

# A FAMILY GATHERING AT RHAMNOUS?

## WHO'S WHO ON THE NEMESIS BASE

(PLATES 27 AND 28)

For Marina

THE DATE of the introduction of the cult of Nemesis at Rhamnous has not been determined with any degree of certainty, but the association of the goddess with the Athenian victory at Marathon, made by ancient literary sources, has led some scholars to suggest that the cult was founded, or at least expanded, in the aftermath of the Persian Wars.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was submitted as a school paper to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 1989. Later versions were presented orally in 1990 at the American Academy in Rome, the Canadian Academic Centre in Rome, and the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in San Francisco. I am grateful to the Fulbright Foundation and the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley, whose support allowed me to undertake preliminary research for this paper in Athens; to the Luther Replogle Foundation whose generosity allowed me to continue my work as Oscar T. Broneer Fellow in Classical Archaeology at the American Academy in Rome; to John Camp who introduced me to the problems of the Rhamnous base; and to Christina Traitoraki for her kind assistance in the early stages of the preparation of this paper. I have profited greatly from the insights, suggestions, and criticisms of M. Bell, J. Boardman, D. Clay, A. S. Delivorrias, C. M. Edwards, E. S. Gruen, E. Harrison, D. C. Kurtz, M. Marvin, M. M. Miles, J. Neils, M. C. J. Putnam, B. S. Ridgway, A. F. Stewart, B. A. Stewart, and J. M. Tillotson, all of whom I thank warmly for their help and encouragement. They do not, of course, necessarily agree with the views presented here, nor should they be held responsible for any of my errors. Permission to reproduce photographs and plans has been kindly provided by B. Petrakos, H. Kyrieleis, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

- Delivorrias = A. Delivorrias, «Αμφισχημίες και παραναγνώσεις», *Ήρος* 2, 1984, pp. 83–102  
Kallipolitis = V. G. Kallipolitis, «Η Βάση του αγάλματος της Ραμνουσίας Νέμεσης», *Ἀρχ'Εφ* 1978 (1980), pp. 1–90  
Kjellberg = E. Kjellberg, *Studien zu den attischen Reliefs*, Uppsala 1926  
Petrakos 1981 = B. Pétracos, «La base de la Némésis d'Agoracrite (rapport préliminaire)», *BCH* 105, 1981, pp. 227–253  
Petrakos 1986 = V. Petrakos, «Προβλήματα της Βάσης του αγάλματος της Νεμέσεως», in *Archaische und klassische griechische Plastik (Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums von 22.–25. April 1985 in Athen)*, II, *Klassische griechische Plastik*, H. Kyrieleis, ed., Mainz am Rhein 1986, pp. 89–107  
Picard = C. Picard, *Manuel d'archéologie grecque. La Sculpture*, Paris 1935–1966  
Robertson = M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art*, Cambridge 1975

Numbers in the text in bold face refer to figures carved on the base as numbered in Petrakos 1986.

Nemesis and her cult: *RE* XVI, ii, 1935, s.v. Nemesis [H. Herter], cols. 2338–2380, esp. cols. 2346–2352; more recently, F. W. Hamdorf, *Griechische Kultpersonifikationen der vorhellenistischen Zeit*, Mainz 1964, pp. 35–36, 96–97 and H. A. Shapiro, *Personifications and Abstract Concepts in Greek Art and Literature to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.*, diss. Princeton University 1976, pp. 83–86, 152–155.

Sanctuary at Rhamnous: J. Travlos, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika*, Tübingen 1988, pp. 388–390; M. M. Miles, «A Reconstruction of the Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous», *Hesperia* 58, 1989, pp. 131–249; and B. Petrakos, «Οι ανασκαφές του Ραμνούντος 1813–1987», *Ἀρχ'Εφ* 1987 (1989), pp. 265–298.

Ancient literary sources which associate Nemesis with Marathon include Pausanias 1.33.2–3; Aelius Aristides 12 (p. 203 Dindorf); and *Anth. Pal.* 16.221, 222, 263.



Inscribed accounts from the sanctuary demonstrate that the cult was flourishing by the middle of the 5th century B.C., and recent analysis of the physical remains of both the Classical Temple of Nemesis and the sculptured base of its cult statue suggest that the sanctuary was the object of considerable attention in the years *ca.* 430–420.<sup>2</sup>

Fragments of the cult statue and its sculptured base, now identified as the work of Agorakritos of Paros and his workshop, have been known for well over a century, but despite the description of Pausanias (1.33.2–3, 7–8), their composition has, until recently, remained the subject of considerable scholarly debate.<sup>3</sup> The painstaking physical reconstruction of both these 5th-century originals from hundreds of fragments by Georgios Despinis and Basileios Petrakos, however, has clarified their appearance and added significantly to our understanding of Greek sculpture of the Classical period.

The rectangular statue base consisted of three elements: an ornately-carved socle of white Pentelic marble; a central die of two pentelic blocks; and a crowning course of dark Eleusinian limestone into which the cult statue was set.<sup>4</sup> The physical integration of both the sculptured-relief fragments and recently recovered unsculptured pieces of the central die indicates that the base was decorated on three sides with widely spaced figures carved in high relief. These figures were arranged symmetrically with two pairs of males flanking four females on the front of the base and three males and a horse on each of the two shorter sides (Fig. 1); the back was left blank.<sup>5</sup>

The 14 human figures, traces of which are evident from fragments, break lines, and comparative symmetry, are at variance with the 12 apparently named by Pausanias, who saw the base in the mid-2nd century after Christ:

νῦν δὲ ἥδη δίδειμι ὁπόσα ἐπὶ τῷ βάθρῳ τοῦ ἀγάλματος ἔστιν εἰργασμένα, τοσόνδε ἐς τὸ σαφὲς προδηλώσας. Ἑλένη Νέμεσιν μητέρα εἶναι λέγουσιν Ἕλληνες, Λήδαν δὲ μαστὸν ἐπισχεῖν αὐτῇ καὶ θρέψαι· πατέρα δὲ καὶ οὗτοι καὶ πάντες κατὰ ταῦτα Ἑλένης Δία καὶ οὐ Τυνδάρεων εἶναι νομίζουσι. ταῦτα ἀκηκῶς Φειδίας πεποίηκεν Ἑλένην ὑπὸ Λήδας ἀγομένην παρὰ τὴν Νέμεσιν, πεποίηκε δὲ Τυνδάρεων τε καὶ τοὺς παῖδας καὶ ἄνδρα σὺν ἵππῳ παρεστηκότα Ἰππία ὄνομα· ἔστι δὲ Ἀγαμέμνων καὶ Μενέλαος καὶ Πύρρος ὁ Ἀχιλλέως, πρῶτος οὗτος Ἑρμιόνην τὴν Ἑλένης γυναῖκα λαβών· Ὁρέστης δὲ διὰ τὸ ἐς τὴν μητέρα τόλμημα παρείθη, παραμεινάσης τε ἐς ἅπαν Ἑρμιόνης αὐτῷ καὶ τεκούσης παῖδα. ἐξῆς δὲ ἐπὶ

<sup>2</sup> Accounts: R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford 1969, no. 53, pp. 144–146. Temple: Miles, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–227. Base: Petrakos 1986, p. 107. The cult statue itself was dated *ca.* 430 B.C. by Georgios Despinis (*Συμβολὴ στὴ μελέτη τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Αγορακρίτου*, Athens 1971). The difference between this date and that ascribed to the base, both determined on grounds of style, may, in part, be attributed to the differences between the master's large-scale work carved in the round and the smaller reliefs presumably carved by his workshop. In the discussion following Petrakos' paper, moreover, Despinis expressed a willingness to downdate the statue to the 420's (Petrakos 1986, p. 107). Of course, Pliny (*NH* 36.17) would have us believe that it was decided to erect the statue in Rhamnous only after it (a model?) was rejected by the Athenians. Thus the statue (or its design) would indeed antedate the base.

<sup>3</sup> For the attribution of the cult statue to Agorakritos rather than to Pheidias (both are attested by ancient sources along with a Diodotos) and for previous bibliography see Despinis, *op. cit.* For good pictures of individual fragments of the base and previous bibliography see Kallipolitis and Petrakos 1986.

<sup>4</sup> Petrakos 1981: socle, pp. 246–248; central die, pp. 229–243; crown, pp. 243–245; over-all dimensions of central die = 2.38/2.41 × 1.664 × 0.50 m., p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Petrakos 1986, German abstract, p. 231, Greek abstract, pp. 245–246, fig. 8.

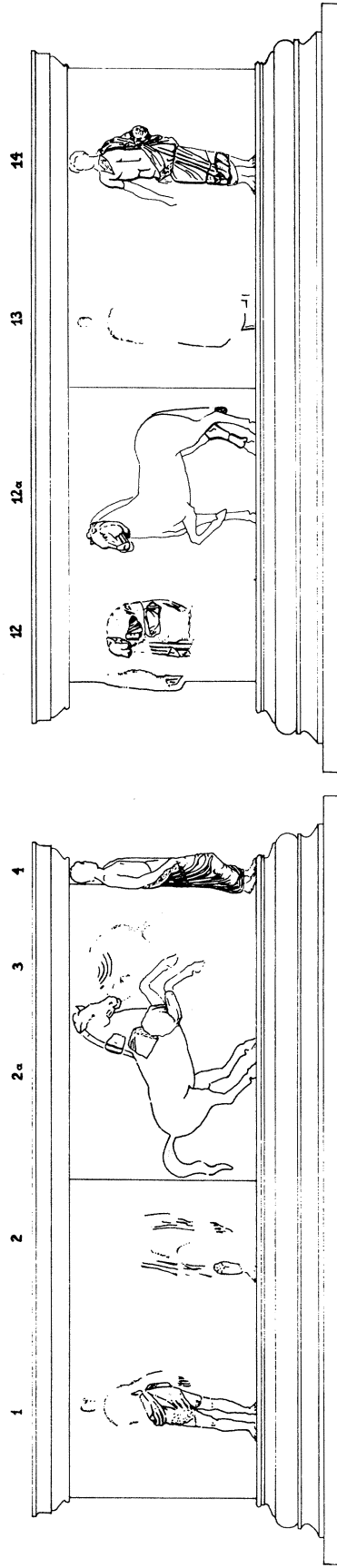
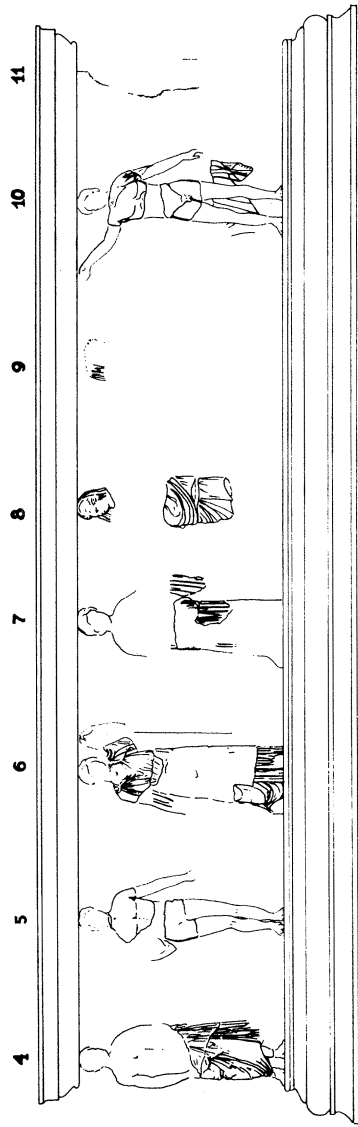


FIG. 1. The base of the statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous (after Petrakos 1986, fig. 8, p. 106 and pl. 112:3)

τῷ Βάθρῳ καὶ Ἐποχος καλούμενος καὶ νεανίας ἐστὶν ἕτερος· ἐς τούτους ἄλλο μὲν ἤκουσα οὐδέν, ἀδελφούς δὲ εἶναι σφᾶς Οἰνόης, ἀφ' ἧς ἐστι τὸ ὄνομα τῷ δήμῳ.

1.33.7–8 [Rocha-Pereira, Leipzig 1973]

Now I shall describe what is fashioned on the base of the statue, having made so long an introduction for the sake of clarity. The Greeks say that Nemesis was the mother of Helen, but Leda suckled and raised her. The Greeks and everybody else consider the father of Helen to be Zeus and not Tyndareos. Having heard this, Pheidias has represented Helen being led by Leda to Nemesis, and he has represented Tyndareos and his children and a man standing by with a horse, named Hippeus. Also present are Agamemnon and Menelaos and Pyrrhos, the son of Achilles, who first took Hermione, the daughter of Helen, to wife. Orestes is omitted because of his crime against his mother, but Hermione stayed by him through everything and bore him a child. Next upon the base is one called Epochos and another youth; I heard nothing about them except that they are brothers of Oinoe, from whom the deme has its name.

(author's translation)

The battered state of the fragments, which survived an intentional and very thorough destruction of the base in Late Antiquity, makes it difficult to identify the figures as reconstructed with any degree of certainty,<sup>6</sup> but a well-known neo-Attic relief from Rome now in Stockholm (Pl. 27:a)<sup>7</sup> can help identify the figures on the front of the Rhamnous base (Fig. 2). The Stockholm relief reproduces the four figures of the left half of the front of the base to scale in their original order: A bearded male wearing a himation looks toward the center of the relief. He and the youth next to him correspond closely to figures 4 and 5 on the original base.<sup>8</sup> Next to these males stand two female figures. One, to the viewer's left, wears a belted peplos, the long overfold of which, also tied by the belt, falls almost to her knees; she holds her himation open with both hands in an unveiling gesture.<sup>9</sup> But for the reversal of the lower legs,

<sup>6</sup> Prior to the rejoining of the fragments, scholars were agreed only in placing Helen, Leda, and Nemesis in the center of the base, although the precise placement of even these figures remained a matter of dispute. For a convenient guide to previous restorations see Petrakos 1986, p. 106, fig. 8. Petrakos himself is unwilling to offer a "canonical interpretation" defining which figure is which, but he does argue for the relative placement of Helen next to her true mother, Nemesis, in the center of the base with Leda behind her rather than acting as an intermediary between the two, as suggested by the account of Pausanias and some earlier scholars. He sees the closer spacing of the two central females and the converging focus of the remaining figures, moreover, as an affirmation that the meeting of the goddess, whose cult statue stood above, and her daughter was the focal point of the entire composition (p. 97). He does, however, eventually tentatively suggest the following identifications for the figures: 1-Agamemnon or Menelaos; 2-Pyrrhos; 3-Hippeus or Epochos; 4-Tyndareos; 5-Dioskouros; 6-Leda; 7-Helen; 8-Nemesis; 9-Oinoe; 10-Dioskouros; 11-Menelaos or Agamemnon; 12-Epochos or Hippeus; 13-unknown male (Theseus?); 14-Neonias.

<sup>7</sup> Nationalmuseum Sk 150. Found in Rome 1763. Length 1.20 m., restored height 0.54 m. The top of the frame, parts of the background, the right hand of the bearded male to the left, the left hand of the central youth, the nose and right hand of the central female, and the right forearm and hand of the female to the right are all modern. See *LIMC* IV, ii, pl. 294, Hélène 15 (L. Kahil); J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period*, London 1985, fig. 123; Robertson, p. 353, pl. 118:c; Picard, II, ii, pp. 538–541, fig. 223; G. Becatti, *Problemi Fidiaci*, Milan 1951, pp. 54–57, 66, fig. 20, pl. 8; Kjellberg, pp. 105–116, fig. 24, pl. VII; H. Schrader, *Phidias*, Frankfurt 1924, p. 298, fig. 271; H. Brising, *Antik Konst i Nationalmuseum*, Stockholm 1911, p. 75, pl. XXXII.

<sup>8</sup> For detailed photographs of 4 and 5 see Petrakos 1986, pl. 113:1, 4.

<sup>9</sup> The right hand is modern, but surviving drapery indicates the original position. This revelatory gesture is closely paralleled by that of Demeter on the far left of the Rheitos-bridge decree from Eleusis (Eleusis Museum 5093 [*IG* I<sup>3</sup>, 79], dated 422/21 B.C.; see A. Peschlow-Bindocat, "Demeter und Persephone in der

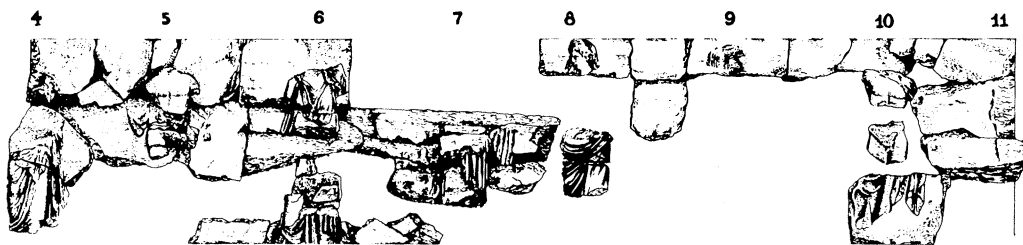


FIG. 2. The front of the Rhamnous base (after Petrakos 1986, fig. 4, p. 96 and pl. 112:3)

her pose is identical to 6 on the original base as reconstructed by Petrakos (Pl. 27:b).<sup>10</sup> The second female on the Stockholm relief wears a belted peplos with a kolpos and a shorter, unbelted overfold. This garment and her himation, which she wears over her head as a veil, correspond to the fragmentary drapery of 7 on the original base.<sup>11</sup> The right arm of this figure on the Stockholm relief has been restored from above the elbow, but it clearly was extended to her right. Her head, however, is turned to her left, looking off the relief. The scene on the Stockholm relief has been rendered meaningless as it has been excerpted from the larger whole of the Rhamnous base. The composition of both reliefs is clarified if we view them together: two males (whose identity will be discussed below) look on as Helen, 6, unveils herself, while her adoptive mother, Leda, 7, gesturing right but looking left, introduces her to her true mother, Nemesis, 8 (Pl. 27:c), whose dress (chiton and himation) identifies her with Agorakritos' cult statue that stood above.<sup>12</sup> The position of these three female figures, their dress, and their action correspond to Pausanias' description of Helen, Leda, and Nemesis: 'Ελένην ὑπὸ Λήδας ἀγομένην παρὰ τὴν Νέμεσιν.

There is, however, evidence of a fourth central female figure, which balances Helen, 6, on the opposite side of Nemesis, 8. Unfortunately, all that survives of this newly discovered female figure, 9, are the folds of her veil on the relief ground (Pl. 27:d).<sup>13</sup> (Thus all female figures except 6 are veiled: further reason for identifying that figure as Helen.) It has been suggested that the "extra" figure might be either Hermione or Oinoe.<sup>14</sup> Both are mentioned

attischen Kunst des 6. bis 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.," *JdI* 87, 1972, pp. 112–117, 130–134, fig. 34 and *LIMC* II, ii, pl. 763, Athena 606 [P. Demargne]) and is associated with Helen by E. Walter-Karydi, «Ελένης ἀνακαλυπτῆρια», *ΚρητΧρον* 22, 1970, pp. 316–321. For ritual unveiling in marriage scenes see J. H. Oakley, "The Anakalypteria," *AA* (*JdI* 99) 1982, pp. 113–118. For another example of the revelatory opening of the himation with both hands see E. B. Harrison, "Apollo's Cloak," in *Studies in Classical Art and Archaeology* (*Festschrift P. H. von Blankenhagen*), Locust Valley, N.Y. 1979, pp. 91–98.

<sup>10</sup> Kallipolitis assigns a fragmentary head to this figure (pl. 7). I have not been able to inspect the join of the lower legs personally. From Petrakos' photographs (Petrakos 1986, pls. 111, 112) it appears unlikely that these legs can be joined to 7, but if they were to be assigned to 9 the formal symmetry of the front of the base would be enhanced considerably. See note 32 below.

<sup>11</sup> For photographs of the reconstructed figure 7 see Petrakos 1986, pls. 111, 112:2. Kallipolitis presents excellent photographs of the fragments themselves (pls. 5, 6).

<sup>12</sup> The female figures on the Stockholm relief have generally been so identified. See, e.g., Picard, Robertson, and Boardman (note 7 above).

<sup>13</sup> Petrakos 1981, p. 240, fig. 5, above and middle, and Petrakos 1986, pls. 111, 112:4.

<sup>14</sup> Petrakos 1981, p. 240.

by Pausanias on account of their relationship to other figures, but neither is explicitly said to be represented on the base.

Noting that the term which Pausanias employs to describe Oinoe's second brother, *νεανίας*, is the name of a hero who received sacrifices recorded on Attic inscriptions, Petrakos posits that the figures represented on the base embody a fusion of now obscure local elements that lie outside the mainstream mythological tradition with better known, philologically attested myths known both to present scholarship and to Pausanias. Thus, for Petrakos, the representation on the base is dominated by a local spirit (*τοπικιστικό πνεύμα*); this spirit is also manifest in Pausanias' account of the cult statue (1.33.2–3), which focuses on the intervention of Nemesis, the goddess of Rhamnous, at the Battle of Marathon. The universal significance of the Battle of Marathon, Petrakos argues, confirmed the special place of Rhamnous among the other demes of Attica and is responsible for the appearance of Oinoe on the Rhamnous base. This argument holds that she is represented because she was the eponym of the neighboring deme of the Marathonian Tetrapolis: like her brothers, she has no clear relation with the myth of Nemesis or of Helen but appears here with them as scenery (*ὡς σκηνικό*) to indicate the place where the meeting of Nemesis and Helen took place.<sup>15</sup>

Although the presence of Epochos and his brother strongly supports this view of local influence in the program of the base, it also renders unnecessary the introduction of Oinoe: her brothers might adequately represent local interests. Why, moreover, should only one deme of the Marathonian Tetrapolis (to which Rhamnous did not belong), and an inland deme at that, be represented on a monument which may well ultimately commemorate the Battle of Marathon, a battle which is known to have taken place predominantly along the coast? Our knowledge of local Rhamnousian religious beliefs and cult practices is certainly inadequate, but should the figure in question, one who is positioned so prominently on the front of the base, alongside the three protagonists and next to the goddess herself, be thought of merely "as scenery"?<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Petrakos 1986, pp. 93–97 with notes 16–21. There is some question, however, whether Pausanias' *νεανίας* is actually a proper name rather than a descriptive epithet. For if Pausanias meant to say "and there is another, Neanias," we would expect *καὶ νεανίας ἐστὶν ὁ ἕτερος*, rather than *καὶ νεανίας ἐστὶν ἕτερος*. Of course, he could have partially misunderstood the guide whom he clearly asked for more information; see E. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica* (BICS Suppl. 57), London 1989, p. 188.

Arguing that contemporary historical events find resonance in the temple's architectural sculpture (i.e., that Theseus' rape of Helen in the central akroterion is a comment on the Peloponnesian War), Angelos Delivorrias (p. 99, note 35) also advocates the identification of the fourth female figure on the front of the base as Oinoe; her presence would imply the Athenian victory over Sparta at Argive Oinoe, which Pausanias (1.15.1) reports was depicted in the Stoa Poikile in the Athenian Agora. Miles ([note 1 above] pp. 212–214), however, argues that the sculptures in question, which have also been identified as Boreas and Oreithyia, do not belong to the Rhamnous Temple at all; see also P. Danner, *Griechische Akroterer der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (RdA Suppl. 5), Rome 1989, no. 157, pp. 25–26, pl. 18. For an attempt to link the Oinoe Painting with Marathon and for previous bibliography see E. D. Francis and M. Vickers, "The Oenoe Painting in the Stoa Poikile and Herodotus' Account of Marathon," *BSA* 80, 1985, pp. 99–113.

<sup>16</sup> On the possible importance of Oinoe as the Athenian mustering place before Marathon see Francis and Vickers, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–106. This Oinoe should not be confused with Oinone, a nymph of the Troad who was the beloved of Paris. (After he abandoned her for Helen, she refused to heal his wound. Relenting too late to save his life, she committed suicide upon his death.) For Oinoe and others of the same name see *RE* XVII, ii, cols. 2233–2234 (E. Meyer) and *RESuppl* VIII, cols. 369–372 (J. Wiesner); for Oinone see *RE* XVII, s.v. Oinone 2, cols. 2251–2253 (J. Krischen).

With the exception of Oinoe's two brothers and the otherwise unattested Hippeus, each of the other figures cited by Pausanias has a direct familial relationship to Helen. Unlike Oinoe, Helen's daughter Hermione certainly has, but Pausanias states that she remained with Orestes.<sup>17</sup>

There is, however, another possible identification for the "extra" female figure. Following his account of Helen, Leda, and Nemesis, Pausanias states that Tyndareos and his children were also fashioned on the base: *πεποίηκε δε Τυνδάρεών τε καὶ τοὺς παῖδας*. These *παῖδας* have, without exception, been interpreted as the Dioskouroi, whose presence on the base is attested by the head of a youth wearing a pilos.<sup>18</sup> Tyndareos, however, had other children besides the Dioskouroi and Helen: Phoibe, Phylonoe, Timandra, and, most renowned, Klytaimestra.<sup>19</sup>

The identification of the fourth female figure as Klytaimestra has several advantages. First, it does not require that a figure not placed on the base by Pausanias be introduced. Second, it helps to explain Pausanias' apparent digression as to the reason for Orestes' absence: *διὰ τὸ ἐς τὴν μητέρα τόλμημα* ("on account of his crime against his mother"). Third, Klytaimestra's presence corresponds with that of her parents, brothers, and even husband and brother-in-law at the presentation of her sister, Helen, to Nemesis. Family connections played a dominant role in the composition of a number of 5th-century cult-statue bases,<sup>20</sup> and the Rhamnous base is no exception.

Helen's family history was complicated, and various literary traditions survive from antiquity.<sup>21</sup> As Pausanias notes, she had two fathers, Zeus and Tyndareos. According to the Hellenistic mythographer Apollodoros, Leda slept with both on the same night. From Zeus, who appeared in the form of a swan, she begot the immortals, Helen and Polydeukes; from

<sup>17</sup> Hermione does appear with her mother on a roughly contemporary Attic red-figured hydria by the Meidias Painter from the Athenian Kerameikos (see note 36 below). Although ancient traditions vary as to whether she was first promised to Pyrrhos or to Orestes, it is clear that the quarrel for her hand resulted in the death of the former (Roscher, *s.v.* Hermione 2, cols. 2433–2434). Thus perhaps she can be linked to Nemesis as well as to Helen and Pyrrhos; see Robertson, p. 353. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf sensed inconsistencies ("unverständiges geschwätz") in Pausanias' treatment of Hermione here and thus concluded that he did not actually see the Rhamnous base but took his account from another author (*Antigonos von Karystos* [*Philologische Untersuchungen* 4], Berlin 1881, pp. 12–14). Against this view now see C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, Berkeley 1985, esp. app. 1, "Pausanias and his Critics," pp. 165–175.

<sup>18</sup> Dioskouros head: Petrakos 1986, p. 98, fig. 5 and Kallipolitis, pl. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Phoibe: Euripides, *IA* 50; Ovid, *Heroides* 8.77; an Attic black-figured hydria attributed to the Archippe Painter, Basel 4482; and the Kerameikos hydria discussed below (p. 116 and note 36). Phylonoe and Timandra: Apollodoros 3.10.6; the latter also appears on an Attic red-figured cup by Makron, Berlin 2291, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 459, no. 4; the former on the Kerameikos hydria. Klytaimestra (this form is to be preferred to the later Klytaimnestra) is referred to as the "child of Tyndareos" in 5th-century and later literature, especially in Euripides, see Roscher, *s.v.* Klytaim(n)estra, esp. cols. 1230–1233.

<sup>20</sup> B. S. Ridgway (*Fifth Century Styles in Greek Sculpture*, Princeton 1981, p. 173) has suggested that "miraculous births" were the theme of 5th-century (Pheidian) cult-statue bases: Aphrodite on the base of Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia, Pausanias 5.11.8; Pandora on that of the Athena Parthenos, Pliny, *NH* 36.18; and Erichthonios on that of Athena and Hephaistos, E. B. Harrison, "Alkamenes' Sculptures for the Hephaisteion: Part II, The Base," *AJA* 81, 1977, pp. 265–287. The 4th-century base of Alkamenes' cult statue of Dionysos Eleutheros, moreover, depicted the birth of Dionysos; C. M. Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs*, diss. New York University 1985, pp. 98–107. For depictions of the birth of Helen from the egg, however, see *LIMC* IV, pp. 503–504, Hélène 1–13 (L. Kahil), pls. 291–293.

<sup>21</sup> For the various ancient traditions see L. Kahil in *LIMC* IV, i, p. 498.

Tyndareos, Kastor and Klytaimestra. The tradition that Nemesis was Helen's mother appears as early as the *Kypria*: in order to flee from Zeus, Nemesis transformed herself into a swan. He changed into a goose and pursued her as far as Rhamnous where their encounter took place. There are various explanations of how the egg from which Helen was born was later found and brought to Leda. In classical art the Dioskouroi are often present.<sup>22</sup> On a stemless kylix signed by Xenotimos and dated *ca.* 430, now in Boston, it is Klytaimestra (inscribed) who accompanies her parents as they discover the egg, while Zeus's eagle stands in for the god (Pl. 28:a).<sup>23</sup> Phylonoe and two other females occupy the reverse.

The scene on the front of the Rhamnous base, however, depicts not Helen's birth but the end of Leda's stewardship and the presentation of Helen to her true mother. I have argued that the four central female figures on the front of the Rhamnous base are, from left to right, Helen, Leda, Nemesis, and Klytaimestra. Who are the four males who flank them? The bearded male wearing a himation, 4, is often identified as Tyndareos,<sup>24</sup> but although the right hand and thunderbolt of the Stockholm figure are modern restorations, the dress and pose of this figure are Olympian, and he can be identified as Zeus.<sup>25</sup> The father of the gods, and of Helen and the Dioskouroi, stands in this guise in the east pediment of his Temple at Olympia,<sup>26</sup> and a closer parallel to the Rhamnous figure appears on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum.<sup>27</sup> The placement of Zeus at the corner of the Rhamnous base, moreover, finds precedent on the base of Pheidias' chryselephantine statue of the god at Olympia. Pausanias' description of the Olympia base (5.11.8) is explicit about the placement of the figures: Zeus appears next to Helios at one end of the long frieze depicting the Birth of Aphrodite; a number of divinities separate him from the central action. Thus I identify figure 4 as Zeus, Helen's true father according to Pausanias, and the now lost figure 11 as her mortal father, Tyndareos.

The young male, 5, who stands between Zeus and Helen is generally identified as one of the Dioskouroi.<sup>28</sup> The corresponding figure on the Stockholm relief, however, does not wear the characteristic pilos which is present on an original head from the Rhamnous base.<sup>29</sup> The hat might, of course, have been omitted, rendered only in paint, or added in plaster or some other material on the Roman copy,<sup>30</sup> but the Dioskouroi might be better placed on the sides of the base with the horses. This would leave Menelaos and Agamemnon, who have a much closer connection with Nemesis, Troy, and Klytaimestra, on the

<sup>22</sup> E.g. *LIMC* IV, ii, Hélène 2, 4, 7 (L. Kahil), pls. 291 and 292; *LIMC* III, ii, Dioskouroi 185 and 186 (A. Hermay), pl. 471; J. Moreau, *Das Trierer Kornmarktmosaik (Monumenta Antiquae Romanae II)*, Cologne 1960, pls. 11:b, 14, 15, 16:a, 17:b, 19:a.

<sup>23</sup> Museum of Fine Arts 99.539, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1142, no. 1: L. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* III, Boston 1963, no. 163, pp. 69–74, pl. XCIX; Moreau, *op. cit.*, pl. 11:a.

<sup>24</sup> So, e.g., Petrakos 1986, p. 99, Kallipolitis, Boardman (note 7 above), and Robertson.

<sup>25</sup> So Picard and Brising (note 7 above).

<sup>26</sup> B. Ashmole and N. Yalouris, *Olympia: The Sculptures of the Temple of Zeus*, London 1967, pl. 14.

<sup>27</sup> In the relief to the left of the inscription in the attic on the southwest (city) side; see M. Rotili, *L'Arco di Traiano a Benevento*, Rome 1972, pls. I, CXXIX, CXXXV, and CXL and, more recently, E. Simon, "Die Götter am Trajansbogen zu Benevent," *TrWPr* 1–2, 1979–1980, pp. 9–10, pls. 2, 10.

<sup>28</sup> So, e.g., Petrakos 1986, p. 97, Robertson, and Picard.

<sup>29</sup> See note 18 above.

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed photograph of the head of the Stockholm youth see Kjellberg, fig. 26, pl. VIII.



front of the base as **5** and **10**, although it does seem odd to depict at least one of them without a beard (cf. the youth on the Stockholm relief).<sup>31</sup> For the moment, the identity of the youths on the front of the Rhamnous base remains uncertain. In either case, however, it can be seen that the presence of Klytaimestra completes not only the participation of the Spartan ruling house but also the formal basis of Agorakritos' compositional scheme: father, son-in-law/son, daughter, mother (**4**-Zeus, **5**-Menelaos/Dioskouros, **6**-Helen, **7**-Leda) on the left half of the front of the base (excerpted in the Stockholm relief) mirror, perhaps even in their poses, mother, daughter, son-in-law/son, father on the right (**8**-Nemesis, **9**-Klytaimestra, **10**-Agamemnon/Dioskouros, **11**-Tyndareos).<sup>32</sup>

The appearance of Klytaimestra in the center of the Rhamnous base, alongside the figure of Nemesis, could not but extend the web of dire associations, which begin with Helen and Troy, through the cycle of vengeance which culminates in her own death. In Aischylos, the circle of retribution, which is only intimated in Pausanias' account of the Rhamnous base, stretches from Troy back to Mycenae as Helen is blamed for Agamemnon's death at the hands of her sister.<sup>33</sup> In the *Choephoroi*, moreover, the fate of the houses of Priam and Agamemnon are explicitly linked by the chorus as Orestes drives Klytaimestra inside the palace:

ἔμολε μὲν Δίκα Πριαμίδαῖς χρόνῳ  
 βαρύδικος ποινά·  
 ἔμολε δ' ἔς δόμον τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος  
 διπλοῦς λέων, διπλοῦς Ἄρες·

*Choephoroi* 935–938 (Page)

As unto Priam and his sons justice came at last in  
 crushing retribution, so unto Agamemnon's house  
 came a twofold lion, twofold slaughter.

(Loeb)

In the *Agamemnon*, however, it is Klytaimestra, not Helen, who serves as the agent of divine retribution, exacting payment not only for the crime of Atreus and, more immediately, for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, but also for the sacrilege committed at Troy and Agamemnon's own

<sup>31</sup> Kallipolitis and Boardman (note 7 above) identify **5** as Menelaos, who does, in fact, appear beardless with Helen on an inscribed Apulian alabastron of ca. 370–350 B.C. in Boston, M.F.A. 00.360 (*RVAp* I, p. 405, no. 48; *LIMC* IV, ii, pl. 302, Hélène 68 [L. Kahil]) and perhaps also on a mid-5th-century Attic red-figured volute-krater connected to the Geneva Painter and now in the Louvre, G482 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 615; *LIMC* IV, ii, pl. 344, Hélène 286, cf. Hélène 289c [L. Kahil]).

<sup>32</sup> For the possibility of mirrored poses see note 10 above. Such antithetical responson of pendant figures on opposite sides of a unified composition has been recognized, e.g., in the west pediment of the Parthenon; see B. S. Spaeth, "Athenians and Eleusinians in the West Pediment of the Parthenon," *Hesperia* 60, 1991, pp. 331–362. If, moreover, figures **5** and **10** are identified as the mortal Kastor and immortal Polydeukes respectively, it can be seen that the divine members of Helen's family alternate with the mortal. As for the figures on the sides, **1** has been identified as Pyrrhos (Kallipolitis and Ridgway in C. J. Eisman and B. S. Ridgway, *The Porticello Shipwreck*, College Station, Texas 1987, pp. 105–106) and **14** as Neanias (Petrakos 1986). This would leave the horsemen, Hippeus, Epochos, and the Dioskouroi/Atreidai, to be disposed around the horses.

<sup>33</sup> A. 1445–1461.

arrogance as exhibited in the tapestry scene.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Klytaimestra glories in the appellation of *daimon* of retribution:

νῦν δ' ὄρθωσας στόματος γνώμην,  
τὸν τριπάχυντον  
δαίμονα γέννης τῆσδε κικλήσκων·  
ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρως αἵματολοιχὸς  
νεῖρα τρέφεται· πρὶν καταλήξαι  
τὸ παλαιὸν ἄχος, νέος ἰχώρ.

*Agamemnon* 1475–1480 (Page)

You speak now more in wisdom,  
Naming the thrice-gorged Fury  
That hates and haunts our race.  
Hers is the thirst of slaughter,  
Still slaked with feud and vengeance,  
Till, with each wrong requited,  
A new thirst takes its place.

(Penguin)

The iconography of Klytaimestra is dominated by murder throughout the Archaic and early Classical periods.<sup>35</sup> In the second half of the 5th century, however, Athenian vase painters begin to portray Klytaimestra in other contexts, as on the Boston kylix (Pl. 28:a). Scenes with Helen and their sisters or with other women in contexts of marriage became popular: on a hydria by the Meidias Painter from the Athenian Kerameikos, Klytaimestra stands with Phylonoe and Phoibe behind Helen, who sits with Eros in her lap;<sup>36</sup> on a pyxis in London by the Chicago Painter, Klytaimestra offers an alabastron to the seated Helen while other female figures represent unhappy brides of mythology (Pl. 28:b).<sup>37</sup> These scenes with Klytaimestra which intimate Helen's nuptials need not denote the latter's wedding to Menelaos, but regardless of the bridegroom, contemporary vases suggest the tragic outcome of Helen's union: On a well-known amphoriskos in Berlin, the name piece of the Heimarmene Painter, Aphrodite holds a pensive Helen in her lap (Pl. 28:c);<sup>38</sup> Peitho (Persuasion)

<sup>34</sup> Cf., e.g., *A.* 461–470, 528–529, 994–974, 1119, 1120, 1339–1342, 1393–1398, 1431–1447, 1500–1504, 1521–1529, 1578–1582. The role of Fate and Retribution in the *Oresteia* has an extensive bibliography. See, e.g., J. de Romilly, "Vengeance humaine et vengeance divine: Remarques sur l'*Orestie* d'Eschyle," in *Das Altertum und jedes neue Gute* (Festschrift W. Schadewalt), Stuttgart 1970, pp. 65–77. I have not been able to consult J. Coman, *L'idée de la Némésis chez Eschyle*, Paris 1931.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., A. J. N. W. Prag, *The Oresteia: Iconographic and Narrative Tradition*, Chicago 1985; J. R. March, *The Creative Poet: Studies on the Treatment of Myths in Greek Poetry* (BICS Suppl. 49), London 1987, "Chapter 4: Klytaimestra and the *Oresteia* Legend," pp. 79–118; and K. Schefold, *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art*, New York n.d., fig. 43, pls. 32, 33, 36, 80.

<sup>36</sup> Kerameikos 2712, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1313, no. 6, pp. 1690, 1708; *Addenda* 180; L. Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, Oxford 1987, pls. 44, 45; *LIMC* IV, ii, pl. 398, Héléne 382 (L. Kahil).

<sup>37</sup> London E773, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 805, no. 89; FR, pl. 57:1, whence S. R. Roberts, *The Attic Pyxis*, Chicago 1978, pl. 103:1.

<sup>38</sup> Berlin 30036, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1173; *LIMC* IV, ii, pl. 280, Heimarmene 1 (L. Kahil); and FR, pl. 170:2, whence L. Ghali-Kahil, *Les enlèvements et le retour d'Hélène*, Paris 1955, pl. 8:2. See Ghali-Kahil, pp. 69–71 and especially the comments of Shapiro (note 1 above), pp. 168–171.

attends them, while Himeros (Desire) cajoles Paris. Nemesis meanwhile directs the attention of another figure, perhaps Tyche (Fortune), to the protagonists, intimating the future with her pointed finger, while Heimarmene (Fate) stands near by. The influence of Agorakritos has been seen in the appearance of Nemesis here, as has “a lack of concern with the niceties of narrative or chronology.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in the relief bases of the Pheidian school, narrative is “almost stilled away.” They share with tragedy “a new approach . . . part of the same attitude as the generalising ideal tendency and the preference for oblique expression of emotion.”<sup>40</sup> The emphasis here is not on any single action but rather on the tragic fate of individuals and its wider consequences. To the punishment of the Persians implied in the person of Helen on the Rhamnous base, Klytaimestra adds another indication of Nemesis’ far-reaching power. It was through her agency that Helen’s mission was furthered: the arrogance of the victor at Troy was punished, and the cycle of retribution continued.<sup>41</sup>

Although the tradition of Helen’s birth from Nemesis can be traced back to the *Kypria*, the occasion of her presentation to the goddess is not specifically mentioned in literature surviving from antiquity. Thus the identification of the precise event depicted on the Rhamnous base has been much debated by scholars:<sup>42</sup> Some believe that the meeting represented on the base occurred on the occasion of Helen’s wedding to Menelaos;<sup>43</sup> others that it took place upon Helen’s return from Troy.<sup>44</sup> The apparent anachronism of both these interpretations, however, has been the source of some consternation: Pyrrhos, the son of Achilles, who is principally associated with the sack of Troy, is clearly out of place at the wedding of his father’s contemporaries;<sup>45</sup> on the other hand, Leda, Tyndareos, the Dioskouroi, and

<sup>39</sup> Burn (note 36 above), pp. 35 and 70.

<sup>40</sup> Robertson, p. 354. See also the comments of A. F. Stewart on the “stillness and frontality” of the participants in the east frieze of the Temple of Athena Nike in a discussion of the rhetorical nature of the narrative presented in the temple program (“History, Myth, and Allegory in the Program of the Temple of Athena Nike, Athens,” in *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* [Studies in the History of Art 16], H. L. Kessler and M. S. Simpson, edd., Washington, D.C. 1985, pp. 65–67).

<sup>41</sup> For Helen as the agent of Zeus’s plan to reduce the wickedness and multitude of men through the Trojan War, attested as early as the *Kypria*, see, e.g., Herter (note 1 above), col. 2344; Kahil (note 21 above), p. 498; Delivorrias; and Schefold (note 49 below). On the cycle of retribution within Aischylos’ House of Atreus, which in some ways parallels the universal and timeless conception of Nemesis presented on the Rhamnous base, see D. Clay, “Aeschylus trigeron mython,” *Hermes* 97, 1969, pp. 1–9 and B. M. W. Knox, “The Lion in the House,” *CP* 47, 1952, pp. 17–25.

<sup>42</sup> For ancient literary and artistic traditions linking Helen and Nemesis and for bibliography, see L. Kahil in *LIMC* IV, ii, s.v. Hélène, pp. 498–563. I. N. Svoronos sums up earlier views of the base in *Το εν Αθήναις Εθνικόν Μουσείον*, Athens 1903, pp. 175–181.

<sup>43</sup> Most recently argued by K. Schefold (*Die Göttersage in der klassischen und hellenistischen Kunst*, Munich 1981, p. 244). See also Delivorrias, p. 93, note 17.

<sup>44</sup> Svoronos (note 42 above), pp. 178–180; Kjellberg, p. 111; and E. Simon, “Der Goldschatz von Panajurište—eine Schöpfung der Alexanderzeit,” *AK* 3, 1960, pp. 19–20.

<sup>45</sup> For various attempts to reconcile the presence of Pyrrhos, including the suggestion of another, unknown hero of the same name, see C. Robert, *21 HallWPr* 1897, p. 25. Could Pausanias have misheard a guide’s explanation (Pyrrhos for Paris?); at Olympia he certainly misidentifies figures in both pediments of the Temple of Zeus (5.10.8); see Ashmole and Yalouris (note 26 above), pp. 15–18. Many scholars, most recently N. Icard-Gianolio (in *LIMC* III, i, s.v. Epokhos II, p. 812), have assumed the presence of inscriptions on the base, but no evidence has been found; Petrakos 1981, p. 240. The iconography of Pyrrhos on the base is briefly discussed by Ridgway ([note 32 above] pp. 105–106), who accepts Kallipolitis’ assignation to 1.

Agamemnon can hardly be thought of as present upon Helen's return from Troy. Thus it has been asserted that the base does not represent a specific scene in the myth of Helen but rather displays a marked degree of timelessness.<sup>46</sup> More recently, it has been suggested that the scene takes place in the Elysian fields on the occasion of Helen's deification.<sup>47</sup>

Such rational treatment of myth invites pitfalls. The presence of Pyrrhos in any context emphasizes Helen's role as the agent of Nemesis against Troy. The reliefs on the Rhamnous base (apparently to a greater degree than the sculptures which adorned the bases of other 5th-century cult statues<sup>48</sup>) explore the character of the goddess herself: the retribution wrought upon the Persians at Marathon is here alluded to in the destruction of Troy. The link between the two events, perhaps tacit in the north metopes of the Parthenon, is explicit in the opening chapters of Herodotos where the origins of the Persian War are traced through a series of misdeeds which found retribution, especially misdeeds done to and by women. Regardless of the precise moment depicted and despite, or perhaps even because of, the stately composure of the widely spaced figures, the reliefs on the base evoke the inevitable doom to be meted out by the Goddess of Rhamnous, whose cult statue, almost four meters tall, loomed above.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that the base was carved in the final third of the 5th century has led some scholars to perceive here a reference to the Peloponnesian War. As the arts of Athens display a marked Athenocentricity in this period,<sup>50</sup> the striking presence of the Spartan royal house on this Attic base has been interpreted as evidence of a reconciliation with Sparta. Thus the base has been dated both before the outbreak of the war and after the Peace of Nikias.<sup>51</sup> Such arguments for date and interpretation easily become circular. Resting as it does on stylistic criteria, the date of 430–420 B.C. does not bring us closer to determining whether the monument was commissioned and carved in the belligerent days of Perikles or Kleon or after the Peace of 421 B.C. The Peace, however, was in reality more an armed truce than a reconciliation of belligerents. Regardless of the precise date of the reliefs' conception and execution,

<sup>46</sup> Ghali-Kahil (note 38 above), p. 60 and Robertson, p. 353.

<sup>47</sup> "The heroine is shown returning to her real mother having finally accomplished the role entrusted to her by the Olympians. The scene refers to her deification known mainly from Euripides. The remaining heroes who are portrayed must be understood as already dead and living in the Elysian fields"; Delivorrias, English summary, p. 102.

<sup>48</sup> See note 20 above.

<sup>49</sup> The spirit of the base is grasped by Karl Schefold: "Dies tragische Geheimnis des Lebes, Glanz und Verhängnis, hat Agorakritos in den Reliefs der Basis neu gefasst. Wenn hier die bräutlich verschleierte Helena von ihrer Pflegemutter Leda zu ihrer Mutter Nemesis geleitet wird, damit diese sie dem Menelaos vermähle, musste jede Beschauer an die unermesslichen Verhängnisse denken, die durch die vollkommen Schöne unbegreifliche über Schuldige und Unschuldige kommen"; "Agorakritos als Erbe des Pheidias," in *R. Boehringer. Eine Freundesgabe*, Tübingen 1957, p. 566.

<sup>50</sup> On the Athenocentricity of late 5th-century Attic art see L. Burn, "The Art of the State in Fifth-century Athens," in *Images of Authority: Papers Presented to Joyce Reynolds on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday* (Cambridge Philological Society Supplementary Volume 16), M. M. MacKenzie and C. Roueché, edd., Cambridge 1989, pp. 67–81.

<sup>51</sup> Kjellberg (p. 110) dates the base before the outbreak of the war, as does Robertson (p. 352). Picard (p. 541) considers this impossible and opts for a date immediately after the peace. Ghali-Kahil ([note 38 above] p. 60) also takes the presence of the Spartans as an indication that the base was carved after the peace. Note that the appearance of Sparte herself on a late red-figured cup, Boston, M.F.A. 00.354 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1516), has been considered reason enough to date that piece after 403 B.C.; see CB III, no. 175, pp. 89–91.

the presence of Tyndareos, Leda, and their children on the Rhamnous base may equally well represent an affront to the Lakedaimonians, blaming them for both the Trojan and the Peloponnesian Wars.<sup>52</sup> The exact contemporary political implications of the scene thus remain difficult to gauge: reconciliation, affront, or perhaps Athenian expropriation of Spartan heroes.<sup>53</sup> The presence of Klytaimestra might well support the second interpretation, but as Helen and her role in the workings of Fate was an extremely popular theme in late 5th-century Attic art and literature and family groups were the preferred subject matter of late 5th-century Attic cult-statue bases,<sup>54</sup> the “meaning” of the monument is best not so precisely translated or so strictly limited. Recent research indicates that the refurbishment of the Sanctuary of Nemesis at Rhamnous may have been part of a larger Athenian program of expiation following the devastating plague of the early 420’s.<sup>55</sup> The new temple, Agorakritos’ cult statue, and its elaborate base featuring Helen and her family should be read as an exploration of the nature of Nemesis, an acknowledgment of the goddess’ timeless and far-reaching power, and a warning to any overweening spirit, that of Athens included.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> So Delivourrias, p. 95.

<sup>53</sup> On the institution of the cult of the Dioskouroi at the Anakeion in Athens see now H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens*, Mainz 1989, pp. 149–154.

<sup>54</sup> On Helen see Kahil (note 21 above) and Kearns (note 15 above), p. 158. On cult-statue bases see note 20 above.

<sup>55</sup> On the Temple of Nemesis, Athens, and the plague see Miles (note 1 above), pp. 227–235.

<sup>56</sup> Precisely such a warning is explicitly made in Euripides, *Tr.* 353–419.



a. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum SK 150  
(photograph, courtesy  
Nationalmuseum)



b. 6, Helen (Petrakos 1986, pl. 112:1)



c. 8, Nemesis (Petrakos 1986, pl. 112:3)

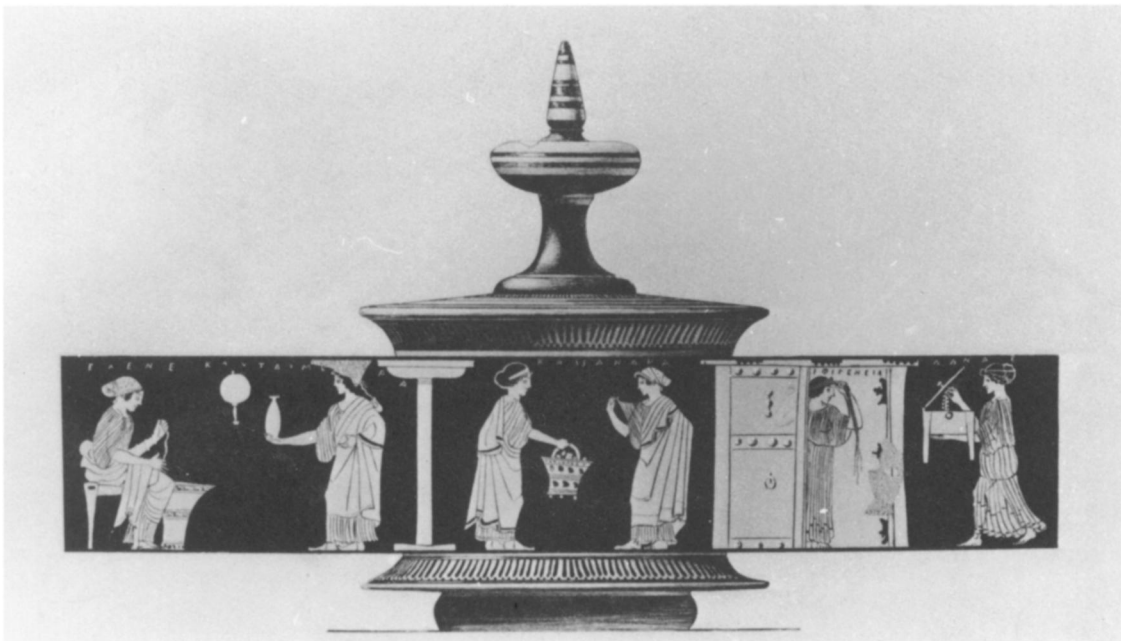


d. 9, Klytemnestra (Petrakos 1986,  
pl. 112:4)

K. D. S. LAPATIN: A FAMILY GATHERING AT RHAMNOUS?



a. Boston, M.F.A. 99.539, H. L. Pierce Fund (photograph, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



b. London, B.M. E773 (FR, pl. 57:1)



c. Berlin 30036 (FR, pl. 170:2)