

In this paper, I challenge the assumption that Euripides' fragmentary *Bellerophontes* is a sequel to his *Stheneboia*, and I argue that Stheneboia appears in *Bellerophontes*. I then offer a brief outline of what the plot of the play could be if Stheneboia appears. Although the loss of both Euripides' *Stheneboia* and *Bellerophontes* limits our understanding of these plays, testimonia and several substantial fragments provide enough evidence to attempt reconstructions. Previous attempts to sketch the plots, however, fail to take into account the flexibility available to the tragedians when dealing with myth and view *Bellerophontes* as a sequel to *Stheneboia*. Thus, since Bellerophontes shoves Stheneboia from Pegasos to a watery death in her name-play, some scholars (most notably di Gregorio 1983a, b; Collard *et al.* 1995) assume that she cannot appear in *Bellerophontes*.

Specifically, I use evidence from Aristophanic parody, scholia on Aristophanes and a vase painting to support the thesis that Stheneboia is among the dramatis personae. Aristophanes' parodies of Euripides' Stheneboia character can be better understood if she appears in both plays, and, in fact, a scholiast on Aristophanes says that Euripides depicts her in two of his tragedies. Furthermore, a vase painting which depicts a king, an eavesdropping woman and a man in rags has been, I believe, wrongly attributed to a scene from Euripides' *Stheneboia* (Trendall and Webster 1971; see also Taplin 2007, who finds the attribution attractive but remains skeptical). The vase is more likely a depiction of Euripides' *Bellerophontes* since the poet infamously depicts his hero in rags in this play, not the *Stheneboia*. I suggest that the eavesdropping woman on the vase is Stheneboia in the *Bellerophontes*.

No previous reconstruction of the play has found universal acceptance. Di Gregorio (1983a, b) has offered the most influential (and daring) reconstruction. He believes the tragedy is a sequel in which the relatives of Stheneboia seek revenge against Bellerophontes for her murder. Although di Gregorio's reconstruction is possible, Collard, Cropp and Lee (1995) note its difficulties and take a more conservative stance. Even their cautious approach, however, presents its own problems. In her review of their edition of the fragments, Scodel (1997) notes that their explanation for the (in)famous atheistic fragment (fr. 286) of the *Bellerophontes* play is unconvincing and Bellerophontes himself cannot speak these lines. One possible solution she suggests is that the atheistic fragment should be attributed to another character. My reading suggests Stheneboia, not Bellerophontes, speaks these lines.

While reconstructing the minutiae of a play's plot includes some guesswork, enough evidence exists to question the exclusion of Stheneboia from the dramatis personae of *Bellerophontes*. Her inclusion in this play changes our understanding not only of the tragedy but also its reception and the myth itself. Thus, this reading will both deepen our understanding of one of the most notorious mythic heroines and broaden our understanding of the different treatments of this popular myth.