

The Intertextual Dynamics of Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen*

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis is devoted to an intertextual study of Colluthus' late antique epyllion, the *Abduction of Helen*. Colluthus is a poet whose reputation has long suffered, but is currently under rehabilitation, and the aim of this study is to build on recent scholarship in order to develop a fuller appreciation of Colluthus' multifaceted engagement with literary traditions and his allusive technique. Chapters are devoted to linguistic allusion, the intertextuality of genre, and the thematic intertextuality of the abduction narrative. In each chapter, a different approach to allusion and intertextuality reveals a pervasive pattern in Colluthus' allusive poetics. Colluthus, it will be shown, was a poet who delighted in irony, but it is an irony which is almost always dependent on its relationships to model texts, generic traditions, and thematic motifs. Through the various allusive devices studied here, we find that the poet frequently creates expectations in the learned reader for the directions his narrative will take, only to deny them: he builds a pastoral world through generic parallels, only to leave it behind; he frequently alludes to the motifs and stories of abduction in classical literature, only to frame the "abduction" of Helen as a mutual romantic encounter. Through a systematic, yet necessarily selective study of Colluthus' allusive poetics, we gain a new understanding of the *Abduction of Helen* as a poem defined by its ambivalence and undecidability, just like the figure of Helen herself.

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Table of Contents

Author's Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1 - Introduction: The Intertextual Dynamics of Colluthus' <i>Abduction of Helen</i>	
1. Overview	1
2. Colluthus in his Late Antique Egyptian Context	8
3. Summary of Scholarship	11
Chapter 2 – Colluthus' Intertextual Toolkit	
1. Overview	16
2. "Simple" Allusion: The Alexandrian Footnote and the Homeric Hapax Legomenon	18
3. "Simple" Allusion: Citation and Revision of Single Models	22
4. "Complex" Allusion: Multiple Models, Centos, and Intra-Textuality	29
5. Colluthus and Christian Texts	37
Chapter 3 – Generic Intertextuality and <i>Poikilia</i> in the <i>Abduction of Helen</i>	
1. Epyllion Poetics, Genre-Mixing, and Irony	42
2. Genre, Meta-Poetics, and Misdirection: A Commentary on Colluthus' Proem	54
Chapter 4 – Thematic Intertextuality: Sex, Violence, and Abduction Narratives	
1. Models and Motifs: Abduction Narratives in the <i>Abduction of Helen</i>	64
2. Hermione's Lament: A Close Reading	67
Chapter 5 – Conclusions	84
Bibliography	89

1) Introduction: The Intertextual Dynamics of Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen*

1.1) Overview

Recent scholarship on Colluthus' epyllion the *Abduction of Helen* has made it a habit to begin by acknowledging that while the poet's reputation has long suffered among philologists, its rehabilitation is now underway in modern scholarship.¹ The goal of this thesis is to contribute to this "Colluthus renaissance"² by reassessing Colluthus' allusive practice and the intertextual dynamics of his poem in light of recent scholarship and the newfound appreciation of both Colluthus and his late antique poetic contemporaries. At this point it should no longer be controversial to begin from the assumption that the *Abduction of Helen* is a sophisticated narrative, and its poet (whether to our tastes or not) is a learned practitioner of an allusive, refined brand of poetics. But there remains much work to be done if we are to arrive at a better understanding of the nature of Colluthus' allusive practice at the level of narrative; that is, how reading Colluthus intertextually affects our understanding of his story, and at an meta-narrative level; how this approach sheds light on his meta-poetics and reveals the existence of a sophisticated reworking of literary tradition in which traditions are adapted and reworked with allusive irony by one of the latest classicizing poets of late antiquity. Colluthus' short epyllion will here be subjected to a thorough analysis of its "intertextual dynamics",³ a term I will use to refer to the system comprised of the inter-connected devices of linguistic interaction with specific models, thematic allusion and *topoi*, and engagement with various generic conventions. Each of these allusive devices provides a filter through which to view allusion and intertextuality in the *Abduction of Helen*, and they will be addressed individually on a conceptual level before being applied to a pair of close readings which will highlight their

¹ e.g. Paschalis 2008, Magnelli 2008

² Magnelli 2016, 288

³ My terminology is inspired by two sources: Hinds 1998; and Kaufmann 2017, whose approaches (though dedicated to two different periods of Latin poetry) have been invaluable

narrative and meta-narrative functions as part of a more coherent whole. The proem (1-16) and the lament of Hermione (326-392) are especially important passages for the structure of the epyllion. In chapter 3, the proem will be the subject of a line-by-line commentary focussed on Colluthus' mixing of genres and its meta-poetic messaging. In chapter 4, Hermione's scene will be studied for its central role in addressing the theme of abduction in Colluthus' narrative. Together, these two passages illustrate the variety of Colluthus' allusive practice and are deserving of closer intertextual study if we are to appreciate more fully the range of possibilities in the interpretation of the *Abduction of Helen* and Colluthus' manifold engagement with the Hellenic literary tradition.

Following Barchiesi's analysis of Vergilian intertextuality, I will approach Colluthus' use of his models in two ways: as *script*, and as *repertoire of genre*. The former, Barchiesi's "example model", provides the poet with "a series of individual events that can be endowed with an allusive dimension", while the latter, the "genre model", is used to recall the formulas, *topoi*, paradigms and recurring conventions of given models.⁴ Colluthus' linguistic interaction with various example models frequently directs the reader's attention towards a specific textual moment, or to complicate matters, a nexus of specific textual moments. Genre models work in a more open way and encourage the reader to situate the *Abduction of Helen* within broader traditions of genre, theme, and story. Throughout this thesis, I use the terms "allusion" and "intertextuality" largely interchangeably, and a few notes on these two approaches are in order before proceeding further. The term "allusion" traditionally "privileges the interventions in literary discourse of one intention-bearing subject, the alluding poet".⁵ While "intertextuality" focusses on the ultimate unknowability of the author's intentions, and thus gives pride of place to the role of the reader, who constructs meaning at the moment of reception.⁶ It should be understood

⁴ Barchiesi 2015, 73-4

⁵ Hinds 1998, 47

⁶ Hinds 1998, 48

that although the alluding poet's full intentions are ultimately unknowable, we may still speak with some confidence *when* he is alluding, *what* he is alluding to, and *why* he might do so. But in all cases the subjectivity of the poet and role of the reader should be viewed on a spectrum: any two readers may not agree on the visibility of an allusion, or they may agree on its presence but not its meaning. In the case of potential allusions marked by clearly borrowed language from a canonical text, in which there is a strongly visible contextual parallel, it is reasonable to assume the presence of an allusion, and to hypothesize what interpretative work the poet may have hoped for from a model reader. But as we move along the spectrum to the broader traditions of the "genre model", we inevitably may claim less for our poet, and increasingly privilege the role of the reader.

In chapter 2, we will address how Colluthus' linguistic borrowings, his engagement with example models, function as allusion. They could play a strictly ornamental role (itself still a form of allusion), or act as critical "sign-posts" for moments of allusivity which are essential for the interpretation of his narrative. Alternatively they could provide "optional" allusive content which is not essential, but further enhances the narrative for the reader who responds to it.⁷ The poet's use of borrowed language as an allusive device will be interrogated on the levels of *visibility* (how do we recognize a potential allusion on a strictly verbal level and make it stand out?) as well as *meaning* (how do we assign a literary function to a potential allusion?).⁸ It will be demonstrated that although his poem is not abundant in the linguistic signatures of allusive activity traditionally associated with the "Alexandrian" poets and their Augustan successors,⁹ his fondness for borrowed half-lines (especially from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*) and *hapax legomena* frequently represents the

⁷ Following Kaufmann 2017, 155-62 who outlines these features of late Latin intertextuality. Kaufmann also stresses the decline of the Alexandrian footnote and similarly marked forms of allusion in later Latin poetry, "though other ways of sign-posting, for example (near-)complete lines and centos, make some allusions more heavily marked than others" (151)

⁸ Fowler 1997, 19-20: "We require a correspondence to stand out, and to make sense"

⁹ See Hinds 1998, 1-3 for some useful discussion of the "Alexandrian footnote" habit and similarly marked sign-posting of allusive activity

presence of marked allusions to at least one model text, which have implications for the reading of his own narrative. In short, though Colluthus is frequently acting as a “copyist” in a literal sense, his use of copied material is also an important marker of intertextual engagement which is fundamental to his ironic, often humorous approach to his models. The irony of Colluthus’ allusive engagement with specific texts is found in the way he frequently reworks models into a new context in which either the model text is corrected or revised, forming a sort of literary polemic, or in which the context of the model text is juxtaposed with Colluthus’ narrative to humorous effect.

Flagrant linguistic borrowings can be treated as a characteristic allusive device in later poetry,¹⁰ and in the *Abduction of Helen* they are the most frequent device by which the alluding poet alerts the reader to the fact that he is alluding, playing the role of the “Alexandrian footnote”. Unique borrowings frequently highlight major themes in his poem and add to our understanding of the poet’s self-positioning among his models. In certain cases, this approach to Colluthus’ language will allow for potential new readings of his often problematic text; neither Livrea nor Orsini were strongly inclined to account for intertextual resonances in their editorial choices, as Giangrande was keen to point out in his review of Livrea’s edition.¹¹

The *Abduction of Helen* is a classicizing hexameter poem in the epyllion tradition; it tells in 392 lines the legendary origins of the Trojan war, recounting the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, Eris’ anger at her lack of invitation, Paris’ judgement of the goddesses, his travel to Sparta and elopement with Helen, and the grief of Helen’s daughter Hermione upon discovering her mother’s absence. It thus constitutes a “prequel” to the Homeric epics, which is largely traditional in its telling of the mythological story. There are however several additions, omissions, and modifications of the traditional versions of the tale which seem to be Colluthus’ own invention. Colluthus’ choices for his additions and omissions concerning a well-known story and his treatment

¹⁰ Kaufmann 2017, 151

¹¹ Giangrande 1969; More on Livrea and Orsini’s editions of Colluthus below

of characters highlight a broader trend in the poem which I will call his “negative meta-poetics”, a device whereby the poet frequently alludes to what he is *not* doing in his poem, and thereby suggesting the superiority of his own approach, which is defined in opposition to traditions of genre, story, and theme.¹² This meta-poetics of absence, it will be argued, is an integral aspect of Colluthus' poetics and his treatment of the classical tradition. It forms a sort of commentary on the role of classical literature in the poet's contemporary context and is intimately connected with the irony and humour which define his treatment of story, theme, and genre. As Enrico Magnelli has noted, Colluthus' depiction of characters is closely bound to the literary tradition; his Paris is “a parody of famous heroes and lovers”, a parody which only works when read in light of literary models including, but not limited to, those depicting Paris.¹³ Throughout this study, we will address how Colluthus' characters can be read in light of a variety of intertextual models, not only canonical versions of Paris and Helen, highlighting the omnipresent irony and parody which underscores his depiction of the characters in his famous story. The intertextuality of story and characterization exists somewhere on a spectrum between the pointed and specific script of the example model, and the open and cumulative effects of the genre model. Colluthus' intertextual engagement with thematic and generic conventions clearly belongs to the latter category.

In Chapter 4, we will explore how intertextual reading on a thematic level is another key to unlocking the richness of Colluthus' poem. As Helen Morales has recently stressed, this is a poem which is first and foremost about an abduction.¹⁴ Allusion to the conventions and *topoi* of traditional abduction narratives (not only those surrounding Helen) plays an important role in his narrative and perhaps also at a meta-narrative

¹² The best study of this sort of allusive polemics is Thomas 1982, who argues that in his epyllion, Catullus' references to earlier poetry “has a specifically polemical function: to demonstrate the importance of the poet's models, and often to indicate the superiority of his own treatment” (p.146)

¹³ Magnelli 2008, 158

¹⁴ Morales 2016, 62-3

level. If Colluthus is encouraging his reader to reflect on the themes of sexual transgression, adultery, and agency in his narrative, and accordingly to pass moral judgement on Paris and Helen, then it is through his engagement with the thematic conventions of various poetic treatments of abduction that he does so. At an extra-narrative level, this pervasive focus on abduction may represent the poem as a whole; it is not only a poem *about* an abduction, but the poem itself *becomes* a sort of literary abduction, in which many aspects of the classical tradition are converted from tragedy (or epic, pastoral etc.) to parody or farce.¹⁵

In Chapter 3, we will examine how Colluthus' engagement with several distinct genre traditions may help reinforce this idea: generic conventions ranging from traditional epic, tragedy, and pastoral to comedy and rhetorical exercises are subsumed into a short, episodic pastiche of the literary tradition. All of these generic conventions are subjected to ironic treatment in their evocation, expanding the genre-mixing poetics of the epyllion tradition in its post-Nonnian dimension.¹⁶ The irony of Colluthus' play with genre comes from his play with reader expectations, and his frequent transgression or abandonment of generic norms. The poet frequently alludes to the importance of generic thinking in his narrative, only to subvert such thinking or leave it behind entirely. The generic conventions of the *Abduction of Helen* are often taken out of their appropriate contexts and made absurd in their new environment. This generic intertextuality certainly adds richness to the *Abduction of Helen* from a narrative perspective; Colluthus' story and characters are enhanced by their relationship to the generic traditions used to depict them. Conventions of genre, like those of theme, story, character, and language, are used to play with audience expectations, but in a way that does not require the same kind of erudition in a reader as a learned allusion to one particular line of Nonnus, or a specific version of Paris in the literary tradition. Colluthus' generic allusion often works in a more general way than the

¹⁵ I have in mind Gerard Genette's third category of parody here, where an author borrows from a text's style "in order to compose in that style another text, treating another, preferably antithetical subject" (Genette 1997, 11). The distinction to be made here is that Colluthus is not writing a parody of any one text, but categories of texts.

¹⁶ On Nonnus and the poetics of the epyllion, see Bär 2012, 468-71

sophisticated Alexandrian practice which he is also capable of employing, and like his engagement with various thematic traditions, it probably reached a wider audience.¹⁷ All of Colluthus' intertextual modes are underscored by irony, reversal, and amusement; but some were more readily accessible than others, and it is hoped that a systematic approach to these different modes will reveal the multiple levels at which the poem can be approached by the readers ancient and modern. Throughout this thesis, consideration will also be given to the practice of self-referential allusion within the *Abduction of Helen*, which will reveal that the poet's intra-textual practice adds complexity and connectivity to an otherwise disjointed and episodic narrative, and is at its most interesting when *intra-text* meets *inter-text*;¹⁸ even Colluthus' own narrative could be subject to irony, reversal, and misdirection, a technique which confirms some of the poet's methodology as it is applied to other texts.

The resulting picture is a poem which is truly Alexandrian in spirit, if not always in technique.¹⁹ It is full of irony, humour, and parody, which is only evident in the light of the model texts and literary traditions with which it engages, and a poet who is more thoroughly occupied with meta-poetic commentary on the classical tradition than has been recognized to date. Unlike the finest examples of Callimachean allusivity however, Colluthus' intertextual dynamics could be labelled as a “flexible system”, which allows his reader to approach the poem at several levels. As with the Alexandrian poets, the more erudite the reader, the more learned the poem becomes; the reader who searches for pointed intertextual play will find it, while the reader who is only familiar with the generalities of the various literary traditions employed, or the mythological story

¹⁷ This is more or less the assessment provided by Magnelli 2008, 165: “Colluthus' verses do not contain challenging erudition or riddles, and their standards are well below the refined intertextual plays of Alexandrian poetry: the humour is to be found not so much in 'arte allusiva' as in narrative devices and the handling of the mythological tradition.” My approach differs from Magnelli's by treating this as only one of several levels at which Colluthus engages with literary tradition.

¹⁸ For discussion of this connection at a theoretical level, see Sharrock 2000, 5-7

¹⁹ Giangrande 1969 is the first to depict Colluthus as a poet in the “Hellenistic” mould in his scathing review of Livrea's edition. Some of the ideas explored in this paper were first proposed by Giangrande in his attempt to defend Colluthus as a skilled practitioner of “humorous *arte allusiva*”.

of Paris and Helen, will find engagement on those levels as well. If the term “perhaps” occurs rather too often in my readings, it is because the *Abduction of Helen*, despite its apparent simplicity, lends itself to a multiplicity of readings for multiple audiences. My goal is to capture the range of possibilities in reading Colluthus intertextually, and this means that no one reading is definitive. Yet in the conglomeration of possible readings, a pattern emerges which will allow us to conjecture about the poet's methodology and intent in his use of the literary tradition. By approaching the intertextual dynamics of the *Abduction of Helen* through the perspectives of linguistic, generic, and thematic allusion, this thesis will demonstrate that Colluthus' allusive poetics are consistently ironic, and often humorous; they are defined by their reversal of readerly expectations associated with both broad traditions and specific intertextual moments. This poetic approach of intertextuality as irony is repeatedly used to create and then deny reader expectations, which allows for originality in the treatment of one the most frequently told stories in the classical tradition.

1.2) Colluthus in his Late Antique Egyptian Context

In order to better understand Colluthus' position in the literary tradition, we must take account of the poet's socio-cultural background and the context in which he was writing. This is admittedly difficult for a poet like Colluthus, about whom we lack any reliable biographic details, but nevertheless his relative position in the literary scene of late antique Egypt allows us to make some general conclusions. A poet named Colluthus is named in the *Suda* (10th cent. CE) as the author of the epic poems *Calydoniaca*, *Persica*, and an *Encomium* in hexameter verse, but puzzlingly the *Abduction of Helen* is not mentioned among his works, though it is the only work attributed to him which has survived.²⁰ The fifteenth century *Codex Ambrosianus* (Q5 sup. Gr. 661) connects the author of the works listed in the *Suda* with the surviving epyllion, but the

²⁰ Orsini 1972, v

grounds for that attribution are unclear, especially since it elsewhere depends on the entry in the *Suda*.²¹ Both the *Suda* and the *Codex Ambrosianus* place Colluthus' activity in the reign of the emperor Anastasius I (c. 491-518 CE), and it has been hypothesized that the *Persica* attributed to him could have been written on the subject of Anastasius' Persian campaigns, perhaps suggesting a poet with ties to the imperial court.²²

Nothing is known of Colluthus' religious orientation, and there is little in his text that suggests either pagan or Christian convictions.²³ It seems best to work under the assumption that he was a Christian, and that there was no conflict between his subject matter and his religious environment. Pamprepisus is perhaps the only poet of the period who can confidently be labelled a “pagan”, and the taste for classicizing subject matter popular among some of Colluthus' contemporaries can hardly be used to argue for a group of pagan poets writing for an increasingly rare pagan audience.²⁴ Whatever his personal convictions, it is clear that Colluthus wrote in a Christianized social context as well as a Hellenized intellectual environment, and to be fully understood his work should be situated within both of these worlds. Since there is no ancient commentary tradition on the *Abduction of Helen*, and Colluthus himself does not make any direct proclamations about his relationship to either Hellenism or Christianity, any conclusions about how his work engages with contemporary thought are necessarily based on the internal evidence of the poem, and therefore speculative. But it is hoped that a thorough assessment of Colluthus' engagement with various literary traditions will shed some light on his, and perhaps his audience's attitudes towards them. As a consistent pattern of irony, humour, and parody takes shape in Colluthus' approach to his models, we may begin to speculate how the poem could be read by his audience(s); by avoiding directness, might Colluthus have been playing both sides?

²¹ Livrea 1968, xi

²² Jeffreys 2006, 129; Cadau 2015, 7 connects the *Persica* as well as the *Encomia* to Anastasius

²³ Miguelez-Cavero 2008, 40; Cameron 1965 lumps Colluthus in with Nonnus and other poets of the Egyptian Thebaid, assuming that they were almost all pagans, but Cameron's views on Nonnus later changed and it is unreasonable to assume that Colluthus was a pagan based solely on the lack of Christian material attributed to him. There are perhaps a few moments in the *Abduction of Helen* which engage with Christian literature; these will be addressed below.

²⁴ Cameron 2007, 31-2

Whether or not the creator of our poem is the same Colluthus named in the *Suda* (or had that name at all) is not especially important, since what seems clear is the relative dating and provenance of the *Abduction of Helen* as a post-Nonnian product of the late antique Egyptian literary scene. Colluthus demonstrates his engagement with Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* throughout his epyllion, and shows himself to be a member of the so-called “school of Nonnus” in his language, style, and metre.²⁵ Although the idea of Nonnus as the leader of a cohesive school of poets working in the Egyptian Thebaid is largely debunked, his stylistic influence over the classicizing poetry produced in Egypt in the late 5th – early 6th centuries is wide-ranging, allowing us to confidently place Colluthus among those poets influenced by him, including Musaeus, Pamprepicus, and Agathias.²⁶ The Greek poetry of this period was dominated by Egyptians, and Colluthus is located in the city of Lycopolis in Upper Egypt by the *Suda* and *Life* in the *Codex Ambrosianus*.²⁷ Numerous poets, including Nonnus, hailed from the Thebaid in the 5th and 6th centuries, and the region seems to have contended with Alexandria as the new centre of poetic achievement in the late antique world.²⁸ But the professional Greek Egyptian poets of the period often practiced their craft far from home. Alan Cameron documented the phenomenon of the “wandering poets” of late antiquity, a large group of professional poets, all Egyptian born or educated, who travelled to make their living from various patrons around the empire, and he included Colluthus in this class of poets by assumption.²⁹ If we accept the works attributed to him by the *Suda*, Colluthus certainly appears to fit in with this group, who specialized in encomia and other forms of

²⁵ The relationship was rigorously demonstrated throughout the commentary of Livrea 1968

²⁶ Miguelez-Cavero 2008, esp. 189-90

²⁷ He is also referred to as “(the poet) of Lycopolis” in the *titulus* to some mss. See Livrea 1968, 8

²⁸ Agosti 2014 has corrected the outdated view that there was no poetic scene in Alexandria in late antiquity; in fact several important poets studied there (Nonnus, Rufinus, Pamprepicus, Agathias and more) for some or most of their careers. He cautions that we “should not exaggerate the striking difference between Alexandria and Upper Egypt in terms of poetic ‘schools’”, and notes that the evidence is largely skewed by the survival rates of papyri in the arid south vs. the Nile delta (291). cf. Cameron 1965, 472

²⁹ Cameron 1965, cf. Nicks 2000, 186, who states that “it is likely that... Colluthus remained in his native land.” Neither bases their assumptions on Colluthus' text, and the most compelling conjecture for Colluthus as a “wandering poet” comes from Jeffreys (see note 28 below)

topical, contemporary poetry (invective and epithalamia), and the more ambitious of which wrote epic.³⁰ His *Abduction of Helen* is however something of an oddity in this poetic scene and among his own works, where contemporary topics and long-form epics seem to be the norm. Jeffreys has proposed that this epyllion might represent his “master piece”, a “polished specimen of an artist's, or perhaps better, an artisan's skills to demonstrate his competence to future employers and patrons.”³¹ This practical function might explain why Colluthus would put so many literary styles on display in so short a poem, demonstrating his mastery of mythological traditions and poetic language as well as his fluency in multiple literary traditions to those who might commission a poem from him, whether a mythological epic, an encomium, or a piece of invective. This however, is speculative, and limiting Colluthus' reading audience to a set of potential patrons obscures the multiplicity of poetic effects that his poem may have intended, and which this study aims to elucidate.

Finally, it should be noted that Colluthus shows his indebtedness not only to the classical tradition, but to various branches of the post-classical: He engages with Homer, Hesiod, and Athenian tragedy, but also with successive generations of poets who alluded to and experimented with their classical predecessors. Callimachus and Apollonius engaged with Homer; Quintus Smyrnaeus engaged with them; Nonnus engaged with Quintus; Musaeus with Nonnus; and Colluthus with all of the above, creating a complex mosaic of models. One question which this study aims to address is whether an intertextual reading of the *Abduction of Helen* functions differently when applied to Colluthus' near contemporaries (especially Nonnus), to intermediate authors (such as Quintus and Triphiodorus), and to the canonical works of the pre-Christian era.

1.3) Summary of Scholarship

³⁰ Cameron 1965, 477 notes that although the mythological poetry represented by Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, Musaeus' *Hero and Leander* and Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen* is the best known today, this was actually a much smaller subset of works among a group who were most often concerned with contemporary topics.

³¹ Jeffreys 2006, 131

As has already been mentioned, Colluthus has been much maligned in the scholarship of the last 100 years, although the numerous printings and translations of his text, from the *editio princeps* of the Aldine press in the early 16th century through the 19th century, attest to his earlier popularity.³² In the 20th century, such authoritative voices as Rudolf Keydell and M.L. West could write of Colluthus: “Kolluthus... ist, wenn man von Dioskoros von Aphrodito absieht, der schlechteste Dichter der griechischen Spätzeit, den wir kennen.”³³ and “Colluthus is one of the very worst poets to have come down to us, his only notion of the art is to arrange in hexameters phrases borrowed from his predecessors, with little sense of their appropriateness or of narrative coherence.”³⁴ The situation clearly had not changed much with the publication of the first modern critical edition and commentary by Enrico Livrea in 1968; for Livrea, Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen* was an example of “frigida inabilita dello schema compositivo”, “maldestro uso delle fonti”, and “incerta padronanza del linguaggio epico”.³⁵ Despite his negative judgements of Colluthus as a poet, Livrea's extensive commentary laid the foundations for an intertextual study of Colluthus, and despite several scathing reviews of his text,³⁶ more recent scholarship is heavily indebted to his notes. A.W. Mair provided the first (and still the most recent) English translation of Colluthus, paired with Oppian and Triphiodorus in his Loeb edition of 1928, and though Mair had little to say about Colluthus' literary qualities,³⁷ some of my translations will show their debt to his work. Pierre Orsini advanced the standing of Colluthus' text in his Budé edition of 1972, as well as providing a valuable introduction and overview of Colluthus' sources and models. He was willing to admit that Colluthus could at least occasionally be “tres allusive”, but ultimately finds the *Abduction of Helen* to be a poem “a peu

³² See Livrea 1968, xlii - xlvi

³³ Keydell 1975, 543 (In response to Orsini's edition)

³⁴ West 1970, 657-8 (In response to Livrea's edition)

³⁵ Livrea 1968, xiv

³⁶ Giangrande 1969, West 1970; See Combellack 1971 for a positive review, though unlike Giangrande he is uninterested in a defense of Colluthus as a poet. It should also be noted that Giangrande's review is tainted by unfairness and personal attacks, and contributes little to improving Livrea's editorial work

³⁷ Except for the charming observation that, along with his other subjects, Colluthus was a poet who “dwells rather on the lower levels of Parnassus” (v).

de valeur, soit artistique, soit simplement littéraire.”³⁸ The first scholar to take Colluthus seriously was Giuseppe Giangrande, especially in his thorough review of Livrea's edition. According to Giangrande, Colluthus was a skillful practitioner of “humorous *arte allusiva*” in the Alexandrian mold, writing for a learned audience with frequent humour and irony.³⁹ Giangrande's specific arguments have been thoroughly rebutted,⁴⁰ but the general frame of his argument has been advanced in more recent scholarship, which has begun to re-assess Colluthus' social and literary context, narrative technique, and his treatment of his various models.

Almost 40 years passed with little interest in Colluthus, despite the advancement of his text and a steadily growing interest in the cultural output of late antiquity. In 2006, Adrian Hollis was bold enough to state his fondness for Colluthus and his “learned poem in the Alexandrian tradition”, giving several examples of possible Alexandrian influences on Colluthus' epyllion, and situating the poem in the Hellenistic epyllion tradition.⁴¹ In the same volume, Elizabeth Jeffreys advanced our understanding of Colluthus' work in relation to its reading audience, with comparison to Christodorus and John Malalas, noting that Colluthus was writing in a refined style, making “no concessions to a changing environment”, a question to which we shall return.⁴² In the same year Byron Harries made a significant contribution to studies of the *Abduction of Helen's* intertextuality, documenting Colluthus' “lament for the lost innocence of pastoral” and Nonnus' influence on this important aspect of his narrative scheme.⁴³ In a special 2008 edition of *Ramus*, major advances in the reading of Colluthus' epyllion were made by Paschalis, Prauscello and Magnelli, who each re-assessed the literary value of the *Abduction of Helen*, respectively in regards to Colluthus' narrative structure and thematics,

³⁸ Orsini 1972, xxvii

³⁹ Giangrande 1969, 152

⁴⁰ See Livrea 1969, with comments by Magnelli 2008, 151,165

⁴¹ Hollis 2006, 154-5

⁴² Jeffreys 2006, 134

⁴³ Harries 2006, esp. 540-7

his engagement with pastoral traditions, and the irony and misdirection in his handling of a tradition Homeric topic.⁴⁴ More recently, Helen Morales has contributed to reading Colluthus in light of the poem's major theme, an abduction, setting it in the context of both literary traditions and contemporary thought on abduction and adultery, and Enrico Magnelli has assessed Colluthus' treatment of the gods as flawed, "human" characters with no trace of late antique allegorizing to vindicate them.⁴⁵ Other valuable scholarship has dealt with the late antique Egyptian literary context in which Colluthus was writing: most notably that of Gianfranco Agosti and Laura Miguelez-Cavero, as well as a far more substantial body of scholarship on the poetry of Nonnus of Panopolis, which sheds much light on literary trends and the far-reaching influence of Colluthus most significant model.⁴⁶ The only monograph dedicated to Colluthus is that Cosetta Cadau, who has made major advances in the study of Colluthus' engagement with his literary models, and especially in the narratological study of his epyllion, and the most substantial contextualization of Colluthus in his contemporary context.⁴⁷ Though Cadau has made major advances in appreciating Colluthus' engagement with various models, her intertextual summary is selective, and has left room for an equally detailed reading of other important sections of the poem, most notably that of Hermione's lament (326-392), which is a major focus of this study. Cadau has also revisited the thorny question of Colluthus' engagement with Latin literary sources, concluding that our poet is heavily engaged with Latin poetry, especially Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*.⁴⁸ There is however little agreement on the degree to which later Greek poets, and especially Colluthus, engaged directly with Latin poetry, and this question will be revisited here with a more cautionary approach.⁴⁹ Although Claudian's

⁴⁴ Paschalis 2008, Prauscello 2008, Magnelli 2008

⁴⁵ Morales 2016, Magnelli 2016

⁴⁶ Miguelez-Cavero 2008; Shorrock 2001; Agosti 2012; Agosti 2014. For a summary of scholarship on Nonnus, see most recently Chuvin 2018; The most fundamental resource for Nonnus is to be found in the complete Budé editions in 17 volumes.

⁴⁷ Cadau 2015, especially relevant for our study is Ch.2 (Colluthus and his Models), pp. 36-134

⁴⁸ On Claudian's potential influence see especially page 45 n.39

⁴⁹ Following Agosti 2014, 293 who notes that although the teaching of Latin in late antique Alexandria is well attested, "attempts to prove that late Greek poets were familiar with Latin literature do not pay enough attention to the fundamental distinction between a certain degree of knowledge of Latin and the imitation of Latin models" cf. Cameron 1965, 494-6 who

epic abduction narrative is a valuable inter-text for the modern reader, there is little indication of direct engagement on Colluthus' part, and where Claudian seems most appealing, more relevant Greek models can often be found.

In summary, although Colluthus has received a great deal more attention in the last ten years, there remain some *desiderata* when it comes to reading his poem intertextually, and especially surrounding the mechanics of his allusive practice. While earlier scholarship was only concerned with the identification of models for Colluthus' language and story with little interest in how they were employed, modern scholarship has begun to read the *Abduction of Helen* in its own right and its proper context, but often avoids the specifics of Colluthus' allusive practice. This paper will in part attempt to unify these two approaches by establishing a consistent approach to Colluthus' *arte allusiva*, focussing on the ways in which his adaptation of models is integral to the narrative, and how his ironic classicizing can be read in his late antique context.

takes the knowledge of Latin literature as a given among late antique Egyptian poets, though with no comment on Colluthus himself.

2) Colluthus' Intertextual Toolkit

2.1) Overview

This section will address Colluthus' methods of signalling his own allusive activity at the linguistic level. That is, how he directs the reader's attention to intertextual engagement with a specific moment in a text (or set of texts) through his choice of words, their morphology, and metrical position. There is inevitably a great deal of overlap between this approach and those of later sections, as the study of linguistic markers of allusion leads naturally to questions of meaning and function at the levels of story, genre, and thematics. However, my goal here is simply to highlight how Colluthus' engagement with the text of some of his main models works in a technical manner: how allusion is “sign-posted”, how specific moments of intertextuality contribute to our reading of Colluthus' epyllion, and what these moments can reveal about Colluthus' reading of his models. To begin, we shall address “simple” instances of allusion to a given moment in a model text, those which can be isolated based on the uniqueness of language and the lack of extant intermediary or alternate models. Next, we shall complicate the picture by attempting to trace moments when Colluthus may be alluding to multiple models. These take the form of multiple scenes from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, or “window allusions” to an earlier model filtered through one or more later intermediaries, which have the effect of “subsuming their versions, and the tradition along with them, into his own”.⁵⁰ Also included in this category of complex allusion are linguistic leitmotifs which Colluthus recalls throughout his narrative; these often begin as an allusion to another text, but evolve over the course of the poem as our poet repeats and rearranges them. Finally, an open question on Colluthus' models will be addressed from this linguistic perspective: Can we trace the influence of Christian texts through Colluthus' language?

⁵⁰ Thomas 1986, 193: Thomas treats “window allusion” as an example of “correction” (188), playing one model against the other, while “multiple references” incorporate a whole tradition. For the purposes of this paper these two categories of reference will be treated as one device with different intended effects.

As Cadau notes in her reading of Colluthus, there is an open debate regarding any author's intention in his use of textual connections, and we are often limited to making assumptions about how the learned reader may have received such references, and all the more so given our scanty biographical knowledge of Colluthus the author.⁵¹ As this study proceeds to the study of the tropes and *topoi* of genre and theme in subsequent chapters, we will increasingly move away from the specific textual relationship towards the general, that is, from an author-centred notion of *allusion*, to a reader-centred *intertextuality*. Any notions of authorial intent will become necessarily more speculative when leaving behind the strong markers of linguistic allusion. This entails loosening our attachment to (but never entirely abandoning) the notion of demonstrable authorial intent and moving towards a more reader-centred approach.⁵² But for the moment let us set aside intertextualist fundamentalism and make some observations about Colluthus' use of his example models which allow us to proceed on firmer footing when it comes to linguistic allusion and the poet's aims in its application. Firstly, as Livrea rigorously established in his commentary, Colluthus is heavily influenced by the language and style of Nonnus, and the wholesale borrowing of half-lines, phrases, and unique vocabulary from the *Dionysiaca* often provide us with parallels which cannot be dismissed as "accidental confluences", and thus provide a solid point of entry to go further and ask not if, but why Colluthus is alluding to his influential predecessor. Secondly, although the entire epic tradition from Homer to his own contemporaries provides one of Colluthus' main genre models, the influence of Homer can often be isolated from the broader epic tradition when we narrow our focus to specific textual moments which are sign-posted by borrowed language. Without a doubt Colluthus' borrowings can be subtle, or re-arranged to the point where we must refrain from bold proclamations about specificity and authorial intent, but so often the "parroting" or "plagiarism" for

⁵¹ Cadau 2015, 36

⁵² Hinds 1996, 49-51 has shown how these two approaches can and should be reconciled in the philologist's practice; dogmatism on either side of this spectrum is of little use.

which he was long maligned in scholarship turns out to put us on steadier ground when assessing the *visibility* of allusions than with earlier poets who employed much more subtle devices.⁵³ What remains then is to identify some system of meaning behind these borrowings, and in this our confidence is often aided by the development of patterns. In the case of Colluthus the major unifying pattern is defined by the consistent application of irony, reversal, and humour, especially when it pertains to the main themes of his epyllion. So let us turn to some examples of marked intertextuality in the *Abduction of Helen* in order to better understand the linguistic devices in Colluthus' intertextual toolkit.

2.2) “Simple” Allusion: The Alexandrian Footnote and Homeric *Hapax Legomenon*

Perhaps the simplest allusive device used by Colluthus is the citation of an authoritative model through the use of imitated or borrowed language. In these cases the use of the model simply establishes a precedent for Colluthus' own story, characters, or themes, and makes connections between canonical representations and his own work.⁵⁴ Among the Alexandrian and Roman poets, the device known as the “Alexandrian footnote” is a particularly common means of alerting the reader to a citation of an earlier model through the use of “seemingly general appeals to tradition and report”, an artifice which mimics the style of a learned commentary.⁵⁵ A handful of examples of this method of allusive citation can be found in Colluthus. When Aphrodite learns of the beauty contest, she expresses her anxiety over losing to Hera and Athena based on their reputations according to the report of an unspecified “they” (87-90):⁵⁶

⁵³ The strongest criticism of Colluthus' “artless” borrowing comes from West 1970, 657

⁵⁴ What I call a “citation” here generally falls in the class of reference which Richard Thomas (1986) classified as “single”, as opposed to “casual”. For Thomas, the casual reference recalls a specific antecedent, but not in a way which is important to the new context (175), while the single reference directs the reader to “recall the context of the model and apply that context to the new situation; such reference thereby becomes a means of imparting great significance (177).

⁵⁵ Hinds 1998, 2

⁵⁶ Throughout this thesis, the text of Colluthus is that of Orsini 1972, all translations are my own

δαιμαίνω, τίνι μῆλον ὁ βουκόλος οὔτος ὀπάσσει.
Ἥρην μὲν Χαρίτων ἱερὴν ἐνέπουσι τιθήνην,
φασὶ δὲ κοιρανίην μεθέπειν καὶ σκῆπτρα φυλάσσειν,
καὶ πολέμων βασιλείαν αἰεὶ καλέουσιν Ἀθήνην.

*I fear to whom this cowherd will give the apple.
They call Hera mother of the Graces,
And they say she protects sovereign rule and guards
the scepter,
And they always call Athena queen of wars.*

The phrasing certainly has the appearance of an allusive citation: “they” call Hera the mother of the Graces, and “they” say that she wields sovereignty and guards the scepter, and “they” always call Athena the queen of war.⁵⁷ The first claim is almost unique in surviving sources, the parents of the Graces are normally given as Zeus and Eurynome (e.g. Hes. *Theog.* 907), so Colluthus must be citing a specific claim as opposed to a general tradition. This may perhaps be found in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, where Hera is called the mother of Pasithea (μητέρα Πασιθέης... Ἥρην, 31.186). The claim that Hera gave birth to the Graces is repeated by Colluthus at lines 173-4, again in Aphrodite's words and again given by an unspecified “they say” (φασὶ σε, μήτηρ Ἄρῃος, ὑπ' ὠδίνεσσιν ἀέξειν | ἠυκόμων Χαρίτων ἱερὸν χορόν).⁵⁸ In this second instance, Aphrodite seems to be refuting the truth of this Nonnian tradition, on the grounds that the Graces did not aid Hera in the beauty contest. The other claims made by Aphrodite here are impossible to trace to a specific model, rather they seem to cite general tradition (or perhaps a specific moment in a lost text) surrounding the beauty contest, foreshadowing what the goddesses will offer to Paris should he give the apple to them. So this device is neither prominent nor straightforward in Colluthus' epyllion, in keeping with a broader trend which has been documented in Late Antique poetry.⁵⁹ Instead, Colluthus mainly uses linguistic borrowings to draw attention to certain models, whether in the form of copied or modified phrases, adaptation of unique and rare

⁵⁷ Livrea reads ἐπικλείουσιν for αἰεὶ καλέουσιν (see note *ad loc.*): “always” would have the effect of citing not a specific source or model but rather a long tradition

⁵⁸ Hollis 2006, 155 notes that these lines recall Callimachus' disputed genealogy of the Graces, even using the passage from Colluthus to argue for the placement of fr. 634 (οὔλου μήτηρ Ἄρῃος) with Callimachus' genealogy in Book 1 of the *Aetia* (fr. 6)

⁵⁹ Kaufmann 2017, 151

vocabulary, or even verses approaching the form of a cento.

Similar to the Alexandrian footnote, one may also suspect that Colluthus' use of Homeric *hapax* or *dis legomena* could give us an insight into specific textual moments to which the poet attempts to steer his reader's attention. This was certainly the case among Hellenistic poets such as Apollonius and Callimachus, whose “culture de l'érudition” made the transformation of rare Homeric vocabulary an important intertextual tool which strongly connected hypertext and hypotext.⁶⁰ In the *Abduction of Helen*, and indeed in post-Nonnian poetry more generally, we face a rather more difficult situation. Of at least 31 words used by Colluthus which have their origins as Homeric *hapax* or *dis legomena*,⁶¹ only five are not found in the corpus of Nonnus' poetry (and those he did use occur with some frequency), and none went unused by at least one author between the Homeric texts and the time of Colluthus' writing. Throughout this study, some of these distinctive Homeric terms will be noted, but we are seldom able to isolate the Homeric text as a distinctly marked hypotext, or even establish Colluthus' knowledge of it. Let us note one example of, and one exception to this rule. In line 40 of the *Abduction*, Apollo (named two lines earlier) is described coming to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis with “his uncut cluster of hair tossed by the west wind” (βότρυς ἀκερσεκόμης ζεφύρω στυφελίζετο χαίτης).⁶² The adjective *ἀκερσεκόμης* is found once in *Iliad* 20.39: Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης, “Apollo with uncut hair”, and is subsequently used by Hesiod (fr. 60.3, fr. 171.8), the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (134), and Pindar (*Pyth.* 3.14, *Isth.* 1.17), and always of Apollo's long hair. All of these except Pindar use the same phrase in the same metrical position as Homer, as does Colluthus. If it weren't for the 13 appearances of the adjective in Nonnus, we would be confident in saying that Colluthus was making a learned allusion to Homer, or perhaps the *Hymn* by varying

⁶⁰ Cusset 1999, 27; See Genette 1997, 5 for more on the terminology of “hypertext” and “hypotext”

⁶¹ Reliably documented in Livrea's commentary (*passim*)

⁶² Lines 39-40 have been transposed after line 24 by all modern editors, but the numbering is unchanged: See Livrea's note *ad loc.* for more on the textual issues, in part caused by earlier editors' assumptions that *Botrys* referred to Dionysus due to the influence of Nonnus!

a rare term describing Apollo. Of these 13 instances, most relevant to us are *Dion.* 10.207: Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης κεχάλασμένα βόστρυχα σείων (replicating the Homeric version) and *Dion.* 18.12: Βότρυς ἀκερσικόμης ἀνεσείρασεν ἄρμα τοκῆος (matching Coll. 40). Colluthus is clearly not using βότρυς as a proper name, as in the Nonnian passage above, but the fact that Nonnus also used the *hapax* in application to Apollo and in the same metrical position means that we are left uncertain whether Colluthus is playing a Nonnian line against the Homeric model, or two Nonnian lines against each other. The remaining factor to consider is context: in the Homeric passage, the description of Apollo is part of a “catalogue” of the gods entering the battle at Troy, which concludes with Eris (Strife), the last of the deities in Colluthus' catalogue, while the context of the Nonnian passages is not nearly as compelling. My own inclination is that Colluthus did intend to draw a parallel between his catalogue and Homer's, where the learned reader could recall the impending war which would result from the quarrel of the goddesses at the wedding, while the Nonnian passage gave him material for an artful variation. However the reader is left to decide, and we may only conjecture as to the author's intended reference here. Such complicated traditions are the norm, but not always the case, as we find with Colluthus' use of the Homeric *dis legomena* Δύσπαρις “wretched Paris” (193). The term is found in the *Iliad* in two of Hector's rebukes of his brother (*Il.* 3.39=13.769): Δύσπαρι εἶδος ἄριστε γυναιμανές ἠπεροπευτὰ. In Colluthus, there is a switch from character voice (Hector), to that of the narrator, the judgement of Paris as “wretched” is no longer a character's opinion but stated as fact. Because there is little in the way of intervening tradition, and because the Homeric metrical position remains unaltered by Colluthus,⁶³ we are on safe ground in stating that our poet had these particular Homeric passages in mind, and further meant for the reader to recall these famous passages of hostile rebuke towards Paris. Colluthus' Δύσπαρις is a hostile title on the face of it, but when

⁶³ We may not entirely rule out Alcman fr. 77: Δύσπαρις Αἰνόπαρις κακὸν Ἑλλάδι βωτιανεῖραι as an important intertext, albeit one for which we lack a surrounding context. On the importance of *homotaxy* (the maintaining of metrical position) in the use of rare vocabulary; Cusset 1999, 29-57

the reader recalls Hector's "hateful words" (αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσσιν), *Il.* 3.38–13.768), and his labelling of Paris as "mad for women" (γυναιμανές) clarifies the terms of Colluthus' judgement of Paris and his actions.⁶⁴

The above examples demonstrate that in order to distinguish between allusive borrowing and mere linguistic ornament,⁶⁵ we must pay attention to the context of the model text and its adaptation in the *Abduction of Helen*. For some first examples we may look to Colluthus' proem, in which the citation of Homeric models helps define Colluthus' story as well as his poetic agenda and aesthetic.⁶⁶

2.3) "Simple" Allusion: Citation and Revision of Single Models

The *Abduction of Helen* begins with an invocation of the Trojan Nymphs as a stand-in for the Muses, followed by a series of questions posed by the narrator which introduce the poetic subject of the majority of the poem, namely the causes and result of Paris' judgement of the goddesses and his elopement with Helen of Sparta (5–11):

δεῦτε, θεμιστοπόλοιο νοήματα μηλοβοτήρος
ἔσπετέ μοι, κελάδοντος ἀπορνύμεναι ποταμοῖο,
ἐξ ὀρέων πόθεν ἦλθεν ἀήθεα πόντον ἐλαύνων
ἀγνώσσων ἀλὸς ἔργα; τί δὲ χρέος ἔπλετο νηῶν
ἀρχεκάκων, ἵνα πόντον ὁμοῦ καὶ γαίαν ὀρίνη
βουκόλος; ὠγυγίη δὲ τίς ἔπλετο νεΐκεος ἀρχή,
ὄφρα καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεμιστεύσωσι νομῆες;

*Come, leave behind the sounding river,
tell me the thoughts of the justice-dealing shepherd;
why did he come from the hills and sail the unfamiliar deep,
ignorant of the works of the sea? What need was there for ships
the origin of woes, that a shepherd would stir up both land and sea?
What was the primeval origin of strife,
that shepherds should be the judges of immortals?*

⁶⁴ Magnelli 2008 notes several instances which demonstrate our poet's dislike for Paris, concluding that "Colluthus appears to be playing the moralist – to some extent at least. But I do not think that his main scope was to produce a moralising reading of the myth" (165). The purpose of Colluthus' negative characterization of Paris is a point to which we shall frequently return.

⁶⁵ Kaufmann 2017, 159–60 cautions that even these "formal features" which do not require knowledge or recognition of the model text for understanding the later text still have an allusive quality: characterizing the "poetic texture" of the text. Pelltari 2014, 131 has also observed how "a number of late antique allusions do not function as references back to their sources", leaving their referentiality undefined. Both authors' studies are dedicated to late antique Latin poetry, but their observations are certainly of use for a study of Colluthus and other later Greek poets.

⁶⁶ For a detailed overview of Colluthus' proem, see Cadau (2015), 37–49. We shall return to the proem below for a more in-depth discussion of its meta-poetics and genre-mixing.

The lines highlighted above are of special interest because of their “citation” of the Homeric epics, creating expectations for the narrative to follow based on the authorizing model of the Homeric texts.⁶⁷ In line 10, the narrator asks: “What was the primeval cause of strife?” (ὠγυγίη δὲ τίς ἔπλετο νείκεος ἀρχή), posing his question in the very same words which Homer had used to answer the question in Hector's monologue of *Il.* 22.114-6: “I would promise him (ie. Achilles) Helen and with her all the goods which Alexander led off in his hollow ships to Troy, which was the cause of strife (ἧ τ' ἔπλετο νείκεος ἀρχή).” So here Colluthus is “citing” Hector's view of the origins of the Trojan war, namely the act of abduction carried out by Paris, for an authoritative answer to his question. There is no sense here of the *oppositio*, ironic reversal, or revision in allusion with which Colluthus was very fond, rather the Homeric allusion carries the weight of authority, providing as it did a source for canonical answers. As it stands in the proem, this linguistic recall of the Homeric passage creates an expectation in the reader, even though it is formed as a question the reader is already positioned to blame Paris for the outbreak of the Trojan war through the citation of a Homeric answer.

In the preceding lines, Homeric allusion again helps define Colluthus' position at the poem's outset: He asks: “What need was there for ships, the beginnings of woe (ἀρχεκάκων), such that a cowherd would stir up both land and sea?” (8-9). Homer had already identified the ships built for Paris as the “beginnings of woe” in *Il.* 5.62-3 in his description of the death of Phereclus “who built ships for Alexander, the beginnings of woe, which brought evil to all the Trojans” (ὄς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τεκτῆνατο νῆας εἴσας | ἀρχεκάκους, αἳ πᾶσι κακὸν Τρώεσσι γέγοντο).” The emphatic positioning of the adjective ἀρχέκακος, which is a Homeric *hapax legomenon*, strengthens the parallel between the passages. This term is in fact a *leitmotif* in Colluthus' narrative to which we shall return, but its role in the proem is to cite the sole use of the term in the Homeric corpus in order to position the reader's expectations. Where Homer emphasized that Alexander's ships brought trouble to the

⁶⁷ On authorizing models and the intertextual effects of “citation” see Thomas 1982; Barchiesi 2015, 73-4

Trojans, Colluthus uses a different Homeric model to shift his focus back to Paris; for him the result of Phereclus' ships is a paradoxical situation where a cowherd would stir up both land and sea: πόντον ὁμοῦ καὶ γαῖαν ὀρίνη | βουκόλος (9-10). This phrase recalls identical passages in the *Odyssey*, where Zeus is said to rouse a furious storm and cover both land and sea with clouds: νηυσὶ δ' ἐπῶρσ' ἄνεμον βορέην νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς | λαίλαπι θεσπεσίη, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε | γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανόθεν νύξ (*Od.* 9.67-9 = *Od.* 12.313-15; cf. *Od.* 5.292-4). By borrowing the phrasing of this stock Homeric scene which traditionally depicts the power of mighty gods, Colluthus enhances an already ironic and humorous picture of a cowherd who is far outside of his element, further emphasized by the enjambment of βουκόλος. These lines from the epyllion's proem show how Colluthus could cite tradition through the use of distinctive terms and phrases, using Homer as an authorizing model for his depiction of Paris as a negative character, with implications for the narrative to come.

Another important model for Colluthus on both linguistic and thematic levels is Apollonius' *Argonautica*.⁶⁸ One example of its importance in reading Colluthus intertextually comes from the beauty contest between Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena, which recalls the embassy of Hera and Athena to seek the help of Aphrodite in causing Medea to fall in love with Jason. After Hera and Athena make their cases, Aphrodite reveals her secret weapon: she bares her chest and “with a smile addresses the herdsman thus” (τοῖα δὲ μειδιόωσα προσέννεπεν μηλοβοτήρα, 158).⁶⁹ Aphrodite had used the same smile to address the goddesses “with wily words” in the *Argonautica* (τοῖα δὲ μειδιόωσα προσέννεπεν αἰμυλίοισιν, 3.51), and Colluthus is clearly alluding to the scene to recall an interaction of the three goddesses in a very different and far more congenial context.

⁶⁸ Orsini 1972, xiv, xix; Cadau 2015, 381 Schönberger 1993, 17

⁶⁹ The pun on μῆλον as not just “flock”, but “apple” and “breast” is probably nowhere stronger than in this moment. Through Colluthus' humorous wordplay we can imagine Paris here as the literal “herdsman”, or in Aphrodite's eyes as the “apple-tender”, or further as the “breast-tender” as he stares at Aphrodite's naked chest. For more on this wordplay see Cadau 2015, 48; Paschalis 2008, 146-7

Though the interaction may be far friendlier in the Apollonian scene, there Hera nevertheless recognizes that Aphrodite is taking a mocking tone (κερτομέεις, 3.56), which Colluthus the narrator picks up on at the beginning of Aphrodite's victory speech “mocking Hera and manly Athena” (“Ἡρην κερτομέουσα καὶ ἀντιάνειραν Ἀθήνην, 170).⁷⁰ So what effect does Colluthus create by recalling the Apollonian meeting of the three goddesses through the use of this pointed language? It is a prime example of Colluthus' desire to play with his models through reversals of context which heighten the irony and humour of his own narrative, a characteristically Hellenistic device. In the *Abduction*, Aphrodite hardly uses “wily words” to convince Paris, in fact she has not even finished speaking when he awards her the apple (166). In the beauty contest one gets the impression her powers of persuasion had little to do with argument, especially given the character of her judge. Colluthus does keep the notion of Aphrodite mocking her fellow goddesses, however here it has transformed from gentle sarcasm to full-blown invective as she glories in her prize.⁷¹ It is one of several episodes and references in the *Abduction of Helen* which brings the pagan gods of literature down to a very human level. Here Colluthus makes use of an authoritative model to cite and then enhance the discord among the goddesses, recalling a far more modest Aphrodite who is surprised by a visit from two “very important goddesses” (περίεστε θεάων, A.R. 3.54), and turning her into a gloating victor who savagely mocks her defeated rivals.

Next let us turn to an example of a linguistic allusion which serves not only to increase the irony of Colluthus' depiction of the gods, but also stands as an example of a correction or revision of an authoritative model. During Aphrodite's deliberations before the beauty contest, she lists off the powers of Hera and Athena (87-90) and portrays herself as the only harmless goddess, before realizing that she too has weapons, not of war, but of love (91-5):

⁷⁰ Magnelli 2016, 294; One might wonder if Colluthus' ἀντιάνειραν Ἀθήνην (a more literal translation would be “a match for men”) also contains a hint toward Athena's reputation for the repulsion of rape, on which see Deacy 1997

⁷¹ See Cadau 2015, 111-34 for a detailed discussion of Aphrodite's victorious invective

μόνη Κύπρις ἀναλκίς ἔην θεός, οὐ βασιλήων
κοιρανίην, οὐκ ἔγκος ἀρήιον, οὐ βέλος ἔλκω.
Ἄλλὰ τί δειμαίνω περιώσιον ἀντί μὲν αἰχμῆς;
ὡς θοὸν ἔγκος ἔχουσα μελίφρονα δεσμὸν ἐρώτων
κεστὸν ἔγω καὶ κέντρον ἄγω καὶ τόξον ἀείρω

*“Kypris alone is a harmless goddess, I have no sovereignty among
kings,
no warlike spear, nor do I draw a missile.
But why be so afraid when instead of a spear
I have a swift weapon, the honeyed girdle of the Erotes?
I have my girdle, I ply my goad, I lift my bow!”*

Aphrodite's self-depiction is borrowed from Homer's famous scene depicting her injury on the battlefield by a raging Diomedes, who pursues her “knowing that she was a harmless goddess, and not one of those who has power in the wars of men, she was no Athena, nor Enyo destroyer of cities”: *γινώσκων ὃ τ' ἀναλκίς ἔην θεός, οὐδὲ θεάων | τῶν αἰ τ' ἀνδρῶν πόλεμον κάτα κοιρανέουσιν | οὐτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίη οὔτε πτολίπορθος Ἔνυώ* (*Il.* 5.331-3). The immediate context reveals that Homer's “harmless” goddess actually has a great deal of power, not on the battlefield, but in the realm of love. And of course, Aphrodite's victory in the beauty contest will indeed cause the very war which is being alluded to here. Homer's passage is clearly marked as the model with *ἀναλκίς ἔην θεός*, in the same metrical position and lexical form, but Colluthus refutes the notion of a weak goddess both within his narrative and intertextually. Here, Aphrodite claims she does not “draw a missile”, but of course her son was famous for the power of his βέλος.⁷² Colluthus' choice of phrase that “Kypris alone” is a harmless goddess may also allude to texts which make precisely the opposite claim, for example the chorus of Euripides' *Hippolytus* sings of Aphrodite's power over all of mankind and nature through her son': *συμπάντων βασιληίδα τιμάν, Κύπρι, τῶνδε μόνᾳ κρατύνεις* (*Eur. Hipp.* 1279-80), “over all these, you alone Kypris, hold honoured queenship”. Similarly, in Moschus' *Europa*, Aphrodite is the cause of Zeus' desire for Europa, when “his heart was overcome by the unexpected darts of of Cypris, who alone has the power to subdue even Zeus” (*θυμὸν ἀνώιστοισιν ὑποδμηθεὶς βελέεσσι | Κύπριδος, ἢ μούνη δύναται καὶ Ζῆνα δαμάσσαι* (*Mosch. Eur.* 75-6)).⁷³ By

⁷² We have already seen Colluthus allude to one passage in which Aphrodite convinces her son Eros to use his arrow to cause Medea to fall in love with Jason in the *Argonautica*. Colluthus has a model for this image of Aphrodite using the weapons of beauty over weapons of war in Claudian's Greek *Gigantomachy* 43-4: *Κύπρις δ' οὔτε βέλος φέρεν, οὐχ ὄπλον ἀλλ' ἐκόμιζεν ἄγλαϊην*, see Cadau 2015, 127

⁷³ The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* may be the canonical source behind this tradition highlighting Aphrodite's power: see

recalling these and similar depictions of Aphrodite at the same time as she alludes to her own weakness through the Homeric model, Colluthus not only corrects the authoritative model, but heightens his own narrative by creating doubts about Aphrodite's sincerity, as well as looking forward to her inevitable victory in the beauty contest. This passage further provides an example of how Colluthus could develop one of his primary themes, the parallels between love and war, not only on the surface of his text but through marked borrowing from his models.⁷⁴

We may find a similar “correction” of Nonnus signalled through linguistic borrowing in Colluthus' image of Eris preparing to disturb the wedding of the gods with the golden apple. Before throwing the apple among the goddesses, we are given a striking image of the goddess twirling the particularly cursed apple in her hand (60-63):

ἔνθεν Ἔρις, πολέμοιο προάγγελον ἔρνος ἐλοῦσα
 μῆλον, ἀριζήλων ἐφράσσατο δήνεα μόχθων.
 χειρὶ δὲ δινήσασα μόθου πρωτόσπορον ἀρχὴν
 ἐς θαλίην ἔριψε, χορὸν δ' ὤρινε θεάων.

*Then Strife, taking the fruit which was the harbinger of war,
 the apple, contrived her plan for famous woes.
 And twirling in her hand the first seed, the origin of turmoil,
 she threw it into the party and stirred up the dance of the
 goddesses*

We have already seen Colluthus' interest in origins above, and here we find him borrowing the phrase *πρωτόσπορον ἀρχὴν* from Nonnus, who applied it Eros in a description of his birth: *καὶ τότε θούρον Ἔρωτα, γονῆς πρωτόσπορον ἀρχὴν*, | ἀρμονίης κόσμοιο φερέσβιον ἠνιοχήα | ἀρτιφανῆς ὤδινεν ἐπ' ὄφρῦσι γείτονος ὄρμου (Nonn. *Dion.* 41.129-31), “Then on the brow of the neighbouring harbour she gave birth to wild Eros, the first seed and origin of birth, life-giving guide of the order of the universe”. The borrowed phrase is surrounded by very different contexts: in Colluthus, the apple is the first seed of turmoil (μόθου) and the harbinger of war (πολέμοιο

Faulkner 2008, 74-5, who also notes the influence of *Hymn. Aphr.* 2 on Mosch. *Eur.* 76. The *Hymn* is certainly one of Colluthus' models, although he does not seem to be making a specific reference to it here.

⁷⁴ On this theme e.g. Magnelli 2016, 294 and Cadau 2015, 110-11 on the *Venus armata* motif. We may point out other passages such as Ares' jubilant dancing at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (lines 34-7), or the reference to Helen aboard Paris' ship as his “cargo of war” (φόρτον... ἰωχυοῖο, 325), which leaves us with a delightful ambiguity: was Helen the “cargo” of Paris' seductive victory (as *militia amoris*), or was she the “cargo” that *caused* the war?

προάγγελον), while in the Nonnian passage Eros is the first seed of birth/generation (γονῆς), who brings order to the universe. We could stop here and call this an example of *oppositio in imitando*, a piece of linguistic playfulness.⁷⁵ But we can also press our interpretation of this reference further by comparing the subjects involved: apple/disorder/destruction in Colluthus and Eros/order/generation in Nonnus.⁷⁶ Colluthus' passage picks up on an intimate connection in Greek literature between the image of the apple and love, of which the story of Eris' apple is but a part.⁷⁷ If we allow that Colluthus may have had in mind not just the literal apple, but the apple as a stand-in for erotic love, the passage can be read in a different light. When marked against the Nonnian passage, the learned reader may more readily pick up on the symbolic value of the apple in Colluthus. The result is a subtle message about the dangerous power of desire, which may only be realized through contrast with the Nonnian model and may thus be read as an intertextual correction of Nonnus' depiction of Eros. This is an example of the potential for finding moralizing readings in Colluthus, which are rarely visible on the poem's surface, but begin to come to light when he is read in light of his models.

The above examples illustrate some of the ways in which Colluthus could rework specific linguistic moments from his models, especially Homer and Nonnus, perhaps the two most recognizable to his reading audience. Whether picking up on a famous Homeric passage, a *hapax legomenon*, or a unique Nonnian phrase, Colluthus rewards his reader for looking past simple “borrowing” and engaging with the context of the model text and the manner in which he adapts it to his own narrative. More often than not, what could easily be glossed over as an unsophisticated (if learned) copying of a model text turns out to enhance the narrative through authoritative citation or take the form of ironic exercise in *oppositio in imitando*, reversal or correction.

⁷⁵ See Giangrande 1967 for the seminal account of this habit in Alexandrian poetry

⁷⁶ An especially distinct parallel given Nonnus' pervasive interest in chaos and disorder in the *Dionysiaca* (Newbold 1999, 37); it is worth speculation that Colluthus was aware of this overarching theme and that this “correction” has a broader significance applicable to Nonnus' narrative writ large

⁷⁷ See for example Theoc. *Id.* 11.10; *Id.* 2.120; for the literary tradition of this symbolism of apples as love tokens and other erotic associations, see Littlewood 1968, 149-59

Some of these unique borrowings add substantially to our reading of Colluthus' poetic agenda by demonstrating his desire to re-write specific models, while citing others as authoritative. This ambiguity is, as we shall see, typical also of Colluthus' treatment of larger generic traditions and the theme of abduction. Matters become more complicated when we are faced with clear linguistic borrowings and reworkings which despite their markedness cannot be traced to one specific moment in a model text, but rather recall a larger nexus of moments in one text or several texts. Next, we will consider some of these complex models, and the extent to which we can trace the functions of multi-level linguistic allusions in Colluthus' epyllion.

2.4) “Complex” Allusion: Multiple models, Centos, and Intratextuality

There are three modes of “complex” linguistic allusion which stand out in Colluthus' poetry: the first is the allusion to a set of texts, or multiple passages within a text, which does not isolate any one moment in the model text(s) but rather recalls a common theme throughout those texts, or perhaps a divergence between model texts. Put differently, this form of complex allusion invokes a tradition, but unlike the thematic and generic intertextuality which we will explore later, that tradition is marked by specific language which is recalled by Colluthus' borrowing or modification of that language. The second mode is similar in spirit but different in execution, that of the cento, a line formed as a compound of components from two distinct model texts, with minimal or no modification. In this mode our poet encourages the reader to consider how the two models may interact and add meaning to his narrative. Another mode of multiple allusion will be examined throughout this paper but should be noted here for its functional similarity to the complex modes above. This is the author's repetition of phrases, or “signal” words, and how they evolve throughout the text and structure the narrative. Linguistic *Leitmotifs* are often connected to important themes in the poem, and as such we will approach these as one of the poet's modes of reinforcing important concepts. This self-referentiality may also

begin with an allusion to a model text, and thus can also represent an evolving *intra*-textual reading of an initial intertextual moment.

There are several passages in which a multiplicity of models does not necessarily imply a multiplicity of references. However, we may also find several examples of more clearly defined “multiple references” in Colluthus' text, where a knowledge of multiple models facilitates a more complete reading. One example is marked by Colluthus' *second* use of the term *ἀρχεκάκος*, discussed above in the context of his proem. Having already established the strong Homeric reference inherent in the term, its recurrence at line 196 already bears a multiple reference; to the Homeric model text and the proem of Colluthus' own text. But on close inspection, Colluthus imports another model on this occasion in order to recall an intervening literary tradition which itself markedly alludes to the Homeric model, Triphiodorus' *Fall of Troy*. Let us examine the relevant passages side by side:

ἔνθα πολυπρέμνοιο δαϊζόμεναι δρύες Ἴδης
ἦριπον ἀρχεκάκοιο περιφροσύνησι Φερέκλου,
ὅς τότε μαργαίνοντι χαριζόμενος βασιλῆι
νῆας Ἀλεξάνδρω δρυτόμῳ τεκτῆνατο χαλκῷ.
αὐτῆμαρ προβέβουλε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ κάμε νῆας,
νῆας δ' οὐκ ἐνόησε καὶ οὐκ ἤσκησεν Ἀθήνη.
(Coll. 195-200)

*There the oaks of tree-rich Ida fell,
cut by the skill of Phereclus, the source of woe,
who then, obliging his greedy king
built ships for Alexander with wood-cutting bronze.
On the same day he planned, and on the same day he made
the ships,
Ships Athena neither devised nor worked.*

Μηριόνης δὲ Φερέκλον ἐνήρατο, Τέκτονος υἱὸν
Ἄρμονιδεω, ὃς χερσὶν ἐπίστατο δαίδαλα πάντα
τεύχειν· ἔξοχα γὰρ μιν ἐφίλατο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
ὃς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρω τεκτῆνατο νῆας ἔϊσας
ἀρχεκάκους, αἱ πᾶσι κακὸν Τρώεσσι γέγοντο
(Hom. *Il.* 5.60-3)

*And Meriones killed Phereclus, the son of Tecton,
Son of Harmodius, who knew how to prepare all kinds
Of cunning works. Pallas Athena loved him exceedingly,
It was he who built ships for Alexander, which amounted to
The origins of woe and brought evil to all the Trojans.*

ἦδη καὶ βουλήσι θεῆς ὑποεργὸς Ἐπειὸς
Τροίης ἐχθρὸν ἄγαλμα πελώριον ἵππον ἐποίει.
καὶ δὴ τέμνετο δούρα καὶ ἐς πεδῖον κατέβαινε
Ἴδης ἐξ αὐτῆς, ὁπόθεν καὶ πρόσθε Φερέκλος
νῆας Ἀλεξάνδρω τεκτῆνατο, πῆματος ἀρχὴν.
(Triph. 57-61)

*Now too Epeius, servant to the will of the goddess
Made a hateful gift for Troy, a monstrous horse.
And trees were cut, and he brought them down to the plain
From Ida, the very place where Phereclus once
Built ships for Alexander, the origin of calamity.*

Unlike his first use of the term, which alludes to the same Homeric passage, Colluthus has now applied the term ἀρχεκάκος to describe not the ships themselves, but their builder, Phereclus, who plays a part in all three passages. In Homer's passage narrating Phereclus' death, his role in building Alexander's ships is assigned to Athena's exceeding love for him as a craftsman, although in fact the text is not clear; ὅς could refer to Phereclus or his father Tecton, son of Harmonides.⁷⁸ It is thus possible that Colluthus incorporates the passage from Triphiodorus in order to correct or clarify Homer's version, since whatever the correct reading of the Homeric text may be, Phereclus was known as the builder of Paris' ships in the subsequent tradition.⁷⁹ Triphiodorus, whose narrative picks up from the close of the *Iliad*, describes Epeius' building of the wooden horse from the same trees on Mt. Ida with which Phereclus built the ships for Alexander. All three passages are connected by the phrase νῆας Ἀλεξάνδρω τεκτήνατο (in varying word order), and the term ἀρχεκάκος, which in Triphiodorus appears to be glossed by his πήματος ἀρχήν.⁸⁰ In this passage, Colluthus alludes to Athena's role as Phereclus' patroness found in the Homeric passage, only to reverse the notion and declare that Athena “did not know about the ships, nor did she build them” (200). This reads as another correction of Homer's version: why would Athena help Paris' shipwright after being embarrassed in the beauty contest? But Colluthus clearly imports aspects of Triphiodorus' passage as well, in addition to clarifying the identity of Paris' shipbuilder, he also incorporates the notion that the trees for the ships were cut from Mt. Ida. The other effect of this merging of models is to bring to mind both the Homeric notion of the act marking the *beginning* of war, while importing Triphiodorus' image of Epeius and the Trojan horse which would bring about the *end* of

⁷⁸ Kirk 1990, 60 notes that this was debated as far back as Aristarchus, but the force of the relative pronoun in best taken with the closer Τέκτονος υἱὸν Ἀρμονίδεω. There is also debate as to whether Tecton should be taken as a proper name or not. All these questions suggest it was a passage which was ripe for intertextual correction by authors such as Triphiodorus and Colluthus.

⁷⁹ Gerlaud 1982, 113, citing Apoll. *Epit.* 3.2; Lycophron 97; Ovid, *Her.* 16.22

⁸⁰ Miguelez-Cavero 2013, 168; Gerlaud 1982, 113

the war.⁸¹ Triphiodorus used *analepsis* in looking back to Phereclus in his sequel to the *Iliad*, while Colluthus created an allusive *prolepsis* by recalling Triphiodorus in his prequel, playing with the temporal and geographical connections between his text and his models. This passage is thus an example of a complex multiple reference which has characteristics of both the “window reference” and the “multiple reference” described by Richard Thomas: the intermediate source here acts to *correct* the “chief” model, although in this case both models are visible, whereas in Thomas’ “window reference” the original model can only be seen through the intermediary.⁸²

Another passage which invites the reader to consider a multiplicity of references centers around the figure of Echo, whose very nature invites both poet and reader to consider “echoes” of texts and stands as a symbol of allusive poetics which are defined by repetition and imitation.⁸³ Before Hermes arrives to command Paris to judge the beauty contest of the goddesses, Colluthus paints a pastoral scene of the shepherd ignoring his flocks and playing his *syrix*, which is responded to by Echo alone (114-118):

ἔνθεν ἔχων σύριγγα κατ’ ἦθεα καλὰ νομῶν
 Πανὶ καὶ Ἑρμῶνι φίλην ἀνεβάλλετο μολπὴν·
 οὐ κύνες ὠρῦοντο καὶ οὐ μυκήσατο ταῦρος,
 μούνη δ’ ἠνεμόεσσα, βοῆς ἀδίδακτος ἐούσα,
 Ἰδαίων ὀρέων ἀντίθροος ἶαχεν Ἥχῳ.

*There with his syrix, pasturing his familiar flocks
 he raised up a song dear to Pan and Hermes:
 The dogs were not barking nor did the bull bellow,
 but only windy Echo, though untaught in the shout,
 responded resounding through the Idaean hills.*

Cadau has argued that this invocation of Echo is based on several passages in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*:

μούνη δ’ ὑστερόφωνος ἐμόν κτύπον ἔκλυεν Ἥχῳ | θρήνοις ἀντιτύποισι τεὸν στενάχουσα τοκῆα (47.177-8), of “late-resounding Echo” hearing Icarius’ screams as he died. And in particular 48.790: φθόγγον ἀμειβομένη μυκήσατο δύσθροος Ἥχῳ, “unharmonious Echo bellowed in response to her scream” of Echo responding to Aura’s

⁸¹ See Cadau 2015, 163-4 for a reading of these passages which emphasizes the shared notion of trouble surrounding Phereclus and the consequences of Paris’ journey

⁸² Thomas 1986, 188

⁸³ On Echo as a “trope of allusivity” in Latin poetry, see Hinds 1998, 5-7; see also Thomas 2011, 169 for Echo as a possible symbol of allusivity in the Homeric *Hymn to Pan*

screams of pain in labour, where Colluthus' ἀντίθροος is a *variatio* on Nonnus' δύσθροος.⁸⁴ Both these passages and others involving Echo in the *Dionysiaca*, Cadau notes, involve Echo's response to scenes of violence and rape.⁸⁵ She is surely right to argue for the importance of this Nonnian “linguistic pastiche” here, itself already a form of multiple reference centred around the Nonnian figure of Echo, but we may perhaps build a larger, more complex network of allusions here by considering the pastoral context in Colluthus, and some of Nonnus' linguistic models for his Echo.

A series of epigrams centred around Echo, gathered as *Anth. Plan.* 152-155, offer intriguing intertexts for both Nonnus and Colluthus on linguistic and thematic levels. An epigram of Satyrus is of particular interest to us here (*Anth. Plan.* 153=*Anth. Gr.* 16.153):⁸⁶ Ποιμενίαν ἄγλωσσοσ ἀν' ὀργάδα μέλπεται Ἀχὼ | ἀντίθρου πτανοῖς ὑστερόφωνον ὄπα, “Voiceless Echo sings along the shepherd's pasture, her late-resounding voice echoing on wings”. This epigram contains the only use of the adjective ἀντίθροος, “echoing, resounding” which predates the poetry of Nonnus, as well as the earliest attested use of ὑστερόφωνος “late-resounding”, which is subsequently picked up by Gregory of Nazianzus and several times by Nonnus. Colluthus' βοῆς ἀδίδακτος ἐοῦσα may perhaps be read as an elaboration of Satyrus' ἄγλωσσοσ. His use of ἀντίθροος, though it has a metrical parallel in Nonnus' *Paraph.* 8.183, may be inspired by this epigram directly, as the Nonnian use does not capture the themes of violence discussed by Cadau, nor does it apply to the personified Echo as here. Another epigram of Archias (*Anth. Plan.* 154) calls Echo “the companion of Pan” (Πανὸς ἑταίρην) and her song a “trifle pleasant to shepherds” (ποιμέσιν ἡδὺ παίγνιον), while in Colluthus the song which Paris plays and Echo repeats is “dear to Pan”. I would like to argue that by recalling at the same time Nonnus' violent Echo, and the far more

⁸⁴ Cadau 2015, 64-5; The latter point is dubious, as Cadau does not explicitly mention Nonnus' use of ἀντίθροος agreeing with ἡχώ at *Dion.* 13.414, and *Paraph.* 8.183. Although neither of those passages involve a *personified* Echo, there is no need to see a *mimesis cum variatone* in ἀντίθροος

⁸⁵ See also *Dion.* 13.414 and 15.389

⁸⁶ See Page 1981, 89 for possible dating of Satyrus

pleasant shepherd's companion of these epigrams, Colluthus is deliberately encouraging a reading of this pastoral tradition through Nonnus, who removed Echo from her traditional pastoral role.⁸⁷ Read through Nonnus, the depiction of Echo here reads as ironic, since she is unexpectedly *not* responding to screams and cries, but to Paris' pleasant music, as Cadau rightly argues.⁸⁸ But when the reader sees through the Nonnian “corruption” of Echo, and back to some of his own linguistic models for her depiction, we can also detect perhaps a hint of criticism of Nonnus' violent perversion of the pastoral world.⁸⁹ All of this is triggered both by Colluthus' use of rare vocabulary and his exuberant emphasis on Echo's mimetic nature: ἀντίθροος ἴαχεν Ἥχῳ could be translated “Echo echoed echoing”. This encourages the reader to think “intertextually”, not only about what the poet may be echoing, but what those echoes “echo”, recalling an entire tradition of pastoral from its Hellenistic conception through Nonnus.

Another distinct, and distinctly late antique mode of complex allusion is marked by Colluthus' use of centos.⁹⁰ In Colluthus' poem, cento-lines are few but distinct, and the distinctness of each individual component of these lines invites the reading of both model texts against the context of their re-use, and perhaps against each other.⁹¹ Cento poetry is typically studied as a genre in its own right, famous examples include the empress Eudocia's (c.401-460) *Homerocentones*, which are comprised entirely of “Homeric stitchings” converting lines of Homer's epics according to the requirements of her biblical narrative. The frequent appropriateness of the borrowed Homeric passage to her own poetry speaks to the fact that this was

⁸⁷ This traditional role is captured elsewhere in stories of Pan's love for Echo, e.g. Moschus fr.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 6.20; and by Nonnus himself, *Dion.* 6.219-324. Echo's association with Pan's music goes back to the Homeric *Hymn to Pan*, for which see Thomas 2011, 158

⁸⁸ Cadau 2015, 67

⁸⁹ Harries 2006, 525-35 has argued that mourning and pastoral are intimately connected in Nonnus' world, and that Colluthus picks up on this theme in his depiction of Hermione. Prauscello 2008, 176-7 sees Colluthus picking up this thread of mourning and pastoral imagery with his opening invocation of the “Trojan Nymphs”, a question to which we shall return in our study of Colluthus' proem.

⁹⁰ On cento poetry in late antiquity, see Usher 1998; Peltari 2014, 98-112

⁹¹ Colluthus on occasion borrows nearly entire lines as well; e.g. Coll. 162 ἀγλαΐη πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες ~ Nonn. *Dion.* 40.27 Χειροβίης πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες

more than an exercise in cut and paste, but that the very act of borrowing had an allusive quality.⁹² On the Latin side we have Proba's (4th cent.) *Cento Vergilianus de Laudibus Christi*, which took Vergil as its source and inspiration for biblical poetry.⁹³ The ultra-canonical status of the texts traditionally re-arranged in cento form speaks to the status of Colluthus' main source for his own hybrid lines, the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus. Our first example of such a hybrid line in the *Abduction of Helen* comes from the poet's introduction of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis where "Ganymede poured the wine by the commands of Zeus" (Ζηνὸς ἐφημοσύνησιν ἐωνοχόει Γανυμήδης, 19). The first half of the line comes from the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 213,⁹⁴ describing Hermes' mission to reassure the father of Ganymede that his son, after being abducted by Zeus, was in a better place among the gods. The second half comes from one or both of *Dion.* 25.449 and 27.245, the former being the more likely model for metrical reasons.⁹⁵ We can see right away that the figure of Ganymede is central to both models for Colluthus' line, and this is no coincidence. Ganymede's "double" presence in Coll. 19 serves to introduce and reinforce the essential theme of the poem, an abduction. Both halves of the line recall Ganymede's "happy" fate as the wine-pourer of the gods (mentioned in *Hymn.Aphr.* 204), and thus set up a false picture of the kind of abduction with which Colluthus is concerned; his abduction has grave consequences and no real divine agency behind it.⁹⁶ Both passages also remind the reader of Ganymede's Trojan origin, and his status as a βούκολος.⁹⁷ Is Colluthus hinting that the Trojan shepherd Paris is himself a "victim" of abduction, or the opposite, that he's not dealing with an abduction at all? The Hymnic half-line also brings to mind Ganymede's father being put at ease, but no such peace of mind will come to Helen's daughter

⁹² Usher 1998, 86-7

⁹³ See Kaufmann 2017, 157-9 for an analysis of Proba's "optional" allusion to Vergilian passages

⁹⁴ *Hymn. Aphr.* 212-14 εἶπέν τε ἕκαστα \ Ζηνὸς ἐφημοσύνησιν διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντες \ ὥς ἔοι ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως ἴσα θεοῖσιν.

⁹⁵ *Dion.* 25.449 βουκόλος ἀσερόφοιτος ἐωνοχόει Γανυμήδης; *Dion.* 27.245 εὐχαίτης γλυκὸν νέκταρ ἐωνοχόει Γανυμήδης

⁹⁶ On Ganymede in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, see Carvounis 2018, 39-43

⁹⁷ In the *Hymn*, this is achieved by Aphrodite's telling of the story as an exemplum in an attempt to reassure the Trojan shepherd Anchises, while in Nonn. *Dion.* 25.431 he is called Τρώϊος οἰνοχόος, and in Colluthus' model line (25.449), βουκόλος

Hermione, on whose distress Colluthus will dwell at length. By recalling the “commands of Zeus” surrounding Ganymede's abduction, the poet also alludes to something notably absent from his proem, which is any sense that the story to come is part of Zeus' plans, in the mode of *Iliad* 1.5.⁹⁸ Here, Zeus' only concerns are drinking wine poured by his abducted prize, Ganymede. Thus this hybrid line can have a number of allusive connotations, to both presences and absences in his poem. The allusive qualities are mutually reinforced by the two pieces concerning Ganymede and the abduction theme with which Colluthus will become increasingly concerned as his narrative proceeds.

Another hybrid line comes in the narration of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, where Peitho (Persuasion) is said to arrive wearing the wedding crown and “carrying the quiver of the archer Eros” (τοξευτήρος Ἔρωτος ἐλαφρίζουσα φαρέτρην, 29), a line formed from two overlapping Nonnian models: *Dion.* 5.139 τοξευτήρος Ἔρωτος ὅπως ὀπτήριον εἶη, and *Dion.* 48.254 ἀγρευτήρος Ἔρωτος ἐλαφρίζουσα φαρέτρην. The former passage comes from a description of the necklace of Harmonia made by Hephaistus for Aphrodite “as a gift at the sight of archer Eros”, which is central to Nonnus' description of the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia, a key model for the larger wedding passage in Colluthus.⁹⁹ The depiction of Eros as “archer” rather than the “hunter” of 48.254 may be a result of Colluthus' description of Artemis as a “wild goddess” a few lines later (ἀγροτέρη περ εὐόσα, 33). The latter half of the line comes from Nonnus' description of Aura's dream, where she foresees the loss of her virginity, of which she was exceedingly proud. In her dream she envisions herself “carrying the quiver of the hunter Eros, high on the shoulder which was accustomed to Artemis' bow” (48.253-4). So what does Colluthus suggest by having Peitho carry this device of unwanted love, while at the same time perhaps alluding to the disastrous necklace of Harmonia and its connection to Eros? Notably, Eros

⁹⁸ An absence noted by Magnelli 2016, 290; see n.12 for the Homeric passage's possible allusion to the story of the *Cypria*, which readers of Colluthus might have expected here.

⁹⁹ Orsini 1972, xi-xiii

himself is not in attendance at this wedding, and Peitho takes his place. This unexpected substitution may make a proleptic statement about the nature of Helen's decision to join Paris, which emphasizes the role of persuasion in Paris' task.¹⁰⁰ Unlike Aura, the proud virgin and “younger Artemis” (Ἄρτεμις ὀπλοτέρα, 48.245), Helen will not be compelled by the irresistible force of Eros and Aphrodite as Aura was in her dream, but by Paris' ability to persuade her.¹⁰¹ Peitho with her “wedding crown” (στέφος ἀσκήσασα γαμήλιον, Coll.28) may also be marked as taking the place of Victory in Colluthus' adaptation of the Nonnian model,¹⁰² which would strengthen the connection being made in the wedding scene to the *result* of the victory contest soon to be won by Aphrodite. Whatever our poet's precise intentions, one may certainly read a sinister undertone here in the otherwise light-hearted description of the wedding. And as we shall see, the figure of Aura seems to be of special significance to Colluthus' intertextual play throughout his poem.

2.5) Colluthus and Christian Texts

In this section, we will take a brief aside to address the open question of whether any allusion to Christian content or vocabulary can be detected in the *Abduction of Helen*, which few scholars have considered in their studies of Colluthus.¹⁰³ I would like to revisit this question with two examples which have been overlooked to this point, and present tantalizing text-based evidence that Colluthus not only knew Christian literature, but that he was capable of weaving both tropes and specific moments of Christian thought into the

¹⁰⁰ Colluthus may be picking up on the important role played by persuasion in Nonnus' account of the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia, e.g. Aphrodite's speech persuading Harmonia to marry Cadmus (*Dion.* 4.77-176). On the theme of persuasion in the wedding, and the goddess Peitho throughout Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, see Carvounis 2014, esp. 21-4

¹⁰¹ Although it may be not be lost to our poet that Peitho did play a role in Dionysus' actual rape of Aura, by persuading her to drink wine, see Carvounis 2014, 24

¹⁰² So Orsini 1972, xii, n.3.; Coll. 28 also borrows language from a scene surrounding Aura, in which Eros promises Dionysus that Aura will be his bride: καὶ στέφος ἀσκήσασα μάγης καὶ παστάδα κούρης \ Θρήκη νυμφοκόμος σε δεδέξεται (Nonn. *Dion.* 43.432-3) “Bride-rearing Thrace will await you, with a crown of victory and a girl's bridal chamber”

¹⁰³ Cadau 2015, 69 discusses one possible instance in Colluthus' choice of διάκτορον as epithet of Hermes, with its double meaning of messenger and servant, “possibly the only textual occurrence in which we may glimpse Colluthus' knowledge of Christian literature”, but concludes that “no other allusions to Christian words or content have been detected in the *Abduction*; therefore the question remains open”

fabric of his poem. The first example involves the blending of Homeric vocabulary and Christian exegesis, while the second involves a precise textual moment in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus. Gianfranco Agosti has argued that Homeric vocabulary should not be endowed with Christian allegorical readings in texts which are mythological, as opposed to ideological,¹⁰⁴ but I would like to entertain this possibility in Colluthus on the basis of his strong moral judgement of Paris, which is reflected throughout the epyllion.¹⁰⁵

Let us revisit (again) the term ἀρχέκακον as it is applied to Paris in the poem's final line. As already discussed, this is a markedly Homeric term, used three times by Colluthus; first in his proem (9) in application to the ships built for Paris, directly reflecting Homer's claim (using a *hapax legomenon*) that these ships were the “sources of woe” (*Il.* 5.62-3), on the second occasion it is used of Phereclus himself (196), again in the context of Paris' ships, and finally it is applied to Paris as Troy “receives on his return her citizen who was the origin of woe” (δέξατο νοστήσαντα τὸν ἀρχέκακον πολίτην, 392), which effects a ring composition and resolution to the story.¹⁰⁶ Although the term ἀρχέκακον has its origins as a Homeric *hapax*, and the two previous references clearly invoke its Homeric context, there may be a broader intertextual resonance when it is applied to Paris at the poem's close. By the time of Colluthus' writing, the term had acquired a specifically Christian resonance in several important writers, perhaps most notably (and frequently) in Gregory of Nazianzus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus Caecus (author of a commentary on Job), and John Chrysostom.¹⁰⁷ Though it could be used in several ways, it was most often applied to διάβολος/δαίμων (devil/demon), ἀμαρτία (sin), ἔχθρος (hatred), and ὄφις/δράκων (the biblical serpent). It seems highly unlikely that a reader who was educated in *both* Homer and Christian theology could be unaware of the word's long history and its application to Christian

¹⁰⁴ Agosti 2005, 25

¹⁰⁵ Numerous examples of Colluthus' negative characterization of Paris can be found in Magnelli 2008

¹⁰⁶ Paschalis 2008, 143 notes that the placement of the term at the beginning, middle, and end of the poem is no coincidence, and serves to reinforce Colluthus's interest in *aetia*

¹⁰⁷ After Homer it is only used twice in non-Judaeo-Christian contexts (Plut. *Mor.* 861A; Hel. *Aeth.* 1.9), with the exception of several exegetical or lexical studies of the Homeric passage.

thought, that it is a “word pregnant with meaning”.¹⁰⁸ Though we may perhaps fall short of a strong argument for the author's intentions, we also cannot assume his readers could filter out the Christian sense of the term. The position of ἀρχέκακον as the poem's closing statement along with its evolving repetition throughout the narrative, suggests it is meant to be read closely here as a strongly marked term. If my argument is right, this means that Colluthus, for all his classicizing, may leave his readers with a finalizing statement that could (though need not) be read as subjecting the entire narrative to a contemporary and specifically Christian morality. We have here moved beyond the bounds of “allusion and intertextuality” with model texts, and into the power of a single word, but it is also a word which the reader will first and foremost recall from its use within Colluthus' text as a distinct Homeric reference. The evolving meaning(s) of ἀρχέκακον in Colluthus' narrative demonstrate how intra-textual self-referentiality can also be bound up with exterior allusiveness and take on an important role within the text. The ring composition marked by ἀρχέκακον draws the reader's attention simultaneously to the poem's ending and beginning, highlighting that the almost paradoxical ending is itself marked as a beginning, or origin. The Christian resonance in the term is ultimately an “optional” intertextual effect,¹⁰⁹ one which reveals itself only to the reader who approaches the text with an eye towards Christian content or allegory beneath the poem's classicizing surface. Surely some in Colluthus' late antique audience would approach such a text with this mindset.

A similar intertextual engagement with Christian literature may be found in Colluthus' depiction of Aphrodite as she prepares mentally and physically for the beauty contest. Upon learning of the contest, the goddess gathers her children the *Erotes* with a hortatory speech: “The contest is near, my dear children, embrace your mother! Today beauty of face is my judge” (ἐγγύς ἀγών, φίλα τέκνα, περιπτύξασθε τιθήνην. |

¹⁰⁸ To borrow Isabella Gualandri's term: on the potential power of single words in late antique (Latin) poetry, see Gualandri 2017, esp. 125-31

¹⁰⁹ This is the second of Kaufmann's intertextual categories in late antique (Latin) poetry, see Kaufmann 2017, 155-9

σήμερον ἀγλαΐται με διακρίνουσι προσώπων, 85-6). The first level of reference here seems to be to the sort of exhortatory speech given before battle,¹¹⁰ a striking parallel can be found in Xenophon: "Ἄνδρες φίλοι, ὁ μὲν ἀγὼν ἐγγὺς ἡμῖν, προσέρχονται γὰρ οἱ πολέμιοι (Cyr. 2.3.2). At this level, Aphrodite is made to look somewhat absurd by contrasting real warfare with the sort of battle she is preparing for here, and we have already seen how the *Venus armata* motif plays out through the subsequent contest. While the goddess' exhortation may recall speeches such as that found in Xenophon, another sort of "contest" may have resonance here as well. We find the exclamation ἐγγὺς ἀγὼν twice in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus, in *Ep.* 13.3.1 (ἐγγὺς ἀγὼν, καὶ ἀγώνων ὁ μέγιστος) and more importantly in the same metrical position of a prayer-poem begging for mercy as the end of life draws near (*PG* 37, 1420.9-14): ἐγγὺς ἀγὼν βιότοιο· κακὸν πλὸν ἐξεπέρησα, | ἤδη καὶ στυγερῆς τίσιν ὀρώ κακίης. "The end of life is near: I make the terrible journey, and now I see the punishment for hateful vice". An 11th century lexicon on Gregory's poetry clarifies that ἀγὼν is equivalent to τὸ τέλος,¹¹¹ and for those familiar with Gregory's verse, Aphrodite's speech would take on an even more absurd, and rather more judgemental tone. While Gregory uses ἐγγὺς ἀγὼν to invoke coming death and passionately beg God to have mercy on what remains of his life, Aphrodite is concerned only with the superficial results of a beauty contest. Once again, this reading seems to be secondary to the more obvious one, an "optional" allusion. The portrayal of Aphrodite is humorous on the surface of it, but for the reader who knew Gregory's poetry her vanity takes on a more prominent role by contrast to the humble figure of Gregory's autobiographical poetry.

In summary, if we were to cover every piece of *recherché* vocabulary or Nonnian turn of phrase, we would discover yet more passages whose intertextuality is optional for the reader, and others which appear to be a formal feature of the text adding no further insight to the reading of Colluthus' poem, or indeed, situations

¹¹⁰ Orsini 1972, 5 notes the military subtext of περιπτύξασθε "surround, encircle (an enemy)"

¹¹¹ *Cod. Paris. Coislin.* 394

where awareness of the model text actually confuses our understanding of it.¹¹² The intertextual dynamics of Colluthus' poem are just that; *dynamic*. Much of this varied approach to model texts is in the hands of the poet, who marks passages for the reader's attention in different ways and for different reasons. But the reader also brings their own knowledge and their own priorities to the text: Colluthus' readers (this one included) can be unaware of, ignore, exaggerate, or undervalue both the visibility and the meaning of Colluthus' allusive language. As such there is no one way to define Colluthus' approach to his models, but as the examples discussed above should make clear, the open-minded and learned reader could read a great deal more in Colluthus' use of markedly borrowed language than we have typically been prepared to admit.

¹¹² Kaufmann's notion of a spectrum or continuum of modes of intertextuality is most useful here (Kaufmann 2017, 162-4)

3) Generic Intertextuality and *Poikilia* in the *Abduction of Helen*

3.1) Epyllion Poetics, Genre-Mixing, and Irony

One of the most striking features of the *Abduction of Helen* is the variety of generic traditions represented within it, and the difficulty of fitting the poem into a neat genre category of its own. This generic *poikilia* (ornateness, variety) is not announced by the author,¹¹³ but rather it is a feature waiting for the reader's discovery as they approach Colluthus in light of his many intertextual models and the various traditions represented by them. In this section, we will establish how this feature of Colluthus' poem fits into a larger tradition of poetics in Greek epyllion poetry, which runs from its origins in the narrative *Homeric Hymns*, through its refinement in the Hellenistic period, and up to Nonnus, Musaeus, and its last practitioner in Colluthus.¹¹⁴ Indeed we have already seen that poems which could be defined as “epyllia” are some of Colluthus' most important models.¹¹⁵ We will then proceed to a brief summary of how different generic markers might be identified in the *Abduction*: keywords with generic associations, employment of the imagery and *topoi* of genre models, and the specific allusion to example models all play a role in Colluthus' pervasive *Kreuzung der Gattungen*.¹¹⁶ We will conclude with a close reading of Colluthus' proem and its “negative” meta-poetics, where a variety of genre conventions are signalled and subsequently denied, in the process defining misdirection as one of the central features of the poem as a whole. As we shall see, Colluthus' relationship to genre is a complicated one.

¹¹³ Unlike Nonnus, who in his proem invokes Proteus as a symbol of diversity and changeability (Nonn. *Dion.* 1.14-15): “Bring me versatile (πολύτροπος) Proteus, so that he may appear in his diverse form (ποικίλον εἶδος), since I strike a diverse song (ποικίλον ὕμνον).” On Nonnus' proem and his play with genres see Lasek 2016, esp. 402-405

¹¹⁴ Colluthus' special position in this tradition makes it all the more tragic that he receives hardly a mention in Baumbach and Bär (2012), an otherwise excellent guide to the epyllion tradition and the many questions still surrounding it.

¹¹⁵ e.g. The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, *Hymn to Demeter*; Moschus' *Europa*, and Triphiodorus' *Fall of Troy*, to say nothing of Nonnus, whose *Dionysiaca* is long and intricate, but also highly episodic and displays many features of the epyllion genre. On Nonnus and epyllia see Shorrock 2011, 16-19; Bär 2012, 468; On the longer narrative *Hymns* as (proto-) epyllia, see Petrovic 2012 and Baumbach 2012

¹¹⁶ A term which I use loosely: Typically, this describes the incorporation of clear elements of one genre into another well-defined genre (Harrison 2007, 6), but it is genuinely difficult to assign a genre to the *Abduction of Helen*, perhaps even more so than other well-known epyllia

Colluthus' relationship to the epyllion genre ("genre" is a term to be used with caution, since the features of the epyllion tradition are not perfectly defined) have been well surveyed by Cosetta Cadau in her monograph.¹¹⁷ The question of whether or not the *Abduction of Helen* can fit precisely into the category we now call "epyllion" is an open one, and as Cadau notes, it is perhaps a limiting approach to Colluthus' poem.¹¹⁸ My own impression is that "epyllion" is a useful label for Colluthus' poem, not because it checks all the boxes of various scholars' criteria for the form,¹¹⁹ but because the variety with which we are concerned here is one of those features central to the poetics of so many poems which have been labelled as epyllia.¹²⁰ In other words, leaving aside criteria of length, metre, and subject matter, the epyllion is a "genre" which, like the *Abduction*, can be partially defined by its lack of genre. The question of whether Colluthus was deliberately engaging with the genre-mixing conventions of a set of texts which came to be known as "epyllia" is beyond our reach.¹²¹ But given his frequent allusion to texts which are more commonly accepted as examples of the epyllion tradition, it seems safe to say that some of these texts provided models and inspiration for his own *poikilos hymnos*. Colluthus' allusive genre-mixing is not a reflection of a detached "generic memory",¹²² but reveals him to be a direct participant in a long literary tradition, however ill-defined that tradition may be. With this literary tradition of hybridization, irony, innovation, and even subversiveness in mind, let us turn to a survey of how Colluthus employs different genre traditions, and to what effect.

I begin by noting that any consideration of genre is by definition "intertextual": we cannot make any sort of statement about Colluthus' genre-mixing poetics without reference to models both broad and specific.

¹¹⁷ Cadau 2015, 21-35

¹¹⁸ Cadau 2015, 35

¹¹⁹ A very brief selection of features which can be found in Colluthus: narrative hexameter verse and short length (Hollis 2006, 141); an ironic approach to the world of Homeric epic (Gutzwiller 1981, 6); a love story (Crump 1931, 22); a focus on female characters and explorations of gender (Merriam 2001), the use of digressions and description (Cadau 2015, 25-7)

¹²⁰ Baumbach and Bär 2012, xi; Hollis 2006, 141

¹²¹ Though one slight clue may come from the fact that Colluthus adopts a common feature of epyllia which is completely absent from Nonnus and Musaeus, the spondaic fifth foot (19x); see Hollis 2006, 155

¹²² See Baumbach and Bär 2012, xv-xvi

In his allusive genre-blending, Colluthus' adapts models ranging from Homer, Hesiod and archaic hymns, to pastoral poetry both in its “pure” Theocritean form and as found elsewhere (for example in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* or in epigrams),¹²³ and other Alexandrian poets as models of aesthetics. Traces of the Greek novels may be found in Colluthus' “love story” (a term which should be used ironically), and we may also find traces of performative poetry such as pantomime,¹²⁴ and tragedy, as well as performance oratory and invective in the speeches of the beauty contest.

Some of these generic affiliations are marked by the presence of “keywords” which are indicative of well-defined genres, and which become more impactful when they become a repeated motif in the poem. We have already discussed how allusion to specific uses of Homeric vocabulary and phrasing helps shape the texture of the poem, but on its surface the *Abduction of Helen* is hardly “Homeric” in its interests or style.¹²⁵ The use of markedly Homeric terminology is often put to ironic effect in order to show how un-Homeric Colluthus' poem or its characters can be. For example, when Paris departs Troy on his sea voyage to Sparta he is described as “Sailing the Hellespont on the broad waves of the sea” (ἔπλεεν Ἑλλάσποντον ἐπ'εὐρέα νῶτα τιθήνης, 204), recalling a frequently used Homeric phrase (ἐπ'εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης).¹²⁶ This image of Paris, the shepherd who is “ignorant of the ways of the sea” (8), sailing in the mold of Homeric heroes is a humorously ironic picture in light of the pastoral figure to whom we have been introduced, and the clumsy anti-novelistic lover whom

¹²³ See for example the discussion of Echo, Nonnus and pastoral epigrams in Ch.2

¹²⁴ On Pantomime in Colluthus see Morales 2016, 76-80; on pantomime and other performative genres see Cadau 2015, 206-221. I find Morales' idea that the *Abduction of Helen* may have been performed as a pantomime to be far too speculative, especially since most of the pantomimic criteria which she provides as evidence is not unique to the genre. Cadau takes a more cautious approach, but both agree that conventions of pantomime had an influence on Colluthus and can help shape our reading of the poem.

¹²⁵ Despite his paper's title (“Colluthus' Homeric Epyllion”) I am largely in agreement with the assessment of Colluthus of Magnelli 2008, who emphasizes Colluthus' misdirections and generic variety, only to conclude that he “keeps within the ideological frame of the Homeric world” in his depiction of Paris and does not stress his distance from Homeric epic (163); I agree with his readings, but question the conclusion that this is ultimately a “Homeric” epyllion.

¹²⁶ Our main MS. (M) reads θαλάσσης for τιθήνης (see Livrea 1968 *ad loc.*), but both Livrea and Orsini have opted for the *lectio difficilior*. The reading is thus an example of *imitatione cum variatione* (Orsini 1972, 24), and the substitution of τιθήνης, which elsewhere in Colluthus is used in the sense of “mother”, only enhances Paris' faux-heroic image in relation to the Homeric model.

Helen will meet. The final image from Paris' successful voyage to Sparta, uses Homeric diction to similar effect: "He hurried to Troy leading off his booty of war" (φόρτον ἄγων ἔσπευδεν ἐς Ἴλιον ἰωχμοῖο, 325). There is an ambiguity in the genitive of the Homeric term ἰωχμοῖο ("rout");¹²⁷ is Helen the "booty" that leads to war? Or the prize for Paris' romantic "battle"?¹²⁸ The notion of Paris as victorious in a military rout and carrying off a trophy in the manner of a Homeric hero on the battlefield is once again a ridiculous one, both in relation to the Homeric Paris by recalling once again Hector's rebukes in the *Iliad*, and the Paris of Colluthus' narrative who shuns Athena's offer of military prowess in favour of Aphrodite's charms. The recollection of Homeric epic is thus used ironically to frame both ends of Paris' journey as distinctly un-heroic.

Although the Homeric Paris is never far from our poet's mind, his Paris is an especially bucolic figure, a portrait which is built up in the proem and enhanced when we first meet him pasturing his flocks and playing the syrinx. The image of Paris as a herdsman is a traditional one, but Colluthus dwells on these features at great length by adopting the conventional imagery of pastoral poetry, and reinforcing the image with keywords in the voice of both narrator and characters.¹²⁹ The pastoral imagery of Colluthus' poem, and especially in its depiction of Paris, is one of its best studied features in modern scholarship.¹³⁰ Thus, rather than summarize the variety of uses and sources of Colluthus' pastoral imagery, I will focus briefly on some of its narrative effects, with an eye towards ironic intertextuality in its characterization of Paris.

What kind of pastoral figure is Paris? At first glance, his depiction seems straightforward: he grazes cattle in the hills of Mt. Ida (72), he plays the shepherd's pipe while his flocks graze (114-15), and he appears to

¹²⁷ *Il.* 8.89, 158

¹²⁸ Magnelli 2008, 159

¹²⁹ He is variously called μηλοβοτήρ (5), βουκόλος (10, 72, 87), οιοπόλος (by association at 15, 112), νομεύς (11, 103), and ποιμήν (104). It is worth noting that none of this terminology is used by Paris of himself when it comes time to persuade Helen to leave Sparta with him. The excessive repetition of his pastoral identity in the build-up to their meeting thus makes his lies to Helen all the more apparent; or alternatively, it puts the lie to his earlier pastoral image and reveals his true character.

¹³⁰ Dedicated works are Harries 2006 and Prauscello 2008; on Paris as a bucolic figure see Cadau 2015, 47-75

be collecting milk for cheese-making at the appearance of Hermes (127).¹³¹ But when read more closely against some of the generic conventions of Theocritean pastoral, as well as some famous pastoral figures, Paris' bucolic qualities become more and more suspect. Colluthus' narrative has many moments of “scholarly engagement” with the generic conventions of pastoral poetry, reading its traditional as well as post-Nonnian form against a variety of other models.¹³² Byron Harries read this bucolic criticism as part of Colluthus' “lament for the lost innocence of pastoral” and its “disavowal of greed and exploitation” which is violated as Paris transitions from innocent shepherd to degenerate abductor.¹³³ In a similar vein, Lucia Prauscello has detailed how different literary traditions (epic and bucolic) and modes of reception (Homeric exegesis and bucolic criticism) are mobilized by Colluthus to shape his readers' expectations, evoking “a web of associations that foreshadow Paris' aggressive future as seducer and rapist”.¹³⁴ Prauscello points to the unconventional depiction of Paris as a herder of bulls at lines 105 and 113, and the association of this image with the Pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 27, in which a sexually aggressive Daphnis is also a herder of bulls.¹³⁵ This image also recalls Theocritus' *Idyll* 1, where Daphnis is also herder of bulls (*Id.* 1.121), but mocked by Priapus for his unwillingness to pursue a girl like any good oxherd would (ἀ δύσερώς τις ἄγαν καὶ ἀμήχανος ἐσσί 1.85).¹³⁶ The label of δύσερως given to Daphnis may also be lurking behind Colluthus' label of Paris as Δύσπαρις (193), which as previously discussed invokes Hector's criticism of his brother in the *Iliad*, but may also mark the moment that Paris becomes a different kind of “a disaster in love” by leaving behind his pastoral life. The beginning of the poem may perhaps foreshadow this connection between Paris and Daphnis, when Paris is initially envisioned as “sitting on a shepherd's seat” (Πάριν οἰοπόλοισιν ἐφεδριόωντα θοώκοις, 15) while judging the beauty contest. In Theocritus

¹³¹ On the meaning of γαυλός (“milk-pail”) at line 127, see Orsini 1972, 22

¹³² Prauscello 2008, 173-4

¹³³ Harries 2006, 547

¹³⁴ Prauscello 2008, 185

¹³⁵ Prauscello 2008, 184-5

¹³⁶ Prauscello 2008, 183

Idyll 1, the goatherd recommends sitting (ἔσδώμεθα) facing the springs “where that shepherd's seat is” (ἄπερ ὁ θῶκος | τῆνος ὁ ποιμενικός, *Id.* 1.22-3), where τῆνος refers back to Daphnis, whose song Thyrsis will sing.¹³⁷ If Colluthus had the Theocritean passage in mind, his choice of οἰπόλος as a substitute for ποιμενικός is interesting, as it may conjure up the ancient tradition of Homeric interpretation (does οἰπόλος mean “lonely”, or “pastoral”?) which is reflected in another important model for Paris, the Anchises of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.¹³⁸ In the *Hymn*, Aphrodite discovers Anchises “left alone in the stables, apart from the others” (τὸν δ’ εἶρε σταθμοῖσι λελειμμένον οἶον ἀπ’ ἄλλων, 79), an image which Colluthus revisits when Paris is depicted playing the syrinx and walking about while “singing in his lonely (shepherd's?) stables” (πολλάκι δ’ οἰπόλοισιν ἐνὶ σταθμοῖσιν αἰείδων, 112) just as Anchises was found by Aphrodite walking back and forth while playing the lyre.¹³⁹ And as was the case with Anchises, Colluthus emphasizes Paris' separation from others (νόσφι, 105, 106) as he herds his flocks and plays his music. Both Anchises and Paris have life-changing encounters with Aphrodite while shepherding on Mt. Ida, and Colluthus makes connections between the two figures through the use of their shared pastoral backgrounds and settings, and their encounters with Aphrodite. The irony of this intertextual portrayal of Paris is that Anchises' encounter with the goddess would make him the father of Aeneas, who would go on to revive Troy in his founding of Rome, while Paris' encounter would lead to Troy's doom. Through the parallels, the poet may hope for his readers to meditate on the fact that Anchises had no choice in his fate, he was a victim of Zeus' plan for Aphrodite. But Paris chose Aphrodite willingly, and all the disaster that followed.

Perhaps this nexus of pastoral tropes is one way the author hints that Paris should never have left his

¹³⁷ Livrea 1968, 68

¹³⁸ Passages discussed by Livrea 1968, 68; Colluthus shows his awareness of the two different traditions generated by the Homeric οἰπόλος, as at line 355 it is used with the sense “lonely”, and at 112 it is ambiguous.

¹³⁹ There is a reversal in Colluthus' depiction, as Paris is traditionally said to play the lyre like Anchises, but Colluthus has further enhanced his pastoral image by giving him the *syrinx* instead, in what seems to be a conscious choice given the strong parallels between the *Hymn* and Colluthus' depiction of Paris.

life in the hills of Ida in search of Helen, he should never have chosen Aphrodite, but rather followed the example of Daphnis in *Idyll* 1, who mocked Aphrodite rather than rewarding her. *Idyll* 27 begins with the girl whom Daphnis is pursuing citing Paris as “another herdsman” who “abducted prudent Helen” (τὸν πιτυτᾶν Ἑλέναν Πάρις ἤρπασε βουκόλος ἄλλος, *Id.* 27.1), to which Daphnis responds that it was rather Helen who “willingly” captured Paris (μᾶλλον ἐκοῖσ’ Ἑλένα τὸν βουκόλον ἔσχε φιλεῦσα, 27.2). This disagreement over Helen's agency and Paris' aggressiveness of course had a long literary tradition,¹⁴⁰ but Colluthus seems to foreshadow his response to the question primarily by evoking pastoral traditions intertextually, rather than on the surface of his text.

There are other intertextual indications that Colluthus' initial portrait of Paris as a pastoral (and innocent) figure is not what it seems. In his pastoral setting Paris is depicted in the traditional shepherd's garb, wearing a goatskin cloak (107) and carrying the shepherd's staff (109), perhaps conjuring a conventional pastoral figure like Theocritus' Lycidas (*Id.* 7.15-20) but the description is modelled largely on Nonnus' Hymnus (Nonn. *Dion.* 15.204-219).¹⁴¹ In the *Dionysiaca*, Hymnus' unwanted pursuit of Nicaea leads to her killing the shepherd, and the entire episode plays with conventions of pastoral courtship and stories of unhappy love, and ultimately sets the stage for Dionysus' rape of Nicaea and prefigures the violence and eroticism of the Aura episode in book 48.¹⁴² Hymnus is yet another ominous pastoral parallel to Paris indeed, and an example of the horror of Nonnus' pastoral world which may lurk behind the seemingly innocent one at the surface of Colluthus' text. All of these pastoral figures seem to share a common theme of being connected to sexual aggression, and act as warnings for Paris which go unheeded. They are also warnings for the reader that the

¹⁴⁰ See Hardie 2012, 348-53

¹⁴¹ Cadau 2015, 49; It is worth noting that in Nonnus' Hymnus episode contains a digression on shepherds who were abducted by gods (15.277-286), so perhaps here we have an ironic portrayal of Paris, who rather than being abducted by a goddess, will become an abductor because of one.

¹⁴² Miguez-Cavero 2016, 564-6; See Hadjitoffi 2008 for a comparative study of the rapes of Nicaea and Aura in the *Dionysiaca*

pleasant bucolic world in which Colluthus dwells at some length is not meant to last.

However ill-omened Paris' pastoral character may be, all of his bucolic trappings are traded in when he leaves for Sparta. There he is described as wearing a helmet (233) and worried about dirtying his feet (232). And his rustic pipe-music which was “dear to Pan” is exchanged for “honeyed speech” when he addresses Helen (μειλιχίην... γήρυν, 277). Upon meeting Helen, Paris suddenly sings a very different tune, while Helen's speech ironically echoes the music which Paris has left behind (λιγύθροος ἔνεππε νύμφη, 277; cf. Paris' music as λιγύρην... ἀοιδήν, 111).¹⁴³ Ultimately Paris is labelled by Helen's daughter Hermione as “a lawless man” (τις ἀνήρ ἀθεμίσιος, 383), confirming the irony of his initial portrayal as “shepherd-judge” (θεμιστοπόλοιο... μηλοβοτήρος, 5) and dispenser of justice to the immortals (as if he were Zeus!). This depiction may in fact recall the most famously “wrong” shepherd, the Polyphemus of Homeric, rather than Theocritean memory.¹⁴⁴ In book 9 of the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus shepherds his flocks alone apart from others (ποιμαίνεσκεν ἀπόπροθεν, 9.188) and is said to be a monstrous man “versed in lawlessness” (ἀθεμίσια ἦδη, 9.189). Perhaps Hermione conjures this image of Paris as Cyclops to emphasize not only the monstrousness of his act, but also to recall Polyphemus' famous violation of the rules of hospitality. Once again the connection is made through the use of pastoral identities, and Paris is finally revealed to be a monstrous, if not utterly fraudulent shepherd, as the reader may have expected all along. Colluthus' pastoral imagery is a misdirection, which as Magnelli notes, sets expectations for the reader which ultimately go unfulfilled, and ends up leaving us with the Paris of Homeric memory.¹⁴⁵ Colluthus' misleading engagement with the traditions of pastoral poetry is one example of an intertextual trend which he begins in his proem and continues throughout his narrative, his “negative” meta-poetics. There is considerable irony in the poet's efforts to create a highly pastoral figure only to abandon the idea completely.

¹⁴³ Harries 2006, 543

¹⁴⁴ Cadau 2015, 62 does note the parallel of Paris and Polyphemus in Theocritus *Idyll* 11.12-14, both ignoring their flocks as they play their music

¹⁴⁵ Magnelli 2008, 162

Colluthus made a conscious effort to elaborate on the tradition of Paris as shepherd, and while this choice may initially point in a different direction from the Homeric Paris, it actually serves to highlight Paris' lustful nature and his future as a sexual predator. The pastoral Paris presents at the same a mischaracterization and a window into the Trojan prince's true character. As we shall see as we proceed, this shaping of reader expectations in one direction only to proceed in another is a defining aspect of Colluthus' poetic program. Colluthus' generic play with pastoral traditions thus goes well beyond a stylistic need for variety, rather it plays an important role in shaping Colluthus' poetics, his narrative, and defining his central character.

It is upon meeting Helen that the intertextual characterization of Paris shifts from the pastoral model to one based on other generic models. One of the most prominent is the romantic novel, whose portraits of the encounters of young lovers helps inform the suddenly changed image of Paris. And as we might expect, the depiction of Paris in light of the lovers of novel turns out to be an ironic one. Initially, Colluthus' blending of pastoral and epic imagery is used to confuse or misdirect the reader, or to encourage a "bucolic criticism" that reveals hidden meanings. The same can be said of the use of novelistic tropes in the romantic section of the epyllion, covering Paris' travel to Troy and his meeting with Helen (201-325). This "confusion" of epic and romance is an essential element of Musaeus' *Hero and Leander*, another epyllion closely contemporary with the *Abduction of Helen*.¹⁴⁶ While Musaeus created a true synthesis of novel and epic in hexameter verse, Colluthus' project is far more varied, but they do seem to share a spirit in creating to varying extents an "un-ideal novel", which ends not with a happy marriage, but tragedy.¹⁴⁷ Nonnus too was highly indebted to the romantic novel,¹⁴⁸ and it is probably the case that Colluthus was influenced by not only the tradition of prose novels, but the elements of novelistic romance found in his closer contemporaries. This perhaps points to a

¹⁴⁶ Dümmler 2012, 411-12

¹⁴⁷ See Dümmler 2012, 446 on Musaeus' atypical (for the novel) ending

¹⁴⁸ For comprehensive treatments see Frangoulis 2014 and Miguelez-Cavero 2016

broader pattern in the reception of the prose romance in later Greek poetry, but Colluthus departs from Musaeus' approach in that he has no interest in writing a "verse novel"; rather he hints at the traditions of romance in order to define Paris and Helen as failures to the standard of novelistic lovers. And unlike Nonnus, Colluthus includes no genuine eroticism in his poem, but suggestively hints at its coming presence only to deny it and move on to a tragic depiction of Helen's daughter. Though direct models from the prose novel tradition may elude us, elements of Paris' journey to Sparta and his persuasion of Helen, as well as some repeated motifs and "keywords" throughout the poem point us towards the romance novel as a valuable intertext in reading the *Abduction*.

There are several tropes and conventions of the Greek novel which are present throughout Colluthus' narrative. The overarching interest in marriage is fundamental to the prose romance, in the *Abduction of Helen* this is reflected in the detail given to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis as well as the elopement of Helen and Paris. Unlike the Greek novels which invariably end in a happy marriage,¹⁴⁹ Colluthus follows Musaeus in turning his attention towards a doomed romance. Like the ideal novel, Colluthus' central story is the meeting and "falling in love" of a handsome young man and a beautiful girl, but again he leans towards parody rather than convention. Paris and Helen are both married,¹⁵⁰ and instead of focussing on the virginity of the heroine¹⁵¹ (of course his choice of story precludes this), Colluthus draws attention to other virgins in his narrative: Athena who is "untaught in marriage" (γάμων ἀδίδακτος Ἀθήνη, 31) and Artemis are both portrayed as unexpected guests at the wedding (31-3), Echo was famous for denying her sexuality in Longus as well as Nonnus,¹⁵² and Nonnus' *Aura* is likewise an important intertext at several points in Colluthus' narrative. The protagonists of

¹⁴⁹ Whitmarsh 2008, 4

¹⁵⁰ This is only obliquely mentioned with regard to Paris' marriage to Oenone. At line 165 Aphrodite tells Paris "After Troy, Lacedaemon will know you as a groom" (νυμφίον ἀθήσει σε μετὰ Τροίην Λακεδαίμων)

¹⁵¹ Morales 2008, 53-4 highlights the role of virginity in the novel

¹⁵² Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 3.15.1-3.20.3; See Miguelez-Cavero 2016, 562-3

novels typically endure sufferings, wandering, and adventures at sea in their quest to be together, like Museaus' Leander who swam the Hellespont every night to see Hero, only to be killed in a storm.¹⁵³ As he sails the Hellespont, the Paris of the *Abduction* encounters a terrifying storm at sea, “a sign of his difficult labours” (τῷ δὲ πολυτλήτων σημήια φαίνετο μόχθων, 205), but it amounts to no danger and his crew sails on.¹⁵⁴ The term πολυτλήτων, of Paris' efforts to get to Helen may ironically allude to an epithet of “much-enduring” Odysseus (πολυτλήμων, *Od.* 18.319), who actually faced many trials in his travels.¹⁵⁵ Thus, in this non-event that ironically hints at the trials of novelistic lovers and defines Paris as an opposing figure, we have already been treated to a level of parody of romantic conventions which continues in the meeting of the lovers.

As soon as Helen sees Paris at her door she invites him inside (ὡς ἴδεν, ὡς ἐκάλεσσε καὶ ἐς μυχὸν ἤγαγεν οἴκου, 257), the language recalls the novelistic convention of characters falling instantly in love (cf. Ach. Tat. 1.4.4 ὡς δὲ εἶδον, εὐθὺς ἀπωλώπειν),¹⁵⁶. On the other hand Paris fully expects to be struck by Helen, since her famous beauty was the reason he chose Aphrodite in the beauty contest, again reflecting a convention of novels where reputation can cause characters to fall in love.¹⁵⁷ Once Helen invites Paris in, Colluthus reverses the usual gender dynamics of these lovers' encounters, with Helen gazing at Paris and thinking at first he was Eros himself: “She couldn't get enough of gazing, at first thinking that she was looking at the golden youth, Cythereia's attendant” (κόρον δ' οὐκ εἶκεν ὀπωπῆς | ἄλλοτε δὴ χρύσειον οἴσαμένη Κυθερείης, | κοῦρον ὀπιπεύειν θαλαμηπόλον, 257-259) using language usually reserved for the male gaze (cf. Mus. 78, κόρον δ' οὐκ εἶρον ὀπωπῆς).¹⁵⁸ The gender role reversals are enhanced by Colluthus' choice of the term θαλαμηπόλον to describe

¹⁵³ Dümmler 2012, 412

¹⁵⁴ On the storm as a description of a waterspout, see Giangrande 1975

¹⁵⁵ Magnelli 2008, 157 sees a similar effect in Paris' boast at line 295 (more on which below)

¹⁵⁶ Cadau 2015, 181; As Cadau notes this was a long tradition, and another striking example is Anchises falling instantly in love with Aphrodite at *Hymn.Aphr.* 56-7

¹⁵⁷ Cadau 2015, 182; cf. Ach. Tat. 2.13.1-2

¹⁵⁸ Morales 2016, 65

Paris/Eros, as this is usually reserved for female attendants, eunuchs, or even Aphrodite herself,¹⁵⁹ further emasculating Paris. After “marvelling at length” at Paris' beauty, Helen finally speaks (ὀψέ δὲ θαμβήσασα τόσῃ ἀνερείκατο φωνήν, 265); this language of amazement in love (θαμβήσασα) also has a novelistic flavour, and again the female is typically the object of amazement rather than the subject (cf. Mus. 98 θάμβεε δ' εἶδος ἄριστον, of Leander amazed at Hero's “great looks”).¹⁶⁰ We receive yet another ironic intertextual hint that Paris is not really a genuine novelistic lover when he boasts to Helen that it was for her sake that he “even dared to cross such great seas” (ἦς ἔνεκεν τέτληκα καὶ οἴδματα τόσσα περήσαι, 295). This looks to be a direct imitation of Musaeus' Leander “Maiden, because of your love I cross the raging sea” (παρθένε, σὸν δι' ἔρωτα καὶ ἄγριον οἴδμα περήσω, 203),¹⁶¹ as well as Musaeus' model in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, where Jason defends his intentions to Aeetes: “Who would willingly dare to cross such a great sea for a foreign possession?” (τίς δ' ἂν τόσον οἴδμα περήσαι | τλαίη ἐκῶν ὀθνείον ἐπὶ κτέρας, *Arg.* 3.388-9). Of course, Jason would not go on to steal Aeetes' throne, but his daughter, and Colluthus creates considerable irony by filtering Jason's words through the context of a lover's speech. As Cadau notes, some versions of the myth had Paris stealing goods along with Helen, and an educated reader with the *Argonautica* in mind would take note of the irony in Paris' words.¹⁶² But the effect is even greater when the two models come together, as it is through the multiple models that Paris reveals that he is no great lover. When the reader recalls Paris' easy journey to Sparta against Leander's deadly swimming and Jason's genuinely perilous journey to Colchis, he becomes a parody of the novelistic lover and the heroic lover.¹⁶³

Throughout, Paris' speech to Helen lacks any sense of the erotic *pathos* of the lovers of novel, and

¹⁵⁹ LSJ s.v. θαλαμηπόλος

¹⁶⁰ Musaeus is himself reworking a passage of Achilles Tatius (1.4.5) in which Clitophon is transposed onto Leander; See Dümmler 2012, 423-4

¹⁶¹ Livrea 1968, 211; Magnelli 2008, 157

¹⁶² Cadau 2015, 253

¹⁶³ Magnelli 2008, 157

though heavily indebted to Musaeus in its language, it is in the end another misdirection.¹⁶⁴ For all the novelistic expectations built up at the moment of encounter, we hear nothing of Helen's beauty, nor is there any sense that Paris reciprocates her admiring gaze. By creating such expectations and then quickly denying them, Colluthus makes it clear that this is not going to be the passionate love affair of Hero and Leander or other lovers of the romance tradition. Paris turns out to be a fraud of a novelistic lover, just as he was a fraud of a pastoral figure.

When Paris is considered in light of the different genre conventions used to depict his character, we end up with a picture far more damning than Homer's "lover but not a fighter". Colluthus' Paris is a shepherd who is out of place in the pastoral world, a lover who fails to live up to the standards of the lovers of novel, and he is certainly not a fighter. Paris' characterization is thus almost completely bound to Colluthus' ironic play with several generic conventions, which must be appreciated in order to grasp fully the negative portrait of Paris which is built up over the poem to the conclusion that it is he (not Helen, not Aphrodite, not Eris) who is the origin of Troy's future woes. But how does Colluthus prepare his reader for this sophisticated play with genre and its potential for allusive irony? How can we state with any confidence that all this generic intertextuality is more than just the residue of models which span several genres? The answer lies in Colluthus' proem, which in the classical tradition forms the primary locus for poetic self-positioning and programmatic statements.

3.2) Genre, Meta-Poetics, and Misdirection: A Commentary on Colluthus' Proem

The proem to the *Abduction of Helen* (lines 1-16) is woven from elements of a variety of genres and models both specific and general to create a "poetic manifesto"¹⁶⁵ which is rich with meta-poetic significance,

¹⁶⁴ Magnelli 2008, 162

¹⁶⁵ Cadau 2015, 42

and essential to the appreciation of the narrative as well as the poet's transgressive approach to genre. What follows is a line-by-line analysis of the proem dedicated to its meta-poetic messaging and the genre-blending approach which is laid out therein.

Νύμφαι Τρωιάδες, ποταμοῦ Ξάνθοιο γενέθλη, (1)
 αἶ πλοκάμων κρήδεμνα καὶ ἱερά παίγνια χειρῶν
 πολλακί πατρώησιν ἐπὶ ψαμάθοισι λιποῦσαι
 ἐς χορὸν Ἰδαίησιν ἐπεντύνασθε χορείαις,
 δεῦτε, θεμιστοπόλοιο νόηματα μηλοβοτῆρος (5)
 ἔσπετέ μοι, κελάδοντος ἀπορνύμεναι ποταμοῖο,
 ἐξ ὀρέων πόθεν ἦλθεν ἀήθεα πόντον ἐλαύνων
 ἀγνώσσων ἀλὸς ἔργα; τί δὲ χρέος ἔπλετο νηῶν
 ἀρχεκάκων, ἵνα πόντον ὁμοῦ καὶ γαίαν ὀρίνη
 βουκόλος; ὦγυγι δὲ τίς ἔπλετο νεΐκεος ἀρχή, (10)
 ὄφρα καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεμιστεύσωσι νομῆες;
 τίς δὲ δικασπολίη; πόθεν ἔκλυεν οὖνομα νύμφης
 Ἀργείης; αὐταὶ γὰρ ἐθήησασθε μολοῦσαι
 Ἰδαίης τρικάρηνον ὑπὸ πρηῶνα Φαλάκρης
 καὶ Πάριν οἰοπόλοισιν ἐφεδριόωντα θώκοις (15)
 καὶ Χαρίτων βασιλείαν ἀγαλλομένην Ἀφροδίτην.

*Trojan Nymphs, children of the river Xanthus,
 who often leave on your father's sands
 the veils of your locks and the holy toys of your hands
 and join the chorus of the dances on Ida,
 come, leaving behind the sounding river
 tell me the thoughts of the justice-dealing shepherd,
 why did he come from the hills, sailing an unfamiliar sea,
 ignorant of the works of the deep? What need was there for ships,
 the origins of woe, such that a cowherd would stir up both land
 and sea?
 What was the primeval source of strife, that herdsmen should be
 judge to immortals?
 What was his judgement? Where did he hear the name of the
 Argive bride?
 For you yourselves, when you went under the three-headed peak
 of Idaean Phalacra
 saw Paris sitting on his shepherd's seat,
 and Aphrodite, queen of the Graces rejoicing.*

Line 1: The poem's opening line evokes a web of associations of hymnic, epic, and pastoral texts. In place of the Muse,¹⁶⁶ Colluthus calls on the Trojan Nymphs to relate the story of Paris and Helen. The phrasing recalls two invocations from Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*:¹⁶⁷ 109 Νύμφαι Θεσσαλίδες, ποταμοῦ γένος, εἴπατε πατρί; 256 Νύμφαι Δηλιάδες, ποταμοῦ γένος ἀρχαίοιο. And a Callimachean flavour is thus imparted from the very beginning, alerting the reader to the learned and allusive style which Colluthus will bring to his story. But the invocation of the Nymphs *qua* Muses also alludes to a pastoral tradition of Nymphs as inspirers of poetry.¹⁶⁸ The choice of the Nymphs may also announce the poem's erotic context, as for example in the only non-

¹⁶⁶ cf. *Il.* 1.1; Hesiod, *Op.* 1; *Theog.* 1; *Hymn. Herm.* 1

¹⁶⁷ Livrea 1968, 56

¹⁶⁸ Magnelli 2008, 153; Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, 153: "In *Idylls* 1 and 3-7... we find that the Muses play an utterly marginal role. Rather it is the Nymphs who, as the inspirers of pastoral poetry, very often occupy the place which in poetic tradition had always been occupied exclusively by the Muses"

martial invocation in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*:¹⁶⁹ “Tell me, mountain-dwelling Nymphs, what did he want the most, what was dearer than to see the girl’s skin alone, free from the love-mad Earth-shaker?” (Ὀρειάδες εἴπατε Νύμφαι, | τί πλέον ἤθελεν ἄλλο φιλαίτερον, ἢ χροά κούρης | μῶνος ἰδεῖν δυσέρωτος ἐλεύθερος Ἐννοσιγαίου, 42.62-4). This erotic-pastoral convention alerts the reader to the bucolic nature of much of Colluthus' poem, but as we have seen, it also creates a *false* expectation that what is to come is a genuine bucolic poem. The combined effects of announcing a traditionally epic topic (the cause of the Trojan war) by borrowing from Callimachus and alluding to Theocritean pastoral conventions is “tantamount to a declaration of literary allegiance”,¹⁷⁰ but this declaration is non-binding. How serious is Colluthus about poetic inspiration? In the hymnic tradition recalled here, the poet is traditionally seeking true inspiration, for the Muse to speak through him, but at line 13 Colluthus justifies his call to the Trojan Nymphs by stating that they were witnesses to the beauty contest (αὐταὶ γὰρ ἐθήγησασθε), suddenly stripping the invocation of any sense of religious significance.¹⁷¹ Magnelli is surely right that this line recalls Homer's famous invocation at *Il.* 2.485 “for you are goddesses, you are present everywhere and know everything” (ὕμεις γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστε, πάρεστε τε, ἴστέ τε πάντα),¹⁷² but it does so with a significant reversal. Homer's Muses are present everywhere and know everything; they are a timeless source for knowledge and inspiration on any subject. Meanwhile Colluthus' Nymphs *were* present in the specific location of interest to his story (they are *Trojan* Nymphs), and their role as witnesses seems to lack this timeless divine presence. This distancing of the “Muse” from the traditional role of inspiration may perhaps be read as an intentional choice of the poet in an age where most poets drew their inspiration from the Christian God or Christ, a trend reflected in the *proemia* of Christian epic, but entirely inappropriate to Colluthus' subject

¹⁶⁹ Geisz 2018, 53

¹⁷⁰ Prauscello 2008, 175

¹⁷¹ Livrea 1968, 56-7

¹⁷² Magnelli 2008, 153

matter.¹⁷³ Scholars have disagreed with Livrea's emphasis on the role of Nymphs as witnesses,¹⁷⁴ but stripping them of their divine aspect need not detract from the meta-poetic significance of Colluthus' opening line, which evokes a genre-blurring blend of hymnic (both archaic and Callimachean) and pastoral elements.

Lines 2-4: These lines place the Nymphs in a *locus amoenus*, setting aside their veils and playing in a scene reminiscent of *Od.* 6.100-5, where Nausicaa and her friends play with a ball and sing in the company of Nymphs.¹⁷⁵ It also recalls the opening of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, where Persephone plays (παίζουσιν) with the Oceanids and gathers flowers before being abducted (ἤρπαξεν) by Hades. There is a linguistic parallel with Moschus' *Europa* 30: τῆσιν αἰεὶ συνάθουρεν ὅτ' ἐς χορὸν ἐντύνοιτο | ἢ ὅτε φαιδρύνοιτο χροῶν προχοῆσιν ἀναύρων, which describes Europa's friends with whom she plays, dances, bathes, and picks flowers, again prefiguring an abduction. These parallels may provide an intertextual hint of Colluthus' main subject, an abduction. But if so, there is again a degree of misdirection here, for as our poet narrates it, the encounter between Paris and Helen is better termed a *seduction*. However, as we will discuss in the next chapter, famous scenes of abduction and sexual aggression, along with the literary *topoi* of abduction narratives often lurk under the surface of Colluthus' otherwise pleasant narrative, and this may be the reader's first indication to consider these undertones as the poem progresses. The form and content of these lines recalls Hesiod's *Theogony*, beginning with the second person relative pronoun (αἶ = Hes. *Theog.* 2) which is not found elsewhere in Colluthus' poem.¹⁷⁶ The Nymphs dance on Mt. Ida (ἐς χορὸν Ἰδαίησιν ἐπεντύνασθε χορείαις), as Hesiod's Muses do on Mt. Helicon (Ἐλικῶνι χοροῦς ἐνεποιήσαντο, *Theog.* 6). The Hesiodic (specifically, *theogonic*) traces in the invocation prepare the reader for Colluthus' treatment of aetiology and origins, which he will continue in the questions

¹⁷³ Pollmann 2017 220-5; It should be noted however that Nonnus and Musaeus had no such difficulty, and given his substantial debt to Nonnus, it is perhaps surprising that we don't find many distinctly Nonnian elements in Colluthus' poem. Might this hint at the more moralizing tone of Colluthus' poem?

¹⁷⁴ Most aggressively Giangrande 1969, 149

¹⁷⁵ Cadau 2015, 42

¹⁷⁶ Livrea 1968, 57

he addresses to the Nymphs in the following lines.

These lines also continue the meta-poetic messaging: Cadau has discussed the poetic significance of the term *παίγνια*, “toys, trifles”, which is used of light playful poems and thus continues the Alexandrian aesthetic of poem's opening line.¹⁷⁷ But perhaps more relevant to the bucolic flavour of the proem, *παίγνια* was used by Aelian to describe Theocritus' pastoral poems.¹⁷⁸ It may also be relevant to us that Gorgias termed his renowned defense of Helen *ἐμὸν δὲ παίγνιον* (Gorgias, *Hel.* 21). Whichever resonance (if not all three) our poet intended, this keyword of Alexandrian poetics is also bound with a markedly Homeric one, in which Achilles expresses his wish that only he and Patroclus should survive the war “so that only we may destroy Troy's holy battlements” (*Il.* 16.100: ὄφρ' οἶοι Τροίης ἱερά κρήδεμνα λύωμεν). Though *ἱερά* is most naturally taken in agreement with *παίγνια*, it is in fact ambiguous, and this ambiguity perhaps draws attention to the two opposing meta-poetic symbols in this line. One is distinctly epic and enhanced through the Trojan context and the fact that the destruction of Troy is the event for which Colluthus is providing an *aetion*, the other is Alexandrian and/or pastoral in its meaning and draws attention to the non-epic aesthetics of his poem. What scholars have failed to notice in this line is the fact that the Nymphs are said to often *leave* these symbols behind (*λιποῦσαι*) when they go to dance. Perhaps this amounts to a negative statement rather than a positive one: Colluthus is not announcing that he is writing an “epic-pastoral” poem, but rather a poem which is *neither* epic, *nor* pastoral, despite the strong presence of both elements in his style and narrative. This negative statement continues in line 6, this time with the imperative request for the Nymphs to “leave behind the sounding river”. This is the author's indirect way of announcing his poetics of generic *poikilia*, that his is a poem which resists easy categorization, but is rather defined by its variety.

Lines 5-6: Colluthus offers here his first moment of bucolic irony: Paris (not yet named) is referred to

¹⁷⁷ Cadau 2015, 44; citing an epigram of Leonidas (*AP* 6.322), and poems of Philetas titled *paignia*

¹⁷⁸ *De Nat.An.* 15.19

as the “justice-dealing shepherd” (θεμιστοπόλοιο... μηλοβοτήρος). On the surface this refers to his role as the judge of the beauty contest, but the language suggests a strong contradiction. Θεμιστόπολος is a fairly rare piece of vocabulary, which in archaic poetry is used exclusively of kings (*Hymn.Dem.* 103, 215, 473; Hes. fr.10(a), 25). Given the hymnic/epic tone which Colluthus has been developing, the idea of a simple shepherd (μηλοβοτήρος) becoming a king-like dispenser of justice is loaded with irony, especially since he will turn down Hera's offer of kingship in the beauty contest, and as we have already seen, Paris' pastoral facade will be dropped when he leaves Troy for Sparta. This irony is perhaps enhanced by the lofty pomposity of this four word line, which draws attention to itself and sets a grand tone for the rest of the poem, a tone which will go unfulfilled following the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.¹⁷⁹ In line 6 the epic tone of the invocation continues, with the request of the Nymphs to “tell me” (ἔσπετέ μοι) the story, directly recalling Homer's secondary invocations of the Muse, especially in book 2 of the *Iliad* which is also alluded at line 13 with the labelling the Nymphs as witnesses: ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι | ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε, πάρεστε τε, ἴστέ τε πάντα, *Il.* 2.485-6.

In this line we may also note a potential meta-poetic symbol in the request of the Nymphs to “leave behind the sounding river”, where the loud river would stand for epic poetry in the tradition of Alexandrian water poetics,¹⁸⁰ and such water imagery may perhaps be at play already with the choice of Nymphs as “inspirers”. But it is not clear that Colluthus is using the water allegory to define his own poetics,¹⁸¹ as he is requesting the Nymphs to leave behind the allegorical river.¹⁸² Rather, it seems he is once again evoking a meta-poetics of absence: Colluthus is subtly telling his reader that he will *not* be writing the loud poetry of traditional epic, but once again he has not clearly defined what he *will* be writing, and this statement is embedded in a

¹⁷⁹ On these lofty lines in the *Abduction of Helen* see Magnelli 2016, 290-2

¹⁸⁰ Cadau 2015, 42-3; citing Callimachus *Hymn* 2.105-12. Callimachus also likens bad poetry with noise in his *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1.19): μηδ' ἀπ' ἔμευ διφᾶτε μέγα ψοφέουσιν ἀοιδῆν

¹⁸¹ First proposed by Giangrande 1969, 149

¹⁸² Such a reading may even call into question the aetiological focus of the proem, since the imagery of Nymphs and rivers is closely associated with the poetics of origination and aetiological narratives in Hellenistic poetry (Depew 2007, 144-5)

fairly traditional epic/hymnic proem.

Lines 7-11: These lines include some of the most direct Homeric references in the entire poem (see Section 2.3 above), but in addition to their marked citation of Homer's text as an authoritative source, they also have a notably Hesiodic feel. This series of questions revolves around a series of aetiologies, and take on an almost theogonic tone with their emphasis on primeval causes (ὠγυγίη... ἀρχή),¹⁸³ the unknown nature of the sea (ἀήθεα πόντον), and the dispensation of justice to immortals (ἀθανάτοισι θεμιστεύσωσι νομῆες).¹⁸⁴ Of course, much of this Hesiodic seriousness is centred around the paradoxical humour that it is a shepherd at the center of these foundational questions. As Paris was previously cast ironically in the role of kings, he now finds himself in the role of Zeus himself, who should be the judge of the immortals, as in Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* (δικασπόλον Οὐρανίδησι, 3).¹⁸⁵ Likewise Paris takes on the attributes of Zeus or Poseidon by “stirring up both land and sea”.¹⁸⁶ As Prauscello argues, all of this amounts to a transferal of the Trojan cycle into a larger Hesiodic framework of “cosmic decline and corruption”, and at the center of it is the figure of Paris.¹⁸⁷

In these lines we may perhaps push Colluthus' water allegory further by asking if Paris' testing of an unknown sea despite being ignorant of its ways is connected to a poetic cliché well-established among Latin poets, whereby sea-faring is made into a metaphor for poetry itself. Perhaps the most relevant example of this habit is found in Claudian's preface to Book 1 of the *De Raptu Proserpinae*, where the poet uses the metaphor to describe his poetic career, first sticking to the calm shore with smaller works (*tranquilis primum trepidus se credidit undis*, 4), but as his boldness grows he bursts onto open water, which is the epic poetry of the *De Raptu* (*ast ubi paulatim praeceps audacia crevit | cordaque languentem dedidicere metum, | iam vagus inrumpit pelago,*

¹⁸³ This Hesiodic context provides strong support for Orsini's reading of ὠγυγίη, from the main MS. (M) over Livrea's adoption of ὠκυπέτης (found in β); see Livrea 1968, 64 for discussion

¹⁸⁴ Prauscello 2008, 180

¹⁸⁵ There may even be a specific reference to Callimachus' *Hymn* here, as in the following line the narrator asks: “what was his *judgement* (δικασπολίη)?”

¹⁸⁶ For detailed discussion see Section 2.3 above

¹⁸⁷ Prauscello 2008, 181

11-13).¹⁸⁸ Biographical details limit our ability to reconstruct Colluthus' career, but perhaps he, like Paris but unlike Claudian, passed on testing the waters and went straight to writing epic poetry (his lost *Calydoniaca* or *Persica*), and the *Abduction* is his culminating masterpiece to which he has been working towards over the course of his career.¹⁸⁹ Paris' boldness in going straight into the unknown sea could provide another allegory for bad epic poetry, against which Colluthus contrasts his epyllion. It seems to be a stroke of originality to make Paris into the “first-seafarer”, turning him into a mock-heroic Jason, who is conventionally the first sailor. A meta-poetic metaphor might explain this decision, for although we would not expect our poet to identify with Paris, this image could be read as Colluthus' proclamation that he is writing mock-epic poetry in the same way that Paris is framed here as a mock-hero.

Lines 12-16: The proem concludes with a final pair of questions and a vivid image of what the Trojan Nymphs saw when they witnessed the beauty contest. The proem closes with the significant naming of the poem's antagonists, Paris and Aphrodite, which may be compared with the non-naming of Helen (the *νύμφης Ἀργείης*). The questions, “what was his judgment?” and “where did he hear the name of his Argive bride?” are rhetorical, for they are answered by the naming of Aphrodite with the proem's final word and the image of her glorying in her victory (*ἀγαλλομένην*). These lines include an impressive piece of learned geography, choosing the obscure peak of Phalacra on Mt. Ida as the specific setting, which among surviving texts seems to be indebted to Lycophron's *Alexandra*.¹⁹⁰ With this piece of erudition the Alexandrian aesthetic returns, enclosing the more traditional epic/hymnic elements of the proem. Line 15 cements Paris' pastoral image, as he is imagined “sitting on a shepherd's seat”.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Gruzelier 1993, 81-2

¹⁸⁹ Cadau 2015, 46 speculates that here that the *Abduction* was Colluthus' last, most refined work, and thus has difficulty accepting a reference to the poet as inexperienced in the waters of poetry, like Paris.

¹⁹⁰ Hollis 2006, 154; Lyc. 24 refers (in typically obscure style) to Paris' ships as the “daughters of Phalacra” (*φαλακραῖαι κόραι*)

¹⁹¹ See chapter 3.1 above for further discussion

This survey should suffice to show the variety of poetic approaches contained just within the short proem to the *Abduction to Helen*. Within it, Colluthus announces a variety of poetic allegiances through the adoption of different generic conventions and meta-poetic symbols. If there is one programmatic message in the proem, it is centred on this blending of styles. The poet positions himself as a master of many styles and leaves the reader with a variety of contradictory expectations for the narrative to come: Is it a hymn? Is it epic? Is it pastoral? Through his blending of generic conventions and play with traditions, our poet is alerting the reader that it is all of these, and none of them. This announces Colluthus' own version of Nonnus' "Protean" poetics, but unlike in the *Dionysiaca* it is not made explicit in a programmatic statement. This is not to say that the proem is entirely dedicated to meta-poetic positioning, it is also central to the narrative itself, laying out the central themes and positioning the character of Paris in a highly allusive manner. Of course, different readers will experience the proem in different ways, but any attentive reader will emerge from the *Abduction of Helen's* opening lines with expectations of genre which over the course of the narrative will go unmet. Colluthus' epyllion involves the appropriation of several genres, none of whose conventions are sacred, and they will all be subjected to considerable irony. As Tim Whitmarsh notes, the best place to look for generic thinking is where the generic contract has been transgressed.¹⁹² There are several instances in which Colluthus either denies reader expectations (in his abandonment of pastoral and novelistic romance) or creates generic contamination (as in the proem). In both of these habits, Colluthus shows himself to be highly self-conscious in his approach to genre: it is in his act of transgressing genre norms that he alerts the reader to the norms which have been transgressed. The proem is the locus in which Colluthus defines his own "anti-generic" brand of epyllion poetics, one which is even more resistant to generic classification than his Hellenistic predecessors. And throughout his narrative, generic *poikilia*, irony, and even parody are important features, as they were in

¹⁹² Whitmarsh 2013, 40

the epyllion tradition and other innovative category-defying forms such as the Greek novel and Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*. Their presence in the *Abduction of Helen* demonstrates Colluthus' own place in a post-classical tradition defined by innovation and hybridization.

4) Thematic Intertextuality: Sex, Violence and Abduction Narratives

4.1) Models and Motifs: Abduction Narratives in the *Abduction of Helen*

This section will focus on the sexual politics of the *Abduction of Helen*, especially the poem's engagement with the themes, stories, and characters of mythological abduction narratives. As we have seen on several occasions, Colluthus' narrative is not, *at its surface*, about an abduction.¹⁹³ However, play with the common elements of abduction narratives is a pervasive element of Colluthus' intertextual practice, and this thematic intertextuality drastically changes our reading of a narrative which is at its surface pleasant and humorous, but reveals a darker side in its engagement with the stories and *topoi* of abandoned lovers, adultery, and sexual violence.¹⁹⁴ We will begin by briefly outlining some examples of Colluthus' allusive engagement with abduction narratives, ranging from the Homeric *Hymns* to Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, which is filled with disturbing scenes of sexual violence. After establishing Colluthus' use of the motifs, stories, and characters of famous abduction narratives, we will turn our attention to the scene in his epyllion in which the thematics of abduction are most prominent; the extended lament of Helen's daughter Hermione (326-86). It is in the dramatic account of Hermione's search for her missing mother that the consequences of Paris and Helen's actions are focussed in an emotionally charged and unexpected way, and the pathos of the scene hinges on its thematic allusions.

Before the appearance of Hermione and her desperate search for answers about her mother's fate, Colluthus has already alluded to several elements of abduction narratives, from thematic motifs to characters, priming the reader to consider his narrative in light of these traditions. We have already seen how elements

¹⁹³ Not until Helen appears to her daughter Hermione in a dream near the poem's end, and calls into question the presented narrative by claiming that Paris "abducted me" (ἤρπασεν, 374)

¹⁹⁴ The fact that the poem's engagement with narratives of rape and abduction is allusive and not always obvious may explain why scholars have not typically turned to other poems about abduction or rape in their reading of Colluthus (an absence noted by Morales 2016, 74). Morales uses this absence to highlight the importance of Latin poetry, specifically Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* and Dracontius' *Abduction of Helen*, but as with Cadau 2015, there is an unusual lack of emphasis on Greek models, which will be the main focus of the following discussion

of Paris' pastoral depiction (Ch. 3.1) prefigure his role as sexual aggressor, even though his interaction with Helen, as narrated by Colluthus, leaves the expectations created by his depiction unfulfilled.

The novelistic elements of Colluthus' epyllion are also not far removed from the frequent depictions of abduction and violence against female characters in the Greek novels, depictions which raise interesting questions about female subjectivity and objectivity, and like Colluthus' treatment of Helen's abduction, defy easy categorization.¹⁹⁵ These generic elements are connected to Colluthus' engagement with the thematics of abduction in a broad sense, but he also employs many specific allusive techniques in order to highlight these themes.

One of the most notable patterns in the *Abduction of Helen* is how often Colluthus mentions or alludes to characters (both female and male) who have been the victims of sexual violence and abduction. This pattern may begin (in a general sense) with the poem's very first line. The invocation of the Trojan Nymphs has been discussed for its generic associations, but it is possible that Colluthus also meant to allude to the role Nymphs so often play in narratives of abduction. Nymphs are often the victims of abduction in literature, but also were capable of abducting mortals themselves,¹⁹⁶ for example the Nymph who cannot resist the beautiful Hylas and pulls him into a spring in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (1.1221-39). From the poem's first line, Colluthus plays semantic games with *νόμφη*, which is frequently applied to Helen and prefigures her role as a potential bride (despite her current marriage).¹⁹⁷ But perhaps the abduction motif provides yet another level to this wordplay; like Helen, Nymphs could be famously promiscuous, and their ability to attract sexual desire could be deadly to men,¹⁹⁸ as Paris' desire for Helen will ultimately be. Not all readers would place this importance on the

¹⁹⁵ Haynes 2003, 63-4

¹⁹⁶ Larson 2001, 66

¹⁹⁷ Paschalis 2008, 145

¹⁹⁸ Larson 2001, 4

various uses of the term *νύμφη* in Colluthus' narrative,¹⁹⁹ but other figures in the poem are famous *primarily* for their being victims of abduction. The poem's first narrative scene, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, opens with an image of Ganymede as the wine-pourer “at the command of Zeus” (*Ζηνὸς ἐφημοσύνησιν ἔωνοχόει Γανυμήδης*, 19), thus drawing attention to one of Zeus' famous victims. Similarly, in addition to its pastoral imagery, Echo's lonely response to Paris' “song dear to Pan” (115-18) may evoke stories of Pan's erotic pursuit of Echo (another Nymph),²⁰⁰ in addition to Echo's accompaniment to the rapes of Nicaea and Aura in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*.²⁰¹ In the meeting of the two ill-fated lovers, Paris announces his identity to Helen in a manner reminiscent of Aphrodite's deceptive speech to Anchises in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*. In response to Helen's request he announces himself: “If perhaps you have heard of a land in the bounds of Phrygia, Ilium, which Poseidon and Apollo fortified. If perhaps you have heard of the very wealthy king in Troy, well-born from the family of Cronos' son” (*εἴ τινά που Φρυγίης ἐνὶ πείρασι γαίαν ἀκούεις, | Ἴλιον, ἣν πύργωσε Ποσειδάων καὶ Ἀπόλλων. | εἴ τινά που πολυόλβον ἐνὶ Τροίῃ βασιλῆα | ἔκλυες εὐώδινος ἀπὸ Κρονίδαο γενέθλης*, 278-81). Aphrodite announces herself to the Trojan shepherd Anchises: “Otreus is my father of famous name, if perhaps you have heard of him, who rules over well-walled Phrygia” (*Ὀτρεὺς δ' ἐστὶ πατὴρ ὀνομάκλυτος, εἴ που ἀκούεις, | ὅς πάσης Φρυγίης εὐτειχῆτοιο ἀνάσσει. Hymn to Aphr. 111-12*). Notably, the speaker in both passages never actually provides their name,²⁰² and we have already seen how Anchises provided a model for Paris' bucolic figure, but now Paris takes on the role of Aphrodite as she attempts to deceive Anchises into believing she is mortal. Here Colluthus has revealed Paris' true nature as the aggressor, and hints that he is a deceitful one at that (cf. Helen's

¹⁹⁹ See Ch. 4.2 below for perhaps the most suggestive example, where Helen is imagined in a gathering of young women (*νυμφῶν*, 340)

²⁰⁰ Especially in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*: e.g. 6.300-16; 15.306-8; 16.209-315

²⁰¹ See Cadau 2015, 65-7; Ch. 3.1 above

²⁰² Harries 2006, 544 points to Vergil's *Aeneid* 1.375-6 as a model here: “*si vestras forte per auris | Troiae nomen iit*” but notes that Colluthus departs from the Homeric-Vergilian models by withholding his name. Given this striking parallel with the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, it seems unnecessary to look to Vergil and Latin poetry as a specific model, though of course all these examples fall in a long tradition of affirmation of identity in poetry.

later claim that Paris was a ἀπατήλιος ἀνήρ, 374); Paris is not an Anchises who is victim to Aphrodite, but takes on the role of Aphrodite herself. As a final example, when Paris is described sailing away with Helen as his “cargo of war” (φόρτον ἄγων ἔσπευδεν ἐς Ἴλιον ἰωχμοῖο, 325), the reader may recall the *ekphrasis* of Zeus' abduction of Europa in the *Dionysiaca*, in which Europa is said to be “both cargo and pilot” of the sea-faring bull (κούρη φόρτος ἔην καὶ ναυτίλος, 1.90).²⁰³ This parallel story of an abducted woman being carried over the sea may cause the reader to consider the similarities and differences between Helen and Europa. Is Helen too both subject and object of her own abduction? Or might this depiction of Helen encourage a re-reading of Europa's own agency? Through this parallel, Colluthus seems to suggest that Helen is a victim, rather than a willing party, she is the “cargo” and *not* the “pilot”. In this image the sailor Paris once again is compared to Zeus, but no longer ironically as a dispenser of justice, but straightforwardly, as an abductor of women.

Other allusions hint at the sexual politics of the poem, even if they do not surround an abduction. For example, in the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, Ares arrives “without helmet nor deadly spear, as when he comes to the house of Hephaestus” (οἶος δ’ οὐ κυνέην, οὐ δῆιον ἔγχος ἀείρων | ἐς δόμον Ἡφαίστοιο σιδήρεος ἔρχεται Ἄρης, 34-5), alluding to the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite and adding a bad omen to the wedding.²⁰⁴ But it is not only a bad sign for the present wedding, it looks forward to the wedding of Paris and Helen which is itself based in adultery. A similar allusion occurs when Paris observes the tomb of Phyllis on his journey to Sparta;²⁰⁵ here Phyllis foreshadows the abandonment of Paris' wife Oenone (who will likewise take her own life), and perhaps too the fate of Helen's abandoned daughter Hermione (who considers suicide in Euripides' *Andromache*).

²⁰³ On this passage see Hadjitoffi 2016, 146 who reads it as reflecting the “paradoxical position of Europa as both the victim of the abduction, and thus the passive 'cargo' of the bull imagined as a ship, and, at the same time, the seaman who steers that very same ship”. Frangoulis 2014, 176 sees this paradox as “la situation *apparente* d'Europe... alors que le mot qui reflète la réalité de la situation est φόρτος”

²⁰⁴ Magnelli 2016, 290, n.17

²⁰⁵ Nevermind that Phyllis died *after* the Trojan war; she is a symbol of the abandoned wife which Colluthus was keen to take advantage of. Magnelli 2008, 160 is surely right that Phyllis evoked as a warning for Paris, which goes ignored

4.2) Hermione's Lament: A Close Reading

The introduction of Hermione (326) is the most abrupt change in Colluthus' narrative, and nothing of the poem's contents prepares the reader for the sudden change of focus. The reader might expect an account of Paris and Helen's journey to Troy and more light-hearted fare, but instead is confronted with the suffering of Helen's as yet unmentioned daughter Hermione, in a scene full of emotion and distress which forces the reader to reflect on the consequences of Helen's abandonment of her home in an unexpected and highly original way.²⁰⁶ The tragic pathos of the scene also stands in opposition to the humorous and parodic treatment given to much of the preceding narrative; this is where Colluthus' poem gets "serious". A structural parallel may perhaps be found in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* (200-238), where the narrative takes an uneasy turn with Aphrodite's recounting of the abductions of Ganymede and Tithonus.²⁰⁷ According to the epitome of Apollodorus' *Library*, Hermione was only 9 years old when her mother left for Troy,²⁰⁸ and this seems critical to the intertextual games Colluthus plays in this passage. Colluthus certainly enjoyed the irony of turning the traditional abduction narrative on its head here: in both myth and reality, it was typically young maidens who were the victims of abduction marriages, but Helen stands out for being a married mother. Thus, in Hermione's desperate search for her missing mother we have a total reversal of Demeter's search for her abducted daughter,²⁰⁹ and this inversion of the traditional abduction narrative causes the reader to consider the disastrous consequences of the story of Paris and Helen in a new light, not through the destruction of Troy,

²⁰⁶ Colluthus is the first poet to give voice to the pre-Trojan war Hermione, although she is mentioned in Athena's upbraiding of Helen in Triphiodorus 493-4: οὔποτε δ' οἰκτεῖρεις πρότερον πόσιν οὐδὲ θύγατρα | Ἑρμιόνην ποθέεις; "Don't you have pity on your first husband, or long for your daughter Hermione?"

²⁰⁷ See Faulkner 2008, 259-60 for summary

²⁰⁸ Ps.-Apollodorus, *Epit.* 3.3

²⁰⁹ Cadau 2015, 250 makes this observation in contrast to Ceres and Proserpina in Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*, but nothing about Claudian's Latin poem suggests that it is a more appropriate model than its own model text, the Greek *Hymn to Demeter*

but through the present, and as we shall see, future suffering of a vulnerable child. Colluthus' Hermione scene frequently alludes to the traditional narrative device which Walter Burkert termed *Mädchentraagödie*,²¹⁰ but never takes its form, following the poet's desire to create expectations in the reader only to deny them. In doing so, the poet gradually draws the reader's attention to the vexed question of whether or not Helen had any agency in her own abduction (or if she was “abducted” at all), before finally letting Helen speak for herself. Such thematic allusion also invites the reader to consider the aetiological function of such narratives, which normally recount a genealogical foundation myth,²¹¹ especially in light of the proem's focus on origins and explanations. In the *Abduction*, Paris' marriage to Helen does not result in a new family line, instead it destroys countless families.

The Hermione scene is modelled partly on Erigone's search for her murdered father in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (47.187-211): both girls have their missing parent appear to them in a dream to announce their fate, and both describe their previously unmentioned efforts to search the countryside for their parent.²¹² Upon receiving a dream vision from her dead father (*Dion.* 47.161-86), Erigone is confused and continues searching for him and asking a series of desperate questions, which the questions posed by Hermione recall when her nurses attempt to convince her that Helen will return (cf. *Dion.* 47.196 πῆ μοι ἐμὸς γενέτης γλυκὺς ὄχεται and Col. 330 παῖδες, πῆ με λιποῦσα πολύστονον ὄχετο μήτηρ). And like Erigone, when Helen appears to Hermione in a dream and states that Paris abducted her the day before, Hermione seems to be in a state of confusion, as she believes Helen's message, but nonetheless continues her search in vain (cf. *Dion.* 47.206 ἔχνια μαστεύσουσα, 211 μάτην ἀλλάλητο and Col. 386 μητέρα μαστεύσουσα, μάτην ἐπλάζετο κούρη).²¹³ Colluthus' debts to Nonnus seem

²¹⁰ Burkert 1998, 91-2; in short, a mortal girl is found by a god away from home, raped (to apply the modern concept, in its ancient literary form this is often presented as more complicated), and becomes pregnant. One can readily see how Colluthus' entire narrative is itself a reversal of this ancient narrative pattern: In the *Abduction*, a semi-divine woman (as opposed to maiden) is found at home by a mortal man and does not become pregnant as a result.

²¹¹ Kuhlmann 2012, 474

²¹² Parallels are collected by Orsini 1972, xxii-xxvi

²¹³ Spanoudakis 2007, 90; As Spanoudakis notes, this parallel provides a strong argument against the transposition of line

clear in aspects of this passage, but there are significant differences as well. While Icarus really had been killed but Erigone could not believe it, Helen was very much alive yet Hermione's search centers on how she might have died, never considering the real cause of her disappearance. And although Erigone is confused and distressed after receiving the dream vision, Hermione is in such a state as soon as she is introduced, and her distress is aggravated by her nurses' attempts to convince her that Helen will return, not by Helen herself. The Erigone scene provides one model for presenting the pathos and emotion of a suddenly parentless child, but there are many more models at play in Colluthus' depiction of Hermione which have been overlooked in part because of these parallels.²¹⁴

Hermione is introduced in a moment loaded with intertextual and intra-textual significance. After the image of Paris sailing off with Helen, his “booty of war”, the scene switches suddenly to Hermione throwing her veil to the wind (326): Ἑρμιόνη δ' ἀνέμοισιν ἀπορρίψασα καλύπτρην. The canonical model for this image is *Il.* 22.406: τίλλε κόμην, ἀπὸ δὲ λιπαρὴν ἔρριψε καλύπτρην, which describes the grief of Hector's mother at the sight of her dead son being dragged off by Achilles. There is a typical inversion here, with a famous scene of motherly grief being transferred on to a daughter's grief for her mother, whom Hermione presumes to be dead.²¹⁵ But the presentation of Hermione may be enriched by other models: the line is closer to Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* 2.554: χειρὶ δὲ δενδρήεσσαν ἀπορρίψασα καλύπτρην | μήτηρ ἄχνητο Γαῖα and 45.50: καὶ πλοκάμων ἀκόμιστον ἀπορρίψασα καλύπτρην | μίσητο Βασσαρίδεσσι καὶ Ἄονις ἔπλετο Βάκχη. The former describes the grief of a mother (Gaia) in the Homeric mold, but the latter describes Theban girls going mad and joining a frenzy of bacchants, giving instead an eroticized symbolism to the throwing away of the veil. The latter passage provides an example of

386 proposed by earlier editors.

²¹⁴ Harries 2006, 545 notes that the parallels between the two passages are largely superficial and are limited to “the reappearance of a departed parent in vision and the pathos of a grief-laden complaint by the orphaned child”

²¹⁵ Also noteworthy, though less close linguistically are *Hymn.Dem.* 195 describing Demeter's grieving for her lost daughter “holding her veil in her hands” (ἔνθα καθεζομένη προκατέσχετο χερσὶ καλύπτρην) and *Hymn.Dem.* 40-2 where Demeter tears her veil (κρήδεμνα; cf. Coll. 2) at the sound of her daughter's screams

an innovation on the Homeric model, which Colluthus takes further by transferring the phrase from grieving mother to grieving daughter. The *καλύπτρα* is often associated with marriage²¹⁶ or maidenhood,²¹⁷ and thus Hermione's grief can be attributed not only to her belief that her mother has died, but it may also be read as grief for her own uncertain future. Without her mother present, Hermione is vulnerable to abduction herself, as was Persephone when apart from her mother.²¹⁸

This brings us to another intertextual resonance in this image of Hermione casting away her veil, which has not been considered in any of the scholarship on Colluthus, that is the proleptic vision of Hermione herself. In Euripides' *Andromache*, Hermione has been married to Neoptolemus after the Trojan war and has found herself in a state of desperation after plotting to kill Andromache, whom her husband favours. In her most desperate moment, Hermione contemplates suicide and declares: "Alas, alas! Away from my hair, fine-threaded mantle, into the air!" (*αἰαὶ αἰαὶ | ἔρρ' αἰθέριον πλοκαμῶν ἐ- | -μῶν ἄπο, λεπτόμιτον φάρος*, Eur. *Andr.* 829-31). Here the casting away of the *φάρος* (a head-covering) is a symbol of emotional distress,²¹⁹ as in Colluthus, and the Euripidean scene shares with Colluthus the specific image of throwing the veil into the air (*αἰθέριον*, cf. *ἀνέμοισιν*). Thus Colluthus' image of Hermione at 9 years of age has the effect of foreshadowing the miserable future of Hermione as a young adult. Given that the rather less endearing post-war Hermione of the *Andromache* was a far better known character in literature than the child of Colluthus' narrative,²²⁰ the mind of the reader may naturally wander in that direction, especially with the emphatic placement of her name at the beginning of the line in a totally unexpected scene. This has the effect of announcing the tragic portion of

²¹⁶ e.g. Archil. fr. 326; Euph. fr. 107.4

²¹⁷ e.g. Bion, *Epith.* 20; it is even connected with sexual violence at A.R. *Arg.* 1.760 where Tityon is depicted attempting to rape Leto, "pulling her by her veil" (*ἐὶν ἐρύοντα καλύπτρην*)

²¹⁸ Morales 2016, 71 (with reference to Claudian's *Proserpina*)

²¹⁹ Lloyd 2005, 155

²²⁰ She appears as a character also in Euripides' *Orestes*, and is the title character of lost plays by Sophocles and Philocles which covered essentially the same story as the *Andromache* (Sommerstein et al. 2006, 7), and she is also featured in Ovid's *Heroides* 8

the poem, which is then reinforced by Hermione's dialogue with her nurses (336-62) and her frantic tone throughout.²²¹ The future Hermione is not only subjected to an unhappy marriage, but the tradition represented by the Hermione of Ovid's *Heroides*²²² makes clear that in her mind she was raped by Pyrrhus (Neoptolemus) when she writes to Orestes begging him to rescue her.²²³ Ovid's Hermione directly compares her situation with that of her mother, telling Orestes to imitate his father-in-law (Menelaus) and rescue her as her father did Helen: *Si socer ignavus vidua stertisset in aula, | Nupta foret Paridi mater, ut ante fuit* (Ov. *Her.* 8.21-2), and she laments that it is the fate of the women of her lineage to always fall victim to rape: *Num generis fato, quod nostros errat in annos, | Tantalides matres apta rapina sumus* (Ov. *Her.* 8.65-6). When read in light of the literary traditions surrounding Hermione's future, Colluthus' introduction of Helen's daughter and her emotional distress brings into focus the theme of abduction which had only been hinted at thus far.

The imagery of the veil is also a recurring theme in the *Abduction of Helen*: the Trojan Nymphs set aside their veils (κηδεμένα) in the proem (2), which as discussed, conjures images of girls abducted from a *locus amoenus*. In the poem's first image of Aphrodite, she opens her veil in order to beautify herself for the contest, adding erotic associations to the removal of the veil (81-3): "Wily Cypris undid her veil and the fragrant brooch of her hair, and parted her locks with gold" (Κύπρις μὲν δολόμητις ἀναπτύξασα καλύπτρην | καὶ περόνην θυόεντα διαστήσασα κομάων | χρυσῶ μὲν πλοκάμους). But the most important iteration of this motif comes from the poem's closing image, when Cassandra pulls at her hair and tears her veil at the sight of Paris approaching Troy (390-1): πυκνὰ δὲ τίλλε κόμην, χρυσέην δ' ἔρρηξε καλύπτρην | Κασσάνδρῃ νεόφοιτον ἀπ' ἀκροπόλεως ἰδοῦσα.²²⁴

²²¹ On the aural and performative qualities of Hermione's speech, see Cadau 2015, 246-7

²²² I leave aside the question of whether Colluthus was reading Ovid's *Heroides* directly, or working with a shared tradition in Greek texts which are lost to us, as the effect is the same. The question has received more attention with regard to *Her.* 16 & 17 (Paris and Helen); Livrea 1968, xv-xviii provides the best coverage of attempts to uncover *un modello alessandrino perduto*

²²³ Morales 2016, 71-2

²²⁴ Repetition of vocabulary and phrases has typically been read as nothing more than a stylistic feature of Colluthus poetics, as in Minniti Colonna 1979, 87-8; this attitude can be found in Livrea 1968 (*passim*), where repeated vocabulary is typically marked with a "cf." and no consideration given to its use

This Trojan image is again modelled on Hecuba's grief at *Il.* 22.406, and in that sense it too looks forward to the calamity of the Trojan war, but the intra-textual connection with Hermione directs also the reader towards the shared fates of two girls who are doomed to abduction and distress by the actions of Paris and Helen.²²⁵ Cassandra will be abducted from Troy as Agamemnon's concubine (a literal φόρτον ἰωχμοῖο in contrast to Helen), raped by the lesser Ajax, and murdered by Clytemnestra, and like Hermione her fate is best known in Greek tragedy, especially Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.

Hermione's tearing away of her veil looks back in the literary tradition to grieving mothers and thus draws attention to the abnormality of a mother being taken from her daughter rather than the opposite, but it also has a proleptic function, looking forward to Cassandra's distress within the narrative, and to Hermione's own future in which she too is to become a victim of abduction. It is this fate that the two girls have in common. As a result of Helen's abandonment, both Hermione and Cassandra will become victims of rape and abduction. In light of the intra-textual link between Hermione and Cassandra marked by the tearing of the veil, one almost gets the impression that Cassandra is not so much mourning the fate of Troy as lamenting the cycle of rape of violence which is attendant on it. And with that closing image meditating on the shared fates of these two girls, the label of Paris as ἀρχέκακον πολιήτην (392) marks him not just as the agent of Troy's doom, but a man whose greed and lack of discipline led to not one rape, but many.

With Hermione introduced in such a way, the reader may become more sensitive to the tragic elements of her depiction and her literary future, as well as her connection to the rest of the narrative. They will bring a heightened awareness of these themes to the rest of Hermione's scene, which is laced with thematic allusion to the motifs of abduction narratives as well as to specific abducted women in literary history.

²²⁵ Paschalis 2008, 144 notes the parallel and remarks that Cassandra's gesture does not mark her prophecy, as one might expect, but the beginning of her lamentation for Troy, just as Hermione's marks the beginning of her lament. However, if my reading is correct, both girls engage in an element of "intertextual" prophecy as well.

Hermione next gathers her handmaidens and expresses her distress and confusion at the absence of her mother (327-32):

ἴσταμένης πολύδακρυς ἀνέστεινεν ἠριγενείης,
πολλάκι δ' ἀμφιπόλους θαλάμων ἔκτοσθε λαβοῦσα,
ὀξύτατον βοόωσα τόσῃν ἀνενείκατο φωνήν·
παῖδες, πῆ με λιποῦσα πολύστονον ὥχετο μήτηρ,
ἢ χθιζὸν σὺν ἐμοὶ θαλάμων κληῖδας ἐλοῦσα
ἔδραθεν ὑπνώουσα καὶ ἐς μίαν ἦλυθεν εὐνήν;

*As dawn rose she wept heavily,
and often taking her handmaidens outside her bedroom
she rose her voice with the sharpest cry:
“Girls, where has my mother gone and left me grieving so,
who yesterday took the keys to my bedroom
and slept with me in my one bed?”*

The depiction of Hermione as πολύδακρυς before delivering her first speech may recall Nonnus' Nicaea, upon realizing that she has been raped by Dionysus and become pregnant (Nonn. *Dion.* 16.365): ἔννεπε, καὶ πολύδακρυν ἀνέβλυσεν ὄμβρον ὀπωπῆς. The adjective is typically used in the passive sense of “much-lamented”, and is only rarely applied in this sense of “much-weeping”.²²⁶ Her speech also strongly recalls that of Moschus' Europa, as she addresses the Zeus-bull who has carried her away from her friends (Mosch. *Eur.* 134-5): ἀμφὶ ἐπαπτήνασα τόσῃν ἀνενείκατο φωνήν | “πῆ με φέρεις θεόταυρε; τίς ἔπλεο;” Europa's and Hermione's situations are reversed; while Europa has been abducted and asks the bull where they are going, Hermione is unaware of her mother's abduction and asks where she has gone. This draws attention to the reversal of the narrative trope in the story of Helen, and the two models above may also draw attention to the conflicted tradition of whether Helen had any choice in leaving with Paris. Nicaea was unambiguously resistant to her pursuers, first Hymnus and then Dionysus, and was drugged with wine and raped in her sleep.²²⁷ Europa, in Moschus' telling of the myth, is a more complicated figure who is both physically carried off by Zeus, but at the same time depicted as a willing participant.²²⁸ According to Hermione, Helen has left her πολύστονον “grieving heavily”, which may allude to Helen's depiction in Euripides' *Orestes*, in which Electra refers to her as “Helen, cause of so much

²²⁶ Livrea 1968, 220

²²⁷ On the Nicaea episode in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, see Carvounis 2014, 60-71

²²⁸ Deacy 2013, 401-2

grief” (πολύστονον | Ἑλένην, 56-7).²²⁹ Colluthus uses the adjective in the less common passive sense, allusively making Hermione the recipient of the grief caused by Helen. The key to all these allusions is that Hermione has no idea that Helen has left with Paris, her innocence is the key to the irony in her frequent recollection of abducted women, but it also reminds the reader of how vulnerable Helen's young daughter has now become.

This passage also picks up on another leitmotif of the poem, the opening of doors: the phrase *θαλάμων κληίδας ἐλοῦσα* picks up directly on Helen's first meeting with Paris, where she “opens the door to her hospitable bedroom” (ἡ δὲ φιλοξείνων θαλάμων κληίδας ἀνείσα, 252) and invites Paris inside, marking the beginning of the end. Thus this image of Helen the protective mother entering Hermione's room and sleeping in her bed is directly contrasted by Paris entering Helen's room and seducing her, leading her to forget about her daughter altogether. As with the image of Cassandra, this line also looks forward to the poem's ending, in which “Troy opens its lofty doors, and accepts on his return her citizen who was the source of woe” (Τροίη δ’ ὑψιδόμων πυλέων κληίδας ἀνείσα | δέξατο νοστήσαντα τὸν ἀρχέκακον πολίτην, 391-2). The intra-textual messaging in these three images may perhaps be summarized by the idea that if Helen had continued to care for her daughter rather than let Paris into her bedroom, disaster would have been avoided.

Next, Hermione's nurses attempt to calm her by proposing a series of explanations for Helen's absence. They tell Hermione to cease her weeping (γρόν εὔνασον, 336)²³⁰ and insist that Helen will return while Hermione is still weeping (ἔτι κλαίουσα νοήσεις, 337), but in their attempts to convince her that all is normal, they actually allude to variety of motifs from abduction narratives which hint at the truth of the matter. Their first suggestion: “Perhaps she has gone to an assembly of young women gathered together, and strayed from

²²⁹ Early editors of Colluthus' text saw this parallel as justification to read the nominative *πολύστονος* with *μητήρ* in line 330 (Livrea 1968, 221). But in keeping with Colluthus' penchant for *oppositio* and irony, the accusative is surely correct.

²³⁰ Cadau 2015, 248 notes a parallel with Hades' plea to the abducted Proserpina: *desine funestis animum, Proserpina, curis | et vano vexare metu* (Claud. *De Rapt.* 2.277-8). The parallels are however generic: Hades' speech is modelled on other speeches of consolation made by gods to their abducted victims, suggesting things aren't as bad as they first appear (Gruzelier 1993, 2014), and this tradition may be part of Colluthus' strategy in depicting Hermione's nurses, suggesting that they may know exactly what has happened to Helen.

the right path” (ἡ τάχα νυμφάων ἐς ὁμήγουριν ἀγρομενάων | ἦλυθεν, ἰθείης δὲ παραπλάζουσα κελεύθου, 340-1) might sound innocent to Hermione, but the reader familiar with the fates of Europa or Persephone know that this is far from a reassuring picture. “Nymphs” here should probably be taken as meaning “young women” (cf. Col. 12, 276 of Helen),²³¹ but Colluthus clearly enjoyed playing semantic games with νύμφαι.²³² Regardless of the literal meaning, the image of Persephone playing with “the deep-bosomed daughters of Ocean” (κούρησι σὺν Ὀκεανοῦ βαθυκόλοισι, *Hymn to Dem.* 5) is easily conjured. These daughters of Ocean were recognized as Nymphs in a variety of Greek and Latin authors,²³³ and there are several other sources known to Colluthus in which girls are abducted from a gathering of Nymphs.²³⁴ Colluthus' choice of νυμφάων here is thus no accident, it hints at the truth of things (Helen has been abducted), but it also draws attention to the fact that she was not abducted in the manner typical of the literary tradition, perhaps hinted at with the suggestion that she has “wandered from the right path”, which could take on a moral tone. A similar effect comes when the nurses offer alternative explanations (342-5): “Or she has gone to the meadow and sits on the dewy plan of the Hours. Or she has gone to wash her body in the river of her forefathers, and lingers by the streams of the Eurotas” (καὶ ἐς λειμῶνα μολοῦσα | Ὀράων δροσόντος ὑπὲρ πεδίωιο θαάσει. | ἢ χροά πατρώοιο λοεσσαμένη ποταμοῖο | ὄχητο καὶ δῆθυσεν ὑπ'Εὐρώταο ῥέεθροις). The meadow is the typical location for young girl's (or Nymphs) to be abducted,²³⁵ continuing the ominous imagery, and has especially erotic associations in the Greek novels and Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*.²³⁶ The image of Helen bathing in the river may conjure another familiar setting for scenes of voyeurism, rape, and abduction (again prevalent in Nonnus). Hermione later responds to each assertion of

²³¹ Orsini 1972, 16 n.4 (but cf. Livrea's translation: “ad un incontro di ninfe riunite in assemblea”)

²³² Paschalis 2008, 145

²³³ Richardson 1974, 140

²³⁴ Most notably *Hymn to Aphr.* 119-21: “Many of us nymphs and maidens were playing, and a huge crowd ringed around us, from there the slayer of Argus with his golden wand abducted me” (πολλαὶ δὲ νύμφαι καὶ παρθένοι ἀλφεσίβοιαι | παίζομεν, ἀμφὶ δ' ὄμιλος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωτο. | ἐνθὲν μ' ἤρπαξε χρυσόρραπις Ἀργειφόντης). The parallel here is especially striking since this is a fiction of Aphrodite disguised as a mortal woman, while the nurses are similarly making up stories to reassure Hermione.

²³⁵ Deacy 2013, 399-400

²³⁶ Carvounis 2014, 27-33

her nurses, and she wonders if her mother has gone swimming and drowned in the Eurotas (μή διεροῖς στονόεντος ἐπ'Εὐρώταο ῥεέθροις | νηχομένην ἐκάλυψεν ὑποβρυχίην σε γαλήνη; 359-60), the language recalls the moment Dionysus falls in love with Nicaea as she swims naked in a river (Nonn. *Dion.* 16.11-2): ἐν δὲ ῥεέθροις | νηχομένην Διόνυσος ἰδὼν γυμνόχροα κούρην, which leads to her rape. Paris also washed in the river (presumably the Eurotas mentioned at line 223) upon his arrival at Sparta (λοεσσάμενος ποταμοῖο, 230), and the linguistic recall of this earlier point in the narrative may cause the reader to imagine him in the role of sexual predator.

But as with all of the nurses' suggestions, the allusive hints are not registered by Hermione, she concludes that there's no way her mother could have drowned, because the Naiads live in rivers, and they do not kill women (361-2)! Taken together, the ominous proposals given for Helen's whereabouts might lead the reader to suspect that the nurses are in fact covering for her elopement with Paris. They hint at the literary tradition of forced abduction in a way that the reader, but not the naive Hermione could detect. This may play off an expectation which contemporary readers would bring to such a scene, as the nurse who conceals the sexual misconduct of her mistress is a familiar figure in both literature and in Constantine's law code against abduction marriages (*CTh* ix.24).²³⁷ Hermione does not believe any of her nurses' suggestions, but she is also too innocent to understand what has really happened, and she exhausts all possibilities for how Helen may have died, without ever guessing that she has abandoned her. Hermione may even allude to various versions of Helen's story in her response to the nurses: “She knows the hill, she knows the river's flow, she knows the ways to Dromos, to the meadow. What are you telling me women?!” (οἶδεν ὄρος, ποταμῶν ἐδάη ῥόον, οἶδε κελεύθους | ἐς ῥόδον, ἐς λειμῶνα. τί μοι φθέγγεσθε, γυναῖκες; 347-8). First a note on the text is in order: Δρόμον is the reading first proposed by Lennep for ῥόδον. It was adopted by Orsini, on the basis of Theocritus' *Epithalium*

²³⁷ Evans-Grubb 1989, 64; Constantine's law proposes “an exceptionally gruesome and sadistic punishment” for the nurse of an abducted girl, who is presumed to have aided and abetted her mistress. There is no suggestion within Colluthus' narrative that anyone knows where Helen went, but in the highly episodic form of his epyllion, Colluthus leaves such details to the reader's imagination

of *Helen* (18.39),²³⁸ and the supposed incomprehensibility of the manuscript reading, ῥόδον.²³⁹ But Livrea and Schönberger both accepted ῥόδον in their texts,²⁴⁰ and on balance the effect of the line seems stronger if we follow the manuscripts and accept ῥόδον, keeping in mind Colluthus' already established pattern of allusion to the motifs of abduction stories.²⁴¹ The idea that Helen knows well the “ways to the rose, to the meadow” may hint ironically at her own experience with abduction, past and present. According to the most detailed version of the story, Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, Helen was abducted by Theseus when she was “a maiden not yet at a marriageable age” (τὴν παρθένον οὐπω γάμων ὥραν, Plut. *Thes.* 31.3.2), apparently while dancing at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia near the Eurotas (Plut. *Thes.* 31.3.3-4), and according to Diodorus she was only 10 years old (Diod. Sic. 4.63.2), making her roughly Hermione's age at the time. Details of geography are not as important as the fact that Helen herself had already experienced the sort of abduction which Hermione and her nurses frequently allude to, yet they never consider the possibility that it has happened again. Instead Hermione goes on to imagine a series of violent scenarios only to reject the possibility of each. Perhaps Helen has fallen from her chariot and her body lies in the bushes (354-5), but Hermione insists that she has search everywhere, and still hasn't seen Helen's body (σὸν δέμας οὐκ ἐνόησα, 357). This image of Hermione scanning the hills and forests looking for her mother's corpse recalls Autonoe's futile search for her son Actaeon in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (5.270-409), once again inverting the roles of parent and child and giving the scene a violent undertone.²⁴² Just as Autonoe looked everywhere but could not see what had happened (she was looking for human bones), so Hermione is looking but not seeing, because she has not considered the outcome which the allusions in this

²³⁸ cf. Theoc. 18.39-40: ἄμμες δ' ἐς δρόμον ἦρι καὶ ἐς λειμώνια φύλλα | ἐρπεῦμες στεφάνως δρεπεύμεναι ἀδὸ πνέοντας. “We shall go early tomorrow to the running course and the blooming meadow to gather sweet smelling garlands”

²³⁹ Orsini 1972, 17 n.1

²⁴⁰ Livrea 1968, 229 is the fullest discussion

²⁴¹ Ultimately this may be effect in either case: in the passage from Theocritus' *Epithalamium*, a group of Helen's female friends says they will celebrate her marriage to Menelaus by picking flowers in a meadow, itself perhaps an allusion to Helen's future abduction by Paris.

²⁴² Cadau 2015, 248

passage suggest should be obvious: Helen has been abducted.

Throughout his narrative Colluthus only alludes to the abduction motif, but this persistent pattern of thematic allusion primes the reader for the moment when the topic of abduction finally rises to the surface. After Hermione finally falls asleep, her mother appears to her in a dream (369-380) in which the question of guilt and innocence (both for Helen and Paris) arises for the first time. However, the dream leaves the reader with as many questions as answers, causing the reader to consider the nature of the “abduction” of Helen as the poem comes to a close. The poet deliberately shrouds this moment in uncertainty by describing the two gates of dreams earlier in the narrative: “Two gates of dreams opened, the one true... the other deceitful” (δοιάς δὲ πύλας ὤϊξεν ὄνειρων, | τὴν μὲν ἀληθείης... τὴν δὲ δολοφροσύνης, 318-321).²⁴³ The image of the two gates of dreams has no impact on its immediate context (as Paris sails off with Helen), but the reader will be especially alert to the possibility that Hermione's dream could be either a true or false representation of reality. As Hermione falls asleep “wandering in the deceits of dreams, she thought she saw her mother” (ἣ μὲν ἀλητεύουσα δολοφροσύνησιν ὄνειρων | μητέρα παπταίνειν ὠισατο, 369-70). This certainly suggests that what follows cannot be trusted, nor can we be certain that it is Helen who speaks to Hermione, rather than her own imagination.²⁴⁴ Hermione addresses the vision of her mother: “Yesterday when you fled from our home you left me grieving, sleeping in my father's bed! What mountain did I forget? What hills did I neglect?” (χθιζὸν ὄδυρομένην με δόμων ἔκτοσθε φυγοῦσα | κάλλιπες ὑπνώουσαν ὑπὲρ λεχέων γενετήρος. | ποῖον ὄρος μεθέηκα; τίνας προλέλοιπα κολώνας; 372-4). This image of Hermione sleeping in Menelaus' bed draws attention to his notable absence from Colluthus' narrative. More importantly for our purposes, it turns the young Hermione into a supplement for

²⁴³ cf. *Od.* 19.562-7

²⁴⁴ Paschalis 2008, 140; But scholars are divided on this question: cf. Morales 2016, 69: “It is not obvious whether the Helen who appears in Hermione's dream is an epiphany of the abducted Helen, an *eidolon* who is masquerading as Helen, or a figment of Hermione's imagination”; Magnelli 2008, 165 connects the dream to the negative characterization of Paris throughout the poem, and despite its uncertainty declares “Colluthus' readers easily understand that the dream is telling the truth”; Cadau 2015, 146 is convinced that it is the real Helen speaking, but that she lies to Hermione about the nature of her abduction.

her mother, continuing the pattern of ironic reversal of the mother-daughter relationship even to the extent of eroticizing Helen's daughter.²⁴⁵ This reinforces the notion that Hermione's own future is foreshadowed in her depiction by Colluthus; as soon as Helen is gone, Hermione steps into her role and inherits her place in the tragic cycle of abduction which she laments in Ovid's *Heroides*.

These lines are followed by one of the poem's thorniest textual issues. The MSS contain the following line concluding Hermione's speech to Helen (375): οὕτω καλλικόμοιο μεθ' ἄρμονίην Ἀφροδίτης; "Was it thus in accord with lovely-haired Aphrodite?". The texts of Mair and Schönberger keep the line in its original position, while Livrea transposes it after 377, and Orsini after 378. Of all these options the line translates most sensibly in Orsini's reading, but none of the options are without difficulty.²⁴⁶ Let us consider how the position of the line affects our line of reading developed in this chapter. If it is spoken by Hermione, it marks the moment where she finally realizes that she has exhausted all options in her search and ruled out every scenario in which Helen might have died in the Spartan countryside. Thus Hermione proposes the one alternative that has been hinted at allusively, especially by her nurses: Helen has left with a man.²⁴⁷ It seems natural to end Hermione's complaint to the dream Helen with a question, as she is clearly desperate to know. Alternatively, if the line is spoken by Helen, it provides her excuse for abandoning her daughter. Helen's reply (following Orsini): "My grieving child, don't blame me who has suffered terribly. A deceitful man who came yesterday abducted me, *so it was in accord with lovely-haired Aphrodite*" (τέκνον ἀκηκεμένη, μὴ μέμφοο δεινὰ παθούση, | ὁ χθιζὸν με μολῶν ἀπατήλιος ἤρπασεν ἀνὴρ, | οὕτω καλλικόμοιο μεθ' ἄρμονίην Ἀφροδίτης, 377-375). Here Helen finally states what the reader has been led to expect throughout the poem; she was abducted (ἤρπασεν)

²⁴⁵ Morales 2016, 72-3

²⁴⁶ Magnelli 2008, 171 n.92: Magnelli prefers keeping the original position but treats the line as corrupt

²⁴⁷ Orsini 1972, 18 n.1 justifies the transposition in part because "la petite Hermione, qui âgée de neuf ans, ne saurait invoquer l'ἄρμονίην Ἀφροδίτης", and thus it is better suited to Helen who was the victim of deceit. However, with all the intertextual hints, and even the eroticizing of Hermione in the lines above, perhaps the point here is precisely the inappropriateness that little Hermione would have to think this, revealing the extent to which her innocence is now lost

by a deceitful man. It is noteworthy that her reply makes no attempt to calm her daughter, she is simply interested in deflecting blame. The transposed line does not add much to her self-defense; ἤρπασεν implies physical force and thus the claim that it was Aphrodite's will only serves to defend Paris' actions, not her own. On balance, line 375 seems a better fit in the form of a question rather than an answer. It amounts to Hermione asking if Helen left because she fell in love, since all other alternatives have been ruled out. This question would spur Helen's defensive response "I didn't fall in love, I was abducted", which would be weakened by transferring agency from Paris to Aphrodite. As far as the scene was narrated by Colluthus, Hermione was right; Helen left with Paris not because she was forced, but because she wanted to, even citing Aphrodite's will in her decision "I will follow, since Cythereia queen of marriage bids it" (ἔψομαι, ὡς Κυθέρεια γάμων βασίλεια κελεύει, 313). It is thus tempting to see Helen's response as an outright lie, fueled by guilt for abandoning her daughter without a thought. As Paschalis notes, this may help explain Hermione's enhanced role in Colluthus' narrative: who else but an innocent child would believe that Helen was actually abducted?²⁴⁸ But this may be an overly conservative reading of the text.

As Helen Morales discusses, the Helen who appears in the dream can also be read as telling the truth and criticizing the official narrative, providing a "hierarchy of narratives" for the reader to consider.²⁴⁹ Perhaps the key to this reading is Helen's label of Paris as a "deceitful man" (ἀπατήλιος... ἀνὴρ); on the surface his deceitfulness should have little to do with a forceful abduction, but perhaps this is Helen's way of saying that she was powerless in the face of a male aggressor who used "honeyed words", and cited his role as judge of the goddesses in order to convince Helen to leave with him. This reading brings us back to the power of persuasion hinted at by the presence of Peitho in the wedding scene, which prefigures the nature of Helen and Paris' union, one driven by persuasion not simply lust. And let us not forget the image of Paris which was established

²⁴⁸ Paschalis 2008, 140

²⁴⁹ Morales 2016, 87

before his meeting with Helen: false, effeminate, and yet still associated with sexual aggression. This implies that Paris was hardly the sort to forcibly carry off Helen, as she claims to her daughter, but it does not mean that he did not have the means to “abduct” her. After all, Colluthus the narrator has the last word, and it is Paris, not Helen, who is labelled as the ἀρχέκακον πολίτην. Such a reading may seem unreasonably modern for a late antique text, but there is ample evidence throughout the narrative that Colluthus wants his readers to consider the nature of “abduction” and the multiple versions of Helen's story, and the fact that there is no simple conclusion to the question of Helen's blame and agency may be precisely the point.

The constant allusion to famous abduction narratives, abducted women, and the traditional motifs of these stories directs the reader to consider Colluthus' narrative as a new, more complicated story of abduction. It forces the reader to consider the ambiguous depiction of Helen's suffering in light of similar figures such as Europa and Persephone, a tactic which had already been explored by Moschus in his own engagement with the *Hymn to Demeter*.²⁵⁰ Colluthus' treatment of the abduction motif is untraditional in its promotion of a moralizing reading, and it does not have the tidy, happily-ever-after ending of traditional abduction stories. In reading against this thematic tradition, the model reader is at the same time alerted to the ambiguity of Colluthus' own treatment while also being directed back to the same potential in earlier abduction narratives. The theme of abduction opens up a two-way intertextual relationship, in which tradition informs the reader's understanding of Helen's situation, but at the same time Helen's indeterminate status as both victim and willing participant comments on the tradition itself. As with Colluthus' frequent misdirection in his play with genre, the reader is ultimately left with questions not answers: the guilt or innocence of Helen is left hanging unresolved at the poem's abrupt ending, and the unambiguous suffering of Hermione is all the more unsettling as a result. Colluthus' approach to the theme of abduction mirrors his treatment of genre; it is in the

²⁵⁰ Smart 2012, 53

transgression of norms and the reversal of expectations that the poet draws attention to the idea of abduction in his own telling of the story of Paris and Helen. The ambiguity of Helen's situation, which is expressly highlighted by the unreliability of her appearance in a dream, is not a defect, but a feature of Colluthus' narrative. It is a feature which reflects the larger poetic program we have established in his treatment of example models and genre models; reversal, irony, and transgression define Colluthus' approach to literary tradition at all these levels. By considering the treatment of abduction motifs in light of these broader trends, we find that the *Abduction of Helen* is itself a sort of intertextual abduction, a transgressive appropriation of a great variety of models and traditions.

5) Conclusions

In this thesis, I hope to have pushed forward our understanding of Colluthus' *Abduction of Helen* as a poem that relies heavily on intertextuality for its meaning, which places demands of knowledge and broad reading on its reader for a full appreciation of the epyllion and its relationship with literary tradition. The coverage has necessarily been selective, but from the examples discussed within this thesis a few broad conclusions may be advanced regarding Colluthus' allusive poetics. We have seen that an intertextual reading of the *Abduction* goes well beyond its treatment of the story of Paris and Helen: it is a work which engages heavily not only with specific textual moments from Homer to Nonnus and other contemporaries, but also with the thematic treatment of abduction, and a variety of generic traditions.

In Chapter 2, we demonstrated how marked instances of allusion to specific textual moments often take the form of borrowed phrases and half-lines, but could also hinge on unique vocabulary, demanding the participation of a reader well-versed in a variety of poetic traditions. But we have also seen how Colluthus' intertextual poetics can be situated in a broader discussion of late antique intertextuality in which allusive content may be placed on a spectrum, including essential, optional, and formal or ornamental material. Where traditionally scholars have seen only "borrowings" without much consideration for the context of those borrowings, we have seen that markedly borrowed lines do tend to evoke the context of the model text. These allusive borrowings could lead to a re-reading of the model text, or they could import the meaning of the model text into Colluthus' narrative. We have also established how Colluthus could play model texts against each other with "multiple" references in the manner of good Hellenistic or Augustan poetry. Most importantly, we have established a pattern of allusion in the *Abduction of Helen* in which irony and humour play a key role. An appreciation of Colluthus' ironic treatment of various traditions has caught on in modern scholarship,²⁵¹ but

²⁵¹ Esp. Magnelli 2008 and 2016; Paschalis 2008; Prauscello 2008

by establishing the ironic effect of specific linguistic allusions, this study has demonstrated that intertextual irony in the *Abduction of Helen* is even more pervasive than scholars of Colluthus have considered thus far. Throughout this thesis we have also established the importance of self-reflexive allusion in Colluthus' text; certain linguistic leitmotifs and the repetition of "keywords" such as μήλον, νύμφη, ἀρχέκακον, and καλύπτρη have intra-textual functions around which this episodic poem is structured. These intra-textual motifs could involve semantic games and could be closely bound with *inter*-textuality as well, beginning as intertextual allusions and being re-written over the course of the narrative with changing significance. Finally, we have speculated on the possibility that Colluthus does selectively include Christian content in his poem, but only in a highly allusive way. This is not to suggest that the poem has a strong allegorical function, but such content does add to the moralizing tone which rarely rises to the surface of the poem. Further study on the Christian resonance of certain terminology, as well as the allusion to specific Christian texts (especially the poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus) may potentially reveal yet more contemporary thought hidden within Colluthus' classicizing text. The approach to linguistic allusion developed here is much better represented in studies of Latin poetry,²⁵² and a thorough study of the mechanics of intertextuality in later Greek poetry remains a desideratum. In light of the influence of Nonnus on Colluthus' allusive poetics, a study of the form and function of intertextual engagement with specific models which situates Colluthus among his post-Nonnian contemporaries would be a fruitful avenue for further research for determining the extent of Nonnus' influence beyond the traditional categories of metre and style.²⁵³

In Chapter 3, we have demonstrated how Colluthus self-consciously blends genre elements throughout his narrative, and especially within the proem, where we have proposed reading more meta-poetic messaging than has typically been acknowledged in scholarship. As an example of the epyllion technique,

²⁵² Esp. Pelltari 2014, Kaufmann 2017

²⁵³ In these respects, Livrea 1968 is seminal

Colluthus is even more pronounced in his genre-mixing than his Hellenistic predecessors: we have discussed his use of elements of epic, hymnic, bucolic, and tragic poetry, and yet more sub-genres could have been highlighted.²⁵⁴ We have highlighted the persistent pattern in Colluthus' approach to genre: misdirection and a sort of intertextual polemics. By constantly alluding to different generic traditions only to ultimately abandon them, Colluthus constantly engages his readers in a game of creating and denying expectations of what form his narrative will take. He ultimately leaves the reader with the impression that none of the *individual* traditions of the classical past (epic or pastoral and so on) is appropriate for innovation in his contemporary context, that there is nothing left but to play these traditions against each other in a work which at the same time resembles all, and none, of the poetry of the past. There is no sense of the late antique Christian polemic against "pagan" poetry in the *Abduction of Helen*, and yet with its constantly negative approach to the literary tradition, it can nevertheless be read as a polemical appropriation (perhaps better, "abduction") of that tradition. Colluthus frequently parodies the traditions he works within: the poem is initially framed in hymnic context, but the gods are unambiguously human in his narrative. He treats a traditionally epic story in a highly un-epic fashion. The conceits of bucolic poetry and novelistic romance are ultimately misdirections, which mainly serve to cast Paris in a negative light. Even his "modern" model, Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, is subjected to the same ironic treatment as the rest. Yet at the same time, the *Abduction of Helen* shows Colluthus' deep allegiance to all these models, and it's very purpose is rooted in a mastery of almost the whole range of the classical literary tradition. Absent any authorial intervention stating his intentions, the reader may approach the *Abduction of Helen* as either an homage to, or a rejection of the various poetic traditions which make up the whole.

In Chapter 4 we witnessed Colluthus' unique treatment of the theme which gives the poem its title:

²⁵⁴ Cadau 2015, 96-134 for example, emphasizes Colluthus' use of invective, *ethopoiiai*, encomium, and other branches of rhetorical writing, as well as his potential engagement with decorative arts which can be read "as texts"

an abduction. Following Helen Morales recent proposal²⁵⁵ for a foregrounding of the subject matter in Colluthus' poem, we turned to (mainly) Greek models of abduction narratives in order to better understand the role played by the thematics of abduction narratives in a poem which does not present itself as such at its surface. The engagement with stories of abduction is one of the most pervasive elements of Colluthus' poem, but one which is only visible when the epyllion is read intertextually. In this chapter, we established the importance of Hermione's highly original appearance for such a reading. Following his love for irony and reversals of traditional models, Colluthus found in Helen's young abandoned daughter the perfect character for alluding to, and finally addressing the question of abduction. Hermione's presence allowed for an unexpectedly emotional finale to an otherwise light and humorous poem, shocking the reader into the consideration of the nature of Helen's abduction and the role of Paris. It is only through the deployment of thematic allusion that the *Abduction* deals with abduction at all, and it thus leaves the reader with a range of interpretative possibilities. Perhaps in the variant versions of the story of Helen's abduction, vacillating as they did between blame and sympathy, Colluthus found the perfect story for a poem which is defined by its own somewhat ambiguous appropriation of literary tradition. The undecidability of the *Abduction of Helen* is analogous to the undecidability of Helen: to write about Helen is always to write about *difference*, or *uncertainty*.²⁵⁶

In each chapter, we have seen that an ironic engagement with literary tradition, whether it takes the form of a specific line, a thematically relevant scene, or the conventions of various generic traditions, is the defining feature of Colluthus' epyllion. It is a poem which is defined by its relationship to tradition at all these levels, and its author delighted in using his reader's knowledge against them, constantly creating and denying

²⁵⁵ Morales 2016, 74

²⁵⁶ Gumpert 2001, 11: "It is true that to a certain extent all Greek myths are really sets of competing submyths, but Helen is particularly undecidable. More than that, *undecidability*, paradoxically enough, is perhaps Helen's essential feature." (my emphasis)

expectations against various poetic traditions. It is perhaps not surprising that some critics have found Colluthus difficult to enjoy, given the sheer variety of material which lends itself to a full appreciation of his poetics. Though we know little about Colluthus the poet, an appreciation of the intertextual dynamics of his lone surviving work provides a glimpse into the relationship between a late antique poet and his audience which highlights the survival of learned, creative poetry in the Alexandrian mold, even towards the very end of the classical poetic tradition.

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