104. φρένας ἄφρονι- The alliteration and juxtaposition of these words in this line highlight the contrast between Pandarus’ heart and mind. The characterization of Pandarus through these words foreshadows his senseless actions. Both φρένας and ἄφρονι derive from the same word, φρήν. Here, the alpha-privative clearly delineates the contrast within the word-play.

105. ἑσύλα-to strip, imperfect from συλάω but with τόξον, to take the bow out from its covering. It is possible to understand the bow being stripped of its cover, but also the covering itself being stripped from the bow. τόξον ἔξος ἵξαλον ἰξάλον- The striking alliteration of the Xi followed by the alliterative gammas in αἶγὸς ἀγρίοι yields a closely interwoven connection between the bow and its source. ἰξάλον αἴγὸς ἄγριοι- These genitive words should be taken with τόξον, understanding that the actual words governing this phrase have been omitted. Thus, the bow [made from the horn] of the goat…. The word ἰξάλον, unknown, most likely here is adjectival describing the bounding quality of a mountain goat, although some sources think it could describe the type of goat or the maturity of the goat, giving insight into the size of the horns from which this particular bow was made. ἔξος, modifying τόξον, could refer to the high-glossed appearance of the horn or to the metal elements of the bow.
106. ὁν, referring to the goat, is governed by βεβλήκει. τυχήσας, often used with βεβλήκει, pluperfect of βάλλω, should be understood with ὑπὸ στέρνοιο. Note the repetition of waiting in δεδεγμένος followed by ἐν προδοκήσι. Aliteration highlights the idea of derivation and emphasizes the action. δεδεγμένος: This perfect middle/passive participle modifying Pandarus, suggests the attitude of waiting. (Monro, 287) He is not simply waiting, but rather, lying in wait for the exact moment he will attack. This participle should be understood with both πέτρης ἐκβαίνοντα and ἐν προδοκήσι, lying in wait for it (the goat) and in a place of ambush.

108. This line nicely broken into two halves shows the action of the goat hit in the chest and the result, the goat falling back on the rock. These two clear syntactical units contrast with the complexity of the preceding two lines describing the interplay between Pandarus and the goat. With subject and object forms alternating throughout lines 106 and 107, line 108 separates their ultimate actions into two clauses: βεβλήκει...ἔμπεσε. The precision in this line reflected in these clauses reflects the precision again of Pandarus’ skill. We can also see a balance between the goat ἐκβαίνοντα, stepping out and ἔμπεσε, falling back.

109. Note the alliteration of kappa (κέρα ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἐκκαίδεκάδωρα πεφύκει; cf. ξ and γ in lines 105-6.) A δῶρον is a unit of measurement the size of four fingers or a palm. One horn could not be 16 palms long, so perhaps Homer is referring to the length of the bow when both horns were fashioned together. Although Homer could
be suggesting the length of the horns, some commentators think that δῶρον could be referring to the rings about the horns, which would tell the age of the goat.

110. The bow itself would have been created not from the horns alone, but probably first from wood, then inset with horn as decoration. This construction would enable the bow to curve in order to shoot effectively. ἀσκήσας is used to describe any sort of artificial preparation. Note the -σκ- root indicating progression or process. Here, we see the process of applying skill, “working them (the horns) up.” τὰ, neuter accusative plural, referring to κέρα, here, the object of both the aorist active participle ἀσκήσας and the aorist active main verb ἠραρε, from ἄραρίσκω, to fit together. Note the -σκ- root in this verb as well as that of the participle, reflecting the careful process by which the craftsman created Pandarus’ instrument.

κεραοξόος-polishing horn-adjective modifying the craftsman, from ξέω, to polish and κέρα, horns.

111. κορώνην-This word refers to anything curved, and here it should be understood as the golden tip of the arrow, curved in order to hold the bow string. Although the tip could have been made of gold, the description here is most likely poetic exaggeration.

112-3. These lines explain exactly how this particular composite (made from horn and wood) instrument functioned. In order to steady the bow to make an accurate shot, the archer would have had to set it into the ground and then allow it to lean after stringing it (τανυσσάμενος). The use of κατέθηκε (and ἐπέθηκε in line 111) with ἐὖ signifies an intentional and deliberate action blended with care. τὸ refers to
τόξον (line 105) and is the object of κατέθηκε and ἀγκλίνας. ποτὶ γαίῃ should be understood with κατέθηκε and ἀγκλίνας then adds description. In line 113, after πρόσθεν, although adverbial, understand him or Pandarus as the object. σχέθον-3rd person plural aorist without augment—this is a poetic lengthened form of ἔσχον, to hold.

114-5. μὴ...ἀναίξειαν-optative aorist with μὴ indicating a negative wish: Lest they should spring up.... πρὶν...πρὶν-here, translate before. βλῆσθαι-aorist middle infinitive; understand the verb to be able to govern this infinitive: Before he was able to hit....

116. σύλα (cf. line 105): here, Pandarus uncovered, or stripped the lid of the quiver. ἐκ... ἔλετ’ : timesis; ἔλετ’ : aorist middle 3rd person singular of αἱρέω.

117. ἀβλῆτα or never before shot, intensifies our understanding of the importance Pandarus is placing on his shot. πτερόεντα-This word probably should be read as winged or swift (rather than feathered), adding another layer of meaning to the destruction looming for the Trojans. ἔρμ’, literally, a prop, often used to support ships when on shore, here has a metaphorical sense, best translated here as bringer or bearer, in apposition to ἵν (line 116). ἔρμ’ has troubled commentators because of the unusual use here; it has been suggested that rather than a support, this word could be connected to ὁρμή, to flow, and here, a spring flowing with dark pain.

(Leaf, 122)
118. κατεκόσμει-The unusual nature of the verb, meaning to arrange, heightens our awareness of the very specific action of Pandarus and emphasizes the care with which he approaches his task.

119. Ἀπόλλωνι Λυκηγενεί κλυτόξῳ-The alliteration here suggests the soothing sound of the prayer Pandarus is making to Apollo.

121. Ζελείης-Zeleia, the home of Pandarus.

122. γλυφίδας- This noun, deriving from γλύφω, to carve, refers to the notched ends of the bow where the string would sit, plural here because each end of the bow would have a notch. νεῦρα βόεια-ox or bull sinew, but here, bow-string, as the bull sinew would have been the material used to make the string of a bow.

123. σίδηρον-This is the only example of an iron weapon, except the club of Areithous. (Monro, 287) Usually when Homer mentions the material of a weapon, it is bronze.

124. κυκλοτερές-indicating the semi-circular shape of the bow as the string is pulled toward the archer, modifying τόξον.

125-6. λίγξε...μέγ...ταχε...ἄλτο...μενεαίνων The onomatopoeia created within this purposeful tricolon of verbs accompanied by strong adverbs both breaks the silence of Pandarus’ preparations and allows us to hear the personified bow, string, and arrow. The personification of weaponry is not uncommon in Homer, but here the human emotions described most likely should convey an understanding of
Pandarus’ own emotion as he embarks upon a shot that will change the course in a way he does not know.
Commentaries and Translations


