

Pseudo-Hera, Pseudo-Aeneas: a Pindaric Intertext in Vergil's *Aeneid*

This paper discusses an intertext between Pindar and Vergil. In *Aeneid* 10.636-42 Juno fabricates an Aeneas-apparition in order to lure Turnus safely away from the battlefield. This phantom Aeneas is generally taken as an imitation of *Iliad* 5.449-50 where Apollo constructs a false Aeneas to rescue the real one from Diomedes (cf. Harrison 1991, Williams 1973, Deuticke 1973, Conington and Nettleship 1963). As I will argue here, Pindar, *Pythian* 2.35-43, where Zeus fashions a false Hera from a cloud to deceive and seduce Ixion, can be considered an additional source-text. I will further argue that this intertext demonstrates Vergil's responsive treatment of gender and deception, as he inverts the role of Hera/Juno and questions the innate perniciousness of female deception.

The centrality of Hera/Juno to both texts argues for correspondence between the two, and the respective imitations themselves parallel one another. Each phantom-figure is fashioned from a cloud (νεφέλα, 2.36; *nube*, 10.636) and encapsulates the mixture of wonder and horror inherent in the blurring of appearance and reality: the Hera-cloud is a beautiful bane and a sweet lie (ψεῦδος γλυκὺ, 37; καλὸν πῆμα, 40), while the Aeneas-cloud is a wondrous monstrosity (*visu mirabile monstrum*, 637). Each poet emphasizes the deceptive purpose and artificial nature of his respective phantom (*dat inania verba, dat sine mente sonum gressumque fingit | euntis*, 639-40; ψεῦδος, 37; δόλον, 39). Even the order in which these concepts are presented is similar: mention of the cloud material (*Pyth.* 2.36; *Aen.* 10.636) is followed in the next line by the innate paradox embodied by the apparition (*Pyth.* 2.37; *Aen.* 10.637), followed two lines later by its deceptive function (*Pyth.* 2.39; *Aen.* 10.639).

The number of similarities suggests a recognizable phantom motif that influenced Vergil's pseudo-Aeneas. If Vergil indeed is reshaping this motif, his variation on Hera/Juno is

particularly striking. In the Pindaric context Hera and her imitation are initially passive figures, the one, an object of Ixion's lust, the other, a creation of Zeus, but pseudo-Hera acquires increasing agency as she couples with Ixion and gives birth to their son Kentauros. Vergil's Juno assumes the role of artificer from the beginning, yet her Aeneas-cloud is a mere apparition without strength or mind (*sine viribus*, 636; *sine mente*, 640) and comparable to shades or dreams (641-2). The Hera-cloud of *Pythian 2*, by contrast, has corporeality, as she is able to couple with Ixion and even bear children to him.

Vergil's revision has implications for the location of deceptive agency: in *Pythian 2* the focus shifts from Zeus, the creator of the deception, to the Hera-cloud herself; Pindar thus uses a female figure to embody the deception while relegating its original male creator to the background. Furthermore, the effects of this deception are unwelcome, as the child is respected neither by gods nor men (*Pyth.* 2.42-43). Pindar's Ixion-myth preserves a literary and intellectual tradition that posits women, seduction, and deception as natural and abhorrent concomitants. Vergil, by casting Juno as the maker of her own deception, rather than the embodiment of and heir to Zeus's original deception, identifies and foregrounds this tradition in which deception belongs to the female.

But in putting the focus on female deceptive agency he also problematizes it. Juno's pseudo-Aeneas is relatively powerless for his lack of corporeality, unlike Zeus's pseudo-Hera; furthermore, although the Aeneas-phantom is meant to deceive, Juno concocts it for the ultimately benevolent purpose of saving Turnus from death. If we recognize the *Aeneid* passage as an inversion of its Pindaric predecessor, we can see how Vergil's poetry destabilizes, questions, and even undermines the old and familiar equation between female deception and malevolence.

Bibliography

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