

ἀλλὰ ... γὰρ ... τῷ: Another Note on Pindar, *Nemean* 7.30–35

Pär Sandin

I have little to offer in way of apology for adding yet another post to the vast bibliography concerning this passage. Suffice it to say that I do have a point to make, which, however slight, I believe may be relevant to the constitution of the text.¹

Treated ill by public opinion, Ajax committed suicide:

30 ἀλλὰ κοινὸν γὰρ ἔρχεται
κῦμ' Ἀίδα, πέσε δ' ἀδόκητον ἐν καὶ δοκέοντα, τιμὰ δὲ γίνεται
ῶν θεὸς ἀβρὸν αὔξει λόγον τεθνακόντων
βοαθῶν· τῷ παρὰ μέγαν ὀμφαλὸν εὐρυκόλπου
μόλεν χθονός, ἐν Πυθίοισι δὲ δαπέδοις
35 κεῖται, Πριάμου πόλιν Νεοπτόλεμος ἐπεὶ πράθην.

33 βοαθῶν Hermann (ap. Heyne III. 324) : βοαθοῶν Farnell : Βοαθῶν Woodbury (1979) | 33–34 ita solus Hóman : τῷ ... μολῶν iam Mezger (1869, 720) : τοι vel τοὶ codd. παρὰ e Σ Hermann loc.cit. : πὰρ Young (1965, 248) : γὰρ BD | 34 μόλεν Schmid : ἔμολε B : ἔμολε D : μολόν (venerunt) e Σ Hermann loc.cit. : μολόν (veni) Fraccaroli

Hermann's παρὰ for γὰρ is found in the scholium and has been almost unanimously accepted by editors: Young's πὰρ is more conservative, but contraction of the *biceps* would hardly be acceptable here.²

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Marianne Rozsondai—another contributor to this volume—who provided me with a copy of Ottó Hóman's note on the passage discussed, together with a needful English translation.

² It is not found in the corresponding places in the second strophe and anti-strophe—and not in the vulgate text in the first strophe, where editors read,

As for the other difficulties of 33–34 critics are, to put it mildly, divided.³ I shall argue for the text printed above, as read by the Hungarian scholar Ottó Hóman (vol. I, p. xx).

Mezger (1869, 720) first suggested the crucial emendation, τῶ for τοι.⁴ This has been supported by some critics, who differ slightly in their readings;⁵ however, nobody has acknowledged that the adverb should be taken as connected with the previous particle γάρ. ἀλλὰ κοινὸν γὰρ ... βοαθῶν is a complete, continuous statement, which in its entirety is taken up by τῶ: the adverb is not referring back exclusively to τιμὰ κτέ, as argued by the last cited critics (n. 5). The combination is well-known, in particular from Homer: in the *Iliad*, the particle-combination ἀλλὰ ... γάρ ... τῶ is employed in three of the four passages where ἀλλὰ ... γάρ is used;⁶ γάρ simple or in other combinations is also regularly taken up and reinforced by τῶ.⁷ Sometimes, as in the case in the present passage, one or several clauses linked by δέ or καί intervenes, expanding on or exemplifying the

with Benedictus and the scholium, ἐνέβαλε. The mss. present ἔβαλε, and ἔμβαλε would produce exact resposion with πὰρ, but for metrical reasons contraction is unlikely, being followed by resolution of the subsequent *longum*.

³ Reviews of the relevant interpretations are found in Woodbury 1979, 103–7, and Most 1986, 262–65: in the last two decades see Peliccia 1989, De Lucia 1993, the recent commentary by Loscalzo, and Howie 1998 (on which see further below, n. 13).

⁴ Pindar uses this adverb in *P.* 5.23, *I.* 8.5 and *I.* 8.66. According to Slater (1969) s.v. τῶ the mss. for these passages are unanimous in reporting τῶ, not τώ which Apollonius Dyscolus, apparently in polemic against some other grammarian, claimed to be the correct form of adverbs ending in -ω (*Adv.* pp. 198–99 Schneider, severely corrupt). Modern editors usually print τῶ with circumflex but without the iota. The matter is of little or no consequence for my argument here.

⁵ Wilamowitz (1922, 162, n. 2): λόγον ... βοαθῶν τῶ ... μόλον (1st pers.); Norwood (1943, 326): λόγον ... βοαθῶν τῶ ... μόλεν; Most (1986, 268–71): θεὸς ... λόγον ... βοαθοῶν τῶ ... μόλεν.

⁶ 15.739–41, 17.338–40, 23.607–9: in 7.242 ἀλλὰ ... γάρ is taken up by another ἀλλά.

⁷ See Kirk on *Il.* 7.328, Denn. 99 (ἀλλὰ ... γάρ ... τῶ), 70–71 (γὰρ ... τῶ).

γάρ-clause: an especially complex case is found in *Il.* 6.216–24, where the γάρ in 216 is not answered by τῷ until eight verses later.

A literal translation of 30–35 would run something like:

But common to all comes the wave of death: it falls on the unexpected as well as on him who purposes it—honour befalls those whose reputation a god causes splendidly to surge when they have died in valiant succour. So he came to the centre of the earth, and lies in the holy Pythian ground, Neoptolemus, having sacked the city of Priam.

ἀλλὰ κοινὸν γὰρ ... δοκέοντα is a transition from the subject Ajax to the subject Neoptolemus: ἀδόκητον refers to the latter, who in this version of the myth meets death unexpectedly: having returned from the war he is slain in Delphi in a quarrel over sacrificial meats.⁸ δοκέοντα, “expecting”, or even (as in the above translation) “purposing” (cf. LSJ s.v. I.1.b and I.3.b), refers to Ajax’ suicide, the subject of the previous verses: as opposed to Neoptolemus, Ajax was obviously δοκέων in relation to his death.⁹ τῷ takes up this argument as well as the part of honourable deaths.¹⁰

The same arguments would support Norwood’s and Most’s versions (above, n. 5). However, I believe the stem (βοηθ-) with its pronounced martial flavour is out of place in this context as a description of the publicity-campaign of a benign god.¹¹ Formally, βοαθοῶν

⁸ 40–42. See further Rutherford 2001, 321, n. 64.

⁹ Thus rightly Gerber (1963, 187) and also Carey ad loc.: “δοκέοντα suggests Ajax’s situation, ἀδόκητον that of Neoptolemus (...), thus preparing for the revised version of the hero’s death.” Revised, that is, in relation to that presented in the sixth *Paeon*, where Neoptolemus’ death was presented as not entirely honourable. Like Carey (see esp. pp. 133–36) and, e.g., Fogelmark 1972, 109–16, 123–25, passim; Fogelmark 1976, 125–26, 129–30, passim—I am convinced that the seventh *Nemean* contains actual references, indeed an apology, for Pindar’s treatment of Neoptolemus in the sixth *Paeon*.

¹⁰ The whole utterance takes the form of a *priamel*: see, for instance, Gerber on *O.* 1.1–7.

¹¹ Or, even worse, of Pindar himself (“helping, I came...”).

is just possible—the Attic contraction of ε + ω, unparalleled in Pindar, is perhaps acceptable after a vowel.¹² On the other hand, in *P.* 2.84, Pindar has ὑποθεύσομαι, not -θεεύσομαι which would have been expected if βοαθοῶν is correct and Pindar consistent in his contractions. βοαθῶν is defended by Woodbury (1979, 106–10), and even if we remain sceptical about the adjective being an “official” title of the Heroes worshipped at Delphi (Woodbury would read Βοαθῶν, τοῖ ... μῶλον), the general argument is valid: Neoptolemus is recognised as one of the heroes who die valiantly “running to the aid” of a righteous cause, and whose honour the god increases.¹³

References

- Benedictus, J. Πινδάρου περίοδος: *Pindari Olympia, Pythia, Nemea, Isthmia*. Saumur 1620.
- Buck, C. D. *The Greek Dialects*. Chicago 1955.
- Carey, C. *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar*. New York 1981.
- De Lucia, R. “Una nota pindarica”. *Sileno*, 19 (1993), pp. 427–35.
- Denn[iston, J. D.] *The Greek Particles*. 2nd ed., Oxford 1954.
- Farnell, L. R. *The Works of Pindar*. I–III, London 1932 (vol. II rep. as *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar*, Amsterdam 1965).
- Fogelmark, S. *Studies in Pindar*. Lund 1972.
- . “Pindar, *Nemean*, 7, 50–52”. *L’Antiquité classique*, 45 (1976), pp. 121–32.
- Fraccaroli, G. *Pindaro: Le odi e i frammenti*. I–II, Milan 1914.
- Gerber, D. E. “Pindar, *Nemean*, 7, 31”. *American Journal of Philology*, 84 (1963), pp. 182–88.
- Gerber, D. E. *Pindar’s Olympian One: A Commentary*. Toronto 1983 (Phoenix, Supplementary Volume 15).

¹² Buck 1955, §§ 42.6, 45.2.

¹³ Apart from Douglas Gerber (n. 9), another συνεγκωμιστής, Gordon Howie, has written on this passage (1998, 105–6, 122–26): an interesting piece which is not incompatible with the reading advocated here, even if Howie does prefer the reading βοαθοῶν referring either to the poet, the god, or to Neoptolemus himself. Howie stresses, in a comparison between the present ode and Thucydides’ *Archaeology* (1.2–19), the general, gnomic validity of 31–32, and argues against the too-specific sense proposed by Woodbury (loc.cit.), an argument with which I fully agree.

- Heyne, C. G. *Pindari carmina et fragmenta*. III/III, pt. 1/2, Göttingen 1798 (cited for Hermann's notes, pp. 179–356).
- Hóman, O. *Pindar versezetei kritikai és magyarázó jegyzetekkel*. I/III, Leipzig 1876.
- Howie, J. G. "Thucydides and Pindar: The *Archaeology* and *Nemean 7*". *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, 10 (1998), pp. 75–130.
- Kirk, G. S. *The Iliad: A Commentary*. II/VI: *Books 5–8*, Cambridge 1990.
- Loscalzo, D. *La Nemea settima di Pindaro*. Viterbo 2000 (Daidalos, 2).
- Mezger, F. "Zu Pindar". *Philologus*, 28 (1869), pp. 717–20.
- Most, G. W. "Pindar, *Nem.* 7,31–36". *Hermes*, 114 (1986), pp. 262–71.
- Norwood, G. "Pindar, *Nemean*, VII, 31–35". *American Journal of Philology*, 64 (1943), pp. 325–26.
- Pelliccia, H. "Pindar, *Nemean* 7.31–36 and the Syntax of Aetiology". *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 92 (1989), pp. 71–101.
- Rutherford, I. *Pindar's Paeans: A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre*. Oxford 2001.
- Schmid, E. Πινδάρου περίοδος *hoc est Pindari lyricorum principis ... Ὀλυμπιονῆται. Πυθιονῆται. Νεμεονῆται. Ἰσθμιονῆται*. {Wittenberg} 1616.
- Schneider, R. *Apollonii Dyscoli quae supersunt*. I/II, fasc. 1/2: *Apollonii scripta minora ... continens*. Leipzig 1878 (Grammatici Graeci, 2, vol. I, fasc. 1).
- Slater, W. J. *A Lexicon to Pindar*. Berlin 1969.
- Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von. *Pindaros*. Berlin 1922.
- Woodbury, L. "Neoptolemus at Delphi: Pindar, *Nem.* 7.30 ff.". *Phoenix*, 33 (1979), pp. 95–133.
- Young, D. C. C. "Some Types of Scribal Error in Manuscripts of Pindar". *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 6 (1965), pp. 247–73.