (or lack thereof) as well as the involvement of the gods for that matter, is mostly irrelevant to this crime as defined in the *Iliad*. Menelaus (and Agamemnon, on his behalf) demands not only the return of Helen, and the return of the other possessions stolen from him, but also recompense (*rhusia*) for the damage that was done to his honour (*timē*).[61] Such an act of violence to Menelaus' *timē* is the height of *hubris* according to the rhetoric of status in the world of the heroes.[62]

The infringement against the institution of *xenia* further aggravates the offence. This emerges at various points in the *Iliad*[63] and in Alcaeus where Helen is 'out of her wits' (ἐκμάνεισα, i.e.

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[54] Cairns 2003: 24; 31-33.
[55] Cairns 2003: 25; 31-32.
[56] *Rhet*. 2.2, 1378a31-3; Konstan 2006: 41, 52.
[57] At *Il* 3. 31-26 and 449-450.
[58] *Il*. 3. 350-354; 13.620-639.
[59] Van Wees 1992: 126-152.
[60] *Ibid.*: *passim*.
[61] *Il*. 3.205-24, 285-9, 351-2, 458-60; 11.139-40; 13.622-3, for example.
[62] Van Wees 1992: 180.
[63] For example at *Il.* 3.351-354 and *Il.* 13. 620-29.

crazed with passion) for the Trojan man, the 'traitor to hospitality' (ξ[ε.]ναπάτα').[64] In Herodotus much is also made of the treasure that Paris took from Menelaus' *oikos*; his plundering of the house of a guest-friend is a heinous contravention of Menelaus' hospitality.[65] His double crime would surely have placed him in great danger and the sword and armour in the scenes could be the vase-painter's way of signalling both his audacity and this transgression.[66]

The ideas of a forceful abduction of Helen and danger to Paris therefore did exist in Greek thought already in the sixth century. On the basis of iconography and on these 'narrative' grounds the tentative identification of these scenes remains plausible. However, as will be seen from the ensuing discussion, this is not the most likely meaning of the iconography. It is noteworthy that other black-figure abductions seem to be conceived differently: A scene on a black-figure hydria in the British Museum (fig. 2.21)[67] which is identified as Helen's first abduction by Theseus shows a bearded Theseus picking Helen up in his arms, physically 'snatching' her. She is fully draped with what is probably a *pharos* veil over her head and she gestures to her companions for help. His companion, Peirithoos, stands ready with one foot in the chariot, in which they will make their hasty escape. Similarly, in scenes that show Antiope taken by Theseus, he bundles her into a chariot by holding her around the waist.[68] Thetis is chased on foot by Peleus[69] or more typically grabbed and wrestled by him with his arms around her waist or torso, as she struggles to escape. [70]

The 'wrestling gesture' and the conveyance by chariot seem to be two standard ways to show the abduction of women in black-figure painting, but in these examples there is no explicit display of weaponry in the scene. The type of force used is manual and these image matrices differ considerably from the black-figure scenes just discussed. This difference could vitiate the identification as the abduction of Helen. However, perhaps more important to the evaluation of these problematic scenes is their remarkable similarity to other contemporary black-figure scenes, a group that is identified less tentatively by scholars as Helen's recovery by

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[64] Alc. frag. 283: 4-5.
[65] Hdt. 2.113-117
[66] See Van Wees (1992: 110) on the likelihood that where a perceived slight also incurs a loss of property, the aggrieved man would 'be doubly angry'.
[67] London BM 310; *ABV* 361.12; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 103.1; '*LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 30.
[68] For example Munich 1414 (J.7); *ABV* 367.87; *LIMC* I 'Antiope II' cat. 4; Naples 128333; *ABV* 367.93; *LIMC* I 'Antiope II' cat. 5; and New York 12.198.3; *LIMC* I 'Antiope II' cat. 6.
[69] For example Paris F 307; *CVA* 2 pl. 4 (76) 4; *LIMC* VII 'Peleus' cat. 64.
[70] For example London B215; *ABV 286.1; Add*[2] 74; *LIMC* VIII 'Thetis' cat.12.

Menelaus.[71] These form a much larger body of scenes and their identification is more secure, despite the fact that they are also devoid of inscriptions.[72]

2. Recovery

2.1 Investigating the vases

The types of vessels that the recovery scenes adorn are almost overwhelmingly amphorae; there are 60 extant examples on amphorae (some fragmentary). In addition 5 drinking cups (one fragmentary), 6 lekythoi, 3 oinochoai, a pyxis, a pyskter, a krater and a tripod feature this scene according to Ghali-Kahil.[73]

2.2 Investigating the iconography

The recovery scenes contain a woman who wears a *peplos* and uses the veil-gesture, she is confronted or lead by a main male aggressor who is dressed as a hoplite. The pair look at each other, or at least, in each other's direction. There are similar combinations of other personnel present (such as a second hoplite, or draped bystanders, etc.). The difference in Ghali-Kahil's categorisation is in the threat now more clearly being directed at the female figure; the hoplite now brandishes his sword at the female protagonist in a (more) hostile manner. According to Ghali-Kahil's classification, this group of black-figure recovery scenes take two main forms, and her argument is based – too literally it must be reiterated – on literary sources. In the first sub-group, '*Type inspiré de la* Petite Iliade *de Leschès* '('Type inspired by the *Little Iliad* of Lesches'), the hoplite threatens a woman with a sword while facing her directly, as in the central pair in the scene on the reverse of the name vase of the Painter of the Vatican Mourner (fig. 2.10).[74] The scenes in the second sub-group are, according to Ghali-Kahil, '*Type inspiré de l'*Ilioupersis *d'Arctinos*' ('Type inspired by the *Ilioupersis* of Arktinos'). They show a woman being led away, but also being directly threatened by a sword which is turned towards her (rather than 'clearing the way') as in a scene on a neck amphora in Berlin (fig. 2.11).[75]

The identification of many of these scenes as Menelaus in the process of recovering his wife Helen is most likely. The panoplied soldier fits Menelaus' portrayal at Troy in black figure; however, as most Greek heroes at Troy are shown as hoplites in black figure, this iconography without an inscription is again unhelpful. In some black-figure scenes containing Menelaus, and particularly in later Attic iconography, he is consistently shown bearded. In these examples

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[71] In *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' the series 210-224; 291-304; 306; 308-309; 315-318; and 320-336.
[72] With the exception of Oxford 1965.141 (*LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 327), which bares nonsense inscriptions.
[73] The vases in this sample are too numerous to list individually; the details will only be supplied for each example chosen for discussion as that example is encountered in the text.
[74] Vatican 16589; *ABV* 140.1; *Para* 58; *Add* 16; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 43.2; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 213.
[75] Berlin 1842; *ABV* 273, 110; *Para* 119; *Add* 35; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 80.1; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 297.

where the male figure, with one notable exception, is shown helmeted, the need to show a beard is obviously negated (though some artists do suggest a rudimentary one, such as on Vatican 358,[76] where incised lines protrude from under the cheek-pieces of the helmet). The exceptional scene is on the reverse of an amphora in Florence[77] and the unhelmeted warrior indeed wears a beard (fig.2.12).

Other artistic cues that aid identification of these scenes as Helen's recovery are provided by the well-known *Ilioupersis* scene by Lydos in Berlin (fig.2.13)[78] and later red-figure scenes. In the case of Lydos, the scene supports the identification through the presence of other clearly identifiable figures carrying out distinctive actions. Priam being attacked on the altar by Neoptolemos securely places the scene within the context of the fall of Troy, and this distinctive episode helps to render the identification of the vignette more certain. Congruence with aspects of later red-figure recovery scenes (securely identified through inscription) is helpful too. Iconographic schemes should be applied retrospectively with a measure of caution but where there is such overt continuity, this should be taken seriously.

2.3. Reading the vases: The literary-narrative context

It is easy to motivate for the presence of Menelaus' hoplite panoply and his threat towards Helen in the context of the *Ilioupersis* narrative. It is soon after the fall of the city that Menelaus fetches his wife, and the heat of battle must have only recently subsided, arms and armour can be explained in this light. But far from simply contextualising the recovery in the context of war, the panoply, and in particular, the sword which is brandished with hostility in some of these scenes have other functions. Menelaus' intention of violently attacking Helen is expressly noted in several (though mostly later) literary sources, especially the dramatists of the fifth century. The recovery is mentioned in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*[79] and also in Euripides' *Orestes*[80] and *Andromache*.[81] The most extensive and dramatic extant account of the recovery of Helen occurs in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, where the recovery takes place in real time. Here, the threat to Helen's person is overt and she is in danger of being executed on account of Menelaus' anger, even if only later when she is back in Sparta.[82]

Earlier literary sources also discussed the recovery. In the *Odyssey*, Helen's return is in the distant past, and though Demodocus does sing of Odysseus and Menelaus' visit to the house of

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[76] Vatican 358; *ABV* 142.7; *Para* 58; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 43.1; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 219.
[77] Florence 3777; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 76.1; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 293.
[78] Berlin F. 1685; *ABV* 109.24; *Add* 12; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 210.
[79] *Lys*. 155-156.
[80] *Or*. 1500.
[81] *Andr*. 627-631.
[82] *Tr*. 928-957.

Deiphobos on the fateful night of Troy's fall, the actual recovery is not related.[83] The epics of the Cyclic poets Lesches and Arctinus narrated the recovery in the context of the fall of Troy, though neither of the poems is extant. Traces of these versions and other non-extant mentions in the lyric poetry of Steisichorus and Ibycus can be excavated through references in the work of later poets or notes by scholiasts. This makes reconstructing seventh and sixth-century literary versions around the reunion of Helen and Menelaus challenging to say the least.[84]

A consistent element gleaned from all these sources, however, is the emotional response of Menelaus. The earlier discussion of the abduction showed that Menelaus has not just a right but an obligation to be angry, and with the kind of wrath that may even mirror the famous *mēnis* of Achilles. Menelaus' hostility as conveyed through the sword and the panoply in the images makes sense for two reasons: because of the anger he feels at the dishonour he has suffered, *and* as anger directed towards the person of Helen, whom he possibly planned to murder. Either way, the recovery is shown to be a precarious moment for Helen, and this is overwhelmingly consistent in the later visual sources as well.

3. Abduction or recovery? Synopsis

The preceding discussion returns us to the question: do the abduction and recovery of Helen feature in Attic black figure at all? In the case of the recovery scenes there is stronger evidence for this as a popular type than there is for the abduction. The black-figure images that show a woman being accosted by a man with a sword use virtually identical iconography to that used in Lydos' *Ilioupersis* scene. This vase clearly shows key moments from the fall of the city, including what is probably Helen's recovery. Continuity between these black-figure scenes with later inscribed red-figure scenes, as well as the coherence between the iconography and the literary narratives support their interpretation as the recovery. The abduction is more dubious, based on both iconographic and narrative grounds. Furthermore, the 'problematic' black-figure scenes do not differ *enough* from the matrices of recovery scenes to signal to their viewer a different – even if connected – narrative. It is unlikely that such a negligible difference in detail (the direction of a sword) would be enough to alert the viewer to this important difference in subject; the syntaxes of abduction and recovery of Helen scenes would surely not deliberately evoke each other to the point of being virtually ambiguous.

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[83] *Od.* 8.516-518.
[84] The article by Clement (1958), though outdated in terms of his approach to the imagery, does help to extrapolate details about the earlier literary versions of the story from the scholiasts.

The identification of both groups of scenes as Helen's recovery is more likely, but this means then that there is an absence of (extant) black-figure scenes showing the abduction of Helen from Sparta. Such a lacuna is surprising given the popularity of the story in the literary sources and the reasonable scholarly expectation that if the recovery is popular, then so too would the abduction be popular. However the evidence does not bear out this expectation. Potential reasons for the reticence of the vase-painters to explore this theme will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

There are also a number of scenes that utilise the aforementioned iconography and image matrices, but do not quite 'fit' for various reasons. An example is a neck amphora in New York (fig. 2.14)[85] where there is not one central pair of a hoplite with a sword threatening a woman (i.e. Helen and Menelaus) but two pairs. In this particular example, one hoplite threatens a woman directly, and the second leads the other woman away turning back to brandish his sword. This reduplication of the pair does not strictly make sense in terms of either abduction of Helen or her recovery. Similarly, on an amphora by the Princeton Painter (fig.2.15)[86] two pairs also appear, but they both walk to right, while the hoplites turn back with threatening swords. A pottery tripod in the Louvre (fig.2.16)[87] contains two women on either side of a hoplite who gestures animatedly and shows his sword. These women both hold wreathes, an unusual feature in this scene type (though common elsewhere). There are also several other scenes that use similar combinations of warriors and women, now with little threat posed to the women. In these scenes the warriors often carry double spears – not swords – and may lead the women, as in a scene by the Antimenes Painter (fig. 2.17),[88] or may walk in front of her, looking back at her (fig.2.18),[89] or simply stand opposite her (fig.2.19)[90] in the company of other hoplites, older men dressed in civic attire, youths or archers. The use of double spears rather than swords does change the tone of the scene, but, I would argue, not its overall meaning.

To explain these scenes – as Ghali-Kahil does – as the 'degeneration of a motif' is a relic of the kind of thinking that gives primacy to mythological interpretations of all vase-painting scenes. The stripping away of names can, in fact, be helpful since this allows us to re-focus on the issues at stake in the images – and the emotions they evoke – rather than on purely narrative interpretations. It is perhaps more apt to look at these scenes from a different perspective.

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[85] New York 56.171.18 (ex coll. Hearst 9511); *ABV* 137.61; *Para* 55; *Add* 16; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 305.
[86] Once Peek; *ABV* 298. 12; *Para* 129; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 43 *bis* 2; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 307.
[87] Paris F151; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 80.2; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 319.
[88] London B244 from Vulci; *ABV* 271.74, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 77; *CVA* 4 pl. 59 (204); *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 323.
[89] Florence 3845; *ABV* 287.1; *Para* 125.7 *bis*; *Add* 37; Ghali-Kahil 1955 109 e, pl. 84.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 343.
[90] San Simeon 5443 (ex coll. Hearst SSW 9945); *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 353.

Rather than viewing them as primarily mythological scenes that degenerated into something more generalised, one should explore them as scene types that are originally concerned with a particular kind of human conduct. These matrices are therefore suitable to be used to tell particular mythological narratives that involve the same kind of human behaviour and exemplify the same issues. The fact that this image matrix survives and is used by the vase-painters to tell mythological narratives confirms that it is a successful code. This would highlight what I term the 'real meanings' of the images. Denuded of a specific narrative, what could these scenes mean to their audience? The scenes, whether mythological recovery of Helen scenes or seemingly generalised scenes, can be shown to raise precisely the same kind of issues and describe the same kind of conduct.

Having investigated the iconography as well as the potential narratives it evokes, the next stage of the contextualisation can begin; that is the investigation of these images within the culture in which they were produced. This means exploring the meaning of the images against the horizons of experience and expectation of the audiences, and coming up with likely readings of the subtexts of these scenes.

4. Reading the vases: the cultural-semantic context

There are few really exceptional examples of the black-figure abduction or recovery of Helen scene-type; there is no extant example in the repertoire of Exekias for example, and even the two scenes by the Amasis Painter might not be considered his best work. This kind of attitude has perhaps led to a neglect of these vases in the scholarship; apart from isolated discussions in works on particular painters, or notes to describe how repetitive these scenes are, their semantic value has largely been ignored.[91] The fact that they occur at all, however, needs to be addressed, and more so because they occur in reasonably significant numbers. This indicates that the subject and the image matrix were meaningful to (a section of) Archaic Athenian society, especially of the latter half of the sixth century when most of the examples are concentrated (560-510). Central to this approach is the premise that mythological narratives on vases have an interest for their audience beyond pure entertainment value and aesthetics. This does not mean that the narrative of Helen recovered by Menelaus is not 'enjoyed' as a good story, nor that vase-paintings would not be appreciated for their draughtsmanship as well. However, their primary interest, I would argue, lies in the availability of myths as paradigms of *human* behaviour, and the use of the vases themselves as objects of contemplation.[92]

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[91] For example Hedreen (1996) only looks at red-figure examples of the recovery of Helen, Dipla (1997) also only gives the black-figure examples a cursory mention.
[92] Osborne (1998: 99) discusses the creation of 'the contemplative viewer'.

The viewing context of the images is therefore paramount. It was established earlier that the types of vessels that these scenes adorned are mostly amphorae. Also included in Ghali-Kahil's two groups (of black-figure abductions and recoveries) there are drinking cups, lekythoi, oinochoae, a pyxis, a pyskter, a krater and a tripod. Apart from the pyxis and the lekythoi, it is clear that the primary viewing context of these vases would have been the male-dominated and elite space of the symposium. Osborne describes the male audience at the symposium as 'experienced and interested in fighting, drinking and sexual conquests'.[93] This could give the impression that the symposium is simply a context for male bonding and debauchery. However, in addition to these aspects, the symposium had other more serious social and political functions. Consisting of *wealthy* and *elite* male members of society, symposia were regular gatherings where the powerful aristocratic members of society could dine, drink, socialise, contemplate life and make personal and political alliances with other such individuals and families. As such the symposium and its discourses reflect the ideologies and interests of the social and political male elite.

Who were these elite members of Archaic Athenian society, the men who were the primary audience for our vases? By the middle of the sixth century, Athens had replaced its aristocratic constitution – literally rule by the aristocrats or well-born (*eupatridai*) – with an oligarchic constitution. Where previously only the hereditary nobility had been eligible for political power, the oligarchy afforded the broader-based property-owning, wealthy elite, more political and social influence. The elite members of Athenian society were therefore both well-born and wealthy, or wealthy and well-connected. That there was constant friction between the rival families and factions is attested by the periodic and opportunistic outbreak of tyrannies in Athens and elsewhere. In Athens the second half of the sixth century is dominated by the tyranny of the Peisistratid family, themselves *eupatridai*.

Whether elite by birth or wealth or tyranny, the sixth-century elite shared an ideology which arose out of the aristocratic way of life and which shows much continuity with 'Homeric values'. This may be linked to the so-called Peisistratid recension; the idea that the Homeric poems were essentially reshaped and canonised into a final form by the Peisistratids for performance at the Panathenaia in the second half of the sixth century.[94] However, regardless of whether the formalising of the text played a role in the popularity of the epics in this era,

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[93] Osborne 1996: 229.
[94] Osborne 1996: 159; Grethlein 2010: 130, and also n. 52.

Van Wees shows much equivalence between the Homeric vocabulary of status and honour and that of Archaic (as well as Classical) society.[95]

Identity is a complex construction, but important to that of the Athenian elite of this era was their participation in wars. Being able to provide the equipment for warfare – and thus to keep Athens in a constant state of preparedness – gained one prestige and status (and also designated one's class after the reforms of Solon). When military opportunities arose, physical prowess and bravery in battle were a certain way of earning respect and status. Conflict and violence were a constant reality, or, according to Van Wees, at least a perceived reality that perpetuated an ideology of violence and competition.[96] Other pursuits such as hunting, horsemanship, and from the mid-sixth century, the pan-Hellenic circuit of athletic games, provided other avenues for aristocratic display and competition. A cursory overview of the subjects and themes of sympotic poetry confirms that the bravado of the battlefield, and heroic values of athletic competition, honour, courage, and beauty dominate the discourses of the symposium.[97] In this context, and alongside such poetry, one needs to question what resonance the story of the recovery of Helen – in the context of the *Ilioupersis* – would have had for its audience.

It seems obvious to state that the Trojan War and its heroes had a special resonance for men who fought in wars. The images are surely pertinent in a general way to men whose status in society was (partially) based on physical strength and military prowess and, it seems, the capacity (or fantasy?) to commit violence – especially when *timē* and *andreia* are at stake. One should not underestimate the role of the heroic myths in the daily lives of the Greeks. As well as being stories from a distant past, the myths were also very much present in the life of the city states, in hero cult, for example, and in the ideology and ethics that the heroes espoused. The myths were relevant to contemporary life, playing what Van Wees calls 'a lively symbolic role in Greek politics'.[98] Lendon cites numerous examples of historical wars fought on the pretext of an affront to Homeric-style honour.[99] Van Wees further argues that while modern scholars may find in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* themes such as 'alienation, death and justice', the ancient audiences would have understood the epics primarily 'as stories of anger and revenge... and have found the poems no less fascinating and meaningful for it'.[100] This idea

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[95] Van Wees 1992: 157-165.
[96] Van Wees 1992: 62.
[97] Lyric and elegiac poetry from the late seventh and sixth centuries, by poets such as Archilochus, Alcaeus, Alcman, Solon and Tyrtaeus. These include the epigrams called 'drinking songs'.
[98] Van Wees 1992: 13.
[99] Lendon 2000: 13-18.
[100] Van Wees 1992: 126.

hones in on one of the key subtexts of the black-figure recovery of Helen images. For their sixth-century sympotic audience they are images not just imbued with the ethos of war, but specifically with its necessary concomitant emotions of anger and revenge.

What is sometimes overlooked is that the iconography of these images is hostile. While it was possible to motivate for the presence of armour and weaponry in the recovery (or abduction for that matter), in many examples of this scene the amount of force used seems excessive, especially given that their target is one unarmed and unresisting woman. The fact that the helmet is worn down covering Menelaus' face is significant. Greek art in general tends to privilege the face,[101] and because of this, as Boardman points out, the Archaic black-figure artist often tries to avoid obscuring human features if he can, even in a battle context.[102] In black-figure fight scenes two warriors may even fight with their helmets pushed back onto the top of their heads to avoid this. Contrary to this trend therefore, the helmet worn down is surely a deliberate attempt to render the figure faceless and, in doing so, more menacing. The measure of force used in these scenes is a potent reminder of the measure of harm done, not just to Menelaus, but to all Greeks and to any man who may have suffered insult to his honour by similar means. It equally calls to mind the necessary anger that can lead to the exacting of revenge and the restoration of honour. This act re-establishes the *andreia* of Menelaus, a crucial aspect of his masculinity.

In some cases the sword itself is very large (fig. 2.4) or positioned within an inch of Helen's body (fig.2.10). I agree with Hedreen who, following Kunze, asserts that the drawn sword is one of 'the most definitive feature[s] of the iconography of the recovery of Helen'.[103] The phallic overtones of the sword, pointed at Helen, should also be investigated. Links between war, violence and sexuality in ancient societies (as well as modern ones) have been demonstrated, however an opposing view finds that these links are overstated.[104] In art and in culture in general, the psychological interpretations of Freud, *et al.* have filtered into mainstream modern thinking to the extent that, as Cohen points out, the question asked by interpreters is not "when is a weapon phallic?" but "when is a weapon not phallic?" The result is that modern readings of ancient images can tend to regard all weapons as phallic symbols. While she agrees that fetishistic associations may well have been made by ancient viewers, she argues this response is not automatic (a weapon is not intrinsically sexual). The association could certainly be activated under particular conditions.

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[101] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 106.
[102] Boardman 1974: 199.
[103] Hedreen 1996: 165; Hedreen 2001: 41; Kunze 1950: 164-66.
[104] A good summary of these views can be found in Cohen 2010: 175ff.

Interpretations that imply that in every act of war there is at least the intention to commit rape, can also take the connection between sex and violence to the extreme. Yet rape and pillage were common occurrences in ancient (and modern) warfare, and a sexual metaphor for war remains convincing on many levels. A typical result of the taking of a city, as attested in the Homeric and other texts, was the 'taking' of the women, in a sexual sense as well as a literal one.[105] The double meaning is implicit in the Greek '*harparge*', as it is in English 'take'. Rape and violence against the women was certainly the outcome of several side campaigns and expeditions during the Trojan War,[106] as well as its final outcome, as told in the *Trojan Women*.[107] In the case of the recovery image matrix, the sack of Troy itself may be implied as a 'sexual' act, however the recovery of Helen by her husband, Menelaus, emphatically is. His goal is to reclaim his wife's sexuality and in this context, I would argue, the sword unequivocally implies sexual domination and a display of virility through force.

The sword here also works well as the kind of 'significant object' described by Mackay in her discussion of sixth-century poetry and vase painting.[108] The significant object is included to evoke more than a simple narrative element, but it simultaneously creates an emotional response through a kind of 'double exposure' or palimpsest created through the viewer's experience of the story and its issues.[109] Gombrich's statement that visual narrative art does not aim 'to tell a story but to allow those who already know the story to re-experience it', seems especially pertinent here. In this particular case Menelaus may currently be using his sword to recover his wife; however, the audience knows that he has also used this sword to wreck total devastation upon the Trojans who dishonoured him. The city has been obliterated, the men butchered, the women and children enslaved. This ideal of total annihilation fits comfortably within the ethical framework of the Homeric hero; however its use is only justifiable when proportionate to the crime and the particular set of circumstances. The Greeks annihilate the Trojans because the fighting had escalated to that level: the demands for return and compensation had been rejected.[110]

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[105] For example Hektor's premonition *(Il.* 6. 448-45) and Priam's fears for his city (*Il.* 22.62-8) pointed out by Van Wees 1992: 186, 384 note 46.

[106] Van Wees 1992: 210-213 on Achilleus' raids.

[107] Cohen 2010: 181.

[108] Mackay (2002: 55) adopts this term from Griffin 1980: 1-49 and applies it to the visual tradition. Her definition is also influenced by Foley's *semata* (1999: 20).

[109] Gombrich 1982: 88, cited in Connelly 1993: 106.

[110] Van Wees 1992: 186. Another example of extreme responses to injury is Achilles' reaction to the death of Patroklos.

The reciprocity implicit in this act is more poignantly rendered in Lydos' *Ilioupersis* scene (fig.2.13) where the extinction of the house of Priam is placed alongside the recovery of Helen by Menelaus.[111] Whether the viewers of this vase would find such juxtaposition unsettling in the same way that later audiences were surely probed about the correct extent of retribution – and the right measure of violence, as demonstrated by Borg[112] – is difficult to say. However, the fact that we only have one such early (extant) example juxtaposing these two acts may suggest that even the mid-sixth-century audience were slightly uncomfortable when confronted with the graphic extent of the violence. In the world of the hero the theft of his wife and his treatment by the Trojans did require Menelaus to take appropriate measures. The violent response shown in the popular black-figure recovery scene types is measured while being vengeful enough and emotionally evocative.

This does not necessarily mean that the sixth-century aristocratic male viewer would actually have recourse to his own sword as a way of settling honour disputes. It is generally agreed that the actual practice of carrying a sword to defend oneself – and one's honour – on the spot had died out already by around 650.[113] However, despite the abatement of the practice in reality, there is evidence that the fantasy of blood revenge remained, even in Classical times. Lendon cites the fourth-century example of how the kin of a murdered Athenian man would carry spears at his funeral to evoke a promise of vengeance 'even if the revenge would take place in the courts'.[114] Both Van Wees and Lendon convincingly argue that while Archaic society had become less violent in actuality than the world reflected in the Homeric epics, the ideology of violence, vengeance and competition for status had not declined at all.[115] To support this they cite various instances of both personal antagonism, as well as examples of communities warring against each other on account of 'insult', 'damage' to honour and retribution. The paradigm of Menelaus retrieving Helen through such an act (mobilising the whole of Achaea) is surely a kind of 'wish-fulfilling, idealised version of everyday private conflict'.[116] The violence inherent in these images makes sense against such a horizon of experience and expectation.

What issues are embedded then, in the figure of Helen? In all examples of the scene Helen is being escorted by an armed male, who sometimes threatens her directly, sometimes not. In the face of this show of violence, Helen shows little emotional response. She does not entreat her attacker, though gestures of entreaty or other reactive gestures are well-practiced by

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[111] Mackay 2002: 62.
[112] Borg 2006: 240-242.
[113] Van Wees 1992: 161 and Lendon 2000: 13.
[114] Lendon 2000: 13.
[115] Van Wees 1992: 151-152 and Lendon 2000: 13.
[116] Van Wees 1992: 251.

Archaic vase-painters.[117] Consistently, too, she is always under male control; Helen is always the object rather than the subject of the scene. She is therefore neither active nor reactive, but either passively rooted to her spot opposite Menelaus, or following in step after him.

Even heroic women, according to the discourses of the symposium and the epics, ultimately have little agency or power, but must be content to be moved around from one man's control to another. Like Osborne's *korai*, which he reads as 'go-betweens', and 'objects of exchange',[118] the passive figure of Helen in these scenes reflects her position in the epic world as a commodity, an item of movable property. She is moved from Sparta to Troy and back again through the actions of two men. Here, she is being reclaimed like the item of property that she is explicitly described as in the literary sources. Women in ancient Athenian society were theoretically perceived in this light, as moveable items of property that moved from one *oikos* to another.[119] As mobile items, however, the position of women in the *oikos* is somewhat precarious; they are not 'fixtures' but can be divorced and returned, and are even susceptible to being beaten if they transgress the social codes.[120] Fisher[121] and Llewellyn-Jones[122] have argued that domestic violence against women (and children and slaves) was likely to be commonplace in ancient Athens, especially in situations where male honour was at stake. It is likely that ancient viewers would also see in Menelaus' sword the wish to punish his transgressive wife.

There are several significant aspects to Helen's iconography in this scene. One is the fact that she wears a veil which covers her head – but not her face – and which she holds to the front of her body. She looks past her veil directly at her aggressor; she does not avert her eyes downwards or look away. The direct gaze is an important signifier of meaning, both in ancient society, but also in the imagery on vases. Cairns shows how the eyes can be expressive of different emotions, and that the meaning of the gaze is complex and situational.[123] In ancient Greek society, a direct gaze – the making of eye contact – can be regarded as both negative and positive; it can on the one had be respectful, but on the other it can be regarded as invasive, transgressive and disrespectful. This depends on the situation and the status of those who are doing the looking. This situational approach means there is no unambiguous reading of such an interaction. In general, Greek women (and children) should avert their eyes in

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[117] Stansbury-O'Donnell 2006: *passim*.
[118] Osborne 1998: 84.
[119] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 173.
[120] On the tentativeness of the woman's position in the marital home see Pomeroy 1995:114-115; 119.
[121] Fisher 1998: 77.
[122] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 166-167.
[123] Cairns 2005.

relation to adult males as a sign of *aidōs* (modesty), and so Helen's direct look at her husband could be regarded, in this context, as *anaideia.* However, adds Cairns, a direct look can also be 'assertive of one's status as an equal or as a worthy antagonist'.[124]

The importance of the eyes in erotics lends another potential meaning to the gaze in these scenes. A mutual gaze between lovers is significant since eye contact was thought to be an active force in workings of love and desire.[125] However, since the helmet is worn properly down over the warrior's face, his eyes are not clearly visible to the viewer of vase, and this may mute the reference to an erotic visual exchange in these black-figure examples. In my opinion, there is no obvious evocation of an erotic gaze here, though there are other traces of the erotic nature of the woman who is being accosted in these scenes.

The veil gesture is one such potentially erotic sign. It is tempting to interpret the gesture in narrative terms; as the artist pinpointing the moment when Helen revealed her extraordinary beauty to Menelaus in the context of the recovery, and thereby saved herself from his sword. However, such simplistic interpretation of the image matrix of Helen with her veil, faced by her aggressor denies the polyvalence of both the veil and the veil-gesture. These merit further investigation.

Whether Athenian women in reality wore veils outside the *oikos* in the sixth century is contested by scholars. Mackay suggests that the practice of wearing the veil may have already been outmoded, but that such 'formulaic gesture' in vase painting could preserve an older custom.[126] Reeder proposes that the idea that women were veiled outside the confines of their home 'may rather reflect the contemporary mores of past generations of scholars than historical reality'.[127] The visual record in fact gives an inconsistent picture, presenting many women in various degrees of veiling, but also many who are not (obviously) veiled in many outdoor or social contexts. However, in his comprehensive study of ancient Greek veiling, Llewellyn-Jones convincingly argues for the ubiquitous practice of female veiling across all periods in ancient Greek society.[128] He also demonstrates that, as in modern veil cultures, in ancient Greece, the veil had a multitude of associations, complexities and nuances.[129]

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[124] *Ibid*. 131-132.
[125] *Ibid*. 132.
[126] Mackay 1993: 106.
[127] Reeder 1995: 124.
[128] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: *passim*.
[129] *Ibid*.: 155.

One aspect of the veil that has perhaps been underplayed is its likely use as an icon of status. The reflection of social position through accoutrement is a long-established human practice; this is particularly so in aristocratic Greece where clothing and adornment in general became a means of conspicuous consumption.[130] The perceived excesses in lifestyle led to Solon's sumptuary legislation that banned women in particular from wearing more than three layers of outer-garments when they left the house.[131] The specific use of the veil as an indicator of rank and wealth by Athenians cannot be proven securely, however, in many modern veil societies, only women of high rank veil. As Llewellyn-Jones points out, veils are perfectly suited to display of leisure status since they are impractical garments and by and large superfluous in terms of basic human needs.[132] They therefore work well as items of 'self-aggrandisement' since they signify the wearer as someone who does not have to labour, i.e. as a member of the leisure class. Implicit in such ideology therefore is the display of elite values and status, and viewed in conjunction with other aspects of Helen's clothing in these scenes, the veil may take this connotation.

It is difficult to appreciate the extent that the female figures in these black-figure scenes were embellished with added colour, since we know well that details in added white, red or other coloured paint are often ill-preserved. One can compare the contemporary Attic *korai* to these Helen figures; Stieber's study highlights the meticulous attention paid to the *korai's* details of clothing, hair, jewellery, and footwear, which she suggests (together with stance and gesture, and corroborated by literary sources) may have highlighted qualities of 'noble birth and good breeding'.[133] The black-figure amphora by the Amasis Painter in Munich (fig. 2.1 and fig. 2.19) does bear intricate details of clothing, hair, and jewellery. The clothing depicted includes a broadly striped veil and a striped *peplos* with incised borders, an overfold with large and small incised crosses and a skirt that is also enlivened by an added red cross-pattern (not highly visible in ordinary photographs but discernable in the close-up, fig. 2.19). In other examples the fabric is also embellished in similar ways, and it can be surmised that the painter is drawing attention, within the constraints of his art-form, to the vibrancy and intricacy of the cloth used and, in many cases, its abundance (e.g. fig. 2.16 and fig. 2.17). Further, in fig. 2.19, the Amasis Painter has paid particular attention to the details of Helen's hair, fillet and jewellery, adding a hoop-style earring with dangling detail, and lines that indicate a necklace and bracelet. To an ancient Greek eye of the sixth century surely these draped, veiled and embellished figures of

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[130] *Ibid.*: 136-139.
[131] *Ibid.*: 139. Plu. *Life of Solon* 21.
[132] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 135-136.
[133] Stieber 2004: 120.

Helen would evoke her position as the quintessential nobleman's wife, and, in this context the mere presence of the veil could also be a signal of her social importance and value.

Scholars have also rightly highlighted that the veil probably has general connections with marriage and married status, though they do not agree on whether the veil and the veil-gesture in particular always specifically point back to the so-called *anakalypteria* – the ritual unveiling of the bride during the wedding ceremony.[134] Llewellyn-Jones has shown that the conflation of *anakalypteria* and what scholars described as the *anakalypsis* (unveiling) gesture is dubious, arguing that the gesture could just as easily be read as *veiling*.[135] However he does not deny a more general connection between the veil and marriage. The veil may therefore point in a general way back to the wedding and hint at the idea that through this recovery, Helen will return to her rightful place of being Menelaus' wife.[136] The icon of the veil and the gesture are not uniquely associated with marriage since both are also used in contexts where there is no overt nuptial allusion,[137] however a more generalised erotic connotation can certainly be argued for.

The ideology of veiling also has close connections with the emotional fabric of *aidōs, sophrosyne* and *timē* and, through them, the preservation of the proper social order. I would agree with Ferrari that whatever the actual contemporary social practice, the depiction of a woman wearing a veil over her head made some reference to her *aidōs* – it has an encoded meaning. As she explains, '*aidōs* is structured by the image of the cloak in both verbal and visual expressions'[138] and that '…the enveloping mantle expresses the particular brand of *sophrosyne* appropriate to females, marked by permanent *aidōs*'.[139] This feminine ideal of *aidōs* included modesty (*sophrosyne*), sexual unavailability, and the protection of the *timē* and integrity of the *oikos*.[140] And for a wife, this meant especially the preservation of the sanctity of her husband's marriage bed. Cairns discusses how the behaviour of the female members of the Homeric household – wives (Penelope, Helen, Clytemnestra), daughters (Nausicaa) and even slaves (in the *oikos* of Odysseus) – affect the *timē* of their superiors, especially that of the head of the household.[141] Their (sexual) fidelity in particular is required in the epics to maintain

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[134] This is a long discussion that is entered into by various scholars. The debate is well summarised by Llewellyn-Jones (2003: 102-104).
[135] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 98-114.
[136] Mackay 1993: 60.
[137] Dipla 1997: 120-121; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 104.
[138] Ferrari 2002: 7-8.
[139] *Ibid.*: 60.
[140] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 122; 155-188; Cairns 1993: 120-125.
[141] Cairns 1993: 120-125.

social order, and disregard for these sexual protocols requires the male head of the household to take action to restore his *timē*.

In this light, Helen's lack of respect for her and Menelaus' marriage bed both potentially leads him into disrepute and figures her in the precarious position of the unreliable wife. To what extent then could the veil as attached to Helen be used to evoke her shame, or her lack of *aidōs*? Is she primarily being shown up as the woman whose *anaideia* brings men's honour into question, and is about to be violently punished for it? Helen, with her veil, standing opposite her aggressor is a complex image matrix that sends multiple messages, and we must be open to the various readings set against the backdrop of sixth-century Athenian discourses. This much we know: Helen was famed for being much married – she had 3 husbands – and also as Austin describes her, for being 'the woman with no shame', a woman who, according to most sources acted outside the expectations of her gender, and certainly outside the role of a wife.[142] In this light, the cloak itself surely acts as a reminder of *aidōs*, which all women – especially wives – should possess, and which the audience of this particular story suspect Helen may or may not possess. If we are to interpret the gesture itself as *unveiling* – as one of display – it may therefore draw attention towards Helen's alleged lack of shame or modesty. This figure of a 'flirtatious' Helen could then stand as a visual equivalent of Euripides' frivolous and parading Helen in the *Trojan Women*. Though this scathing portrayal is later than the images by a century, traces of a shameful or blameworthy Helen do however lurk in the Homeric and lyric texts. Homer's Helen famously calls herself κυνώπιδος (the 'dog-eyed' or 'dog-faced').[143] Whether this dog-reference should be translated as 'the shameless one' is moot, however it certainly is intended to be pejorative and raises issues of *aidōs*, or its lack.[144] She also describes herself as *stugeron* 'hateful'[145] and as the one who (with Paris) caused great suffering to Greeks and Trojans alike.[146]

In the *Odyssey* Book 4 the domestic and rehabilitated Helen is undermined, even if slightly, by two stories narrated to Telemachus – the first told by Helen and the second by Menelaus. Helen's own story relates how, when Odysseus infiltrated Troy she saw through his disguise and after questioning him on matters of Greek strategy, she plotted with him to help the Greeks as 'captive turned double-agent'.[147] By saying that she had already had a change of

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[142] Austin 1994: 26.
[143] Helen twice calls herself κυνώπιδος (*Il.* 3. 180 and at *Od*.4.145) but at *Il.* 6.344 and 356 she also calls herself κυνὸς (dog). On Helen's self-castigation through the dog-insult see Graver 1995.
[144] Graver 1995: 49-54; see also Cairns 1993: 124 on the dog metaphor as related to Clytemnestra.
[145] *Il.* 3.404.
[146] For example at *Il.* 3.100.
[147] Austin 1994: 80. This takes place at *Od.* 4.240ff. Gumpert's description of her engaging in 'a bit of public relations for herself' also seems apt (2001: 38).

heart by this stage reveals, however, that Helen's allegiance had once lain with Troy. Furthermore, Menelaus immediately answers the Helen-loyal-to-Greece story with a Helen that is nearly Greece's undoing. Menelaus relates how Helen almost penetrated the ruse of the Trojan horse by calling out the names of the Greek heroes in their wives' voices.[148] Menelaus quickly adds that a *daimon* must have caused Helen's treachery here, but some damage is done to the characterisation of Helen by these two stories. Both touch on the ambiguity that Helen's position at Troy evokes, and, in particular, the anxiety that her allegiance could in fact go either way. The potential treachery of Helen, the Helen who was once loyal to Troy, even if it was through the machinations of Aphrodite, in my mind undercuts the presentation of Helen the faithful (though prodigal) wife returned to Sparta in the *Odyssey*.[149]

Though the Homeric epics do not engage in outright blame for Helen,[150] it is argued convincingly by Graver and others that these epics do harbour the traces of an alternative and more vituperative contemporary tradition: kitharoidic narrative.[151] Graver argues that the hexameter tradition against Helen is hinted at in Hesiod, and asserts that kitharoidic narratives (i.e. strongly emotional, dramatic and partisan lyric poems) probably existed prior to Stesichorus.[152] According to Graver the epic Helen is more gently defined against this kitharoidic tradition which is highly critical of Helen.[153] The possibility of an early pejorative portrayal of Helen is significant, since it is often assumed (by Hofmeyer for example) that the negative portrayal of Helen as rendered in Attic tragedy, postdates Homer.[154]

The ambiguity of Helen's *aidōs* (does she possess it or not?) in these scenes as well as the ambiguity present in the direct gaze and in the veil gesture (is it veiling or unveiling?) is surely key to reading their emotional subtexts. Llewellyn-Jones points out that difficulty in deciding whether the gesture refers to an unveiling or to a veiling is because, most often it does not unequivocally evoke either. In this, then, is surely the precise value of the sign. It evokes the tension between what is covered and exposed, invisible and conspicuous, modest and seductive, reliable and unreliable; all of which are issues of concern in the ancient Greek concept of fallible womanhood. Hesiod's portrayal of women as a necessary evil[155] and

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[148] Gumpert (2001: 39) describes this act as an 'uncanny ventriloquism' that is surely better associated with magic or divinity than human skill and therefore emphasises her otherworldly nature.

[149] Also Eumaeus' comment at *Od.* 14.79ff where he wishes that Helen and all like her should have died.

[150] According to Graver, blame is not the typical *modus operandi* of epic. The epic poet adopts a (mostly) objective rhetorical position (Graver 1995: 58).

[151] Graver 1995: 56.

[152] *Ibid*.

[153] *Ibid*.

[154] Hofmeyer 1977: 5-6, as cited by Graver 1995: 55.

[155] Hes. *Th.* 590ff; *Op.* 53-104.

Semonides' diatribe against wives[156] demonstrates this particular (male) view, but it is one that is countered by more positive accounts of womanhood in poems such as the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.[157]

I would take this argument a step further and suggest that the veil and the gesture should be read as one unit; as a semiotic package that is not intended to render a process but rather to simultaneously evoke these complex attributes of women as epitomised by Helen. The veil and veil-gesture work together to focus attention on just what is at stake in this story. What lies beneath the veil and is in perpetual jeopardy is her famous and bewitching beauty (as emphasised by the accoutrements of dress and adornment), and her latent sexuality, over which men go to war. A comparison between the Helens on the black-figure vases and the Archaic *korai* is again instructive. These painted figures are also robust and buxom in a way that may evoke the same kind of latent sexuality Stieber reads in the well-shaped hips, buttocks and sturdy legs of the *korai* – all ideal physical traits for childbearing.[158] This beautiful and erotic Helen is, despite her failings, an object worth fighting for, a prize possession worth claiming or reclaiming, an item of ultimate prestige.

This set of black-figure scenes therefore evokes and displays several sixth-century social attitudes towards anger, revenge, modesty, shame, honour and status, and embody the (male) audience's anxiety over the threat that the seductive and beautiful woman (all womanhood) poses to the social order, especially if she is lacking in *aidōs*. In addition, it can be stated that the reunion between Menelaus and Helen as shown in these black-figure scenes, *is* appropriately called a 'recovery' by the standards of the modern English word, in that they do reflect his retrieval of a (prestige) item of property. However, two final points need to be made. Firstly, the category of woman as property and possession does not exclude a human relationship from being at stake – in the narrative and in 'real life'. Roisman argues that for Homer's Helen, to be both a possession and captive at Troy, does not mean that she was unloved,[159] and Lefkowitz discusses loving marital and family relationships in Athenian society.[160]

Lastly, the shaping of the story on these specific vases shows how particular discourses are emphasised because they are appropriate to the *sympotic* context. Osborne says that we

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[156] Semon. *On Women* 7.
[157] Osborne 1996: 227.
[158] Stieber 2004: 137.
[159] Roisman 2006: 5.
[160] Lefkowitz 1983: 67-82.

should differentiate what he calls 'the view from the symposium' from other kinds of discourse; the 'manly' forum of the symposium had its own rhetoric and ways of looking at things.[161] Just looking at the topics of other scenes on the vases is instructive. Of the vases selected for study, Herakles reverse scenes are most popular, particularly scenes from the labours where Herakles appears with Eurystheus, the Amazons, the Nemean lion, and Cerberus. Other scenes from heroic myth, such as Theseus and the Minotaur and Achilles and Troilos, as well as athletes, warriors arming, chariot and fight scenes are also typically combined with the scenes of the recovery of Helen. These subjects clearly engage with similar 'masculine' and 'heroic' values that are reflected in the discourse of the recovery scenes.

The mythological paradigm of Helen's recovery as viewed in a sympotic context held a particular range of meanings for this audience. However, one need only look at Sappho's fragment 16, also a product of the Archaic period, for evidence of another point of view on the story, and one that appears to be far more sensitive to the experience of Helen. In particular, casting Helen as the active lover – rather than the object of love – is both bold and contradictory to the 'male' sympotic tradition (as preserved in these vases and Alcaeus' two fragments). Osborne aptly concludes that the same viewers of the vases may even, in other contexts, have had other views on the story.[162] Thus awareness of the viewing context allows for nuanced, rather than a one-dimensional readings of these black-figure scenes.

5. Summary

In setting out to investigate the likely range of readings that these black-figure scenes may have evoked for their audience, the preceding study has established that the image matrix showing a panoplied hoplite attacking or threatening a woman with a sword could feasibly have evoked the narrative of the Recovery of Helen. This reading is, in my opinion, more likely than the abduction by Paris, for which there is no clear iconographic or contextual evidence to support such an interpretation. The code is a successful one. However its meanings and subtexts are more deeply embedded in its ability to evoke and display human patterns of behaviour and their concomitant emotions – especially anger (*cholos*) and *aidōs* – both of which are of crucial importance to the sixth-century sympotic audience.

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[161] Osborne 1996: 227.
[162] *Ibid.*: 227.

Fig. 2.1: Type B belly amphora by the Amasis Painter, Munich 1383 (J.75), c. 550

Fig. 2.2: Type B belly amphora by the Amasis Painter, Great Britain private collection, ex Riehen, Hoek, c. 540

Fig. 2.3: Neck-amphora, Florence 3777, c. 550-540

Fig. 2.4: Neck-amphora, Paris 10236 *bis,* c. 550-525

Fig. 2.5: Fragment of an amphora, Oxford G 137.54, c. 550-525

Fig. 2.6: Fragment of an amphora, Bollingen, private collection, c. 550-525

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 160.a

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 160.b

Fig. 2.7: Lekythos by the Amasis Painter, Athens 404 (CC 674)

Fig. 2.8: Type B amphora, Würzburg L 247, c. 540-530.

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 101.2

Image source: *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 69

Fig. 2.9: Amphora**,** Munich 1415 (J.380), c. 510

Fig. 2.10: Type B amphora by the Painter of the Vatican Mourner, Vatican 16589, c. 540

Image source: *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' cat. 78

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 43.2

Fig. 2.11: Neck-amphora**,** Berlin 1842, c. 525

Fig. 2.12: Neck-amphora**,** Florence 3777, c. 550-540

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 297

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 293

Fig. 2.13: Ilioupersis scene (drawing) on an amphora by Lydos, Berlin F 1685, c. 510

Image source: Boardman *ABFV*: fig. 67

Fig. 2.14: Neck-amphora, New York 56.171.18 (ex coll. Hearst 9511), c. 540

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 305

Fig. 2.15: Type B belly amphora, Once Peek, c. 550-540   **Fig. 2.16:** Pottery tripod, Paris F151, c. 525

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 43 *bis* 2   Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 80.2

Fig. 2.17: Neck amphora, London B244, c. 520   **Fig. 2.18:** Neck amphora, Florence 3845, c. 525

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 323   Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 343

Fig. 2.19: Type B belly amphora**,** San Simeon, 5443 (ex coll. Hearst SSW 9945), c. 520-510

Fig. 2.20: Detail of Helen, type B belly amphora by the Amasis Painter, Munich 1383 (J.75), c. 550.

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 353

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 2.21: Hydria shoulder scene, London BM 310, c. 520-510

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 30

CHAPTER 3

VARIETY AND ELOQUENCE: HELEN'S RECOVERY C. 520-480

The traditional nexus between the late Archaic and early Classical periods in Greek history is set by modern scholars at 480. Such a division is, of course, artificial and perhaps this particular juncture – the date of the second Persian invasion of Greece – is overstated. One cannot deny, however, that in the course of history there are 'rupture points', as Raaflaub aptly puts it; the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries, for a number of reasons, ushers in a new political, cultural and artistic milieu.[1] In vase-painting, too, a significant change occurs in the final decades of the sixth century: the red-figure technique is born.[2] The experimentative spirit of the era is perhaps best epitomised by the artistic rivalry and the ethos of competition observed in the work of the 'Pioneer' group, which is described by Boardman as probably 'the first conscious movement [in Western Art], a camaraderie of artists'.[3] This new approach brought new iconographic possibilities, scene types and new ways of rendering old stories, and it may also have provided different opportunities for the depiction of emotion.

The controversy around the dating of late Archaic pottery – particularly red figure – was mentioned in Chapter 1, where I explained that the traditional chronology is to be consciously retained in this thesis. More crucial than precise dating of the vessels is their relative dating; in this current chapter it is important that the vases traditionally dated 'late Archaic', c. 520–480, represent a transitional phase in technique and iconography. Early Attic red-figure depictions of Helen's abduction and recovery drawn from this 'transitional' era are telling. On the one hand, there is a conspicuous lack of scenes that show the abduction of Helen. Of approximately 115 vases that may show the abduction in the *LIMC* 'Hélène' entry, only 3 Attic vases showing the abduction fall into the period 520-480.[4] This dearth correlates with the probable dearth of abduction of Helen scenes in the sixth century, observed in the previous

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[1] Raaflaub 2006: 395.

[2] Van Wees 2009: 455; Williams 1991: *passim;* and Boardman 1975: 11.

[3] Boardman 1975: 29.

[4] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' *IV, Enlèvement d'Hélène par Pâris; Pâris et Hélène à Sparte*: 515-533.

chapter. The recovery of Helen by Menelaus, on the other hand, seems manifestly more popular with its audience, numbering about 20 extant vessels.

These statistics are significant yet they have thus far gone uncommented and unexplained. Why this particular abduction does *not* seem to be a popular theme in vase-painting of the late sixth century (or for most of the fifth century in fact) while other abductions are, and why the recovery of Helen *does* seem to interest the Attic audience of this time, is crucial to address. Choices and absences are both highly informative. The decision regarding which narrative to depict and which to ignore reflects the interests of the artist and his audience. The current chapter will therefore focus on the recovery of Helen from 520-480 to explore the strategies employed by the early red-figure artists to render this scene type, and in particular, the emotional iconography and discourses that emerge during this transitional era. This chapter will introduce iconography and emotional vocabulary that is then developed by the painters of the mid- to late fifth century. The fifth century painters and their works will be investigated in Chapter 4. The absence of the abduction will then be interrogated in Chapters 5 and 6, when the few exceptional abduction of Helen scenes from the late Archaic and Classical eras are discussed and explored as revealing anomalies.

1. Investigating the vases

The recovery scenes from the late Archaic period in Athens now frequent a wider repertory of vase shapes than the black-figured predecessors, where the dominant shape was the amphora. The early red-figure shapes surveyed here include a stamnos, amphorae, a hydria, a plate and numerous cups (both skyphoi and kylixes). This range of shapes still indicates that the primary viewing context of the vessels was the symposium; the aristocratic, homosocial and androcentric space that crafts and espouses a particular kind of discourse.

The approaches adopted to depict Helen's recovery in this era can adequately be explored through an excursus on seven vase-painters. Three vessels attributed to Oltos,[5] a skyphos by Makron,[6] a skyphos painted by the Triptolemos Painter,[7] a cup in the Manner of the Foundry Painter,[8] a fragmentary cup by Onesimos, previously in Malibu but now in the Villa Guilia,[9] a

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[5] Paris G 3. 1618, *ARV*[2] 53.1, *Add* 79, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 49.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 237; Malibu 80.AE.154, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 336 *bis*; Odessa 21972, *ARV* 67.137, Kahil-Ghali 1955: pl. 82.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 310.
[6] Boston 13.186, *ARV*[2] 458.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4 and 48, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 166 and 243.
[7] Berlin 1970.9, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 246.
[8] Tarquinia RC 5291 *ARV*[2] 405.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 56.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 244.
[9] Previously Malibu 85.AE.385.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 277, now Rome, Villa Giulia 121110, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 277.

hydria by the Tyszkiewicz Painter[10] and a stamnos by the Painter of the Munich Amphora[11] have been selected for discussion because together they reflect the spectrum of possibilities that were newly injected into the repertoire. In turn, their contributions set the platform for further developments on these themes in the Classical period.

Previous studies of recovery of Helen scenes have tended to isolate the individual scenes not only from their primary context of reception, but even from their actual 'fabric', i.e. the vase.[12] The previous chapter briefly introduced the relevance of 'the other side' of the vase in exploring the significance of the content of the scenes to their sympotic audience. A synergetic or holistic approach to painted vessels can certainly be argued for in Attic black-figure vase-painting (particularly in the case of specific painters as I have previously argued).[13] However, it is with the early and pioneering red-figure painters that this approach becomes a manifest strategy. Not considering the other picture fields of the vase potentially dilutes the effect of each piece considerably; it ignores the vessel's dialogic possibilities. The variety of strategies used to depict the recovery – and particularly its emotional discourses – are often enhanced and elucidated through contemplation of other images on these vessels.

The last section of this chapter will therefore also specifically address, through a few examples, the way in which the emotional discourse becomes more effective when scenes are read in conjunction with the other scenes on the vessels. This contemplation of the other picture fields connects the modern interpreter more closely with the vessels' reception by their original viewers. In the context of the symposium, pottery vessels were part of the luxurious furnishings required to create the ambiance of affluence essential to the sympotic ethos. Furthermore, participants were expected to engage in their surroundings as part of ritualised sympotic behaviour; reflecting on the well-made couches, cushions, decorations and even the physical architecture of the *andron* was protocol.[14] Symposiasts would surely have engaged with all the painted scenes on their dinner and drinking ware, admiring and reflecting upon them in various ways.

On vases selected for study in this chapter we find, for example, the explicit pairing of narratologically connected scenes, similarity or coherence of theme, or the juxtaposition of scenes that comment on each other by way of their complete antithesis of character, story or

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[10] Munich 2425 (J 283), *ARV*[2] 294.65, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 87.3, *LIMC* IV 64.
[11] Tarquinia RC 2460, *ARV*[2] 246.9, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 312.
[12] Ghali-Kahil 1955; Clement 1958; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène'; Hedreen 1996; Dipla 1997.
[13] Masters 1996; see also Mackay, Masters & Harris 1998.
[14] Murray 2009: 516; Lissarrague 1990: 94.

mood. This diversity of strategy also mirrors a diversity of approach to the subject matter: the recovery of Helen and their concomitant subtexts, issues and, especially, emotions. All of these ideas – experimentation, 'the other side' of the vase and the sympotic context – are important to the current chapter.

2. Investigating the iconography

The painters of this era experiment with a variety of configurations for representing Helen's recovery by her first husband, Menelaus. Three main scene matrices emerge: the 'pursuit' of Helen, the 'reversal', where Menelaus changes his mind about killing Helen, and the so-called 'escort' scene.

2.1. Pursuit

The first inscribed and therefore certain example of the recovery of Helen in Attic vase-painting is preserved on a Nikosthenic amphora of about 520, potted by Pamphaios and painted by Oltos (fig. 3.1).[15] Menelaus runs from left to right at Helen (both their names are inscribed), threatening her with a drawn sword. This scene type is aptly described by scholars as Helen's 'pursuit'[16] or 'pursuit and flight'.[17] In the Oltos scene, Menelaus wears a Corinthian helmet, greaves and a metal bell cuirass with short pleated tunic underneath it. Though the look of Menelaus is essentially continuous with the hostile hoplite in the black-figure recovery scenes discussed in Chapter 4, there are three important differences to the image matrix that sets this highly expressive scene apart. Firstly, the scene has newly acquired a dynamism that is not present in the more static black-figure scenes. Menelaus launches forward towards Helen, his legs are positioned wide apart and his knees are bent to show the swiftness of movement. The position of his feet is echoed by Helen's stance, she is also "on the run", so to speak. This movement invigorates the scene, creating both a sense of urgency and drama as the moment of recovery unfolds.

Secondly Menelaus now not only threatens Helen with his sword but he grabs her by the wrist, making physical contact. Black-figure recovery scenes often show Menelaus grabbing hold of Helen's veil to lead her away, but seldom show him physically grabbing hold of her person. An exception is an amphora painted by the Edinburgh Painter, where the warrior does grasp hold

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[15] Paris G 3. 1618, *ARV²* 53.1, *Add* 79, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 49.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 237.
[16] Hedreen 1996: 156.
[17] Dipla 1997: 121; Clement 1958: 55.

of the woman, though it is her hand rather than her wrist that he holds.[18] The physical grasping of Helen's wrist has both dramatic and symbolic implications.

The wrist gesture is perhaps familiar to its audience from its typical use in marriage scenes, though many of these scenes are later than this vase. The earliest use of this gesture – termed *cheir' epi karpo* (hand over wrist)[19] – in a clearly identifiable marriage scene is on a late sixth century fragmentary cup by the painter Euphronios, one of the Pioneer group.[20] This scene shows Peleus sedately leading Thetis (inscribed) by *holding* the wrist, not *grasping* it in a forceful manner. The holding of the wrist nevertheless has connotations of force and its origins of use in the bridal procession may well point back to the notion of the Greek marriage as a kind of abduction and 'taming'.[21] It is thought to symbolise the new bride's submission to her husband, as implicit in the Greek verb for marriage, *damazo,* which carried the connotations of 'subjugate' and 'tame'.[22] The marriage reference works well here in the recovery scene in that it both points back to the original marriage of Menelaus and Helen, and therefore to the marriage bond, as well as having the immediate purpose of signifying the (re)claiming of the bride by her (proper) husband. The gesture and the urgent stance of both protagonists also highlight the drama implicit in this moment, and accentuate the immediate danger that she finds herself in.

Thirdly, there is a distinct difference in the state of Helen. In this scene she has lost the veil that was so central to the black-figure scenes of the preceding era. Her hair is also dishevelled and wild. Carson describes how loose hair can be both a sign of a maenad or prostitute[23] but unbound hair can equally be the sign of a *parthenos*; adult women tend to wear their hair bound in a bun or a chignon.[24] In keeping with the gesture of taming (the grasping of the wrist), Helen is here presented as a woman in need of such taming. The consistent factor here is the reference to the unacculturated woman, the one who does not conform to society's expectations of proper womanhood. Helen's hair (and her lack of veil perhaps) may be read as such a sign. Yet if this is implied, it is not the only available reading. In this context – and all signs acquire their specific meaning *in context* – Helen's hair is surely also made to look unkempt and wild to suggest her emotional state. She is terrified and she gesticulates with a

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[18] Switzerland, private collection *ABV* 478.8; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 335. An earlier black-figure fragment of a lip-cup by the Centaur Painter in the Louvre (Louvre 10268) of about 540 also shows a pair running where a man clasps a woman's wrist, but it is not conclusively identifiable as Menelaus and Helen, and the pair may well be dancing (Clement 1958*:* 54).
[19] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 32.
[20] Athens 15214, *ARV*² 17.18, Reeder 1995: 127.
[21] Reeder 1995: 127 ff; Oakley & Sinos 1993: 32.
[22] Reeder 1995: 127.
[23] Carson 1990:152.
[24] Beaumont 2003: 76; Oakley & Sinos 1993: 14.

pronounced gesture of the right hand, which is outstretched towards Menelaus. She turns back to look at him, and in direct opposition to her predecessor in the black-figure tradition, pleads for her life. She is, as Schefold observes, 'running away in helpless terror, her hair streaming in disorder, pursued by a sinister faceless Menelaus'.[25]

The gesture used by Helen deserves clarification, since it is an important indicator both of Helen's predicament and her emotional state. The outstretched hand is a gesture that is well known to be supplication, in vase-painting in particular,[26] but also in actual practice (as gleaned from several literary and other sources). Supplication is an important social and religious practice which was widely used by several ancient Mediterranean cultures.[27] It is a ritualised request for clemency or safety, made in the face of a particular threat, and it unfolds according to a particular process. Supplicatory gestures referred to in a variety of ancient texts, notably tragedy, include the grasping of the knees, and the touching of the (right) hand or chin of the person being supplicated.[28] Suppliants in epic and tragedy also typically debase themselves before the person they are supplicating; they do this by sitting or falling on their knees in front of him/her, and using emotive and obsequious language to make the supplication more persuasive.[29] In a society that was orthopractic by nature, the enactment of certain steps in a specific order – including the use of supplicatory gestures – may have been thought to help to ensure its effectiveness.[30]

In vase-painting the most common supplicatory gesture is that of the outstretched hand (or hands) extended towards the chin, beard or face of the person being supplicated.[31] In some instances the hand is very close to the beard or face of the person. This is clearly seen in the examples of Nettos supplicating Herakles on the early black-figure amphora in Athens,[32] Priam supplicating Neoptolemus on the amphora by Lydos in Berlin (fig. 2.13),[33] or the later red-figure tondo of a cup by the Marlay Painter, showing the murder of Kassandra (fig. 3.4).[34] However, if there is some physical distance between the two figures, an outstretched hand in the direction of the supplicated person (usually with the palm facing upwards) surely indicates

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[25] Schefold 1992: 289.
[26] Shapiro 1994: 28, 38, 152.
[27] Naiden's book on supplication in the ancient world is the first full-length book devoted to the subject (2006). See also Crotty on supplication in epic (1994) and Gould (1973) on tragic supplication, and a chapter on the *pragma* of supplication in tragedy by Fraser (2010).
[28] Fraser 2010: 147.
[29] Fraser 2010: 146, 151-153.
[30] Naiden 2006, and Fraser 2010: 147.
[31] Shapiro 1994: 164; Boegehold 1999: 19; McNiven 2000: 77-83.
[32] Athens 1002, *ABV* 4.1, *Para* 2.6,
[33] Berlin F. 1685; *ABV* 109.24; *Add* 12; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 210.
[34] Ferrara 2482, *ARV*[2] 1280.64.

the same intention, even if the lack of physical contact reduces its effectiveness as Gould argues.[35]

Since the supplication gesture used in this image of the recovery closely evokes a gesture known from the 'real-life' supplicatory process, it is a suitable and relatively unambiguous visual sign that the person supplicating is in danger and at the mercy of the person being supplicated. While no 'signs', including gestures, are ever completely unambiguous, the known context of the action helps in the identification of the likely meaning of the gesture, which then also informs the likely meaning and emotional subtext of the scene.[36] The expressive gesture encodes a reference then, not only to a cry for help, but to a supplicatory process that in turn renders an obvious power dynamic between the two figures. Here Helen's desperate act of supplication shows her to be in a position of powerlessness. On the other hand, Menelaus is firmly in control, since, not only does he possess a sword, but, as the supplicated party, he has the power to reject the plea. This is one of Naiden's key arguments (contra Gould[37]), that even when a supplication was properly enacted, there was no guarantee that the supplication would be accepted and that safety would be granted.[38] Enactments of supplication in Attic tragedy are, according to Fraser, highly effective and accompanied by high emotion for this reason: their success is never guaranteed.[39] In this is one of the key tensions of the process of supplication and also of these red-figure recovery scenes that render the event as a 'pursuit': the outcome is not assured.

This Oltos recovery scene, then, articulates the new interest in the emotional state of the recovered Helen and the danger inherent in the situation; there is a clear shift of focus that now takes cognisance of *Helen's* emotional response. It also clearly designates her lack of power in the recovery situation. McNiven observes that, in vase-painting, scenes of pursuit always involve 'an asymmetry of power' that reflects power relations in society.[40] The dynamic act of fleeing is usually reserved for those of weaker social status; women, youths or children, or in some cases, elderly men, but seldom by adult men. The specific gesture of supplication (as well as other animated gestures of alarm or distress) he argues, are enacted by those who are less powerful in the situation depicted (and in society in general).[41] The dynamics of this

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[35] Gould 1973: 77; McNiven 2000: 77, fn. 22.
[36] Boegehold 1999: 17, 30-31.
[37] Gould 1973: 81.
[38] Naiden 2006: 163-165.
[39] Fraser 2010: 191-192.
[40] McNiven 2000: 81.
[41] *Ibid.*: *passim*.

scene certainly reflects, in a general way, the Athenian gender and power dynamic of the fifth century.

It is true that Oltos' Nikosthenic amphorae were produced for a different market – the Etruscan one – and this must be taken into account.[42] However, in the case of the current example, artists after Oltos, who produced pottery for an Athenian market, also followed this precedent; they now often show the pursuit of a desperate and vulnerable Helen by the vengeful spouse, Menelaus, whose sword is drawn – or about to be drawn – with *every* intention of using it on her. Both husband and adulterous wife are beset with emotion, though of different kinds, and the outcome is far from assured.

Makron's Boston skyphos (figs 3.5-3.7), which pairs the abduction and recovery of Helen on the same vessel, is another expressive and emotionally evocative vase that uses a similar vocabulary. Dated around 480, it is later than Oltos' pioneering amphora scene, perhaps by as much as 30-40 years. The Makron recovery scene (figs 3.5-3.6) differs from Oltos' in several ways; the scene is more densely populated (with all figures inscribed), the direction of the movement is reversed, and the painter chooses to portray a different moment, even if fractionally. Makron depicts the seconds before the chase commences rather than the chase itself.

In Makron's recovery scene, Helen is confronted by a bearded Menelaus, who is depicted in splendid hoplite panoply (see detail in fig. 3.6). He wears an elaborate, decorated Attic (not Corinthian) helmet with moveable cheek pieces, and his cuirass is not the older metal bell type, but a *linothorax* or linen cuirass. The cuirass and metallic greaves bear fine detailing. Beneath his cuirass, the creases of his *chitoniskos* are luxuriously arranged, and his hoplite shield is emblazoned with the device of a rampaging bull. The rampaging bull is surely intended as a mirror or indicator of Menelaus' own mood and emotional state. He is a picture of rage, poised on the balls of his feet, with elbow bent about to seize his sword from its scabbard. Both the gesture and stance create an atmosphere of extreme foreboding and tension.[43]

Helen responds to this attack by turning to flee in desperation. She runs into the outstretched arms of a waiting Aphrodite, a significant addition to the personnel of this scene type. In this scene Aphrodite has become Helen's rescuer. As Helen moves towards Aphrodite, she also

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[42] Van Wees 2009: 460.
[43] Hedreen 2001: 53.

turns back to look at her aggressor. Helen's arms are thrown open in both directions. Her wild gesture towards Menelaus again suggests supplication; she is pleading for her life, even if her hand does not approach the chin of Menelaus, but passes behind his helmeted head. The effect of this action introduces drama and again, heightens the emotional response of Helen. The gesture also causes Helen's weighty *himation* to lift and it reveals her diaphanous *chiton* beneath, a noteworthy contrast. Through her sheer drapery Makron draws attention to her naked form with simple contours that delineate a pubic triangle, and the outline of a breast. This is surely a deliberate reference to the sensuous form beneath the garments, though some scholars disagree with such a reading (as will be discussed below).

Behind Aphrodite stands the figure of a young woman, Chryseis, and behind her is a white-haired, bearded man, her father, Chryses, the priest of Apollo. The final figure on the extreme right of this scene beneath the handle is the bearded and seated Priam. These last three figures have perplexed scholars somewhat, and their inclusion in this scene is certainly not unambiguous.[44] The figures of Chryses and Chryseis have previously been read as signalling a religious context; i.e. that the attack on Helen takes place in the sanctuary of Apollo, since Chryses is his priest. Hedreen however argues that the locus of this scene could be domestic, specifically the palace of Priam, which he suggests is indicated through the figure of the seated Priam under the right handle.[45] While Priam's presence in Apollo's sanctuary is not easily explained, Chryses and Chryseis can conceivably be suppliants in Priam's house. Hedreen asserts, they 'would be the kind of people one would find in Priam's palace at the end of the long war' since the surrounding area around the citadel had been sacked.[46] Though such an interpretation seems a bit fanciful, the precise location of the scene (a particular sanctuary or Priam's palace) is perhaps not as important as the *idea* of sanctuary that these figures probably convey.

A similar image matrix of pursuit and flight is preserved on other vases from this era. Fragments from another cup by Makron at Princeton[47] preserve enough of the figures to reveal that the scene compares closely to the Boston recovery scene. A kylix in Tarquinia (fig. 3.8), by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter[48] shows what is becoming a familiar matrix. Menelaus is very well dressed in a *linothorax* (fig. 3.9), wearing an Attic helmet with cheek pieces retracted and holding a prominent shield with snake device. He has his drawn

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[44] Hedreen 2001: 55 discusses various interpretations of these figures.
[45] Hedreen 2001: 55.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] Princeton 1990.20A-B.
[48] Tarquinia RC 5291.

sword in his hand and he threatens a heavily draped and veiled Helen who runs to the left (fig. 3.10). Her breast, including a nipple, is clearly outlined on the left of her body. Her destination in this scene is made explicit through the combined icons of altar, column and seated, veiled woman – possibly Aphrodite. If this seated woman is intended as Aphrodite, the other iconography supports the identification of the scene as Helen's flight to the sanctuary of Aphrodite, as told in the literary sources (discussed below). This strengthens the association with supplication; Helen, in desperation, again becomes a suppliant.

The sanctuary as context may also be implied on the skyphos by the Triptolemos Painter in Berlin (fig. 3.13).[49] Four Doric columns punctuate the picture field between the four figures in this scene, and these may recall a sanctuary though a domestic setting has also been posited.[50] 'Bystanders' frame the central pair, standing on left and right margins of the picture field, but unlike the generic-seeming onlookers from the black-figure recovery scenes, these are divinities. To left stands Athena wearing her helmet and aegis, and holding her spear. The hoplite shield leaning on the column may be hers or may belong to the warrior in the centre. On the right a youthful Apollo stands with his hand on his hip, leaning casually with his back on another column despite the frantic central vignette (fig. 3.14). The central pair may well be Menelaus and Helen.[51] Noteworthy is the detailing of Menelaus' exquisite hoplite panoply, and the raised helmet atop his head. Like Menelaus on Makron's skyphos, the hoplite here is shown to be impeccably attired and at his most beautiful.

In this scene the gesture of the attacking Menelaus is also important; he now seems to put out his hand to grip Helen's shoulder, to steady her for the impending blow. This extra detail is used to gruesome and emotive effect in other scenes of attack; a calyx krater by the Dokimasia Painter for example uses a steadying gesture in paired scenes of the death of Agamemnon and the death of Aigisthos.[52] This heightens the tension in the scene by pinpointing the moment: after the drawing of the blade, at the height of the backswing, and just seconds before the blow is delivered. A similar gesture is used by Ajax as he accosts the naked and crouching Cassandra in the *Ilioupersis* scene by Onesimos. Ajax steadies her by gripping her head while he draws back the blade in preparation for plunging it into her defenceless body (fig. 3.17).

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[49] Berlin 1970.9, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 246.
[50] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 246.
[51] A different and also feasible interpretation is offered by Hampe, who suggests that the scene shows the murder of Ismene by Tydeus, as told by Minermos (*LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 246).
[52] Boston 63.1246, *ABV*[2] 1652; *Add*[2] 235; *Para* 373.

Returning to the Triptolemos Painter's skyphos, here Helen (though her figure is not completely preserved) extends her right arm outwards in supplication, palm upwards, towards the attacking Menelaus. She wears a voluminous, pleated *chiton*, *himation* veil around her shoulders and decorated *sakkos* on her head. Due to the fragmentary condition of the vase it is impossible to tell whether the *chiton* was rendered as diaphanous or not. She holds her veil with her left hand, raising it upwards. Though the veil is not obviously placed over Helen's head, this gesture evokes the earlier formulaic veil gesture discussed in Chapter 2 and it is likely that this gesture has a similar force. Llewellyn-Jones argues that the presence of a *himation* or veil garment, even when worn off the head, is still equivalent to a veil or at least carries the connotations of potential veiling.[53] This *himation* then is possibly also a reference to Helen's *aidōs* – or its lack.

Also noteworthy here is the direct line of vision between Helen and her attacker; eye contact is very obviously made. This is made possible by her turning back to look in the direction of Menelaus, but also by his raised helmet, which is positioned – rather unnaturally – on top of his head. The helmet worn this way is significant. It has already been shown that the helmet, as an attribute of war, carries strong connotations of force and hostility, and those connotations are retained here – to an extent. This Menelaus, though hostile, is in stark contrast with the Menelaus of the Oltos amphora. The raised helmet here makes it possible to see Menelaus' face. Though perhaps having something to do with the red-figure painter's interest in depicting human features, the raised helmet has two important effects in this scene.

First it softens the hostility of Menelaus' appearance, making Helen's aggressor less anonymous and faceless; he is more individualised than his forerunner in black-figure and some early red-figure scenes. Human features rather than an anonymous helmet may somehow raise the hope of a more sympathetic Menelaus – they make an appeal to his humanity on a fundamental level. The availability of Menelaus' face is significant for a second reason; it allows estranged husband and wife to properly and more obviously look upon each other again after so many years. While the black-figure scenes of the Archaic era show Menelaus and Helen looking in each other's direction, this lifting of the helmet emphasises the process of looking, as well as the visual exchange. The eyes establish a more concrete connection between the pair.

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[53] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 88.

2.2. Reversal – a unique example

A significant variation on the attack or pursuit of Helen is preserved on fragments of the important cup by Onesimos referred to above (figs 3.16-18), now in the Villa Guilia, which shows the recovery of Helen in the context of the *Ilioupersis*.[54] The recovery of Helen vignette (fig. 3.16) is fragmentary. A hoplite figure (inscribed Menelaus) strides towards the figure of Helen (also inscribed). Of Menelaus' body, only his legs, one forearm and his torso are preserved, including part of his shield and muscled metal cuirass. Helen wears a luxurious pleated *chiton* as she wears in other scenes, and some kind of headgear, probably a *sakkos*. Three important aspects of iconography deserve comment in this scene. First, Helen's body is virtually doubled over as she turns towards Menelaus and entreats him with both hands pointing in the direction of his face (though not preserved). This extreme and dramatic action of supplication is in keeping with the ever stronger vocabulary used by these painters to express Helen's emotional vulnerability and state of mind, as well as the imbalance in power between them.

The second vital aspect of iconography is the dropped sword which is shown falling down to the ground between the pair. This is, as far as I am aware, the earliest example of the dropped sword motif in the recovery of Helen, and it is the single example from this era (the closest extant occurrence of the dropped sword follows some 20-30 years afterwards). The idea of the dropped sword is a literary motif explicitly mentioned in later fifth century drama, however according to scholiasts annotating these references, it was apparently known at least from Ibycus' time.[55] The function of the dropped sword in fifth century drama may differ from its earlier use in the visual tradition. The literary motif will be examined further in the next section, and the function of the dropped sword motif will be elaborated in Chapter 4. In vase-painting the falling sword clearly signals that Menelaus, though angry and wanting to punish his wife, has changed his mind; it stands very obviously for the change in intention or reversal of his feelings about Helen.[56]

Finally, Onesimos inserts a fluttery, winged Eros, hovering between the figures of Helen and Menelaus, and this makes the motivation for his change of mind unambiguous. In tragedy, acts of supplication normally evoked the person's *aidōs* (shame) or *oiktos* and *eleos* (pity),[57] in hope of being spared. However, this vase, as well as Makron's skyphos recovery scene, makes

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[54] Previously Malibu 85.AE.385.2, now Rome, Villa Giulia 121110, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 277.
[55] For example the scholia on Andromache, Euripides and Aristophanes.
[56] Hedreen 1996: 167
[57] Fraser 2010: 151.

explicit the fact that Menelaus is swayed not by pity, but by the forces of Eros – desire. These three aspects combine to create a highly articulate and successful visual code, which though not mainstream in its own time, is taken up by later painters (from 460-420) with much enthusiasm.

2.3 Escort

A final scene type will be investigated to complete the survey of the range of image matrices available to painters to render the recovery of Helen during this era. Several vases present red-figure interpretations of the earlier well established black-figure matrix: that of a helmeted hoplite who leads (rather than chases) a draped woman by the wrist while carrying a weapon. These scenes, categorised by Ghali-Kahil as '*Type inspiré de l*'Ilioupersis *d'Arctinos*' ('Type inspired by the *Ilioupersis* of Arktinos'),[58] are also commonly termed 'escort' scenes.[59] Though they have strong echoes of marriage procession scenes, they are not exactly equivalent, not least of all because of the tone created through the hostile iconography. The man may be helmeted and therefore faceless and menacing, as in a fragmentary cup in Malibu (fig. 3.19) also by Oltos.[60] This Menelaus (name inscribed), who is mostly obscured by his large shield with snake shield device, leads a draped woman (only her bottom half is preserved) by the wrist, carrying a spear rather than a sword.

A hydria by the Tyszkiewicz Painter in Munich[61] (fig. 3.22) perhaps shows Menelaus leading Helen with two spears in his right hand and wearing a helmet, cuirass and greaves. The helmet is of the Attic kind and has hinged cheek pieces, which are lifted up off his face (as for Menelaus on Makron's Boston skyphos). This scene is usually read as the marriage of the pair or as the moment after Menelaus has claimed his bride (rather than the wedding itself),[62] mainly because the 'bride' wears a *stephane* and carries a round fruit (a *malon,* a quince, pomegranate or apple). These attributes usually occur in the nuptial context (the *malon* perhaps suggesting the pomegranate of Persephone),[63] but they may be 'nuptial nuances' in the same way that the wrist gesture evokes the wedding and therefore the reunion of husband and wife. It is questionable whether the full hoplite panoply makes sense in a marital context, though it may suggest the military and heroic stature of the groom. Such a process of

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[58] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 546-548.
[59] Clement 1958: 52; Dipla 1997: 121; Hedreen 1996: 161.
[60] Malibu 80.AE. 154, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 336 *bis*.
[61] Munich 2425 (J 283), *ARV²* 294.65, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 87.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 64.
[62] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 64; Oakley 1995: 66.
[63] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 35; Oakley 1995: 66, fn. 13; Reeder 1995: 127-128, fn. 12. Both cite Plutarch *Moralia* 138d; *Quaestiones Romanae* 279f; and Sol. 20.

argumentation is circular however, and it is best to leave the scene open to a range of interpretations.

Other variations on the 'escort' scene type show another fully helmeted hoplite leading a woman while turning back to threaten her with a sword, not spear. On a stamnos by the Painter of the Munich Amphora (fig. 3.23),[64] the angle of the blade and the warrior's facelessness make the scene particularly menacing. These scenes fit into the range of potential recovery matrices, where, provided there is other hostile iconography, the sword and spear can be interchanged depending on the extent of force being implied, or the tone that the artist wishes to create in the scene.

The fragmentary plate in Odessa (fig. 3.24) also by Oltos[65] depicts another sword-wielding, helmet-wearing Menelaus, however the atmosphere here is different from the black-figure and some contemporary red-figure scenes, including the two other recovery scenes by Oltos himself. Menelaus' sword is drawn from its scabbard and here he points it directly at Helen (this compares closely to a fragment by the Kleophrades Painter from Athens[66] and a cup fragment by the Elpinikos Painter[67]). However, again in contrast to the faceless hoplite of some other scenes, this Menelaus does not wear the helmet properly over his face but it balances on top of his head (precisely in the manner of Menelaus on the Triptolemos Painter's Berlin skyphos). Turning back as he leads the robed, veiled and filleted Helen (back to the ships, or simply back to Sparta), the hostile effect is again softened by the availability of his face. In this period estranged spouses are now often able to look upon each other properly once more, either through raised helmets or the use of Attic helmets that have their cheek pieces retracted.

2.4. Pursuit, reversal and escort: synopsis

The pursuit and escort recovery scenes retain aspects of the earlier black-figure scene-types, including their hostile weaponry. As before, Menelaus' iconography and gestural codes combine to convey the extreme and justifiable anger – *cholos* – he experiences as a result of his maltreatment in this Trojan saga. The sword is still a dominant icon, and one that is a strong indicator of emotion in these scene types. However, in this transitional era, Menelaus is not the faceless and non-descript hoplite from before. He is depicted in magnificent armour, with special attention paid to his embellished cuirass, often a *linothorax*, and other items of

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[64] Tarquinia RC 2460, *ARV²* 246.9, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 312.
[65] Odessa 21972, ARV 67.137, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 82.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 310.
[66] Athens Kerameikos 1663, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 312
[67] Boston 13 190, *ARV²* 119.3, 1627, *Para* 332, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 82.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 311.

the panoply. He now also often either wears his Corinthian helmet on top of his head, or has an Attic helmet, with hinged cheek pieces retracted, which reveals if not all facial features, certainly more of the face than a Corinthian helmet does.

Helen is also changed; she now responds to the danger and is also shown to be dishevelled or in disarray, through the absence of her veil, or at least running for her life. Her gesture of supplication, as well as the references to sanctuaries or the divinities Apollo and Athena draw attention to her fear and vulnerable state of mind and body. Her clothing is also sometimes now shown to be diaphanous, drawing attention to the female form beneath her tunic (usually a *chiton*) and her veil or himation (where this is present). Menelaus' raised helmet (or the Attic helmet) and the fact that in the pursuit scenes, Helen deliberately turns back to look at her pursuer, also allows for a more obvious reference to eye contact. We are more able to notice that the two figures are connected by a line of vision, an idea which becomes more significant to the tale of recovery as told in the fifth century. The fact that by 480 Aphrodite and her son Eros have begun to appear as personnel in these scenes, is very significant. These two figures usher in a new emotional vocabulary that shows a shift in focus, as will be argued in Chapter 4, from rage to love, or more accurately, *eros* – desire. While the traces of an erotic element were read in the phallic sword in the previous chapter, this emotion becomes more explicitly tabled in the later scenes.

Echoes of other iconography or scene matrices are also instructive. While the escort scenes have something in common with marriage processions where the bride is led *cheir' epi carpo* by the groom, the pursuit and flight recovery scene type has strong echoes of another contemporary scene matrix that has been termed 'erotic pursuit'.[68] This is chiefly because Helen actually responds to the attack and flees from him, often supplicating her pursuer. A responsive and supplicating Helen is the invention of these red-figure painters of the transitional era. Stewart's synopsis of the erotic pursuit scene type reveals that they are popular for almost a century, appearing before 550 (though infrequently) and being most prolific between 500-425.[69] These scenes feature heroic, divine and ephebic pursuits where a god, hero or indeterminate youth (sometimes described as Theseus or, as Matheson puts it, 'Every-*ephebe*'[70]) pursues a gesticulating woman, or in some cases a male youth.[71] The pursuer

[68] Stewart 1995: 74; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 32-41.
[69] Stewart 1995: 74ff, 87-88.
[70] Matheson 1996: 223.
[71] Vienna 652. Zeus, for example, typically pursues an emotive Ganymede, grasping or attempting to grasp hold of him while Ganymede is reactive and emotive. McNiven 2000: 84.

may hold a weapon, but it is often not held in a particularly threatening way. The pursued flees and gesticulates, usually turning back to look at her pursuer as she runs.

Similarities in scene configuration are important since they point towards a coherent social discourse which will be interrogated later. The recovery scenes, however, differ from the erotic pursuits and the marriage processions through the presence of more overtly hostile iconography: here Menelaus is usually dressed as a hoplite, and he generally threatens the woman with a sword, while the men in erotic pursuits that are 'armed' are usually *epheboi* with spears (which they do not intend to use)[72] and the 'force' used in marriage processions is manual. The sword has an aggressive connotation and its associations with Menelaus' justified anger and its use as an implement of vengeance are still present in these late sixth and early fifth century versions of the narrative. Manual force on the other hand is a sign of control and sexual submission. Both of these connotations are surely applicable in both the pursuit and escort scene types that show the recovery of Helen by Menelaus.

3. Reading the vases: the literary-narrative context

The literary context may again cautiously be used to elucidate the iconography of these scenes since the texts provide insight into the narrative elements, emotions and issues that are part of the general discourse around the story. Aspects of the mythological narrative, as gleaned from the literary sources were already discussed in Chapter 2. Explanations for the presence of other personnel in the recovery scenes (for example Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena and Eros), for the inclusion of the dropped sword motif, and for Helen's (sometimes) diaphanous clothing, can also be found in the literary sources. However, the potential danger is to over-interpret the iconography on this basis. For the pursuit scenes, for example, the significance of seeing Helen's body, and particularly her breasts, has been a subject of (sometimes amusing) scholarly debate.[73]

Past scholarship has, it seems, looked too carefully for a pictorial icon that will equate with the deliberate exposure of Helen's body, especially her breast/s, which is explicitly mentioned in the later fifth century by Aristophanes[74] and Euripides[75] as a seductive tactic to save her own life in the context of the recovery.[76] In Euripides' *Andromache*[77] and Aristophanes'

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[72] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 35-36.
[73] Hedreen 1996: 157-160 summarises this discussion.
[74] *Lys*. 155-56.
[75] *Andr*. 629-30.
[76] For example, Hedreen (1996: 158) mentions the attempts of Keuls (1983) and Pipili (1981) at finding pictorial evidence for the literary motif of the exposed breast.
[77] *Andr.* 627-631.

Lysistrata[78] the sight of Helen's breasts cause Menelaus to drop his sword. The same is perhaps alluded to in Euripides' *Orestes*[79] and Aristophanes' *Wasps*.[80] In Euripides' *Trojan Women* there is a more detailed portrayal of the encounter between Helen and Menelaus after the fall of Troy. Here, however, Menelaus says that Helen's punishment (death by stoning) will take place in Argos, not at Troy and he sends her off to the ships to be taken back to Hellas.[81] Hecuba does anticipate that Menelaus may change his mind, but there is no mention of a sword or of Helen exposing her body.[82]

These texts are all later than the recovery vases of this transitional era. However, the scholia on the various texts indicate that the story was not necessarily a fifth century invention, but may have been known in the earlier tradition as well. The scholiast on the *Andromache* states that in Ibycus' lost poem the story is told 'in a better way', adding that Helen flees to the temple of Aphrodite, talks with Menelaus and that he then drops his sword on account of Eros (ὑπ' ἔρωτος).[83] The scholiast on the *Lysistrata* seems to indicate that the story of Lesches gives the same account as Ibycus.[84] However Hedreen, following Clement, suggests that the scholiast on the Aristophanic passage, which is taken as evidence that the same story is told in Ibycus and Lesches, is ambiguous, since it does not state explicitly which part of the story is the same. Hedreen adds that Aristophanes and Euripides may well have followed the earlier story that Menelaus dropped the sword, but invented the motif of the naked breast to suit their own dramatic purposes.[85]

One result of this debate on the over-interpretation of the imagery in the light of the literary sources is that scholars now tend to under-state the sensuality implied by breasts or female body parts outlined through diaphanous drapery in this way. The risk, then, is to err on the other extreme. Hedreen has observed (specifically with regard to Makron) that '[he] regularly draws the contours of his women's bodies beneath their clothing, even in situations where physical beauty or seduction seem unintended'.[86] Yet breasts and pubic triangles *are* iconic of female sexuality, in the ancient Greek mind-set as much as the modern one. The widespread and varied sexualised references to breasts and pubic triangles in Attic comedy (again, though later than these images) reveal that these female body parts are considered both highly erotic

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[78] *Lys.* 155-56.
[79] *Or.* 1287.
[80] *V.* 713-714.
[81] *Tr.* 1036ff.
[82] *Tr.* 1044ff.
[83] *Scholia in Euripidem,* II: 293, as related in Clement (1958: 48). Clement's article helps to extrapolate details about Ibycus' version of the story from the scholiasts.
[84] Leidensis-Vossianus at *Lys.* 155, related in Clement 1958: 51.
[85] Hedreen 1996: 159.
[86] Hedreen 2001: 35.

and erogenous zones.[87] It is possible that such iconography generally evokes the sensuality and eroticism that all women are invested with. When it comes to *Helen* however, and in this particular story of her recovery, it is precisely her physical beauty and erotic, seductive power that are at stake. References to Helen's body and sexuality in the imagery should still be taken seriously, but they should be read as having a general significatory value, rather than a specific narrative intention.

It is Helen's implicit eroticism and beauty that ultimately saves her life. As in the black-figure scenes, the images show Menelaus' *cholos* or *orgē* in action. He is angry on account of being dishonoured, and he is taking action, as is expected of a hero in his position. This emotion is crucial as a subtext in these scene types. However, another strong emotion causes Menelaus to ultimately change his mind and this is hinted at in these images. The artists now suggest that Helen will be rescued on account of *eros* – desire – through the presence of Aphrodite and in one case (the cup by Onesimos), through the figure of Eros himself.

The importance of the presence of the figure of Aphrodite in these recovery scenes now deserves fuller treatment. As noted above, the scholiast on the Andromache stated that in Ibycus' lost poem, Helen ran to the sanctuary of Aphrodite, where Menelaus dropped his sword. As a goddess, Aphrodite can offer sanctuary to a suppliant; especially on sacred ground where the suppliant is considered *asylos* – inviolable.[88] However, it is not just Aphrodite's divinity and the physical boundaries of the sanctuary that will result in Helen's rescue. It is also not her act of supplication that saves her, since, as Naiden argues, it could be rejected anyway.[89] The choice of Aphrodite is a specific and deliberate one; she is a figure that is replete with particular associations that scholars seem to downplay. Caskey and Beazley say that in the scene on Makron's skyphos, Aphrodite is physically turning Helen's head towards Menelaus,[90] so that her beauty will avert his wrath, while Hedreen describes this action as Aphrodite 'perhaps neaten[ing] Helen's hair for the reunion'.[91] I argue that both read the gesture a little too literally and tamely. Aphrodite's gesture of framing the face communicates the *way* in which Aphrodite will save Helen from Menelaus' sword; not simply by 'making her beloved' again as Hedreen asserts,[92] but by making her desired.

[87] Henderson 1975: 130-133; 148-150.
[88] Mastrocinque 2009: 340.
[89] Naiden 2006: 163-165.
[90] Caskey & Beazley 1931 (3): 36.
[91] Hedreen 2001: 53.
[92] *Ibid.*: 61.

Dipla also prefers to ascribe the presence of Aphrodite (and Eros) in recovery scenes to 'a more generalised feeling of love' and she specifically adds that 'sensual love was not evidently in the mind of the vase-painters',[93] and that Menelaus will succumb to Helen's 'charms'.[94] In my opinion, she also reads Aphrodite's presence too tamely. This explanation denies the valence of the emotion-word *eros*, which these pursuit images explicitly evoke, and the sexual connotations implicit in the goddess Aphrodite. The goddess cannot escape her connotations of sensuality; her name itself gives rise to the common noun '*ta aphrodisia*', the typical euphemism for sexual acts and pleasures.[95] This domain may include φιλότης (love, or affection) but her *timē* or the sphere of honour allotted to her includes other more explicitly sexual aspects. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, having been born from Kronos' genitals, Aphrodite is called φιλομμηδέα ('member-loving') and described as being accompanied by Eros (desire) and Himeros (longing).[96]

If Aphrodite is indeed manipulating Helen's head on Makron's skyphos, this action does much more than simply reveal her beauty to him. It could also be interpreted as having a more specific function: that of forcing the two to look at each other, to connect their gazes and to engender the erotic reunion that will reunite the marital pair. By turning Helen's face around, the eyes of estranged husband and wife are connected and Aphrodite's domain – *ta aphrodisia* – is assured. In the ensuing fifth century literary, dramatic, rhetorical and artistic accounts of the abduction and recovery, vision and the emotional response that an image can evoke, start to play an increasingly important role.

Aphrodite and Eros' involvement should therefore be interpreted as going beyond the purely literal, narrative level to the emotional level. Aphrodite is a visible sign of the psychological and intensely emotional force that she embodies and engenders in people. The Makron scene expertly implies that Menelaus will not draw his sword, and, furthermore, that his shift from rage to forgiveness will not be motivated by the emotion of pity or by Helen's beauty or 'charm', but by *eros;* fervent and loin-stirring desire. The cup by Onesimos pictorializes this emotion in a different way; the actual presence of Eros himself and the motif of the dropped sword make explicit the effect or impact of this emotional force.

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[93] Dipla 1997: 126.
[94] *Ibid*.: 124.
[95] Pirenne-Delforge 2007: 311. See also Henderson 154-155 for other euphemisms for sex involving the name of Aphrodite in Attic comedy.
[96] *Th*. 200-205.

It has already been mentioned above that, at least in some literary sources, this was all imagined to take place in Aphrodite's sanctuary.[97] Some visual versions however also include the figure of Apollo or Athena, or explicit references to the sanctuaries of the gods through contextual signs (such as statues, altars, trees, tripods, and columns). Neither Apollo nor Athena's sanctuaries were specifically mentioned as the site of supplication or recovery in the extant literary sources, however, in the case of Apollo, as a god who was well known to be supportive of the Trojans during the war, it makes sense that Helen might run to this divinity. The same applies to Athena; no extant literary account places Helen in her sanctuary, and she had both Trojan and Greek alliances.

I suggest, along with Hedreen, that the presence of divinities and sanctuaries in these recovery scenes strongly points to the importance of the idea of sanctuary, which in turn highlights the frantic state of mind of the pursued Helen. Regardless of whether these figures imply an actual religious sanctuary, this scene does emphasise that Helen needs the protective sanctuary of a deity to deflect the wrath of Menelaus' blade. In other words, the scene reflects the *need* for sanctuary, and therefore, like her gestures and general demeanour, also points to Helen's emotional and vulnerable state of mind.[98]

It is clear that Helen exhibits *phobos* – fear – which is an appropriate emotional response given the imminent threat to her life. This ancient emotion-word can unproblematically be applied here; Aristotle's definition of *phobos* is: 'a kind of pain or disturbance deriving from an impression [*phantasia*] of a future evil that is destructive or painful'.[99] Konstan's discussion of this definition shows that this emotion is (as are all emotions, in Aristotle's view) 'a socially conditioned response in which relations of power and judgments concerning the status of others play a crucial role'.[100] Furthermore, Konstan discusses how the fear and anger responses are connected; in Aristotle's definition, one of the causes of fear in an individual is the perceived anger or enmity of someone else who is in a position to do considerable harm.[101] Fear also requires, as its impetus, a credible danger that is impending rather than far-off.[102] This scenario perfectly accounts for a fear response in the context of the recovery; Helen's *phobos* signals her judgement that her life is in danger since she properly interprets Menelaus' *cholos*, and perceives that he is in a position of power and both able and intending to inflict harm. The immediate threat is clearly presented in the angry Menelaus – more powerful than

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[97] As related by the scholiast on Euripides' *Andr.* 627-631.
[98] Hedreen 2001: 61.
[99] *Rhet.* 2.5, 1382a21, quoted by Konstan 2006: 130.
[100] Konstan 2006: 133.
[101] *Rhet.* 2.5, 1382a32-3; Konstan 2006: 132.
[102] *Rhet.* 2.5, 1382a25.

Helen by virtue of his gender, his warrior status, and his being the avenging husband – and Helen's response shows an awareness of this real and imminent danger.

4. Reading the vases: the cultural-semantic context

The vase shapes considered here are, as stated above (and as were the black-figure examples), sympotic vessels designed for use in the context of the drinking party. Who was the 'typical' symposiast – the primary viewer of these vessels – during this transitional era in Greek history? To begin with it is necessary to question whether the symposium remained an 'aristocratic' institution, or whether, in tandem with the movement towards a democratic constitution in Athens, the symposium also become 'democratised'. Though politically speaking the constitution of Athens was ultimately to be radically altered in favour of the citizen assemblies, Kleisthenes' democratic reforms of 508/7-500 are generally considered to be relatively moderate beginnings in this direction. For some scholars the symposium remains an 'aristocratic' pursuit, even well into and during the Classical era.[103]

The practice of communal drinking certainly continued, as well as other aspects of the lifestyle associated with the aristocrats of the sixth century – for example hunting and participation in athletic competition. In the years of class conflict and turmoil leading up to the Persian Wars, however, some criticism for the luxurious lifestyle of the elite had apparently gathered momentum, but it did not, it seems, lead to its abatement. In all likelihood the elites tempered certain extremes of luxury and behaviour, especially in view of the backlash against what was perceived as Persian decadence. Davidson suggests, however, that though there was some moderation of the 'quality and quantity of food and entertainment...conviviality followed the same protocols'.[104]

On the other hand, some scholars argue that such 'aristocratic' behaviour – including the communal drinking party and its protocols – was emulated and aspired to by those who were not, themselves, *eupatridae*. Lynch, for example, argues that during this transitional era, the symposium had already become democratised, citing the dramatic increase in drinking cups after the democratic reforms, specifically kylixes, found in the excavations of the Athenian Agora.[105] Other scholars assert that any democratisation of the symposium was only fully achieved by the mid-fifth century.[106]

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[103] For example, Cooper & Morris 1990: 78; Murray 1990: 150.
[104] Davidson 1997: 238.
[105] Lynch 2007: 247; fig. 26.5.
[106] Whitely 2001: 363.

Keeping in mind the problems related to the precise dating of the red-figured artefacts in these Agora deposits,[107] it is dangerous to argue for such an early widespread practice of formal sympotic drinking, especially of the kind that is reflected in much of the imagery itself, and in the literary sources. During this transitional era, then, it will be assumed that it was still chiefly the nobles or the rising wealthy elite who continued to use the symposium not only as a site of male bonding, but also as a site of class identity-construction. Essentially the last decades of the sixth century and the first decades of the fifth century were still characterised by the cult of *habrosyne* (sophisticated hedonism)[108] and the leisure class continued to espouse aristocratic ideology. Like drinking songs, painted vases were still one of its primary tools.

Osborne asserts that the red-figure revolution in painting also signalled a new relationship between the vase viewer and the vessel, arguing that it made the viewer 'put his own behaviour, as well as the behaviour of others under scrutiny'.[109] This idea of the vase as a mirror or foil suits the sympotic environment as a contemplative one, and on a simplistic level, the newfound 'naturalistic' tendencies of red-figure painting may have made the painted figures easier for their viewers to 'impersonate', animate and think through. Furthermore, the contemplative viewer would engage equally with the various painted scenes on a vessel, and look for ways in which they may intersect. This process makes sense within the scope of the intellectual games, philosophising and conversation that characterised the entertainment and pleasures of the symposium.[110]

What likely range of responses would the symposiast have had to the figured narratives of Helen's recovery by her husband Menelaus? Some differences in iconography between the black-figure recovery scenes and those by the early red-figure artists have been noted above. While black-figure artists had rendered Helen's figure with a fair amount of physical detail and embellishment, in contrast, the severe hoplite-like figure of Menelaus accosting her was relatively plainly drawn and thoroughly lacking in interesting details. The faceless Menelaus type of the early red-figure tradition (on Oltos' amphora for example) is essentially continuous with the black-figure version of Menelaus. However, particular red-figure artists such as Makron, the Triptolemos Painter, the painter in the Manner of the Foundry Painter and Onesimos begin to lavish considerably more attention on the detailed depiction of Menelaus. By 490-480, Menelaus has become the quintessential warrior, complete with exquisitely

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[107] See Chapter 1, fn. 42 and 43.
[108] Skinner 2005: 114; Neer 2002: 21.
[109] Osborne 1998: 154.
[110] Lissarrague 1990: 47ff.

decorated *linothorax*, shield and helmet. There is a distinct aesthetics of manhood, replete with emotional subtext, which is presented in these scenes. This has, I believe, much to do with the prominence and emotional connotations of the panoply in these recovery scenes.

Some clarification on the meaning of the panoply in the late sixth and early fifth centuries can further illuminate these images and their emotional subtexts. What does this assemblage of arms and armour mean here? From early times (and not unique to Greece of course) the equipment required for warfare, including horses, weaponry and armour was extremely expensive and, being privately procured (rather than state-sponsored), these prestige items remained in reach only of the wealthy. Historically speaking, therefore, warfare was an aristocratic pursuit. Armour and weapons were not only intrinsically or materially valuable, but also symbolically since warfare provided a context in which a man could showcase his courage and manliness (*andreia*), his excellence (*arēte*) and earn *kudos*. It could be argued then, that the trappings of warfare, i.e. armour and weaponry, are an outward sign of a warrior's honour, worth and success. Both economic and symbolic meanings explain why in Homer, for example, a panoply of armour was valuable enough for a warrior to risk death in order to retrieve it, or to seize that of the enemy.

During the Archaic period in Greece, the style of warfare changed, moving from an individualised, heroic or 'aristocratic' form to a more communal one, characterised by the hoplite phalanx or mass infantry. The phalanx was, essentially 'a conglomerate of "interchangeable parts," in which all put aside personal distinction for the common good of the state'.[111] This also has implications for the meaning of the panoply, or the *hopla,* after which the type of soldier usually associated with the era – the *hoplitēs* – became known. However, while the scholarly tradition had previously read 'hoplite' equipment and 'phalanxes' in seventh century art and literature as evidence for these early beginnings of hoplite warfare proper, Van Wees problematises this date. [112] Snodgrass has previously suggested that the adoption of the full 'hoplite' panoply of helmet, corselet, greaves, spear, sword, and round shield with the distinctive double grip (the *porpax* and *antilabe*) – collectively the *hopla*[113]– was 'a long drawn out, piecemeal process'.[114] So too, argues Van Wees, was the adoption of proper phalanx warfare; he posits the emergence of the phalanx proper, with its allied ideology, probably only *after* the Persian Wars.[115]

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[111] Wheeler 1991.
[112] Van Wees 2000: 134.
[113] Lazenby & Whitehead 1996: 27.
[114] Snodgrass 1965: 110-122.
[115] Van Wees 2000: 134; Krentz (2002: 23-39) concurs.

If this is the case (and it is impossible to pinpoint with certainty) then the panoply of armour and weapons – *hopla* – could, in these images of the early fifth century, still allude to aristocratic or at least affluent identity, especially given the sympotic audience of these vessels. Even after the reforms of Solon, *hopla* were only in reach of the upper three Solonian classes; i.e. the wealthy and propertied. The Kleisthenic reorganisation of the population and territory of Attica heralded changes in the ideology of warfare, however, it wasn't until the ephebic reform of 335 that members of the *thetes* class were enlisted as hoplites and that (some) equipment was state-provided.[116]

In addition, despite the fact that mass infantry was, ostensibly, a rejection of the earlier style of individualistic aristocratic warfare, a contradiction inherent to the phalanx is, as noted by Wheeler, that while the fighting may appear on the surface to be more democratic, 'the ideology of the hoplite remained the heroic ethos of Homer'.[117] It is likely that during this transitional era, predating and coinciding with the Persian Wars, the 'hoplite' panoply was still primarily a sign of wealth, status, *timē*, *andreia* and *arēte* possessed by a social and military elite. In these scenes the panoply that is so carefully depicted and prominently displayed evokes the aesthetics of masculinity that is also praised in sixth century lyric and elegiac poetry. Sappho's argument for 'the most beautiful thing' dismisses cavalry, foot soldiers and a fleet of warships in favour of 'the person that you love', revealing through this contrast what must have been a mainstream view.[118] Soldiers are beautiful to the (male) sixth and fifth century eye and mind, and the panoply in particular evokes this sense of aggressive beauty and martial splendour.

It is likely that in the first decades of the fifth century the hoplite panoply was yet to acquire its full political value as specifically democratic equipment. Yet, this does not preclude the panoply from also alluding to the communal aspects, risks and benefits of war, and therefore also to one's civic identity. Even individualistic Homeric heroes are ultimately also fighting for the good of their kin and their cities, as emphasised by poignant and emotive family vignettes in the *Iliad,* such as those containing Hektor and his loved ones: Hekabe, Priam, Andromache and Astyanax.[119] These present in concrete terms one of the primary motivations for fighting; the defence of kin and community. This aspect of the Homeric heroic ethos is continuous in

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[116] Bertosa 2003: 361-379.
[117] Wheeler 1991: 122-123.
[118] Sappho fr 16.
[119] For example *Il*. 6.390-500; and 22.25-90.

the martial poetry of Tyrtaios, where brave soldiers must fight on behalf of aged parents, young wives and children.[120]

The reverse side of the Triptolemos Painter's skyphos, in fact, provokes precisely this association (fig. 3.15). Earlier it was stated that contemplation of other scenes on the vases elucidate their discourses and emotional subtexts, and this vessel is an excellent example of such a process. The scene of an aggressive and angry Menelaus recovering a supplicating Helen on one side of the vessel is countered by a calm scene of a departing warrior on the other. This warrior is virtually a facsimile of the well panoplied Menelaus from the other side, but the context and the emotional subtext is entirely different. He stands calmly and the implication that he is about to depart on campaign is made by the fact that he participates in the ritual pouring of a libation, an action that is appropriate in such a moment. He is surrounded by what we can assume to be members of his family (or community?): a seated, bearded man, two women and a youth.

This scene highlights the *hopla* also as a defensive assemblage of items; they protect the body of the soldier, and through the soldier at war, the family and city are protected from harm. Like the family of Hektor in the *Iliad,* these present in concrete terms what is at stake for the soldier: not only personal glory but also the defence of kin and community. In these ways the panoply is not a neutral symbol and its range of meanings must also encompass familial and civic identity. The two sides of the Triptolemos Painter's cup create a powerful and coherent message about the ideal of the integrity and unity of *oikos* and *polis.* One implies an *oikos* and *polis* disrupted and dishonoured by Helen's passage to Troy, while the other, a picture of domestic and civic unity, reiterates the need for her return. The discourses evoked by the beautiful panoplied figure in these pursuit and flight recovery scenes are continuous with the previous century's interest in the 'necessary rage' of Menelaus, required to reinstate the worldly order inverted by the violation of his marriage bed, and ensure her return to the *oikos* and to Sparta.

The increased interest in the emotional figure of Helen in these scenes suggests that she has become an even more fascinating object of contemplation than before. Perhaps this is because Helen's crime is, as Stewart says, 'the prototypical case of *moicheia'* (adultery),[121] a topic that comes under more intense scrutiny in the fifth century. Adultery is not a comfortable topic for monogamous societies, especially those that practice patrilineal inheritance. Furthermore, in

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[120] Fr. 10.
[121] Stewart 1995: 81.

'pre-scientific' societies, while maternity can be witnessed, paternity can never be proven, and so there is usually some anxiety around women's fidelity and the paternity of children. Carson's analysis reveals the Greeks' deep-rooted mistrust of women's nature as well as their bodies, calling them mobile 'units of danger moving across boundaries of family and *oikos* in marriage, prostitution or adultery'.[122] This anxiety that women are always susceptible to pollution is made manifest in a variety of social practices and attitudes; societies such as ancient Athens may use extreme measures to attempt to control the emotional and reproductive capacities of their women, such as their social segregation, the practice of veiling, legislation and attitudes towards adulterers. Informal measures or practices, such as gossip and rumour, were also likely to be a strong means of social control, acting as a deterrent to offences such as adultery and seduction.[123]

Classical Athenian legislation on *moicheia* as recovered from later orators Demosthenes and Aeschines give us insight into the standard punishment for adulterers. Demosthenes shows that the implications for both male and female adulterers were harsh, but not equal.[124] A man caught in the act of adultery in the husband's *oikos* could be killed summarily by the husband, or given the death penalty by a court.[125] Neither did the adulterous wife escape punishment; though her punishment did not involve death, according to Aeschines she could be beaten (though not disfigured) and was stripped of the right to enter temples, attend public sacrificial rituals or to wear jewellery.[126] Furthermore, her husband was forced to divorce his errant wife to protect his bloodline from her pollution. 'Once the taboo of fidelity was broken,' says Reeder, 'it could no longer retain any effectiveness.'[127] These punishments highlight the threat that women's sexuality posed to the social fabric – through her adultery she is regarded as both polluted and a pollutant.[128]

The impact of a wife's adulterous act was, therefore, significant and the cause of great anxiety for the male citizenry. This mythological paradigm of Helen, however, does not 'fit' that of actual social practice, as attested at least in Aeschines. Despite the actual practice and laws around *moicheia* in Athenian society, in all versions of the myth Helen ultimately escapes nemesis. She not only returns to Sparta to her marital home and bed, but she is also assured of

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[122] Carson 1990: 150.
[123] Winkler 1990: 191; Cohen 1991: 221-227; Skinner 2005: 138.
[124] D. 23.53-5.
[125] Cohen 1991: 112-13; 221-7.
[126] Aeschin. *Against Timarchus* 1.183.
[127] Reeder 1995: 23.
[128] Carson 1990: 159-160.

a blessed afterlife either on her own or with her husband on the Islands of the Blessed[129] or at Leuke with Achilles.[130]

It is interesting and surely significant that after the relatively inert black-figure Helen, red-figure recovery scenes of this era shift focus to depict a much more emotional Helen, responding to the danger that she finds herself in with the appropriate response – *phobos*. This danger is emphasised through the gesture of supplication and the need for sanctuary implied by divinities and architectural signs of actual religious sanctuaries. It may be thought of as on account of her lack of modesty or *aidōs*, her lack of self-control or *sophrosyne*, the consequent adultery or *moicheia*, and ultimately, her responsibility for the 10-year war itself. This is certainly deemed the most appropriate response for the clientele of this era; vases consistently adopt the emotional and fleeing Helen for this scene type for the rest of the fifth century. The emotional response is perhaps more palatable to her male audience, who, though they must accept the mythological 'fact' of her return to her *oikos* are surely mindful of the foil: the 'other Helen', the one who left.

Two vases studied here render pointed comparisons between the adulterous, recovered Helen and another woman through their interrelationship with their other picture fields. In the case of Makron's Boston skyphos, the painter pairs the recovered Helen on the one side (fig. 3.5-3.6), with her former self, the abducted Helen (fig. 3.7). The two Helens of this vase provide a fascinating and eloquent commentary, and this vase, which is unique for several reasons, will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5. Contemplation of the four picture fields on Oltos' amphora also delivers a fascinating dialogue that highlights the adulterous nature of Helen and presents the corollary: virtue. The reverse belly scene provides a stark contrast with the recovery, both in subject and mood (fig. 3.2). The expressive and emotionally evocative recovery is met with a serene, pastoral and pleasant scene on the other side; the centaur Chiron stands at rest holding his ward, the baby Achilles. Both neck panels show a running woman with fish in either hand (fig. 3.2): standard iconography for Nereids. It is perhaps noteworthy that these Nereids wear headgear, while the recovered Helen does not – a reference to *aidōs* or its lack?

This pairing that cleverly renders the 'outcomes' of two famous abductions must surely be deliberate, particularly given the types of games and witty entertainment typical of the symposium. Oltos contrasts the result of Helen's illicit liaison with Paris – her near death at the

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[129] A told by the Dioscuri in Euripides *Hel.* 1828ff.
[130] Apparently told in the lost *Palinode* by Steisichorus, Pausanias 3.19.11.

hands of her husband in the context of the *Ilioupersis* – with the illustrious offspring of the marriage of Thetis and Peleus – Achilles. The two running Nereids evoke both the idea of the chase, as well as the dissimilarity between Thetis (a Nereid) and Helen. The antithesis of Paris-Helen and Peleus-Thetis is also made explicit in Alcaeus' poem (fragment 42) where he points out the bitter misery that their union produces, and contrasts the horror of the Trojan War with the glorious offspring of Peleus and Thetis – Achilles, who is αἰμιθέων – the 'mightiest of demigods'.[131]

A naked *ephebe*-like male, dressed only in a crested helmet, is depicted on each handle (fig. 3.3). A range of interpretations present themselves here: this figure – a beautiful and naked male – may have been read by the viewer as Peleus, who was known for his chase and winning over of Thetis, the Nereid, who may be depicted on the neck of the vase on both sides. The youth may also be understood as an ephebic Achilles, their illustrious offspring, who is depicted as a child in the picture field on the belly of the vase. However the figure may also represent the ideal (male) offspring that any parent, divine or human, would hope to produce – such as Achilles was to Peleus and Thetis.

Despite these antitheses, and the actual treatment of adulterous wives (who in the fifth century are not allowed to remain part of the *oikos*), the mythological fact remains that Helen *is* rehabilitated and reincorporated into hers. This can be explained in mythological terms on account of her half-divinity; she is, after all, the daughter of Zeus and this allows for a certain amount of moral flexibility. However, in this era and continuing well into the fifth century, the use of a vocabulary that strongly evokes erotic pursuit or abduction emphasises the recovery as a re-taming of Helen, to facilitate her return to the yokes of her original marital bed and *oikos*.

Helen's emotional and distressed response on Oltos' amphora (and in general in this era) may also have something to do with her having become one of the 'Trojan Women'. The plight of the conquered women, at the mercy of the conquering army, may begin to intrude in a more concrete way through the iconographic and gestural codes of the recovery scene type.[132] It is surely not coincidental that such animated image matrices are introduced to Athens in the face of a Persian threat on Attic soil. Furthermore, two of the cups, one by Onesimos (figs 3.16-3.17) and the other by Oltos (3.19-3.21) specifically depict the recovery in the context of the *Ilioupersis*, depicting other scenes of death and mayhem, including in both cases, the murders

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[131] Alc. fr. 42: 13.
[132] Pointed out by Schefold 1992: 289.

of Priam on the altar with the corpse of the young Astyanax, and Ajax's sacrilegious rape of Cassandra at the altar.

It was during this time that the *Ilioupersis* myth became a significant metaphor for wartime brutality.[133] We need look no further than the Kleophrades Painter's hydria[134] and its highly charged, violent and harrowing depictions of the sack of Troy. Connelly, in her discussion of Ajax and Cassandra scenes, describes a similar shift in the imagery and codes after 'the Great Persian massacres in the wake of the Ionian revolt of 499/498 brought stories of death, destruction and captivity home to Athens'.[135]

A more nuanced reading of the Foundry Painter's kylix recovery scene is also possible through considering the three scenes on the vessel in conjunction with each other. The narratives combine to evoke a generalised erotic subtext for this vessel. The scene on the reverse of the vessel (fig. 3.12) depicts the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus. A sleeping Ariadne reclines across the centre of the picture field, her torso and head raised, propped against the rocky outcrop. She wears a pleated *chiton*, but her feminine figure – the outline of her legs and breasts – are delineated through the fabric. Two divinities are present. Hermes stands on the left; as the god of travellers he signals that Theseus is about to leave the sleeping woman. On the right of the scene and hovering above Ariadne's head, is the luxuriously winged figure of Eros. His outstretched arms may be a protective gesture, signalling not the painful departure of love (Theseus) but the imminent arrival of new love (Dionysos). This interpretation is inescapable when one considers the vine growing as a backdrop to the scene. The fertile vine, bearing leaves and laden with fruit, prefigures Dionysos' actual arrival and bursts with the promise of new erotic experience – and auspicious marriage – for the sleeping woman.

The tondo of this cup adds a further dimension to this vase's fascinating discourse (fig. 3.11). A draped and veiled woman, properly averting her eyes, is being led by a man in civilian attire. He is bearded and holds a spear in his left hand, using his right hand to grip the wrist of the woman. The associations with force and marriage have already been observed in scenes that show the recovery of Helen. The absence of hostile imagery, however, means that this generic-looking pair may rather render a marriage procession, such as the marriage of Helen and Menelaus (as Ghali-Kahil asserts),[136] although Agamemnon and Briseis have also been suggested. The specific identity of this pair is not secure, nor is it ultimately important. What is

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[133] Boardman 1975: 94; Connelly 1993: 120.
[134] Attic red-figured hydria by the Kleophrades Painter, Naples 2422, c. 480.
[135] Connelly 1993: 120-121.
[136] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 67.

most relevant is that this scene, as well as the scenes on the outside of the kylix, evoke erotic themes – namely marriage, or concubinage, or at the very least, the idea of sexual taming and union.

5. Summary

In summary, the recovery of Helen has continued to fascinate the painters and their sympotic audience in this transitional era, though some aspects of the iconography and emotional discourses have shifted to embrace new interests and issues. The images dating c. 520-480 show a continued emphasis on Menelaus' active response, engendered through the emotion of *cholos*. This necessary anger now becomes an essential component of the ideology of the emerging 'citizen' identity – the hoplite. This is epitomised here in the panoply and the beautiful figure of Menelaus, now depicted with considerable care and attention to detail. This figure of Menelaus, his panoply, his sword and his gestural codes evoke the ideas of masculinity, courage, honour and need for vengeance that are consistent with the heroic ethos that remains important also in the fifth century.

Helen, on the other hand, demonstrates a new, and entirely appropriate, emotional response – *phobos* – made clear through her frantic gestures and tendency to not just react, but to supplicate and to flee. Such a response indicates the danger she, as an adulterous wife, finds herself in, and also reflects the unequal power relations between the two figures. She is at the mercy of both the conquering army, and her angry husband, a scenario that is consistent with the power dynamics of the ancient Greek world in general. However, the significant additions of the figures of Aphrodite and, in one instance, Eros, make explicit another emotional subtext – the erotic one – which was perhaps already detectable in the earlier black-figure scenes. The introduction of these figures at the start of the fifth century may point to an increasing emphasis on the emotional and erotic content of the marriage bond, which is here emphatically reinstated through the act of recovery. The social importance and civilising benefits of the institution of marriage will also be seen to become a preoccupation in the newly emerging democratic *polis* of the fifth century.

Fig. 3.1: Nikosthenic amphora potted by Pamphaios and painted by Oltos, Paris G 3. 1618, c. 520, obverse belly

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 237

Fig. 3.2: Nikosthenic amphora potted by Pamphaios and painted by Oltos, reverse

Fig. 3.3: Nikosthenic amphora potted by Pamphaios and painted by Oltos, handle

Image source: Boardman *ARFV* (Archaic) 1975: fig. 56

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.4: Tondo of a cup by the Marlay Painter, Ferrara 2482, the murder of Kassandra, c. 430.

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.5: Skyphos potted by Heiron, painted by Makron, Boston 13.186, c. 485, obverse

Image source:
http://condor.wesleyan.edu/courses/2002f/cciv210/01/image_resources/iliad_images/pages/690e.boston.13.186.htm

Fig. 3.6: Detail of skyphos potted by Heiron, painted by Makron, Boston 13.186, c. 485

Image source: Beazley Archive online

Fig. 3.7: Skyphos potted by Heiron, painted by Makron, Boston 13.186, c. 485, reverse

Fig. 3.8: Kylix by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter, Tarquinia RC 5291, c. 490

Fig. 3.9: Kylix by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter, detail of Menelaus

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.10: Kylix by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter, detail of Helen and Aphrodite (?)

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.11: Kylix by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter, tondo, marriage of Helen and Menelaus?

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 67

Fig. 3.12: Kylix by a painter in the manner of the Foundry Painter, Theseus abandons Ariadne

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.13: Skyphos by the Triptolemos Painter, Berlin 1970.9, c. 480, obverse

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 3.14: Skyphos by the Triptolemos Painter, Berlin detail of Apollo

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 3.15: Skyphos by the Triptolemos Painter, Berlin 1970.9, c. 480, reverse

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 3.16: Fragmentary kylix by Onesimos, previously Malibu 85.AE.385.2, now Villa Guilia, c. 500, detail of Helen, Menelaus and Eros

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.17: Fragmentary kylix by Onesimos, Ajax and Cassandra

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.18: Fragmentary kylix by Onesimos, drawing

Fig. 3.19: Fragmentary cup by Oltos, Malibu 80.AE. 154, c. 500, Helen lead by Menelaus, Priam on the altar

Image source: Author'sown

Fig. 3.20: Fragmentary cup by Oltos, Ajax and Cassandra

Fig. 3.21: Fragmentary cup by Oltos, Malibu, tondo, Polyxena (?)

Image source: Beazley archive online

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 3.22: Hydria by the Tyszkiewicz Painter, Munich 2425 (J 283), c. 480

Image source: Kahil-Ghali 1955: pl. 87.3

Fig. 3.23: Stamnos by the Painter of the Munich amphora, Tarquinia RC 2460, c. 500-480

Fig. 3.24: Fragment of a plate by Oltos, Odessa 21972, c. 500

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 312

Image source: Beazley archive online

CHAPTER 4

FROM ANGER TO DESIRE: HELEN'S RECOVERY C. 480-420

The fifth century painters adopted the image matrices set up by their predecessors in the late Archaic and early Classical periods, and their adoption attests to the success of such matrices. Continuity with these matrices is not surprising; influence between painters and workshops seems natural for a relatively small group of artisans who lived and worked in a small geographical area, in a medium that was, by modern standards, fairly conservative. Continuity with the previous era prompts Boardman to describe the early classical painters as 'sub-archaic' in style and mood.[1] Yet, while the succeeding fifth century painters adopt matrices already present in the early decades of the century, the particular emphasis of this era shifts to embrace a new set of emotional issues relevant to the ideology of the emerging polis, and in particular the ideologies of masculinity and femininity, and the relationship between these two.

1. Investigating the vases

The previous chapter has shown how some of the most successful early red-figure painters, such as Oltos, Makron and Onesimos, found the story of Helen's recovery worthy of representation and interesting for the pertinent issues it could articulate, but that there was some variety in image matrices. In particular the skyphos by Makron stands out for its sophisticated treatment of the recovery and its concomitant emotions. The red-figure recovery of Helen scenes from the era 480-420 are more numerous than earlier on; the narrative is explored on at least 40-50 vessels, though some of the vessels that are identified by Ghali-Kahil as red-figure recovery scenes are not securely identifiable.[2] Again the shape repertory reflects a sympotic context: at least fourteen vessels that bear this scene are kraters, there are ten amphorae, six hydriai, and three stamnoi. Other shapes include an oinochoe, a pelike, cups of different kinds, and fragments of a dinos. Although there are two non-sympotic vessels that feature this scene type (a lekythos and a pyxis), the majority of vases in this group are clearly created for the symposiast's gaze. The fact that there are recovery scenes by distinguished red-

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[1] Boardman 1989: 11.

[2] These vases fall within the various subsections of *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 237-336*bis.*

figure painters – such as the Berlin Painter, the Niobid Painter, the Polygnotos Group and the Persephone Painter – shows that the story remains a popular and compelling narrative in the Classical period.

2. Investigating the iconography

The fifth century painters' choices of image matrices include two main types discussed in the previous chapter; the so-called 'pursuit' of Helen with the sword, where Menelaus chases Helen while brandishing a sword, and the pursuit of Helen where Menelaus drops the sword, the so-called 'reversal'. The established scene types are rendered with variety; painters vary their combinations of contextual information (altars, columns, etc.), significant objects and attributes (swords, helmets, phialai and veils), personnel (Menelaus, Helen, Apollo, Aphrodite, Eros, etc.) and gestural codes (threatening with a sword, supplication using an outstretched arm, etc.). Also the preference for the particular scene type shifts during the course of the century; towards the middle of the century there is a distinct partiality for the 'reversal' type of scene, conceived in a particular way. This is a noteworthy trend, which brings with it, a distinct change in the emotional discourse of the recovery of Helen imagery. The popularity of the recovery in general peaks around 450 and thereafter it declines; after approximately 420 there is not a single extant Athenian example.

2.1 Pursuit

Between 480-460 the dominant recovery scene type is the hostile pursuit of Helen by her armed and angry husband Menelaus. The scene on a hydria by the Syriskos Painter in the British Museum (fig. 4.1 and 4.2),[3] dated to about 470, is continuous in many ways with the examples of pursuits in the previous chapter; though it is uninscribed, it is closely reminiscent of several aspects of the other scenes. The scene evokes the Oltos amphora recovery (fig. 3.1) in its composition and in its mood. Unlike the Oltos scene, however, it contains three figures: probably Menelaus, Helen and a woman. The male figure is placed at the left edge of the picture field. Dressed in an Attic helmet, modestly embellished *linothorax* and *himation*, and holding a sword, he advances to the right towards the two women. His left hand is extended straight out in front of him.

Directly in front of the well-dressed hoplite is the figure of a fleeing woman who turns back to supplicate her pursuer, with one hand positioned very close to the male figure's beard. This gesture was discussed in Chapter 3; outstretched arms, particularly with palms facing upwards,

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[3] London E 161, from Vulci, *ARV*[2] 262.41, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 50, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 248.

and especially when directed towards the face or beard of the other person, clearly signal supplication. The fingers of the fleeing woman's upturned hand are only centimetres from her attacker's beard (figure 4.2).[4] The proximity of her hand stresses the urgency of this entreaty. This woman, in all likelihood Helen, runs to the right towards the second female, who stands facing the pair, her arms also outstretched in entreaty. The highly expressive gesturing of both women in this scene strongly contributes to its emotional subtext. However, as the previous chapter discussed and as Naiden argues, merely asking for supplication does not mean that one's plea will be granted, and that the supplication will be successful.[5] Though both the women supplicate the man in an extreme manner – their arms stretched out to their furthest extent – there is, as in the Oltos amphora scene, no guarantee of their safety.

The male figure, who is being supplicated, cuts a particularly harsh and unsympathetic figure. As in the earlier recovery scenes, this has much to do with his hoplite appearance (helmet, *linothorax*, sword), the posture of his body and his gesture. Like the Oltos scene, the right arm that holds the sword is drawn back and has reached the point at which he may now thrust it forward. Unlike the Oltos scene, however, the right angle created by the hoplite's arm and the sword is particularly menacing, as is the length and direction of the blade. The gesture is both threatening, and yet well-controlled. The sword is pointed at the woman, its horizontal blade directing attention across the picture field towards its target.

The helmet depicted in this scene is of the Attic type, with cheek pieces retracted, as in several other examples encountered in the previous chapter. There I argued that the Corinthian helmet worn properly over the face, as was typical of the black-figure and some red-figure examples, gave Menelaus a particularly hostile appearance. The change in helmet type – from Corinthian to Attic – resulted in the face becoming more visible. This, I argued, had the potential to 'soften' the hostility of the scene to an extent and also allowed the married couple to make more obvious eye contact. However, in this particular example, the opposite effect is created through the careful depiction of facial expression. The combined details of the downturned moustache, the thin, curt line of the mouth and the narrow, almond-shaped eyes are enormously powerful and expressive; together they create a stern, tight-lipped and unforgiving look (figure 4.2). The emotional subtext of this scene – the immediacy and extent of the male protagonist's anger – is magnified through the artist's subtle, yet skilled manipulation of the paintbrush to create facial expression.

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[4] For example Thetis supplicates Zeus this way in Hom. *Il*. 1.500.
[5] Naiden 2006: 163-5. Naiden lists several examples of supplications that were rejected, including mythological and historical supplications.

Facial expression is notoriously scarce on Greek painted pottery, though not entirely absent. Some fifty years before the hydria scene by the Syriskos Painter, Exekias skilfully conveyed understated yet poignant grief by incising two furrows on Ajax's brow in his famous suicide scene (fig. 4.3).[6] Boardman describes the 'grimaces of the wounded' and refers to the well-known example of Achilles bandaging Patroklos' wound on the tondo of a red-figure cup in Berlin.[7] The giant Antaios clenches his teeth in the effort of the struggle on Euphronios' famous Louvre krater (fig. 4.4).[8] While some examples do occur, for the most part faces remain 'masklike' or expressionless in both black and red-figure painting.[9] Why this is the case is a complex question and can only be briefly examined here.

The scarcity of facial expression also occurs in sculpture of the sixth and the fifth centuries. In both media the neutral facial expression is arguably not a result of technical incompetence; the depiction of anatomical and facial details as well as drapery moves in the direction of 'naturalism' and the artists are increasingly capable of depicting lifelike features. Neither did the artists have an aversion to representing emotion *per se*. As I have argued, the vase-painters do manifestly depict emotion albeit through other means. I view the lack of facial expression as a deliberate choice; it is a preference. Stewart describes how, in sculpture, the neutral facial expression, combined with the body in action allows the *viewer* to psychologise the figure without the figure's face becoming permanently fixed in a perpetual grimace.[10] In this way the viewer can read the emotion without it impacting on the dignity of the figure. The potential ugliness of facial expression or its distorting effect on the facial features surely plays a role here.[11] It may be that the principles of *kalos k'agathos* and *sophrosyne* dictate this preference; in a society where beauty is prized and during an era when rationality is important, the distorting effects of facial expression may be avoided. The evasion of strong emotion conveyed through the face prevents the face from appearing grotesque.

In some cases, however, grotesque features are specifically required, as in the example of satyrs. These liminal creatures are sometimes portrayed with grimaces or expressions of playfulness or desire, but their grotesqueness mostly arises out of an exaggeration of features, rather than the naturalistic representation of facial expression. The facial expression of the

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[6] Boulogne 558, *ABV* 145.18, *Para* 60, *Add²* 40.
[7] Berlin 2278, *ARV²*, 21.1, 1620; *Para* 323, *Add²* 154, Boardman 2001: 243.
[8] Paris CP748, *ARV²* 1584, *Para* 322.
[9] Boardman 2001: 243.
[10] Stewart, A. E., personal communication 17 May 2011, Berkeley, California.
[11] I am grateful to Prof. Stewart for directing me to the fascinating 'character portraits' of F. X. Messerschmidt, where the grimaces and expressions show the way in which emotion appears absurd and grotesque in sculptural form.

hoplite on this hydria by the Syriskos Painter, however, is subtle and effective. His features do not become grotesque with anger, but the face retains its dignity and solemnity, and the anger remains appropriate. It is, in fact, an excellent example of the subtle use of facial detail to convey and intensify the emotion of the scene.

Another uninscribed vase by a contemporary painter approaching the Providence Painter (figs 4.5 and 4.6)[12] provides a useful point of comparison with the Syriskos Painter's *amphora*. This vase-painter spreads the scene of a warrior chasing a woman across the two picture fields of the amphora – obverse and reverse – a practice that is not unusual in this period, and fairly typical of the Providence Painter. Each figure occupies the full space available in the picture field. On one side a hoplite advances to the right (fig. 4.5). His attire, pose and general demeanour are aggressive; however he holds a massive round shield which sports the 'apron' that was sometimes used to protect the soldier's legs from missiles, while the Syriskos Painter's hoplite had no shield at all. On his own, this figure works well as a vignette of the beautiful hoplite warrior, as elaborated in the previous chapter.

However, on turning the vase around, one finds that there is also a narrative intention. The woman on the reverse (fig. 4.6) is fleeing in response to the hoplite's attack. She gestures dramatically back towards her attacker with one arm fully extended in supplicatory gesture, much like the Syriskos Painter's Helen, while the other hand grasps at the fabric of her *himation* with the gesture that recalls the fuller veil-gesture. The action of supplication again reveals that the woman is imagined to be in danger, and the outcome is uncertain.

Both of these scenes provide little in the way of explicit iconography for either Helen or Menelaus, however the language implicit in the scenes, as well as the emotional intensity, makes them strong contenders for the recovery of Helen. Other scenes, such as one on a Panathenaic amphora in Bologna by the Painter of the Florence stamnos (fig. 4.7)[13] are also viable through their similarity of matrix. These scenes all convey a similar sense of rage and urgency on the part of Menelaus, and on the part of the Helen, her fear and vulnerability are consistently conveyed through her fleeing and her gesture of supplication.

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[12] Alpine (New Jersey), *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 238*bis.*
[13] Bologna 154, *ARV*[2] 509.5, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 53.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 241.

One can also compare a fragment of a kalpis in Malibu by the Providence Painter (figs 4.8-4.9)[14] where Menelaus is about to unsheathe his sword from his scabbard in the manner of Menelaus on Makron's Boston skyphos (figs 3.5-3.6). Helen's gesture is, again, one of supplication, her hand extended so that it is very near to Menelaus' beard as on the Syriskos Painter's hydria. This is an interesting piece, not least of all because of two details that are only visible on close examination (fig. 4.9).[15] Between the fleeing Helen and pursing Menelaus, there is a low altar, above which there are the traces of flames, now barely visible, which would originally have been depicted in added paint. The presence of the altar adds to the supplicatory theme; emphasising that the context is probably some god's sanctuary or sacred *temenos*.

More intriguing though is that to the left of the altar one can faintly see the upper half of what was once the form of a child, now painted over in black glaze. One can make out that the child's right hand was raised with the palm facing the viewer, while the child's head was turned to look at Menelaus. This gesture is used in scenes where someone is under attack, in this context the gesture surely suggests distress or alarm, and is probably a plea for Menelaus to stop. Hamma argues that this is Eros;[16] however, careful scrutiny of the surface of the vase clearly shows that no wings were depicted. Also, one would expect to find an Eros fluttering at a higher register, as does the Onesimos Eros (fig. 3.16) and the later examples of Erotes discussed below. However there is no other example of this scene type that features a child; if it was the artist's intention to depict a child – Aganus, the child of Paris and Helen perhaps[17] – this would have been unique in extant Attic pottery. Why he changed his mind and painted out this figure is even more enigmatic.

Two slightly later vases (c. 460-450), both in Bologna, provide additional information that not only serves to contextualise and identify the narratives, but provides a more complex emotional subtext. The first vessel is a repaired volute krater by the Niobid Painter (figs 4.10-4.13).[18] This vase depicts the recovery of Helen in the context of the *Ilioupersis*, which is implied through the inclusion of the figures that are probably Aithra being rescued by Akamas, and Demophon on the left side of the scene. This identification is made on account of the age

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[14] Malibu 76.AE.44 *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 245. I am very grateful to Dr. David Saunders at the Getty Villa for the opportunity to examine this fragment closely.

[15] These details are observed by Hamma 1983: 123-124, shown in figure 2.

[16] Hamma 1983: 124. He argues that this is the earliest Eros in the recovery of Helen scene type, however the Onesimos fragments, also previously in the Getty and now in Rome, show an Eros, which is earlier than the Providence Painter's work.

[17] Apparently named by the poet of the *Cypria.*

[18] Bologna 269, *ARV*[2] 599.8, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 58.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 250.

– implied by the whiteness of the hair – of the woman. She is faced by two youthful hoplites, probably her grandsons: the Theseïdai. The scene is therefore more extensive in terms of its personnel than most of the other scenes studied thus far, and it also includes contextual signs and significant objects that contribute to its subtext.

The figures of Helen and Menelaus are shown in fairly standard pursuit mode: a hoplite who holds his shield with the left hand and his sword in the other one, launches after a fleeing woman. Menelaus wears a *chitoniskos* decorated with chevron patterns. A fragment bearing his face is missing but enough of his head is preserved to show that he was certainly helmeted. He also wears a baldric and greaves. Helen is carefully depicted, with particular attention given to her jewellery and her garments, especially her diaphanous but patterned *chiton*, through which outlines of her breasts can be seen (fig. 4.11). She wears fine earrings, necklace and a *stephane* on her head, and she clutches her *epiblema* shawl or veil with both hands. Her gesture is not one that immediately evokes supplication, but she raises the shawl or veil with her left hand with the familiar veil gesture, while pulling it closer to her body with the other hand.

The pair is in eminent company; several divinities are included in this scene. Standing between the attacking Menelaus and fleeing Helen is the unmistakable figure of Athena. She wears her aegis with gorgoneion, a decorated Attic helmet with cheek pieces retracted, and holds a spear in her left hand (fig. 4.12). She stares directly at Menelaus. Behind Helen is probably the figure of Apollo (fig. 4.13); he is youthfully unbearded, draped, wreathed, and holds a short staff with leafy sprigs at the top. Even further to the right, positioned under the handle stands a female figure, who is draped, wearing a *stephane* and holding a phiale in her hand. While it is possible that this is intended as Aphrodite, the iconography is not distinctive. Both the Aphrodite and Apollo figures hold their right hands up, with fingers pointing upwards and palm facing outwards in the direction of Helen and Menelaus. This gesture is very similar to that used by a woman on an Attic kylix which, based on other contextual signs, Boegehold describes as one 'of refusal or denial'.[19] Given the narrative context – the pursuit of Helen who runs towards sanctuary – a gesture of refusal or prohibition by these two divinities is likely to be the case here.

An array of significant objects is also included in the scene; a tripod is positioned between the heads of Menelaus and Athena, while behind Apollo there is a low altar, superimposed over a

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[19] Boegehold 1999: 32, fig. 23. The vase referred to is London E 51, by a painter in the manner of Douris.

taller statue base which supports a small naked male statue, which is facing to the front. This is likely a cult statue of Apollo. Combined with the tripod, Apollo himself with his staff and the altar, the ensemble must suggest the locus of this recovery as the sanctuary of Apollo.[20] The presence of Apollo and Athena, and the suggestion of the context of sanctuary, has already been noted in the previous chapter. The two divinities also occurred together in the scene on the cup by the Triptolemos Painter (figs 3.13-3.14). These figures both occur more frequently in recovery scenes in the period c. 460-450. It is likely, as Hedreen suggests and as discussed in the previous chapter, that the presence of these divinities in the scene points to Helen's general need for sanctuary, which makes them a significant part of the emotional vocabulary of the scene. They highlight the vulnerability and state of mind of Helen, as well as her dangerous situation. However the female figure with the phiale, if she is Aphrodite, has the dual function of representing the sanctuary of a god, and evoking the erotic subtext.

The erotic subtext becomes apparent in a scene on a fragmentary column krater in Bologna (fig. 4.14).[21] In this scene Menelaus chases Helen while two other women frame the pair on either margin. The female figure on the right raises her hand with the fingers up and palm outwards gesture, as observed in the previous scene. The most significant addition to this scene, however, is the pair of Erotes which are flying at eye-level on either side of Menelaus. Both gesture towards him with their hands, and in particular the Eros on the right gestures towards Menelaus' eyes (perhaps even with a phiale?[22]). Here the erotic subtext, with or without the presence of Aphrodite, is obvious. The painter not only suggests that Menelaus will become re-enamoured with his wife, but the proximity of the Erotes to his face tells us something of the mechanism that is understood to operate in erotic contexts – that is the connection between *eros* (erotic desire) and *opsis* (vision). Although the earlier pursuit scenes from this era retain the hostility and drama of those of the transitional era, towards the middle of the fifth century they culminate in a more overt erotic subtext, where the outcome of the chase is clearly stated. The next category – the reversal – makes the outcome of the chase explicit.

2.2 Reversal

From 470 the recovery scene type adopts a significant motif that was introduced in the previous chapter; the dropped sword. It is indeed a graphic and effective visual motif that signals, unequivocally, the change of Menelaus' intention to kill his wife.[23] This potent visual

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[20] Similarities with the Berlin Painter's scene will be discussed below.
[21] Bologna 235; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 56.1, *ARV*[2] 517.6, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 251.
[22] The condition of the vase and the lack of clear photographs make this difficult to make out.
[23] Hedreen 1996: 167.

motif is observed c. 500 in the fragmentary cup by Onesimos (fig. 3.13), but it is found only this once in the extant vases of the late Archaic period. It only reappears in the early Classical period, about 30 years later. The sword is depicted dropping to the ground, or in some cases already lying on the ground, having left what is now the obviously empty right hand of Menelaus.

In isolation the dropped sword simply designates a change in intention. The detail of the open hand and dropped sword takes the scene out of the realm of speculation to produce 'a resolved narrative'.[24] Helen will be safe. The fact that this reversal type outdoes the pursuit type (i.e. without reversal) in popularity in the middle and later part of the century suggests a preference for the 'resolved narrative', rather than the tension of earlier scenes where the outcome is not assured. However, the motif becomes more interesting and meaningful when read in combination with other objects and personnel. We gain insight into the discourses, and particular points of interest in the narrative by exploring the other visual information.

After Onesimos, the motif is adopted by the Berlin Painter on two vases (figs 4.15-16[25] and 4.17)[26] and possibly a third,[27] as well as by painters like the Altamura Painter (fig. 4.18),[28] the Florence Painter (fig. 4.19),[29] and Polygnotos and his group (figs 4.20;[30] 4.21;[31] 4.22;[32] and 4.23[33]). All these painters consistently depict a familiar-looking bearded, hoplite-style Menelaus, equipped with helmet, large round hoplite shield which is prominently held, and a decorated tunic or *linothorax*. He is, as in the imagery before, chasing a woman; however the sword is now noticeably detached from his grip. Menelaus' hand is open with fingers widely spread to emphasise both the drama of the action and the emptiness of the hand, while the sword itself has just left the hand and is plunging through the air towards the ground.

Menelaus, for the most part, is not much changed from how he is depicted in the pursuit scenes; however there is some variety in the other details of these scenes. In particular, Helen's gestures vary more noticeably between the different painter's versions of the scene, as

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[24] Burn 1991: 120.
[25] An amphora in Vienna 741, *ARV*[2] 203.101, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 57.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 260.
[26] An amphora in Naples 126053, *ARV*[2] 202.88, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 59.1-2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 261.
[27] Three fragments of a stamnos are attributed to the Berlin Painter by Beazley, but the Achilles Painter by Oakley (Beazley Archive online). Oxford 1965.123 (Northwick Park, coll. Spencer-Churchill), *ARV*[2], 208.154, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 60.1-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 262.
[28] London E263; *ARV*[2] 594.54, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 62.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène'' cat. 264.
[29] Ferrara 2688 (T 577 VT), *ARV*[2] 541.3, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 61, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 263.
[30] The shoulder of a hydria in Rome, Torlonia, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 57.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 270.
[31] A bell krater Ferrara 4098 (T 53); *ARV*[2] 1054.46, Ghali-Kahil 1955: 88 no 64, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 266.
[32] Athens 14983, *ARV*[2] 1032.60, Ghali-Kahil 1955: 89 no 67, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 269.
[33] Nestoris fragment, Malibu 81.AE.183B, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 276.

do the contextual signs or personnel that are included or omitted. Particular examples can elucidate some of these differences in emphasis, strategy and emotional subtext. On the Berlin Painter's neck amphora in Vienna for example (fig. 4.15-4.16), Helen is heavily draped, and she wears a pleated *shaal* (shoulder-length) veil[34] on her head, as well as a *stephane*. The effect created is similar to the Helen on an amphora by the Painter of Leningrad 702 in Naples, where the *himation* or *pharos* veil is equally voluminous and similar in effect.[35] The Helen who is being chased on the other vase by the Berlin Painter, also in Naples (fig. 4.17) is, however unveiled, though her himation is present, draped across her body and under her left arm. Like the earlier Providence Painter vase (figs 4.5-4.6), the scene is spread across the two sides of the vessel.

A change in Helen's gestural codes can be observed from the previous pursuit scene types. Now Helen no longer supplicates Menelaus, though there is no specific configuration of arms and hands that is consistently used by the painters. In the first scene by the Berlin Painter (fig. 4.16), Helen's left arm is bent at the elbow and covered by her *himation* while she gestures more emphatically with the right hand. Here the outstretched arm with palm turned upwards *is* still that of supplication; however the intended recipient of this plea is not Menelaus since he is behind her. Her hand is instead directed towards a small cult statue of a divinity (probably Apollo) which is directly in her path. In this scene, Helen has become a suppliant of the divinity, not her angry husband.

Similar to this example, in the second Berlin Painter scene (fig. 4.17) Helen's left hand also gestures in the opposite direction from where Menelaus is assumed to be pursuing her (though he is on the other side of the vase). In this example though, her right hand is raised upwards with the palm turned inwards towards Helen's own face, a gesture which appears in other pursuits (for example on a pyxis in Cambridge that shows Zeus chasing Aegina).[36] In another scene by the Altamura Painter, Helen's right arm is bent at the elbow with the palm facing the viewer (fig. 4.18) and in yet another, Helen raises both hands, bending them at the elbows but with her palms facing each other, almost as though she were clapping (fig. 4.21). All of these hand gestures used by Helen, and now, also by female companions, designate alarm; an animated, emotive and distressed state. In some of the recovery scenes, however, Helen also holds the skirt of her tunic with one hand (fig. 4.18), or both hands (fig. 4.19).[37] She may use her hands to control her *himation* or *epiblema* shawl, or gesture with it as on the

[34] Llewellyn-Jones 2003:56
[35] Naples H 3129, *ARV* 1194.6, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 58.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 271.
[36] Cambridge GR 10.1934; Ferrari 2002: pl. 87.
[37] Ferrara 2688 (T 577 VT), *ARV*^{2} 541.3, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl 61, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 263.

fragmentary hydria by Polygnotos in Athens (fig. 4.22)[38] and the shoulder of the hydria by the Polygnotos Group in Rome (fig. 4.20).[39] These gestures are all typically used by women on red-figure vases in a variety of scene types that involve danger of some kind.[40]

The contextual information and personnel of these scenes also vary, dependant to an extent on the possibilities offered by the picture field but also by the artist's own approach towards and interest in the story. These scenes may typically include an altar, already observed in earlier red-figure scenes. On the Berlin Painter's neck-amphora (fig. 4.15-16) Helen is running towards a meaningful ensemble of items, reminiscent of but not identical to those on the right side of the scene on the Niobid Painter's volute krater (fig. 4.13). Directly in front of Helen and positioned so that her foot overlaps it, is a low altar. Behind the altar stands a higher statue base that supports the small statue mentioned above. The statue, depicted in profile, is *kouros*-like in its youthful, naked, and long-haired appearance as well as its pose; the arms are down and close to the hips, and one foot is in advance of the other. The Niobid Painter's statue on the other hand is depicted frontally, appears to be short-haired, and wreathed, but is similarly youthful. In the Berlin Painter's scene there is also a rudimentary tree with four leafy branches; trees are often indicative of sanctuaries. This combination of signs must again indicate the locus of the recovery to be the sanctuary of Apollo; the youthful statue and the tree which could be read as a laurel tree strengthen the association with this god, and help to designate the sanctuary as his.

The likelihood that this set of contextual information points towards the sanctuary of Apollo is bolstered by the appearance of the god himself in other contemporary scenes. Four other reversal type recovery scenes now include Apollo with more certainty: the hydria and the bell krater scenes by the Polygnotos Group (figs 4.20 and 4.21), the Florence Painter's krater (fig. 4.19), and a volute krater painted by the Painter of London E 470.[41] In these examples Apollo is identifiable through his youthful, unbearded face, long hair, draped himation, laurel wreath (or fillet) around his head, and his laurel staff – differentiated from an ordinary staff through the leafy sprigs at the top. In both of the Polygnotos Group scenes he also carries an item associated with archery; on the hydria he holds a bow in his left hand, while on the bell krater he holds an arrow in the right hand. The combined iconographic signals are enough to securely

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[38] Athens 14983, *ARV*² 1032.60, Ghali-Kahil 1955: 89 no 67, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 269.
[39] Rome, Torlonia, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 57.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 270.
[40] Compare a fleeing Io on Genoa 1145, the various gestures of the Nereids and Thetis on Munich 8738 and women being chased by Theseus(?) on Krefeld 1034.1515, to name only a few examples.
[41] Los Angeles A5933.51.108, *ARV*² 615.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 62.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 267.

identify the god in these scenes. In addition to the iconography, in the hydria scene, four of the eight figures are inscribed with names, and Apollo is one of these.

Towards the middle of the century, the dropped sword motif is used more frequently in combination with the figures of Aphrodite and Eros (or *erotes*) and their paraphernalia. Already mentioned above is Eros' presence in the scene on Onesimos' cup; but unless the small figure on the fragment of the kalpis by the Providence Painter in Malibu is actually an Eros, he only re-appears in the extant scenes in about 470-60. Aphrodite on the other hand was clearly identified on the Makron skyphos through an inscription. She also becomes a more emphatic presence towards the middle of the century where she is associated with more definite iconography. Often Aphrodite and Eros are paired in these scenes.

The shoulder scene of the Polygnotos Group hydria in Rome (fig. 4.20) combines several meaningful iconographic elements that give the scene its own particular emphasis. In addition to the dropped sword – which in this scene has been dramatically cast aside rather than dropped – and the inscribed Apollo figure with his wreath, staff and bow, there are other new and important iconographic imports. On the ground between Menelaus' running legs is a tripod which lies on its side. A tripod is also included on the krater by the Niobid Painter (fig. 4.10), though this one is the right way up, suspended in the picture field between Menelaus and Athena. On an obvious narrative and symbolic level, the tripod may serve as another indicator of the sanctuary of Apollo since tripods are closely connected with his worship, though not often depicted as his attribute in art. However on the hydria its upturned position is not by chance; it creates a subtext and atmosphere of disorder. Apollo is present. He stands behind Helen, and looks on as the recovery unfolds; however he is not the only divinity in the scene, nor is he the one who is most directly involved in the action. Positioned between estranged husband and wife is another female figure, surely Aphrodite. She is without an inscription but holds a sceptre in her left hand and a phiale in her right: the sceptre is more typical of Aphrodite than the phiale but neither is unique to her.[42]

As in Makron's skyphos scene, Aphrodite's presence here signals that she has a vested interest in the reunion between husband and wife, but in these scenes that show the reversal, it is clear that her intervention has already prevented Menelaus from killing Helen. Her method of intervention is implied in her gesture; she lifts the phiale towards Menelaus' face. A fragmentary stamnos in Bologna (figs 4.24-25)[43] uses a similar scheme to Polygnotos' Rome

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[42] Carpenter 1991: 43.
[43] Bologna 175, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 67.1-2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 282.

example; Menelaus pursues Helen, and Aphrodite, now crowned, stands between the couple, holding a sceptre and raising a phiale to the level of Menelaus' face, particularly his eyes. While in some earlier scenes, a woman (Aphrodite) directed attention towards the face of *Helen*,[44] highlighting no doubt her famous and seductive beauty, from 460 onwards the recovery of Helen scenes show a particular interest in *Menelaus'* face, especially his eyes.

The general interest in the face has been discussed above; however, this new group of scenes more emphatically stresses the importance of Menelaus' face and eyes. In particular, the phiale directed at the eyes is a significant and meaningful action that indicates more specifically *how* Aphrodite has catalysed a change of heart in Menelaus. Dipla suggests that it both evokes a superstitious practice and 'pictorialises the charm that Helen has cast on Menelaus'.[45] This may be so, though I have not found any evidence of a specific practice such as this one.[46] This is clearly a rhetorical device; the phiale*, more likely, is the concretisation of the process involved, an indication that the recovery will be made through love, or more specifically desire, which will be catalysed through the eyes, through the process of looking.

In another comparable scene by Polygnotos on the nestoris fragment in Malibu (fig. 4.23),[47] Aphrodite stands between the pair and holds, not a phiale, but the fluttering Eros himself. The feet of his diminutive body balance in her hand, while his arms are pointed directly towards Menelaus' face. A column krater in Tübingen by a painter approaching the Leningrad Painter (4.26-7)[48] uses the same motifs; Menelaus pursues Helen, who flees, while Aphrodite holds out, at eye-level, the figure of Eros rather than a phiale, and Menelaus drops his sword in response. On several vases however, the elements of Aphrodite, Eros and phiale are combined. On a fragment of a phiale by the Chicago Painter (fig. 4.28)[49] Aphrodite holds Eros, who in turn holds the phiale which he directs towards Menelaus' face. On another fragment in Boston (fig. 4.29),[50] however, now has Eros detached from Aphrodite's hand, wreathed and hovering above Menelaus with the phiale.

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[44] Makron's skyphos (fig. 3.3), the Copenhagen Painter's dinos fragment (Princeton 86-34, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 278) and the Syriskos Painter's hydria (fig. 6.5).
[45] Dipla 1997: 124.
[46] Using Faraone's book as a guide. Despite the ubiquity of different kinds of aphrodisiacs and love magic, the only love magic involving eyes includes transferring the eyes of a bat into the eye sockets of a clay dog, which are then pierced with needles to induce a state of erotic insomnia in a particular person. (Faraone 1999: 66)
[47] Malibu 81.AE.183B, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 276.
[48] Tübingen 67.5806, *ARV*[2] 585.27, *Para* 393, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 265.
[49] Brauron, *ARV*[2] 631.42, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 63.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 279.
[50] Boston, coll. Blakey Vermeule, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 279 *bis.*

Several examples now use this model, and Aphrodite need not even be present in the scene for the same connotations to apply. A lekythos in St. Petersburg (figs 4.30-32)[51] presents a particularly explicit and interesting example. Menelaus, in hoplite panoply, rushes at Helen who is fleeing, her hair hangs loosely and she wears a voluminous veil. Between the two is the hovering Eros who carries the phiale as before. However, clearly indicated through lines of added red paint are two streams of liquid that are being poured from the phiale into Menelaus' eyes (fig. 4.32). This language is overt and unambiguous; Menelaus' anger is in the process of being stilled, his rage converted to forgiveness through the force of *eros*, made possible through *opsis* (seeing).

The Menelaus Painter's Louvre bell krater (figs 4.33)[52] is a fascinating example that takes the iconography and these ideas on vision to their ludicrous extreme. This scene still features Aphrodite with her sceptre, but she stands inactively on the left margin of the scene. She is a mere observer now. Helen occupies a prominent and central position in the picture field. A winged Eros, armed with a phiale, flies at Menelaus as in the other examples. However, this Menelaus not only drops his sword at the sight of Helen, but cowers behind his shield. His face is not visible at all, either to the viewer of the vase or to Helen, and the only conclusion to be drawn is that he is desperately *avoiding* looking at her, so as not to be affected by her bewitching beauty, or her penetrating eyes, or Eros's power – probably all three. Helen's expression is determined; she directs her eyes at Menelaus in a way that is daunting to say the least.

In this particular scene, the balance of power has shifted firmly in Helen's direction. Helen is no longer simply reactive, but an active, powerful force. The danger is not perceived in relation to *her* precarious or vulnerable position, but in relation to that of Menelaus. Now *he* appears to be in danger while she is terrifying, both are probably also comical. The ancient viewer would surely have read this active and threatening woman and the cowering, completely faceless hero as utterly ridiculous. This Menelaus has become the antithesis of the beautiful, active hoplite who exacts revenge with precise, controlled rage. He is the paradigm of *anandreia*.[53] This vase scene may resonate with a similar humour as empowered female characters beating up magistrates would seem to the (male) audience of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*: ludicrous and hilarious.

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[51] St. Petersburg 4524, *ARV*[2] 1194.7, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 62.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 272.
[52] Paris G424, *ARV*[2] 1077.5, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 63.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 268.
[53] McNiven 2000: 83.

Another yet later scene, which surely also has a humorous intention, is on a fine krater in Toledo (Ohio), painted by the Persephone Painter (fig. 4.35)[54] and dated to around 440-430. The recovery scene displays an image matrix that is thoroughly familiar to its audience: an armed, bearded warrior, with a helmet that reveals rather than masks his facial features – in particular, his eyes – chases a draped woman who rushes for sanctuary, as indicated through the altar and the tree. She turns back to look at him and their eyes meet. In this scene there are two essential differences from most of the preceding scenes. First, the painter has opted to depict neither Eros nor Aphrodite, and second, Helen's peplos is now clearly open all the way down her side to reveal the beautiful and sensual body beneath. The exposure of Helen's body may have the treble function of showing disarray, accentuating the sensual body of Helen and hinting at the sexual reunion that will take place as Menelaus reclaims his wife, as well as his conjugal rights to her. Menelaus, confronted with the beauty – and also alluring sexuality – of his wife, drops his sword. His expression is wide-eyed, and he looks somewhat like the proverbial rabbit in the headlights. Through modern eyes at least, I cannot help regarding this scene as most amusing, and it is likely that the ancient viewer would have done likewise.

One of the latest Attic scenes that shows the recovery of Helen is on a much discussed oinochoe by the Heimarmene Painter, dating between 430-420 (fig. 4.37).[55] This inscribed scene has a naked but helmeted Menelaus rushing across the picture field in the direction of an animated and alarmed Helen, who stops just in front of a statue of Athena. Between the pair stands a calm Aphrodite, who looks at the fluttery figure of Eros, who in turn flies at Menelaus. Eros holds a wreath rather than a phiale, though he is still on eye level with Menelaus. Menelaus is dressed in full panoply though without his tunic or cuirass; he is rather ridiculous in his nakedness. What may have registered as 'heroic nudity' in another context, fails to do so here. His exaggeratedly upright, running posture makes the entire event appear comical.

Menelaus has already changed his mind; the discarded sword is by now cast behind him. An interesting addition to this scene is the figure that stands on the left margin holding a tendril; she is Peitho (inscribed) and she turns her head to the left, away from the scene that is unfolding. This is the only secure identification of Peitho in the recovery of Helen scenes, and for this reason her presence is significant. Peitho has little in the way of distinctive iconography; she sometimes holds feminine *accoutrements,* but not uniquely, therefore she is

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[54] Toledo (Ohio) 67.154, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 274.
[55] Vatican H525 (16535), *ABV*[2] 1173, *Add*[2] 339, Para 460, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 272*bis.*

only securely identifiable when there is an inscription present.[56] She appears frequently in the company of Aphrodite, and Eros, and a host of other personifications of abstract concepts such as Himeros, Pothos, Paidia, Eunomia, *et al.*,[57] particularly in certain scenes of the later fifth and fourth centuries. Her close attachment to Aphrodite and Eros makes sense; she embodies a crucial aspect of Aphrodite's (and Eros') power; desire and seduction are, essentially, a kind of persuasion.

Peitho is present also in abduction of Helen scenes, for example on the famous skyphos by Makron (figs 5.6-5.7)[58] which is explored in detail in Chapter 5. In this recovery scene however, her presence can easily be justified. Persuasion has played a role in preventing the husband who was intent on killing his wife from doing so; erotic persuasion or seduction has affected that reversal. It is curious that in this scene she looks away from Menelaus and it may be, as Dipla says, that the direction of her face signals that her work is already accomplished.[59]

2.3 Pursuit and reversal: synopsis

The iconography of the Recovery of Helen scenes in this era is consistent with that of the transitional era to an extent, using similar matrices and articulating similar emotions, particularly in the first half of the century. However the increased interest in the presence of Aphrodite and Eros, as well as the popularity of the dropped sword motif shows that the recovery shifts its meaning to elaborate on a new emotional, erotic vocabulary. Here the change of heart is specifically ascribed to love, but to use terminology even more precisely – *eros* – erotic desire that is caused or facilitated through the process of looking. In the previous chapter I disagreed with Dipla who prefers to read the divinities Aphrodite and Eros as representative of a more generalised feeling of 'love' that overcomes Menelaus, on account of which he forgives Helen – not as a 'reaction to a sexual impulse'.[60] In this chapter, I continue to read these icons and figures much more strongly, as forces or manipulators of emotions, and even as potentially dangerous.

3. Reading the vases: The literary-narrative context

The key literary accounts that describe or refer to the recovery of Helen have been introduced in Chapters 2 and 3. To summarise briefly, these narratives related either a confrontation between husband and estranged wife, which resulted in him (or others) leading her back to

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[56] Shapiro 1993: 186-207.
[57] Borg 2005 for example in the works of the Meidias Painter, his circle and the Eretria Painter.
[58] Boston 13.186, *ARV*² 458.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4 and 48, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat.166 and 243.
[59] Dipla 1997: 124.
[60] *Ibid.*: 125.

the ships, or a chase to a sanctuary, where Menelaus, though intent on killing Helen, dropped his sword on account of *eros.* The dropping of the sword was also specifically connected, in the versions of some authors, with a glimpse of Helen's breast. In the *Andromache* Peleus blames Menelaus for losing his purpose when he laid eyes on her, specifically her breast,[61] as discussed in the previous chapter.

This particular act of looking draws attention to the process of *opsis* or vision, highlighting the increasing interest in the role of the eroticised gaze in male-female relationships during this century. As the iconographic investigation of the recovery scenes has shown, attention is now often paid to the eyes and face of *Menelaus*, who even, having seen his wife, forgets his resolve to kill her. But the idea of the power of *Helen's* gaze has also become increasingly important to the tale as told in the literature and art in the later Classical period. Hekabe, in the *Trojan Women,* for example, advises Menelaus to kill Helen quickly before being bewitched by her, since she ensnares men's eyes, causes their cities to be destroyed and their homes burned (αἱρεῖ γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ὄμματ᾽, ἐξαιρεῖ πόλεις, πίμπρησιν οἴκους).[62] Earlier in the play, Andromache also cursed Helen's καλλίστων… ὀμμάτων (beautiful eyes) that brought shameful ruin to famed Troy.[63]

It is also important to note that the literary versions of the recovery discussed in the earlier chapters, have chiefly presented what is a flattering portrait of Menelaus; he is the wronged husband, who reclaims what is his – his wife and his honour – through justifiable force. However, an alternative, comical or ineffectual, Menelaus, as identified in some of the vase images of this era, is also presented in certain literary sources. This is so in Attic drama, specifically in the enigmatic 'tragedy', Euripides' *Helen*, a play has little in common with other fifth century tragedies, but is more akin to New Comedy.[64] Austin terms this play 'the final revision'; after Steischorus and Herodotus had both revised the traditional Helen, Euripides seems to provide, in a way, his own palinode, rehabilitating the character of Helen and revising the narrative account of her abduction and recovery even further. In the *Helen,* Helen's character is completely changed from the vituperative traditions discussed before. In this play a dignified, resourceful and blameless Helen emerges; she was never living with Paris in Troy as a Trojan princess, but in Egypt.[65] The war itself was fought over an εἴδωλον – a phantom.[66] The real, long-suffering and faithful Helen has been held in Egypt by Proteus' son, the

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[61] E. *Andr*. 627-631.
[62] E. *Tr*. 890-894.
[63] E. *Tr*. 773-5.
[64] Austin 1994: 139.
[65] Helen delivers the play's prologue herself, providing all the background detail. E. *Hel*. 1-67.
[66] E. *Hel*. 35.

tyrannical Theoclymenos, who is intent on marrying her.[67] This Helen is the antithesis of the parading and frivolous Helen – hated by all – who appears in the *Trojan Women*.

However, as marked as the difference between these two Helens, is the difference in Menelaus. In the *Helen* the distinctly anti-heroic Menelaus is shown to be at a complete loss. After being shipwrecked, he has lost virtually everything, though he still has the insubstantial phantom Helen in his custody.[68] His opening lines in the play are not assertive or manly, but he woefully laments his very existence, stating that it would have been better if he had never been born at all.[69] Menelaus is ashamed and self-conscious of the rags he is wearing; he shrinks from speaking to respectable people on account of his vagrant-like appearance.[70] He is not the beautiful and confident hero of epic. In this play, he is subjected to further humiliation and indignities. He presents himself to the palace doorkeeper – an old woman – as a ναυαγὸς (castaway) and a ξένος (stranger or guest) and as ἀσύλητον γένος (a supplicant).[71] But rather than being impressed by Menelaus' credentials, the doorkeeper physically attacks him in a scene that must have been an amusing piece of stagecraft.[72] The great Menelaus of the *Iliad*, sacker of Troy, is in this context reduced to a nobody. Though Menelaus claims recourse to his sword at several moments in the play, he does not actually act on any of these statements. Rather than being the man of action, the play actually unfolds according to Helen's highly successful escape plot.[73] Inverting the audience's expectations, this Helen is active and assertive, while Menelaus is reactive and mostly ineffectual. This play presents an important perspective that calls Menelaus' masculinity into question, reflecting the same kind of playful reversal of manly *andreia* and *sophrosyne* found, I would argue, in several of the vase images of the fifth century.

4. Reading the vases: The cultural-semantic context

The shifts in emotional emphasis in the recovery scenes are revealing when read against the backdrop of the emerging *polis* and its ideologies; particularly those related to the attributes and ethics of manhood and womanhood, and the relationship between the two. It is a well-established fact that Ancient Athenian society was strongly 'gendered' in that political, social, and familial roles were dictated to a large extent by one's gender.[74] Emotion and behaviour too were gendered; as previous studies have tabled, the depiction and display of emotion in

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[67] E. *Hel*. 63-64.
[68] E. *Hel*. 386-414.
[69] E. *Hel*. 386-395.
[70] E. *Hel*. 415-420.
[71] E. *Hel*. 449.
[72] E. *Hel*. 451.
[73] E. *Hel*. 1032-1106.
[74] Many studies relating to this topic exist, including Stears 1998, Stansbury-O'Donell 2006, McNiven 2000, and Bremmer 1991.

Greek imagery (and in Greek society in general) is by no means consistent across all social categories. Emotion and its display are bound by certain cultural constraints set up by expectations of what is appropriate to one's gender, age, class or ethnicity.

McNiven's study of gestures in Athenian vase painting shows how gestures, as signs of behaviour, differentiate 'the adult male ruling class in Athens' from categories of the 'Other'.[75] Specifically, he argues, the Athenian adult male citizen of the fifth century defined himself in opposition to 'negative role models' with reference to two key virtues: *andreia* (manliness) and *sophrosyne* (self-control).[76] *Sophrosyne* encapsulates both moderation and rational self-restraint and emerges as a crucial tenet of democratic political and social ideology during the century.[77] The presence of these virtues (or their lack) can be perceived in vase imagery through gestural codes. The adult male citizen is depicted as active, rather than reactive; he is taking decisive action in the narrative. He is further defined through courageous behaviour, which is often difficult to identify specifically, except through reverse, or cowardly, behaviour. Being courageous could simply mean standing one's ground, and *not* showing fear, which in turn is usually indicated through tell-tale gestures of supplication and alarm.[78] Such a response of fear and powerlessness would, however, be deemed entirely appropriate as a womanly response to a dangerous situation.

The scenes that show the pursuit of Helen from the early part of the fifth century, then, render the appropriate emotional responses of Menelaus and Helen in a consistent manner. The matrix works well as a paradigm of emotional response to *moicheia*; a dominant, active and hostile Menelaus and an emotive yet physically and emotionally vulnerable Helen serve to reiterate the ideology of male strength and justifiable revenge, as discussed in the previous two chapters. Here, through the gestural codes of Menelaus, *andreia* and *sophrosyne* can be observed in action, making it possible to read him as the epitome of the male hoplite citizen.

The reversal scene type however reflects a distinct shift in the emotional subtext, particularly towards the middle and later part of the century. These artists continue to depict Menelaus' rage and desire for punishment and revenge, but increasingly they tend to focus on the reversal of his intention, and progressively they account for it through figures, icons, contextual features and significant objects. The inclusion of Apollo (and divinities in general) in these scenes has been interpreted by Dipla as indicators of Menelaus' *sophrosyne.* While

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[75] McNiven 2000: *passim.*
[76] *Ibid.*: 71.
[77] Dipla 1997: 124.
[78] McNiven 2000: 77

Menelaus' palpable rage was unproblematic, in fact, considered laudable in the sixth and early fifth century recovery scenes, the mid-fifth century vase-painters tend to prefer the dropped sword and a resolved narrative. This may be because the fifth century audience problematized the extent or appropriate display of anger. The male citizen should not be overwhelmed by his *pathe*, but seek to be rational and stable, according to philosophical discourses of Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle. The late fifth century and fourth century philosophers reiterate the need for controlling and regulating the emotions and pleasures, specifically highlighting the importance of the role of the intellect.[79]

Dipla suggests that a demonstration of *sophrosyne* accounts for the popularity of the reversal scene type particularly when the dropped sword motif is combined with divinities and sanctuaries.[80] Castriota discusses how the story of the *Ilioupersis* may be used to similar effect on the Parthenon, the iconic monument of the fifth century. The damaged recovery of Helen metope (NM 24-25) originally showed Helen taking refuge at the Palladion.[81] Dipla argues that by dropping the sword in the presence of divinities, Menelaus has been able to avoid 'a hubristic act', claiming that in the fifth century, such imagery is designed to 'extol this sense of moderation as essentially Greek'.[82]

There are several problems with this hypothesis as applied to these vase images. The first difficulty is in the behaviour and appearance of Menelaus: a fully armed and armoured, angry, hoplite-citizen who is still in the process of rushing at his errant wife, suddenly tosses away his sword with a dramatic gesture in what looks like an impetuous act. This is not a picture of self-restraint and it is difficult to see how an ancient Athenian audience would have read it that way. That this act demonstrates self-restraint is incongruous to an audience well versed in the protocols of war craft and *sophrosyne*. When Athena convinces Achilles to restrain his wrath in the first book of the *Iliad*, for example, he places his sword back into its scabbard, he does not toss it on the ground.[83] A beautiful pictorial representation of a sword returned to its scabbard is on the fragment of a Roman relief in Malibu (fig. 4.38).[84] Though Hamma's identification of the hoplite as Menelaus seems a bit fanciful and the example is of course from a different context and era when compared with the images on Attic pottery, the relief still presents what

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[79] Skinner 2005: 133.
[80] Dipla 1997: 124
[81] Castriota 1992: 165-174; also mentioned by Dipla 1997: 124, fn. 61.
[82] Dipla 1997: 124.
[83] *Il.* 1.215-220.
[84] Malibu 75.AA.113.

the iconography could possibly have been had the artists wanted to depict Menelaus' self-restraint.[85]

Second, Dipla does not specify what this hubristic act would have been. She could mean the killing of a wife, or the act of killing someone who is *asylos,* by virtue of being in a sanctuary. It is true that there were legal restrictions on the killing of an adulterous wife. It was discussed in the previous chapter that legal speeches from the late fifth and fourth centuries tell us that while a male adulterer caught in the act in the marital home which he had invaded could be summarily executed by the aggrieved husband, adulterous wives were not allowed to be killed in the same way.[86] They were subject to other treatment, divorce was one such punishment. However, Cohen believes that such restrictions had much to do with trying to curb the levels of 'self-help' or blood feud kind of justice of earlier times, and it is likely that moral opinion, especially among men – still the primary viewers of these particular vases – would have sympathised with Menelaus' murderous intent. The audience's sympathy would probably lie with a husband, who would suffer shame through his wife's act of adultery; in the eyes of his community he was, as her moral guardian and head of the household, something of a cuckold.[87]

The killing of a person in a sanctuary would on the other hand have, in general, been regarded as hubristic, regardless of who was murdered, and this is most likely what Dipla means. However, while plenty of other acts of sacrilege do occur at Troy, sacrilege does not emerge as an issue in the literary texts related to the *recovery* of Helen (the abduction is another matter!). Hedreen's suggestion about the general need for sanctuary still makes the best sense here for the inclusion of divinities like Athena and Apollo, sanctuaries and religious paraphernalia.

As the iconographic analysis has shown, many of these recovery scenes – and particularly those showing the reversal of intention – crucially contain Aphrodite and Eros, who are very different divinities from Athena and Apollo. This is a further reason for the incompatibility of these images with Dipla's argument of *sophrosyne.* Their increasing appearance in the middle and late fifth century suggests a more emphatic interest in the power of Eros itself, and in its

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[85] Hamma 1983: 126-7.

[86] Cohen 1991: 106. He is discussing Lysias *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* 30-34 on the law of justifiable homicide, but points out that there were key restrictions that had to be adhered to, otherwise the husband could be prosecuted for homicide.

[87] Cohen 1991: 82 refers to the power of this sense of shame thus: 'If honour is won in public it may be lost in private: a man unable to protect his private sphere incurs dishonour. Thus some men whose wives have dishonoured them prefer to hide their shame in silence; or a man marrying an illegitimate daughter conceals it and does not go through a public ritual.' He cites *Isaeus* 8.20.

mechanism. The way in which the figures of Aphrodite and Eros pay particular attention to Menelaus' face, and specifically show them either gesturing at or holding a phiale near his eyes, or more explicitly, pouring liquid into them is crucially important to the emotional discourse of the vase.

The power of Helen's eyes and the process of *opsis* in certain literary accounts has been discussed earlier in this chapter. The belief in the power of the gaze and eyes in erotic arousal in general is well attested in the wider discourses of the fifth and fourth century. On the level of philosophy and natural science, several theories of vision abounded. Stansbury-O'Donnell's brief survey of these theories is useful.[88] He points to two main features that the theories had in common; first, that they united 'the physical, physiological, and psychological aspects of vision' – this means that the process of looking was never a neutral or simply mechanical act, it was closely linked to an emotional response in the viewer. Second, that there is a closer connection made between the viewer and the viewed than our own theories on optics allow.[89] The atomists believed objects gave out emissions (*eidola*) from their surfaces, which entered the eye, and then affected thought while Plato and the Pythagoreans believed that the eye sent out rays or beams ('visual fire') that reflected back from the object (described in the *Timaeus*).[90] Either way, object and viewer are intimately connected through vision; and reciprocity is implicit in these models. One is affected by what one sees but the object of vision is also affected in the process. Of most relevance perhaps is Plato's description of how desire is facilitated through the process of seeing. The links between seeing and emotion are epitomised in the *Phaedrus* where he describes the process of how desire enters the soul through the eye.[91]

Without advocating that the vase-painters and their audiences are completely conversant with the intricacies of such theories of perception or the minutiae as articulated in the philosophical texts of Plato (which are later than most of these vases anyway), it is reasonable to assume that such ideas, having been in existence for some time, circulated in a diluted and popular form to become part of the general cultural discourse. These ideas were probably, then, theorised and conceptualised more precisely by philosophers. The purpose of the sign of the phiale and the potion that flows from it can be interpreted as a visual metaphor for the kind of process that was understood to be happening on the level of atoms and, also, emotions. This action is less likely an anointing that will enhance and facilitate the natural physical process of

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[88] Stansbury-O'Donnell 2006: 61-67.
[89] *Ibid.*: 61.
[90] *Ibid.*: 61.
[91] *Phdr.* 251b.

vision than simply another explicit sign of the force, or emotion of desire. It provides a label for the emotion that will cause the change of heart. The urge to kill is abandoned, but it is done so in favour of another emotion. While certain situations in vase imagery evoke or imply the emotion of pity (*oiktos* and *eleos*), including scenes that show supplication,[92] in these images pity is unlikely to be tabled. Rather *eros* – desire – is the crucial explanation here, which is facilitated by *opsis*.

Returning to the ideal of *sophrosyne*, this claim is, in fact, impossible to reconcile with the two divinities of Eros and Aphrodite, who do not extol self-control, moderation or rationality, but actually conflict with these ideals. The 'reversal' images do not show a man putting away his sword calmly, but abandoning his weapon – and his purpose – in the face of desire. *Eros* and *logos* are polar opposites. Desire, the emotional force of Aphrodite and Eros, is viewed by the ancient Athenians with ambivalence: on the one hand, it is synonymous with excitement and pleasure, but on the other it is treated with suspicion and contempt. This is true of the sixth century but seems true particularly in the discourse of the fifth and fourth centuries. This has much to do with Eros' potentially debilitating effect, especially on adult male citizens. In the *Dios apate* episode of the *Iliad* the desire that Zeus feels for Hera, brought on by Aphrodite, overpowers him so that he cannot give his attention to other more serious matters – such as war.[93] Zeus' response after the seduction, when he realises what has transpired, is anger. Being overcome with desire is emasculating, though not permanently so.

As a function of the gendering of emotion, many of the ancient sources reveal that susceptibility to emotion in general was deemed more natural to a woman's biological make up; being characterised as naturally softer than the male she was thought to be more easily 'moved to tears, pity, jealously, despondency, fear and rash impulses'.[94] She was also more susceptible to erotic desire, and, because she lacked the natural self-regulating *sophrosyne*, she was in danger of experiencing excessive desire and therefore prone to being tempted to commit adultery. She was potentially dangerous because of it. On the other hand, because men did possess *sophrosyne*, they could (and should) withstand the dissolving effects of desire. Being overwhelmed by emotion was considered unmanly; it was 'womanish' to be overcome with desire. In keeping with the idea of desire as irrational is the view that excessive desire was considered an affliction, a kind of pathological illness.[95]

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[92] Oakley 2005: *passim*.
[93] *Il.* 14.263-348, Breitenberger 2007: 72-74.
[94] Arist. *HA* 9.1.608b.
[95] Faraone 1999: 43ff.

How then would the ancient viewer of the vessels read these scenes of a manly Menelaus, overwhelmed by the forces of *eros*, and facilitated by the process of *opsis*? It might be argued that some viewers of the images could have read the force of Aphrodite and *eros* in a more positive light; *eros*, and *ta aphrodisia* could, if moderated, be pleasurable and honourable, not an affliction at all.[96] There was not only one view on the matter of sexuality and as Faraone aptly describes it, the ancient Athenians tended to have 'a flexible and situational model of desire'.[97] Would the audience see in these scenes the happy resolution of rightful husband reclaiming his wife – and, of course, her sexuality? This is highly unlikely.

The male sypotic viewer would surely have viewed this motif of sword dropping on account of *eros* as an image of emasculation, as a strong-willed warrior – and a cuckolded husband – forgetting his purpose in the face of *eros*. These depictions of the myth of Menelaus recovering Helen discuss not only the troublesome behaviour of the adulteress Helen (and the wish to take revenge for this), but also the 'destabilising consequences' of erotic desire.[98] The scene by the Menelaus Painter is a good example; the emasculated and cowering Menelaus has lost his sword and lost the fight altogether while Helen is portrayed as the dominant and all-consuming female that the poets and philosophers issued warnings about.

5. Summary

While the previous chapter suggested that the transition from an aristocratic ethos was by no means rapid, a new set of ideals did gradually emerge to define the citizen male, who had according to Winkler, a new 'ideal self' to aspire to. A new masculine and democratic identity was being crafted, and it favoured the control and regulation of the emotions over excess and emotionality. This male self is constantly being defined against the various other social categories in Athenian society – including women, youths, foreigners, criminals, monsters and old men.[99] In my view, Menelaus' behaviour shifts from being portrayed as that of the ideal male citizen (in the pursuit scenes) to his negative role model (in the reversal scenes). The discussion here can however elucidate the perpetual ambivalence associated with the emotion of *eros*. It *can* be bewitching and bring evil or discord, but it can also 'implant sweet grace into the soul'.[100] Being at the root of all procreative acts, desire is also ultimately indispensible to the reproductive polis; without it, the Athenian *polis* is condemned to oblivion. Though a valid perspective on *eros*, it is not the one that is tabled in most of these examples. The Helen and

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[96] Borg 2005: 198.
[97] Faraone 1999: 170.
[98] Johnston 2005: 3.
[99] McNiven 2000: 83.
[100] E. *Hipp.* 525-9, in Skinner 2005: 136.

Menelaus scenes on these distinctly sympotic vessels, rather, articulate the ideology of the *Männerbund* that is Athens of the fifth century.

Fig. 4.1: Hydria by the Syriskos Painter, London BM 161, from Vulci, c. 470

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 50

Fig. 4.2: Hydria by the Syriskos Painter, detail of Menelaus

Image source: British Museum

Fig. 4.3: Amphora by Exekias, Boulogne 558, detail of Ajax committing suicide, c. 525

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.4: Calyx krater by Euphronios, Paris CP748, detail of Antaios and Herakles, c. 515–510,

Image source: Beazley archive online

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Fig. 4.5: Amphora by a painter approaching the Providence Painter, Alpine (New Jersey), c. 480-470, obverse

Fig. 4.6: Amphora by a painter approaching the Providence Painter, Alpine (New Jersey), c. 480-470, reverse

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 238*bis*

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 238*bis*

Fig. 4.7: Panathenaic amphora by the Painter of the Florence stamnos, Bologne 154, c. 475

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 53.1

Fig. 4.8: Fragments of a *kalpis* by the Providence Painter, Malibu 76.AE.44, c. 480-470

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 245

Fig. 4.9: Detail of the fragments of a *kalpis* by the Providence Painter, Malibu 76.AE.44, c. 480-470

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 4.10: Volute crater by the Niobid Painter, Bologna 269, c. 460-450

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 58.2

Fig. 4.11: Volute krater by the Niobid Painter, Bologna, detail of Helen

Fig. 4.12: Volute krater by the Niobid Painter, Bologna, detail of Athena

Image source: Beazley archive online

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.13: Volute krater by the Niobid Painter, Bologna, detail of Apollo, statue, altar and Aphrodite (?)

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.14: Column krater by the Painter of Bologna 235 (name vase), Bologna 235, c. 460-450

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.15: Amphora by the Berlin Painter, Vienna 741, c. 470, Menelaus drops the sword

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 57.1

Fig. 4.16: Amphora by the Berlin Painter, Vienna, detail of Helen, statue, altar and tree

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.17: Amphora by the Berlin Painter, Naples 126053, c. 470

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 59.1-2

Fig. 4.18: Amphora by the Altamura Painter, London E263, c. 470-450

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 62.1

Fig. 4.19: Column krater by the Florence Painter, Museo Nazionale 2688 (T 577 VT), c. 460-450

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 61

Fig. 4.20: The shoulder of a hydria, Polygnotos Group, Rome, Torlonia, c. 460

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 57.2

Fig. 4.21: Bell krater by the Polygnotos group, Ferrara 4098 (T 53), c. 450-440

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 266

Fig. 4.22: Fragments of a hydria by Polygnotos, Athens National Archaeological Museum, 14983, c. 450-445

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 269

Fig. 4.23: Fragments of nestoris by Polygnotos, Malibu 81.AE.183B, c. 450-440

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 276

Fig. 4.24: Fragments of stamnos, Bologna 175, c. 440-430, detail of Menelaus and Aphrodite

Fig. 4.25: Fragments of stamnos, Bologna 175, c. 440-430, detail of Aphrodite and Helen

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 67.1

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 67.2

Fig. 4.26: Column krater by a painter approaching the Leningrad Painter, Tübingen 67.5806, c. 460

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.27: Column krater, by a painter approaching the Leningrad Painter, Tübingen 67.5806 detail of Menelaus, Aphrodite and Eros

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.28: Fragment of a pyxis by the Chicago Painter, Brauron, c. 460

Image source: Beazley archive online

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Fig. 4.29: Fragment of hydria-kalpis, Boston, coll. Blakey Vermeule, c. 450

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 279 *bis*

Fig. 4.30: Lekythos by the Painter of Leningrad 702, St. Petersburg 4524, c. 450-440, Menelaus and Eros

Fig. 4.31: Lekythos by the Painter of Leningrad 702, St. Petersburg 4524, Eros and Helen

Fig. 4.32: Lekythos by the Painter of Leningrad 702, St. Petersburg 4524, Menelaus and Eros, detail

Fig. 4.33: Bell krater by the Menelaus Painter, Paris G424, c. 450, obverse

Fig. 4.34: Bell krater by the Menelaus Painter, Paris G424, c. 450, reverse

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4. 35: Bell krater by the Persephone Painter, Toledo (Ohio) 67.154, c. 440-430, obverse

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.36: Bell krater by the Persephone Painter, Toledo (Ohio) 67.154, c. 440-430, reverse

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 4.37: Oinochoe by the Heimarmene Painter, Vatican H525 (16535), c. 430-420

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 272*bis.*

Fig. 4.38: Fragment of a Roman relief, Malibu 75.AA.113

Image source: Hamma 1983: figs 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 5

MAKRON: THE ABDUCTION AS A WEDDING PROCESSION, C. 500-480

Chapters 2-4 have found that the Athenian vase-painters of the sixth and fifth centuries had a particular interest in Helen's recovery by Menelaus. Yet, despite the prevalence of this theme, the general interest in Trojan War narratives in the literature and art in these centuries, and the perception among scholars that the abduction narrative is also prevalent on vases, Helen's abduction is in fact difficult to identify with certainty on most of the generally accepted Attic examples. This chapter will investigate scenes on vases from the period 520-480, the era described in Chapter 3 as transitional in nature. In Ghali-Kahil's *LIMC* entry on the abduction, only 3 Attic vases out of a possible 115 fall into this period.[1] Furthermore, the dating of one of these is dubious, and will be discussed in Chapter 6 where the later examples are examined.[2] The two inscribed and therefore secure examples of the abduction of Helen from the era are painted by the same painter, the accomplished Makron, and they date to around 500-480. Their eloquent portrayal of the abduction (as well as other narratives) will be explored here, as well as why Makron ventures to broach what seems to be an unpopular topic in vase-painting at the time.

1. Investigating the vases

Makron depicts the abduction of Helen by Paris on two important drinking cups: a kylix in Berlin (c. 500-490, fig. 5.1)[3] and the exquisite skyphos in Boston (c. 490-480, figs 5.7-5.8).[4] The (probably) earlier example is the kylix, making this scene also the earliest inscribed – and therefore securely identifiable – abduction of Helen scene. Being drinking vessels, the primary context of reception of the scenes is, again, the symposium. Despite their Attic origins, both skyphos and kylix were, however, recovered in Italy in funerary contexts; the kylix in Vulci[5] and the skyphos in the cemetery of Suessula in Campania.[6] As asserted in Chapter 3, I follow the

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[1] Berlin F 2291, *ARV²* 459.4, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 3.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 167; Boston 13.186, *ARV²* 458.1; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4 and 48, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat.166 and 243; and Athens, from the Acropolis, Threpsiadis, I; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 68.2-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 84.

[2] Athens, from the Acropolis, Threpsiadis, I; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 68.2-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 84.

[3] Berlin F 2291, *ARV²* 459.4, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 3.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 167.

[4] Boston 13.186, *ARV²* 458.1; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4 and 48, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat.166 and 243.

[5] *ARV²* 459.4.

[6] Caskey & Beazley 1931 (3): 33.

position that the exported pottery, though clearly appealing to a foreign market, retained its Attic character; the iconography on these vessels still strongly reflects Athenian tastes. The skyphos, however, is unusual in its dimensions: it measures 21.5 cm in height and 38.9 cm in width, which, as Caskey and Beazley point out, make it 'unusually broad for its height'.[7] The overall size raises questions about whether this vessel could have actually been used for drinking, even in its original Attic context. It is likely, however, that such oversized skyphoi were actually mixing vessels, and used by their owners in the same way as kraters or stamnoi. In this case, the Makron skyphos was probably still viewed within the context of the symposium where admiring such exquisite apparatus was a part of sympotic protocol. Both kylix and skyphos then, will be considered as items designed to be predominantly viewed by a male, Athenian audience.

2. Investigating the iconography

Chapter 2 investigated the iconography of a series of black-figure scenes that show a warrior confronting or leading a woman away; these scenes were characterised by implicit hostility. Though tentatively tabled as abduction of Helen scenes by Ghali-Kahil, this identification, I asserted, is problematic, but not completely impossible. No other black- or red-figure scenes that I know of have successfully been tendered as Helen's abduction by Paris before the red-figure painter, Makron. Other abductions from this transitional era continue to use image matrices popular in earlier black-figure painting; painters still often render the abduction of women either through an abduction by chariot, such as a scene in London showing Antiope abducted by Theseus (fig. 5.9),[8] or the abductee being physically seized with a wrestling kind of grasp, as in an example showing Helen abducted by Theseus (fig. 5.10).[9] For much of the fifth century though, abductions are shown through the popular matrix of a dramatic 'erotic' pursuit, such as a fine example of the abduction of Oreithyia by Boreas in Berlin (fig. 5.11).[10] Makron's scenes showing the abduction of Helen by Paris, however, both render the moment in the form of a quiet and fairly orderly procession, and one which specifically evokes associations with a marriage procession. These iconographic echoes have been observed;[11] however, the appropriateness of the analogy between Helen and Paris' act of adultery and a legitimate *gamos* has not satisfactorily been investigated. The potential meaning/s of this iconographic choice will be explored in this chapter.

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[7] Caskey & Beazley *op cit*: 33.
[8] London 1837.0609.58, *ARV*[2] 58.51, 1622, *Add*[2] 164, *Add* 80.
[9] Munich 2309 (J410), *ARV*[2] 27.4, 1620, *Para* 323; *Add* 75, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 103.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 41.
[10] Berlin F2384, *ARV*[2] 1149.26.
[11] Oakley & Sinos 1993; Oakley 1995 and Sutton 1997/1998.

The abduction scene on Makron's kylix in Berlin (fig. 5.1)[12] takes the form of a procession moving from right to left across the vessel; this well suits the elongated picture field of the kylix shape. Paris (inscribed 'Alexandros'), is at the front of the procession. He is short-haired, unbearded and wears a long, luxuriously pleated *chiton*, a *himation* that is draped diagonally from his left shoulder, and a *petasos,* which hangs from its cord at the back of his neck. This kind of clothing suggests a traveller. Odysseus the arch-traveller, for example, commonly wears a draped himation and, in particular, a *petasos*.[13] Hermes, the god of travellers also does so on occasion.[14] In other contemporary red-figure scenes that include Paris, even where he is found in the pastoral context evoked in the Judgement scenes, he does not wear the *petasos*.[15] The *petasos*, therefore, highlights the fact that Paris has travelled; it calls to mind the journey he has made, that he is not at home. He carries two spears with his right hand and turns back to look at Helen (inscribed), whom he leads by the wrist. Four other figures make up the remainder of the entourage.

Chapters 4 and 5 have established that the wrist gesture, noted in the recovery scenes described as the 'escort', surely evoked connotations of marriage for the ancient viewers of the vases. While black-figure marriage procession scenes tend to be in the form of chariot or cart processions, red-figure painters prefer to show brides being lead on foot by the wrist.[16] This is known as the *chamaipous* (foot procession), where the bride is conveyed *cheir' epi karpo* (hand over wrist) from her own paternal home to her new abode, the house of her groom.[17] Such scenes commonly decorate red-figure marriage vessels such as loutrophoroi (figs 5.12 and 5.13) and lebetes gamikoi*,* especially those from the second half of the fifth century.[18] It was also discussed that the wrist grasp, as used in the marriage ceremony and in marriage imagery, has been traced back to origins in the perception of marriage as a kind of abduction and taming of the woman. In the context of an actual abduction the grasp surely acquires additional potency, functioning as a kind of visual *double entendre.*

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[12] Berlin F 2291, *ARV*[2] 459.4, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 3.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 167.

[13] There are numerous examples of Odysseus in such travelling gear, for example Odysseus visiting Achilles at Troy on a *crater* in the Louvre by the Eucharides Painter (Paris G163, *Add* 99, *ARV*[2] 227.12, *Add*[2] 199, *Para* 347) and another well-known example of Odysseus attacking Circe on an oinochoe*,* also in the Louvre (Paris G439 *Add* 141, *ARV*[2] 227.1, 775.5, *Add*[2] 288, *Para* 416).

[14] An example, among others, is a vase showing Hermes with a youth, Tübingen E78, *ARV* 463.5.

[15] In scenes such as Naples M1336, *ARV*[2] 630.30, 1663, *Para* 399; London E289, *ARV*[2] 653.6, 1571; and London E178, *ARV*[2] 503.20, *Add*[2] 251.

[16] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 28- 32.

[17] *Ibid.*: 32.

[18] For example the following Attic red-figure loutrophoroi: Toronto 929.22.3 (by Polygnotos, dated c. 430), *ARV*[2] 1031.51, *Add* 317, Oakley & Sinos 1993: 32, figs 82-84; Athens 1174, (by the Washing Painter, dated c. 430), *ARV*[2] 1127.15, *Para* 453, Oakley & Sinos 1993: 32, fig. 85; Oxford 1966.888 (dated c. 420), Reeder 1995: 168-169 (cat. 25); Munich NI 9493 (by the Naples Painter, dated c. 440-430), Reeder 1995: 332-334 (cat. 102); Boston 03.802 (c. 425), Oakley & Sinos 1993: 109-111, figs 105-107; and Reeder 1995: 165-168 (cat. 24). In this last example the groom leads the bride by the hand rather than the wrist.

Helen's figure also employs the visual language of the bride. She wears a long but diaphanous *chiton*, through which the contours of the breasts are clearly indicated. In contradiction to Helen's diaphanous *chiton* is the thick and almost floor-length *pharos* veil draped over her shoulders and head. Again, as earlier chapters have discussed, it is likely that breasts have a general erotic or feminine significatory value, especially because this is Helen, and that the *pharos* veil is also a 'nuptial nuance' that works to highlight her latent sexuality as well.

It is perhaps significant that Helen does not hold her veil with the formulaic veil-gesture used by women, including Helen, in other vase-painting scenes. However red-figure painters explore other more complex iconographies of veiling, including various degrees of touching or holding the veil. Here Helen does not touch the veil at all, but its presence is enough to make reference to the idea of marriage, as well as the womanly *aidōs* expected of her.[19] On her head Helen also wears a fillet or *stephane*; again these are typically worn by brides but are not unique to them.[20] This Paris-Helen pair, therefore, evokes the language of marriage in a deliberate way.

The couple are followed by a group of four figures, and at first glance, the figures evoke a bridal entourage. Directly behind the pair walks an uninscribed bearded figure who may be Aineas, mentioned as Paris' companion on the journey to Sparta by Proclus in his summary of the *Cypria*.[21] Aineas also securely appears in Makron's skyphos scene, so this is a viable identification for this figure on the kylix as well. He also wears a *petasos* and carries double spears, but wears the shorter *chitoniskos* and what may be the shorter *chlamys* or *exomis* over his shoulders. The likelihood that he is Aineas is supported by his gesture: he walks to left but turns back to fend off the pleas of an animated robed woman, named Timandra (Helen's sister). His gesture, with fingers facing upwards and palm outwards towards Timandra, has been noted before in Chapter 6 as one of prohibition or denial.[22] This tussle between Aineas and Timandra may now subvert the initial reference to the wedding procession; the usual bridal entourage would be processing in support of the pair, not trying to prevent them from leaving the *oikos* of the bride's father. On the other hand, the tussle may actually strengthen the association; during the wedding ritual proper the *thuroros* (gatekeeper) was installed outside the wedding chamber to prevent the bride's friends from trying to rescue their

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[19] Reeder 1995: 127.
[20] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 18.
[21] Procl. *Ch.* i.
[22] Boegehold 1999: 32.

companion.[23] This custom again suggests that marriages originated in abductions, and so some resistance to the new relationship is always implicit in the marriage.

Behind Timandra another woman (inscribed Euōpis) turns back to speak to two bearded, robed men: Tyndareos (inscribed, the mortal father of Helen) and Ikarios (inscribed, brother to Tyndareos, the father of Penelope).[24] The elderly men both carry staffs and also make the alarmed gesture of prohibition used by Aineas; they raise their left hands with fingers upwards and palms facing forward. Their facial expression that includes a wide-eyed look, raised eyebrows and a downturned mouth, also, in my opinion, suggests concern. The fact that they do not wear *petasoi* surely also highlights the fact that they are 'locals'; they are the inhabitants of this land, while Paris and Aeneas are the outsiders. The figure of Euōpis is enigmatic; her name means 'fair to look on'. As a participant in the scene, she seems to be informing the elders of Helen's imminent departure, exhorting them to action. Whether she is intended as a companion of Helen, or rather as a personification of Helen's beauty is debatable; however, Helen's beauty is inseparable from her, and this would highlight this aspect of her mythic persona.

On the right edge of the scene are two goats that stand nonplussed beneath the right handle. They spill over from the scene on the other side of the vase, but make sense in this scene as well, signalling an outdoor context at the very least. However they may also have a more subtle, analeptic function, especially in view of the identity of the narrative scene on the reverse of the vase. The goats then, may playfully evoke for the viewer of the vase, the episode when, as a herdsman minding his flocks on Mount Ida, Paris judged which of the goddesses was 'the fairest'. Turning the kylix around, the viewer would be faced with precisely this prior episode: the Judgement of Paris (figs. 5.4-5.5). The goats may connect the two narratives visually, but the causal relationship between these two episodes is explicitly obvious to the audience well versed in the stories. In the Judgement scene, the god Hermes leads the goddesses towards Paris, seated on a rock, and holding his kithara. Paris here is similarly dressed to his figure on the obverse; however, he lacks his *petasos.* Athena, Hera and Aphrodite approach the Trojan prince. The depiction of Aphrodite is the most striking; she is veiled, holds a dove in her left hand and is surrounded by four hovering Erotes (fig. 5.5). These signify both her own erotic powers and also the 'bribe' that she will offer to Paris – erotic pleasure in the form of Helen – realised on the other side of the vase.

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[23] Reeder 1995: 128 and also Oakley & Sinos 1993: 37.
[24] Proclus describes the entertainment of Paris first by Tyndareus and then by Menelaus (*Ch.* i.).

Gestures and iconography in the abduction scene may well suggest force. Being led by the wrist and escorted by two Trojan men makes Helen unmistakeably under their control. The spears may act as an emblem of potential hostility or danger posed to Paris through this action, as briefly explored in Chapter 2. If this is their function however, they remain *muted* references to force. Spears, as Sourvinou-Inwood points out, are often carried by youths as attributes of their status as *epheboi* in scenes of erotic pursuit; in other words they are carried by men who have no real intention of using them in the immediate context.[25]

Helen, though controlled by Paris, does not appear to resist the 'abduction'. Comparison with abductions of other women reveals that not only are the behaviour, stance and gestures of the abductor different from this example, but so too is the reaction of the abductee. Those women tend to struggle and resist, showing some disapproval of this act through gestures of alarm or fright that are similar to those of Helen in the recovery scenes of the fifth century. Makron, however, has chosen to depict a calm and co-operative Helen in this scene, not a terrified or coerced one. In addition, the reciprocal gazes between Helen and Paris strongly suggest her acquiescence, or at the very least, his attempt at erotic persuasion.[26] The importance of visual contact between two people, especially in an erotic context, has been discussed in Chapters 5-6. Calame describes the gaze as Eros' 'favourite medium'.[27] Notably, the backward glance offered by the husband to his bride is also an important standard feature of red-figure wedding procession scenes. These wedding connotations then imply an elopement rather than a proper abduction, though other even more specifically 'erotic' indicators (such as the figures of Aphrodite or Eros) are absent in this example.

The moment of abduction or, more fittingly, elopement is, in this scene, drawn mainly in terms of the destructive emotional effects on those left behind. Here attention seems to be focussed on the fact that Helen, following Paris, left her home, family and her country, Lakedaimonia. The pointed reference to what she is abandoning is in this scene made evident by the presence of Timandra, Tyndareos, and another fairly prominent Lakedaimonian, Ikarius. The inclusion of the goats may also point to the significance of the land she is leaving. This moment is shown to be traumatic to her family, if not to her, through the gesticulations and expressions of the entourage.

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[25] Sourvinou-Inwood 1987: 131-153.
[26] Frontisi-Ducroux 1996: 83.
[27] Calame 1999: 21.

A variation on the abduction of Helen theme is offered – again by Makron – on the exquisite and much studied Boston skyphos (figs 5.7-5.8).[28] The vessel, dated around 490-480, depicts what Caskey and Beazley describe as the two 'crises' in Helen's life: her abduction and recovery[29] (the latter was discussed in Chapter 3, fig. 3.5-6). The painter has meticulously used inscriptions to securely identify each figure. Again the format of the scene is processional; Paris leads Helen by holding her right wrist firmly with his left hand and an entourage accompanies the pair. Nuptial nuances proliferate. [30]

As in the kylix example, the protagonists, Paris and Helen, evoke marital associations through their clothing and stance. She wears an ankle-length pleated *chiton* – with profile breast outlined – and a voluminous *pharos* veil is draped over her head and shoulders and reaches virtually to the ground. She wears a *stephane* on her head*.* Though this rendition of Helen's drapery is far more sophisticated than the black-figure Helens in the recovery scenes discussed in Chapter 2, the effect is similar; here the mere extent of the drapery suggests her status as affluent and prized noblewoman. It also suggests her status as pseudo-bride. The veil viewed together with Helen's bowed head and perhaps downcast eyes (her features are eroded) evokes *aidōs* and *sophrosyne,* the two emotions or attitudes expected of a bride (and all good Greek women) in the presence of strange men.[31] This would include the presence of her new husband.[32] In Chapter 2 it was discussed how these two aspects of womanly demeanour are not only connected with respectability but also with the male perception of female beauty and eroticism. Shyness, modesty and self-restraint were considered to be alluring, particularly in a bride.[33] These qualities are beautiful in a woman, and Helen, here, is shown to be very desirable.

Beauty is also key to Paris' depiction on this vase; he is portrayed as the quintessential and exquisite aristocratic Greek male, with details that also evoke the figure of Greek bridegroom. Paris' clothing is both luxurious and delicate; he wears a finely pleated *chitoniskos*, a thick cloak around his shoulders and sandals on his feet. He carries a spear (the accoutrement of the *ephebos*) while wearing a Corinthian helmet, which is not worn properly over his face but balances rather unnaturally on top of his head. The helmet and spear are significant. They may be included to evoke a generalised heroic context; designating him as belonging to the class or

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[28] Boston 13.186, *ARV*[2] 458.1; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4 and 48; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 166 and 243.
[29] Caskey & Beazley 1931 (3): 33.
[30] Oakley 1995: 63-72.
[31] Ferrari 2002: 60; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 122; 155-188; Cairns 1993: 120-125.
[32] Reeder 1995: 123
[33] Athenaeus *Deipnosophistai* 13.564b; Aristotle *Rhet.* 1384a; Ferrari 2002: 188; Reeder 1995: 123-124

race of heroes. They may also have specific contextual relevance – signalling 'abduction at Sparta', rather than 'arrival and marriage at Troy' (where there would be less need of them).

The use of the helmet and the spear to imply 'hostility' or 'force' has been discussed at length in previous chapters. The fact that the helmet is raised, however, surely softens its hostile effect, as was also noted in certain recovery scenes. One clear reason for the helmet's raised position on top of Paris' head is that it also allows us to appreciate his beautiful face and hair, which Makron has depicted with care on this vase. Studying the details of his face (fig. 5.8) we notice Paris' fledgling beard indicated with rough strokes on his jaw. Such details are also found in contemporary vase painters' depictions of other youthful heroes, particularly Achilleus, who is represented as unbearded in fifth-century vase-painting. Several scenes clustered around 500-480 show Achilleus with wispy facial hair on the edges of his cheeks just below the sideburns.[34]

This detail is significant as an emblem of youth and beauty, but should also be understood as a sign of male eroticism. On Makron's skyphos then, the wispy signs of a first beard signal Paris, the Trojan prince, also specifically as an erotic object. This youthfulness and eroticism are surely chosen to contrast with the more mature, though still beautiful, figure of Menelaus in the recovery scene on the other side of the vase. This carefully depicted portrait of Paris is surely, to the Greek eye, a flattering portrayal, unlike the ultimately damning '*gynaimaniac*' portrait of Paris by Homer. Exquisite and erotic beauty is an emblem of *both* the figures of Helen and Paris in this scene.

As on the Makron kylix, the idea of a marriage is also evoked by the accompanying entourage. Here the entourage includes Aineas (inscribed, walking ahead of Paris to the left of the scene), Aphrodite (inscribed, behind Helen), followed by Peitho (inscribed) and an unnamed boy (below the handle on the right side). This group even more closely recalls red-figure marriage procession scenes than the kylix scene. As discussed above, in red-figure bridal procession scenes of the fifth century, the bride and groom are accompanied by various attendants. In the skyphos scene Aphrodite walks behind Helen, carefully adjusting Helen's heavy *pharos* veil in a

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[34] For example Achilleus on a white ground *lekythos* in Paris (Louvre MNB 911, *ARV2* 301,1, *LIMC* I 'Achilleus' 426, c. 500); in a scene of Odysseus visiting Achilleus at the camp in Troy on the shoulder of a *hydria* by the Kleophrades Painter (Munich 8770, *Para* 341, 73; *LIMC* I 'Achilleus' 445, c. 480-470); Achilleus in the same scene-type on a *stamnos* by the Triptolemus Painter (Schweizer Privatbesitz, Basel, *ARV²* 361,7, *LIMC* I 'Achilleus' 453, c. 480); and Achilleus' ransom of Hektor on a skyphos by the Brygos Painter (Vienna 3710, *ARV2* 380, 171, *LIMC* 'Achilleus' 659, c. 500).

way that the *nympheutria* or a mother of the bride would do.[35] The figure of Peitho with her hand raised visually recalls the various other female bridal helpers that are usually part of the procession. The figure of Aineas may recall the *proegetes* (sometimes a youth in simple tunic, and *exomis* or *chlamys*[36]) or the *parochos* (the groom's attendant) while the unnamed boy at the rear of the procession may evoke either the *pais amphitheles* ('boy whose parents are both alive') or one of the *paides propempontes* included in matrimonial ensembles.[37] If the erotic connotation or the marriage metaphor was at all in doubt in this scene, a fluttering Eros hovers between the couple, touching Helen's head (perhaps adjusting her *stephane*) in a way that he typically does in both preparation of the bride and wedding procession scenes.

In Makron's scene, Aphrodite and Eros' careful attention to Helen points towards the erotic allure of this exquisite pseudo-bride; she is an eroticised object of Paris' desire. Paris looks back at the beautiful, alluring Helen. His gaze is a clear signal of his amorous state. Though Helen's head is demurely lowered, causing her eyes to be downcast, she may in fact be glancing upwards in the way that demure brides and wives often sneak a look up at their husband.[38] This (probable) visual exchange, as well as Eros's prominent position hovering between the couple, are telling signs that the feeling is mutual. Paris looks at and is enamoured with the beautiful Helen, but so has she been both persuaded and seduced.

3. Synopsis

On both the kylix and the skyphos Makron renders the narrative and its emotional complexity with great sophistication. The most striking aspect of the iconography is its deliberate use of nuptial echoes; these include the processional image matrix, gestures of the participants, clothing of the 'bridal pair' and personnel in the scene. These can be imagined as having a proleptic function in terms of the narrative sequence; they could point forward to the actual wedding of Paris and Helen, which took place later in Troy.[39] This straightforward narrative explanation seems acceptable on a superficial level. However, investigating the wedding (and other) iconography against the horizons of expectation and experience allows us to problematize the appropriateness of its use to describe the famous adulterous relationship.

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[35] Regarding the *nympheutria's* role Oakley & Sinos 1993: 16, 32; regarding Aphrodite as *nympheutria* Oakley 1995: 65; Aphrodite as the bride's mother Caskey & Beazley 1931.
[36] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 32.
[37] *Ibid.*: 30-34.
[38] The vase condition is such that one cannot properly see if her eyes are averted or if she makes eye contact with Paris.
[39] As Oakley (1995: 65) argues regarding the Boston skyphos by Makron.

4. Reading the vases: The literary-narrative context

Earlier chapters have already established that the literary versions relating Helen's abduction by Paris present differing views on the event; there are both 'traditional' and 'revised' accounts of the narrative. Even amongst the sources that accept Helen's arrival in Troy (the 'traditional' account) there is no agreed version of precisely how events unfolded and, in particular, of the motivations and emotions of Helen. Gorgias' *Encomium* of Helen, though dating to the end of the fifth century, and therefore later than most of the vessels considered in this study, provides a useful summary of these ancient standpoints. Gorgias offers several explanations for why Helen may have gone to Troy; these include manipulation by the Chance, the gods or Necessity, abduction by force (βίᾳ), persuasion by words (λόγοις πεισθεῖσα), and persuasion by *eros* (in other words, an elopement).[40]

The kylix and skyphos scenes by Makron together cover all four of the possibilities presented by Gorgias (also present in the other texts). The wrist grasp and the carrying of spears in both scenes, as well as the responses of Helen's family on the kylix amount to muted references to force. Manipulation by the gods is clearly articulated in the skyphos scene through the actual presence of the divinities Aphrodite and Eros, who attend to Helen. Aphrodite's gesture of tender fussing over Helen's veil is clearly a statement of her vested interest in the abduction, and even more explicitly her manipulation of it. Aphrodite plays a prominent role in the *Iliad* and is also a primary motivator in the accounts by Alcaeus, Sappho, and the tragic poets. While the gods are not shown in the context of the kylix abduction scene, the Judgement on the reverse highlights the divine intervention that overarches the narrative, the one event leading to the other. The presence of Peitho on the skyphos combines well with the figures of Eros and Aphrodite to pictorialize the important role that persuasion, both verbal and erotic, played in some versions of the narrative.

Another aspect of the narrative accentuated in both the kylix and the skyphos scenes is Helen's legendary beauty. This was discussed in Chapter 4; beauty is her most consistent attribute in literary sources of all time periods; she surpasses all other women in this regard. Without her beauty, how could Helen be Helen? In the *Iliad* Helen is presented as a victim of her own legendary beauty; her beauty is that which got her to Troy and it is that which is ultimately contested there. At the *Teichoscopeia,* the Trojan elders claim that no blame (*nemesis*) should be cast to Trojans or Greeks for fighting for a woman who αἰνῶς ἀθανάτῃσι

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[40] *Hel.* 6.

θεῆς εἰς ὦπα ἔοικεν ('terribly resembles immortal goddesses').[41] Their declaration highlights the privilege afforded to beauty in the poem – but this is not only true in the case of Helen's beauty. Homer's thought world prizes physical splendour and attractiveness over ugliness and even over ordinariness: the beauty of the heroes is celebrated, and ugliness, such as that of Thersites, is viewed with utter contempt.[42] In such a moral universe where *kalos k'agathos* are virtually synonyms, the pursuit of Helen's beauty becomes a noble cause.[43]

Heroes at Troy – both Greek and Trojan – are also praiseworthy for their beauty, and often described in terms that connect their physical prowess, stature and beauty with excellence. Sappho's contemplation on the nature of beauty in fragment 16 gives this distinct impression; cavalrymen, foot soldiers and a fleet of ships are all thought to be most beautiful. Paris is also described as beautiful in Homer; his handsomeness is mentioned several times in Book 3 of the *Iliad*. However, contrary to the usual equation of beauty with *arête*, in Homer he is shown lacking in battle prowess, and he emerges as a weakling who is overcome not just on the battle field, but by desire: he is *gynaimanes.* These connotations do not seem to emerge in Makron's vase-paintings, where Paris emerges as a beautiful pseudo-groom.

The marital analogy now deserves elaboration. The end result of Helen's abduction or persuasion is, in the traditional account, a union – a marriage in Troy. Makron's multifarious allusions to marriage portray the moment in the same terms as a legitimate *gamos*, an interesting choice of imagery since this relationship is, in fact, adulterous. While there are some traces of the idea of a marriage in Homer's portrayal of the relationship, the term *gamos* is only applied to the relationship of Helen and Paris in the tragic poets; in other words, later than Makron's two vessels.[44] Euripides for example, has Helen speak of her marriages (*gamoi*) in Troy[45] and in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* the Chorus uses marriage as an elaborate conceit when describing Helen and Paris' passage to Troy.[46] However in Aeschylus, this marriage conceit is highly ironic and it exposes the illicit relationship as an unlawful wedlock that has disastrous effects.[47]

Seaford demonstrates the ways in which the *Agamemnon* presents this union between Paris and Helen as a kind of 'perverted' marriage; concluding that normal 'positive elements [of

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[41] *Il*. 3.157-8.
[42] In *Iliad* Book 2, the Greek Thersites, son of Agrios, is scorned for his unsightly appearance, is rebuked for speaking up against Agamemnon, and beaten by Odysseus. (*Il*. 2.216ff)
[43] Austin 1994: 24.
[44] Breitenberger 1997: 27.
[45] *Tr*. 932.
[46] *Ag*. 685-762.
[47] Seaford 1987: 123-130.

marriage] are perverted into negative elements and the negative elements prevail'. [48] Helen is

τάν δορίγαμβρον ('bride of spears')[49] and Paris is αἰνόλεκτρον ('fatally wedded')[50] but the

extended comparison is more pervasive than this terminology alone. Their union is attended

by divinities, but not those expected to preside over marriage – such as Zeus *Teleios*, Hera

Teleia, or Aphrodite. Their union is attended by Μῆνις (Anger) and an Ἐρινύς (Fate) – harsh

divinities that carry with them a highly negative association.[51] The most significant indication

of the perversion of the normal wedding expectations, however, is in the outcomes or

consequences of their union. The wedding hymns quickly become dirge-like lamentation;[52]

Helen's gaining of a husband will cause the Trojan women to lose their husbands; the offspring

of the union are not legitimate 'radiant' children who bless the house, but disastrous, violent,

impious acts and suffering.[53]

The products of the illicit relationship between Helen and Paris have already been alluded to in

Chapter 5. There I argued that Oltos' Nikosthenic amphora deliberately juxtaposed the

outcomes of two famous abductions – Helen and Paris, and Peleus and Thetis – in order to

contrast them. Alcaeus' poem also explicitly contrasts these pairs; describing the bitter misery

that the union of Paris and Helen produces: the horror of the Trojan War, with the glorious

offspring of Peleus and Thetis: Achilles 'mightiest of demigods'.[54] It is interesting to note that

Helen and Paris' actual offspring, a son Aganus, who was apparently named by the poet of the

Cypria, is specifically *not* mentioned in the 'severer' Homeric tradition. Davies suggests that

the 'illegitimate liaison of Helen and Paris must be distinguished from a real marriage'.[55]

Another result of Helen's abduction was its effect on the *timē* and *andreia* of Menelaus, her

aggrieved husband. The impact on Menelaus is strongly articulated in the literary sources, as

discussed in Chapters 4-6. The repercussions, however, reach beyond Menelaus' suffering

alone. The broader impact of the event is poignantly suggested in the kylix scene through the

presence and reactions of the Spartan elders, Tyndareos and Ikarios, and Helen's sister

Timandra. These figures stand proxy for this far-reaching impact, which is also hinted at in the

literary sources. Proclus for example relates that Paris was entertained by Tyndareos before

being entertained by Menelaus.[56] Alcaeus describes how Helen abandoned her warrior

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[48] *Ibid.*: 126-7.
[49] *Ag*. 686.
[50] *Ag.* 712
[51] *Ag*. 700, 744-9, Seaford 1987: 125.
[52] *Ag*. 700-712.
[53] *Ag*. 750-770.
[54] Alc. fr. 42.
[55] Davies 2001: 39.
[56] Procl. *Ch.* i.

husband but also her child, παῖδά τ᾽ ἐν δόμ[ο]ισι λίποισ[κἄνδρος εὔστρωτον [λ]έχος πεῖθ᾽ ἔρωι θῦμο[] (she left her child and the bed of her warrior husband, her heart having been persuaded by *eros*)[57]while Sappho also specifically describes how Helen abandoned not just her husband, but κωὐδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη (her child and dear parents).[58]

In the literary sources, then, the marriage analogy is an important one, but it used in an ambivalent or even negative way. Rather than a positive comparison, the marriage of the adulterous pair is used as a foil, showing the illicit relationship up to be, in fact, quite unlike a legitimate *gamos*.

5. Reading the vases: The cultural-semantic context

In the mythic imagination, the abduction, or seduction, had serious and far-reaching consequences; not only for Helen's husband, Menelaus, but also for her children, her family, her city, Sparta, and the pan-Hellenic force that was dispatched on her behalf. It also had devastating consequences for Paris, and for his brothers, his father, the king and for his city, Troy which was destroyed and its women and children enslaved. However, despite the enormity of the consequences, there is an apparent dearth of extant vase-painting scenes that render the abduction or persuasion of Helen in the sixth and the first half of the fifth centuries.

It was mentioned in Chapter 3 that scenes that show the pursuit and abduction of women were popular in general between 525-425. Stewart's useful tables show the prevalence of heterosexual pursuits and abductions in sixth- and fifth-century Attic vase-painting; the statistics reveal that between 525-475 there are 46 divine pursuits/abductions and 151 heroic pursuits/abductions, with a further 6 uncertain ones.[59] Helen's abduction by Paris is not included in his survey, however, my study has shown there to be only three viable 'abduction' scenes from the late sixth and fifth centuries. These are represented through different image matrices. There are by comparison 119 scenes that show Peleus pursuing/abducting Thetis, for example. Absences can speak very loudly, and in this case I think the silence declares itself vociferously.

What does the apparent reticence about the abduction say about the market, especially in view of the relative popularity of the other abductions? One must assume that this particular

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[57] Alc. fr. 283. 7-9.
[58] Sapph. fr. 15. 10-11.
[59] Stewart 1995: 87-88.

abduction of Helen, though attested in poetry, is an unpalatable story or episode that the viewer of the vase would rather not be confronted with. Also, it is necessary to ask, when Helen's abduction does occurs, why is this famous abduction *not* represented in the terms that are familiar and established for other contemporary abductions – the erotic pursuit. And thirdly, bearing in mind the horizons of experience and expectation of the sympotic viewer, what does Makron convey through the use of the visual language of marriage in this context.

Helen and Paris' relationship stands out, as Stewart says, as 'the prototypical case of *moicheia'.*[60] In Chapter 3 and 4 I argued that adultery is an uncomfortable topic in patrilineal societies. For the emerging democratically-minded Athenian polis of the early fifth century, the increasing enfranchisement of the citizenry meant that patrilineal inheritance of wealth and family name were not the only factors at risk of corruption through pollution of the bloodline. Citizenship of the *demos* itself, and therefore political eligibility was also conferred through paternity (and later in 451/450, with Perikles' citizenship law, even more strictly, by Athenian maternity and paternity). In an era where there is increasing emphasis on marriage ties, the episode of Helen's abduction by Paris presents an uncomfortable subject: adultery. In Chapter 5 I also suggested that the story may be particularly troubling to its audience because the errant wife, Helen, ultimately escapes *nemesis*. This may explain the lack of scenes in general in this era.

It is worth reiterating that during this era, the primary viewers of the vases are symposiasts and that the discourse of the symposium, of which these vases are an integral part, is a particular kind of discourse. The subject of adultery may have been especially uncomfortable in the homosocial sympotic context of the sixth and fifth centuries where 'heroic values' persisted and women's fidelity was closely entwined with the integrity of the household. While access to more than one woman may have been acceptable for men, female fidelity was crucial to the Athenian woman's social identity and to the integrity of the *oikos* as well as the *polis*. Helen's adultery disrupts this ideal paradigm of womanhood; her relationship with Paris dislodges an essential (male) expectation. However, as problematic as the implications of adultery for male-female relationships was its potentially disruptive effects on male-male relationships. An illicit relationship between a man and another man's wife could severely impact the *hetaireia* between men, often established through the sympotic context. [61]

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[60] Stewart 1995: 81.
[61] Neer 2002: 9-10.

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This may explain the general reticence to confront the theme in vase-painting. While Makron does confront the theme, he does not use the typical matrix for abductions: erotic pursuits. It can be argued that Makron is deliberately setting Helen's abduction apart from others, particularly since his audience would be well versed in such imagery. If Stewart is correct in reading the matrix of the pursuit of women as a male fantasy 'that promotes the cause of Athenian self-assertion',[62] Makron steers clear of such an association. For Stewart erotic pursuits and abductions evoke a particular configuration of male-female power relations in the patriarchal Greek world view; the outcome of the pursuit is that the *parthenos* or pursued woman is tamed or acculturated through the abduction, sometimes even through the civilising institution of marriage itself.[63]

This process involves physical (and of course sexual) dominion, expressed in the abduction scenes through semi-violent signs of struggle and pursuit. The woman both resists by fleeing and gesticulating, and relents or acquiesces through her backward glance and the meeting of gazes.[64] The eventual outcome of such abductions (and we can infer, also legitimate marriage) is beneficial to her and to society; the woman is both tamed and civilised, and she often produces offspring.[65] The abduction stories depicted in the scenes cited by Stewart usually end this way; if not in the actual marriage of the pair, the production of auspicious offspring is assured (for example the heroic offspring of Zeus' various amours). The prime example of such famous heroic pursuit or abduction is that of Thetis by Peleus and their magnificent son, Achilles.

The abduction of Helen by Paris is different; it does not fit into the ideological paradigm of abduction with a harmless or positive outcome. For one thing she is hardly a *parthenos*, she is married already. The outcome of her abduction may be another marriage but it cannot produce legitimate or auspicious heirs. While other relationships depicted through the erotic pursuit or abduction scene type are justified by their result, Helen and Paris' relationship has no such exemplary outcome. This may account for the lack of the use of this kind of image matrix to describe Helen's abduction by Paris. However, the image matrix that Makron applies in both cases – the presentation of Helen and Paris' adultery as a marriage – is, I think, highly provocative, particularly when read against the value system of the early fifth century.

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[62] Stewart 1995: 86.
[63] *Ibid.*: 74.
[64] Sourvinou-Inwood 1987: 131-153.
[65] Carson 1990: 143, Calame 1999: 67.

Neer has convincingly shown how the context of the symposium was one which was governed by particular practices and principles. Its agonistic aspect appreciated parody, riddles (e.g. the *logikos griphos* or 'word riddle'[66]), games, and verbal and visual puns. The principle of *homōnymia* ('double meaning') was central to many of these practices. Makron's rendition of the *gamos* of Helen and Paris is surely intended to evoke such double meanings, and to provoke questions and debate around the subject, which is, manifestly, an unpopular one. Significantly, both of Makron's Helen and Paris scenes are eloquently paired with other scenes that help to elucidate the issues and emotions that the story could evoke for this particular audience. Reading the obverse, reverse and tondo (in the case of the kylix) scenes in a vacuum, obscures their dialogic possibilities.

It was pointed out above that Makron's kylix combines the Judgement of Paris with Helen's abduction. Judgement and abduction are framed as interrelated episodes; there is a neat and obvious cause-and-effect pairing. The prize offered by Aphrodite at the Judgement gives divine cause for Paris to travel to Sparta and redeem it. But there is also a distinct contrast between the moods of each scene; the Judgement is pastoral, calm and dignified, while the abduction, though first appearing orderly, is fraught with emotional pleas, laments and drama. The nature of the players in each case is also differentiated; though the abduction scene is devoid of divinities (apart from the possibly personified Euōpis), the other side of the vase gives them full coverage. These scenes are crafted to be read in tandem; the Judgment calls to mind the divine machinery that overarches this story, while the abduction scene juxtaposes its human, communal and familial cost.

The tondo of the vase (fig. 5.6) is also significant: a draped boy is courted by an older man, who tenderly holds the youth's hand, and gazes at him with obvious affection. The erotic emblem of the hare makes explicit the context of pederastic courtship, accentuated by the inscription that reads *Hippodamos kalos*. Though marriages were monogamous and adultery was discouraged, relationships between men and youths in ancient Greek society did not threaten the moral fabric or disrupt patrilineal descent because they were non offspring-producing. Furthermore, in sixth and early fifth-century Athens, the symposium was well known to be not only a homosocial environment but also a primary site of homosexual courtship. Homosexual and heterosexual courtship scenes are often juxtaposed on the same vessel.

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[66] Neer 2002: 13.

Stewart shows that pederastic imagery was losing popularity in the first decades of the fifth century, saying that these scenes decline in frequency after 500 and by 475 they have virtually disappeared altogether.[67] This may be connected with the general erosion (though not disappearance) of certain aristocratic ideas and practices. The decline of the pederastic imagery does not of course prove the disappearance of the practice. However, in this transitional era, scenes such as the tondo just discussed are still relatively popular and *kalos* inscriptions (themselves evoking an aristocratic ideal) continued to declare the beauty of youths, and perhaps of patrons or symposiasts themselves. The sexual plurality of Athenian males allows the male symposiast to read and appreciate the aesthetics not just of Helen (the most beautiful woman in the world) but also that of Paris, and the youth on the tondo of the cup.

Makron's skyphos, which combines the narratives of abduction and recovery on its two sides, also only fully expresses its emotional and aesthetic discourse through contemplation of both sides. The vessel also explores an aesthetics of Greek manhood and womanhood that the late Archaic viewer of the vessel would understand and appreciate, and, I would argue, engage with emotionally. The vase makes sense in a sympotic context where the male audience defined themselves as *kalos k'agathos*, and the importance of beauty is consistently espoused. But there are other emotional issues that are interrogated in this scene. Makron's Paris is shown as a young Greek man at the peak of his aesthetic and erotic allure, with whom the beautiful Helen elopes through the full support of the gods.

The significatory value of the 'personified' figures of divinities outlives or even outdoes their presence as 'actual characters' who steer events in the narrative. On an explicit level, the gods have manipulated events but on an implicit or psychological/emotional level, they represent the emotional discourse of the scene – *eros* and *peitho*. These two levels are unlikely to be thought of as mutually exclusive in the mind of the late sixth and early fifth-century audience. Instead, this scene adds up to a complex ideological picture that accommodates both human feeling and divine volition.

If Eros's prominent position between the couple suggests that the feeling is mutual, and not only that Paris desires her, then it is possible that the problem or issue of the desiring woman is tabled in this scene. Sappho's fragment 16 again offers a significant sixth-century perspective on the emotional dynamics of the moment of Helen's 'abduction'. She uses the

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[67] Stewart 1997: 157.

story of Helen and Paris as a mythological exemplum to explore the very nature of beauty and desire/love. The story is framed within the priamel form, where several objects of beauty (the aforementioned cavalrymen; foot soldiers and navy) are presented and discarded, giving way to Sappho's emphatic statement that the most beautiful thing is ὄττω τις ἔραται ('that which one desires').[68]

While beauty is highly prized in the poem (as in the Homeric epics), Sappho's point is to ultimately disagree with any absolute notion of it. Rather, she argues, beauty is subjective – it is related to individual perception. This is borne out by the exemplum of Helen in an unexpected way. Helen, known for her beauty and for being desired, is not the beautiful object of desire in the poem, but rather the one who desires (Paris, the most beautiful to her?). The subtle reversal that occurs in the presentation of Helen as the desiring woman, turns Helen into an active participant (the subject), while he becomes the object of her passion.[69] In this way the traditional 'abduction' from Sparta shifts to become an elopement of two lovers in Sappho's fragment 16.

This perspective may inform the way in which the story is framed on Makron's skyphos; Paris desires Helen and, it may be implied, she is not merely persuaded but actively desires him. Athenian (male) concerns associated with female desire were discussed in Chapter 6. Osborne has also pointed out how the notion of the desiring woman presented something of a conundrum to the ancient Greek audience; there is an obvious lack of visual portrayals of actively desiring women on vases.[70] It is significant that the only female figure to be shown on vases pursuing a male figure according to the erotic pursuit matrix is Eos.[71] She is unmistakably divine; her very obvious appendages – wings – prevent a mistaken assumption that this could be an ordinary woman. The wings, says Osborne, signal Eos' desire as 'an unavailable transgression'.[72] The uniqueness of this scenario in extant vase-painting is telling. The fact that only Eos' armours are presented this way may reiterate the unacceptability of such behaviour for real women. At the same time the images may render male fears about female desire and its dangers.

I think that Makron, on his skyphos in particular, subtly suggests Helen's desire of Paris, and that he provokes his male audience with such a contention. By evoking the *gamos* through the

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[68] Sapph. 16.4.
[69] Hutchinson 2001: 163.
[70] Osborne 1996.
[71] *Ibid*: 67-68 and Stewart 1995: 86.
[72] Osborne 1996: 68.

use of the marriage procession, he takes this a step further. However this is in the spirit of *homōnymia,* the initial appearance or veneer of acceptability and respectability is superficial, since, after such sympathetic contemplation of the eloping pair, on turning the vase around the male viewer would be confronted with the potent reminder of the harm done to Menelaus' honour in the process. In this way Makron suggests that this pseudo-*gamos* has consequences, and the viewer would be well aware that the 'marriage' led to the dire fate of Paris, his city, and his nation.

This vase is continuous with the moral paradigm that was discussed in Chapters 4-6; the justification for *Menelaus' cholos* and his right of revenge. The recovery scene allows the symposiast now to appreciate the extent and the vigour of Menelaus' rage; insulted and dishonoured he is about to punish the adulterous wife for her crime of *moicheia* (made obvious by her see- through garments) and reinstate his honour. Motivated by the 'necessary rage' discussed in earlier chapters, he is shown taking action to reinstate the worldly order inverted by the violation of his own legitimate *gamos*. There is an aesthetics of manhood at play here too; Menelaus is presented as a beautifully adorned hoplite that surely prefigures the ideal of the mature male citizen soldier.[73]

6. Summary

The apparent neglect of the abduction or elopement of Helen in vase-painting of this era and well into the fifth century is inversely proportionate to the popularity of scenes showing her recovery. This points to an interest in the legitimate *gamos* of Helen and Menelaus, which was denied by the abduction or elopement, and which is emphatically reinstated through the act of recovery. The fact that Paris' abduction of Helen is not configured through the typical contemporary vocabulary of abduction or erotic pursuit suggests that an act of adultery with another man's wife was not considered within the range of acceptable male behaviours that is tabled by such scenes; not least of all because of the complications it caused between men. Such acts were not viable deeds of self-assertion for Athenian males also because they could impact on the paternity of the children of their own *oikos* – an issue of the utmost importance in the newly emerging democratic *polis.*

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[73] Winkler 1990: 179.

Fig. 5.1: Kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, obverse, the abduction of Helen (drawing), c. 490

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 3.3

Fig. 5.2: Detail of the abduction of Helen on the kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, Paris and Helen, c. 490

Image source: Beazley archive online

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Fig. 5.3: Detail of the abduction of Helen on the kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, Euopis, Tyndareus and Ikarius, c. 490

Fig. 5.4: Kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, from Vulci, reverse, the Judgement of Paris, c. 490

Fig. 5.5: Kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, from Vulci, reverse, the Judgement of Paris , Hera and Aphrodite surrounded by Erotes, c. 490

Image source: http://www.theoi.com

Fig. 5.6: Kylix by Makron, Berlin F 2291, from Vulci, tondo, courtship scene, c. 490

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 5.7: Skyphos by Makron, Boston 13.186, from Suessula, the abduction of Helen, c. 490-480

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 4

Fig. 5.8: Skyphos by Makron, Boston 13.186, from Suessula, detail of abduction of Helen by Paris, c. 490-480

Image source: MFA online

Fig. 5.9: Kylix, London 1837.0609.58, Theseus abducting Antiope, c. 510-500

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 5.10: Amphora by Euthymides, Munich 2309 (J410), Theseus abducting Helen, c. 510-500

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 103.2

Fig. 5.11: Hydria in the manner of the Kleophon Painter, Berlin F2384, Boreas chases Oreithyia, c. 450

Image source: Beazley archive online

Fig. 5.12: Loutrophoros, Boston 03.802, bridal procession, c. 425

Fig. 5.13: Loutrophoros by the Washing Painter, Boston 10.223, bridal procession, c. 430

Image source: Reeder 1995: cat. 24

Image source: Oakley & Sinos

CHAPTER 6

THE PERSUASION AND SEDUCTION OF HELEN C. 450-350

Though there is a lack of interest in the abduction of Helen in vase painting of the sixth and first half of the fifth centuries, traditional scholarship has found a marked interest in the theme towards the latter half of the fifth century and the fourth century. These alleged scenes, for the most part (but with notable exceptions), take the form of a pleasant and idyllic visit to Helen in Sparta in an interior setting (often described as the *'gynaikon'*),[1] with the full support of the divinities, Eros, Aphrodite and, in one instance, Peitho. The versions from the early to mid-fourth century are more densely populated than the fifth century scenes; the former can include several *erotes* and numerous 'youths', attendants and divinities. One notable exception out of all these scenes may show the abduction in a more ambivalent way; in this scene Helen is reluctant, and the tone is more foreboding. However the current chapter will problematize all but one of the scenes usually identified as Paris courting Helen, and with them, many assumptions made by scholars related to the iconography and identity of this group of scenes. It is, I believe, highly unlikely that these scenes actually show a starry-eyed version of the event, particularly when one follows the methodology of reading the images in the context in which they are produced and used.

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that the subject of Helen's abduction or persuasion is a reasonably popular literary *topos* in the extant texts; however the exact nature of the meeting between Helen and Paris in Sparta is not explicitly described in any literary source.[2] The mere fact that Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* offers several potential 'reasons' for Helen's passage to Troy, suggests that there was no agreed version of the event. The absence of a literary description of such a meeting does not vitiate the potential identification of the vase-painting scenes as Helen's persuasion or seduction because, as Chapter 1 sets out, the images are not to be viewed as mere 'illustrations' of texts, but they themselves are parallel purveyors of the discourse. It is, however, impossible to ignore that no clearly inscribed version of Helen

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[1] The term *gynaikon* will be challenged below.
[2] It may have been described in the lost epic, the *Cypria* by Stasinus, known from Proclus's later summary, as mentioned in Chapters 2 and 5.

being visited by Paris in Sparta is extant in Attic pottery. Partial inscriptions exist in particular scenes but these are not conclusive, as will be argued below.

Ghali-Kahil's identifications appear to have been made on the basis of iconographic confluence; ensembles of certain icons and figure types have been read together as strongly suggesting this particular narrative. However, in all cases but one, there is no concrete iconographic evidence for such an identification. Additionally, alternative explanations can be found for these iconographic schemes, and not necessarily mythological ones. Other somewhat comparable matrices on South Italian vases, Etruscan mirrors, neo-Attic reliefs, and in Pompeian painting have probably influenced the identification process, assuming some common model that these various art forms, including the Attic scenes, may refer to in different ways. Yet in all these cases the individual contexts of production and reception are quite different from that of Attic pottery. These matrices cannot be applied retrospectively without clear evidence of their relationship to such common model. This unequivocal evidence does not exist.

The search for the abduction of Helen scenes on Attic pottery is probably also partly fuelled by the existence, and prevalence, of the much more securely identifiable recovery scenes: because there are recoveries of Helen, there is an expectation that there must also be abduction scenes. The identification of these scenes as Helen's abduction is also a remnant of the kind of methodology that sought mythological and narrative explanations for vase images wherever possible, without adequately contextualising the imagery and discourses and ascertaining whether such interpretations are viable. Though this latter methodology is no longer tenable, its effects have yet to be redressed in some areas. Importantly, in these questionable scenes, an investigation of their emotional discourse renders them highly unlikely to be Paris courting Helen in Sparta.

1. Investigating the vases

Ghali-Kahil's *LIMC* study includes 32 Attic vases that fall into the mid- to late classical era.[3] The spectrum of vase shapes is diverse; these include the larger hydriai (8) and kraters (5), as well as drinking cups (3), pelikai (3), squat lekythoi (7), and one example each of a tallboy lekythos, oinochoe (chous), amphoriskos, plate, oon, and siphon. The significance of this distribution of scenes on such shapes is immediately obvious. This range of vessels suggests a more diverse audience than the 'sympotic' one that is so vital to reading the recovery scenes and Makron's two Helen and Paris scenes. Some sympotic vessels do occur in this group – the cups and the kraters are traditionally the apparatus of the symposium. However, the hydriai and the smaller

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[3] These scenes are included in the entries from *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 70-185.

vessels, particularly the lekythoi and amphoriskos are 'feminine' vases; and their range of use is more closely aligned with the life of women in the house.[4]

2. Investigating the iconography

These Attic scenes identified by Ghali-Kahil and other scholars as the abduction, persuasion or seduction of Helen by Paris do not follow Makron's formula of the abduction as a wedding procession, though some 'nuptial nuances' also occur. The painters allegedly adopt a different matrix: that of Paris' visit to Helen and her persuasion, shown for the most part to take place in an interior setting (though more specifically designated by scholars as the '*gynaikon*') through the presence of furnishings and other indoor accoutrements, though an outdoor or indeterminate setting also occurs.

The term '*gynaikon*' now deserves further elaboration. In recent years scholarship has problematized the existence of such a specific space within the house where women were 'secluded' and 'confined'.[5] Nevett for example, rejects this idea on archaeological grounds; one of her findings is that 'feminine' artefacts are found distributed throughout the house, not in one particular part of the *oikos* where women were supposed to spend most of their time.[6] Nevett's idea that there is an opposition between the *andron* – a more public space – and the rest of the house, where women would work and conduct their daily activities is a feasible one. The *gynaikon,* then, may rather be a broad idea than an actual physical space. In this thesis, the term will be abandoned in favour of '*oikos'* or 'interior' or 'domestic spaces'; places where women conduct their womanly work and activities, wherever in the house that might be.

In these scenes, 'Paris'[7] appears in different guises; he can either be shown as a traveller, a shepherd, an *ephebe* (or a bridegroom) or as a foreigner in long, patterned trousers, tunic and the so-called 'Phrygian bonnet'. However while all of these figure-types can be Paris, none of them is uniquely Paris. The 'Helens' in these alleged scenes lack concrete iconography too. One woman is usually singled out and in most cases she is shown to be adorned, well dressed and commanding all the attention. But Helen is, of course, not the only woman in Attic vase painting to be shown well adorned and dressed. In a scene on a fragmentary hydria by the Meidias Painter in Athens, Helen and her sisters are difficult to distinguish from each other (or

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[4] Burn 1991: 120; Sutton 1992: 5; Lewis 2002: 132 and Webster 1972: 98-104 on particular vessels and their specific uses.
[5] Lewis 2002: 135.
[6] Nevett 1999: 68-74.
[7] The terms 'Paris' and 'Helen' are used here to describe the figures which are thought to be Paris and Helen, but which I am disputing. Paris and Helen on the other hand refer to figures that I accept as such.

from other Meidian women) without their inscriptions.[8] In the Meidian scene Helen is differentiated from the other women not through her own particularised appearance, but because she is attended by Eros who sits in her lap. On another inscribed vase by the Painter of the Athens Wedding,[9] Helen is singled out from the other women in the scene through her white skin, her central placement in the picture field, her decorated tunic or himation, and the attention of Pothos. However, again, none of this iconography is distinctive for Helen, and in fact, a well-dressed and adorned woman commanding attention and visited by Eros or Pothos can also, in many instances, be the goddess Aphrodite. Aphrodite is also frequently attended by beautiful and youthful males (Phaon, Mousaios), including those of oriental descent (Adonis). The ambiguity of this iconography makes it unsafe to make assumptions without other concrete indicators.

Ghali-Kahil categorises the various *Enlèvement d'Hélène par Pâris* scenes from this period into several sub-categories depending on very specific scene matrices (for example, whether 'Helen' or 'Paris' is seated or standing, whether they face each other or whether the pair is alone or in the presence of other personages, etc.) and the precise moment that is imagined to be depicted (the arrival of Paris, for example, or the giving of gifts). In order to explore – and in all cases but one, to contest – the viability of these scenes, I will consider particular examples according to simplified categories rather than those offered by Ghali-Kahil. The categorising exercise has some value; however, in separating out the various types of scenes in such detail, this approach can blur the fact that common to most of the scenes in question, is a basic idea, which is then elaborated on. The general thrust of the so-called 'persuasion of Helen' scenes is that they use a familiar matrix of generalised 'courtship' or a young man visiting a woman in a domestic setting.[10] Whether one has to find a mythological story embedded in these scenes is one of the key questions of this chapter.

2.1 The reluctant 'Helen'

Two significant scenes dated between 440 and 420 are widely accepted as showing the persuasion of a reluctant Helen by Paris. The first example is on a kylix in Berlin, the name vase of the Painter of Berlin F2536[11] (figs 6.1-6.4) and the identification is convincing. The second is on a well-known pointed amphoriskos, the name vase of the Heimarmene Painter, also in Berlin and dated to c. 430-420 (figs 6.5-6.11).[12] In my view, this identification is doubtful. In fact, the scene on the Berlin kylix (fig. 6.1-6.2) shows, I believe, the only viable persuasion of

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[8] Athens, Kerameikos 2712, *ARV* 1313.6, 1690, 1708, *Add* 180, Burn M 6.
[9] London E 226, *ARV*[2] 1318.3, Kahil-Ghali 1955: pl. 28.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 78.
[10] Stafford 1997: 201.
[11] Berlin F 2536, *ARV*[2] 1287.1, 1689, *Para* 473, *Add* 178, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 9.1-2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 85.
[12] Berlin 30036, *ARV*[2] 1173.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 6.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 140.

Helen scene of all the scenes offered by Ghali-Kahil from this period, though again no inscriptions make this identification secure. It is also highly significant that this vessel is a kylix – a sympotic vase. This suggests an affluent male audience and it is to be expected that the discourse of the vase reflects their interests.

In this probable persuasion of Helen scene, two youthful men with short hair and no beard are positioned on the right margin of the scene. They are dressed similarly; they wear *petasoi*, *chlamydes*, and boots and hold double spears. To the left of them stands another man, but he is differentiated from the visiting youths in three ways. First he is bearded while they are youthfully smooth-cheeked, second this man wears a long himation draped over his shoulder and no footwear rather than travel attire, and third, he holds not a spear but a sceptre. It has been suggested that this trio consists of the travellers, Aineas and Paris being received by Menelaus, their host and the king of Sparta.[13]

A seated woman forms the left margin of the scene: Helen (fig. 6.1-6.2).[14] This fascinating figure is quite different from most of the other potential 'Helen'-figures discussed in this chapter. She is seated on a *klismos*; this much is similar to her alleged counterparts in the later scenes. She has a small, footed casket resting in her lap. The way in which she handles it is significant: her hand is poised above it, as though about to take something from the casket. Directly in front of her stands a woman in a *peplos* and a *sakkos* (or *taenia*), who fiddles with her headgear with one hand, and admires herself in the mirror that she holds in the other. Both the casket and the mirror suggest 'womanly' activities, such as grooming, preening and adornment and point to an interior context.

Erotic connotations are made explicit in this scene through the inclusion of a large-winged Eros who kneels at the feet of the seated woman. He is probably imagined to be tying her sandals, an erotic motif that is typically used in red-figure adornment of the bride scenes where Eros helps the *nymphe* to put on her nuptial sandals or *nymphides*.[15] The direction of Helen's head, and indeed the expression on her face are both highly significant. She does not look in the direction of her visitors as she does in the other scenes discussed above, but she turns her head away and grasps her own forehead with her right hand. Her lips are pursed together and the edges are exaggeratedly downturned; the expression on her face as well as the turn of her head together create a deeply melancholic mood. Burn compares the demeanour of Helen in

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[13] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 85.
[14] London E 229, *ARV* 1481.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 18, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 87.
[15] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 16; Oakley 1995: 66. Compare for example a squat lekythos in the manner of the Meidias Painter (Boston 95.1402).

this scene to that on the Kerameikos hydria:[16] in both, Helen appears, by her downcast head and her gesture, to be in the throes of a serious dilemma. On the Meidias Painter's hydria there is no visitor in the scene; Helen is surrounded by her sisters and various other women and the source of her disquiet is not immediately evident, even if implied through the figure of Pothos. In the *kylix* scene, Helen is particularly despondent; she is non-receptive to the visitors, and reluctant to engage in the arts of seduction that are being suggested by the woman with the mirror, the casket that she is about to take something from, and the more explicit action of Eros' attention to her feet.

The melancholic mood of this scene is strikingly different from the vases that will be discussed in the next subsections. In the other scenes, the 'Helen'-figure is shown to be either passive or receptive to her visitor and his potentially seductive charms. But here Helen – though in the process of becoming beautified and 'eroticised' by Eros – is unreceptive and reluctant. On the other hand, it is implied either that she will be swayed by the forces of *eros* – and therefore she will give in to her own desire – or that she is to become the object of desire for Paris, through Eros' embellishments of her, or both. Rather than Helen simply appearing 'not to be pleased with what the future holds,' as Oakley describes it,[17] the artist surely pictorializes the inner struggle that she experiences. This scene suggests her emotional state to be conflicted between her wifely duties (evoked by Menelaus being present in the scene) and her desire (evoked by the figure of Eros, the casket gesture, and the beautiful, youthful visitors). The result will be an illicit relationship that has far-reaching consequences, and it may be that the feelings of guilt and responsibility that are sometimes articulated by Helen in the literary sources can be predicted in Helen's demeanour here.

The sophistication of this vase-painter's approach to the story and its concomitant issues becomes clearer after a contemplation of the other side of the vase. Like Makron's Berlin kylix, the reverse scene also depicts the Judgement of Paris (fig. 6.3), which strongly supports the identification of the obverse scene just discussed as the persuasion of Helen. Apart from the obvious thematic or narrative links (the judgement leads to the abduction or persuasion), visual and aesthetic links also strongly suggest that the two sides should be considered as part of a unified programme of decoration, and a coherent discourse.

On the reverse, a bare-chested – in fact, virtually naked – Paris sits on the right margin. He is seated on a raised plinth between two Ionic columns; such architectural features suggest the

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[16] Burn 1987: 69-70.
[17] Oakley 1995: 66.

house – or *prothura* (portico or courtyard) – but this is more typical of scenes showing women at the house, rather than men. This is also contrary to the pastoral setting that is usually indicated in other Judgement of Paris scenes through rocky outcrops or animals.[18] A pastoral setting is perhaps implied in the string instrument that Paris holds in his left hand. His other hand holds a sceptre, an accoutrement carried by Menelaus on the other side of the vase. It may well be intended here as a sign that the person holding it is in his own domain. This is Troy, Paris' domain, while the obverse scene takes place in Menelaus' territory, Sparta.

In front of the seated Paris stands Hermes with his winged hat, and caduceus. He leads a procession of parading divinities: Hermes looks back towards a veiled Aphrodite, who holds a small crouching Eros in her left hand and a wreath in the right. Eros in turn holds out a necklace or a ribbon towards Hermes, but this is surely intended for Paris who must do the judging. Aphrodite looks back towards Athena, who wears an aegis and is holding a helmet out in front of her with her right hand and a spear in her left. Behind Athena is Hera, wearing a veil and *stephane*, and holding a lion in her left hand and a sceptre in her right. These icons held by the divinities of course represent the bribes or incentives that they offered to persuade Paris: Hera's lion and sceptre stand for political power, Athena's helmet is for military might, and Aphrodite's wreath and the figure of a crouching Eros represents the prize and the promise of erotic pleasure, in the form of Helen. This vase's discourse is clearly centred on persuasion, and particularly of the erotic kind.

Compositional echoes occur between obverse and reverse sides of the kylix: on each side a group of three figures processes towards a fourth figure that stands opposite a seated figure. However the gender of the figures is reversed and so is the direction of movement. On the obverse, Aineas, Paris and Menelaus process left towards Helen's attendant, who stands opposite a seated Helen. On the reverse, Hera, Athena and Aphrodite move right, towards Hermes who stands in front of the seated Paris. One figure is consistent on both sides of the vase; Eros is centrally positioned in both the Judgement and the persuasion scene. This sophisticated vase highlights precisely the point that the forces of desire, represented by Eros himself, *will* prove to be formidable. Eros is impossible to resist. This pairing of the Judgement and the abduction or persuasion accentuates the connectedness of the two events in the mythic imagination but it also highlights the emotional force that Eros is shown to command.

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[18] For example Munich 1545, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' 7; Munich 1722, *ABV* 269, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' 8; London E289, *ARV*^{2} 1571, *LIMC* I 'Alexandros' 11; and Berlin F2182, *ARV*^{2} 251.32.

Another potential scene that has confidently been identified as the persuasion of Helen by Paris is on the well-known pointed amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter, also in Berlin, and dated to c. 430-420 (figs 6.5-6.11).[19] This scene is also read as a reluctant Helen type;[20] however there are potential problems with this mythological and narrative interpretation. Comparing it with the previous scene reveals how different it is in conception, composition and personnel. Nine figures appear in this scene and several of these are inscribed. The figures that are inscribed are all personifications of abstract concepts of some kind; however the protagonists – the figures that are purported to be Helen and Paris – are notably not inscribed. This is contrary to the impression of Stafford that all of the figures in this scene, including these two, are inscribed.[21] Such inscriptions would of course render the identification of the narrative secure, but they are simply not there.

The scene wraps around the entire vessel to form a continuous picture field. When unwrapped, the scene begins on the left edge with a female figure in a *sakkos*, Nemesis (inscribed ΝΕΜΕΣΙΣ, 'righteous and equitable retribution'), stoops over and points to the right (fig. 6.6). Alongside the face of the woman who stands next to her is inscribed [.]Υ[.]Ε; two possibilities are that she may be Tyche ('good fortune')[22] or Eukleia ('good repute').[23] Standing in front of these women is another female figure, inscribed ΠΕ[Ι]θ[Ω] (Peitho) and holding a casket (fig. 6.7). Directly before her is the supposed Helen figure (uninscribed) who is seated on the lap of Aphrodite, inscribed ΑΦΡΟΔ[ΙΤΗ] (fig. 6.8). Behind Aphrodite stands a naked male youth – supposedly Paris – with no accompanying inscription who is conversing with a winged Himeros (ΙΜΕ[ΡΟΣ], 'longing') (fig. 6.9). The final two figures are female; one is Heimarmene (inscribed ΕΙΜ(Α)Ρ[ΜΕΝΗ], 'destiny'), and the other lacks an inscription, but holds a small bird (fig. 6.10). She may, according to Smith, be Themis (divine order).[24]

The scene has been erroneously read, in my opinion, as the moment of Helen's persuasion, which is facilitated by the forces of desire, and overseen by the goddesses of Fate (Nemesis and Heimarmene). According to this reading, the 'Helen' figure is reluctant and needs to be persuaded to go with 'Paris', but it is made clear that she will be powerless to resist the forces of desire and fate. On the one hand, Nemesis' presence in the scene might be suggested as support for identifying the myth of Helen persuaded since, according to one (older) genealogy,

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[19] Berlin 30036, *ARV*[2] 1173.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 8.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 140.

[20] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 140; Stafford 1997: 200; Shapiro 1993: 194.

[21] 'On the Berlin vase inscriptions identify the central female group as Helen, seated on Aphrodite's lap, attended by Peitho, and the youth as Paris, with Himeros.' Stafford 1997: 200.

[22] Shapiro 1993: 194.

[23] Smith 2003: 12.

[24] *Ibid.*: 24.

Nemesis, rather than Leda, was the mother of Helen.[25] However, Nemesis is more likely intended as an abstract concept here, as are the other personified figures, rather than as the mother of Helen. For one thing, she does not behave in a maternal fashion at all; she stands a fair distance from 'Helen' and points at her in a way that is somewhat impersonal if not accusatory. Any 'mothering' or nurturing is being carried out by Aphrodite, certainly not Nemesis.

The conventional reading of this scene as showing the persuasion of Helen assumes that the protagonists are securely identified, which they are not. Without secure identification of Helen and Paris an alternative, non-mythological reading can more than suffice. The figures that are said to be 'Helen' and 'Paris' deserve closer attention. The woman wears a veil and a diaphanous *chiton*, through which her rounded breasts are clearly visible. Her appearance is reminiscent of that of brides in contemporary scenes; as Chapter 4 has established, although veils are not uniquely bridal attire, they can be seen to reflect a range of associations linked with the state of being married.

The scene is reminiscent in other ways of scenes that show the preparation of the bride: the 'Helen'-figure is surrounded by female attendants with the accoutrements of beauty or seduction, such as the casket that Peitho holds. Her downturned head and pensive gesture certainly make her appear reluctant. Her hesitancy is also articulated through the intimacy and intervention of Aphrodite on whose lap she is seated. The motif of sitting on the lap of Aphrodite or another female figure is also used in marriage imagery, where it is the sign of the coaching and support needed by the young bride in this time of transition and anxiety.[26] Such reluctance or resistance to marriage is in fact implicit in the marriage ritual itself; and the coy attitude of the bride is important to her desirability.[27]

The 'Paris'-figure also evokes associations with weddings. He is shown in the guise of a youthful and beautiful bridegroom/*ephebe*. He is naked, but holds a cloak (himation?) over his wrist while his hand rests on his hip, with relaxed and confident pose. He wears a wreath on his head. Wreathes are standard headgear for bridegrooms and often feature in nuptial scenes in various ways; suspended above the bride, hanging on the wall or carried by Eros or other members of the entourage. However wreathes are certainly not unique to bridal contexts. It is worth asking what other meanings wreathes evoke which may in turn render them suitable in

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[25] Athenaeus viii. 334 B:
[26] Such as the fragmentary lebes gamikos by the Painter of Athens 1454, *ARV*[2] 1038.1 and 1679; *Para* 443; *Add*. 319.
[27] Oakley 1995: 13; 17.

bridal contexts. One typical context of use of the wreath is that of the festival or religious ritual, and since weddings were ritualised and festive occasions, the wreath is an appropriate accessory. However women are notably not wreathed in the imagery or on such occasions, though they wear other kinds of headgear. The other key association of the wreath is victory; wreathes were prizes at the various games, and in vase imagery Nike sometimes flies while holding a wreath. Furthermore, the olive wreath on the door of an Athenian house was also apparently an announcement that a boy had been born to the family; Golden's suggestion that it was an aspiration for Olympic victory is viable.[28] The wreath, then, is imbued with multiple associations, but in the context of courtship and marriage scenes, it may also reflect these ideas about masculinity, competition and success. Such messages are appropriate in discourse that encourages success in courtship; what is aspired to in these scenes is both erotic prowess and victory.

While bridegrooms in wedding procession scenes are commonly shown wearing a himation over their naked torsos, youthful, wreathed and cloaked men or naked youths do sometimes appear in scenes involving bridal preparations. One example is a scene on a red-figure hydria by the Orpheus Painter in New York where Eros presents what may well be *nymphides* to a seated bride, who is visited by a youth in a himation.[29] Another example is the naked and wreathed youth who is present in a wedding preparation scene on a lekanis lid in St. Petersburg.[30] Objections to reading these figures as bridegrooms may be that they would not physically be present during this process of ritual adornment; however this is to interpret the imagery too literally. It is more likely that such figures may represent the youthful bridegroom for whom the bride is being so lovingly prepared, rather than implying that the bridegroom is in the room with the entourage.

The man's companion in this scene is Himeros, Eros' twin; erotic desire and longing is closely aligned with this youthful male. The two are engaged in an intense conversation that is mirrored by the equally intense conversation going on between the woman and Aphrodite. If one reads these two figures – Aphrodite and Himeros – on the allegorical rather than mythological level, one can extrapolate an entirely coherent message conveyed by the vase. Borg has shown how personifications are a sophisticated means of communicating messages on vase-paintings; rather than superficial figures, they provide allegorical comments on

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[28] Golden 2003: 16.
[29] New York 17.230.15; *ARV*[2] 1104.16, c. 440-420.
[30] St. Petersburg 179; *ARV*[2] 1476.3; *Para* 496; *Add*[2] 381, c. 370.

particular situations.[31] In the case of this vase by the Heimarmene Painter, the scene can be shown to offer perspectives on the important rite of passage that is marriage. The personifications in the scene steer the viewer through a specific discourse pertinent to its audience; as a 'feminine vase', the scene is intended for and relevant to a female audience.

The concepts embodied by Nemesis, Tyche (or Eukleia), Peitho, Aphrodite, Himeros, Heimarmene and Themis – (just) retribution, fortune (or good repute), persuasion, sensual love, desire, destiny, and divine law – map out the potentialities implicit in the life of a woman, and in marriage. These personifications are the most important cues that structure the scene's potential meaning/s. Though marriage is not exclusively a feminine experience, it is the defining experience for a woman. It is, to use a modern expression, her 'career path' and her success or failure would be measured in these terms. The allegory could work thus: Righteous retribution (Nemesis) and fortune (Tyche) are closely watching over the young bride, who is anxious, inexperienced and naïve before her marriage. Once persuaded (Peitho) into her married life, in particular, its sexual aspect (Aphrodite), she will ignite erotic desire in the groom (Himeros), and accomplish her destined role (Heimarmene), and divine law (Themis) will prevail. That Nemesis is watching over the young bride does not mean that she is bound to fail and fall into disrepute; it is simply a warning of this potential, but it is balanced by the presence of Tyche alongside her and Heimarmene on the extreme right margin of the scene.

These personifications act as rhetorical devices that discuss profound concerns and anxieties related to a woman's erotic life in particular. The personifications generate a coherent discourse without the two protagonists being labelled as mythological characters. The very fact that they are unlabelled probably suggests that the artist was not at pains to specify their identities because it really did not matter. Their iconography designates the figure types as bride and groom. This does not preclude a spontaneous reading of the scene as one involving Helen and Paris. It is necessary to distinguish between the likely range of readings, based on the iconography or signs present in the scene, and a spontaneous individual reading, that is based on the viewer's own particular circumstances and context. These spontaneous readings are not invalid. It is my contention, however, that this image and the images in the categories that follow are unlikely to have been interpreted by the typical viewer as the illicit relationship of Helen and Paris.

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[31] Borg 2005.

A third scene, though much later, also deserves discussion here, since it is similar in emotional content. A fragmentary hydria by the Painter of the Group of London E 230 or the Hippolytos Painter (fig. 6.12)[32] has been thought to render the persuasion of Helen. The scene shows a woman with bulbous breasts clearly indicated through her diaphanous *chiton*, who is seated on a cushioned *kline*. She is adorned with a necklace and earrings and is surrounded by human attendants. However, her head is down; is this reluctance, or are her eyes perhaps averted in a show of *aidos*? On the *kline* alongside her is the figure of Eros standing on a pillow and looking down at her bowed head. Three other draped female figures are standing or languishing in the scene but they are only partly preserved. The naked legs of a youthful male figure are preserved on the extreme right next to the handle. Who this figure is supposed to be is impossible to tell. While Ghali-Kahil would like to read this figure as a naked Paris, he could as easily simply be a naked languishing youth or bridegroom-type figure, such as those noted in some preparation of the bride scenes. The open doorway behind the seated woman is another strong sign that evokes marriage scenes where the doorway may even allude to the woman's metaphorical entrance into adult life. It is both a physical portal into the bedchamber and a metaphorical one into the most important phase of an Athenian woman's life: her *telos*.

2.2 'Helen' and a traveller

After Makron, the three fragments of a white ground calyx krater in Cincinnati by the Methyse Painter[33] (dated to roughly the mid-fifth century) provide the next potential persuasion of Helen scene that is extant (figs 6.13-6.16). A substantial amount of the picture field is lost, but inscriptions support the identification of three figures; Helen, Aphrodite and Eros are securely identified. No inscription is preserved for the male figure on the third fragment, which also preserves the fabric of a purple cloak on its left edge. This implies that a figure stood or sat in front of the male figure.

On the first fragment are the head and upper torso of Helen (inscribed HEΛEN[.]), facing right, with her eyes averted and head lowered (fig. 6.16). She wears a *stephane* and her tunic is a pleated *chiton*, while a golden-brown coloured *himation* hangs over her left shoulder. The second fragment bears the head and torso of what is probably a seated Aphrodite (inscribed [A]ΦP[--]) and the legs and lower edges of the wings of Eros (inscribed EPO[.]), who is hovering in flight to the left of her (fig. 6.15). Both figures are facing to the left. That she is seated on a *klismos* is implied by the position of her left arm which is raised in a way that she could be

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[32] London E 229, *ARV* 1481.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 18, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 87.
[33] Cincinnati 1962.386-388, *ARV*² 634.5, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 10, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 139.

resting the elbow on the chair-back. Aphrodite's hairstyle is similar to, or perhaps slightly more elaborate than, Helen's and she is similarly clothed with *stephane* and pleated *chiton*. She has a purple *himation* draped diagonally over her left shoulder and beneath her right arm.

The third fragment (fig. 6.14) is the most substantial one, but it bears no inscription. A man – a traveller, as indicated by his *petasos*, *chlamys* and double spears – stands at rest. Moon has, without explanation, identified this figure as Aineas, while he reads the fragment of the cloak on the edge of the fragment as belonging to the figure of Paris, who was supposedly standing in front of him.[34] All of this is a bit fanciful, as is the reconstruction of the scene's configuration based on only three fragments, of which some may have belonged to the scene on the other side of the krater. Nor can we deduce, from the existing evidence, what other figures and inscriptions may have been present in the scene, which could have given the scene an entirely different identity. Even if the fragments were originally arranged roughly in the way that they have been placed in fig. 6.13, it is impossible to know whether this scene had one or two male figures at the right margin, and whether they are arriving or departing.

However the iconography and inscriptions of the fragments of this scene imply an erotically charged event, perhaps a meeting between Helen, and a man who may have travelled to see her, or who may be departing. Aphrodite and Eros leave no doubt as to the erotic tenor of the scene. The inclination of Helen's head is also significant; when faced by a man in this manner, she shows due *aidōs* by lowering her head and averting her gaze. The light grasp of her *himation* with her left hand may also allude to the modesty and *sophrosyne* that comes with veiling. Lowering the head, averting the eyes, and touching or holding drapery with one hand are all familiar from a number of mid-fifth-century scenes showing women in the presence of men. In departure scenes such as the well-known *stamnos* by the Kleophon Painter (fig. 6.17),[35] the wife lowers her head and holds her drapery in similar fashion as she says goodbye to her husband who sets off for war.

An argument could perhaps be made for the identification of the male figure on the Methyse Painter's third fragment as Paris or Aineas, both of whom were shown wearing *petasoi* in the Makron kylix scene. However, as already established, travel attire is by no means distinctive to Paris nor Aineas. While travelling clothes are typical of certain characters from myth (such as Odysseus, the arch traveller, and Hermes, the god of travellers) in most other cases it simply designates the idea of travel. This means that it could signal that the male figure has travelled

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[34] Moon 1981: 114.
[35] St.Petersburg 1148 (St. 1428, B. 809), *ARV*[2] 1143.3.

to get to this place, i.e. that he is not in his own household, or even in his home city. In this sense the travelling attire signals that the person is a stranger, or at least, a visitor. Or travel attire may signal that someone from that household is about to travel, or, having travelled, has now returned. The nuances of whether a traveller belongs or does not belong to a household are not always obvious, and in this scene, the scene does not provide any conclusive answer.

If this traveller figure is a visitor, then, apart from Paris or Aineas, he could be a youthful Menelaus courting his future wife, Helen. Though Menelaus is usually depicted as bearded in both black and red-figure vase painting, an inscribed scene by the Brygos Painter shows a younger, clean-shaven Menelaus leading a woman who must be Helen, though he is not dressed as a traveller (fig. 6.18).[36] Helen's first abductor, Theseus, may also be posited. On a *stamnos* in Athens by Polygnotos (fig. 6.19)[37] Theseus is dressed in a *chlamys*, *chitoniskos* and *petasos*, and holding two spears. All three identifications are, I believe, as viable – and as inconclusive – as each other.

2.3 'Helen' visited by a traveller in a domestic setting

Other vase painting scenes that have been presented by Ghali-Kahil as the persuasion of Helen by Paris, dressed as a traveller, are more clearly located inside the *oikos*. This sub-group includes a scene on a pelike in Athens by a painter in the Polygnotan Group and dated c. 450-425 (fig. 6.20);[38] a siphon in Athens (fig. 6.21)[39] and a scene on the belly of a hydria by the Kadmos painter, dated c. 420 (fig. 6.22).[40] In all three, a standing man – 'Paris' – and a seated woman – 'Helen' – 'encounter' each other in a domestic setting. On the siphon, only these two figures appear, while in the other two scenes, other personnel include female attendants (pelike and hydria) and a second male traveller (hydria). The interior context is clearly signalled by furniture, namely the *klismos* on which the woman is seated. However, the idea that it is specifically a *feminine* space is indicated through other icons.

On the pelike and the siphon, the presence of the distinctive flared wicker basket – the *kalathos* or wool basket – indicates such a feminine space. Ferrari and Lissarrague discuss this

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[36] Lekythos by the Brygos Painter, beginning of the fifth century. Berlin F2205, *ARV*[2] 383.202, *Para* 366, *Add* 113, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 85.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 62.

[37] Athens 18063, *ARV*[2] 1028.13, 1678, *Add* 155, Ghali-Kahil 1955: 68-69, c. 430-420. Inscriptions securely identify the figures (ΘΕΣΕΥΣ, ΗΕΛΕΝΕ, ΠΕΡΗΣΟΣ, ΦΟΙΒΑ).

[38] Athens 1182, *ARV*[2] 1059.133; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 9.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 108.

[39] Athens, from the Acropolis, Threpsiadis, I; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 68.2-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 84. The dating of this vessel is disputed. A date of 500 is preferred by Ghali-Kahil and von Bothmer, but Clement disputes this, placing it closer to the mid-fifth century rather than at the start. 500 is preferred by Ghali-Kahil and von Bothmer, based on a comparison with the cup Paris CA 2495, cited in Clement 1958: 55, fn. 37. This later dating seems more appropriate.

[40] Plovdiv 298, *ARV*[2] 1187.36, *Para* 371, *Add* 114, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 13.3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 70.

object's meaning beyond its simple contextual reference; it is a typical and appropriate connotation of women's spaces because it signals both the *philergia* of the woman it is associated with, and for this reason, also her attractiveness or suitability as a wife.[41] On the siphon*,* two mirrors – one in the hand of the seated woman and one hovering on the wall between the pair – also evoke connotations of the toilette. A footed casket carried by the attendant on the pelike and held by the seated woman in the hydria scene may also evoke the processes of dressing and beautifying that are central to the toilette, though none of these activities are specifically being carried out in either case.

In all three scenes the draped woman faces the man without averting her eyes; she looks straight at him in a way that suggests familiarity – or *anaideia* – though in the pelike and the hydria scenes she holds a piece of her drapery with the veil gesture which suggests a modicum of decorum. The siphon scene is poorly drafted and the details of both figures are sketchy. In the pelike and the hydria scenes the woman is well dressed and wears headgear; a *sakkos* and a *stephane* respectively. The standing male 'Paris'-figure in all three scenes is presented as a traveller; though the siphon scene is not very carefully drawn, he seems to be dressed in a *chlamys*, holds a staff, and possibly wears a *pilos* or *petasos* on his head. On the pelike and hydria the central male figure is more carefully depicted with *chlamys, petasos*, boots and double spears.

Of the three scenes, the male figure on the pelike in Athens is most reminiscent of the traveller on the Methyse Painter's fragment – in both his travelling attire and in his stance. However, again, there are no clear and unequivocal signals that suggest the identification of this pelike scene as the visit by Paris in Helen's *oikos*. Inscriptions above the women's heads are not helpful; they are difficult to make out and it is possible that they are nonsense inscriptions.[42] Though Ghali-Kahil does not express doubt as to the identification, and Ferrari describes this scene as 'plausibly interpreted as the encounter of Paris and Helen',[43] Beazley was more cautious about its identity.[44] There is, in my opinion, nothing to compel the identification of the scene as the persuasion of Helen, nor as any particular mythological narrative.

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[41] Ferrari 2002: 92 on *philergia* generally and 56-60 on wool working, wool baskets and *philergia*; Lissarrague 1995: 96.

[42] Immerwahr (1998) suggests: 'above the girl at left: (κ)α(λ)(ε). Above the seated woman: (υ)α(.)α(χ). Above the girl at right: traces of an inscription'.

[43] Ferrari 2002: 30.

[44] *ARV*[2] 1059.133.

The hydria scene has also been read unproblematically by Ghali-Kahil as Paris offering Helen gifts on his arrival in Sparta.[45] A seated 'Helen' holds up a casket which is open, and a traveller figure – 'Paris' – appears to have taken an object from it; vestiges of paint suggest an item that he holds in his hand above the casket. A second male figure behind 'Paris' is identified by Ghali-Kahil as Aineas. He is also dressed in *chlamys* and sandals, but wears a *pilos* on his head, not a *petasos* as worn by 'Paris'. He leans on a staff with one hand and carries a wineskin over his right shoulder, and an object that looks like a cage. If this is a scene of gift giving, there is no evidence that it is one involving Paris or Helen.

Other red-figure scenes that show men giving gifts to women, or merely consorting with them in the *oikos,* exist without need of mythological explanation.[46] Such scenes have in the past been interpreted as men consorting with or giving gifts to *hetairai*, since it was deemed unlikely that respectable unmarried girls or citizen wives would have come into contact with strange men under such circumstances.[47] A lebes gamikos by the Pan Painter preserves precisely such a 'courting' scene;[48] but it seems unconvincing that an image of men soliciting *hetairai* or prostitutes would be deemed appropriate to a marriage vessel. Ferrari's reading of the women in these scenes as 'marriageable girls' is more likely; the girls may be shown being courted in this way (contrary to social convention) since the vase images are not to be interpreted as snapshots of 'reality' but fictive constructions. She reminds us that 'the possibility should be allowed […] that the pictures represent fiction, things that are thought not to exist but may be imagined. In fiction, things may be represented as they are not, even as the contrary of what they are thought to be; impossible things may be shown but not without a sense and a purpose, that is, not outside a given discourse.'[49]

The final statement here is paramount. It is not that any fantasy could be presented, but a palatable fantasy. Since imagery tends to be affirming rather than subversive, and to suggest approval or agreement with the behaviour represented unless there are obvious indications of criticism,[50] it can be argued that the discourse within which the scenes exist must comfortably accommodate them. These scenes could show a real event – the giving of gifts from a betrothed man to his prospective wife – in unrealistic terms. The event is shown on such vases

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[45] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 70.

[46] For example an alabastron in Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 508, *ARV*[2] 1610, c. 460; a pelike by Polygnotos, Athens 1441, c. 430; a hydria of the mid-fifth century by the Dwarf Painter, Munich 2438, *ARV*[2] 1011.18, 1678; a hydria, also of the mid-fifth century by the Phiale Painter, Toronto 362, *ARV*[2] 1020.94, *Add*[2] 316; and another hydria attributed to either the Dinos or the Chrysis Painter *ARV*[2] 1158.1 *bis* (Market, Collection unknown).

[47] For example, Williams 1983: 97; Keuls 1985: 258-64; Davidson 1997: 86-9; Reeder 1995: 181-187.

[48] Providence 28.020, *ARV*[2] 552.27, c. 460.

[49] Ferrari 2002: 19.

[50] Borg 2006: 248, fn. 74-75.

as a face-to-face exchange, though if we trust the standard accounts of betrothals and marriages, the betrothed pair may not have had an opportunity to meet before their wedding.[51] Like the general seclusion of women, this is more likely to be an ideal than a feasible practice. The presence, in these scenes, of the bridegroom giving the gift clarifies the message – that he is the one doing the gift-giving. These scenes could therefore show the fantasy of courtship in a context where the discourse increasingly allows for romantic ideas about the marital relationship (the goal of courtship), a point that will be argued later in this chapter.

Another more likely explanation is that these are not marriageable maidens but married ones, and that in these scenes the men could be associating with women they do know – their wives. Apart from the familiarity that the women show towards the men, another clue may reside in the items carried by the attendant women that frame the left margin of this hydria scene and the right margin of the pelike scene; they each carry an oinochoe and a phiale. These items suggest ritual connotations more strongly than the signs of 'toilette' and adornment. Used frequently in warrior departure scenes, here they may therefore signal that the traveller, a member of this household, is about to depart, rather than his having recently arrived. Furthermore, the wineskin and the cage carried by the male figure in the hydria scene may provide even more specific information. Apart from being entirely inappropriate gifts for 'Helen' or any woman, cages are associated with the hunt. It is likely, then, that these two figures are not offering gifts but departing from the household, about to embark on a hunting expedition. Regardless of the specific purpose of the trip, the three scenes discussed above offer no evidence whatsoever for an encounter between Helen and Paris in an interior context.

2.4 'Helen' courted by 'Paris' as a traveller or *ephebe*

A larger group of scenes described as the persuasion or courting of Helen has aspects of iconography and scene matrix in common with the first three groups, but these scenes contrast with them in terms of emotional content and personnel (figs 6.23-6.40). In contrast to the scenes in the second group, they are, in almost all cases, characterised by the presence of Eros (or *erotes*). Well adorned and beautified women are now regularly visited by youthful *ephebes* in the presence of Eros. In distinct contrast with the first group (the 'reluctant Helen') these scenes tend to emphasise the pleasure of courtship; they are more 'romantic' than apprehensive.

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[51] Oakley & Sinos 1993: 10; Reeder 1995: 126.

The scenes either take place in the interior of the house, or have an outdoor setting, though for some the setting is indeterminate. Also typical is that they recreate the atmosphere of the 'heavenly garden' and reflect the general ethos or tone of the Meidian circle, for which the representation of Aphrodite and her companions are a preoccupation.[52] Scenes in this category from the late fifth century tend to be depicted mainly on smaller vases that are usually described as 'female vases'; for example squat or acorn lekythoi (figs 6.24-6.34),[53] though an oinochoe (fig. 6.35)[54] and a hydria (fig. 6.23)[55] are also included. Other larger vessels from the fourth century also show, in essence, a woman courted by a traveller or *ephebe*, but they are generally more densely populated and include other figures that become increasingly difficult to account for in terms of the myth of Paris and Helen. Two bell kraters,[56] a calyx krater[57] and two hydriai[58] are included in this fourth-century sample.

All examples of these scenes are consistent in representing an *ephebe*-like male, who is sometimes accompanied by a second male (figs 6.23; 6.30; 6.38; and 6.39) or in the fourth-century examples, several other males (figs 6.36 and 6.37). The 'Paris'-figure is usually shown standing alongside a well-adorned, unveiled woman – 'Helen'. He may stand opposite her (figs 6.28; 6.31; 6.34; 6.38; and 6.39) or behind her (figs 6.26-7; and 6.40) or he may be standing or seated next to her (figs 6.36 and 6.37) and in some cases separated from her by the large figure of Eros (figs 6.24; and 6.32-33).

The 'Helen'-figure is normally seated, but in three examples she stands (fig. 6.32; 6.34; 6.36). Where she is seated, she may be shown using variations on two main postures or positions used by the Meidias Painter and his circle to depict Aphrodite.[59] The first is where she is seated on a *klismos* (for example fig. 6.31; 6.38; 6.39); she faces left, and stares straight ahead of her, while casually resting her left elbow on the chair-back. While this pose may well reflect that of the cult statue from the sanctuary of Aphrodite in the Gardens on the north slope of the Acropolis, the pose is also used by the Meidias Painter to depict ordinary women and there is

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[52] Burn 1987: *passim*.

[53] Malibu 86.AE.259, possibly by the Meidias Painter (fig. 6.25); three lekythoi in the manner of the Meidias Painter: Athens 1162 (CC 1483), *ARV²* 1325.48, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 13.1-2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 89; Athens 1284 (CC1941), Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 14.1-4, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 91, Burn MM 112; Toledo (Ohio) 17 135, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 126; Toledo (Ohio) *CVA* 1, pl. 46 (figs 6.32-33); one by the Pronomos Painter: Berlin 4906, *ARV²* 1336.4, *Add* 182, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 12.1-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 88 (figs 6.23-24); and one by or near the Erbach Painter: Athens 17315, *ARV²* 1419, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 16. 1-3, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. *LIMC* 'Helene' 128 (fig. 6.34).

[54] Athens 1263 (CC1287), *ARV²* 1324.38; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 12.4, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 92.

[55] New York 19.192.86, *ARV²* 1130.152 (59), Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 11, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 80.

[56] Vienna IV 1089 (Sk 236) *ARV²* 1423, 1, 1693; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 24.1, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 127 (fig. 6.36) and Vienna IV 1143, *ARV²* 1410, 27; *CVA* 3, pl. 123. 1-3, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 24.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 109 (fig. 6.37).

[57] Munich 2388, *ARV²* 1446.2, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 22, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 99 (fig. 6.38).

[58] St. Petersburg KAB104B, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 15.2; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 96 (fig. 6.39); and London E 236, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 17, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 142 (fig. 6.40).

[59] Burn 1987: 27.

no reason to suspect that a scene is mythological because of this pose.[60] The second pose, also typical of Aphrodite, is where the woman is seated on the ground, also facing left. With this posture she usually puts her weight on her left arm (which is straight) and looks over her left shoulder (as in fig. 6.24, though here she is seated on a casket, not directly on the ground). On another example the 'Helen'-figure is seated on a stool (fig. 6.40).

Eros is consistently present in these scenes, and in certain cases there are two *erotes* (fig. 6.24). Eros usually attends or is close to the 'Helen'-figure. He may do so in various ways; he either attends to her feet or shoes (figs 6.23; 6.26) – a nuptial reference – or flies towards her (fig. 6.28; 6.31; 6.38), or stands on her lap (fig. 6.39), or leans on her (fig. 6.40). These various motifs involving Eros are all used in bridal scenes from the fifth and fourth centuries. In one of the proposed Helen and Paris examples, Eros is more interested in 'Paris' (fig. 6.35) or he converses with another female figure, usually described as Aphrodite (fig. 6.34). Other female attendants also appear in the scenes; there may be one attendant (figs. 6.35; 6.36; 6.39) or more (figs 6.28-29; 6.38; 6.40).

The scenes from the end of the fifth century mostly evoke the generalised 'heavenly garden' scenes favoured by the painters in the Meidian circle, rather than the *oikos*. The outdoor setting is suggested by sprigs of foliage or rocky outcrops on which either 'Paris' or 'Helen' is seated. Three exceptions that deserve elaboration are a squat lekythos in Athens in the manner of the Meidias Painter (fig. 31),[61] an oinochoe, also near the Meidias Painter (fig. 6.35),[62] and a lekythos in Malibu, by the Painter of the Frankfurt Acorn (figs 6.41-43).[63] On the Athens lekythos the woman is seated indoors on a *klismos* while Eros flutters above the woman, hovering there between her and her male visitor. This hovering Eros motif appears elsewhere in this group. As pointed out in Chapter 5, it is well known also from wedding preparation scenes, where a small Eros often flies above or towards the bride, or in wedding procession scenes, where he flies between the couple. A wreath is also depicted here; though the condition of the vase makes it difficult to make out whether he holds the wreath and is about to place it on her head or whether the wreath is on the wall, the latter seems more likely. Again, the presence of the wreath probably signals courtship, and may express the hope of a successful encounter that may lead to marriage.

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[60] *Ibid*.
[61] Athens 1162 (CC 1483), *ARV*[2] 1325.48, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 13.1-2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 89; Burn MM 77.
[62] Athens 1263 (CC1287), *ARV*[2] 1324,38; Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 12.4, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 92.
[63] Malibu 91.AE.10, attributed to the Painter of the Frankfurt Acorn, ca. 420-10. *ARV*[2] 1317.3, *Add*[2] 363, *LIMC* II 'Aphrodite', cat. 120.

The oinochoe (chous) in Athens also shows a 'Helen'-figure who is seated on a *klismos* and visited in an interior setting by 'Paris', who is naked, wreathed and dressed as a traveller (fig. 6.35). The woman in this scene is shown differently from other proposed 'Helen'-figures; she holds a lyre and a plectrum. Musical instruments start to appear in domestic scenes, particularly in the second half of the fifth century.[64] The presence of the lyre probably suggests the feminine spaces of the *oikos* but it may also render the woman as desirable. In a Meidian scene of Aphrodite and Phaon, for example, Phaon plays a lyre, and the instrument may be an attribute of his attractiveness rather than his musicality.[65] There are more explicit references to erotic charms in this lekythos scene through the presence of Eros himself. Here Eros leans against the visiting (or departing) 'Paris' in a manner that evokes the Himeros and 'Paris'-figure pair on the amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter.

In contrast to the Eros who is attentive to the 'Helen'-figure in other scenes, this Eros gazes lovingly and longingly at the youthful man. The look of course does not suggest that Eros desires 'Paris', but that he is in the process of infusing him with desirability and erotic appeal. Alternatively, or additionally, Eros excites desire in the 'Paris'-figure for the woman who sits opposite him. Though the iconography is different, this process is surely envisaged as taking place in a similar way to that implied by Eros flying at Menelaus – particularly at his eyes – in several of the recovery scenes discussed in earlier chapters. Erotic desire is transmitted visually; the gaze once again is the vehicle for communicating these emotions. The man does not return Eros's stare but redirects his eyes towards the seated woman; the 'Paris'- and 'Helen'-figures look at each other directly and exchange an erotically charged stare. This scene shows a moment of intimacy; however, there are, again, no signals to compel a mythological narrative. The Helen and Paris identification is entirely without basis.

Another exceptional scene that has been presented as Paris' seduction of Helen at Sparta[66] takes the idea of the eroticised gaze to the extreme. The *lekythos* in Malibu (figs 6.41-3) shows a pair of rapt and mesmerised lovers staring into each other's eyes while engaged in an intimate embrace. Though this scene is not included in either of Kahil-Ghali's studies, and most scholars concede the uncertainty of the identity of these lovers, this scene is worth discussing here because of its emotional content. The 'Helen'-figure is seated on a *klismos*, and holds a mirror, and a stool on the left of the scene also denotes an interior setting. The 'Paris'-figure

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[64] For example on a hydria by a painter in the Group of Polygnotos (Würzburg L521, *ARV²* 1046.7, *Add* 156, *Add²* 320) a seated woman plays the lyre, while another woman stands holding a kithara and pipes. A flying Eros carries a wreath.
[65] Florence 81947, *ARV* 1312.2, *Para* 477, *Add* 180, Burn M2.
[66] Sutton 1992: 37.

does not stand opposite her as he does in most of the other proposed examples, but he stands very close behind her with his arms around her shoulders. She turns back to look directly into his eyes: their faces could hardly be closer and they exchange a deeply intimate gaze.

There are several other elements that make this scene quite unique, not only in the group of 'Helen'-'Paris' scenes, but among extant vase-painting in general. The 'Paris'-figure is not wreathed, nor a traveller, but he wears a patterned himation and a gilt diadem. He also, unusually, holds an athlete's strigil in his left hand, a curious accessory, described by Sutton as an item of male 'toilette' to match the mirror held by the 'Helen'-figure.[67] Two women frame the scene. The figure on the right has, without solid basis, been identified as Aphrodite. She looks on impassively, holding her patterned veil in the veil gesture. Another woman stands alongside a door post or column, she is identified, with similar lack of evidence, as Hera, and, unlike the 'Aphrodite'-figure's calm demeanour, she gestures with both hands bent at the elbows, denoting surprise. The gesture creates drama in the scene which is intensified by the miniature chariot that charges across the top of the picture field, above the heads of the two lovers. The driver could be Peitho as Beazley suggests,[68] or she is more likely Aphrodite who in other scenes drives chariots pulled by erotes, as is depicted here. Beazley's description of the pair as the bride and bridegroom is more viable than Paris and Helen; there is no iconographic evidence to support a mythological interpretation. The scene makes perfect sense as a human courting couple, engaged in a passionate embrace. The strigil, an athlete's accessory, may evoke connotations of masculinity and competition, suggested earlier as being connected with the wreath. A wreath is also present in this scene; it is suspended on the left, close to the figure thought to be Hera, goddess of marriage.

The scenes from the fourth century that are proposed as Helen and Paris scenes tend to favour an interior setting, made clear through the presence of the *klismos*, stool or *kline*, and the attendants with paraphernalia related to the toilette. In the scenes that are densely populated and include figures on several ground levels, it is impossible to guess which of the men would be the 'Paris'-figure. In fig. 6.36 there are three similarly dressed men, and in fig. 6.37, four men appear, none of which are singled out as a protagonist. It is highly unlikely that a painter would fail to distinguish the key figure in the narrative. Who these extraneous men might be makes the mythological interpretation even more implausible; Ghali-Kahil's suggestion for the latter scene – that the two wreathed figures are Paris and Aineas, and the two figures in *piloi* are the Dioscuri – is pure fantasy that is not based on literary or iconographic evidence.

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[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *ARV*² 1317.3.

A few other points of iconographic interest, or rather anomaly, occur within this group. Another densely populated scene is on a krater in Munich (fig. 6.38) where a seated woman, visited by a naked and wreathed male figure, has a dove resting on her knee. The dove is usually associated with Aphrodite, not with Helen, but it could also simply evoke the 'heavenly garden' atmosphere of some of the earlier scenes. In the register above, Eros flies towards the woman while playing the lyre and two other women hold and play tympana. The musical element is not typical of this group of scenes, but somehow adds to the pleasantness and charming atmosphere. There is another unusual element in a scene on a hydria in St. Petersburg, dated c. 380-370 (fig. 6.39). A seated woman is visited by two naked and wreathed men (fig. 6.38)[69]. A panther is positioned on the ground alongside her. Panthers are more typical of Dionysian scenes, but they are also notably gifts in pederastic courtship scenes and it is probably their reputation as sexually potent creatures that is implied here.[70]

A key aspect of these vase scenes is their tone; the painters render encounters between a woman and youthful travellers in a distinctly 'romantic' or idealising fashion, often in a context that evokes the atmosphere of the 'heavenly garden'. The outdoor setting and the proliferation of Erotes contributes to this ethos, giving the impression that the scenes are escapist idylls. This tendency to romanticise characterises the scenes that appear on the women's vessels of the late fifth and early fourth century, including several vase-painting scenes by the Meidias Painter and his circle. There is no evidence that the scenes render the persuasion or seduction of Helen by Paris though, the iconography simply does not support it.

2.5 'Helen' courted by 'Paris' as an oriental

A final sub-group of scenes that are purported to show the persuasion or seduction of Helen by Paris differ from the preceding group in a few noticeable ways. The most obvious difference is that the 'Paris'-figure is singled out as foreign – but also specifically as oriental – through typical garments used by vase painters to signal this status. These garments include a long-sleeved and patterned tunic, patterned trousers, and the characteristic pointed hat often described by scholars as a 'Phrygian bonnet'. The oriental outfit may suggest Paris since his depiction as an oriental is well-attested in other scenes, particularly in some versions of the Judgement.[71] These garments are used generally by the vase-painters as a sign of the 'otherness' of certain characters or groups; Amazons and Persians, for example, are commonly

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[69] St. Petersburg KAB104B, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 15.2, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 96.
[70] Barringer 2001: 99.
[71] For example Malibu 83.AE.10 and Karlsruhe 259 (Burn CI).

depicted in such clothing in vase-painting scenes. The latter are included on two vases by the Meidias Painter[72] and in his corpus, Mousaios is also sometimes shown wearing patterned clothing.[73]

In the proposed Paris and Helen scenes, the entire oriental outfit may be shown, or in some cases only the bonnet is present. In other ways the scenes follow similar image matrices as the previous group but with some variations; a male figure visits, or courts, a woman in an indoor, indeterminate or outdoor setting, usually in the presence of Eros (or *erotes*) and other male or female attendants. In these scenes, though, Eros consistently seems more interested in the 'Paris'-figure rather than paying attention to 'Helen' as in the previous group.

A good example of the full oriental costume worn by the 'Paris'-figure is on a pelike by the Painter of Louvre G539, dated towards the end of the fifth century (fig. 6.44).[74] He wears zig-zag patterned trousers and a matching long-sleeved tunic with 'Phrygian' bonnet. He is seated on a rocky outcrop while a woman stands opposite him, holding a phiale in one hand and her *peplos* fabric with the other. Between the pair Eros flutters, placing his hand above the man's head. There are two marginal figures; on the right of the scene behind the seated man stands a woman holding his spears, while behind the standing 'Helen'-figure is a short man or boy, also in oriental attire.

A squat lekythos in Boston shows another seated oriental who holds a spear and wears 'Phrygian dress'; the most discernible item again is the characteristic pointed bonnet (fig. 6.45).[75] This 'Paris'-figure looks at a seated woman who is depicted in the pose described earlier as characteristic of Aphrodite in late fifth-century scenes; she is seated on the ground or on a rocky outcrop, and leans on her one hand, looking back over her shoulder. An outdoor setting is indicated by sprigs of foliage that emerge from the ground line. No Eros is preserved in this scene but the outline of the woman's flesh, in added white, is voluptuous and this is surely intended as an erotic encounter.

Other scenes on larger vessels from the beginning of the fourth century are also more densely populated with figures, as in the previous group. The central pair on a hydria by the Jena Painter in Berlin is flanked by four figures, not two (fig. 6.46).[76] The woman in the centre wears

[72] Burn M 24 and M 25.
[73] Burn M 7.
[74] Harvard 1925.30.46, *ARV*[2] 1341.1, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 25, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 119.
[75] Boston 95.1403, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 131.
[76] Berlin 3768, *ARV*[2] 1516.81, 1697, *Para* 500, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 15.3-5; *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 86.

a patterned *peplos*, and is seated on a casket, while holding a mirror. Leaning back on her left hand makes this pose similar to the Aphrodite-pose once again. This 'Paris'-figure does not wear the full oriental outfit; he is naked with a *chlamys* but wears a 'Phrygian bonnet'. They look at each other; however, more attention is lavished on the 'Paris'-figure in this scene than the 'Helen'-figure through the gestures of two other figures. Eros flies towards him from the right, and a female attendant holds a wreath or a sprig of foliage out towards him from the left. Another female attendant stands on the extreme right of the scene with relaxed pose, while two other naked male figures are also present; one with a *petasos* and *chlamys*, the other nude but seated on his cloak.

Another populous scene on a hydria in Hildesheim depicts an array of figures on two registers including three *erotes* and perhaps several divinities (fig. 6.49).[77] Again the two figures of the central pair regard each other; the seated 'Helen'-figure is – unusually – veiled, and she holds her patterned veil with veil-gesture while looking at the man standing in front of her, dressed in oriental attire. An Eros hovers above the woman, holding something in his hands (fillet or girdle?). Four other female figures are in various poses and positions; three seated women may be goddesses since they hold sceptres and the fourth standing figure brings a casket and is probably an attendant. In the lower register, on the extreme right of the scene, is the figure of Hermes (with *petasos* and *caduceus*). On the upper level a seated wreathed figure with long hair and foliage (laurel?) is possibly Apollo. A second oriental is also included. It is impossible to identify a Paris and Helen narrative that could comfortably accommodate this ensemble of figures.

Another busy scene on a calyx krater in the manner of the Meleager Painter also includes several *erotes* (fig. 6.48).[78] A seated woman in the centre faces a man dressed in oriental clothing. An Eros between them flies towards the male figure's head with a wreath. Behind the seated female figure is another man in oriental dress, and behind him is a seated youth who is wreathed. One of the *erotes* seems to adjust the shoe of the man in oriental dress in a noteworthy departure from the established motif where Eros attends the feet of the bride. Another oriental figure sits to the left on this margin of the scene while on the right margin a youthful figure is seated holding a large amphora.

A final scene makes the erotic element more explicit than before; on a pelike dated towards the beginning of the fourth century the seated 'Helen'-figure is naked to the waist, revealing

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[77] Hildesheim 1252, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 20, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 93.
[78] Bologna 305, *ARV*[2] 1416, Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 19, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 94.

her naked breasts and torso (fig. 6.49).[79] She sits opposite a standing 'Paris'-figure, who wears the full oriental costume, and who is attended by Eros. Eros stands on the 'Helen'-figure's lap in a way that is reminiscent of the hydria in St. Petersburg (Fig. 6.39), except that he faces the 'Paris'-figure and touches his head as though crowning him with a wreath. Two other attendants are included in the scene; a female figure walks forward with a phiale and oinochoe, while a naked male stands casually on the right, leaning on his knee and gesturing to the 'Paris'-figure. Nudity is, according to Sutton, another step in the eroticisation of the bride and groom, as represented by Helen and Paris and possibly reflects Zeuxis's Helen, a painting of a nude Helen that redefined attitudes towards female nudity in large scale public art.[80] Zeuxis' painting may well have had that effect, however, the presence of nude or semi-nude women on vases do not automatically make them Helens. Furthermore, the idea that Helen and Paris present a paradigm for marriage, as Sutton argues, is unfounded and illogical in the extreme.

These scenes show the courtship of beautiful women by attractive and youthful males who wear different assortments of oriental dress. As in the previous subgroups, the men are shown as idealised, attractive, confident and amorous creatures, but here the erotic emphasis is more markedly on the male figure, rather than the female figure, suggesting that they are not to be viewed as identical to the previous group. While the oriental outfit may suggest Paris in some contexts, other characters from myth also wear this clothing, or are oriental in origin. Both Adonis and Anchises are viable candidates here; like Paris, both are oriental in their descent but in addition to that, both were romantically involved with Aphrodite. Since the iconography of the 'Helen'-figure described here is in most cases similar to that of Aphrodite (or vice versa), these scenes could viably show Aphrodite with her mortal lovers or favourites. Also, oriental clothing may simply be a marker of oriental luxury, and so these male figures dressed up in Phryian outfits could be men from the ordinary world, rather from the realm of myth. Either way, the iconography itself, again does not support the identification of these scenes as the persuasion or seduction of Helen by Paris. The contextualisation process will further dispute their viability.

2.6 Abduction, persuasion or seduction: synopsis and synthesis

The preceding analysis has revealed that the identification of the majority of scenes from 450-350 as Helen's persuasion or seduction – Helen 'courted' by Paris in a romantic way – is unsupported by the inscriptional or iconographic evidence. If the purported scenes were Helen

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[79] Paris CA 2261, *CVA* Paris, Louvre 8.49, Ghali- Kahil 1955: pl. 21, *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 95.
[80] Sutton 1997/1998: 41; Sutton 1997: 360.

and Paris, this would mean that the artists have chosen to present the illicit relationship in a non-controversial and even romantic way, using several 'nuptial nuances' that evoke the idea of the legitimate marital relationship. As Sutton and Oakley have pointed out, the 'Helen'-figures in these scenes are portrayed in a similar way to women who are being adorned as brides.[81] This 'Helen'-figure is courted by a beautiful and youthful man – the 'Paris'-figure – who looks like the bridegrooms in nuptial scenes. Shapiro also observes the anomaly: 'This is, of course, also the period in which wedding iconography dominated much of Attic red-figure, and though Paris and Helen may seem unlikely role-models – the abductor and the adulteress – they seem to have provided a kind of paradigm for scenes of Athenian bride and groom.'[82] That Paris and Helen are entirely unsuitable as the paradigm for Athenian marriage is not interrogated at all. What is problematic then, is not that the relationship is represented *per se*, but the way in which these scenes present it. This act of adultery, whether willing or unwilling, is a crucial aspect of the ancient story that modern scholars tend to gloss over when identifying these images, or explaining their appeal.

Out of the 32 Attic scenes surveyed, only one scene – that on the kylix by the Painter of Berlin F2536 – is, in my opinion, a viable example. However this image is notable for its unique image matrix, as well as for its sophisticated treatment of the theme that is of interest to a male sympotic audience. The vase discusses the abduction of Helen by Paris as a complex, but non-romantic event; the forces of the divine and erotic persuasion compel a course of events that will have far-reaching consequences. The vignette of Helen in particular, where she is shown as reluctant and yet irresistibly complicit in the course of events that will lead to her own adultery, is a piece of virtuoso painting.

3. Reading the vases: The literary-narrative context

The previous chapters have already shown that Helen's abduction was viewed differently by the various ancient authors and that the variety of approaches is summarised by Gorgias. There is no extant discourse that I know of that unequivocally admires and romanticises the behaviour of Helen and Paris. On the contrary, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, there is a strongly vituperative tradition that is highly critical of Helen, Paris or the pair. In particular fifth-century tragedians paint a graphic picture of the mayhem that results from their affair, and the Helen of Euripides' *Trojan Women* is shown to be superficial, parading and ingenuous. The other Euripidean Helen (in the *Helen*) is respectable, but this is because she was never in Troy at all. This Helen was not complicit in adultery, but remained chaste and

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[81] Sutton 1997/1998; Oakley 1995.
[82] Shapiro 1993: 195.

loyal to her husband. Likewise, the *Palinode* by Steisichorus supposedly exonerated Helen, but it did not idealise any relationship between Paris and Helen.

Even Sappho's famous account of the late seventh or early sixth century, which is read as celebrating and valorising Helen's beauty and her role as an active subject, may not unambiguously praise Helen's behaviour in eloping. [83] Much has been made of Sappho's defiant tone and the 'celebratory' nature of the poem. That the poem is set against the traditional epic *accoutrements* of war, but *eros* and its object are chosen over them, may position the poem in a different ideological universe entirely. If Sappho's fragment 16 is to be seen as encouraging or celebrating the actively desiring woman, however, it does so in a way that was inconsistent with the general tenor of Greek thought of the time. [84] Hutchinson does not read the poem as celebratory and suggests that Sappho may judge Helen's actions. [85] The effects of the love affair (abandonment of husband, child and dear parents) are mentioned, and must imply some sense of error, though, as Hutchinson describes 'there is no elaboration of the disaster she caused'. [86] Reconstructing Aphrodite as the subject of παράγαγεν ('lead her astray') [87] deflects some blame from Helen, but not all. Sappho's method is, according to Hutchinson, to use the specific narrative of Helen to explore broader philosophical or ethical discourses, one of which is the idea that love can 'master and mislead the mind'. [88]

The two epideictic speeches about Helen by the orators Gorgias and his pupil, Isocrates (who *floruerunt* in the late fifth and fourth centuries) may be used to argue for a perspective that praises and idealises Helen and Paris's liaison. Both Gorgias and Isocrates present (like Steisichorus' *Palinode* allegedly did), a blameless Helen. Unlike Steisichorus' revision though, Gorgias and Isocrates' Helen *did* go to Troy. Both offer pieces that set out to defend Helen, inserting their arguments into a mainstream tradition that they declare, slanders her name. Gorgias positions his work as an encomium, a particular type of epideictic piece that praises and extols the virtues of its subject. [89] Isocrates, points out that, technically speaking, Gorgias

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[83] Fredricksmeyer (2001: 75) summarises the recent scholarship on Helen's positive portrayal in this poem. Fredricksmeyer's (*2001*.: 78) own view is that the poem offers 'competing judgements [which] in turn, affirm and critique the notion that fulfilment of erotic desire is the highest value'.
[84] 'In Sappho's version, as Page du Bois has pointed out, Helen is not the object of exchange (or theft) between men, but celebrated as "an 'actant' in her own life, the subject of a choice, exemplary in her desiring". The poem suggests therefore a double reversal of established values: love is to be valued above war, and women are to take on an active, desiring subjectivity'. (Williamson 1999: 260)
[85] Hutchinson 2001: 163.
[86] *Ibid.*: 164.
[87] Sapph. 16.11.
[88] Hutchinson 2001: 164.
[89] *Hel.* 18.

offers an *apologia* (i.e. defends Helen's actions) rather than eulogising Helen,[90] and he then goes on to offer his own encomium.

Gorgias' four possible causes for Helen's flight with Paris have been alluded to already: she was a pawn of the gods, or abducted by force, or persuaded by words, or actually in love. His intention is to absolve her from blame equally in all four cases. He spends little time on the first two possibilities, but devotes most attention to the latter two defences. This suggests that they are for him and his audience, infinitely more interesting and topical.[91] Gorgias' third defence exonerates Helen on the basis of persuasion by *logos*, effectively extolling the virtues, power and also dangers of his own art. His thesis is that powerful speech (of which he cites several kinds) generates emotional effects, and can mould and deceive the mind.[92] So too is Helen vulnerable to the forces of *eros* and it is argued that her susceptibility to *eros* (or Eros) (generated through *opsis*) cannot be perceived as her fault. For Gorgias Helen remains a passive victim; the fault lies with the gods, the nature of love, or with Paris, the perpetrator of the crime(s). In all these versions of events, though, there is no sentimentalising or defence of the illicit relationship.

Isocrates' *Helen* argues from a different perspective, concentrating on the virtue and beauty of Helen, as demonstrated through the fact that men compete to possess her.[93] Isocrates' presentation of the divine and supremely beautiful Helen is the strongest eulogisation of the controversial character of Helen. Much of the force of his argument is related to her divine status and Paris, eager to become the son-in-law of Zeus, is also exonerated in this light.[94] Further Isocrates asserts that the goal of enhancing his (and his family's) status by marrying into Helen's ancestry, is laudable.[95] The speech also strongly endorses the view of the sublime privilege afforded to beauty, reinforcing the Homeric view that the Trojan War was a noble war fought on behalf of such an ideal.[96] The final point of the speech however turns on its head any previous notion that Helen should be blamed for the suffering of Greeks that died at Troy, or even that the losses at Troy were a catastrophe. Rather, as an unexpected (and perhaps playful or paradoxical) dénouement, Isocrates praises Helen for uniting the Greek forces against 'the barbarians of Asia Minor', in his view a decisive moment (or change of

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[90] Isoc. *Helen* 14.
[91] Shaffer (1998: 250-251) points out that 'The amount of space he allots to each cause is significant: whereas he dispenses with the gods and fate in one paragraph (*Hel*. 6), and physical force in a second (*Hel*. 7), he devotes seven to persuasion by *logos* (*Hel*. 8-14) and five to passion (*Hel*. 9-19).'
[92] *Hel*. 8-14.
[93] Isoc. *Helen* 18-30. Paris features, but Theseus, perpetrator of her so-called 'first abduction' in particular receives elaborate treatment.
[94] Isoc. *Helen* 43.
[95] Isoc. *Helen* 44.
[96] Isoc. *Helen* 54.

fortune) that lead to the Greeks' domination of Asia, rather than their becoming its slaves.[97] Thus a positive 'spin' on the relationship between Helen and Paris does emerge in this oration. However, the relationship itself is not eroticised, romanticised nor sentimentalised; it is an utterly political affair.

In both Gorgias' and Isocrates' versions of a blameless Helen, the orators mould her character, and her mythological narrative, to suit their own rhetorical, philosophical, and even political agendas. The nature of epideictic oratory, particularly of the kind practiced by Gorgias, a sophist, is crucial to consider here, as is the context and audience of such speeches. Epideictic speeches were, as their name suggests, composed for the purposes of display, and were often not delivered at all, but were demonstration pieces used in the teaching of rhetorical skill to students.[98] These exercises were ways of honing skills of argumentation and style, and were typically *paigniai* – or playful exercises – that deliberately employed deceptive and paradoxical arguments (*paradoxologia*) for affect or amusement.[99] We cannot, therefore, take this view of Helen's blamelessness as a serious contention or a popular one.

Furthermore, Isocrates' political motivations serve to illuminate his position that Helen's seduction was a laudable thing because of its result: the Trojan War cemented Greek alliances into a panhellenic force. Isocrates was a passionate supporter of fourth-century panhellenism (a theme of much epideictic oratory) and in the *Panegyricus* he strongly supports the plan for retribution against Persia.[100] Isocrates apparently felt so strongly about this united campaign against Persia that he ultimately starved himself to death on account of the Athenians' apparent lack of support for the idea.[101] These political views are strongly voiced in the final section of Isocrates' *Helen.* Of course, at no time is it possible to entertain what either orator really thought of Helen. But their views should not be taken as 'mainstream' or popular. It is likely that she was chosen, partially, as a subject to defend or eulogise precisely because she is so controversial and difficult to defend. Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* was chiefly an exercise in *paradoxologia* conducted for display and for his own amusement; he says as much in the oration's final line. Isocrates on the other hand was surely hoping to influence public opinion, and rally support for the cause of panhellenism, the lack of which he saw as a great travesty his day.

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[97] Isoc. Helen 67.
[98] Edwards 1994: 6.
[99] Wardy 1996: 36.
[100] Edwards 1994: 28-29.
[101] *Ibid.*: 26-27.

The extant literary sources, though presenting a range of attitudes to the story, are largely unsympathetic to the illicit relationship between Paris and Helen. Reading the vase images as parallel discourses reveals a distinct incongruity. If the vases typically labelled as Helen's abduction, seduction or persuasion are accepted as such (which I do not advocate), then one would have to accept that the painters tend to valorise the relationship, putting it on a par with other courtships that result in marriage. Unlike Makron's use of marriage imagery, there is no attempt to problematize this analogy between an illicit affair and a marital relationship. Exploring the discourse of the vases within the cultural-semantic context of the fifth century further elucidates this awkward comparison.

4. Reading the vases: The cultural-semantic context

This thesis has repeatedly emphasised the fact that Paris and Helen's relationship – an illicit affair, an adulterous relationship – is contrary to the moral fabric of the ancient Athenians. This is crucial to understanding the imagery on the various vases, across all eras. Ogden's statement that 'for the Classical Athenians adultery was the paradigmatic sexual crime' is pertinent.[102] As previous chapters have discussed, crucial to Athenian ideology of the fifth century, particularly the second half of the century, is the increasing importance of citizenship, which enfranchises participation in the *polis*, and which is made legitimate and inherited through the institution of marriage. Perikles' law of 451/450 spotlighted the role of citizen wives in particular in the process of citizen-production. That the vases might present the adulterous relationship in a manner that is romantic, positive and affirming is problematic in such an intellectual and moral climate.

Ogden has shown how laws relating to rape and adultery reflect the citizen (male)'s preoccupation with bloodlines and inheritance.[103] However this is not only related to the bloodline of the family, but more broadly, the descent line for citizenship of the polis. He points out that Lysias' famous claim that for the Athenians adultery was a worse crime than rape is not necessarily borne out by the penalties available to both, and is perhaps exaggerated to suit his line of argument. However, Ogden agrees that Lysias' statement surely does articulate the anxieties of the audience, and their concerns about bloodlines. While rape was usually a single act that potentially brought only one illegitimate child into being, adultery was a more insidious crime because the wife was complicit, it could have taken place over a prolonged period of time and because it could result in several children of questionable

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[102] Ogden 1997: 34.
[103] *Ibid*: 33-35.

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paternity (*nothoi*, or 'bastards').[104] Further, the fact that actions for adultery and rape (*graphe moicheias and graphe hybreios*) could be brought not only by the aggrieved party but by any citizen, reflects that these crimes were of concern for the entire community. Says Ogden: 'The state clearly felt it was in the interest and duty of all citizens to protect not only their own bloodlines but the legitimacy of the citizen descent-group as a whole; all would lose if the coinage of the Attic citizenship were to be debased.'[105]

It is against this moral backdrop that these supposed Helen and Paris scenes must be read. What is problematic is not that the relationship is represented *per se*, but the way in which these scenes seem to offer the illicit relationship in a non-controversial and even romantic way, using several 'nuptial nuances' that evoke the idea of the legitimate marital relationship. Previous chapters have also shown that marriage scenes were particularly popular in the fifth century in Athens. In the second half of the fifth century such imagery implies more intimacy between the groom and bride, and seems to reflect the increasing importance of *eros* or *ta aphrodisia* – sensual love – as well as increasing emotional bonds between husbands and wives in marriage.

This concept of emotional and romantic ties in marriage is contrary to an assumption that still predominates in some scholarly quarters; that 'marital sex was generally agreed to be unerotic and primarily reproductive in nature'.[106] Such views have perhaps been influenced too strongly by statements that focus on certain formal and mundane aspects of Athenian marriage, such as those made by Xenophon in his *Oikonomika* or the famous statement on male-female relations from Demosthenes.[107] The sexual plurality of the Athenian male is a widely known and accepted fact; Athenian men had a number of erotic options open to them, including same-sex ones. However, this does not preclude the marital relationship from being sexually rewarding and erotic. Other sources from the later fifth century – including the vase imagery – in fact suggest that erotics between husbands and wives become a subject of utmost importance, especially after the mid-century.

Evidence from drama can be brought to bear on this issue. Lefkowitz shows that comedy and tragedy take as a given not just devotion and affection between husbands and wives, but also

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[104] *Ibid.*: 33-34.
[105] *Ibid.*: 35.
[106] Nussbaum & Sihvola 2002: 14.
[107] 'Three categories of women in ancient Athens: 'For we have courtesans (*hetairai*) for pleasure, and concubines (*pallakai*) for the daily service of our bodies, [and] wives (*gunaikes*) for the production of legitimate offspring and to have a reliable guardian of our household property...' (Demosthenes 59: 122).

sexual desire.[108] A fragment of a comedy, now lost, expresses a relationship between a betrayed husband and his wife in terms of desire, love and affection. [109] All three Greek words for love (*erao, phileo and agapao*) are used to describe the marital bond here, though this combination is uniquely occurring in the extant record. Kaimo also argues for the crucial importance of erotic experience in the conjugal bed from the standpoint of Greek tragedy.[110] As Sutton points out, the erotic and emotional connection between husband and wife is present already in the *Odyssey*, where 'the wedding bed appears in Book 23 as the central symbol on which the house is literally founded'.[111]

Borg has also argued how personifications on vessels by the Meidias Painter and his circle contribute to a visual and coherent discourse on erotics – its pleasures but also its dangers – in real life and specifically, in marriage.[112] Also, she points out that 'the success of the Aristophanic comedy *Lysistrata* is hardly imaginable without the assumption that also in real life the common marital relationship was to include a pleasurable sex life'.[113] *Lysistrata* simply doesn't make sense without the men caring about consummating their marital relationship with their wives. It is not the *hetairai* who are on sex-strike but the wives. Other evidence comes from the medical writers; Stewart discusses the Greek belief that conception was possible only if both man and woman experienced orgasm.[114] Sexual arousal and enjoyment, according to these medical writers was therefore of the utmost importance in the continuation of, not only the family, but also, the polis. Furthermore, erotic attraction in marriage and an enjoyable conjugal life was a means of ensuring a wife's faithfulness.[115]

Sutton's investigation of the erotic nuptial imagery on vases from this era has also successfully refuted the idea of emotionless and passionless marriages.[116] However, he still accepts the traditional readings of the scenes in question as Helen and Paris seduction scenes – agreeing that they are strongly interlinked with nuptial imagery. He goes so far as to argue that the Helen and Paris imagery actually in turn shapes the way in which marriage imagery develops over time and that the (illicit) relationship serves as a paradigm for marriage.[117] The ideological

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[108] Lefkowitz 1983: 37.
[109] The fragment is *P. Antinoop*. 15. 'since the night I was married… I have not been away from bed a single night, away from my wife… I wanted (*eron*) her, honestly… I was tied to her by her noble character and her unaffected ways; she loved me (*philousan*) and I cared for her *(egapon)*' in Lefkowitz 1983: 37.
[110] Kaimio 2002.
[111] Sutton 1998/1999: 27.
[112] Borg 2005: *passim.*
[113] Borg 2005: 197.
[114] Stewart 1995: 84.
[115] Borg 2005: 197.
[116] Sutton 1997/1998.
[117] Sutton *Ibid*.: 27,

aspect of the imagery and its impact needs to be reconsidered. For this, one needs to return to the specific viewers of the vase. It was pointed out above that the vessels on which most of these scenes are painted are 'female vases', which suggests that the images on them are part of a distinctly feminine discourse. However, these vessels are still, as far as we know, created by male painters and potters, and purchased by men for their women.[118] If marriage was increasingly becoming characterised by emotional attachment, as suggested by Lefkowitz, and adultery was actively discouraged, in fact viewed as the ultimate sexual crime, and the vases were bought by men, for their women, the question begs to be asked: would the imagery be actively encouraging and valorising such behaviour as Helen and Paris' affair?

Ghali-Kahil says that in these Paris and Helen scenes on the female vases 'beauty triumphs over morality'.[119] Sutton agrees that the 'heavenly garden' and courtship type scenes on vases of this era are a welcome escape from the austere and grim realities of the Peloponnesian Wars. He uses modern day analogies, describing vases as 'mass media' and comparing the women's vessels to Mills and Boons-type romantic fantasies, or romantic Depression era films.[120] This view that the vase imagery is 'escapist' is thoroughly convincing – most scholars would agree that the imagery presents pleasant and carefree idylls through which the viewers of the vases could escape the uncertainties and worries of their own existence.[121] The scenes on many of the vases certainly romanticise and valorise youth, beauty, *eros* and hedonistic values, as evoked by the 'heavenly garden' imagery discussed above.

However even in a world that was grimly different from the world shown on the vases, it is my contention that vase images would still show a palatable fantasy, not a subversive one. It is entirely implausible that these images valorise beauty and romance above marital bonds and harmony, the message that is prominently conveyed in other paintings on 'female vases' of the era, such as the *epinetron* by the Etreria Painter in Athens.[122] This finding returns to Ferrari's contention quoted earlier, that the image must present a situation that is imaginable and fits within a particular discourse, whereas the identification of these particular scenes as Helen and Paris contradicts everything we know about the ancient Greek value system. Furthermore, there is nothing in the iconography of the vases that encourages such a reading.

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[118] Kousser 2004: 100.
[119] *LIMC* IV 'Hélène': 558.
[120] Sutton 1992: 31.
[121] Pollitt 1972: 123-25; Burn 1987: 94-96; and Sutton 1992.
[122] Athens 1629, A*RV*^{2} 1250.34, 1688, discussed by Kousser 2004.

5. Summary

The contention that Helen and Paris' illicit relationship becomes a popular theme in Attic vase painting in the mid fifth to the fourth centuries is incorrect, as is the assertion that the liaison is used as a trouble-free 'romanticised' mythological paradigm through which marital relationships are explored. To summarise, there are two main objections to these arguments. Firstly, there is no iconographic evidence to support these identifications. In the absence of compelling iconographic information, and without a secure 'model' to which all these vase-paintings may refer, the onus remains on the scholars to motivate and support this identification through some other means. Secondly, the literary, ideological and social context in which these vases were made, purchased and received is unreceptive to such a paradigm.

Fig. 6.1: Berlin F 2536, kylix by the Painter of Berlin F2536, the persuasion of Helen, c. 440-430.

Fig. 6.2: Berlin F 2536, detail of Helen, Eros and attendant

Fig. 6.3: Berlin F 2536, reverse, Judgement of Paris, c. 440-430

Fig. 6.4: Detail of tondo, Berlin F 2536, c. 440-430

Fig. 6.5: Amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter, Berlin 30036, c. 430-420

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 8.2

Fig. 6.6: Detail of Nemesis and Tyche? (inscribed), amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Fig. 6.7: Detail of Peitho (inscribed). amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Image source: Perseus online, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu, photograph by Maria Daniels, courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Image source: Perseus online, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu, photograph by Maria Daniels, courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Fig. 6.8: Detail of 'Helen' and Aphrodite (inscribed), amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Fig. 6.9: Detail of Himeros (inscribed) and 'Paris', amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Image source: Perseus online

Image source: Perseus online

Fig. 6.10: Detail of Heimarmene (inscribed)and ?, amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Fig. 6.11: Detail of shoulder, amphoriskos by the Heimarmene Painter

Image source: Perseus online

Image source: Perseus online

Fig. 6.12: Hydria by a painter in the Group of London E 230 or Hippolytos Painter, London E 229, 360-350

Fig. 6.13: Three fragments of a calyx krater by the Methyse Painter, Cincinnati 1962.386-388, c. 460-450

Fig. 6.14: Detail of fragment showing traveller (uninscribed), calyx krater by the Methyse Painter

Fig. 6.15: Detail of Eros and Aphrodite fragment (inscribed AΦP[--] and EPO[.]), calyx krater by the Methyse Painter

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 10

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 10

Fig. 6.16: Detail of Helen fragment (inscribed HEΛEN[.]), calyx *krater* by the Methyse Painter

Fig. 6.17: Detail of departure scene on a *stamnos* by the Kleophon Painter, St Petersburg 1148 (St. 1428, B. 809)

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 10

Image source: Reeder 1995: cat. 18

Fig. 6.18: Lekythos by the Brygos Painter, Berlin F2205, youthful Menelaus (inscribed) leads Helen? Beginning of the fifth century.

Fig. 6.19: Detail of a stamnos by the Polygnotos Painter, Athens 18063, Theseus abducts Helen, c. 430-420

Fig. 6.20: Athens 1182, pelike by a painter in the Polygnotan Group, the persuasion of 'Helen', c. 450-425

Fig. 6.21: Siphon from the Acropolis, Threpsiadis, I, persuasion of 'Helen', c. 450

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 84.

Fig. 6.22: Plovdiv 298, the persuasion of 'Helen', c. 420

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 70

Fig. 6.23: Hydria by the Washing Painter, New York 19.192.86, c. 430-420

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 80

Fig. 6.24: Squat lekythos by the Pronomos Painter, Berlin 4906, 'Helen' or Aphrodite and erotes, late fifth century

Fig. 6.25: Berlin 4906, Eros and 'Paris'?

Image source**:** *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 88

Image source**:** *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 88

Fig. 6.26: Malibu 86.AE.259, squat lekythos by the Meidias Painter, end of the fifth century, woman ('Helen') attended by Eros

Fig. 6.27: Malibu 86.AE.259, squat lekythos by the Meidias Painter, 'Paris'

Fig. 6.28: Lekythos in the manner of the Meidias Painter, Athens 1284 (CC1941), end of the fifth century, woman, 'Paris' and Eros

Fig. 6.29: Athens 1284 (CC1941), 'Helen' and Aphrodite?

Fig. 6.30: Athens 1284 (CC1941), Aphrodite? and Aineas?

Fig. 6.31: Squat *lekythos* in the manner of the Meidias Painter, Athens 1162 (CC 1483), 'Paris', Eros and 'Helen', end of the fifth century

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 14.3

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 13.1

Fig. 6.32: Squat lekythos near the Meidias Painter, Toledo (Ohio) 17 135, woman ('Helen' or Aphrodite?) with Eros

Fig. 6.33: Toledo (Ohio) 17 135, seated 'Paris'

Image source: Beazley Archive online

Image source: Beazley Archive online

Fig. 6.34: Athens 17315, squat lekythos by/near the Erbach Painter, 'Paris', 'Helen' Eros and Aphrodite?

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 16. 1-3

Fig. 6.35: Choes (oinochoe) Near the Meidias Painter , Athens 1263 (CC1287), late fifth century

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 12.4

Fig. 6.36: Bell krater, Vienna IV 1089 (Sk 236), beginning of the fourth century

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 24.1

Fig. 6.37: Bell krater by the Meleager Painter, Vienna IV 1143, beginning of the fourth century

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 24.2

Fig. 6.38: Calyx krater, Munich 2388, c. 370

Fig. 6.39: Hydria by the Hippolytos Painter, St. Petersburg KAB104B, c. 380-370

Image source**:** *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 99

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 87

Fig. 6.40: Hydria by a painter in the studio of the Hippolytos Painter, London E 236, c. 370-360

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 17

Fig. 6.41: Lekythos attributed to the Painter of the Frankfurt Acorn, Malibu 91.AE.10, ca. 420-10

Fig. 6.42: Lekythos attributed to the Painter of the Frankfurt Acorn, Malibu 91.AE.10, ca. 420-10

Image source: Author's own

Image source: Author's own

Fig. 6.43: Lekythos attributed to the Painter of the Frankfurt Acorn, Malibu 91.AE.10, ca. 420-10

Fig. 6.44: Pelike by the Painter of Louvre G539, Harvard 1925.30.46, c. 420

Image source: Author's own

Image source: Beazley Archive online

Fig. 6.45: Squat lekythos, Boston 95.1403, end of the fifth century.

Fig. 6.46: Berlin 3768, hydria by the Jena Painter, c. 380-370

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 131

Image source: Beazley Archive online

Fig. 6.47: Hydria, Hildesheim 1252, beginning of the fourth century

Fig. 6.48: Calyx krater, Bologna 305, Manner of the Meleager Painter, c. 400-390

Image source: Ghali-Kahil 1955: pl. 20

Image source: *LIMC* IV 'Hélène' cat. 94

Fig. 6.49: Pelike, CA 2261, an oriental 'Paris', with half-naked 'Helen' and Eros?

Image source: Ghali- Kahil 1955: pl. 21

CHAPTER 7

DANGEROUS LIAISONS: RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This study, a re-investigation of the iconography of scenes showing (or previously identified as) Helen's abduction and recovery, set out to achieve two main goals. One goal was to investigate how emotions – essentially 'unseeable' – are conveyed in the imagery. This is the emotional language of the scenes. The second goal was to explore which emotions are tabled in these scenes; this is what I have described as investigating the emotional content, or subtext, of the images. The emotional discourses of the vase scenes are not necessarily apparent or understandable at first glance. Reading them through a modern lens, with modern expectations about the subject matter can mislead the interpreter.

The research findings presented in this thesis show that this is particularly true of the numerous vase-painting scenes that have been labelled as Helen's abduction or persuasion by Paris, where scholars' preconceptions have lead them to make erroneous assumptions. The result is that we have a corpus of 'Helen' and 'Paris' vases of dubious credibility. Establishing a proper methodology that takes the language of images seriously, and coming to terms with the horizons of experience and expectation of the typical viewers of the vases allows us to arrive at an approximate range of meanings that the scenes may have evoked in their ancient viewer. In the case of the dubious abduction scenes, we can, after following this methodology, confidently reject all but three of the vases from this corpus.

1. Methodology: Taking the language of images seriously

'Reading' emotion in Greek vase scenes requires a process akin to excavation; it requires exploring these 'texts' for a level of meaning that goes beyond or beneath the superficial 'facts' of the narrative. The two-phase process of reading the vessels first involves a close observation of each vase and its iconography, noting all potential signifiers of emotional content. This process of simply noting what is actually present on the vase is fundamental since this makes it possible to isolate the rhetorical or pictorial devices that are used by the painters to express emotions in the imagery.

The second process – the interpretation of the imagery in the context of its production and reception – involves a reconstruction of that ancient context, including its social, legal, political and gender value systems. Contextualising the vases, though, requires not only reading them within the general societal context – ancient Greece of a particular era – but also within the micro-context of actual use. It is possible to do so for Greek vases to a large extent since these pottery vessels were created with specific functions and viewers in mind. This is particularly true of the vessels manufactured for the symposium and for women. The sympotic context provides its own distinct discourse and a specific type of contemplative viewer. The so-called female vases, especially of the fifth century, also have a clearly defined target market, with its own objectifiable range of expectations. Both sets of typical viewers were immersed in the value systems of ancient Greek society and are conditioned by them. The response of the typical viewers of the vase – or the mainstream response – can be contrasted with numerous individualised readings, which are based on a person's own unique life circumstances or immediate situation. However, these individual readings are not objectifiable or recoverable, and not relevant here. What is aspired to is a 'close reading' of the images and their language, and thereafter a contextualisation of the images within the horizons of experience of the real people. The result is a range of viable readings of the scenes selected for study.

2. Emotional language

Numerous iconographic elements and aspects of the image matrices contribute to the ancient painters' language of emotions. These pictorial devices are used to express the emotion of a single figure, the emotion that defines the relationship between two or more figures in a scene, or those used to create an emotionally charged atmosphere or mood in the scene. The prominent emotional indicators that have emerged in this study are gesture; stance; the face and gaze; clothing, physical attributes and icons; divinities and personifications; and contextual icons or information. Though facial expression is not a major indicator of emotion in vase painting, two exceptional examples do show how successfully it can contribute to the emotional discourse of the scenes. A synopsis of observations and findings pertaining to the emotional language of abduction and recovery scenes is presented below.

2.1 Gesture

Gesture is a strong indicator of emotion in ancient vase-painting scenes. Certain gestures recur with enough frequency to show that they are part of a generalised artistic rhetoric, while others may be unique to a particular painter but are no less expressive. While gesturing should not be taken at face value or universalised, a cautious and informed reading of gesture in

context points towards its emotional discourse. The fierce, but controlled, attacking gesture of Menelaus, the warrior hoplite who brandishes his sword in both black and red-figure recovery scenes, for example, conveys Menelaus' anger and indicates his desire for retribution. However, allowing for the likely phallic implications of the sword, this violent action may also present a reference to the erotic or sexual intention of Menelaus in recovering his wife.

Another important gesture that recurs in the group of red-figure recovery scenes termed 'reversal' is Menelaus' dropping of the sword that he had previously brandished menacingly at Helen. In these scenes the sword slips from Menelaus' hand or, in certain extreme examples, he throws his weapon wildly behind him (for example, fig. 4.20). The gesture clearly designates a change of Menelaus' intention, and therefore a shift in his emotional and mental state. It is feasible to assume that the viewer would have seen other vase scenes of Menelaus pursuing Helen with sword in hand (i.e. before the reversal). Viewed against the attacking pursuit images, the dropping of the sword gesture is especially pertinent. The vase scenes resonate even more effectively when regarded in relation to the alternative iconographies available, but not selected. Here, Menelaus' exaggerated throwing gesture may be due in part to a particular painter's artistic flourish; however, it is more likely an eloquent and compelling signal that Menelaus' has lost his composure altogether, he is deliberately being made to appear absurd in these scenes.

Another emotionally expressive gesture is that of supplication. In the red-figure recovery scenes, the easily identifiable supplicatory gesture of Helen – with arm outstretched, palm upwards – strongly evokes the emotion of fear. The gesture is, in turn, an appeal for another emotional response from the recipient of the supplication: that of pity. The gesture, then, not only reflects the supplicant's vulnerable and fearful state of mind, but the relationship that exists between the supplicant and the supplicated – in this case Helen and Menelaus. Reading the vase scenes in their social context reveals that such a gesture has the potential to evoke anxiety both for the supplicant and for the viewer of the vase. This is because the outcome of supplication itself is never assured and so the gesture contributes to the tension of the scene because of this uncertainty. The supplicatory gesture then, is an encoded sign that articulates a range of emotional responses from the participants of the scenes as well as their viewers.

Various gestures that are associated with the marriage ceremony or its preparation are also emotional indicators. The wrist grip, present in both of Makron's scenes of the abduction of Helen, for example, is recognisable as a nuptial reference. Since the *cheir' epi karpo* gesture was used in the marriage procession of bride and groom, and in vase-paintings showing such a

procession, the gesture in other contexts also surely evokes this erotic connotation. Similarly, in the scene on the Berlin kylix (fig. 6.1-6.2), Eros' attention to Helen's feet, a nuptial gesture known from vase-paintings showing the preparation of the bride, strongly evokes the erotic emotional subtext and the importance of this emotion in marriage.

The veil gesture used by Helen in both black- and red-figure scenes of her recovery is also a marital reference, though it is more difficult to decode and potentially polyvalent. The *anakalypteria* or unveiling of the bride during the wedding ceremony is one potential reference, but the veil gesture can also be interpreted more generally as an erotic sign. However, since the veil itself points to modesty or *aidos* (a disposition more than an emotion), holding the veil in such a way surely evokes this reference as well. In general the veil surely evokes in the mind of the viewer a range of associations with ideal womanhood, including beauty, sexuality, and the modesty or *aidos* expected of her.

2.2 Stance

Stance is another useful indicator of emotion. On Makron's skyphos recovery scene (fig. 3.5-3.6) for example, Menelaus' entire body is tense with anger. He is poised with his weight on the balls of his feet and his knees are bent as though he is about to spring into action. Together with his dramatic gesture – here he is about to draw his sword from his scabbard, rather than already threatening Helen with the sword – the positioning of his body creates a terrifying and poignant portrait of a man scorned and his desire for revenge. This is an excellent example of the way stance and gesture together can encapsulate and convey an emotional subtext.

2.3 The face and the gaze

Since the face is the locus of emotional expression in most societies, it is, as a starting point, a reasonable expectation that the vase painters would exploit its potential to that end. However, for the most part, emotion is not conveyed through the face on Greek vases. Rather, faces tend to remain fairly neutral or mask-like. There are some notable exceptions to this general characteristic; in the recovery scene by the Syriskos Painter (fig. 4.1-4.2) for example, Menelaus' facial features do convey his acute rage.

Eye contact between two figures in a scene is a more typical and effective aspect of emotional vocabulary. In all three abduction of Helen scenes, eye contact is a strong indicator of emotion. On Makron's kylix Paris turns back to look at Helen, who returns his gaze. This suggests both reciprocity of feeling and that through the process of *opsis* their desire has been ignited. On his skyphos, however, Helen averts her gaze, looking downwards in a way that is erotically

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charged but also demure. This look speaks of *aidos*, already referred to above as a disposition that was considered extremely beautiful, erotic and appropriate for women to adopt in male company. On the Berlin kylix (the name vase of the painter of Berlin F2536, figs 6.1-6.2), the complete lack of eye contact between the approaching Paris and the seated Helen is significant. Helen has not simply averted her eyes downwards, as she does in the skyphos scene, but she has turned her head completely to look in the other direction. This is a strong indicator of denial or refusal and the direction of her gaze accentuates the emotional complexity of the scene. This scene also shows how a combination of emotional indicators create a more intense or poignant subtext. In addition to the turn of her head, Helen's conflicted emotional state is also reflected in her disapproving facial expression and her gesture. Her right hand is against her forehead in distress, while the other hand, suspended above the box, signals that she is about to become complicit in the act of adultery.

The recovery scenes also capitalise on the emotional vocabulary of the gaze and the mechanism of eye contact. The black-figured scenes present an austere and faceless Menelaus in a Corinthian helmet, which is worn properly over his face, obscuring his features. The red-figure painters shift attention to Menelaus' eyes through various means: by raising the helmet, or replacing it with an Attic helmet that shows more of the face than the Corinthian one allows, particularly when the cheek pieces are retracted. These painters draw more explicit attention to Menelaus' eyes in some later fifth-century scenes through the figure of Eros who flies towards his face gesturing at his eyes in particular. The examples where Eros holds a phiale near Menelaus' eyes, from which liquid may even flow (for example, figs 4.29-4.32), pictorializes the mechanism of desire: *opsis*. The effect of this erotic intervention is often shown through the gesture of the dropped sword: Menelaus will see his beautiful wife and change his mind, desiring her anew. Helen, even while fleeing, is always shown turning back to look at her pursuer, making it possible for the pair to make eye contact. Eros works through the eyes, gaze is crucial to the emotion of love and in these scenes the language states clearly that the reunion will be engendered in this way.

2.4 Clothing, icons and physical attributes

The figures themselves can convey emotion through aspects of their own physical bodies or accessories, including items of clothing or weapons or items that they hold or wear. In certain examples of the recovery, for example, Helen's unkempt hair and general state of disarray suggest her distressed emotional state. Menelaus' panoply – his sword, cuirass, shield and helmet – are also emotionally evocative. The prominence of his entire panoply, which becomes more embellished and beautiful in the fifth century, conveys his angry response. In

Makron's skyphos recovery scene, the rampaging bull device on his shield provides an effective mirror of his own emotional state that could not have been missed by his ancient audience.

2.5 Divinities and personifications

The presence of divinities and personifications which are associated with particular emotions or emotional states also imbue the scenes with emotional content. The divinities Aphrodite and Eros, and the personification Peitho, all occur in Makron's skyphos abduction scene. These figures provide clear motivations for the action in the scene. The erotic subtext is strongly conveyed through the proximity of Eros and Aphrodite to the protagonists and their interaction with them. However, their physical presence should not be taken literally, since they serve to evoke the emotional dynamics, rather than acting as participants in actual events. Aphrodite, Eros and Peitho present aspects of the mechanisms of *ta aphrodisia*. On Makron's kylix, the divinities do not appear in the elopement scene itself, but Aphrodite and several Erotes appear on the reverse of the vase in the Judgement scene. These evoke, by association, the erotic motivations with which Paris travelled to Sparta, since the Judgement is the precursor to the event.

In the recovery scenes, Eros and Aphrodite's involvement is again a crucial aspect of the emotional content. Eros or Aphrodite may appear together to intervene in the event, stopping the Menelaus from killing his wife. Through them, the motivation for Menelaus' change of intention, often pictorialized through the dropping of the sword is made clear. Again, divinities associated with *eros* are not to be read as literally present in the scene. Rather they appear to account for and explore complex human emotion and behaviour reflected in the images.

2.6 Contextual icons

Context and setting are also potentially emotive. A significant example of the use of context to convey emotional state is in the contextual icons and personnel (deities) that relate to sanctuary which are present in certain of the recovery scenes. Altars, cult statues and divinities, especially Athena and Apollo, do not simply point to narrative elements of the story (Helen ran to a sanctuary) but, more importantly, to the vulnerable emotional state of Helen. Her fate, according to the imagery anyway, is not yet assured and so she is very much in need of protection, as would be provided by a god or his precinct.

3. The scenes: Recovery

The emotional discourse of the recovery scenes centres mainly on anger – *orgē* or *cholis* – as an appropriate response to the situation of Helen's abduction. In the black-figure examples, the threatening, austere Menelaus expresses his anger at the crime committed against him. Menelaus' active and hostile figure shows his anger to be a crucial aspect of his masculinity or *andreia*, since it is through anger that he takes action to reclaim his wife and his honour. Helen's emotional discourse is harder to read since she is, in these scenes, mostly impassive, and appears impervious to this attack.

The early red-figure scenes, on the other hand, retain the angry discourse of the black-figure images, but they present an alternative emotion for Helen. Menelaus is active, assertive and aggressive. He either leads his wife ('escort' scenes) or pursues her ('pursuit'). His figure coincides well with the image of the ideal citizen-hoplite; warlike, beautiful and in control. Now Helen reacts by fleeing, supplicating or generally being shown to be fearful. The discourse which centres on the *phobos* of Helen, who is in danger and at the mercy of her husband, reflects the gender and power dynamic of the fifth century in Athens.

A further shift in emotional discourse emerges in the early fifth century with Onesimos, but only gains popularity in the middle of the century. The new matrix (termed 'reversal') dramatically shows Menelaus' change of intention to kill his wife, which may suggest that pity replaces his anger. However, along with the increasing prevalence of the dropped sword motif is the increasing importance of Eros or Aphrodite as a motivator for the change in intention. Now the reversal of intention is explicitly accounted for and again it is emotional. Overcome by *eros*, rather than *eleos* (pity) or *sophrosyne* (self-restraint), Menelaus forgets his anger and his purpose. This erotic reversal is also shown to be generated and facilitated through *opsis*. Menelaus drops his sword when he sees the beauty and desirability of his wife; beauty is again an important human attribute in these scenes. Yet the image of the strong warrior throwing his sword away on account of *eros* would most likely have engendered a less than positive emotion response in the sympotic audience. Here Menelaus is doubly cuckolded. Having lost his wife to another man through *eros*, he is further emasculated by dropping the sword. He is disarmed through desire and it is likely that the audience would be critical of such an action, rather than praising or celebrating it.

4. The scenes: the Abduction

While previous scholarship has found Helen's abduction to be well documented in vase-painting, as stated above, one unexpected but extremely significant result of the current study is the rejection of all but three of the scenes proposed. From a modern perspective, it may make sense to assume that Helen's abduction, such a momentous event in the mythic imagination, would receive extensive coverage in art as well. Also contributing to this expectation is the presumption that if the recovery is a popular narrative on vases (which it is), then surely the abduction would have been popular as well. Though such assumptions provide a viable working hypothesis, after using a rigorous methodology as set out above; in other words engaging in a close reading of the various scenes and contextualising them within the society that produced them, my findings demonstrate that the hypothesis is incorrect. There is no evidence for the abduction as a popular scene type at all. The vases themselves simply do not bear this out.

My investigations found that the black-figure scenes offered as tentative abduction scenes can be excluded as possibilities; if they are mythological they are more likely to designate the recovery of Helen than her abduction. The two inscribed and therefore securely identified red-figure scenes showing Helen's abduction by the master painter, Makron, are exceptional scenes that present the abduction in eloquent terms. Makron employs the language of marriage, to present the affair as a pseudo-*gamos* using iconography that evokes both the figures of bride and groom and the matrix of a wedding procession*.* On the skyphos, Aphrodite, Eros and Peitho are present to suggest the erotic nature of this persuasion or seduction of Helen. Makron's kylix scene does not contain the divinities, but the presence of Aphrodite and Eros on the other side of the vase in the Judgement of Paris scene reminds the viewer of the reason for Paris' visit to Helen; they are the catalyst.

However on both of these vases, Makron does not present the viewer with a starry-eyed version of the *gamos* of Paris and Helen. This affair has consequences, which are brought to the attention of the viewer in two main ways. Firstly, the kylix scene shows the emotional effects that Helen's abduction has on her family and homeland, through the identity of the other personnel in the scene, their gestures and activities. On the skyphos, the recovery appears on the other side. This explicit pairing of abduction and recovery is not neutral. The recovery scene is as eloquent. It shows the ferocity of Menelaus' wrath, and, through it, surely evokes the catalogue of catastrophes that ultimately result – such as the death of many great

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Trojan heroes, the extinction of the line of Priam, and the complete destruction of Troy. These two vessels do not, in my opinion, present a trouble-free version of the liaison, but they raise questions around adultery – its motivations and its consequences – that would be of the utmost interest to the sympotic audience.

All of the scenes from the Classical period that are typically identified as Helen's persuasion by Paris should be excluded except for one: the name vase of the Painter of Berlin F2536 (fig. 6.1 and fig. 6.2). The dubious scenes are not inscribed, and therefore any identification should be based on compelling iconography, read in context. The Berlin scene is also not inscribed, but this identification is likely based on iconographic and contextual evidence, bolstered by the presence of the Judgement on the other side of the vase. The mood and image matrix is quite different from the other late fifth-century scenes proposed; it present's Helen's abduction or seduction as a complex emotional event, and it does not valorise or celebrate it.

The other scenes from this era are mainly found on 'women's vases', but there is no evidence whatsoever to compel an identification of Helen and Paris' affair. Furthermore, identifying them as such renders them entirely incompatible with the ethos of the day. It is highly improbable that the painters would represent the scandalous adulterous event as a romantic and starry-eyed idyll. Regarding these images as a distinctly feminine discourse akin to romantic Mills and Boons type novels of the modern era, is pure scholarly fantasy. These vases are still products of a patriarchal system that abhorred adultery. The vessels are produced by men for men to give to their women, and because imagery on women's vases in particular is not subversive of the social norms and ideals, they are highly unlikely to valorise the adulterous relationship. These identifications should therefore be rejected. This is an important result arising from situating the vessels in their original context, against the background and expectations of their viewers.

Having excluded the majority of the previously identified abduction scenes, the remaining three scenes present a distinctive and complex emotional discourse which is enriched, in each case, by a contemplation of the other side of the vase. The key emotion conveyed in these scenes is unmistakably *eros*; this emotion-word is best translated as sensual desire rather than the more generalised English word 'love' that has a broader semantic range. In the two examples by Makron, it is not just Paris' desire for Helen that is implied, but also Helen's desire for Paris. This is reciprocal *eros,* which is facilitated by *opsis.* The effect of seeing the beautiful Helen, and vice versa causes the erotic response; the attribute of beauty is central to Makron's

discourse about the event. The abduction is depicted here as an elopement rather than a forceful abduction.

However, it is an event that is shown to have a broader emotional impact. On Makron's kylix (fig. 5.1-5.3) the trauma of the affair is shown through the impact it has on Helen's family and city, and on the skyphos (fig. 5.7-5.8) her dishonoured husband is to be found on the other side of the vase. The emotional discourse of the kylix in Berlin also involves *eros*, but in this example, ambivalence about this emotion is clearly conveyed. Helen is shown to be conflicted about the impending relationship, regretful even, and its consequences are foreshadowed through the figure of Menelaus, her husband, who is here shown welcoming the *xenoi* to his city and *oikos*. In this scene, *eros* is not (yet) mutual, but it is implied that Helen will ultimately be seduced.

5. Conclusion

In excavating the abduction and recovery scenes on Attic pottery for their emotional subtexts, this thesis has demonstrated the merits of a proper methodology that combines a close reading of the images – that includes taking their language seriously – with their careful contextualisation. For scholars to reconstruct the likely readings and reactions to these images, in their original time and place, it is necessary to begin with the actual evidence (the vases) and not simply to accept the labels provided by the scholarly tradition. When, apart from a scholarly theory or identification, there is absolutely nothing in an image that suggests a certain interpretation, and especially when this interpretation contrasts markedly with the value system of the society that produced these images, then one can reject these traditional interpretations. This leaves only three abduction scenes, though considerably more recovery scenes stand firm amidst this rigorous approach.

It emerges, then, that though inter-related events, the abduction and recovery do not get the same degree of coverage in extant vase-painting; the recovery is far more popular. This is probably due to the fact that the typical citizen of the Athenian *Männerbund* that was the polis identified more closely with the experience of Menelaus than that of Paris, the foreign adulterer, especially in the sympotic context. In the few extant examples of the abduction in vase-painting, Helen is the beautiful but adulterous wife who, through her behaviour – whether willingly or unwillingly – ultimately brings her husband's *andreia* and her family into disrepute. The erotic liaison between Helen and Paris results in a pseudo-*gamos*, a loss of honour for Menelaus – he is the cuckolded husband – and brings dishonour for Helen's family.

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This relationship was ultimately also disastrous for Troy bringing about the Trojan War, the sack of the city, the death of Paris, the extinction of the royal house of Priam and also the Trojan nation. This result, catalysed, according to the recovery imagery, by appropriate anger, is deemed extreme but apposite. The vase-paintings laud the emotion of necessary anger that leads to revenge for wrongs committed and Helen's fear and supplication show an appropriate female response to the danger she finds herself in. The adulterous relationship, then, shows the destabalising consequences of the emotion of *eros*.

The destabalising consequences of *eros* are also present in the recovery scenes of the fifth century. Rather than a negation of Menelaus' anger, the dropped sword, thrown away on account of *eros* renders Menelaus ridiculous. As Osborne says, images like these must surely raise the question of who is victorious: 'If Menelaos loves rather than punishes, has he conquered Helen, or has she conquered him?'[1] In the vase imagery Menelaus' reputation suffers because of this action, and *eros* again triumphs, revealing its destabalising effects for a second time. If there is any irony in the idea that the warrior is emasculated through desire, it is only a modern perception, not an ancient, one. Such a view is consistent with the ideology of the Athenian *polis* of the fifth century, where the emotional range of *eros* allows it to be both positive and productive, but also disastrous. The tragic poet, Chaeremon, described the workings of Eros using an analogy from the symposium. Eros is compared to mixtures of wine and water. In moderation, Eros is a positive force; however 'in excess he is disruptive in the most harmful ways'.[2]

The images then present issues of relevance to their audience, and this includes the complex human experiences served by the emotions. The images raise questions, and like the image on the modern Zuma T-shirt, they may evoke a range of responses. These could vary from an emphatic statement about the virility of Menelaus or its lack, or warnings about the perils of having a beautiful wife. Through mythological paradigms such issues can be debated, explored, and questioned. The image on an ancient pottery vessel is a mechanism through which thoughts, ideas, and issues can be tabled, tested, discussed – and not necessarily neatly resolved. The Greek vase-painters of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries and their audiences are thinking through visual metaphors. Images are for them, as for us, yet another way of coming to terms with the complexities of the human condition and the changing world that we all inhabit.

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[1] Osborne 1996: 69.
[2] Calame 1999: 84 (quoting Chaeremon frag. 787).

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