

ARCHILOCHUS IN PINDAR *PYTHIAN* 2.

The author states that Pindar uses Archilochus in *Pythian* 2 as a vehicle for resentment against his enemies who had barred him of Hiero's estimation.

ἐμὲ δὲ χρεῶν
φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν
εἶδον γὰρ ἐκὰς ἑὼν τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἑμαχανία
ψογερόν Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθρῃσιν
πιαινόμενον.

Pyth. 2, 53-58

Pindar seems to have lost to Bacchylides an important contract for composing the celebratory Ode on an occasion of Hiero's victory with his chariot, but he composed a poem nevertheless¹. *Pythian* 2 suggests that the poet is in a mood of uncertainty, and is anxious about the damage that ill-wishers are doing to him in the estimation of Hiero. We have no reason to think that he is attacking Bacchylides rather than members of Hiero's court². To assert both his poetic talent and his claims upon Hiero's consideration, and to provide a counterblast to the detractions of his opponents, he sends this poem *Pythian* 2,

¹ For a concise and helpful resume of modern work on this poem and a perceptive interpretation of the poem in the light of recent criticism: H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Modern Interpretation of Pindar: The Second Pythian and Nemean Odes' *J. H. S.* 93, 1973, pp. 109-137 (Esp. 109-127). There can be no certainty about the occasion of the poem; R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes Essays on Interpretation*, Oxford 1962, pp. 111-112; it is probable that it was written after 470 B. C.

² C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* Oxford 1964, p. 206 thinks that the reference to the πῖθων in v 72 castigates Bacchylides for imitation (Pindar *O.* 1-7, cf Bacchyl. 3, 85-92); for a different view, Burton p. 126. J. B. Bury perceived a punning insult to Bacchylides in μαυυλάκας (*Nem.* 105) = Βακχυλίδης, «Paronomasia in Pindar», *Hermath.* 13, 1887, p. 202; also *The Nemean Odes of Pindar*, London 1890, p. 126, 144; an ingenious idea which has never gained wide acceptance, though the paronomastic principle is sound (Bowra, p. 211).

unsolicited and probably gratis, from Thebes to Syracuse¹. Under such circumstances it is not unfitting that Archilochus, the Greek poet who most of all was plagued by the thought of enemies and backbiters, should appear in its roster of images and exempla; and the following discussion is addressed to this image, especially as it appears in the verses quoted above², and in its traces elsewhere in the poem³. The notion of Archilochus and his traditional reputation erupts vividly not only in these lines, but permeates and colours the poem as a whole.

The first strophe of the poem praises Syracuse, Hiero's victory, and the gods who patronized it. This honorific theme is carried on in the second, which with characteristic amplitude refers to the various leaders who, from time to time, have been praised by bards (e. g. Cinyras). The reference is narrowed down to Hiero, who is worthy of gratitude for preserving the Locrians in their peril (vv. 18-20). Gratitude is established as a good; it is a proper substance of commemorative lyric. On the other hand, there is the example of the ungrateful Ixion who learned about the goodness of gratitude by a very hard lesson. The switch from praise of Hiero to the detailed study of Ixion's ingratitude is rapid, but not more so than other Pindaric transitions from general to particular:

διὰ τεὰν δύναμιν δρακεῖσ' ἀσφαλές
 θεῶν δ' ἐφετμαῖς Ἰξίονα φάντι ταῦτα βροτοῖς
 λέγειν ἐν πτερόεντι τροχῷ παντᾶ κυλινδόμενον κτλ

(20-23)

Men say that Ixion himself can recommend gratitude, as he whirls about on his winged wheel, and the wheel here appropriately is imagined in the form of the ἵυγξ, the love charm in which the wry-neck is whirled

¹ Pindar, since he had expressed the wish in 476 B. C. that II should win at the Pythian games, *Olym.* 1, 108 ff., may well have felt, (assuming that P 2 refers to the Pythian games) that he had a lien on the contract: see Bowra *Pindar* 135, who characterizes the poem as being 'on approval' (κατὰ φοίνισσαν ἐμπολὴν v. 67) or as a 'poetical letter'.

² I agree with Burton, p. 119 that the first statement in the passage ἐμε ... καταγοριᾶν, though it possibly could refer to P. avoiding attacks made upon him by others, refers certainly to P. avoiding the practice of making abusive attacks himself.

³ 71 ff. especially.

on a wheel¹. Since Ixion attempted ungratefully and hybristically to steal Hera's love, he was placed on such a wheel, and now knows better. The mythic sermon is the familiar one on hybris, and no one is considered too great to take warning of its dangers, not even Hiero. The wheel, however, is an ambiguous symbol here, well worthy of Pindar's gift for strongly associative imagery. Hiero's victory depends upon spinning, racing wheels; he has won a race by chariots; the rapid wheel, however, is the symbol of Ixion's retribution for his *hybris*. There follows an explication of the other consequences of Ixion's sin, and how he begat a monster upon a falsity, and what further offspring came from this to plague the earth; and then we find the lines quoted at the beginning of our discussion, in which Pindar wishes to avoid the ways of Archilochus.

We see from these lines that Pindar suddenly pulls himself up, and addresses himself with an almost Homeric remonstrance. It has been suggested that Pindar feels here that he is in danger of going too far in his critical account of Ixion's ingratitude, towards, if you like, an Archilochean excess². I do not think that in this context the associative complexity of Pindar's art would be likely to admit such a simplicity except as a screen behind which we are intended to sense the movements of more subtle feelings. His concern is the relation of himself, Pindar, to Hiero, and to others in Hiero's court, and when he finds the Archilochean mask beginning to grow upon his face, he restrains himself, not from continuing the image of Ixion, which has preceded, but from formulating an explicit equation between the great and otherwise praiseworthy Hiero and Ixion. I suggest that the equation is already adumbrated by the image of the wheel. Even its adumbration would be unacceptably savage were it not that there is ambiguity which permits it to refer to Hiero's friends who are unfriendly to Pindar, rather than the great man himself. Indeed, he has almost expressed his anger and disappointment openly by the very mention of Archilochus, that political pamphleteer par excellence amongst poets. In rejecting Archilochus as an ineffectual satirist, feeding upon hatred, he neutralizes the sting which he has wielded, but hesitated to implant. There is the future to consider. Wealth, with 'wisdom' allocated by fortuna is best: Pindar's phrase is ambiguous: τὸ πλουτεῖν δὲ σὺν τύχῃ πότμου σοφίας

¹ Familiar enough in Pindar: *Pyth.* 4, 214, *Nem.* 4, 35 cf. Theocr., *Idyll* 2.

² The view of I. G. Hirschke, «Dissertatio de Fabulis Archilochis», *Miscell. Philol.* ed. Aug. Matthiae (Lips. et Altenburg 1809), p. 29.

ἄριστον¹ (56-57), and no doubt is intended to be so. It probably refers to his own prudent policy, as well as to his poetic skill².

Another ambiguity is that the intention of the lines: ἐμὲ δὲ χρέων φεύγειν δάκος κτλ, and the κακαγορία which he fears in himself, is not entirely retrospective, referring to ingratitude towards himself in Hiero and or his court. It is prospective and concerns the attitude towards Pindar of Hiero and his court. But the mention of Archilochus' name has the effect of «earthing», as it were, any really powerful current of offence that might reach Hiero, allowing it to administer at most only a slight shock, scarcely perceptible. But, ironically, Archilochus, having been established in the ecology of the poem's images, does not fade away as Pindar proceeds to other matters, but continues to exercise his characteristic influence strongly as it proceeds. Now that the Parian poet has been mentioned, Pindar can introduce material of an Archilochean kind, sermonizing, using animal fable, and taking poetic steps against his critics and enemies with Hiero.

The ambiguity in the reference to Archilochus may also be supported by another argument, as follows: we find in the verses which immediately precede these with which we are specially concerned, a reference to the swiftness of divine justice which elevates the good man and humbles the over-proud. One way of reading the poem suggests that Hiero is the good man: Ixion (and the collective foes of Pindar) are the proud. This is how Hiero will read it and Hiero's face will be thus saved. But Hiero has been influenced by opponents of Pindar, and thus is in line for some reproach. We have seen how he can be given a mild 'shock' by the way in which the poet uses Archilochus. But in saying 'I must not be like Archilochus', at the same time as he separates Hiero from such unpleasant characters, Pindar seems to be using a technique for separating a powerful man from unpleasant subordinates by praising Hiero close to a context which severely criticizes certain vices of deceit, ingratitude, etc., represented by Ixion's example. The great ruler, praised though he may be, and beyond the poet's range as a target for direct attack, is yet intended to perceive a lesson himself. A much more direct example of this technique is to be found in Cicero's speech for Roscius

¹ Burton, p. 120 wisely points that πλουτεῖν in this phrase must mean literal wealth as opposed to ἀμαχανία, which excludes the traditional view that σοφίαν depends upon πλουτεῖν. I think that comparable phrase in *Pyth* 5, 3 πότμου παραδόντος σοφίαν suggests that σοφίας may well be taken with σύν τύχῃ πότμου rather than ἄριστον: it also suggests the 'given' or 'endowed' character of poetic talent and extraordinary intelligence.

² 'Wisdom' probably in the sense of poetic skill; Burton, p. 120.

of Ameria, in which Sulla is praised in contrast to his wicked associates; but the fact remains that Sulla should have kept these in order, and by implication is to blame for cherishing them¹. So Hiero is expected to perceive a lesson in what is said about Ixion, and the lesson becomes much more specific later in the poem, when the theme of the monkey, an Archilochean idea, is introduced.

But first let us consider somewhat more closely the lines which introduce Archilochus. A possible (if unpoetical) version of their meaning might be:

‘For I have seen, far away in time fierce satirist Archilochus;
for the most part afflicted by financial difficulties, with nothing
but his own harsh worded flytes to get fat on. It is (much) the
best however to have wealth, with the coincident blessing of a
fine mind (wisdom).’

Pindar blends this theme with the praise of Hiero, who manifestly has these blessings. I do not wish to add to the copious commentary material on these verses, but it is clear that Pindar’s picture of the older poet takes account of the general tradition in antiquity about his temperament, a tradition which it influences, but can hardly be thought to have originated². Pindar seems to see Archilochus as a poet who is worth mentioning, but also as an archaic, uncontrolled paranoid whose example he warns himself against following. If Pindar were to give in to his feelings of irritated injustice, he would lose by it, and incur problems of ἀμαχανία or financial trouble, which he cannot afford to do if he is to survive in his profession. His attitude to Archilochus is not entirely unsympathetic; on the contrary, he has some Archilochean feelings himself, but he will not allow them to dominate him. His attitude to the impracticality of Archilochus’ proceedings is probably a traditional one, and it seems to be mirrored in later reports of the tradition such as that in Oenomaus to the effect that Archilochus lost his property ἐν πολιτικῇ φλυαρίᾳ.³ Archilochus’ characteristic epithet is φογερόν, (‘the satirist’ or ‘satirical’ it may well be rendered) and nobody pays for φόγος; nor will anybody become ‘fat’ on its proceeds. The metaphor of πραινόμενον, ‘getting fat’, is of the utmost importance: the

¹ Cicero, *Pro Roscio Amerino*: 21, 25, 26, 91, 110, 130, 131.

² As exemplified by Critias’ account of it in Aelian, *Var. Hist.* X 13 (Diels-Krauz 88 B 44).

³ *Ap. Euseb., Praep. evang.* V 31, 1.

ambiguity is pointed, for it is clear both that a satirist will not get physically fat on the proceeds of his scolding, no patron will pay for that — and the word also has, as E. Fraenkel pointed out, a notion of 'fatness' or 'thickness' of the wit¹, a frequent image of misperceiving or being deceived about the realities of a situation.

Pindar anachronistically retrojects the patron-poet relationship of his own time and specialism to Seventh Century B. C. Paros. It matters little whether he was aware of his anachronism. What is significant is the contact that he makes with Archilochus, especially in the pun involved in *πικανόμενον*², which emphasizes the foolishness of alienating a good patron, even if you are not sure of his present attitude or how much attention he is paying to your rivals who surround him.

Pindar, however, has it both ways: by rejecting Archilochus with the 'I should be a fool to act like that', together with the momentary identification of himself with the poet, he (i) brings to the notice of Hiero that he has a grievance about the whisper-campaign in his court by indicating that the great king Rhadamanthus would not have anything to do with such rumours³, and (ii) gives himself liberty to be somewhat Archilochean in the sermon which comes later in the poem. Naturally he is a somewhat bowdlerized Archilochus, and the identification is resumed in an inoffensive way as he uses the Archilochean animal-fable motif with skill and appropriateness.

After reassuring Hiero once more in flattering terms that he is not really under attack, he begins a quite frank address of advice: *γένοι' οἷός ἐσσι μάθων*: 'Live in accord with the quality you know yourself to possess' or 'Live up to your nature'. Huschke aptly quotes in this connection Cicero's admonition to Atratinus in the speech *pro Caelio*: *Qualis es talem te esse existimes*, etc.⁴. In the reference to the fable of the fox and the ape, which occurs in Archilochus but of which the storyline is not clearly known, we see Archilochus' influence clearly surfac-

¹ See Fraenkel's note on Aesch., *Ag.* 276 with its associated examples. (Oxford 1950).

² The idea is not simple or unambiguous, as might be suggested by such parallels in English as 'I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him' for which, see the comments, *ad loc.*: C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar, Olympian and Pythian Odes*, London 1897; also Bury, *Hermath.*, op. cit. for word-plays and ambiguities in P.; Bowra 211-214.

³ VV. 75 ff.

⁴ *Pro Caelio* 3; Huschke 30; note Bury's view, *Hermath.*, p. 206, that 'Ραδαμάνθους in this connection (v. 73) takes up idea of μάθων in v. 72, and suggests ὁ ῥαδίως μανθάνων.

ing¹. What does seem clear about the fable is that the ape had false pretensions which were exploded by the fox's pointing out to him and others his obvious nature. In the poet's reference to the superficial attractiveness of the monkey in the eyes of children: καλός τοι πίθων παρὰ παισιν ἀεὶ καλός, we need see no allusion to the sophists. The allusion to the monkey and fox fable brings the poet's attention to another story involving the profitless cunning of the fox, like the whisperers and slanderers who ultimately gain nothing; unlike the great and simple-hearted Rhadamanthus, who is king of the dead (and a greater and stronger king than Hiero). Pindar will be like a cork, bobbing above all the turbulence, in the manner of a fisherman's float. Like Archilochus, in the midst of sham and deceit, he can still long for integrity and fairness. He will stand firmly by his friends and bid defiance to foes, true to the archaic ethos. These assertions, especially the later, have a reminiscence of Archilochus' utterances. He is opposed and put down, but he will win in the end and escape his opponents and calumniates. The assertion of confidence is not unlike the tone of the poem in *Ox. Pap.* 2310, which is generally and conclusively attributed to Archilochus; the animal allusions to foxes and wolves, as well as more recondite references to corks bobbing about on the sea, and to measuring-lines, might almost suggest parody of his great predecessor in their engagement of the αἶψος theme. But one categorical division separates the Theban poet from Archilochus, and limits his capacity for identification with him, though it does not prevent him from comprehending his state of mind and representing it artistically: this is Pindar's professionalism, his need to compete with rivals and resist slanderers within the context of an artistic society in which the poet depended upon patronage. However, much as we may be in agreement with the line of interpretation which sees Hiero reproached by Pindar in this poem, we must recall that whatever he felt, he had to keep his feelings under Delphic control. He reins in his temper with nice balance: his reproaches to his patron are protreptic rather than outrageous, and overlaid with courtier's praise, but he uses Archilochus and ideas associated with him as a vehicle for resentment against enemies which enables him to go far enough in anger, and further, certainly, than if Archilochus were not available for his purpose. The ancient reader, however, who was more alert to symbols than the modern, would be aware of his purpose.

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¹ Hirschke, 23 ff.; Burton, p. 124.