


Framing a Homeric *Hapax*: Bacchylides as *Homererklärer* in the Deianeira/Clytaemestre Connection (B. 16.30)¹

Marios Skempis

Independent Scholar. ✉ 

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ENG Abstract: I propound the idea that Bacchylides 16 connects Deianeira with Clytaemestre in four different ways: [1] by means of a Homeric hapax (οἶον ἐμήσατο); [2] by dint of a figura etymologica (μηῆτιν/ἐμήσατο); [3] by drawing parallel constructions from a thematic point of view; [4] by exercising *Homererklärung* through etymologising in absentia.

Keywords: Bacchylides; Homer's *Odyssey*; *Homererklärung*; etymologising.

ES Enmarcar un hapax homérico: Baquilides como *Homererklärer* en la conexión Deyanira/Clitemestra (B. 16.30)

Resumen: Propongo la idea de que Baquilides 16 conecta Deyanira con Clitemestra de cuatro maneras diferentes: [1] por medio de un hapax homérico (οἶον ἐμήσατο); [2] a través de una figura etymologica (μηῆτιν/ἐμήσατο); [3] estableciendo construcciones paralelas desde un punto de vista temático; [4] haciendo de *Homererklärung* mediante la etimologización in absentia.

Palabras clave: Baquilides; *Odisea* de Homero; *Homererklärung*; etimologización.

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Bacchylides 16 is a concise poem about how Heracles' infatuation with Iole causes his demise. His legitimate wife, Deianeira, vehemently reacts to the terrible news that the hero brings a concubine with him back home, and devises a plan that leads up to the death of her husband. This plan assimilates Deianeira to Clytaemestre, who also killed her husband Agamemnon, on sheer intertextual grounds². In this article, I am concerned with the intricate way in which intertextuality works when it comes to the cementing of the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection. I draw attention to the fact that Bacchylides accommodates a Homeric *hapax legomenon* in his narration at the point where

¹ I am thankful to the editor, Prof. Fernando García Romero, for his insightful remarks and kindness in the respectation of scholarship.

² For general comparability of the mythic occasions see Errandonea 1927: 148. I owe this reference to the kindly conducted indication of Prof. García Romero.

Deianeira's plan is implemented³. The exploitation of a *hapax* is the culmination of further analogies that substantiate the connection between these two female figures. What is more, I argue that Bacchylides behaves as a *Homererklärer* in the manner of a Hellenistic poet⁴ for he makes use of intertextual cuing to explain the etymology of the name of Deianeira's female peer, which is not even attested in his own narration. I set out to show that the suggestiveness of Bacchylides' poetry is the product of calculated techniques such as intertextual affinities and name etymologising, which deal with the extent to which the lyric poet defines his relation to Homer⁵.

The Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection establishes itself in the second part of the mythical section (16.23-35), when Heracles heads off to Trachis after he has put Oechalia in flames and has sacrificed a considerable amount of cattle at Cenaeum in Euboea (16.13-22). A deity wove for Deianeira a woeful plan (16.24-5 ὕφα[νεν | μήτιν]⁶ when she was apprised of the fact that her husband Heracles escorts another woman as he returns home (16.25-6 πύθει' | ἀγγελίαν)⁷. Against this backdrop, Deianeira has devised herself the plan of having a garment, smeared with the venomous blood of the Centaur Nessus, handed over to her husband (16.30 οἶον ἐμήσατο):

τότ' ἄμαχος δαίμων
Δαΐανείρα πολύδακρυν ὕφα[νεν
μήτιν ἐπίφρον' ἐπεὶ πύθει'
ἀγγελίαν ταλαπενθέα,
 ἴολαν ὅτι λευκώλενον
 Διὸς υἱὸς ἀταρβομάχας ἄλοχον λιπαρὸ[ν]
ποτὶ δόμον πέμ[π]τοι.
 ἅ δ' ὄσμωρος, ἅ τάλ[αι]ν', οἶον ἐμήσατο
 (B. 16.23-30)

This junction, which signposts the concurrence of divine and human causation by means of ring composition (16.25 μήτιν ~ 16.30 ἐμήσατο), is intertextually linked with the opening entry of a catalogue of nine men in *Odyssey* 11 that closes with Heracles:

οἰκτροτάτην δ' ἤκουσα ὅπα Πριάμοιο θυγατρὸς
 Κασσάνδρης, τὴν κτείνει Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις
 ἀμφ' ἐμοί· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ποτὶ γαίῃ χεῖρας ἀείρων
 βάλλον ἀποθνήσκων περὶ φασγάνω· ἡ δὲ κυνώπις
νοσφίσατ' οὐδὲ μοι ἔτλη, ἰόντι περ εἰς Αἴδαο. 425
χερσὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐλέειν σὺν τε στόμ' ἐρεῖσαι.
ὥς οὐκ αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο γυναικός.
ἢ τις δὴ τοιαῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶν ἔργα βάλῃται.
οἶον δὴ καὶ κείνη ἐμήσατο ἔργον ἀεικές.
κουριδίω τεύξασα πόσει φόνον. ἦ τοι ἔφην γε 430
ἀσπᾶσιος παιδεσσιν ἰδὲ δμῶεσσιν ἐμοῖσιν
οἴκαδ' ἐλεῦσεσθαι· ἡ δ' ἔξοχα λυγρὰ ἰδυῖα

³ For allusions to Homeric *hapax legomena* see Nelson 2021.

⁴ On *Homererklärung* and the Hellenistic poets see most prominently Rengakos 1992; 1993; 1994. There is no survey in current scholarship that documents a similar case of *Homererklärung* for the lyric poets of the archaic and classical periods.

⁵ For various degrees of Bacchylides' relation to Homer see Kirkwood 1966; Segal 1976: 100-107; Pfeijffer 1999: 44-51; Ford 2002: 115-117; Kowalzig 2007: 306-308; Skempis 2011: 259-260, 264-269, 284-286; Fearn 2012; Dova 2012: 76-87; De Jong 2014; Cairns 2010: 49-58; 2014, 115.

⁶ The junction ὕφαίνω μήτιν is traditional register of early epic: Hom. *Il.* 7.324; 9.93; *Od.* 4.678; 9.422; Hes. *Sc.* 28. Bacchylides' intertext is the reference in the *Shield* where Zeus the all-wise father of gods and men (30 μητίετα Ζεύς) is said to have woven the plan of Heracles' conception. The *figura etymologica* (μητίετα/μήτιν) is here unfailing.

⁷ It should be noted that ἐπίφρων μήτις is not just a Homeric junction attested merely once, but also attributed to women (Hom. *Od.* 19.326). Cf. Jurenka 1898: 114; Maehler 1997: 164.

οἷ τε κατ' αἰσχος ἔχευε καὶ ἔσσομένησιν ὀπίσσω
θηλυτέρησι γυναιξί, καὶ ἦ κ' εὐεργὸς ἔησιν.

(Hom. Od. 11.421-34)

In this entry, Agamemnon speaks to Odysseus and reproaches his wife Clytaemestre, who devised the plan of his detriment, with the same words (11.429 οἷον δὴ καὶ κείνη ἐμήσατο ἔργον ἀεικές). The junction οἷον ... ἐμήσατο is a Homeric *hapax*⁸ that attests to the formative influence the Homeric text exerts on the narration of Bacchylides⁹. The nonce quality of the Homeric wording and its deployment by Bacchylides set up the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection according to which two women are shown to be responsible for their husbands' death.

Apart from the verbatim citation of the *hapax legomenon* in Bacchylides 16, the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection is bolstered by a series of parallel constructions. The glossing of Deianeira's name as 'the one who murders her man' (16.24 Δαίανείρα < δηῖώω 'slay' + ἀνὴρ 'man')¹⁰ is tantamount to Clytaemestre's reputation as 'the one who murders her husband' (11.430 πόσει φόνον). The piteous voice of Cassandre that Agamemnon hears when he has reached his home (11.421 ἦκουσα ὄππα), is at one with the message about Iole accompanying her husband, which Deianeira hears (16.25-26 πύθει' ἀγγελίαν). The double pronouncement that there is nothing more dread and shameless than the race of women (11.427 οὐκ αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο γυναικός), is in tune with the double characterisation of Deianeira as ill-fated and wretched (16.30 ἄ δὺςμορος, ἄ τάλ[αι]ν'). The return home of Agamemnon, who carries off Cassandre (11.432 οἴκαδ' ἐλεύσεσθαι), matches the return home of Heracles, who brings Iole with him (16.29 ποτὶ δόμον πέμ[πι]οι). The large amount of parallel constructions, four in sum, that centers on the citation of the *hapax legomenon* οἷον ἐμήσατο, shows that the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection predicates on a contextual intertext, which the Agamemnon-entry in *Odyssey* 11 furnishes.

The Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection feeds on etymological manoeuvres. In Homer, the narrator advertises the spelling *Clytaemestre* with two puns that justify the existence of prefix (κλυτός < κλύω 'hear' ~ 11.421 ἦκουσα) and suffix (μήστρα < μήδομαι 'plot, contrive' ~ 11.422 δολόμητις and 11.429 ἐμήσατο) of the personal name, even though he opts to preserve the rival variant, whose suffix derives from μνάομαι 'woo' (< *Clytaemnestre*)¹¹. The Homeric *figura etymologica* analysed above is in principle an instantiation of etymology *in absentia* because the supported variant, *Clytaemestre*, does not feature in the text. Consequently, the Homeric narration fosters the meaning of the name 'renowned [through hearing] for cunning' (< *Clytaemestre*)¹² as opposed to 'famous cunning' and/or 'famous wooing' (*Clytaem[n]estre*)¹³. As a *Homererklärer more hellenistico*, Bacchylides casts upon his poetry a tone of criticism on name etymologising insofar as he privileges the glossing of *Clytaemestre*'s name *in absentia* as 'renowned [through hearing] for cunning' as opposed to the 'famous cunning' of her husband's murder: the Bacchylidean expression πύθει' ἀγγελίαν (16.25-26) squares with the Homeric ἦκουσα ... ὄππα (11.421) because it lays stress on *hearing* a message relayed, not on a reputed cunning. In this way, Bacchylides follows the Homeric understanding of *Clytaemestre*'s name in the particular passage by using both the pun μῆτιν/ἐμήσατο and the *hapax* οἷον ἐμήσατο as a flag for criticism on onomastics and their modes of signification. Hence, the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection remains pervasive in the narration of Bacchylides 16 in spite of its stunning suggestiveness.

⁸ Without any link to οἷον, the verb ἐμήσατο occurs four times in Homer's *Odyssey* (3.194; 3.303; 10.115; 22.169) and twice in Hesiod's *Works & Days* (49; 95).

⁹ None of the modern editors of Bacchylides (Kenyon 1897: 150; Jebb 1905: 373; Blass 133; Jurenka 1898: 115; Irigoin 1993: 14; Maehler 1997: 165) mention the fact that οἷον ἐμήσατο is a Homeric *hapax*.

¹⁰ Cf. Errandonea 1927: 147; Davies 1989: 469; García Romero 2012: 79 [= 2018, 20].

¹¹ For this etymology see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2009. On early Greek poetic etymologising in general see Loudon 1995; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2007.

¹² Marquardt 1992: 243.

¹³ Marquardt 1992: 246. The pun δολόμητις/ἐμήσατο discloses a preference for the cunning of the person, not the act itself.

I have argued that Bacchylides not only frames a Homeric *hapax* with a *figura etymologica*, but also draws parallels to support the Deianeira/Clytaemestre connection. The effect of this stratagem is glossing the Homeric text on a meta-level inasmuch as the lyric poet etymologises the name Clytaemestre *in absentia*.

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