

## MEETING 11/5

### NEW OUTLINE:

- Home Page/Introduction – Introduce who Helen is and the different ways shes been portrayed and perceived over the years.
  - **Helen** ([Ancient Greek](#): Ἑλένη, [romanized](#): *Helénē*<sup>[b]</sup>), also known as **Helen of Troy**,<sup>[2][3]</sup> or **Helen of Sparta**,<sup>[4]</sup> and in [Latin](#) as **Helena**,<sup>[5]</sup> was a figure in [Greek mythology](#) said to have been the most beautiful woman in the world. She was believed to have been the daughter of [Zeus](#) and [Leda](#) or [Nemesis](#), and the sister of [Clytemnestra](#), [Castor](#), [Pollux](#), [Philonoe](#), [Phoebe](#) and [Timandra](#). She was married first to King [Menelaus](#) of [Sparta](#) "who became by her the father of [Hermione](#), and, according to others, of [Nicostratus](#) also."<sup>[5]</sup> Her subsequent marriage<sup>[c]</sup> to [Paris of Troy](#) was the most immediate cause of the [Trojan War](#).
  - Helen first appears in the poems of [Homer](#), after which she became a popular figure in Greek literature. These works are set in the final years of the [Age of Heroes](#), a mythological era which features prominently in the canon of Greek myth. Because the Homeric poems are known to have been transmitted orally before being written down, some scholars speculate that such stories were passed down from earlier [Mycenaean Greek](#) tradition, and that the Age of Heroes may itself reflect a mythologized memory of that era.<sup>[20]</sup>
  - The legends of Helen during her time in Troy are contradictory: Homer depicts her ambivalently, both regretful of her choice and sly in her attempts to redeem her public image. Other accounts have a treacherous Helen who simulated [Bacchic](#) rites and rejoiced in the carnage she caused. In some versions, Helen does not arrive in Troy, but instead waits out the war in [Egypt](#).<sup>[7]</sup> Ultimately, Paris was killed in action, and in Homer's account Helen was reunited with Menelaus, though other versions of the legend recount her ascending to Olympus instead. A cult associated with her developed in Hellenistic [Laconia](#), both at Sparta and elsewhere; at [Therapne](#) she shared a shrine with Menelaus. She was also worshipped in [Attica](#) and on [Rhodes](#).
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- Family and Early Life (family --- Oath of Tyndareus) \*try and keep anything from Homer or Euripides, the other sources I don't care about\*
  - In most sources, including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Helen is the daughter of [Zeus](#) and of [Leda](#), the wife of the Spartan king [Tyndareus](#).<sup>[33]</sup> [Euripides](#)' play *Helen*, written in the late 5th century BC, is the earliest source to report the most familiar account of Helen's birth: that, although her putative father was Tyndareus, she was actually Zeus' daughter. In the form of a swan, the king of gods was chased by an eagle, and sought refuge with Leda. The swan gained her affection, and the two mated. Leda then produced an [egg](#), from which Helen emerged.<sup>[34]</sup> [Pseudo-Apollodorus](#) states that Leda had intercourse with both Zeus and Tyndareus the night she conceived Helen.<sup>[37]</sup>
  - Two [Athenians](#), [Theseus](#) and [Pirithous](#), thought that since they were sons of gods, they should have divine wives; they thus pledged to help each other abduct two daughters of [Zeus](#). Theseus chose Helen, and Pirithous vowed to marry [Persephone](#), the wife of [Hades](#). Theseus took Helen and left her with his mother [Aethra](#) or his associate Aphidnus at [Aphidnae](#) or [Athens](#). Theseus and Pirithous then traveled to the [underworld](#), the domain of Hades, to kidnap Persephone. Hades pretended to offer them hospitality and set a feast, but, as soon as the pair sat down, snakes coiled around their feet and held them there. Helen's abduction caused an invasion of Athens by Castor and Pollux, who captured Aethra in revenge, and returned their sister to Sparta.<sup>[45]</sup>
  - [Ovid](#)'s *Heroides* give us an idea of how ancient and, in particular, [Roman authors](#) imagined Helen in her youth: she is presented as a young princess wrestling naked in the [palaestra](#), alluding to a part of girls' physical education in classical (not Mycenaean) Sparta. [Sextus Propertius](#) imagines Helen as a girl who practices arms and hunts with her brothers:<sup>[49]</sup>
  - Tyndareus was afraid to select a husband for his daughter, or send any of the suitors away, for fear of offending them and giving grounds for a quarrel. [Odysseus](#) was one of the suitors, but had brought no gifts because he believed he had little chance to win the contest. He thus promised to solve the problem, if Tyndareus in turn would support him in his courting of [Penelope](#), the daughter of [Icarus](#). Tyndareus readily agreed, and Odysseus proposed that, before the decision was made, all the suitors should swear a most solemn oath to defend the chosen husband against whoever should quarrel with him. After the suitors had sworn not to retaliate, Menelaus was chosen to be Helen's husband

because he was the "greatest in possessions" and had offered the most gifts.<sup>[52]</sup> As a sign of the importance of the pact, Tyndareus sacrificed a horse.<sup>[53]</sup> Helen and Menelaus became rulers of Sparta, after Tyndareus and Leda abdicated.

- The marriage of Helen and Menelaus marks the beginning of the end of the age of heroes. Concluding the catalog of Helen's suitors, Hesiod reports Zeus' plan to obliterate the race of men and the heroes in particular. The Trojan War, caused by Helen's elopement with Paris, is going to be his means to this end.<sup>[54]</sup>
- Trojan War Era (seduction or kidnapping --- fate) (
  - Paris, a Trojan prince, came to Sparta to claim Helen, in the guise of a supposed diplomatic mission. Before this journey, Paris had been appointed by Zeus to judge the most beautiful goddess; Hera, Athena, or Aphrodite. In order to earn his favour, Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman in the world. Swayed by Aphrodite's offer, Paris chose her as the most beautiful of the goddesses, earning the wrath of Athena and Hera.
  - When he discovered that his wife was missing, Menelaus called upon all the other suitors to fulfill their oaths, thus beginning the Trojan War.
  - Homer paints a poignant, lonely picture of Helen in Troy. She is filled with self-loathing and regret for what she has caused; by the end of the war, the Trojans have come to hate her. When Hector dies, she is the third mourner at his funeral, and she says that, of all the Trojans, Hector and Priam alone were always kind to her.<sup>[75][76]</sup>
    - "Wherefore I wail alike for thee and for my hapless self with grief at heart;  
for no longer have I anyone beside in broad Troy that is gentle to me or kind;  
but all men shudder at me."<sup>[77]</sup>
  - These bitter words reveal that Helen gradually realized Paris' weaknesses, and decided to ally herself with Hector. There is an affectionate relationship between the two, and Helen has harsh words for Paris when she compares the two brothers:<sup>[76][78]</sup>
    - "Howbeit, seeing the gods thus ordained these ills,  
would that I had been wife to a better man,  
that could feel the indignation of his fellows and their many  
revilings. [...]  
But come now, enter in, and sit thee upon this chair, my brother,

since above all others has trouble encompassed thy heart  
because of shameless me, and the folly of Alexander.”<sup>[79][75]</sup>

- After Paris was killed in combat, there was some dispute among the Trojans about which of Priam's surviving sons she should remarry: [Helenus](#) or [Deiphobus](#), but she was given to the latter.
- At least three Ancient Greek authors denied that Helen ever went to Troy; instead, they suggested, Helen stayed in Egypt during the Trojan War. Those three authors are Euripides, Stesichorus, and Herodotus.<sup>[68][69]</sup> In the version put forth by Euripides in his play [Helen](#), [Hera](#) fashioned a likeness ([eidolon](#), εἴδωλον) of Helen out of clouds at Zeus' request, [Hermes](#) took her to Egypt, and Helen never went to Troy, but instead spent the entire war in [Egypt](#).
- During the fall of Troy, Helen's role is ambiguous. In [Virgil's Aeneid](#), Deiphobus gives an account of Helen's treacherous stance: when the [Trojan Horse](#) was admitted into the city, she feigned [Bacchic rites](#), leading a chorus of Trojan women, and, holding a torch among them, she signaled to the Greeks from the city's central tower. In the [Odyssey](#), however, Homer narrates a different story: Helen circled the Horse three times, and she imitated the voices of the Greek women left behind at home—she thus tortured the men inside (including Odysseus and Menelaus) with the memory of their loved ones, and brought them to the brink of destruction.<sup>[80]</sup> When Menelaus finally found her, he raised his sword to kill her. He had demanded that only he should slay his unfaithful wife; but, when he was ready to do so, she dropped her robe from her shoulders, and the sight of her beauty caused him to let the sword drop from his hand.<sup>[b]</sup>
- Helen returned to [Sparta](#) and lived with Menelaus, where she was encountered by Telemachus in Book 4 of [The Odyssey](#). As depicted in that account, she and Menelaus were seemingly reconciled and had a harmonious married life—he holding no grudge at her having run away with a lover and she feeling no restraint in telling anecdotes of her life inside besieged Troy.

- Sources – this page will just list sources, including the Wikipedia page, as well as other sources for photography, and any other credits that need to be provided.
- Additionally, lets try one long page? Since we've cut down the content

## RESPONSES TO INITIAL DRAFTS

- I loooove version A, I think even though we basically took out all the actual text about diff interpretations, the text we have works great with the little circle motif you used to get the many versions thing across, Bc like the circles echo the images—great move I think
- My things I think could work better are legibility of the troy section, where the pulled text is behind the body text, and overall its very large size wise, where at scale it takes a lot of scrolling to get through. I think maybe a overall smaller scale would help, particularly because when the text forms two columns, you have to scroll down and back up
- I think trojan war section could be interesting to see with a dark background and light text to kinda mix up what we've had so far, plus that where the story gets dark
- Version B I like the color story more here, yeah. I think the text for mobile needs to be bigger tho, and I kinda like the idea of the quotes being styled differently (maybe just a h2 or smth)