

The *Capture of Oechalia.*

A notable epic of this class was the *Capture of Oechalia*, *Οἰχαλίας ἄλωσις*, ascribed to the Ionian Creophylus of Samos, whom tradition called the friend, or even the son-in-law, of Homer¹. An epigram of Callimachus² attests the fame of this poem, which was probably as old at least as the eighth century B.C., and must have had the genuine ring of Homeric epos. The subject was the passion of Heracles for Iolè, and the war which, in order to win her, he made on Oechalia, the city of her father Eurypus, which was placed, as by Sophocles, in Euboea. It is not known whether this epic introduced Deianeira, the envenomed robe, and the hero's death on Mount Oeta³. But in any case it must have been one of the principal sources from which Sophocles derived his material.

Lyric poets on Heracles. Archilochus.

§ 5. Lyric poetry also, from an early time, had been busied with these legends. The Ionian Archilochus (*circ.* 670 B.C.) composed a famous hymn to the victorious Heracles. It was known as the *καλλίνικος*⁴, and was a counterpart, at the Olympian games, of 'See, the conquering hero comes,'—being sung at the evening procession in honour of a victor, if no special ode had been written for the occasion. But it was in the choral form, a distinctively Dorian creation, that lyric poetry rendered its loftiest tributes to the son of Alcmena. Stesichorus of Himera, a city in which Dorian and Chalcidic elements were blended, gave the

Stesichorus.

¹ Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus*, pp. 212 ff.: Bernhardt, *Gk Lit.* II. pt 1, p. 252.

² *Epigr.* 6:

Κρεωφύλου πόνος εἰμί, δόμῳ ποτὲ θεῖον Ὀμηρον
δεξαμένον· κλαίω δ' Εὐρυτον, ὅσσ' ἔπαθεν,
καὶ ξανθὴν Ἰόλειαν· Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῦμαι
γράμμα· Κρεωφύλω, Ζεῦ φίλε, τοῦτο μέγα.

³ That the *Capture of Oechalia* ended with the pyre on Oeta, and the apotheosis, is Welcker's view (*Cyclus*, p. 233). He remarks that the hero of a Cyclic poem was often raised to immortal bliss at the end,—as Amphiaraus in the *Thebais*, Achilles in the *Aethiopsis*, Menelaus in the *Nostoi*, Odysseus in the *Telegonia*. The apotheosis of Heracles has already a place in the *Theogony* of Hesiod, vv. 950—955.

The war against Oechalia may possibly have been, as Welcker suggests, the subject of the *Ἡράκλεια* ascribed to Cinaethon of Lacedaemon (8th cent. B.C.?) by schol. Apoll. Rhod. I. 1357, where it is cited with reference to Trachis; but this is pure conjecture.

⁴ In Pindar *Ol.* 9. 2 *καλλίνικος ὁ τριπλῆος*, since the burden was thrice repeated. Bergk, *Poet. Lyr.* II. p. 418 (4th ed.).