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**The Odysseus Gene: A Case of Reverse-Genealogical
Characterization in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (11.312–315,
344–345)**

*Odysseus'un Soyunu: Ovidius'un Metamorphoses'inde (11.312–315, 344–
345) Tersine-Şecere Karakterizasyonu*

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Abstract

This paper identifies a new instance of “reverse-genealogical characterization” — a literary technique whereby a well-known character’s distinctive traits are projected back onto their ancestor — in the Daedalion episode of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (11.289–345). It has widely been recognized that the episode’s sketch of the figure of Autolycus (312–315) alludes to some of the defining characteristics of that trickster’s grandson Ulysses, but I contend that Ovid’s depiction of Autolycus’ own grandfather Daedalion extends this process of genealogical foreshadowing back two generations further. In particular, I argue that the reciprocal pain and injury that typify Daedalion’s post-metamorphosis existence (*aliisque dolens fit causa dolendi*, 345) alludes to the Homeric etymology of “Odysseus” from Ὀδυσσεύς, as expounded by Autolycus himself in the *Odyssey* (19.407). The reverse-genealogical characterization of Autolycus and Daedalion jointly delineate Ulysses’ essential character and particularly highlight traits that undermine his sophistic self-presentation in the Judgment of Arms in *Metamorphoses* 13.

Key Words: Epic genealogy, Odysseus/Ulysses, Autolycus, Daedalion, the name of Odysseus, etymological allusion

Öz

Bu makalede, Ovidius’un *Metamorphoses* eserinin Daedalion anlatısında (11.289-345) ünlü bir karakterin ayırt edici özelliklerinin atalarına yönelik yansıtılmasına yönelik edebi bir araç olan “tersine-şecere karakterizasyonu” için bir örnek ortaya çıkarılmaktadır. Söz konusu anlatıda Autolycus karakteri için yapılan tasvirde (312-315), bu düzenbazın torunu Ulysses’in bazı karakter özelliklerine gönderme yapıldığı, yaygın olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ancak bu çalışmada, Autolycus’un büyükbabasına dair Ovidius’un yaptığı betimlemenin, bu soyağacı önemesini iki kuşak önceye taşıdığı önerilecektir. Özellikle de Daedalion’un dönüşüm-sonrası durumunu niteleyen döngüsel ıstırap ve yaralanmanın (*aliisque dolens fit causa dolendi*, 345), *Odysseia*’da bizzat Autolycus tarafından ifade edilen Odysseus’un Ὀδυσσεύς kelimesine dayanan Homeric etimolojisine göndermek yapıldığı savunulacaktır. Autolycus ve Daedalion’un tersine-şecere karakterizasyonu Ulysses’in esas karakterini bir arada betimlemekle birlikte, bilhassa *Metamorphoses* 13’de yer alan Silahların Hükümü’nde kendisinin sofistçe benlik tasvirini zayıflatan özellikleri vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Destansı soyağacı, Odysseus/Ulysses, Autolycus, Daedalion, Odysseus’un ismi, etimolojik gönderme

Introduction

In the normal course of life, children take after their parents, but in the curious world of “prequel” literature, the reverse is equally possible. In a genetic twist on Barchiesi’s “future reflexive” (Barchiesi, 1993, esp. p. 333–335),¹ it may turn out that a parent or ancestor in the prequel has “prefigured” the traits or deeds associated with a character familiar from an earlier work; readers are meant to notice the family resemblance and think to themselves, “So that’s where they got it from!” Greco-Roman mythological epic, because it deals with a select number of heroic generations, is ideally suited to exploit this technique, especially in those poems that deal with the parents or grandparents of the generation of heroes immortalized in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. A few examples from later Greek and Roman epic will clarify the nature of such “reverse-genealogical characterization” (Hunter, 1993, p. 99):

- Apollonius’ Oileus is praised as particularly “well-skilled at rushing upon the enemy from behind when they broke ranks” (ἐπαίξαι μετόπισθεν | εὔ δεδαῶς δήοισιν, ὅτε κλίνωσι φάλαγγας, *Argon.* 1.75–76, trans. Race, 2008). As commentators regularly observe, Apollonius has retrojected the singular virtue of Oileus’ son, the Locrian Ajax, back onto his father; for as the *Iliad* declares of the “swift son of Oileus,” “there was no other like him to pursue on foot among the rout of men” (Οἰλῆος ταχὺς υἱός· | οὐ γάρ οἱ τις ὁμοῖος ἐπισπῆσθαι ποσὶν ἦεν | ἀνδρῶν τρεσσάντων, *Il.* 15.520–522, trans. Murray, 1999).²
- In his Latin *Argonautica*, Valerius Flaccus contrives a situation during the Colchian Civil War that maps precisely onto an Iliadic scenario: in both epics, a warrior distinguished by an enormous sevenfold ox-hide shield protects the body of a fallen comrade from the enemy, and in so doing is compared to a lion defending his cubs. The warriors in question in their respective epics are, as it happens, father and son: Telamon (VF 6.345–349) and the greater Ajax (*Il.* 17.128–139).³

¹ This term denotes a type of temporal paradox resulting from the reader’s recognition of an allusion that disrupts the “alignment” between *fabula* or story-time and the historical flow of literary influence (as in, e.g., Theocritus’ allusions to *Odyssey* 9 in *Idyll* 11; the Hellenistic poem postdates Homer’s famed Cyclops episode, but is set at a much earlier point in the monster’s mythological *vita*).

² The parallel is noted already in Wellauer, 1828, ad *Argon.* 1.76, and Campbell, 1981, has even based a textual emendation on its strength. The genealogical connection, evidently first noted by Ardizzoni, 1967, ad loc., is regularly acknowledged by more recent commentators; see, e.g., the discussion of Schollmeyer, 2017, p. 42–44. For further Apollonian examples of “reverse-genealogical characterization,” see Hunter, 1993, p. 99; Harder, 2019, *passim*; McPhee, 2020, p. 154 n. 111.

³ See, e.g., Barnes, 1981, p. 368. The simile at VF 6.358–362 likewise reworks that of *Il.* 17.389–395 (see the notes in Wijsman, 2000, p. 147, 149). In light of these carefully crafted parallels, the doubt raised by Spaltenstein, 2005, ad VF 6.345 (“Val. s’en inspire [i.e., by the Iliadic passage], mais il n’est pas certain qu’il se soit avisé

- Among all the Argonauts, the author of the *Orphic Argonautica* has Peleus win the footrace at the funeral games of Cyzicus, a victory he justifies with the phrase “thanks to his footspeed” (ποδωκείης ἔνεκα σφῆς, 581)—a trait the hero has evidently “inherited” from his famously fast son, the swift-footed Achilles (πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς; e.g., *Il.* 1.58, 84, 148, etc.).⁴
- Of the many specimens that could be cited from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, it will suffice to mention just two striking examples that make the workings of this allusive operation virtually explicit. First, Nonnus represents the Thracian King Oeagrus as a prize-winning musician (19.69–117) precisely on the grounds that he is, by the Muse Calliope, the father of Orpheus (ὡς γενέτης Ὀρφῆος, ὀμέστιος ἠθάδι Μούσῃ, 101; cf. 113), the premier singer of the Greek mythological tradition (Wüst, 1937, col. 2084; Gonnelli, 2003, ad Nonn. *Dion.* 19.69–72, 100–110).⁵ Second, Aeacus' fighting in the Hydaspes River is said to “foretell” (προθεσπίζων, 22.387) his grandson Achilles' combat in the Scamander (22.384–389), so memorably depicted in *Iliad* 21. In extradiegetic reality, of course, this passage exhibits a peculiar type of *vaticinium ex eventu*: the poet has in fact modeled his representation of the grandfather on the Homeric account of the grandson (Goldhill, 2020, p. 126–128).

This paper proposes a new example of this phenomenon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It is *a priori* unsurprising, given the immense chronological scope of Ovid's epic, that he would make use of this technique as well. Indeed, the foregrounding of genealogical connections is one of the fundamental methods by which the poet binds together his unwieldy *carmen perpetuum* (Cole, 2004). Thus, to take a straightforward example: the river god Achelous' gift for storytelling (see esp. 8.611–612) seems to stem from the poetic skill of his famous daughters, the Sirens.⁶

qu'Ajax est le fils de Télamon”) seems unduly skeptical. *N.b.* that the fallen warrior in the *Iliad* is, crucially, Patroclus; Valerius thus injects a measure of pathos into his account by including Menoetius, Patroclus' father, in his adaptation of an Iliadic scene that had revolved around his own son's doom (VF 6.343; Fucecchi, 2006, p. 21 n. 37).

⁴ *N.b.* that other Argonauts are better known for their speed (see, e.g., Köhnken, 2005, p. 71–73, on Euphemus and Iphiclus), whereas Peleus more traditionally wrestles in such contests (see, e.g., Eumelus *Corinthiaca* fr. 8 Bernabé, Ibycus fr. 176.11 *PMGF*, Apollod. *Bib.* 3.9.2, and the artistic depictions listed in Malten, 1923–1924, p. 308), just as elsewhere he wrestles with Thetis (Davies and Finglass, 2014, p. 220). Text of the *Orphic Argonautica* is taken from Vian, 1987; the translation is the author's own.

⁵ Oeagrus does not seem to reveal musical inclinations in any earlier source. Text and translation of Nonnus are taken from Rouse, 1940.

⁶ The author would like to thank Jeremy Lam for this suggestion. Ovid has his internal narrator (an unnamed Muse reporting the words of Calliope) describe the Sirens, dubbed *Acheloides* (5.552; see also 14.87), in strikingly

More subtly, verbal echoes between the stories of Pygmalion and Myrrha suggest that Ovid would have his readers project Myrrha's incest back onto her grandfather Pygmalion's union with the sculpture he has himself produced: the artist sleeps with the woman he has created just as Cinyras sleeps with the one he has pro-created, so to speak (Sharrock, 1991, p. 176–181; cf. Viarre, 1968, p. 239; Leach, 1974, p. 123; Janan, 1988, p. 125–126). But perhaps the most widely-recognized example of this technique comes from the Daedalion episode in Book 11 (289–345), an internal narrative in which King Ceyx of Trachis recounts how his brother was once transformed into a hawk. Here Ovid implicitly draws on the traditional connection between Ulysses' signature character traits and those of his maternal grandfather Autolycus. This article will argue, however, that scholars have missed an additional piece of foreshadowing that further contributes to Ulysses' characterization (and, in point of fact, is inspired thereby) in Ovid's portrayal of Autolycus' own maternal grandfather, Daedalion himself. As it turns out, the “Odysseus gene” goes back at least another two generations in the hero's family tree.

But fittingly, in view of this paper's theme, the analysis shall begin with the descendant before working its way back to the ancestor. Ulysses' connection to the Daedalion episode has attracted critical attention in large part because the hero's descent is the subject of explicit comment later in the *Metamorphoses*, during the debate over the arms of Achilles in Book 13. One arrow in Ajax's argumentative quiver is his exalted genealogy: he traces his lineage through the heroes Telamon and Aeacus back to Jupiter himself, and he is also a cousin of Achilles, the original owner of the arms in contention (21–31). He denigrates his opponent Ulysses, by contrast, as “the son of Sisyphus, and exactly like him in thefts and deception” (*sanguine cretus / Sisyphio furtisque et fraude simillimus illi*, 31–32).⁷ As a rebuttal, Ulysses emphasizes the importance of personal merit over blood (140–141, 148–159; Hardie, 2015, ad 13.150–153; Kyriakidis, 2021, p. 275–277), but he also briefly cites his own divine ancestry: he is also three generations removed from Jove through his father—Laertes, that is, not Sisyphus (141–145)—and he is descended from Mercury through his mother as well (146–147). Thus Ulysses outdoes Ajax by claiming divine ancestors on both sides (*deus est in utroque*

positive terms evocative of their poetic and linguistic skill (*doctae Sirenes*, 555; *canor mulcendas natus ad aures*, 561; *tantaque dos oris*, 562); see Zissos, 1999, p. 105–107.

⁷ Text of the *Metamorphoses* is taken from Anderson, 2008; translations are provided by the author. Ajax heightens the contrast between his and Ulysses' genealogy by noting that Aeacus serves as a judge in the underworld where Sisyphus has been sentenced to his eternal punishment (Hopkinson, 2000, ad 13.26).

parente, 147; cf. *materno ... sum generosior ortu*, 148) and manages to answer the charge of hereditary cunning and thievery by disclaiming Sisyphus' paternity.⁸

But as commentators have pointed out, whereas Ulysses fully outlines his descent from Jupiter (via Laertes, son of Arcesius, son of the chief god, 143–144), his summary claim of descent from Mercury on his mother's side cleverly conceals the identity of his maternal grandfather, Autolycus, an arch-trickster and thief notorious since Homer (*Il.* 10.266–267, *Od.* 19.395–396) and very much cut from the same cloth as a Sisyphus (Gantz, 1993, p. 175–176). As Gross puts it, Ulysses “deliberately avoids reference to Autolycus lest he elicit any dubious connotations that might cling to his maternal grandfather” (Gross, 2000, p. 57; cf. Hopkinson, 2000, ad 13.146–147).⁹ In fact, Ulysses' silence on this score seems designed to provoke the reader to remember Ovid's own earlier treatment of Autolycus' birth from Mercury in Book 11, as part of the Daedalion episode (Pavlock, 2009a, p. 114–115). Although Ulysses tries to suppress the evidence of some of his defining characteristics in rehearsing his genealogy, the reader has already seen these traits modeled by his ancestors—and not just Autolycus, but also, as will be argued, his remoter forebear Daedalion.

Turning now to Book 11: Ceyx relates his brother's story as internal narrator. The warlike Daedalion had a beautiful daughter named Chione, sought by a thousand suitors (301–302). One day, while flying from Cyllene (*vertice Cylleneo* 11.304),¹⁰ Mercury descends the maiden and immediately rapes her. As Mercury's brother Apollo proceeds to rape Chione again that very night, in the fullness of time she bears twins, Autolycus and Philammon, one by each god (11.303–317). The description of her first son¹¹ reveals why Ulysses must have thought it rhetorically advantageous to omit him from his genealogical sketch (11.312–315):

“alipedis de stirpe dei versuta propago
nascitur Autolycus, furtum ingeniosus ad omne,

⁸ Thus Ulysses does not simply ignore Ajax's charge that he is the son of Sisyphus, as Hopkinson (2000 ad 13.26) and Pavlock (2009a, p. 113) assume. The claim *mihi Laertes pater est* (144) functions both to link Ulysses to Jove and to correct the slander of Sisyphian paternity.

⁹ Simultaneously, Ulysses' silence here may help Ovid to downplay the chronological problems inherent in this branch of the hero's genealogy; see Cole, 2004, p. 403–404.

¹⁰ Cf. Mercury's designation *Cyllenius* by antonomasia (13.146) in Ulysses' brief reference to him.

¹¹ This brief digression describing Autolycus and Philammon is justified, if any justification is needed, by Autolycus' metamorphic ability, which makes him congenial to the poem's avowed theme. Perhaps that is why he receives twice as many lines as his twin brother (11.312–315 vs. 316–317). Autolycus is only mentioned once elsewhere in the poem, as the husband of Mestra, Erysichthon's shapeshifting daughter (8.738). These tricky transformers make a fine match (cf. Galinsky, 1975, p. 12; Cole, 2004, p. 388 n. 87).

candida de nigris et de candentibus atra
 qui facere adsuerat, patriae non degener artis.”

(“From the stock of the wing-footed god is born Autolycus, a wily son, adept at any theft, who would often turn black to white and white to black, no unworthy heir of his father’s art.”)

Thus, whether Sisyphus is part of Ulysses’ family tree or not, thievish guile runs in his blood. Indeed, as this passage makes clear, Ulysses’ claim of descent from Mercury *per se* undercuts the distance that he takes from Sisyphus, insofar as Sisyphian thievery and fraud are precisely Mercury’s arts.¹²

The reader’s recollection of this passage serves to undermine Ulysses’ arguments, revealing him for the trickster that he is and warning against his deceitful rhetoric. As if to facilitate this recollection, the poet includes distinctive Odyssean notes in his description of Autolycus: *versuta*, a *hapax* in the epic, is specially chosen as the adjective that Livius Andronicus had used to translate the hero’s signature epithet *πολύτροπος* in the first line of the *Odyssey* (Bömer, 1980, ad loc.; Pavlock, 2009a, p. 115; Reed, 2013, ad loc.), while the ability to change black to white and vice versa evokes a proverbial expression for deceptive rhetoric (Odysseus’ forte) in particular.¹³ The reader is thus forewarned to view Ulysses’ speechifying in Book 13 with some suspicion.¹⁴

What scholars seem not to have noticed, however, is that an integral aspect of Ulysses’ character is also modeled by Autolycus’ grandfather Daedalion. In particular, when Chione dies, slain by

¹² For Hermes’ association with *μητις*, see, e.g., Scherer, 1886–1890, col. 2369–2372; Kahn, 1978, ch. 2; for his connections with Odysseus, see, e.g., Thalmann, 1984, p. 173–174; Pucci, 1987, p. 23–26. The mercurial cunning that Autolycus inherits (*patriae non degener artis*, 11.315) has been displayed earlier in the poem, particularly in the Battus episode (cf. *arte sua*, 2.686). Autolycus’ inheritance of his father’s arts is paralleled and reinforced by Philammon’s inheritance of his own father’s arts, song and citharody (11.317). For congenital treachery in sons of Hermes, see further Apoll. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.51–52.

¹³ Griffin, 1997, ad loc., citing Juv. 3.30, to which Pers. 1.110 may be added. *N.b.* Autolycus’ outstanding skill in manipulating oaths in Homer (*Od.* 19.396). In other sources, Autolycus’ abilities appear to be more expansive: he can change the colors (not just black and white) of horses (Hes. *Cat.* fr. 68 Most), alter animals’ shapes (Pherec. 3 F 120; cf. Tzet. *Chil.* 8.443–453 = Eur. *Autolycus* test. iv) or brands (Tzet. ad Lyc. *Alex.* 344), and even add or remove horns from cattle (Hyg. *Fab.* 201)—all abilities that help him disguise his stolen goods. According to Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 2.79, he could even transform himself (like Mestra: see n. 11 above). Ovid appears to have given this more limited description of Autolycus’ abilities in order to capitalize on the black-to-white proverb.

¹⁴ Reed, 2013, ad 11.314–315, who seems to interpret Autolycus’ ability as purely rhetorical, notes that it foreshadows Ulysses’ deceptive speech, in which, like a sophist, he can make the weaker argument appear stronger. Cf. Arias Abellán, 1984, p. 113: “In 11, 314–315 ... we find a meaning similar to that of the Spanish idiom ‘hacer lo blanco negro’ with the transference of the antithesis ‘white’ / ‘black’ to ‘true’ / ‘untrue’.”

Diana for daring to compare her beauty to the goddess's, Daedalion leaps from the peak of Parnassus in a spate of suicidal grief (318–339a). Apollo takes pity, however, and transforms the mourning father into a hawk mid-fall (339b–343).¹⁵ The episode concludes by noting the persistence of Daedalion's martial aggression in his new form: "And now as a hawk, not at all kind to anyone, he rages against all birds and in his grief grieves others" (*et nunc accipiter, nullis satis aequus, in omnes / saevit aves aliisque dolens fit causa dolendi*, 344–345).¹⁶

The detail of universal hostility and particularly the epigrammatic polyptoton with which the episode closes are highly suggestive.¹⁷ The emphasis on reciprocal pain especially recalls the meaning of the name of Odysseus as explained in the *Odyssey*, whose ambivalence is captured well by Dimock's translation "Trouble" (Dimock, 1956, p. 56–57).¹⁸ The name, connected in the epic, *inter alia*,¹⁹ to the verb *ὀδύσσομαι, "to hate," and the noun ὀδύνη, "pain," hovers between the active sense of "hating/causing pain" and the passive sense of "hated/suffering pain," both of which are central to Odysseus' character.²⁰ The famous scar that betrays the hero's identity to Euryclea epitomizes this duality: Odysseus received his telltale wound only to wound fatally in turn the boar that had inflicted it (*Od.* 19.447–454; Dimock, 1956, p. 55; Peradotto, 1990, p. 144–146; Cook, 1999, p. 152).²¹ Likewise, when Odysseus and Penelope

¹⁵ For Apollo's possible motivation, see Reed, 2013, ad 11.339. The hawk was Apollo's favored bird and Parnassus (Autolykus' abode already in Homer: *Od.* 19.411, etc.) his domain.

¹⁶ The word *aequus* in the phrase *nullis satis aequus* is perhaps chosen to contrast with the hawk's emphatically curved beak and talons (*oraque adunca dedit, curvos dedit unguibus hamos*, 342). Daedalion's unfriendliness is thus manifested in the curved parts of his transformed body with which he attacks his foes. *N.b.* that his indiscriminate rage seems to stem from his grief over Chione; prior to his transformation, Daedalion is certainly warlike, but not necessarily bloodthirsty (Rudd, 2008, p. 103 n. 1).

¹⁷ The epigrammatic quality of this conclusion is noted by Murphy, 1972, ad loc.; Bömer, 1980, ad loc.; and Griffin, 1997, ad loc.; cf. Solodow, 1988, p. 48. As Davies, 1907, ad loc., points out, polyptoton of this sort is a favored stylistic flourish of the poet (used once every thirty-six lines, according to Kenney, 2002, p. 47), especially if a shift in grammatical voice is involved. See further Wills, 1996, p. 249. In this case, the shift in voice from "feeling pain" to "causing pain" is semantic rather than grammatical; strictly speaking, *dolens* and *dolendi* are both active-voice.

¹⁸ For Ovid's play on the meaning of Odysseus' name in another passage (*Trist.* 3.11.59–66; *n.b. dolere* at line 60), see López-Cañete, 2016 (with good bibliography on the etymology).

¹⁹ The *Odyssey* also connects its hero's names to ὀδύρομαι, "to lament" (Rank, 1951, p. 51–52); Ovid may pick up this valence of Odysseus' name by foregrounding Daedalion's mourning for his daughter (cf. *dolorem*, 11.328; *delamentatur*, 331; and *n.b.* that Daedalion is himself lamented by Ceyx [*flebat; dolores*, 289]).

²⁰ The ambiguity between active (middle deponent) and passive significations for ὀδυσσάμενος (the etymon for "Odysseus" at *Od.* 19.407) was registered already in ancient Homeric scholarship (see Σ V ad loc.), as Ovid likely would have known (López-Cañete, 2016, p. 450 n. 12). The current scholarly *communis opinio* emphasizes the reciprocity of inflicting pain and thus incurring hatred as the key to interpreting this etymology. Of the considerable bibliography on this subject, see, e.g., Austin, 1972, p. 1–3; Clay, 1983, p. 54–68; Peradotto, 1990, p. 120–170; Russo in Russo and Heubeck, 1992, ad *Od.* 19.407; Cook, 1999; Kavanou, 2015, p. 90–100; cf. Zuenelli, 2010.

²¹ As Pavlock, 2009b, p. 180, notes, Ovid's Ulysses recalls the Odyssean scar digression (and with it the nestled sub-episode of the hero's naming by Autolykus) when he shows off his wounds to his Achaean judges (*Met.* 13.262–267).

are at last reunited as husband and wife at the end of the epic, Odysseus summarizes the many adventures of his νόστος according to precisely this dichotomy: “Zeus-born Odysseus recounted all the woes that he had brought on men, and all the toils that in his pain he had himself endured” (ὁ διογενῆς Ὀδυσσεὺς ὅσα κήδε’ ἔθηκεν | ἀνθρώποις ὅσα τ’ αὐτὸς οἰζύσας ἐμόγησε, | πάντ’ ἔλεγ’, *Od.* 23.306–307; Clay, 1983, p. 56).²² Odysseus is the hater and the hated, giver and receiver of pain, *dolens* and *aliis causa dolendi*.

Ovid’s etymological allusion²³ to Odysseus’ name as he describes his ancestor’s hawkish behavior suggests a continuity of character preserved through their bloodline.²⁴ This insinuation particularly capitalizes on the fact that the passage of the *Odyssey* that actually explains the origins and meaning of its protagonist’s name stars none other than Autolycus himself, who christens the newborn during a visit to Ithaca from his home near Parnassus.²⁵ The grandfather derives the name “Odysseus” from his own life experiences as a thief who has cheated many and consequently earned their ire: “Since I have come here hateful toward/hated by many, both men and women over the much-nurturing earth, let his significant name be Odysseus” (πολλοῖσιν γὰρ ἐγὼ γε ὀδυσσάμενος τόδ’ ἰκάνω, | ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξίν ἀνὰ χθόνα πουλυβότεραν, | τῷ δ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς ὄνομ’ ἔστω ἐπόνυμον, *Od.* 19.407–409, author’s trans.).²⁶ By attributing to Daedalion the same traits that “will” typify both the Homeric Autolycus and Odysseus—namely, the general antipathy and reciprocal hatred implied by ὀδυσσάμενος²⁷—Ovid shows that integral elements of the “Odysseus gene” can be traced back not only to Mercury, but also to Daedalion on Chione’s side of the family. In a clever twist, the epigonal Roman poet outdoes Homer’s own genealogical maneuver: Ulysses inherited his eponymous character traits from his maternal grandfather, yes, but it turns out that *he* had inherited them in turn from his own maternal grandfather.

²² Cf. Menelaus’ marveling at what Odysseus both “did and endured” in the wooden horse (ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη, 4.271). Text and translation of the *Odyssey* are from Murray, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

²³ For etymological allusions in the *Metamorphoses*, see above all Michalopoulos, 2001; further bibliography in O’Hara, 2017, p. xxiii n. 14, 56 n. 307.

²⁴ It may be relevant that the *Odyssey* once appears to figure its hero as a hawk in a bird omen (*Od.* 15.525–528); see Page, 1955, p. 85. Elsewhere in the epic Odysseus is rather symbolized by an eagle (2.146–163, 15.174–176, 19.548–550; cf. 20.243, 24.538).

²⁵ *N.b.* Daedalion’s transformation occurs once he has leapt from Parnassus (*Met.* 11.339).

²⁶ Here is a probable case of reverse-genealogical characterization already in Homer, insofar as general hostility likely represents a projection of an Odyssean trait back onto his grandfather rather than a fixed characteristic in earlier traditions surrounding Autolycus (Köhnken, 1976, p. 111–112).

²⁷ Autenrieth, s.v. ὀδύσσομαι, notes the word’s reciprocal sense here.

In effect, Ovid gives Ulysses a dual pedigree: his trickery descends from Mercury; his quarrelsome, “Odyssean” nature, from Daedalion. Certain connections in the narrative between Mercury and Daedalion, however, function subliminally to unify these two genealogical streams.²⁸ Most obviously, Ceyx describes his brother’s running in his mad grief over Chione: “Already then he seemed to me to run faster than is humanly possible; you would think his feet had gained wings” (*iam tum mihi currere visus / plus homine est, alasque pedes sumpsisse putares*, 336–337). The figure of speech anticipates Daedalion’s transformation into a hawk (Griffin, 1997, ad loc.), but it also looks back to the description of Autolycus’ birth “from the stock of the wing-footed god” (*alipedis de stirpe dei*, 312; Reed, 2013, ad loc.).²⁹ A bit later, although it is Apollo who transforms Daedalion into a hawk, the description of the metamorphosis is evocative of some of Mercury’s chief characteristics. In particular, his suspension on wings (*subitis pendentem sustulit alis*, 341) and curved talons (*curvos dedit unguibus hamos*, 342) recall Mercury’s gifts to Perseus of his own winged sandals (*alis ... penderet*, 4.616–617) and curved sword (*Inachides ferrum curvo tenus abdidit hamo*, 720).³⁰ Moreover, Ovid chooses the name “Daedalion” from one of a few alternatives in the tradition, and “Chione” may be his own invention;³¹ accordingly, these names might well be significant.³² “Daedalion” is derived from Greek δαιδάλεος, “speckled,” and anticipates the plumage of the

²⁸ Interestingly, the two figures are actually interchanged by Pausanias (8.4.6), who claims that Autolycus, though called the son of Hermes, is in fact the son of Daedalion.

²⁹ Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 8.224, which similarly uses this figure of speech to connect Cacus to one of his literary models, the Hermes of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (Casali, 2010, p. 39).

³⁰ Cf. *telo ... unco* (4.666), *falcato ... ense* (727), *hamato ... ense* (5.80, following the reading of Heinsius). Hermes’ gift of sword and sandals to Perseus would appear to go back to Aeschylus’ *Phorcides* (Gantz 1993, p. 305), and this tradition presumably explains why Perseus sacrifices to Mercury at 4.754. Mercury can be seen wielding this same sword when he slays Argus (*falcato ... ense*, 1.717). For similarities between Perseus and Mercury, see Barchiesi and Rosati, 2009, p. 323–324.

³¹ Cf. Griffin, 1997, p. 142, ad 11.301. The equivalent figures in Hesiod are named Deion and Philonis (*Cat. fr.* 64); for other names assigned to these characters in ancient sources, see Fowler, 2013, p. 184–185. The occurrences of “Daedalion” at Paus. 8.4.6 and Σ V ad *Od.* 11.85 presumably derive from sources other than the *Metamorphoses*, so Ovid likely did not invent this name.

³² The significance of Chione’s name is less apparent than her father’s, but construed as something like “Snow White” (so Courtney, 1980, ad Juv. 3.136; cf. Mart. 3.34), it can be related to her son’s ability to turn white to black and vice versa. If so, the variant reading *colorem* in 11.305 ([*Apollo et Mercurius*] *videre hanc pariter, pariter traxere colorem*) may be worth revisiting. *colorem*, the preference of most editors, produces a nice paradox (the fires of passion ignited by “Snow”), but *traxere colorem* could sensibly refer to a blush; *n.b.* that male blushing as a response to beauty is modeled elsewhere in the poem by Narcissus (3.423; for blushing imagery in the poem, see Dyson, 1999; Barolsky, 2003, p. 53–54). Most importantly, the reading *colorem* would foreshadow Autolycus’ metamorphic ability: the sight of snow-white Chione changes the color of Autolycus’ father’s complexion. Indeed, a blush is nothing more than a suffusion of the capillaries in the facial skin with blood, which is traditionally black in Greek and Latin poetry (e.g., αἷμα κελαϊνόν, *Il.* 1.303), and the ability of blood to change white to black appears in other metamorphoses in the poem (Ethiopians’ skin: *nigrum traxisse colorem*, 2.236; Pyramus and Thisbe: *nigra*, 4.52; *pullos*, 4.160). By causing Mercury to blush, Chione poetically foreshadows her son’s ability to turn white to black.

hawk that the man will become (Griffin, 1997, ad 11.295). But as per LSJ s.v., the basic meaning of the adjective is “cunningly wrought,”³³ with the extended meaning “cunning,” a cardinal quality in Mercury and Autolycus alike.³⁴ Thus, although at first glance the single-mindedly warlike Daedalion (291–294, 298–300, 343–345) would seem to have little in common with Mercury, nevertheless, these links serve to unite the two sides of Autolycus’, and Ulysses’, genealogy.

By way of conclusion, it should be noted that, just as Ulysses’ descent from Autolycus undercuts his arguments with Ajax, so too does the crucial trait that he has inherited from Daedalion—the capacity to inflict and suffer pain, to hate and be hated—conflict with his self-presentation in Book 13. One of the basic premises of both Ajax’s and Ulysses’ arguments is that each speaker has in various ways aided the Greek army and thus deserves the award of Achilles’ arms in return (cf. 101, 136–137, 150, 173, 179–180, 188, 206, 211, 270, 272, 365). The conclusion to Ulysses’ speech begins along just these lines (370–372):

“At vos, o proceres, vigili date praemia vestro
proque tot annorum cura, quibus anxius egi,
hunc titulum meritis pensandum reddite nostris!”

(“But give, all you chieftains, the prize to your sentinel, and in exchange for so many years spent in anxious care, grant me this glory as recompense for my merits!”)

But reciprocal injury, not benefit, is the essence of Ulysses’ character—a trait that goes back at least four generations in the Ithacan’s family. Rather, Ulysses is at his most “Odyssean” when he avenges himself on Palamedes, for instance, even though, as Ajax argues, this personal vendetta damages the larger Greek cause (13.56–62). The reader who remembers the hero’s true nature, revealed in his family tree, may prove more skeptical of his speech than the judges of that ill-starred contest.

³³ Cf. Daedalus, the master craftsman whose myth shares several elements in common with Daedalion’s (Kaufhold, 1993, p. 87; Barbanera, 2013, p. 24 n. 54; see further Myers, 1994, p. 36).

³⁴ Cf. such epithets for Odysseus and others as ποικιλομήτης (*Il.* 11.482; *Od.* 3.163, 13.293), which similarly reflects the Greek association of “dappled” (cf. δαιδάλεος) or variegated textures with cunning; see Detienne and Vernant, 1991, p. 18–20.

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