

HADES AND HERACLES AT PYLOS: DIONE'S TALE DISMANTLED*

The fifth book of the *Iliad* contains a curious story about the fight between Heracles and Hades at Pylos, told by Dione (395–7): τλῆ δ' Ἀΐδης ἐν τοῖσι πελώριος ὤκων ὀϊστόν, | εἰδτέ μιν ὠπτός ἀνὴρ υἱὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο | ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι βαλὼν ὀδύνησιν ἔδωκεν; the tale seems to have no clear mythological reference or at least not any known to us. Neither can one be found for the most puzzling element of this passage: the bizarre phrase in line 397 that Hades was wounded ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι, as we know nothing about a myth which might have been connected with this event. The lines in question have not been of great interest to scholars hitherto and tend to be mentioned only cursorily; even if some attempts at explanation have been made, no satisfactory solution has yet been offered.¹ In this paper I would like to address two issues: (a) the myth(s) involved in the story and the meaning of ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν

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¹ See G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1990), ad loc. and T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore, 1993), 454–7. Both scholars follow the scholia in their interpretations and propose to connect the event either with the battle at Messenian Pylos, where Heracles slew the sons of Neleus (alternatively, according to Kirk, the reference is to the hero's support for Orchomenus against Thebes), or with Heracles' taking Cerberus away from the Underworld. Ganz ([this note], 456) argued also that a number of red-figure vases (dated to the first quarter of the fifth century B.C.) representing Heracles accompanied by, shaking hands with, or carrying on his back a bearded (sometimes white-haired) semi-naked god holding a cornucopia may be connected with the myth related in these lines of the *Iliad*. One of the representations, on a bell-krater (Berlin: PM inv. 31094), shows Heracles with the god on his back led by Hermes through water, indicated by fish around their feet. Ganz proposes to interpret the scene thus: 'after wounding the lord of the Underworld, [Heracles] takes him up to the earth or Olympus to be cured, with the water crossed perhaps the Acheron or Styx, and Hermes quite appropriately in attendance.' Yet, according to the *Iliad*, Hades went to Olympus alone (*Il.* 5.398–9). Furthermore, neither Homer nor any other ancient author mentions Olympus in connection with any river or sea. Overall, the vase representation does not seem to indicate the journey from the Underworld, since a) the fish depicted seem to be alive, whereas, if Pausanias (10.28.1) is to be trusted, the fish in the river Acheron depicted by Polygnotus were dead (and no ancient testimony provides us with information about any living creatures in the Underworld waters); b) although lakes were considered in antiquity to be the entrances to the Underworld (cf. Paus. 2.37.5), Heracles is nowhere said to enter or leave it through water. I believe that the scenes represented on the vases in question belong to a myth connected with the sanctuary of Panocrates and Palaemon by the river Ilissus (see K. Sekita, 'The figure of Hades/Plouton in Greek beliefs of the archaic and classical periods' [Diss., University of Oxford, 2016]). On the lines in question, see also B. Sammons, *The Art and Rhetoric of the Homeric Catalogue* (Oxford, 2010), 21–38, who suggests (29–30) that the catalogue form of Dione's speech is resistant to the scholiasts' interpretation that the wounding of Hera and Hades took place on the same occasion, although he does not speculate as to the explanation of the story behind the lines in question.

νεκύεσσι within it, and (b) the mechanisms through which the confusion of the transmitted versions of the motif of Heracles fighting various gods might have originated, amalgamating separate tales into an apparently unitary story. The motif of Heracles' fight with Hades is particularly interesting and deserves careful examination.

The struggle between Hades and Heracles is first mentioned in the fifth book of the *Iliad* by Dione; then it is alluded to by the laudator in Pindar's ninth *Olympian* ode, and by Panyassis in his fragmentarily preserved *Herakleia*; it is also echoed in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*,² Apollodorus and Pausanias. In Homer, Pindar and Panyassis, the common denominator is the manner of presentation, resulting usually in a catalogue of deities wounded by Heracles. We learn almost nothing about the context of this struggle from the preserved material; the explanations provided by the scholiasts baffle more than they help.

SOURCES AND IMPLICATIONS

a) *Il.* 5.395–402

According to Dione's tale, Hades was wounded 'at Pylos among the dead' (ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι) with the hero's arrow, which was driven into his shoulder (οἷστος ὄμφ' ἐν στιβαρῷ ἠλήλατο) and distressed his spirit (κῆδε δὲ θυμόν); he was forced to leave his realm and go to Olympus to be cured by Apollo. What is interesting is that the emphasis is put on Hades' physical suffering—he is pierced with pains (ὀδύνησι πεπαρμένος), grieving in his heart (κῆρ ἄχέων)—but also on his immortality, expressed through the generalization in the last line: οὐ μὲν γάρ τι καταθνητός γε τέτυκτο. Furthermore, Hades' wounding happens three lines after the wounding of Hera (in her right breast), also by Heracles, and ten lines after the binding of Ares by the sons of Aloeus (Otus and Ephialtes).³ The enumeration of the gods' sufferings caused by mortals allows Dione to comfort⁴ her daughter Aphrodite rather than to provide the audience with a mythical narration for its own sake, as she is giving homologous examples to Aphrodite's case, wounded in her hand by Diomedes while saving her son Aeneas from his attack.⁵ The story is indeed constructed on the principle of correspondence between several elements, especially where the wounding of Hades is concerned: both gods (Aphrodite and Hades) suffer bodily pain,⁶ both go to Olympus to be healed⁷ and in

² Seneca's account is not discussed in this paper, because it does not add any new information, but follows Homeric lines: see J.G. Fitch, *Seneca's Hercules Furens. A Critical Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1987), on 560–5, and M. Billerbeck, *Seneca Hercules Furens. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Leiden and Boston, 1999), on 560–5.

³ [Hes.] *Scut.* 357–67 says that Ares was also wounded by Heracles in the battle at (sandy) Pylos.

⁴ Confirmed by lines 382–4: τέλαθι τέκνον ἐμόν, καὶ ἀνάσχεο κηδομένη περ· | πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ τλήμεν Ὀλύμπια δόματ' ἔχοντες | ἐξ ἀνδρῶν χαλέπ' ἔλγε' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι τιθέντες. Cf. Σb 5.392: διὰ μειζόνων δὲ προσώπων παρεμυθίσαστο τὴν Ἀφροδίτην and M.L. West, *The Making of the Iliad. Disquisition and Analytical Commentary* (Oxford and New York, 2011), on lines 392–7 ('this may have been the poet's model for Diomedes fighting against the gods').

⁵ *Il.* 5.311–18, 330, 336, 376–8.

⁶ Respectively *Il.* 5.354 (ἀχθομένην ὀδύνησι) and 5.399 (ὀδύνησι πεπαρμένος).

⁷ Respectively *Il.* 5.367 and 5.398. Lines 398–402 were deleted by West, as an interpolation caused by rhetorical expansion, added to enhance the dramatic effect or graphic vividness of the narrative; according to him, these lines were not 'an essential part of the original myth' (M.L. West, *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the Iliad* [Munich–Leipzig, 2001], 192). However, Hades' journey

both cases Athena is present (in Aphrodite's case she helps Diomedes⁸ and in that of Hades she helps Heracles⁹). Also the reasons for their wounding may be compared in certain aspects: she stood up for her son, he (as I shall argue later) for his worshippers. Taking into consideration the repeated reference in the passage to the sufferings of different gods caused by humans,¹⁰ we may assume that the stories interwoven into Dione's speech are not related to the same event.

The explanations of this story offered by scholiasts, however, complicate and blur the whole picture unnecessarily: some of them present the story as one event; others divide it into two separate events. In the former case,¹¹ Heracles came to Messenian Pylos (as may be assumed on the basis of the presence of Neleus) to be purified, perhaps after the murder of Iphitus (cf. Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.6.2),¹² but, having been rejected, he became angry and attacked Pylos. The gods who supported Neleus were Poseidon, Hera and Aidoneus; on Heracles' side were Athena and Zeus. According to the other scholiastic account, the events were separate: Heracles hurt Hera during the battle at Pylos, or when she refused to nurse him as a child,¹³ whereas Hades was wounded during the hero's twelfth labour (taking Cerberus away from the Underworld), because he opposed Heracles' cheating (Hades allowed him to take Cerberus on the condition that the hero overpowered him without any weapon).¹⁴

As explanations of the Homeric lines, both of the scholiastic accounts fail: the first because, as we have seen, there is no reason to think that the wounding of Hades and Hera happened on one occasion or even that the wounding of Hera occurred at Pylos at all; the second because it goes against the text in associating with Pylos the wounding not of Hades but of Hera. As we shall see, some of the scholiastic details may none the less prove to be relevant, but let us now revert to the Homeric text itself, in particular to the phrase ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκυέσσι. There were several cities named Pylos.¹⁵ Homer

to Olympus and his treatment by Apollo did not have to be essential parts of the myth (about which we know little) in order to occur in the poem. Complementarity with Dione's consolatory speech (and not, as West insists, with Ares' healing in *Il.* 5.899–904) seems to be a satisfactory justification for these lines.

⁸ *Il.* 5.405.

⁹ Cf. *Od.* 11.625, Paus. 6.25.2.

¹⁰ Kirk (n. 1), on 5.385.

¹¹ ΣΑ *Il.* 5.392: Ἡρακλῆς παρεγένετο εἰς Πύλον χρήζων καθαρσίν. οἱ δὲ Πύλιοι ἀποκλεισάντης τὰς πύλας οὐκ εἰσεδέξαντο αὐτόν· ἐφ' ᾧ ὄργισθεις ὁ ἦρωσ ἐπόρησε Πύλον. συνεμάχουν δὲ τῷ μὲν Νηλεῖ τρεῖς θεοί, Ποσειδῶν, Ἥρα, Ἄιδωνεύς, τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ δύο, Ἀθηνᾶ καὶ Ζεὺς.

¹² See also ΣΤ 11.690. However, cf. W. Leaf's commentary ad loc. (Homer, *The Iliad*, ed. with English notes and introduction [London, 1886–1888]), noting that it could not have been a Homeric story because there is no trace of purification for blood in Homer, and thus the story has to belong to Heracles' Underworld journey. For the purification of Heracles, see R.C.T. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1983), 382.

¹³ ΣβΤ *Il.* 5.392–4: οἱ μὲν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Πυλίου μάχῃ, οἱ δὲ διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶσαι αὐτὴν νήπιον ὄντα σπᾶσαι τὸν ἴδιον μαζόν. Cf. Σ Lycoph. 39.

¹⁴ ΣβΤ *Il.* 5.395–7: φασὶν Ἡρακλέα ἐπιταχθέντα ὑπὸ Πλούτωνος ἄνευ ἀσπίδος καὶ σιδήρου χειρώσασθαι τὸν Κέρβερον, τῇ μὲν δορᾷ χρήσασθαι ἀντὶ ἀσπίδος, τοῖς δὲ βέλεσι λιθίνας ἀκίδας κατασκευῶσαι. μετὰ δὲ τὴν νίκην πάλιν ἐναντιουμένου τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ὄργισθέντα τοξεύσαι αὐτόν.

¹⁵ It seems that even for the ancients the identification of 'the right' Pylos was a problem (cf. Strab. 8.3.7): it was localized variously in Elis, Triphylia and Messenia. This uncertainty may reflect an ancient view that Homer himself refers to more than one Pylos or it may simply indicate general confusion: G. Maddoli, 'L'Elide in età arcaica. Il processo di formazione dell'unità regionale', in F. Prontera (ed.), *Geografia storica della Grecia antica* (Rome and Bari, 1991), 150–73, at 155–64. On the geographical differences between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, cf. West (n. 4), 8; for the view that Pylos of the epic legend was the one in Triphylia: West (n. 4), on 2.591, J.E.

elsewhere mentions only the Messenian one,¹⁶ but that is not conclusive; he could have meant any of them here. Already in antiquity attempts to fill out Homer's reticence were made: Hades was said to have his cult in Elis and his temple might have been considered to be the gate to the Underworld;¹⁷ and Aristarchus took Pylos here as a synonym of πύλη¹⁸ leading to the other world. Though such an association, based on a word play, might have appealed to the ancients, no author localizes the entrance to the Underworld in any Pylos.¹⁹ In any case, Homer only ever refers to the 'gates of the Underworld' in the plural.²⁰ Moreover, the most convincing argument, probably sufficient to prove that the event has nothing to do with the Underworld (and least with the Homeric conception of it), is that, although Hades is said to be the god, lord or king of corpses, he is never said to be among them nor represented with them in art.²¹ Furthermore, the noun νέκυς designates a corpse, and, though the cadavers belong to the Underworld, they constitute a natural remnant of the deceased, and νέκυς functions as a generic term in this context; the active figures are ψυχαί and εἰδῶλα of these corpses.²² Thus we should interpret the phrase simply as 'among the corpses in the

Coleman, *Excavations at Pylos in Elis* (Princeton, 1986), 161–5, W. Dörpfeld, 'Alt-Pylos. III. Die Lage der homerischen Burg Pylos', *AM* 38 (1913), 97–139. See also G. Maddoli, M. Nafissi, V. Saladino, *Pausania, Guida della Grecia, Libro VI L'Elide e Olimpia* (Milan, 2003), 371 (on Paus. 6.22.6); and M.H. Hansen, T.H. Nielsen (edd.), *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis* (Oxford, 2004), 501–2 (no. 263, Elis), 541 (Triphylia), 554 (S81, Messenia). We may compare the similar case of Oechalia (also sacked by Heracles), which in the *Iliad* is localized in Thessaly (*Il.* 2.730), by Sophocles (*Trach.* 237, 750) in Eretria, by Pausanias (4.2.3) and probably Creophylus (see G.L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry: from Eumelos to Panyassis* [London, 1969], 105) in Euboea, and by Strabo in Arcadia (8.3.6).

¹⁶ For instance, *Il.* 11.689; with an epithet: ἐν Πύλῳ ἠγαθήη (*Il.* 1.252) or ἐν Πύλῳ ἡμαθόεντι (*Od.* 4.599, 11.257, 11.459).

¹⁷ Whether there existed 'a primitive idea that Pylos was the gate to the underworld', as claimed by Leaf (n. 12), or not, I am not convinced by the etymological explanation given by Sergent (B. Sergent, 'Pylos et les Enfers', *RHR* 203 [1986], 5–39) that Messenian Pylos might have been considered as the 'Underworld' and Neleus as a manifestation of Hades.

¹⁸ See Kirk's commentary (n. 1), ad loc.; cf. ΣΤ *Il.* 5.397: Ἀρίσταρχος "πύλω" ὡς "χόλω" καὶ ἐσπέρω. ἀλλὰ πληθυντικῶς ἀεὶ λέγειν "ὄϊγγυντο πύλαι", "πύλας Αἴδου". ἐν τῇ Πύλῳ οὐκ ᾔρισαν; for further discussion of this point, see E. Meyer, *RE* 23 (1959), s.v. *Pylos*, cols. 2135–6. However, the metaplasm was noticed explicitly in ΣΤ *Il.* 16.203b: ἔστι δὲ ὡς Σάμιος ἀντι τοῦ Σάμη καὶ "ἐν πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσιν" ἀντι τοῦ πύλη.

¹⁹ Matthews's interpretation of Panyassis' fr. 6 (V.J. Matthews, *Panyassis of Halikarnassos: Text and Commentary* [Leiden, 1974]) as related to the twelfth labour led him to discuss a probable entrance to the Underworld in Elis—this remains, however, sheer speculation, since Euripides (*HF* 23–4) and Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 2.5.12) tell us that Heracles entered the Underworld through the cave in Taenarus in Laconia (according to Xen. *An.* 6.2.2, the hero descended at the Acherusian Chersonese). Cf. Paus. 3.25.5, according to whom there was no road leading underground in Taenarus.

²⁰ *Il.* 5.646, 9.312, *Od.* 14.156, cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1291.

²¹ I elaborate on this claim and its consequences for our understanding of this deity in Sekita (n. 1). See also *Lfgre* s.v. εὐρώεις with M. Clarke, *Flesh and Spirit in the Songs of Homer. A Study of Words and Myths* (Oxford, 1999), 192 n. 71.

²² Although Odysseus pours a libation to all the corpses (πάνσιν νεκύεσσι, *Od.* 11.26), these are ψυχαί who speak with him, and not the corpses (cf. 11.90). For corpses, see especially *Il.* 10.349: ὡς ἄρα φωνήσαντε παρ᾽ ἑξ ὁδοῦ ἐν νεκύεσσι κλινοθήτην; also *Il.* 23.13–14, where Patroclus is lying dead and warriors are driving their chariots thrice round his corpse; and *Il.* 23.34: the blood of the victims is flowing copiously ἀμφὶ νέκυν of Patroclus; at *Il.* 23.65–8 the ψυχή of Patroclus is speaking to Achilles. On the meaning of the noun and the various contexts in which it appears, see *Lfgre* s.v. νέκυς, and Clarke (n. 21), 157–228 (for νέκυς / νεκρός vs ψυχή and εἰδῶλον, see esp. Clarke [n. 21], 191–2; on ψυχή, see also D. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* [Oxford, 1955], 22). *Contra*: Kirk (n. 1), on 5.396–7.

battlefield' rather than 'among the dead (*psychai*) in (the gates to) the Underworld', and we should look for a fight between Heracles and Hades set at a Pylos still to be identified.

b) *Pind. Ol. 9.29–35*

As we have seen, the events alluded to in Dione's tale plausibly belong to separate contexts, and are brought together by her not for the purpose of narrating a certain myth (or myths) but with the aim of listing examples of divine victims suffering at the hands of Heracles, the quintessential model of an exceptional mortal, in order to console her wounded daughter and, of greater relevance, to make the *aristeia* of Diomedes stand out from the rest of the *Iliad*.²³ Such a rhetorical manoeuvre was not uncommon in antiquity.²⁴ An analogy can be found in Pindar's ninth *Olympian* ode (29–35). The poet seems to be using the same motif, listing examples of Heracles' struggles with various gods. He omits Hera, but he includes Apollo and Poseidon. To illustrate the claim that ἀγαθοὶ δὲ καὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ δαίμον' ἄνδρες ἐγένοντ' ('men become brave and wise by divine favour'), Pindar writes ἐπεὶ ἀντίον | πῶς ἂν τριόδοντος Ἡ-|ρακλέης σκύταλον τίναξε χερσίν, | ἀνίκ' ἀμφὶ Πύλον σταθεὶς ἤρειδε Ποσειδάν, | ἤρειδεν δέ νιν ἀργυρέῳ τόξῳ πολεμίζων | Φοῖβος, οὐδ' Ἀἴδας ἀκινήταν ἔχε ῥάβδον, | βρότεια σώμαθ' ᾧ κατάγει κοίλαν πρὸς ἄγυιαν | θνασκόντων ('for how else could Heracles have wielded in his hands his club against the trident when Poseidon attacked him, having stood at Pylos, and Phoebus attacked him, fighting with a silver bow, nor did Hades keep his rod still, with which he sends mortal bodies of the dying down to the hollow passage').

The scholiast suggests (Σ *Ol.* 9.44a Drachmann) that Pindar is conflating three different stories into one. This is a more plausible approach than to suppose that the lines in question present 'an early version of the fight at Pylos, now lost to us, in which Poseidon, Apollo, and Hades all resisted Heracles together', or to assume that 'Pindar is following an earlier version in grouping Poseidon and Hades together as Heracles' opponents at Pylos, but has himself accidentally added Apollo to the list'.²⁵ There are no early traces, apart from this passage in Pindar, of a myth in which Poseidon and Hades fought together against Heracles at Pylos, let alone Apollo, who does not fit into the picture at all, because the fight between him and Heracles at Delphi over the tripod (which is mentioned by the Pindaric scholiast in connection with our passage) remains quite distinct.²⁶

²³ For the comparison of Diomedes to Herakles in these myths, see West (n. 4) and Sammons (n. 1), 33–4.

²⁴ Sammons (n. 1), 24 (with nn. 6 and 7 for references): 'The catalogue form seems [...] perfectly suited to amplify the rhetorical effect that paradigmatic reasoning clearly aims at.'

²⁵ J.H. Molyneux, 'Two problems concerning Heracles in Pindar *Olympian* 9.28–41', *TAPhA* 103 (1972), 301–27, at 309–13. He rejects the third possibility: that Pindar intends to refer to three separate incidents. Contrast C. Carey, 'Three myths in Pindar', *Eranos* 78 (1980), 143–62, at 151–2 n. 36: 'It remains possible, and not at all improbable, that Pindar refers to three separate incidents, but in order to aggrandize Heracles' achievement he a) uses ἀνίκα only once, thus implying that Heracles faced three gods at once; b) identifies only the first locale and omits the other two, thus suggesting that all three encounters took place on the same spot.' To Molyneux's statement ([this note], 306) that it would be 'most natural for Pindar to quote them [to the audience] the version they would recognize', Carey (this note) responds: 'a) Greek myths can be altered freely for rhetorical purposes, either explicitly or by implication, since there was no one canonical form of a given myth; b) as this is orally delivered poetry, the audience can accept only such facts and interpretations as the poet chooses to give.'

²⁶ Cf. Molyneux (n. 25), 310.

Moreover, the representations in art clearly separate the events, and the gods mentioned by Pindar never occur together with Heracles.²⁷ Therefore, there is no iconographic representation of a ‘lost’ myth and it seems to me quite unlikely (especially bearing in mind Heracles’ popularity in ancient iconography) that such a myth was ever depicted in antiquity. It is true, however, that the grammar of the Pindaric passage forces us to think about one event at Pylos during which the fight between the three gods and Heracles took place; we seem therefore to be dealing with Pindaric innovation,²⁸ a combination of stories previously separate. By having Heracles fight against three gods at Pylos, Pindar was not contradicting the Homeric passage: Poseidon and Apollo could have been present without being wounded.

c) *Panyassis, fr. 6 Matthews (with fr. 20 and 21 Matthews)*

Neither Homer nor Pindar specifies where the Pylos at which the fight between the god(s) and Heracles occurred was located. The first source which seems to localize it and to indicate a specific mythical occasion is Panyassis. Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 2.36.2 = Panyassis, fr. 6 and 20 Matthews)²⁹ tells us that, according to Homer, Aidoneus was shot by Heracles and that Panyassis records it was—if we accept the necessary conjecture Ἄιδην for Αὐγέαν of the MSS—the Elean Hades;³⁰ moreover, we learn from Clement that this same Panyassis also says that Hera was shot by the same Heracles ‘in sandy Pylos’ (that is, the Messenian Pylos; cf. *Il.* 11.690–3). Since Clement names Panyassis twice in his account, it seems reasonable to think that he does so referring to two separate episodes, which may serve as independent confirmation that the interpretation of the Homeric lines in question given by the first scholium (n. 11), merging them, was wrong.³¹

d) *Apollodorus (Bibl. 2.7.3)*

The account of the Pylos battle given by Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 2.7.3)³² is awkward and cursory: we learn that Heracles, after the capture of Elis, marched against the

²⁷ Poseidon: Boardman *LIMC V Herakles* 3369–70; Apollo: Lambrinudakis *LIMC I Apollo* 1009–40, Woodford *LIMC V Herakles* 2947–3063.

²⁸ D.E. Gerber, *A Commentary on Pindar Olympian Nine* (Stuttgart, 2002), 34–9. For Pindaric variations and alterations of myths, see A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* (Berlin, 1971), esp. 221–3, 225–8, 231–2; R.W.B. Buxton, *Pindar’s Pythian Odes. Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford, 1962), 83–4; C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar. Pythian 2, Pythian 9, Nemean 1, Nemean 7, Isthmian 8* (Salem, New Hampshire, 1981), 33, 74–5, 195; and G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar. Edited with an Introduction and Commentary* (Chico, CA, 1982), 15–16, 27.

²⁹ ναὶ μὴν καὶ τὸν Αἰδωνέα ὑπὸ Ἡρακλέους τοξευθῆναι Ὅμηρος λέγει, καὶ τὸν Ἥλειον Ἄιδην Πανύασσις ἰστορεῖ· ἤδη δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἥραν τὴν ζυγίαν ἰστορεῖ ὑπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἡρακλέους ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος Πανύασσις «ἐν Πύλῳ ἡμαθόεντι». Cf. Arnob. *Adv. Gen.* 4.25 (= Panyassis, fr. 21 Matthews [n. 19] above): *non ex uobis Panyassis unus est, qui ab Hercule Ditem patrem et reginam memorat sauciatam esse Iunonem?*

³⁰ I follow Matthews’s conjecture (n. 19), adopted by West (M.L. West, *Greek Epic Fragments: from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* [Cambridge, MA and London, 2003]), of Ἄιδην for Αὐγέαν in codices and scholia; for the justification, see his commentary on fr. 6 Matthews (n. 19).

³¹ For the interaction of Panyassis with the Homeric passage in question, see also Sammons (n. 1), 27 with n. 9.

³² μετὰ δὲ τὴν τῆς Ἥλιδος ὄλωσιν ἐστράτευσεν ἐπὶ Πύλον, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐλών Περικλύμενον κτείνει τὸν ἀλκμώτατον τῶν Νηλεῶς παίδων, ὃς μεταβάλλον τὰς μορφὰς ἐμάχετο. τὸν δὲ Νηλεῶς

Messenian Pylos (as may be guessed from the presence of Neleus—cf. *Bibl.* 1.9.8–9). There he slew Neleus and his eleven sons, except Nestor (who was absent), but including shape-shifting Periclymenus. At the very end Apollodorus adds that Hades was also wounded by the hero in the fight, because he stood up for the Pylians.

This addition appears as an afterthought. Inconsistency is visible earlier (*Bibl.* 1.9.8), where Apollodorus gives an account of the same Pylian battle without mentioning any deity. This account seems to be repeated in *Bibl.* 2.7.3, but with the addition of the detail about the wounding of Hades. Furthermore, the testimony of Apollodorus is problematized by the evidence of Homer (*Il.* 11.690–3), Ps-Hesiod (fr. 33, 35 MW) and Ovid (*Met.* 12.549–58), who mention a fight between Heracles and Periclymenus without any reference to Hades.

It looks as if the original version of the story of the fight between Heracles and Periclymenus did not mention Hades; whether Apollodorus included him because of confusion of place or myth is hard to judge, but it is interesting that the capture of Elis introduces the story and the wounding of Hades ends it, while in both the regions involved (Elis and Messenia) there was a Pylos. An unintentional confusion cannot be excluded, especially given that the name ‘Periclymenus’ (as well as ‘Clymenus’) can also denote the god of the Underworld³³ and some scholars have even suggested that originally he was Hades himself.³⁴ However, according to Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 1.9.8), Periclymenus’ power of transformation was given to him by Poseidon, his grandfather;³⁵ Hades is not mentioned anywhere in this connection.

e) Pausanias (6.25.3)

The only source focussed solely on Hades’ fight with Heracles at Pylos is Pausanias (6.25.3),³⁶ who says that the hero was supported by Athena when he was leading an army against Pylos—but Pylos in *Elis*. Hades came to fight for the Pylians because of the hatred he bore towards Heracles, and because he was worshipped at Pylos (ἔχοντα ἐν τῇ Πύλῳ τιμᾶς). As proof for the veracity of their story the Pylians

καὶ τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ χωρὶς Νέστορος ἀπέκτεινεν· οὗτος δὲ νέος ὦν παρὰ Γερηνίους ἐτρέφετο. κατὰ δὲ τὴν μάχην καὶ Ἄϊδην ἔπρωσε Πυλῖους βοηθοῦντα.

³³ Las. 702 *PMG*, Paus. 2.35.9, *IG* IV 686–91, 715, 1609.

³⁴ See P.M.C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford, 1990), 180 n. 42 for bibliography. He also notices a very interesting correlation, namely that the name of Periclymenus’ brother is Πυλάων and that Hades in *Il.* 8.367 is called Πυλάρτης; in Apollodorus the second brother’s name is Ἀλάστωρ—to my knowledge, it is never used as Hades’ name explicitly, but it occurs in Aesch. *Supp.* 115 as probably denoting him (θεὸς ἀλάστωρ).

³⁵ Other sources claim that Poseidon was the father of Periclymenus: Σ Pind. *N.* 9.57a (Drachmann), Hyg. *Fab.* 157.

³⁶ Paus. 6.25.2–3: ὁ δὲ ἱερός τοῦ Ἄϊδου περίβολός τε καὶ ναός—ἔστι γὰρ δὴ Ἥλειος καὶ Ἄϊδου περίβολός τε καὶ ναός—ἀνοίγνυται μὲν ἅπαξ κατὰ ἔτος ἕκαστον, ἐσελθεῖν δὲ οὐδὲ τότε ἐφείτα πέρα γε τοῦ ἱερωμένου. ἀνθρώπων δὲ ὧν ἴσμεν μόνου τιμῶσιν Ἄϊδην Ἥλειοι κατὰ αἰτίαν τήνδε. Ἡρακλεῖ στρατιᾶν ἄγοντι ἐπὶ Πύλον τὴν ἐν τῇ Ἥλιδι, παρεῖναι οἱ καὶ Ἀθηναίων συνεργὸν λέγουσιν· ἀφικέσθαι οὖν καὶ Πυλῖους τὸν Ἄϊδην συμμαχήσοντα τῇ ἀπεχθεῖα τοῦ Ἡρακλέους, ἔχοντα ἐν τῇ Πύλῳ τιμᾶς, ἐπάγονται δὲ καὶ Ὀμηρον τῷ λόγῳ μάρτυρα ποιήσαντα ἐν Ἰλιάδι τλῆ δ’ Ἄϊδης ἐν τοῖσι πελώριος ὠκὺν οἰστόν, εὐτέ μιν αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ υἱὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι βαλὼν ὀδύνησιν ἔδωκεν· εἰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ἀγαμέμνονος καὶ Μενελάου στρατείαν ἐπὶ Ἴλιον Ποσειδῶν τῷ Ὀμήρου λόγῳ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐπίκουρος ἦν, οὐκ ἂν ἄπο τοῦ εἰκότος οὐδὲ Ἄϊδην εἰη δόξη γε τοῦ αὐτοῦ ποιητοῦ Πυλῖους ἀμύνα. Ἥλειοι δ’ οὖν ὡς σφίσι τε εὖφω καὶ ἀπεχθανομένῳ πρὸς τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐποίησαντο <τὸ> ἱερὸν τῷ θεῷ· ἐκάστου δὲ ἅπαξ ἀνοίγειν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ νομίζουσιν, ὅτι οἴμαι καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἢ κάθοδος ἢ ἐς τοῦ Ἄϊδου γίνεται.

quote, according to Pausanias, the Homeric lines in question. For Pausanias, the Eleans were the only people known to worship Hades, and hence his story appears to be principally aetiological. The Pylians built the temple for Hades because he was favourable to them. Pausanias does not mention any other deities supporting the Pylians against Heracles.

Pausanias is talking about the precinct and temple of Hades in his description of the city of Elis, so he is probably referring to Pylos in Elis, and not in Triphylia,³⁷ as has been suggested by scholars on the basis of Strabo (8.3.14). According to Strabo, a *τέμενος* of Hades is situated at the foot of Mt Minthe in Triphylia,³⁸ but his description of the cult place is different in important details from Pausanias'. While Pausanias reports on Hades' *νόος* and *ἱερός περίβολος* in the city of Elis, Strabo tells us about his *τέμενος* near the sacred grove of Demeter near Pylos (Triphylia); furthermore, Pausanias does not mention any other deities worshipped in the vicinity or connected with Hades' cult. The two precincts are thus distinct, and Strabo's testimony is irrelevant for understanding Pausanias, according to whom Hades had a sacred precinct in both the Elean cities, Elis and Pylos, but he received the temple in Elis after the fight with the hero as an additional honour; we do not know anything about his temple in the Elean Pylos.

The story referred to by Pausanias suits very well the aetiological explanation for Hades' cult, which is distinctive for the region. A curious element is Hades' hostility towards the hero (*τῆ ἀπερχθείᾳ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους*), and it seems that Heracles' twelfth labour cannot be excluded as its cause. As has been said, nothing sheds light on the reason for his attitude anywhere else, apart from the scholiast's account³⁹ that the hero had breached Hades' order while overpowering Cerberus (in this case, the event should have happened earlier than the battle at Pylos); but equally well it might have been incited by some other, previous deeds of Heracles.⁴⁰

* * *

Even if the comparison of the extant sources seems to be rather inconclusive, we should summarize their input. What we know is:

- 1) Homer tells us about Hades' wounding by Heracles at Pylos 'among the corpses'; nothing sheds light on which Pylos is meant in the passage, nor on the occasion; we can, however, probably assume that it took place not in the Underworld but in the world of the living.

³⁷ Although Triphylia was a part of Elis at least until the end of the fifth century B.C.; I treat it as a separate region for the purposes of clarity only; note, however, that the Triphylians, if Pausanias is to be trusted (5.5.3), reckoned themselves as Arcadian and not as Elean. On Pausanias' various localizations and confusions of different Pyloi, see Coleman (n. 15), 164–5 with commentary on the passages quoted: 158–9.

³⁸ πρὸς ἕω δ' ἐστὶν ὄρος τοῦ Πύλου πλησίον ἐπάνωμον Μίνθης, ἣν μυθεύουσι παλλακὴν τοῦ Ἄιδου γενομένην πατῆθεισαν ὑπὸ τῆς κόρης εἰς τὴν κηπαιᾶν μίνθην μεταβαλεῖν, ἣν τινες ἠδύοσμον καλοῦσι. καὶ δὴ καὶ τέμενος ἐστὶν Ἄιδου πρὸς τῷ ὄρει τιμώμενον καὶ ὑπὸ Μακιστίων, καὶ Δῆμητρος ἄλλος ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ Πυλιακοῦ πεδίου. I discuss in detail Hades' cult in both places in Sekita (n. 1).

³⁹ See n. 14.

⁴⁰ According to Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 2.5.12), Heracles during his stay in the Underworld (connected, obviously, with the abduction of Cerberus) orchestrated a kind of revolution: he had to wrestle with Menoetes, the herdsman of Hades, he removed the rock from on top of Ascalaphus, the gardener of the lord of the Netherworld, and rescued Theseus (and in Diodorus' account Pirithous too: 4.26.1).

- 2) Pindar presents a battle between three gods and Heracles at Pylos (probably Nelean Pylos, judging by the presence of Poseidon), as if it were one myth; the scholia (*Σ Ol.* 9.44a Drachmann) separate the events and claim that only the fight with Poseidon took place at Pylos (the hero otherwise fought with Apollo at Delphi and with Hades during his twelfth labour; the latter agrees with the second Homeric scholium);⁴¹ Pindar was apparently innovating here.
- 3) According to the corrected text of Panyassis, Heracles wounded Elean Hades; thus the author probably had in mind the Elean Pylos, which would be compatible with Pausanias' version.
- 4) Apollodorus seems to mix up two different stories and cities. His adding of Hades to the fight between Periclymenus and Heracles at Messenian Pylos seems to be an attempt at joining the dots.
- 5) Pausanias tells us that the fight between Hades and Heracles happened at Pylos in Elis, which is why the Eleans quote the Homeric lines, turning the myth into an aetiological story on the origins of Hades' cult in the area. It seems that for Pausanias the fight does not happen during the hero's twelfth labour, but occurs as a separate and independent event.

The problem remains of when and why Heracles fought with Hades at Pylos. The preserved literary sources allow us to understand why Hades might have been hostile to Heracles, but they do not explain why a conflict occurred at Pylos and apparently on a battlefield. Perhaps the identification of the Pylos in question as that in Elis by Pausanias and (apparently) Panyassis provides a clue. We may hypothesize that the battle at Pylos ἐν νεκύεσσι was part of a well-known mythological event, Heracles' sack of Elis. Pausanias claims that Hades stood up for the Pylians because he was worshipped at Pylos and because of the hatred he bore towards the hero: having in mind all Heracles' crimes against him, his mood would be hardly surprising. The aetiological story alone cannot prove the antiquity of Hades' cult in Elis owing to the lack of archaeological evidence; the myth itself, however, seems to belong to an old (pre-Homeric?) stratum of Heracles' myth repertoire.

To sum up, after an exploration of the possible contexts for the battle at Pylos and an identification of the points of conflation and confusion, the interpretation of the wounding of Hades 'at Pylos ἐν νεκύεσσι' in the *Iliad* as a part of Heracles' adventures in Elis emerges as an internally and externally coherent possibility. Most of our uncertainties about the location and dramatis personae of the Pylos battle arose from the Homeric scholiasts' conflation of separate stories and the fact that, according to one strand of interpretation found in them, ἐν νεκύεσσι was a reference to the Underworld, which led to the association with the abduction of Cerberus. It is true, of course, that the myth itself was poorly represented (Panyassis?) and thus subject to manipulation (Pindar), confusion (Apollodorus) and rationalization (Pausanias). Therefore, it is not surprising that the stories were conflated, the protagonists exchanged and the places merged, until only the name of the *polis* remained the same, because, as an ancient proverb explains, ἔστι Πύλος πρὸ Πύλοιο· Πύλος γε μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ ἄλλος.⁴²

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⁴¹ See n. 14.

⁴² Arist. *Hipp.* 1058–9; cf. Strab. 8.3.7.