

PINDAR, *NEMEAN* 7.102—PAST AND PRESENT

The notorious ending of Pindar, *Nemean* 7.102–5 runs:

τὸ δ' ἔμὸν οὐ ποτε φάσει κέαρ
ἀτρόποισι Νεοπτόλεμον ἔλκυσαι
ἔπεισι.

Thirty-five years ago, I ventured briefly in this journal¹ to suggest that the then standard translation of these lines, ‘My heart will never affirm that it has . . .’, was not as certain as had been almost universally maintained. I did not realize that this single page would give rise by the end of the century to several hundred pages of criticism of all kinds.² In a recent issue of the journal *Hermes*³ Erbse offers his view of the relation of myth to occasion in Pindar’s poetry, a problem that may well defy any comprehensive solution.⁴ However, my aim here is not to deal with this highly debated subject, but only with one of Erbse’s remarks on *Nemean* 7, which are also motivated by a desire to relate myth to occasion in that much debated ode. Like many before him, Professor Erbse is of the opinion that *Nemean* 7 needs a biographical explanation.

I was concerned then only to emphasize that ‘one will doubt that N.7 has anything whatsoever to do with Paean 6’—not, one would think, a particularly revolutionary or violent thesis—and even proponents of the biographical interpretation are ready now to concede that doubt is amply justified, though at the time it was a considerable departure from the interpretations current. I feel no urge to offer here or elsewhere any overall interpretation of the seventh *Nemean*, since the uncertainties in its text seem to me insuperable; rather, I am concerned only about one aspect of the grammar of the passage in question, and readers may then judge whether all this somewhat overwhelming scholarship is not in need of some qualitative improvement.

Erbse has evidently read my article⁵ and (p. 20) offers the following opinion:

Slater’s Vorschlag οὐδὲ mit ἔλκυσαι zu verbinden und zu verstehen ‘ich verkunde den N. immer gepriesen zu haben’ lässt sich grammatisch nicht rechtfertigen. Es gibt m.W. kein Beispiel dafür dass die Negation vor einem Verbum des Sagens steht, aber nur mit dem abhängigen Infinitiv verbunden werden müsste (mit dem sie eine Litotes bilden würde). Das gilt auch für andere Infinitivkonstruktionen, vgl. z.B. O.13.46 or N.10.50! . . . Wenn die Negation zum Infinitiv gehört, steht sie dort, vgl. P.2.88.

¹ W. J. Slater, ‘Futures in Pindar’, *CQ* 19 (1969), 86–94, written in spring 1966 after a discussion with T. Krischer in reply to the latter’s article on *Nemean* 2, ‘Pindars Rhapsodengedicht’, *WS* 78 (1965), 32ff. It was delayed by a backlog in publication, and so took no account of such an important work as D. Young’s *Three Odes of Pindar* (Leiden, 1968). The argument I deal with in this article is to be found only on the last page.

² Several valuable bibliographies by D. Gerber in the journals *CW* and *Lustrum* cover these years. I have I think read nearly everything, but make no attempt to do more than sketch the main thread of the argument here.

³ H. Erbse, ‘Über Pindars Umgang mit dem Mythos’, *Hermes* 127 (1999), 14–32. Of course, the translation Erbse offers is still a common one, as in W. Race’s new Loeb translation.

⁴ Erbse seeks to justify his criticism of B. Braswell, *A Commentary on Pindar Nemean 1* (Fribourg, 1992), which in his view fails to tackle the possibility of mythical analogy.

⁵ Many citations of it are at second hand, and sometimes do not reflect any opinion I have ever uttered.

It is a risky business to inform the author of a lexicon to Pindar that he does not know his Pindaric parallels; and it is no surprise to discover that none of the passages cited by Erbse is at all relevant; in fact none even has a verb of saying. *O.* 13.46 has a verb of knowing, *N.* 10.50 of surprise, and *P.* 2.88 has οὐ χροή. Indeed one can reasonably ask for evidence for such an extraordinary assertion⁶ about οὐ φημί. After all, most elementary grammars⁷ tell us the opposite. When, for example, we read in Aristophanes, *Nub.* 1139

οὐ φασίν ποτε | οὕτως ἀπολήψεσθαι

we are obligated to translate: ‘they say that they will never get it this way’, and we recognize that it makes no sense whatsoever to translate: ‘they never say that they will get it . . .’ in the context. A Greek listener, faced with a negated verb of saying with the adverb ποτέ, automatically made this adjustment on hearing the phrase. It does therefore make a difference where the ‘never’ goes in translation. Likewise, Hom. *H. Hermes* 444:

θαυμασίην γὰρ τήνδε νεήφατον ὄσσαν ἀκούω,
ἦν οὐ πώ ποτέ φημι δαήμεναι οὔτε τιν’ ἀνδρῶν
οὔτε τιν’ ἀθανάτων οἱ Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχουσι.

This translates as ‘whom I affirm has never yet been overcome . . .’ and not ‘whom I never yet have said has been overcome . . .’ On the basis of the usual handbooks of grammar, without citing these examples, I affirmed—as it turned out, somewhat naïvely—that it was only natural in *Nemean* 7 to translate literally, ‘I shall affirm that I have never . . .’ and not as had been universally translated before then, ‘I shall never affirm, concede etc. . . .’ It is in fact precisely the existence of ‘never’ that makes this transference of the negative reference both necessary and normal. Erbse wishes to translate, apparently, ‘I never shall say (= admit) that I have . . .’ in the Pindar passage. That, despite what he says, is entirely contrary to usage, and he has produced no parallel to suggest that his translation is possible, let alone justified. Why, then, does he assert what he cannot prove? He maintains this translation, one supposes, because his rendition ‘I shall never say (that I have disparaged? Neoptolemos)’ would support his stance that the words are an apology for something outside the poem, for it implies that ‘say’ is the same as ‘admit’. The translation ‘I shall never admit . . .’ suggests strongly that *Nemean* 7 is an apology of some sort. *Hinc illae lacrimae*. If, however, the words are given the meaning required by normal Greek, ‘I shall affirm that I have never . . .’, his case is weakened, and I should argue, disappears, for the words are in reality a confident affirmation, not an apology, and whatever the precise meaning, this affirmation must in the end be to the effect that Pindar has at no time treated Neoptolemos incorrectly. There is no grammatical reason to read this as an admission, denial, or apology. So much ought to be clear.

Regrettably Erbse seems unaware of much of the scholarly discussion that has raged on just this issue.⁸ It would be a pity if the view he has now mistakenly endorsed

⁶ Quite apart from the general grammars, a look into J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* (Basel, 1928), 2.261ff, or A. C. Moorhouse, *Studies in the Greek Negatives* (Cardiff, 1959), 131ff. would have provided material for doubt.

⁷ I had cited only Kühner–Gerth *Gr. Grammatik* 2.2, 180, and Wackernagel (n. 6); J. Wilson, *Glotta* 66 (1988), 88 adds more.

⁸ He refers only to H. Lloyd-Jones, ‘Modern interpretations of Pindar: the second Pythian and

prolonged a pointless debate into another millenium. He cites as evidence in support of his position two articles, by Lloyd-Jones and Fogelmark.⁹ In 1973 Lloyd-Jones decided to argue that *Pythian* 2 was not filled with political allusions (something that seems to contradict what it says), while *Nemean* 7 in his view did express Pindar's personal poetic politics. That required, as we have seen, that the standard version of the lines above be upheld, whereby the 'I' is Pindar and his remarks are an apology for his *Paeon* 6, for as even Lloyd-Jones admitted there was nothing in the rest of the poem that could be used as evidence for this ancient thesis. Lloyd-Jones, however, having convinced himself that the lines in question were biographical, produced several novel reasons for maintaining the then standard interpretation of these lines, one of which bears on the central issue of our negative. The normal meaning of the Greek was an inconvenience for him, as it still is for Erbse, and he therefore asserted: 'οὔποτε goes with φάσει not with ἐλκύσαι'. He offered no evidence for this—indeed there was no evidence to offer—but as a substitute added:

Every translator has seen this except Slater who in his violent attempt to fit the text to the Procrustean bed of his dogma has done to Pindar's words just what Pindar is denying that he has done to Neoptolemos.

Unfortunately, even this kind of scholarship can always find adherents, and its unthinking approval by Erbse may well create more. But one should note even here that 'denying' is simply assumed, and the 'argument'—if it can be so called—perfectly circular.

There is no need to refute severally the other reasons offered by Lloyd-Jones for his overall interpretation of this passage, all without substance, for soon afterwards Carey had written a Cambridge thesis on Pindar in 1976, which was revised in 1980, and published in 1981. It dealt with *Nemean* 7, and has since been frequently cited on this passage, sometimes at length but rarely with any critical acumen.¹⁰ In it, with one exception, to which we shall come, Carey glossed over the arguments of Lloyd-Jones. Nonetheless, since he too was convinced that (p. 135) 'these verses . . . must be taken as autobiographical' he was obligated to find something better himself. The poverty of Lloyd-Jones's other arguments should, one would have thought, have made him worry about the remaining one, which was precisely the argument about the application of the negative. He was aware that verbs of saying tend to attract the negative, but he boldly (p. 177) sought refuge in generalities and Italian scholarship. This often-cited passage deserves to be savoured in full.

But although in negative statements with φημί the negative is *usually* [my italics] attracted from the infinitive to the governing verb (though not always <examples follow>), *it is by no means an invariable rule* [my italics] that in οὐ φημι plus inf. the negative belongs with the infinitive, see S. Trach. 1073; Dem. 39.28 and esp. Dem. 3.17, Hdt. 2.49.2.

seventh *Nemean* Odes', *JHS* 93 (1973), 109–37, and S. Fogelmark, *Studies in Pindar with Particular Reference to Paeon VI and Nemean VII* (Lund, 1972).

⁹ Fogelmark (n. 8) writes on p. 110: 'Even if οὔποτε is taken with the infinitive, it does not alter the meaning very much.' I—and apparently many since—thought it did, and since many of his reasonings have been overtaken with time, I ignore them here.

¹⁰ C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (New York, 1981); since then, he has written sensible things on Pindar (e.g. 'Pindar and the Victory Ode', in L. Ayres [ed.], *The Passionate Intellect* [New Brunswick/London, 1995], 85–103), and for all I know may regret some aspects of his earlier book. In particular his failure to appreciate the groundbreaking interpretation of *Pythian* 10 by A. Köhnken was a slip.

He goes on to argue that the phrase οὐ ποτε φάσει suggests that it is difficult to avoid taking οὐ ποτε with φάσει.

something, as we have seen, that in fact ought not to be difficult for a Greek scholar. And so he ends desperately, ‘cf. in general Cerri’.

Unfortunately Cerri, eagerly defending the antique position of Gentili,¹¹ had no more done his grammatical homework than his colleagues in Oxford or Cambridge, and he offered no example to support his thesis, other than the unsupported claim that the word ποτέ made it impossibly difficult (‘insormontabile’) to take the words as normal grammar would demand. We have already seen above two examples that suggest that more effort might profitably have been expended on surmounting that problem. Carey then, unlike any previous scholar, recognized the problem and offered four passages that are alleged to be exceptions to the rule, and which will demonstrate that the negative should (or at least could) be taken with the verb of saying, and not with the infinitive.

There are two points to be made about this. The first is that, even if we did have an exception, it would be an exception of considerable rarity, a breach of an allegedly ‘by no means invariable rule’—and would not affect the admitted fact about what is normal. Second, any exception, to possess validity, would have to be unambiguous, clearly parallel, and preferably involve the idea ‘never’. None of the passages adduced even begins to meet these criteria.¹² There is to my knowledge no example that does. The four passages are:

Soph., *Trach.* 1072–73

καὶ τόδ’ οὐδ’ ἂν εἶ ποτε | τόνδ’ ἄνδρα φαίη πρόσθ’ ἰδεῖν δεδρακότα,

Dem. 39. 28

... , οὐπω τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι φάσκων τοῦ ἐμοῦ υἱός, ...

Dem. 3. 17

οὐ γὰρ αὐτοὶ γ’ αἴτιοι φήσομεν εἶναι, σαφῶς οἶδα τοῦτ’ ἐγώ.

Hdt. 2.49

Οὐ γὰρ δὴ συμπεσεῖν γε φήσω τά τε ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ποιούμενα τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖσι Ἑλλησι.

In Herodotus and Dem. 39.28 the negatives are closer to the infinitive than the verb of saying, and clearly go with the infinitives because of their position. They do not represent a negated verb of saying at all, and are irrelevant. In Sophocles and Dem. 3.17 the emphatic negative obviously modifies primarily the following word, and is

¹¹ G. Cerri, ‘A proposito del futuro e della litote in Pindaro; Nem. 7.102sgg.’, *QUCC* 22 (1976), 83–90. B. Gentili, *Poesia e Pubblico nella Grecia antica* (Bari, 1983), 189 n. 78, simply refers to Cerri, who while admitting the ‘noto fenomeno grammaticale’ of negated verbs of saying, argues that ποτέ shows conclusively that the phrase must refer to something other than *Nemean* 7.

¹² J. Wilson, ‘Adherescent negative compounds with φημί and the infinitive’, *Glotta* 66 (1988), 88–92 esp. 92.

sufficiently distant from the verb as to make it certain that it does not negate it. The four examples do not therefore even represent negated verbs of saying. It is difficult to believe that any scholar who had consulted these passages would cite the article with confidence. What Carey is admitting behind the special pleading I have quoted is what scholars have known all along, namely that ‘φημί die Negation an sich zieht, die logisch richtiger beim abhängigen Infinitive stehen würde’.¹³ If we are going to debate the meaning of passages, we should accept that what is normal and supported by all the evidence is what a listener will first consider, and what a critic should first consider.

σφέτερος ἔκ σφετέρου σοφός, says the poet; and Most who wrote half a doctoral thesis at Tübingen on *Nemean 7* could write in 1985:

Slater’s suggestion that φάσει be understood as an epinician future and that οὐ ποτε be detached from it and connected with ἔλκυσαι founders on the particle ποτέ.

He cites¹⁴ for this odd assertion the works of Cerri, who first thought it up, and Carey, who said something slightly different. This is another attempt to create an exception, and Most made no effort to justify his certainty. A response falls into two parts. Is there any reason to think that the presence of the word ποτέ invalidates in any way the general rule that the negative goes with the infinitive? Certainly no one has ever cited a single passage to show that this is so, and it is easy, as we have seen, to demonstrate the contrary. Yet we should have to tackle this as well, if another scholar had not already done so. It is a relief to record that what I took to be obvious to scholars in 1965 was justified in detail by Wilson in an article published in 1988, where will be found some parallels for what Erbse believes cannot be grammatically justified, though as I have noted above, these can be multiplied.¹⁵ Wilson cited Hom. *Od.* 18.132, 23.71, *Il.* 8.238, 18.238—passages one assumes Erbse knows—and Xenophanes 1.5 W:

ἄλλος δ’ οἶνος ἐτοίμος, ὃς οὐποτέ φησι προδώσειν,

which means obviously ‘claims it will never betray’. Wilson also cited the apparently ambiguous Eur. *Alc.* 238, where the chorus sings:

οὐποτε φήσω γάμον εὐφραίνειν | πλέον ἢ λυπεῖν.

Even though the otherwise reliable Loeb editor Kovacs now translates this as ‘I shall never henceforth say that marriage causes more joy than pain’, we need, as Wilson (p. 91) had already correctly pointed out: ‘I shall assert that marriage never (in all its manifestations) gives more pleasure than pain.’¹⁶ The addition of ‘henceforth’ in the

¹³ So Kühner–Gerth (n.7), 180; cf. Wackernagel (n. 6), 2.263, often quoted and cited, e.g. by Barrett on Euripides, *Hipp.* 181.

¹⁴ G. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar’s Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes = Hyponnemata* 83 (Göttingen, 1985), 204. His further point, ‘the drastic violence expressed by the infinitive’ ἔλκυσαι is without value, since he fails to demonstrate what the meaning of the word is. The references as before are to Carey and Cerri.

¹⁵ Wilson (n. 12). There are of course other later examples, even Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 7.1.139 . . . καὶ ἄρχων εἰρήνης, ἧς εἰρήνης οὐποτέ φησιν ἕσασθαι τέλος.

¹⁶ I. L. Pfeijffer, *First Person Futures in Pindar* (Stuttgart, 1999) believes (p. 15) that ‘the entire discussion . . . is strangely preoccupied with the idea of first person futures in Pindar being a unique phenomenon’; this, like many of his generalities, is simply untrue; even the concept of ‘performative future’ comes from Dover’s comment on Aristophanes, *Nubes* 127; cf. Garvie on

translation alters the sense, in order to justify the placing of ‘never’. For a Greek the sentence was, of course, not ambiguous at all; it is only English translation that makes it so.

It should be added here, though it is not immediately germane to my argument, that certainly not every future of this sort is a conventional or generic or encomiastic or contractual or fictional or dramatic future¹⁷—for all of these adjectives are now being employed, not always helpfully. But the choral use of the future to make an assertion for the present is a phenomenon noted already by Gemoll in 1866, and many times since with regard to epic, drama, and lyric, and is not an invention of the late Professor Bundy, as is still alleged.¹⁸ Dornseiff,¹⁹ for example, wrote in 1933 that: ‘Wendungen wie “ich will besingen” nicht Ankündigungen zu sein brauchen, sondern oft schon [NB: not always!] den angekündigten Lobpreis selber darstellen’—Bundy *avant la lettre* apparently. These choral assertions are to be found in a number of forms, some of them referring to the future, e.g. οὐ παύσομαι plus participle, which Bond²⁰ describes as a ‘solemn formula of devotion’.²¹ Another interesting parallel is Soph. *Electra* 1240, where Elektra sings:

Οὐ τὰν Ἄρτεμιν τὰν αἰὲν ἀδμήταν,
τόδε μὲν οὐ ποτ’ ἀξιώσω τρέσαι
περισσὸν ἄχθος ἔνδον | γυναικῶν ὄν αἰεί.

That is, ‘I think it right never to fear this . . .’²² and not ‘I shall never deign . . .’.

The second reponse to the argument about ποτέ addresses Cerri’s view: in making this statement, Pindar, he argued, could not be referring to *Nemean* 7, where he has in fact said nothing negative about Neoptolemus, and so he must be referring to some other time or poem; the negative must therefore go (as he seems to admit, abnormally) with the verb of saying. The *non sequitur* ought to be obvious. If Pindar has in fact said nothing negative about Neoptolemus in *Nemean* 7, then he is perfectly entitled to affirm so at the end of it, and the ‘never’ is simply emphatic, looking back from the conventional standpoint of the future. It is bizarre reasoning to infer from the affirmation that one has never been rude, to a conclusion that therefore one must have been rude, or regarded publicly as having been rude, at some earlier unknown point, or, in the newer jargon, that the affirmation has extra-carminal reference. Even if all of

Choeph. 465; Gentili (n. 11), 43 on Menander. Indeed Norden’s *Aus altrömischen Priesterbüchern* (Lund, 1939), 199ff., or F. Dornseiff’s remarks in *Die archaische Mythenerzählung* (Berlin, 1933), 10 could have warned him that the discussion is a much older and complex one than he realizes, and that his views about ‘Bundy and followers’ were both reductionist and unwisely derivative.

¹⁷ As Pfeijffer (n. 16), 54 says, no scholar has ever called all Pindaric futures ‘encomiastic’ or ‘performative’, though a careless glance at Carey (n. 10), 178 might suggest so. It was important to assert in 1965 that some futures did not need to refer to a time outside the poem, though I had already there also pointed out the ‘dramatic’ nature of some poems. Recently M. Dickie (*Tyche* 14 [1999], 59, n. 8) has also protested against too wide-reaching discovery of such ‘performative futures’—a convenient term for whose philosophic misapplication I do bear some responsibility, as he has reminded me. For the argument between Gemoll and Crusius, see Dornseiff (n. 16).

¹⁸ So still Pfeijffer (n. 15), 16: ‘As scholars have in recent years identified Bundy’s type of futures in several other authors . . .’

¹⁹ Dornseiff (n. 16), 10, a book noted in Pfeijffer’s bibliography.

²⁰ Bond, on Eur. *Heracles* 673.

²¹ Bond cites E. Wolff, *Platons Apologia* (Berlin, 1929), 39ff. It was also treated by H. Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike* (Stuttgart, 1937), 4. Eur. *Cycl.* 341 should be added to the examples.

²² Kühner–Gerth (n. 13) had noted this use of οὐκ ἀξιώω.

this is not sufficient, one can discern no validity in arguing from ‘ever’ to a breach of the normal rule concerning the negative.

Lastly, we turn now to Pfeijffer’s investigation²³ of futures in Pindar, where we read on p. 47 ‘οὐ ποτε must go with φάσει and makes the generic relevance of the future explicit’. This, if it means anything at all, inverts the grammatical facts: the generic future does not need to be made explicit, because it is conventional, and any Greek attuned to choral utterance knew exactly what its significance was; and the ‘never’ needs to go with what follows because that is what the Greek language demands. As evidence for his view, Pfeijffer notes ‘Carey . . . followed by Lloyd Jones . . . demonstrated that this [i.e. Slater’s view] is untenable’. Once again, this is an assertion without evidence, for in this point Lloyd-Jones did not follow Carey and, as we saw, Carey did not demonstrate anything, least of all that normal Greek is untenable. Normal grammar—‘ces faits globalement connus’, says Hummel somewhat optimistically in his Pindaric grammar²⁴—requires us to take the negative with the infinitive. Pfeijffer has not done his homework, any more than those he urges us to consult. Likewise Peliccia²⁵ is mistaken to write that I have argued that ‘it is permissible [sic] to take the negating phrase οὐ ποτε not with φάσει but with ἐλκύσαι’, for in fact I maintained that it is normal to do so, and queried whether it is possible to do anything else. Peliccia, despite a very lengthy discussion of the passage, in which he fairly cites opposing views, offers no example to support his own affirmation²⁶ that the negative must or even could go with φάσει. Instead he argues that Pindar must be saying ‘my heart will not say’ because otherwise it would contradict what follows,²⁷ where in a final statement Pindar says that he will bore his hearers if he repeats his affirmation. (Cerri, Most, and others had implied that it contradicted what preceded!) I am unable to see the validity of this complicated reasoning, which is designed to justify an emendation of the text.

We have travelled quite a distance from *ratio* and *res ipsa*. The only issue, after all, is a grammatical one concerning what is normal Greek, which is where scholarship should begin. If we do, we are at least on safer ground with the intractable problems that follow. For, even if we do take the negative with the infinitive, we do not unfortunately advance much further in our comprehension of what Pindar was saying, because no one knows what ἐλκύσαι is supposed to mean. The comfortable assumption (which occasionally turns into assertion) of scholars²⁸ has been that it must mean

²³ Pfeijffer’s *First Person Futures in Pindar* (n. 15) was reviewed favourably by the judicious D. Gerber in *BMC*R (July 2000): ‘He has proved his point.’ I should disagree. But the issue must be dealt with separately.

²⁴ P. Hummel, *La Syntaxe de Pindare* (Louvain/Paris, 1993), 309, notable because he has no interpretative axe to grind.

²⁵ H. Peliccia, *Mind, Body and Speech in Homer and Pindar* (Göttingen, 1995), 317.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 334; he cites as usual Lloyd-Jones and Carey, at length but without criticism. If one operates like Peliccia with hyper-precision in an area where we have an extremely limited database and a known tendency to baroque expression, then inevitably one will soon be able to assert correctly that this or that phenomenon has no parallel and is anomalous.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 333: ‘so long as unnegated *phasei* retains any degree of future reference, it is contradicted by what immediately follows it . . .’ The formulation is extreme, especially given the odd ‘point of view’ from which poems are written and performed; certainly I should never want to claim that a future ‘excludes all future reference’.

²⁸ I too readily passed over H. Fränkel’s view in *Hermes* 39 (1961), 386 that it could mean *παρέλκειν*, ‘drag out’, cf. Hdt. 7.169. Important is that the verb usually means ‘draw towards, with one’ and can be opposed to *ὠθέω* Hdt. 1.194 and often, and so *προσέλω* means ‘embrace’ affectionately at Eur. *Hipp.* 1432; its magical sense of ‘attract’ is therefore very natural. An interesting problem is Polyb. 12.28.6 where most translations give ‘winning, attracting’ for *ἐλκων*.

something negative, because Pindar is denying he did it, and he would only deny he had done something negative. Therefore it must mean ‘rend’, ‘treat violently’, and so on. I at one time unwillingly echoed this argument, and accepted that it had to mean *βιάζεσθαι* or its equivalent. That is still the general default view of scholars. I still cannot claim to know what it means, but at least I should now want to affirm that it need not mean what I and apparently most people thought. The closest parallel in classical literature, though by no means as close as to be sufficiently persuasive, is in fact Menander fr. 210, 3–5 KT, where a divine object and instrumental dative are both parallel:

εἰ γὰρ ἔλκει τινὰ θεὸν
τοῖς κυμβάλοις ἄνθρωπος εἰς ὃ βούλεται,
ὁ τοῦτο ποιῶν ἔστι μείζων τοῦ θεοῦ.

The overtones are those of magic, as elsewhere,²⁹ and the verb therefore signifies magical attraction. It certainly has no overtones of ‘rending’ or even molesting.³⁰ There is really no justification for the assumption that the verb in *Nemean* 7 must imply violence, let alone Most’s unwarranted ‘drastic violence’, and I cannot believe on purely aesthetic, let alone philological grounds, that Pindar would have even implied that he could have treated Neoptolemos like a corpse savaged by a dog. He could, however, quite properly have said that he had not drawn, that is summoned, Neoptolemos with *ἀτρόποις* words. If the verb *ἐκλύσαι* has no negative connotation, then this could lie in the word *ἀτρόποις*. But this word is also one that has no clear significance for us—even if it would go well with words of magical import, like its congeners *ἀποτροπή*, *προστροπή*. Two adjoining terms with magical associations would be sufficient perhaps to direct a listener to the desired interpretation. But we cannot at present know, and there is at least plenty of room for doubt, and little room for convenient assertion.

In conclusion, I stress two general points, which I am sure most scholars can illustrate from their own experience. The sheer amount of bibliography on this passage seems to have caused scholars to part company with the study of the grammatical fundamentals. An assertion once made is repeated without question as if its mere convenient repetition somehow made it valid. Secondly, the paramount need to demonstrate that some poem is unified, even when much is and will always be uncertain, seems to demand that the normal rules of grammar be suspended, if necessary by some convenient *Machtwort* from on high, or a slovenly ‘cf.’. Even amidst the ethereal wonders of modern hermeneutics, philology should retain some pedestrian value.

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As an Attic law term it means variously ‘bring [to court]’, ‘arrest’, or ‘molest’, ‘rough up’, always in such a way that the meaning is clear in context. There is no obvious reason to think of violence or dogs in our passage.

²⁹ M. Petropoulos, *ZPE* 97 (1993), 43ff., esp. 51. For magical procedures lying behind the language of Pindar we have *O.* 1.71ff. with Gerber’s note. It is clear, though, that Pindar, like Homer, deliberately avoids the technical language of magic, which only adds to our difficulties.

³⁰ I feel obliged to express polite disagreement with the conclusions of M. Heath, ‘Ancient interpretations of Pindar’s *Nemean* 7’, *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 7 (1993), 169–99, who seems to me to have an over-optimistic view of the procedures of ancient scholars.