

THE TRICKER TRICKED A Reinterpretation of Pindar, Nem. 4.57–58

In Nem. 4, written for the Aiginetan boy wrestler Timasarchos, Pindar's praise of the Aiakidai takes the form of a catalogue of the far-flung lands where they hold sway, reaching a climax with the story of Peleus' sack of Iolkos (vv. 54–61):

Πάλιου δὲ πὰρ ποδὶ λατρίαν Ἴαολκόν
πολεμία χερὶ προστραπῶν
Πηλεὺς παρέδωκεν Αἰμόνεσσι
στρ.η' δάμαρτος Ἴππολύτας Ἀκάστου δολίαις
τέχναισι χρησάμενος.
τᾶ Δαιδάλου δὲ μαχαίρα φύτευέ οἱ θάνατον
ἐκ λόγου Πελῖαιο παῖς· ἄλαλκε δὲ Χίρων,
καὶ τὸ μόρσιμον Διόθεν πεπρωμένον ἔκφερεν·

The sexual temptation of Peleus (a variant of the Potiphar's Wife theme) and his subsequent exposure in the woods is told in a compressed and allusive manner, and at points the meaning is quite obscure: the subject of ἔκφερεν is not readily apparent, and the mss. reading προστραπῶν has been variously emended¹. More significant than these, however, is the problem occasioned by the codices' χρησάμενος (58), for here our choice of reading will affect not merely nuances of imagery and expression (as in the case of προστραπῶν), but how we answer the basic questions of what Peleus does (or suffers) and how Pindar goes about praising the hero, and along with him the victor.

If the mss. reading is to be preserved, it is necessary to determine precisely how the verb χρῆσθαι may express the relation of Peleus to the wiles of Hippolyte. If χρῆσθαι means 'to use', then it may suggest that Peleus co-operates with Hippolyte; that (in Farnell's words) "in capturing Iolkos Peleus 'availed himself of the crafty arts of Hippolyte', i.e., she suggested to him crafty stratagems for taking the city"². Farnell is right, however, in dismissing

1) See, e.g., the discussion of J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar*, London 1890, 75–76; and L. R. Farnell, *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar*, London 1932, 268–70.

2) Farnell (above, n. 1) 269.

this interpretation out of hand: not only do other versions of the story (including two others in Pindar) fail to provide evidence of co-operation³, but to suggest that Peleus conspires with his host's wife hardly redounds to the hero's credit and runs counter to the epinician imperative of hero praise.

More plausible is Dissen's suggestion that *χρησόμενος* can mean 'experiencing', a use which is common with certain classes of nouns. Although Dissen's interpretation is dismissed by Bury (whom both Farnell and Köhnken quote with approval), it has of late come back into fashion thanks to William Slater's tentative adoption of Rédard's suggestion that *χρησόμενος* means "ayant éprouvé l'astuce perfide"⁴. Bury's dismissal of Dissen is in fact overly narrow: he claims that the latter's examples with *δυστυχία* and the like all refer to "a state of the person experiencing, not the objective cause of an experience"⁵. Yet the middle of *χράω* may be used, contra Bury, of a person being subject to a variety of external events: these include meteorological phenomena such as *λαίλαπι* (AP 7.503), *νιφετώ* (Hdt. 4.50), and *χειμώνι* (Antiph. 5.21; Dem. 18.194; cf. also Rédard 25); and customs, laws and habits of life (with *νόμοιοι* or *νόμῳ* frequently in Herodotus: 1.29,173; 2.79 etc.; also with analogous expressions such as *τῷ νενομισμένῳ* [Hdt. 2.17] and *διαίτη* [Hdt. 4.116]). What these external events have in common, however, is that they are beyond individual human control: they are either natural phenomena, or socially determined practices or beliefs; *χρησθαι* does not normally refer to experiencing actions performed by another individual⁶. Accepting the interpre-

3) Farnell (above, n. 1) 269: "But that is an unknown and unimaginable legend." The extended treatment at Nem. 5.26–34 makes clear the opposition between Peleus and Hippolyte, as do post-Pindaric versions (particularly Peleus' extremely violent revenge on Hippolyte at Apldr. 3.13.7). Such opposition seems to be an invariable feature of the myth.

4) Bury (above, n. 1) 74–75; Farnell (above, n. 1) 269; A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar*, Berlin 1971, 201 n. 41; W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar*, Berlin 1969, 547 (s.v. *χράω*); G. Rédard, *Recherches sur *χρη*, *χρησθαι**: *Étude Sémantique*, Paris 1953, 25.

5) Cf. also the catalogue of such expressions (based on LSJ) in Rédard (above, n. 4) 27–28.

6) Thus also the use with *δουλίῳ ζυγῷ* (Aesch. Ag. 953), and Aristotle's *γυναικῶν τῶν τοῖς τόκοις χρωμένων πλείοσιν* (HA 582a24). Rédard (above, n. 4) rightly stresses that the verb is used to express processes which are "invariablement à l'intérieur de la sphère du sujet" (40), and that this tendency displays a "liaison essentielle avec la diathèse moyenne du verb" (41). Thus the cases we would normally translate as 'use' are still fully middle, for as Rédard says of the verb's dative objects "toutes ces notions sont des réalités indépendantes de qui y fait recours; l'objet existe toujours hors du sujet qui jamais ne le modifie" (42). Yet within this

tation of Réard (and of LSJ) would raise Hippolyte's *δολίαις τέχναισι* to the level of a socially accepted practice or natural phenomenon; or alternately make the phrase an apparently unique exception to the semantics of this quasi-passive use of *χρησθαι*. Surely it is preferable to reclassify it as 'use'.

Yet bringing *χρησάμενος* into line with the other attested uses of the verb brings us back to the contextual problem of Nem. 4: we need to interpret it in a way that does not make Peleus Hippolyte's co-conspirator. That the passage may contain an elliptical reference to the ultimate, positive result of Hippolyte's tricks – Peleus' sack of Iolkos – was suggested in the scholia, where it is claimed that Peleus, angered because Hippolyte plotted against him, used her tricks as a reason for the sack of Iolkos⁷. Although accepted by Wilamowitz and Bury⁸, this reading has of late fallen into disfavor because of its apparent ellipsis of *αἰτία εἰς πόρθησιν* or its equivalent. Thus Farnell maintains that "while *προφάσει χρῶμενος ταῖς τέχναις* would be good prosaic Greek, we cannot leave out *προφάσει* in such a phrase and retain the same meaning for the unsupported *χρῶμενος*"⁹. Similarly Köhnken, recognizing that the participle must mean 'using', concludes: "Dann aber müßte Akastos, nicht Peleus, Subjekt zu *χρησάμενος sein*"¹⁰. Köhnken also adduces a discontinuity in the narrative as further reason to doubt the mss. reading. Observing that vv. 54–58 give the impression that

broad range of the verb's indubitably middle meanings, some verge more toward seeing the subject as an active agent, others toward seeing the subject as experiencing in a less active sense a variety of external forces. (Here it may be desirable to reclassify into the former category Réard's example from Hdt. 5.72, *τῇ κληιδόνη οὐδὲν χρεώμενος*, where the emphasis seems to be not on the oracle's warning as an external force, but on Kleomenes' failure to make proper use of it – i.e., by attempting to enter the Athenian Acropolis and meeting with defeat).

7) Schol. C ad 92a, p. 80 Drachmann: *χολωθεὶς ταῖς γενηθείσασ ἐξ Ἀκάστου γυναικὸς δολίαις τέχναις καὶ ταύταις εἰς πόρθησιν τῆς Ἰωλκοῦ αἰτία χρησάμενος* ὅτι ἐπεβουλευθή. Cf. also Schol. B ad loc., pp. 79–80 Drachmann: *εἰς πρόφασιν τιμωρίας ταῖς τοῦ Ἀκάστου γυναικὸς Κρηθίδος, ἥτις Ἰππολύτης ἐστίν, ἐπιβουλαῖς ἀποχρησάμενος*.

8) Bury (above, n. 1) 75; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros*, Berlin 1922, 175–76 n. 3.

9) Farnell (above, n. 1) 269.

10) Köhnken (above, n. 4) 201. Köhnken finds support for this claim in Scholiast B, who uses the phrase *δολία τέχνη χρησάμενος ἐπεβούλευσεν* to refer to Akastos' plot against Peleus; but this contradicts the same Scholiast's earlier statement (above, n. 7) concerning Peleus' use of the tricks. We can at most conclude that B knew a variant reading making Akastos the referent of *χρησάμενος* (and even this is not necessarily the case), not that B claimed that this reading was correct.

Peleus wants revenge specifically against Hippolyte, not against Akastos, he maintains that making Peleus the referent of *χρησάμενος* would make the tricks of Hippolyte and Akastos “zwei ganz selbständige, nicht direkt aufeinander bezogene Sachverhalte” (201); this in contrast to the treatment of the myth at *Nem.* 5.26–28, where Hippolyte is specifically said to have helped her husband against Peleus. Köhnken solves the dilemma by changing *χρησάμενος* to *χρησαμένου*, so that the participle now modifies Ἀκάστου as part of a genitive absolute.

Using Köhnken’s emendation – the most elegant of those proposed – to stand a fortiori for the others (which are occasioned by the same semantic considerations), we may see that emendation is not only unnecessary, but leaves intact the semantic difficulties it sets out to resolve¹¹. To deal first with the question of context: it need hardly be pointed out that Pindar’s allusive narrative technique often leaves out important connections between events, particularly when he is relating a story well known to his audience. Here the connection between Hippolyte’s attempted seduction and her husband’s attempted revenge is too well-known (even to a modern audience) to require elaboration. Moreover, the nature of the Potiphar’s Wife mytheme is such that the attempted seduction and its consequences are all but inseparable: an audience would inevitably link the two in the absence of an express assertion to the contrary¹².

As for semantics, Farnell’s objection is overly exacting: when *χρηῆσθαι* means ‘to use’, it is far more common than not for the specific manner or τέλος of the use to be left out¹³. The absence of a specific τέλος also accords well with Pindaric habits of expression:

11) Schroeder’s change of Ἀκάστου to Ἀκαστος is in effect a less elegant and less plausible version of Köhnken’s, since it necessitates changing δέ τε in the following line (τῶ Δαιδάλου τε μαχαίρα φύτευέ οἱ θάνατον ἐκ λόχου Πελίου παῖς). Mingarelli’s *χωσάμενος*, while giving good sense and still referring the participle to Peleus, involves a more radical alteration of the text.

12) I would not go so far as to assert that Pindar and his audience could not consciously conceive of non-traditional resolutions of the story. Rather, the force of the myth’s deep structure – its attempt to discuss and resolve contradictions within the Greek systems of gender and kinship – acts as a powerful but hidden conditioning factor in the composition of the narrative. The association of the attempted seduction and the attempted revenge would be felt by Pindar’s audience to be not only usual but in some ineffable sense necessary: other scenarios might be felt to be ‘ungrammatical’.

13) Such uses are listed by Rédard (above, n. 4) 30 (again, following the classification of LSJ), defined as “(u)tiliser dans l’intention de, en vue de’ (avec une préposition)”.

compression verging on obscurity is a hallmark of Pindaric style; in addition, Pindaric practice in the Aiginetan odes frequently involves making surprising statements about the reality underlying familiar local traditions. Thus the main point of the central μῦθος of Isthm. 8 is that the familiar fact of Aiakos' founding of the Aiakid line is responsible for settling a quarrel between Zeus and Poseidon; the notion that Peleus did not suffer from Hippolyte's tricks, but actually made profitable use of them, is a similar poetic tour de force¹⁴. Not only is the sense of χρησόμενος reasonably clear, but the emendations proposed by Köhnken and Schroeder in fact do nothing to remove the difficulty they allege: if the participle refers to Akastos we still lack any explicit explanation of the manner in which the wiles of Hippolyte are used¹⁵.

The interpretation of the scholia should not be rejected, but rather fine-tuned, taking χρησόμενος as 'using', but with a somewhat more immediate referent than the scholiast's αἰτία εἰς πόρθησιν. The use implied here is a reversal: Peleus uses Hippolyte's trick against her¹⁶. This extended sense of χρῆσθαι is suggested both by the immediate context of the Peleus-μῦθος, which includes other examples of stratagem being met by counter-stratagem (the setting and foiling of Akastos' trap; Peleus' winning of Thetis); and by the larger context of the ode as a whole, where, as Köhnken suggests (206–9), wrestling imagery serves as a narrative leitmotif emphasizing the ode's particular suitability for its patron.

The clearest and most immediate example of 'counter-intelligence' is that of the trap set by Akastos. First, the plot of the hostile host comes to naught owing to the intervention of an outsider: the thrust of ambush (ἐκ λόχου) is parried by the counter-

14) On I. 8 (and the analogous situation in O. 8, where Aiakos himself receives partial credit for the Fall of Troy), see T. Hubbard, Two Notes on the Myth of Aeacus in Pindar, GRBS 82 (1987) 5–22; and J. Carnes, The Uses of Aiakos: Pindar and the Aiginetan Imaginary, Lanham, MD 1998, Chapter 5.

15) The emendation in fact requires us to remove from our reading any direct reference to the Potiphar's Wife theme: as Wilamowitz (above, n. 8) 176 n. 3 points out, "der List seiner Frau konnte sich Akastos nur bedienen, wenn er wußte, daß es eine List war". Farnell (above, n. 1), following Wilamowitz' reasoning, realizes that in this reading the τέχναισι must refer not to the attempted seduction of Peleus, but rather to Hippolyte's active participation in the plot on Peleus' life (giving her husband advice on how to set the trap or the like; 269–70).

16) The αἰτία εἰς πόρθησιν remains as final cause: the preceding catalog details the far-flung lands acquired by the Aiakidai (all of whom – with the exception of Thetis – are understood to have been of Aiginetan origin), and in this context Pindar's audience would naturally have understood that the acquisition of Iolkos was the τέλος of Peleus' use of Hippolyte's tricks.

thrust of rescue (ἀλαλκε). Second, two key elements of the story – the marvelous knife and the rescue by Cheiron – are both examples of sudden reversal of fortune, of the tricker being out-tricked. In non-Pindaric versions of the myth, it is Peleus who has a magic or god-given weapon: the story may be traced back as far as Hesiod (fr. 209 M-W), where Akastos hides Peleus' knife so that he will be killed by Centaurs:

ἦδε δέ οἱ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνεται βουλή·
 αὐτὸν μὲν σχέσθαι, κρύψαι δ' ἀδόκητα μάχαιραν
 καλήν, ἣν οἱ ἔτευξε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις·
 ὡς τὴν μαστεύων οἶος κατὰ Πήλιον αἰπὺ
 αἶψ' ὑπὸ Κενταύροισιν ὄρεσκόοισι δαμείη.

Other versions of uncertain date refer to a knife or sword, either given by the gods to rescue Peleus after his abandonment in the woods (Sch. A ad Ar. Nub. 1063) or taken away from Peleus by Akastos and hidden, later to be restored by Cheiron (Sch. C ad Ar. Nub. 1063; Apldr. 3.13.3) or Hermes (Sch. ad Ap. Rh. 1.224)¹⁷. Pindar's version is unique in that it seems to imply that the weapon is not merely taken away from Peleus, but actually used against him, and may indicate as well that Akastos was a direct participant in the ambush. While Akastos may have set a trap using the Centaurs (hinted at but not confirmed by the presence of Cheiron), he may have been directly involved in the attack (or even its sole agent): φύτευε will admit either¹⁸. The precise function of the knife is also less than clear. Köhnken, arguing against Wilamowitz and Farnell, claims that "(d)ie zusätzliche Angabe 'aus dem Hinterhalt'

17) No two versions agree entirely, and sometimes the gods are said to favor Peleus by directly intervening to rescue him (rather than providing him with a weapon). The weapon itself seems to have some sort of magic power (cf. Zenobius 5.20, ἧ χρώμενος πάντα κατώρθου καὶ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς θήραις) although this folk-tale element is de-emphasized in some versions. Zenobius (ibid.) repeats a proverb concerning Peleus, attesting to the popular diffusion of the tale. The difference between Hesiod's Hephaistos-made μάχαιραν καλήν and the other Hephaistos- or Daidalos-made weapons is inconsequential, each being a marvelous weapon made by a legendary craftsman; we need not resort to expedients such as Bury's assertion (above, n. 1, 75) that Daidalos is literally a name for Hephaistos.

18) Against the possibility of Akastos' direct involvement we must reckon the tendency for myth to avoid direct and conscious host-guest conflict (cf. the refusal of Bellerophon's hosts to kill him outright at Il. 6.167–70 and 175–82), parallel to the avoidance of conscious father-son aggression (although the latter is somewhat less absolute; see the statistics in P. Slater, *The Glory of Hera*, Boston 1968, 399–403). It is more common for the guest or son to be subjected to ordeal or exposure (as in Hesiod's version of the Peleus myth).

(60 ἐκ λόχου) deutet weiter darauf hin, daß das Messer offenbar nicht direkt (als Mordwaffe) eingesetzt worden ist, sondern auf andere Weise mit dem Anschlag im Zusammenhang stand¹⁹. Yet the use of an apparently instrumental dative (τῆ Δαιδάλου μαχαίρα) to mean ‘using the knife of Daidalos by taking it away from him’ is quite a stretch when easier interpretations are at hand. I think the most likely solution is that Pindar’s narrative presupposes (as do various other versions of the tale) a knife that has some special power, and that the dative τῆ Δαιδάλου μαχαίρα refers to Akastos’ attempt to use this marvelous weapon against its owner²⁰.

While some of the details will always remain in doubt, the larger picture is clear: within a range of possible tellings of the story, Pindar has chosen one which suggests that Peleus’ own trick is used to his disadvantage. Such a treatment reflects in microcosm the ode’s overall emphasis on physical strength and reversal – both reversals of fortune and reversals of normal power and status relationships. The attack (sexual and then violent) on a guest is reversed, becoming an attack on a much stronger host, ultimately leading to the praiseworthy (and perhaps marvelous) subjugation of the host’s city²¹. And as Cheiron reverses the usual bestiality of Centaurs (the hypo-civilized and hostile has turned into the hyper-civilized and friendly), so too is Hippolyte, via her unbridled sexuality, a reversal of all that is normal or desirable for women²². Most significant, however, is the victory of Peleus over

19) Köhnken (above, n. 4) 203.

20) Köhnken’s objection – that such a reading posits the existence of an otherwise unknown myth and is in direct contradiction to Hesiod – is weak. Pindar was certainly not obliged to follow Hesiod, and there must have been many myths in the Aiginetan tradition, both written and oral, which are unknown to us. For the question of unique Aiginetan variants of mythic traditions, see Carnes (above, n. 14) 114–18.

21) An even stronger assertion of Peleus’ heroism is found at Nem. 3.34, where Pindar refers to him as ὃς καὶ Ἰαολκῶν εἶλε μόνος ἄνευ στρατιάς. While Nem. 4 does not specifically state that Peleus acted alone, this may be a reasonable inference from (1) the existence of the μόνος motif in Aiginetan tradition, combined with the absence of any statement to the contrary in Nem. 4; (2) the situation of Peleus as Akastos’ ξένος, which implies isolation (particularly if, as is probable, Pindar follows the mainstream tradition in which Akastos purifies Peleus of blood-guilt).

22) On the Amazonian nature of Hippolyte and her relation to the Centaurs, see J. Carnes, *The End of the Earth: Father, Ephebes and Wild Women in Nemean 4 and 5, Arethusa* 29 (1996) 17–25; on the relation of the two groups to Greek ideas of gender and citizenship, see P. duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, Ann Arbor 1982. Myth has a general structural tendency toward inversion, to present for every x an anti-x. The contrary tendencies may be found within one individual

Thetis, where a mortal is able, contrary to all expectation, to overcome an immortal in wrestling; Thetis' wiliness in shifting shape is defeated by Peleus' wiliness and tenacity. Wrestling was proverbial throughout antiquity as a contest dependent on craftiness: thus Odysseus excels in it at the funeral games of Patroklos (Il. 23.700–39), and the δολίαις τέχναισι of Hippolyte echo the tricks used by Proteus in his attempt to escape Menelaos: οὐδ' ὁ γέρων δολίης ἐπελήθετο τέχνης (Od. 4.455)²³. Köhnken has observed²⁴ that the prevalence of wrestling imagery is designed as a particular tribute to the victor; indeed, it is hard to overstate the significance of wrestling here. Peleus is able to use against Thetis the same skills he had used against Hippolyte and Akastos; and lest we have any doubt about the morality of his wiliness, Pindar reminds us that it is fated and ordained by Zeus: καὶ τὸ μόρσιμον Διόθεν περρωμένον ἔκφερον (v. 61)²⁵. Wrestling victory comes both through innate craftiness and through the will of the gods, and this is a clear lesson for the victor as well. Indeed, the agonistic spirit of wrestling is not confined to the ode's central μῦθος, but is found as well in gnomic material such as the discussion at 36–41 of envy and the need for the poet to combat ἐπιβουλία²⁶.

(as with Herakles, the civilizing monster-slayer who is himself incapable of living in human society) or may, through decomposition, reside in more than one figure (Cheiron/the other Centaurs; the hyper-civilized Phaiakians/the hypo-civilized Kyklopes). In addition, the opposition between Cheiron and his brethren reveals, as duBois points out (30), "the Greeks' fundamental ambivalence about nature and about the pre-history of mankind. The world before culture was viewed with nostalgia as well as loathing."

23) It is of course common in wrestling to throw an opponent by using his own momentum against him (on the recognition of this in antiquity see Quint. 2.12.2); χοησόμενος may be in part a metaphor of this sort of reversal. Sources on the perception of wrestling are compiled by M. B. Poliakoff, *Studies in the Terminology of the Greek Combat Sports*, Meisenheim 1986, 14–15 n. 21. Peleus' contest with Thetis is yet further implicated in trickery in light of the close relation between Thetis and Metis in many parts of the ancient tradition; see M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 1978, 142–45. They also observe that the cuttlefish (the last of Thetis' metamorphoses according to Schol. ad Lyc. Alex. 175, 178) was seen by Aristotle and others as "the paradigm of an animal possessing *metis*" (159).

24) Köhnken (above, n. 4) 206.

25) Although this line is not easy to interpret correctly (ἔκφερον may have either Cheiron or Peleus as its subject, or may even be intransitive; cf. Köhnken [above, n. 4] 203–5), Pindar's emphasis on the divine sanction for Peleus' actions is nonetheless clear.

26) Köhnken's discussion of the passage (205–8) rightly rejects the pre-Bundian notion that Pindar must be talking about specific personal rivals, yet goes too far in insisting that the use of the wrestler Peleus as mythic exemplar for the

This emphasis is not fortuitous, for there were other ways of treating the same material: Nem. 4's emphasis on Peleus' cunning and wrestling skill stands in stark contrast to the more pacific Nem. 5's celebration of his filial piety²⁷. Thus the mss. reading *χρησάμενος* (referring to Peleus) is to be preferred: paleographically and semantically sound, it emphasizes trickery and reversal in a way thoroughly consonant with the thematic concerns of the ode as a whole; and provides as well a crucial link between the hero Peleus and the patron for whom he serves as paradigm.

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wrestler Timasarchos necessitates referring the *ἐπιβουλίᾳ* to the circumstances surrounding the patron and his family. We may rather read 36–41 in light of our understanding of epinician conventions: the motif of jealousy or opposition is not only a common Pindaric topos, but one which is particularly appropriate for an ode which emphasizes struggle and the conquest of tricky opponents. The lesson applies not merely to the individual victor, but to all who by their success might inspire *φθόνος*, including the poet himself. See A. Miller, N. 4.33–43 and the Defense of Digressive Leisure, CJ 78 (1982) 202–220; and C. Carey, Three Myths in Pindar: N. 4, O. 9, N. 3, Eranos 78 (1980) 150–51.

27) This treatment of Peleus is appropriate in yet another way: the victor is a boy, and Peleus here is depicted as an ephebe; see Carnes (above, n. 22).