

KATHERINE R. DE BOER : **Blaming Helen: Vergil's Deiphobus and the Tradition of Dead Men Talking.**

This paper reconsiders the narrative of his own death delivered by the shade of Deiphobus in *Aeneid* 6 (509-530). This episode is usually compared to Agamemnon's encounter with Odysseus in the first *nekuia* of the *Odyssey*, but I argue that the underworld meeting of Agamemnon and Amphimedon in the second *nekuia* (*Odyssey* 24.121-190) is also an important intertextual model. Deiphobus and Amphimedon both accuse a woman – Helen, Penelope – of conspiring with their sexual rivals – Menelaus, Odysseus – to bring about their deaths. Yet comparison of Amphimedon's and Deiphobus' narratives highlights the misleading and self-aggrandizing character of their rhetoric and raises questions about how women are represented by male narrators and by the epic tradition more broadly. This paper suggests that Deiphobus' narrative works together with other competing and contradictory views of Helen within the *Aeneid* in order to fracture the epic tradition's univocal representation of her – and women more generally – as *casus belli*.

Mots-clés :

Vergil – *Aeneid* – Helen – Homer – *Odyssey* – Penelope – Deiphobus – Amphimedon – epic – intertextuality – gender – women – blame – invective