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Ἀνάγκιδες Ἀθῆναι: Femininity and its Absence in Colluthus' Rape of Helen

Summary – This paper explores the portrayal of Aphrodite, Athena, Helen and other women as realized through the comments made by Aphrodite and Paris on femininity and the lack of it in Colluthus' Rape of Helen. It is argued that in making Paris state that Helen's female 'Argive' entourage lacks womanly features, Colluthus is making reference to Theocritus' Encomion of Helen and to Callimachus' Bath of Pallas, in which Spartan women and Athena respectively are endowed with masculine characteristics. Colluthus is further conversing with the Homeric image of Aphrodite in the passage in which the goddess is defeated by Athena and Diomedes and is mocked for her feebleness. In Colluthus, it is Aphrodite's turn to exult over her Homeric opponents (namely Athena) and to show that beauty, which shines in her victory in Paris' judgment, is the real female power which masculine women lack and thus to proclaim the superiority of love to war.

The floruit of Colluthus of Lycopolis, in the Egyptian Thebaid, is placed in the reign of Anastasius (491–518); the poet was perhaps born between 460 and 470.¹ Colluthus belongs to the so called 'school of Nonnus', along with Musaeus, Pamprepicus, John of Gaza and Paulus Silentiarius who were also influenced by Nonnus' style. It has been observed that Colluthus is less 'Nonnian' in his writing, by comparison to other such poets; he is also usually considered less imaginative and less inspired in comparison to them.² The Rape of Helen, the only surviving work of Colluthus,³ is a narration of Paris' abduction of Helen, starting from the wedding of Peleus and Thetis to which Eris is not invited and the incident with the apple. It moves on to Paris' judgment of the three goddesses, his visit to Sparta and his departure together with Helen and ends with the arrival of the couple at Troy. Colluthus' insertion of the young Hermione's passionate reaction as she realizes her mother has gone, having been told of this by her own mother in a dream, has been considered the best part of the poem, in that it is the most original.⁴ The work is often labeled a 'Homeric epyllion'. As a whole it is Homeric

¹ See further Cadau 2015, 6f.

² See Magnelli 2016, 288 with n. 4.

³ Suda informs us that he also wrote 'Calydoniaca', 'Persica' and encomia in hexameters.

⁴ See Magnelli 2016, 297 with n. 46.

because its protagonists generally act in the way we know from Homer, and Paris, in particular, is perfectly in accord with his un-heroic Homeric self. It is an epyllion, because it is a small hexameter poem (three hundred ninety-four lines), although, contrary to what one usually expects from an epyllion, if one thinks, for example, of Callimachus' *Hecale*, Eratosthenes' *Erigone* and Musaeus' *Hero and Leander*, it tells a mainstream story, which was recounted earlier (in the *Cypria*), without adding any unusual dimension or reversing any of its important traditional elements.⁵ Of course, the *Hermione* episode, which is actually an invention of Colluthus, does partly justify applying the term epyllion to the poem, since in this episode the poet gives a role, impressive and memorable, albeit not a leading one, to a marginal mythology figure. As has been observed, here Colluthus "foregrounds a minor character", as just Sophocles in his *Hermione* and Euripides in his *Andromache* had done in the past.⁶ Furthermore, the *Hermione* episode has a functional role: it is through the girl's dream that we (and the world) learn of the circumstances of the abduction, since, in Colluthus' version, Menelaus was absent from the palace and so nobody witnessed Paris' visit.⁷

Scholars have become increasingly interested in Colluthus' poem and there has been a number of pieces of research on its models. Apart from Nonnus, Homer, Callimachus, Triphiodorus and Musaeus, *inter alios*, are the poetic reservoirs whence Colluthus draws his motifs, means of expression and his manifold inspiration. The present paper examines aspects of Colluthus' dialogue with works of the poetic past in regard to his characters' remarks on the femininity (or the lack of it) of Helen and other females and hopefully adds a new dimension to our picture of the poet's handling of his literary material in these points.

In his narration, Colluthus lays emphasis twice on the masculinity of women whose appearance is similar to that of men. In the first instance, Aphrodite makes a speech after her victory in the beauty contest judged by Paris. In this she scornfully mocks Hera and Athena and concludes by saying (I follow Mair's line numbering):

ἀγνώσσεις, ὅτι μᾶλλον ἀνάγκιδές εἰσιν Ἀθῆναι
τοῖται, κυδαλίμοισιν ἀγαλλόμεναι πολέμοισι,
κεκριμένων μελέων οὔτ' ἄρσενες οὔτε γυναῖκες; (187–189)

⁵ See Magnelli 2008, 162–164; 2016, 288f.

⁶ Edmunds 2016, 235.

⁷ See Paschalis 2008, 138–140. In the traditional version of the story, Menelaus welcomes his guest before departing for Crete (e. g., Apollod. *Epit.* 3, 3).

“Knowest thou not that such Athenas as thou are the more unvaliant – exulting in glorious wars, with limbs at feud, neither men nor women?” (Mair’s translation)

Here, Aphrodite speaks of men-like women in general, apparently referring to Athena herself,⁸ in a contemptuous generalization: Ἀθῆναι, lovers of wars, cannot be said to be either masculine or feminine, when one looks at their limbs. Interestingly, as has been repeatedly observed by critics, the point is taken up by Paris who ends his speech of seduction that he addresses to Helen with a similar statement about Argive women:

οὐ τοῖαι γεγάασιν ἐν Ἀργείοισι γυναῖκες,
καὶ γὰρ ἀκιδνοτέροισιν ἀεζόμεναι μελέεσσιν
ἀνδρῶν εἶδος ἔχουσι, νόθοι δ’ ἐγένοντο γυναῖκες. (302–304)

“Women born among the Argives are not like you: for although they grow with weaker limbs, they look like men, and are just counterfeit women.” (translation of Cadau 2015, 123)

One cannot help wondering how and why Paris declares that Argive women are manly to such an extent as to look like men and in fact to be only pseudo-women. On an initial level, the words of Paris, whom Colluthus describes as particularly dainty, are to be explained as a reference to the words of Aphrodite, whom he favoured and with whom he shares a common taste for beauty, love, elegance and fineness.⁹ However, even when viewed as a reference to the end of Aphrodite’s speech, Paris’ assertion at 302–304 that Helen is the only feminine Argive woman is still a strange and unnecessary exaggeration. It was suggested long ago that the “proverbial crudity of Peloponnesian women” is here contrasted to Helen’s feminine grace.¹⁰ It has also been suggested that Paris’ generalizing mention of Argive women’s masculinity also refers to the sporting activity of Athena and the Spartan girls and their competing with Spartan boys, as was the case in historical times in regard to the girls of Lacedaemon, although it is difficult to interpret ‘Argive’ as ‘Spartan’ in Colluthus’ passage; and it was suggested that such

⁸ For the contest between the three goddesses as interpreted as a rivalry principally between masculine Athena and feminine Aphrodite, see Bulloch 1985, 127, on Call. H. 5, 18–28, with n. 1. For an emphasized description of the distance in physical grace between Athena and Aphrodite, cf. Nonnus D. 48, 352 θῆλον ἔχεις Παφίης, οὐκ ἄρσενα μαζὸν Ἀθήνης (Aura addressing Artemis).

⁹ For the content of Paris’ words as a partial repetition of that of Aphrodite’s words, see, for instance, Mair 1928, 555 and 564; Livrea 1968, 213; Vian 1969, 595f.; Schönberger 1993, 65, on 186f., and 70, on 299f.; Cadau 2015, 143.

¹⁰ Critics’ views are summarized in Livrea 1968, 212.

women, as hybridic creatures, are ἀνάγκιδες.¹¹ It has to be initially noted that ‘Argive’ can indeed stand for ‘Spartan’ in this context, as Ἀργεῖη Ἑλένη is a Homeric *junctura* for Helen (Il. 2, 161; 3, 458; 4, 19, al.); if Helen is ‘Argive’, the other women of her town can be ‘Argive’, as well. A passage which justifies the description of Spartan women as un-feminine is Aristot. fr. 8, 45, 611, 65f. Rose τῶν ἐν Λακεδαίμονι γυναικῶν κόσμος ἀφήρηται, οὐδὲ κομᾶν ἔξεστιν, οὐδὲ χρυσοφορεῖν; of course, the prohibition of cosmetics for Lacedaemonian women in historical times can hardly constitute an excuse for our Paris’ comment on Argive women’s extreme masculinity. Now, as regards Aphrodite’s taunting of Athena over her masculinity at 187–189, it has been recently argued that, among other passages, Call. H. 5, 15–23 is a scene which the reader may have recalled when reading Aphrodite’s disdainful depiction of her rival.¹² In this Callimachean passage, we have an account of how Athena was uninterested in perfumes and cosmetics even when she was about to appear in the beauty contest. In regard to Athena’s lack of femininity, as this is judged by Colluthus’ Aphrodite, it has been noted that there are other references to the goddess’ masculine features in literature in particular commenting on how she sprang from her father alone.¹³ However, Paris’ reiteration of Aphrodite’s point and his claim that Helen is an exception to ‘Argive’ women, whom he presents as excessively masculine, cannot be explained and justified only on the basis of the reminiscence of the Callimachean description of Athena in Aphrodite’s comments at Coll. 187–189.

In addition to the interpretations of Paris’ words at 302–304 that we have mentioned, a new suggestion can be made. Colluthus seems to have in mind Theocritus’ lines on how Helen stands out from, and exceeds, all other women in his Ἑλένης Ἐπιθαλάμιος.¹⁴ Echoes of this poem in several other lines on the Rape of Helen have been in fact already traced and discussed.¹⁵ The words of Colluthus’ Paris can be explained when read in the light of the

¹¹ As Vian (1969, 596) puts it, “une femme qui joue à l’homme comme Athèna ou les Laconiennes (appelées ici improprement Argives) n’est qu’un être hybride et donc ἀνάγκις”. Schönberger (1993, 70, on 299f.) also wonders whether there is a playful reference here to Spartan girls’ athletic life.

¹² See Cadau 2015, 124 and below, n. 35.

¹³ For instance, Aesch. Eum. 736–738. See further Cadau 2015, 124.

¹⁴ For a recent discussion of the cult of Helen and her plane-tree with reference to Theocritus’ idyll where this is implied, see Edmunds 2016, 164–186.

¹⁵ Especially as regards the ‘idyllic’ setting in which Hermione imagines her mother to wander at 342–361. See Livrea 1968, 228, on 345; Prauscello 2008, 177f. and 187, nn. 33, 34.

words of Theocritus' girls who, while praising their friend Helen, who has just married, in their epithalamion that they sing and address to her, admit that no one among them, who are anointed with oil in manly fashion near the Eurotas, can be compared to Helen:

Ζανός τοι θυγάτηρ ...
 οἷα Ἀχαιάδων γαῖαν πατεῖ οὐδεμί' ἄλλα·
 ...
 ἄμμες δ' αἰ πᾶσαι συνομάλικες, αἷς δρόμος ωὐτός
 χρισαμέναις ἀνδριστί παρ' Εὐρώταο λοετροῖς,
 τετράκις ἐξήκοντα κόραι, θῆλυς νεολαία,
 τᾶν οὐδ' ἄτις ἄμωμος ἐπεὶ χ' Ἑλένα παρισωθῆ. (18, 19–25)

The girls assert that Helen is beyond comparison with any Achaean woman (18,21) and in particular beyond comparison with themselves (18, 24f.); the girls are χρισαμέναις ἀνδριστί (18,23), of course so as to participate in athletic competitions, like men. Such a statement suits the description given by the Paris of Colluthus, who states that these women have 'manly' looks and are 'false' women: since they engage in sports with men, as the word δρόμος shows,¹⁶ they are hardly feminine in gender. What is more, the girls' words in Theocritus actually parallel the words of Aphrodite in Colluthus, who says that the limbs of Athena and other manly women cannot be distinguished from those of men, when the limbs in question are compared with each other (κεκριμένων μελέων). Since the Spartan girls, as Theocritus tells us, compete in sports like men, then it follows that when one observes their limbs when, for example, they are running (with or amongst boys, Colluthus invites us to imagine), one cannot tell which belongs to men and which to women. Theocritus, however, seems to include Helen in the company of girls who exercise (αἷς δρόμος ωὐτός, l. 22).¹⁷ Nevertheless, the phrasing is ambiguous, since the relative clause αἷς δρόμος, κτλ., refers to ἄμμες δ' αἰ πᾶσαι συνομάλικες, i. e., to the group of the girls who are Helen's contemporaries, and who go running near the Eurotas. One suggestion is that Colluthus interprets the Theocritean sentence as referring to the girls alone and not to Helen,¹⁸ whose femininity is stressed below in Id. 18: at 32–37 Helen is praised for her skill in activities suitable for girls,

¹⁶ For δρόμος as indicating exercise, see Gow 1952, ad loc. For Edmunds (2016, 168), Theocritus' lines partly express nostalgia for "those athletic ingenuous Spartan maidens of the past".

¹⁷ "We are the full number of her coevals who share her sports", as Gow comments on 22ff.

¹⁸ As Stephens seems to interpret; see below, n. 26.

such as weaving and playing the lyre. Alternatively, if Colluthus understands the Theocritean lines to include Helen in the women who indulge in sports like men,¹⁹ he makes Paris underline the point that Helen is indeed different from the other women of her country and, whilst they look like men, she does not. Χρῖσαμέναις ἀνδριστί (l. 23) does not refer to Helen, for Colluthus. Further support to Spartan women's masculinity is given by one interpretation of the reason of Lacedaemon's distinction for its women in the well-known Delphic oracle about the Megarians' insignificance among Greeks (Deinias fr. 7 Müller): γαίης μὲν πάσης τὸ Πελασγικὸν Ἄργος ἄμεινον, ἵπποι Θρηϊκίαι, Λακεδαιμόνιαι δὲ γυναῖκες. Commenting on this account, where each Greek city is given a feature of eminence, Ps. Nonnus (4, 74) says ὁμοίως καὶ ἡ Λακεδαίμων ... (sc. ἔσχε) γυναῖκας ἀνδρείας καὶ ἀπτοήτους.

Aphrodite condemns the masculinity of Athena and other manly women whom she derisively calls Ἀθῆναι. The poet's use of the plural and his generalization, which implies the existence of many possible Ἀθῆναι, is odd, if Athena alone is the target of Aphrodite's attack.²⁰ The phrasing suggests that the poet is employing the plural deliberately so as indirectly to include other women, too, in Aphrodite's accusation of lack of femininity. Obviously, the first group of women that comes to mind here are the Amazons, who could certainly be described as resembling men, since in Homer they are ἀντιάνειραι (Il. 3, 189; 6, 186). However, the Amazons are not directly relevant to Aphrodite's attack to Athena here and their presence on the battlefields of Nonnus²¹ is not enough for one to maintain that they are also alluded to here. The likelihood that the Amazons are being referred to is lessened still further by the point that the Amazons in fact help the Trojans and are not opposed to Aphrodite and by the fact that their leader Penthesi-

¹⁹ A plausible assumption, since Theocritus says at 18,39–41 that the girls will collect flowers from the Δρόμος and remember Helen: Δρόμος was a piece of open ground near the Eurotas where the youths presumably exercised (cf. Gow on l,39). If the girls remember Helen at the Dromos, this means that Helen was actually with them when they exercised. Furthermore, if, with Orsini, we accept Lennep's correction of the transmitted ἐς ῥόδον to ἐς δρόμον at Coll. 350, Colluthus is indeed referring to Helen's athletic activity at the Δρόμος, in reminiscence of Theocritus. See Prauscello 2008, 177.

²⁰ References to a god in the plural are, of course, rare and mostly occur in figures of speech (for instance, Plut. Mor. 744 B, 6–8 ἀλλὰ τί ταῦτα ταῖς Μούσαις μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς προσῆκεν, ὥστε Μούσας ἔχομεν ἑννέα, Δήμητρας δὲ καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς καὶ Ἀρτέμιδας οὐκ ἔχομεν;) or concern the gods' statues (Athen. 4,5,6f. Ἐρωτες καὶ Ἀρτέμιδες καὶ Πᾶνες καὶ Ἑρμαῖ καὶ τοιαῦτα πολλὰ εἶδωλα).

²¹ See below, with n. 48.

leia is portrayed as a strong but fascinating woman.²² Other women famously involved in a war, this time outside mythology, are actually the Argive women who opposed Spartans under the guidance of Telesilla, as, for instance, Pausanias recounts (2, 20, 8–10); nevertheless, Colluthus' Aphrodite has no reason to 'attack' these women, even if one accepts that the poet might perhaps allude to them, too, with this plural.

Aphrodite's words are complemented at the end of Paris' speech, where the Spartan women are actually placed in parallel to, and identified with, the manly Αθήναι of 187–189. In Colluthus, all these masculine Spartan women are said to be inferior to Helen, who is unique in her environment and unique, too, among the totality of Argive women, exactly as Theocritus says (note Ἀχαιιάδων γαῖαν), through the mouth of Helen's girlfriends, in his poem on Helen. Consequently, since in Colluthus the 'Athenae' correspond to the masculine women of Sparta, the poet also draws a parallel between Spartan women and Athena herself, as Helen is, as Paris states at Coll. 296, Aphrodite's sister.²³ This parallelism also enhances the meaningfulness of Colluthus' use of the adjective 'Argive' to describe Helen's milieu. It is noteworthy that Ἀργεῖη Ἑλένη appears in Homer twice in an account of Helen's beauty (Il. 9, 140 and 282). Playfully alluding to Helen's Homeric adjective, Colluthus has Paris say that not only all other Spartan women are manly, compared to beautiful 'Argive' Helen, but also that actual Argive women are totally deprived of femininity. In this particular case, the adjective refers to Athena's specific character as an Argive goddess in Callimachus' Bath of Pallas. Since, as we argue in the present paper, the statement by Paris' Colluthus is inspired by Theocr. 18, 19–25, the poet is even more likely to have made use of the Fifth Callimachean Hymn.²⁴ It has been shown that Callimachus drew inspiration from Theocr. 18, 22–32 for

²² Cf. Qu. Sm. 1, 571 καὶ ἰφθίμη περ εὐσοῖα, 1, 623 δέμας ἠύ. For the femininity of dead Penthesileia, beautiful, compared to Artemis, honoured by Aphrodite and attracting Achilles, cf. Qu. Sm. 1, 663–674 κείτο γὰρ ἐν τεύχεσσι κατὰ χθονὸς ἠὺτ' ἀτειρῆς / Ἄρτεμις ὑπνώουσα Διὸς τέκος ... / ... / αὐτὴ γὰρ μιν ἔτευξε καὶ ἐν φθιμένοισιν ἀγητὴν / Κύπρις ἐυστέφανος κρατεροῦ παράκοιτις Ἄρηος, / ὄφρα τι καὶ Πηλῆος ἀμύμονος υἱ' ἀκαχίση. / ... / καὶ δ' Ἀχιλεὺς ἀλίσστων ἐφ' ἐντειρέτο θυμῷ, / ... / ἐπεὶ μέγεθός τε καὶ εἶδος / ἔπλετ' ἀμώμητός τε καὶ ἀθανάτησιν ὁμοίη.

²³ Aphrodite and Helen are close to each other in beauty; also, erotic passion characterizes the actions of both in mythological tradition. For an analysis of the role that Aphrodite played in bringing Paris and Helen together in Homer, Sappho (fr. 16 L–P) and Alcaeus (fr. 283 L–P), see Edmunds 2016, 126f.

²⁴ For other Callimachean reminiscences in Colluthus, principally of fr. 634 on Coll. 174f., see Hollis 2006, 154f.

his account of, *inter alia*, Athena's athletic looks and for his description of Athena's anointment "like the Lacedaemonian stars near the Eurotas" (H. 5, 24f.), i. e., like Helen's brothers, the Dioscuri.²⁵ Athena's masculinity mentioned in Colluthus in Aphrodite's speech after the beauty contest indeed draws on Callimachus' account of Athena's appearance and deeds in general and on his presentation of her actions directly before the contest in particular, as has already been noted. This, however, occurs in association with Id. 18, and certain points of Colluthus' account can be seen as specifically referring to the Callimachean portrait of Athena as read by Colluthus, who seems to perceive the echo of the Theocritean lines in Callimachus. If Callimachus, according to one possible interpretation, is drawing a parallel between Helen and Athena, presenting them as being both athletic and beautiful, rather than identifying Helen with Aphrodite and Helen's group of friends with Athena, the two passages of Colluthus discussed here do not then agree with Callimachus. From these passages we are to gather (perhaps together, according to another possible and more likely interpretation, with Callimachus)²⁶ that Helen is to be identified with Aphrodite, but contrasted with Athena, who is neither feminine nor beautiful. Helen is beautiful and purely feminine, in her capacity as the ideal woman, given her Aphrodite-like quality, and is clearly to be distinguished from her entourage of masculine-looking Lacedaemonian girls and any other women who behave in a masculine fashion, *χρισάμεναι ἀνδριστί*, and who are, in contrast to what they themselves think, weak rather than strong Athenae: *ἀνάλκιδες Ἀθῆναι*.

The occurrence of *φυταλιή*, not extremely common in poetry, to describe the apple, destructive prize of Aphrodite, *φυταλιὴν πολέμοιο, κακὴν πολέμοιο γενέθλην* (Coll. 169), may be first sign that Colluthus is referring to Callimachus' Fifth Hymn. It recalls the same term which designates Athena's tree, the olive-tree, which produces the goddesses' *χρίματα* in Callimachus, *τᾶς ἰδίας ἔκγονα φυταλιᾶς* (H. 5, 26), especially when seen with regard to the neighboring word from the stem *γεν-* in both verses: Callimachus'

²⁵ See Bulloch 1985, 41, 131f. and Stephens 2015, 21 and 250, on Call. H. 5, 23–28.

²⁶ Bulloch (1985, 132) maintains that a parallel is drawn between Helen and Athena in the Fifth Hymn, especially on the grounds of the reference at Call. H. 5, 28 to Theocr. 18, 29–31, where the poets describe the 'rosy' quality of Athena and Helen respectively. Differently, Stephens (2015, 250) sees Athena as corresponding to Helen's company and Aphrodite to Helen: "Callimachus transfers the simple health regimen of Helen's female attendants (running, anointing in manly fashion) to Athena; ... However, Theocritus goes on to inform us that none of these girls is the equal of Helen, just as in the contest Athena, however healthy, is no match for Aphrodite."

φυταλιή gives birth to the manly olive-oil, suitable for Athena's toilette before the beauty contest, and Colluthus' φυταλιή, the womanly prize of beauty won by Aphrodite in the same contest, will ultimately give birth²⁷ to war, the business of manly Athena. Now, Aphrodite's reference to limbs which are neither masculine nor feminine, when they are examined (189 κερκρίμενων μελέων, echoed in 302 μελέεσσιν,²⁸ of the limbs of man-like women, in Paris' speech), acquires a further dimension when read in regard to the reference to Athena's body in Callimachus. At H. 5, 5f. we hear of Athena's μεγάλως ... πάχεις, which the goddess does not wash before cleaning up the λαγόνες of her horses. Even if the phrase could be and actually was used for a female with no allusion to masculinity,²⁹ the juxtaposition of Athena's "big arms" to the loins of her horses, in whose washing she shows great interest, implies man-like strength and a consequent lack of femininity. This feature is, of course, emphasized by the ἄρσεν ... ἔλαιον suitable for the anointment of these limbs (1, 29)³⁰ and probably lies beneath the poet's reference to naked and bathing Athena's στήθεα καὶ λαγόνας (1, 88), where the repetition of the noun λαγόνες for the goddesses' private parts after its use for the horses' loins is notable and does not seem random.³¹ The implication of (male) strength that qualifies the body of Athena even when she is imagined in an environment of femininity (bathing with her companion nymph) is grasped also by Propertius who, when referring to this particular Callimachean scene, he describes Athena's limbs as she bathes with Chariclo as *fortia ... membra* (4, 9, 58). Colluthus' attribution of masculinity to the μέλεα of (Argive) Athena and her followers recalls the Callimachean sketching of the body of masculine Argive Athena, all the more since the participle κερκρί-

²⁷ In the only instances where φυταλιή is found in a context of giving birth (without, however, cognates from γεν-), φυταλιή is actually, and more expectedly, the product of the birth, the one which is being born, rather the one who gives birth to something, as in Callimachus and Colluthus: Nonn. D. 16, 270f. γαῖα ... / φυταλιήν ὄδινε, 47, 16–18 φυταλιή δ' ἀνέτελλεν ἀπὸ χθονίου δὲ κόλπου / αὐτοφυῆς γλυκεροῖο πεπαινομένου τοκετοῖο / βότρυς ἐλαιήεντος ἐφοινίχθη Μαραθῶνος.

²⁸ As Cadau (2015, 123) observes.

²⁹ Call. H. 1, 30 μέγαν ... πῆχυν (of Rhea); see Bulloch 1985, 117, on μεγάλως.

³⁰ For Athena's masculinity in Call. H. 5, 1–30, see Depew 1993, 66–69. Depew (1993, 67) notes that the reference to Athena's masculine quality in the hymn's first part begins with the description of the goddess busying herself with her horses.

³¹ Stephens (2015, 258, on λαγόνας) remarks: "While there is no doubt that Callimachus is creating an erotically charged scene, the repetition of the noun is jarring", further noting the repetition of λυσαμένα at 10 (on Athena setting her horses free from their yoke) and 70 (on Athena's and Chariclo's loosening the περόναι of their veils).

μένων³² that Colluthus uses points directly to the κρίσις that Paris made, which is the topic of Colluthus' poem and also of the first part of Callimachus' hymn. Paris actually ἔκρινε these very μέλεα. Zeus had ordained that Paris should διακρίνειν eyes and face;³³ Paris tried διακρίνειν the beauty in eyes, neck, feet;³⁴ Aphrodite revealed the upper part of her body, described by the terms κόλπον, στήθος, μαζοί (Coll. 155–158). These μέλεα are feminine par excellence and Paris assigns them the prize: Callimachean Athena's στήθεα and λαγόνες, included in Propertius' *fortia membra*, are not feminine when they undergo a κρίσις, Aphrodite implies at Coll. 189 with her κεκρμένων μελέων οὐτ' ἄρσενες οὔτε γυναῖκες. Finally, Colluthus' account of how Aphrodite arranged her hair before participating in the contest (83f.) clearly refers the reader to Callimachus' narration of how Aphrodite "many times re-arranged the same lock of hair" (H. 5, 22), as has been already observed.³⁵ Colluthus' reminiscence of Callimachus' Fifth Hymn can be traced, albeit less certainly and less visibly, in a couple of passages yet. As a whole, Aphrodite's rejection of σάκεα and Athenae who love wars (Coll. 162 and 188) can be seen as recalling Callimachean Athena at Call. H. 5, 44, who is ἵππων καὶ σακέων ἀδομένα πατάγω.³⁶

Callimachus mocks Aphrodite by making her obsessive with her looks: Colluthus, in return, has Aphrodite take her literary revenge by presenting the goddess' concern about her hair and about her appearance, as a whole, as

³² For Colluthus' κεκρμένων μελέων as echoing Nonn. Par. 19, 188, see Schönberger on Coll. 186f. and Cadau 2015, 122f.

³³ διακρίνειν δὲ θεάων / κέκλεο καὶ βλεφάρων ξυνοχὴν καὶ κύκλα προσώπων (Coll. 74f.).

³⁴ ἦκα διακρίνειν πειρήσατο κάλλος ἐκάστης / δέρετο μὲν γλαυκῶν βλεφάρων σέλας, ἔδρακε δειρὴν / ... / καὶ πτέρνης μετόπισθε καὶ αὐτῶν ἴχνια ταρσῶν (Coll. 133–136).

³⁵ Call. H. 5, 22 is mentioned by Cadau (2015, 124), with reference to Athena's general indifference to cosmetics, contrasted to Aphrodite's coquetry. Magnelli (2016, 294) sees a specific echo of the Callimachean passage in Colluthus' description of Aphrodite's toilette.

³⁶ When Aphrodite says that she has nothing to do with shields, τί γὰρ σακέων Ἀφροδίτη; (Coll. 162), and that the 'Athenae' are ἀγαλλόμεναι πολέμοισι (Coll. 188), the reader recalls, apart from Athena's portrait in Callimachus, a number of poetic passages. The first instance is copied *verbatim* from Nonn. D. 24, 304 τί γὰρ σακέων Ἀφροδίτη (as Livrea 1968, 147, Orsini 1969, 20, and Hopkinson on Nonn. loc. cit. observed). The second instance recalls Hom. h. Ven. 9 ἀλλ' ἄρα οἱ πόλεμοι τε ἄδον καὶ ἔργον Ἄρηος (mentioned by Cadau 2015, 124, in regard to Athena's interest in war, as this stands in contrast to Aphrodite's character) and, perhaps, Hom. h. Min. (11 Allen-Halliday-Sikes) 2f. ἦ ... μέλει πολεμῆϊα ἔργα / περθόμεναί τε πόλῃες αὐτῆ τε πτόλεμοι τε.

normal feminine behaviour,³⁷ which rightly contributes to her victory. Callimachus has ridiculed Aphrodite for her coquetry and given prominence to the masculine Athena, whom he praised and made his protagonist. In Colluthus, it is now Aphrodite's turn to ridicule her rivals ("Ἥρην κερτομέουσα καὶ ἀντιάνειραν Ἀθήνην, Coll. 171). She makes it clear that in Athena's case un-feminine behaviour and love of wars, features which Callimachus, together with most other poets of the past, admired and extolled (though not without irony and humour)³⁸ are nothing but a very good reason for mockery. Thus, before the contest, Aphrodite admits that she is the only ἀναλκίς goddess and, rather than carry weapons, uses love's bonds instead (Coll. 92–95), only to reverse the characterization and apply it to Athena (and her followers) after the contest, saying that the real ἀνάλκιδες women are the Ἀθῆναι.

The words of Colluthus' Aphrodite are important above all in that they invert the logic that underlies a famous and classical portrayal of the goddess. In Hom. Il. 5, 330–351, where she is presented as particularly delicate and feminine,³⁹ Aphrodite is involved in a battle to save Aeneas and ends up being attacked, wounded and taunted by Diomedes:

ὁ δὲ Κύπριν ἐπώχετο νηλεὶ χαλκῷ,
 γινώσκων ὅ τ' ἀναλκίς ἔην θεός, οὐδὲ θεάων
 τάων αἶ τ' ἀνδρῶν πόλεμον κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,
 οὐτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίη οὔτε πτολίπορθος Ἐνυώ. (5, 330–333)

"He the while had gone in pursuit of Cypris with his pitiless bronze, discerning that she was a weakling goddess, and not one of those that lord it in the battle of warriors – no Athene she, nor Enyo, sacker of cities." (Murray's translation)

After wounding her, Diomedes demands that she withdraw from war and asks her in mockery if it is not sufficient for her to seduce weak women:

εἶκε Διὸς θύγατερ πολέμου καὶ δηϊοτῆτος·
 ἧ οὐχ ἄλις ὅττι γυναῖκας ἀνάλκιδας ἠπεροπέυεις; (5, 348f.)

"Keep thee away, daughter of Zeus, from war and fighting. Sufficeth it not that thou beguilest weakling women?" (Murray's translation)

³⁷ For ladies' similar hair styling in literature, see Matthews 1996, passim; Matthews mentioned Hom. Il. 14, 175–177 (Hera), Ap. Rh. 3, 36f. (Aphrodite) and passages from novels as models of Coll. 81–83.

³⁸ See, for instance, Griffiths 1988, 232; Stephens 2015, 233.

³⁹ See Kirk on 336–338.

Homeric Diomedes knows⁴⁰ that Aphrodite is ἀνάγκις and unfit for war, in contrast to Athena and Enyo. After defeating her (even if this defeat consists of a light wound, which, nevertheless, causes Aphrodite much pain),⁴¹ he orders her to retreat (εἶκε) and states that the appropriate place for her activities is the sphere of women, weak and so similar to her, ἀνάγκιδες.⁴² It is particularly significant for the present discussion that ancient commentators had already observed that Helen (who describes Aphrodite's appeal to her with the verb ἠπεροπεύειν in her address to the goddess at Il. 3, 399) is actually implicitly referred to in this line.⁴³ What is more, in this Homeric episode Aphrodite is wounded ostensibly by Diomedes, but actually by Athena, who directs the hero against her: Il. 5, 131f. ἀτὰρ εἶ κε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη / ἔλθῃσ' ἐς πόλεμον, τὴν γ' οὐτάμεν ὄξει χαλκῶ (Athena's words to Diomedes) and 5, 405 σοὶ δ' ἐπὶ τοῦτον ἀνήκε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (Dione's words to Aphrodite).⁴⁴ Finally, as they watch Aphrodite's complaints and Dione's treatment of her daughter's wound, Hera and Athena address Zeus on the subject of Aphrodite's hardships with teasing words: αἱ δ' αὐτ' εἰσορώουσι Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη / κερτομίους ἐπέεσσι Δία Κρονίδην ἐρέθειζον (5, 418/419).

As we have seen, the Aphrodite of Colluthus implicitly replies to the derisory reference to her and to the eulogy of her rival in Callimachus' Fifth Hymn. At the same time, she also takes her revenge for her maltreatment by the Athena of the Iliad. Thus the vehemence in Colluthus of Aphrodite's attack on the two goddesses is justified still more. It is now Aphrodite who addresses Hera and Athena and does so employing mockery. To describe

⁴⁰ Γινώσκειν here, apart from denoting Diomedes' recognition of the goddess, also and principally marks that the hero knows that she is a weak opponent: see Kirk on Il. 5, 127–130 and 331–333.

⁴¹ Il. 5, 336 ἄκρην οὔτασε χεῖρα, 5, 343 ἦ δὲ μέγα ἰάχουσα, 5, 352 τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς, 5, 364 ἀκηχεμένη φίλον ἦτορ. Dione's wiping the ichor from her daughter's arm is enough for curing the wound and stopping the pain: 5, 416f. ἦ ῥα καὶ ἀμφοτέρησιν ἀπ' ἰχῶ χερρὸς ὁμόργυ· / ἄλθετο χεῖρ, ὀδύνα δὲ κατηπιόωντο βαρεῖαι. See Kirk on Il. 5, 416.

⁴² For ἀνάγκις as an adjective appropriate for women, who do not have valour in war, see Kirk on Il. 5, 349.

⁴³ See Kirk on Il. 5, 349. Also, cf. Eust. 2, 86, 19–22 van der Valk (on Il. 5, 348f.) ὅτι θηλύφρονι ἀνδρὶ ἀχρεῖα τὰ εἰς πόλεμον, ἐπιφωνηθήσεται τὸ “εἶκε πολέμοιο καὶ δηϊότητος, ἢ οὐχ' ἄλλις ὅτι γυναῖκας ἀνάγκιδας ἠπεροπεύεις”, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. Ὅμηρος δὲ περὶ Ἀφροδίτης τοῦτο φησιν, ἥτις ὡσπερ τὴν Ἑλένην, οὕτω καὶ ἄλλας ἀπατώσα ἐποίει ἀφραίνειν.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that Athena endowed Diomedes with exceptional valour at the very beginning of the rhapsody Il. 5, 1f.: ἐνθ' αὖ Τυδεΐδῃ Διομήδεϊ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη / δῶκε μένος καὶ θάρσος.

this, the poet uses a cognate of κερτόμιος, the term employed in the Iliad to describe mockery by Hera and Athena: Ἥρην κερτομέουσα καὶ ἀντιάνειραν Ἀθήνην (Coll. 171).⁴⁵ Aphrodite says that her rivals are experienced in war, but have now been defeated by her. To demand that they acknowledge her victory Aphrodite uses the same Homeric verb employed by the triumphant Diomedes, repeating it twice for emphasis: εἴξατέ μοι πολέμοιο συνήθεις, εἴξατε νίκης (Coll. 172). Then, just as the Diomedes of the Iliad knows (γινώσκων) that Aphrodite is ἀνάλκις,⁴⁶ unlike Athena and Enyo, and states that her sphere of authority is over other ἀνάλκιδες women, the Aphrodite of Colluthus asks the defeated Athena whether she is unaware (ἀγνώσσεις)⁴⁷ of the fact that women like herself are ἀνάλκιδες. As a winner, Aphrodite now exults in her confirmed right to throw back the accusation of weakness at the powerful goddess of the Iliad who humiliates her in that poem. Having been applied in the Iliad to the women-like women, followers of Aphrodite, the Homeric 'loser', the adjective ἀνάλκιδες is now transferred to the men-like women, followers of Athena, who is now the loser in Colluthus. Along with many other ancient readers, Colluthus very probably understands the ἀνάλκιδες women of Il. 5, 349 to refer to Helen in particular. Thus the words of Colluthus' Aphrodite acquire yet further significance, as the goddess actually declares that Helen and the feminine ideal she represents are themselves strong, rather than weak, in contrast to the logic of the protagonists of the poems of war.

From this discussion it is evident that delicacy and femininity, features unsuitable to and rejected in the context of contests and combats in the male world of heroic epic, and afterwards treated with typical Alexandrian irony and ambiguity in Callimachus in the Bath of Pallas, are qualities that are endorsed and valued in Colluthus' poem, as the reader gathers from the evolution of the plot and its poetic connotations. The real power that creates a victor lies not in Athena's and Diomedes' physical strength and perform-

⁴⁵ Magnelli (2016, 294) sees in Aphrodite's reaction a reversal of her welcoming of Hera and Athena in Apollonius (3, 52–54), where Aphrodite's modesty is interpreted as mockery by Hera (Ap. Rh. 3, 56 κερτομέεις ~ Coll. 171 κερτομέουσα).

⁴⁶ The parallel between the words of Aphrodite at Coll. 92 μούνη Κύπρις ἀνάλκις ἦν θεός (Aphrodite's ironic self-presentation before the contest) and Il. 5, 331 has been already noticed by older critics. See Ludwig 1901, 9; Livrea 1968, 112, on 90–92.

⁴⁷ From a different point of view, Cadau (2015, 122) discusses the echo of Mus. 249 (ἀγνώσσεις ὅτι Κύπρις ἀπόσπορος ἐστὶ θαλάσσης) in Coll. 187, and also argues that the reader is to associate the unnatural birth of Athena (Coll. 181–183) with the also unnatural birth of Aphrodite, mentioned in Musaeus' line. The parallel phrasing was already noticed by older critics. See Livrea 1968, 156 ad loc.; Schönberger 1993, 65, on 186f.

ance on the battlefield; rather, it lies in Aphrodite's and Helen's charm and subtlety that conquer everyone and inspire both love and also poetry of a smaller scale, appropriate for Colluthus' topic. Indeed, Aphrodite states at Coll. 163 ἀγλαΐη πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες, meaningfully applying a verb typically used of Homeric excellence in heroism (Iliad 5 in fact entitled Διομήδους Ἀριστεία) to women's ἀγλαΐη, and promises Paris Helen as a lovable erotic companion who is a counterpart to (κοιρανίη and also) heroic manliness: ἀντὶ μὲν ἠγορέης ἐρατὴν παράκοιτιν ὀπάσσω (164). In 163, Colluthus transforms a Nonnian verse (εἰσὶν Ἀμαζονίδες περὶ Καύκασον, ὀππῶθι πολλαὶ / Χειροβίης πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες, D. 40, 26f.),⁴⁸ addressed by Athena, disguised as Morrheus, Deriades' son-in-law, to Deriades, in which the goddess refers to the martial female race of the Amazons. Such an echo playfully enhances the complication of Colluthus' poetic references, for in a passage on Aphrodite's ἀριστεία in beauty against warlike Athena, the poet uses a maxim uttered by Nonnian Athena, who, disguised as a man, tries to help Dionysus and his female army, the Maenads, against a king whose daughter Athena compares to the Amazons. Yet another Nonnian verse, regarding the ἀριστεία of beauty of the bacchant Chalcomedeia, both lovely and warlike, is echoed, too, in Colluthus' phrasing.⁴⁹ To return to Colluthus' setting: it should be noted that in rejecting Athena's and the Athenae's masculinity, Colluthan Aphrodite should not be regarded as rejecting gender transgression in general nor condemning the adoption of opposite-sex behaviour for both men and women nor defending the properness of the traditional strict differentiation between men's and women's realms. Each of the protagonists of the story, necessarily representing both sexes, each one moved to action by her power and fully exposed to it, are carefully and emphatically portrayed as expressions of perspectives of life that are non-masculine, at least in the conventional heroic sense. In fact, the predominance of the atmosphere of femininity in the Rape of Helen borders on parody with Paris' "almost effeminate demeanour", as Magnelli puts it, at 230–234, where the Trojan prince, later compared to the androgynous Dionysus (252f.), is presented as almost comically preoccupied with his appearance as he approaches Menelaus' palace.⁵⁰ In this he is imitating his goddess' concern for her toilette before the contest, just as his words

⁴⁸ For the borrowing, see Orsini 1969, 16. Nonnus uses again ἀριστεύουσι γυναῖκες for the Amazons' bravery at D. 36, 266.

⁴⁹ καὶ μελὴς πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀριστεύουσι παρειαί. See Orsini 1969, 17.

⁵⁰ Of course, Paris' relative 'effeminacy' is a traditional feature of his: see Magnelli 2008, 156 and 168, n. 38.

at the end of his address to Helen echo the closing words of Aphrodite's speech to Hera and Athena. And this delicate Paris, who detests Athena-like manly women, uses, too, along with Aphrodite, the Homeric verb for excellence in the battle to describe his prominence in his homeland: ἔνθεν ἀριστεύων ἐμφύλια πάντα διώκω (Coll. 284).⁵¹ Ἀριστεία is clearly transferred from the sphere of the activities of war to that of beauty and refinement and from men and masculine women to women and non-masculine men.

However, Colluthus' demonstration of the triumph of femininity, love and beauty is not straightforward and unambiguous. Evil omens, which Paris, as naïve as Helen, does not understand, are noted by the poet as soon as Paris leaves Troy. They include a reference to the absence of Athena's approval of the construction of his ship (201), and later, the account about Paris' gazing on the statue of Athena, his chief enemy, on his way to Menelaus' palace.⁵² Moreover, the description of the apple as κακὴν πολέμοιο γενέθλην at 169, discussed above, words such as πολίπορθον, qualifying Helen as a prize, immediately after Aphrodite's triumphant speech (191), and Δύσπαρις (194) and the closure of the epyllion itself make specific reference to the forthcoming catastrophe: the poem ends with Cassandra's tearing of her veil as she watches the couple coming (391f.) and with the phrase τὸν ἀρχέκακον πολιήτην referring to Paris, the phrase actually positioned at the poem's last hemistich.⁵³ The poet knows that Paris' action will prove highly destructive, that Athena will not remain defeated and ἀσχαλώσα (Coll. 192) forever and that the traditionally powerful, the masculine (albeit occasionally female, such as Athena and Enyo) Homeric ἀριστεύοντες, will finally defeat the momentarily powerful Homeric ἀνάκιδες, male and female: Aphrodite, Paris, Helen. Colluthus' artful undermining of the stature, characters and attitude of his protagonists is part of the generally ironic handling of his material and the teasing way in which he treats his own point of view.⁵⁴ One further subtle manifestation of this irony, relevant to the present discussion, lies in that the poet describes Sparta, as seen by Paris as he approaches it, as καλλιγύναικα at l, 223. If Sparta is a land of fair women, as is stated at Coll. 223 and also at Hom. Od. 13, 412 Σπάρτην ἐς καλλιγύναικα, which is echoed in Colluthus, then Paris' claim at 302–304

⁵¹ For the verb meaning "I am an aristocrat" in the present passage, in contrast to its Homeric sense of bravery, see Magnelli 2008, 157 and 169, n. 45.

⁵² See further Magnelli 2008, 159–162.

⁵³ As Paschalis (2008, 139) observes, in the last lines of the poem the capture of Troy is almost seen as an accomplished event.

⁵⁴ For Colluthus' humour in the handling of myth, see, for instance, Magnelli 2008, 165.

that, with the exception of Helen, all (Argive and) Spartan women look like men is *a priori* open to doubt. The reader is invited to ponder on the validity of Paris' statement, which, then, is capable to more than one interpretation, if we exclude, of course, the (unlikely) possibility that the adjective here is purely ornamental and devoid of any real meaning and that the phrase is a parroting repetition of the Homeric phrase. One explanation that reconciles the adjective for Sparta with Paris' words is that Sparta is καλλιγύναιξ only because of Helen, as some Homeric interpreters did maintain.⁵⁵ Another possible interpretation, however, is that Sparta does indeed possess beautiful women (though by no means more attractive than Helen), given that this is reported by the narrator, who is an 'objective' onlooker. The well-known oracle reported by Deinias fr. 7 Müller, cited in the beginning of the present paper, can be also regarded as a witness to Spartan women's beauty, if the reason for Lacedaemonian women's eminence in this is εὐπρέπεια, as Choricus takes it,⁵⁶ rather than ἀνδρεία, as Ps. Nonnus, cited above, has it. Other passages in which Spartan women excel in beauty are Athen. 13, 566a καλλίστας γεννώσης τῆς Σπάρτης τὰς γυναῖκας and Mus. 75f.: καὶ Σπάρτης ἐπέβην, Λακεδαίμονος ἔδρακον ἄστν, / ἦξι μόνον καὶ ἄεθλον ἀκούομεν ἀγλαΐων, where a Spartan beauty contest is actually mentioned.⁵⁷ Then Paris is either lying to Helen, in order to maximize his praise and to convince her more easily, or believes what he says and is blind to other women's beauty when he stands before Helen, whose superb looks annihilate those of every other woman. It might also be that for the standards of Paris, who is exceptionally handsome and delicate himself, as we have seen at 232–234, only extreme feminine beauty deserves to be called feminine. With such refined implicit comments on the subjectivity of things and the possible existence of more than one 'truths', the poet further highlights the frail status of his characters' views and casts doubt on the soundness of their words, reasoning, choices, (re)actions and general stance. Hermione's dream, which is introduced in terms that challenge its truthfulness (371f. ἡ μὲν ἀλγτεύουσα δολοφροσύνησιν ὄνειρων / μητέρα παπταίνειν ὠίσατο;

⁵⁵ Eustathius ad loc. (2, 56, 29 Stallbaum) ὅτι καλλιγύναικα τὴν Σπάρτην κἀνταῦθα λέγει διὰ τὴν Ἑλένην.

⁵⁶ Chor. 29, 1, 3 Foerster and Richtsteig Ἀχαιίδα γούν καλλιγύναικα τὸ ἔπος φησίν, τὰ πρῶτα φέρουσι τῆς εὐπρεπείας αἱ Λάκαιναι, εἰ τῷ ἰκανὸς Ἀπόλλων τεκμηριώσῃ ἵππον μὲν Θεσσαλικὴν ἐπαινῶν, Λακεδαιμονίην δὲ γυναῖκα.

⁵⁷ However, such Lacedaemonian καλλιστεῖα are unattested; for this reason it has been argued that the reference is to Spartan girls' athletic education. See Kost 1971, 261 (on l. 75).

cf. 323, where night's gate of false dreams is described as τὴν δὲ δολοφροσύνης, κενεῶν θρέπτειραν ὄνειρων), but in which Helen does reveal a part of the truth, thereby, however, contradicting her previous self in that she denies her voluntarily adultery,⁵⁸ is one more example of Colluthus' 'skeptical' treatment of his story.

This paper has discussed the passages of the Rape of Helen which refer to the femininity of Helen and to the absence of femininity in Athena and other females grouped with Athena. It is argued that Colluthus exploits Theocritus' portrayal of Helen and her company in Id. 18 in association with Callimachus' portrayal of Athena and Aphrodite in the Fifth Hymn, in order to give to his own Aphrodite and his Paris a literary basis for their criticism of non-feminine women. At the same time, the poet draws on the Homeric scene of Aphrodite's injury by Diomedes and reverses the situation there, in order to underscore the predominance and triumph of the goddess, who is feeble in the Iliad, over the traditionally strong Athena. Such poetic transformations are not carried out without ambiguity and recurrent twists which blur the reader's idea about the extent to which the narrator treats his characters seriously, partakes in their feelings and approves their frame of mind.

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⁵⁸ For a discussion of the lie of Helen, who had clearly agreed to follow Paris (314/315 ἀγγρέο νῦν Σπάρτηθεν ἐπὶ Τροίην με κομίζων. / ἔψομα) and now denies her responsibility (380 χθιζός με μολῶν ἀπατήλιος ἥρπασεν ἀνὴρ), in Hermione's dream, see Cadau 2015, 259–261.

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