Nicholas Lane

A CONJECTURE ON PINDAR, *PYTHIAN* 2. 81–82

ἀδύνατα δ᾽ ἔπος ἐκβαλεῖν κραταιὸν ἐν ἀγαθοῖς
δόλιον ἀστόν· ὅμως μὰν σαίνων ποτὶ πάντας ἄ-
ταν πάγχυ διαπλέκει.

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82. ἄταν Heyne: ἄγαν MSS: ἀγὰν Boeckh

The deceitful citizen cannot utter an effective word among good men, but nonetheless he fawns on all and weaves his utter ruin.[1]

Modern editors generally print Heyne's ἄταν for the MSS' ἄγαν.[2] Gentili's retention of the paradosis, notwithstanding Cingano's attempt to justify it,[3] is metrically improbable. Iambic full base is rare in Pindaric glyconics.[4] Everywhere else in *Pythian* 2 the base in s2 is occupied by a spondee. The juxtaposition of ἄγαν and πάγχυ is at best clunky and the sense not easy and with ἄγαν the verb is left, unexpectedly,

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[1] The text is that printed by Snell–Maehler 1987, 59. The apparatus is my own. The translation is from Race 1997, 241.

[2] In addition to Snell–Maehler 1987, 59, Turyn 1952, 84, Race 1997, 240, Bremer 2003, 124, Liberman 2004, 70 ("Nombreuses autres corrections moins plausible") and Ferrari 2018, 92 all print ἄταν. Most 1985, 113 n. 82 says that ἄταν is "preferable" but does not explain why. Schroeder 1900, 191 originally obelized ἄγαν, but at 1908, 96 he "returned" to Heyne's ἄταν (noted by Schroeder at 1923, 515). The exception is Gentili 1995, 70, who "by deviating from the consensus on metre among modern scholarship, keeps ἄγαν" (Itsumi 2009, 214).

[3] Cingano in Gentili et al. 1995, 399–400.

[4] As Itsumi 2009, 214 explains, "According to his [Gentili's] colometry, a pherecratean which ends with a short syllable can be followed by a glyconic which starts with an iamb (– ⏝ – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ ⏝ – – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ –)!" See further Itsumi 2009, 25 ("while the notation × – can be used [sc. for ∘∘] for tragedy and elsewhere, it is not appropriate for Pindar") and 34–35. Understandably, editors since Gentili have declined to follow his lead.

without an object.[5] ἄγαν is far more likely to be an error arising from scribal anticipation of πάγχυ, whether because of its nearly similar sense ('entirely'/'very much'), its appearance (because of the following -αγ-), or both.

Heyne's ἄταν has also been doubted. Burton observes that ἄταν διαπλέκειν is a difficult phrase to parallel.[6] According to Lloyd-Jones, "Heyne's ἄταν … gives the verb a most unusual object".[7] Carey notes that the agency of ἄτη "is usually divine, not human".[8] Kirkwood comments that ἄταν "to some extent contradicts the preceding sentence", but suggests that it may be justifiable as "hyperbolic".[9] He also notes that ἄταν would have been an instance of *lectio facilior* because it is "hard to see how [ἄταν] would have been corrupted".[10] Kirkwood concludes that the text "must be regarded as uncertain".

The main difficulties with ἄταν are that it is rather an incongruous object for διαπλέκει. The verb seems to demand an intricate rather than a cataclysmic object. It is also difficult to imagine a human "weaving destruction". One could imagine the Μοῖραι, or perhaps some other god or goddess, doing something like that, but not a mortal. At v. 78 Pindar asks †κέρδει† δὲ τί μάλα τοῦτο κερδαλέον τελέθει; ("But what profit really results from that cunning?"),[11] clearly indicating that while slanderous

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[5] In the active διαπλέκω invariably takes an accusative object, including in Pindar (*Pyth.* 12. 8; *Nem.* 7. 99).

[6] Burton 1962, 130. The closest parallel I could find using a *TLG* proximity search was ἔπλεκες ἄτην at Apollinar. *Met. psalm.* 49. 44 (4th century AD). Carey 1981, 58 responds to Burton's point about the use of διαπλέκω (although he does not specifically address the difficulty of finding parallels for the phrase ἄταν διαπλέκειν), arguing that Burton takes too limited a view of the potential figurative uses of the verb.

[7] Lloyd-Jones 1973, 125 n. 97 (= 1990, 134 n. 97).

[8] Carey 1981, 58. Carey does not consider whether this could be an argument against ἄταν (I think it is). He claims that ἄταν means 'self-delusion'. But if ἄταν meant that here, it would trump the expectation that the deceitful citizen should try to deceive the person whom he is flattering. His argument also relies on a meaning of ἄτη which, according to Braswell 1998, 86 (n. on 21, ἄταν), is not the predominant one in the 5th century (which was 'ruin' or 'calamity').

[9] Kirkwood 1982, 158.

[10] Farnell 1930–1932, 2. 133, who considered ἄταν "bad", had complained that it does not "explain the MS. corruption", but without stating why.

[11] Tr. Race 1997, 239. Huschke's conjecture κερδοῖ in v. 78, which gives a reference to a crafty vixen, does not perhaps follow the pl. ἀλωπέκων (77) neatly (a problem felt by Boeckh and Kayser, see Schroeder 1922, 22 [n. on 78]; reading dat. κερδοῖς would only raise the question whether the dat. of such a noun is plausible,

people cause problems (at least for their targets), they do not ultimately profit from them themselves. But ἄταν, as the ruin of one's enemy, could be understood as a kind of profit to the deceitful citizen and therefore as contradicting v. 78. More generally, Pindar's envious slanderers do not normally deal in ἄτη. They deploy words behind their targets' backs aimed at denting their reputations. Words deceive (*Ol.* 1. 29). They are an ὄψον … φθονεροῖσιν, 'a tasty morsel for the envious' (*Nem.* 8. 21). Bowra observes that φθόνος is closely associated with ψόγος, μῶμος and κακαγορία.[12] ἀστοί and πολῖται talk. That is why in Pindar a hope is sometimes expressed that the victor or the singer will meet with good-will / lack of envy from townsfolk (*Ol.* 6. 7, 7. 89–90; *Nem.* 8. 38, 11. 17–18). The latter are branded as κακολόγοι (*Pyth.* 11. 28). Envious neighbours start malicious rumours on the sly (*Ol.* 1. 47–51: ἔννεπε κρυφᾷ [47]). In *Pythian* 2, Pindar says that he must avoid the δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν (53), the 'powerful bite of calumnies'. ὅμως μάν (82) suggests a contrast between the ἔπος … κραταιόν (81) and some other kind of utterance that might be damaging.[13] If there had been a lacuna in the transmitted text instead of the corrupt ἄγαν, it would have been quite natural to supply an object for διαπλέκει that has something to do with words. Lastly,

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at least for this era), but it is certainly an attractive conjecture (especially in a fable-like context) and it is printed by Kirkwood 1982, 146, Gentili in Gentili et al. 1995, 70 and Liberman 2004, 68. Carey 1981, 56 thinks it preferable. However, I agree with Lloyd-Jones 1973, 124 (= 1990, 133) that "the best editorial procedure would be to mention Huschke's conjecture, but to place a crux against κέρδει in the text".

[12] 1964, 187, citing *Nem.* 7. 61 (ψόγος); *Ol.* 6. 74; *Pyth.* 1. 82; fr. 181 Maehler (μῶμος); *Ol.* 1. 53; *Pyth.* 2. 53, 11. 28 (κακαγορία). One may add chatter, τὸ λαλαγῆσαι (*Ol.* 2. 97), and πάρφασις (*Nem.* 8. 32), 'misrepresentation'. Pi. calls the latter the companion of the kind of words which the fawning deceiver can be expected to have used here at *Nem.* 8. 33 (αἱμύλων μύθων ὁμόφοιτος); for discussion see Bulman 1992, 48–50.

[13] σαίνων (82) may and probably does here imply an utterance, but flattery is harmless unless accompanied by a more dangerous kind of utterance. It is unlikely that Pindar is suggesting that slander can simply be ignored just because it does not benefit slanderers personally. Otherwise, why describe it as an ἄμαχον κακόν (76), devote time and space to its discussion here (and elsewhere) or indeed attack a slanderous enemy like a wolf (84)? Most 1985, 113–114 argues that "this sentence does not oppose any kind of success on the part of the tricky citizen to the futility asserted in the previous sentence" and therefore that Wilamowitz' ὁμῶς should be read instead of the transmitted ὅμως. But Most also asserts that "it contrasts the kinds of means which are available to [the tricky citizen]" and thereby undermines his argument. Whichever way one looks at it, there is a contrast and no need to tamper with ὅμως.

Kirkwood's point about ἄταν being *lectio facilior* is a valid one. In the face of all this,[14] it is surprising that ἄταν has become the preferred text.

A different solution would be to read ὅμως μὰν σαίνων ποτὶ πάντας ἀρὰν πάγχυ διαπλέκει, i.e. 'nonetheless while fawning on all he is tightly weaving a curse'.[15] The groundwork for a reference to a curse is laid in the chain of thought that starts with mention of the ape (72). Apes always appeal to children because children are naive. Not so the Underworld judge Rhadamanthys, who is immune to deceptions (ἀπάταισι, 74). However, for a mortal deceit is an ever-present danger posed by ψιθύρων παλάμαις (75) and it is impossible to fight because those who deceive do so like foxes, on the quiet or under their breath, as is clear from ψιθύρων (75) and the preposition in the compound ὑποφάτιες (76).[16] What, it is then asked, is the benefit to the fox (78)? In truth there is none. The sort of scheme the fox deploys remains low like a fisherman's net at sea, but Pindar will float above the surface like a cork (79–80). In other words, he will avoid being ensnared. It is impossible for a deceitful citizen to say out loud in polite society a word that has the power to harm a noble person (81–82). Nonetheless, while the deceitful citizen praises everyone in polite society, in less polite society, he is privately weaving a tight curse (82). Both πάγχυ and the δια- of διαπλέκει underline the care taken over the curse. In διαπλέκει the δια- may reinforce the variance between open flattery and private curses, while -πλέκει has connotations of

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[14] I have not mentioned the earlier editors and commentators who rejected Heyne's ἄταν in favour of Boeckh's ἀγάν, including Schneidewin, Mezger, Gildersleeve, Fennell, Christ, Farnell, Sandys and Bowra. LSJ s.v. διαπλέκω I also accept it ("ἀγὰν πάγχυ δ. *to try* every *twist, wind* all ways"). But both sense ("weave a bend" is a strange locution) and the prosody of the first syllable (Schroeder 1923, 191: "de genuine vocis mensura [Choerob. I 308, 14 Hlg] dubitari licet") are doubtful.

[15] Gerber 1976, 67 does not record it, but Pauw 1747, 135 suspected that σαινων ποτι παντας αρα should be read. It is not entirely clear what Pauw meant (his failure to use accents does not help), but e.g. Heyne 1824, 1. 179 and Mommsen 1864, 156 understood Pauw to mean ἄρα. ἀρά cannot at any rate be the subject of the masculine σαίνων. I wonder whether there has been some misunderstanding. Pauw himself added "α in αρα est anceps, ut nemo nescit", which might indicate that he meant ἀρά rather than ἄρα. The initial *alpha* in ἄρα cannot be described as "anceps". Strictly, it is not properly anceps in ἀρά either since it is long in Epic (and Doric) and short in Attic. If Pauw meant ἀρά, it is strange that he did not propose ἀράν.

[16] The emphasis on the "stealthy" slanderers is noted by e.g. Lee 1978, 281 (with n. 3), who treats ψιθύρων and ὑποφάτιες as "virtually synonymous".

trickery.[17] This then supplies something consisting of words that might be dangerous to Pindar's patron and which contrasts with the unavailable ἔπος … κραταιόν (81).[18] Unable to utter a strong or reliable word in public, the deceitful citizen must resort to a private curse. While it is difficult to provide a precise parallel for the phrase ἀρὰν διαπλέκειν, 'weave [i.e. compose] a curse',[19] the metaphor "weaving words" (or things that consist of words) is a common one[20] and the idea that the deceitful citizen should quietly (as may be inferred from the emphasis on stealth in ψιθύρων and ὑποφάτιες [75, 76]) weave a curse is, while bold, a variation on that metaphor. A poorly formed *rho* would account for the transmitted ἄγαν.[21]

   One might object that mention of a curse is alien to Pindar's high style, but it has often been observed that in the "epilogue" or "coda" of this ode (following χαῖρε [67]) he uses popular images and phrases.[22] Certain features associated with ἀραί may lend further support. Curses are sometimes invoked in desperation, when the person making the curse lacks other means of redress.[23] ἀδύνατα (81) suggests this as the motive

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   [17] See e.g. *CGL* s.v. πλέκω 5: "(pejor., of persons) devise, contrive – *trickery*, *plots*".

   [18] As is required for metre, the initial *alpha* of ἀρά is long (as at *Isthm.* 6. 43).

   [19] I take the verb to mean 'compose', as at θρῆνον διαπλέξαισ᾽ (*Pyth.* 12. 8, of Athena), with ἀράν the product woven by the deceitful citizen (presumably from words). On the early and classical use of διαπλέκω, see the survey by Held 1998, 382–384, who concludes that it "most frequently means to weave a product, not to interweave material".

   [20] *Ol.* 6. 86–87 πλέκων | ποικίλον ὕμνον, *Nem.* 4. 94 ῥήματα πλέκων, *Pae.* 3. 12 (= fr. 52 c. 12 Maehler) ἀοιδαῖς ἐν εὐπλε[κέσσι and fr. 179 Maehler ὑφαίνω δ᾽ Ἀμυθαονίδαισιν ποικίλον | ἄνδημα; cf. also [Eur.] *Rhes.* 834 πλέκων λόγους (with the commentaries ad loc. of Fantuzzi 2020, 569, Fries 2014, 428 and Liapis 2012, 292) and Pl. *Hp. mi.* 369 b.

   [21] In MS B (98 recto) the top of the *gamma* has some damage and there is no clear loop underneath (it is filled in). It therefore differs little from the *rho* in ἐχθρός (four lines below in the MS). This illustrates how slight the change proposed is. At Men. *Sam.* 477 the papyrus has ἐγώ, but Kassel's ἐρῶ may be right.

   [22] E.g. Wilamowitz 1922, 291 n. 1: "Auf Fabeln geht es nicht zurück, wenn Pindar hier Affe, Fuchs und Wolf einführt, sondern er greift einmal nach volkstümlichen Bildern und Ausdrücken, sehr werschieden von seinem sonstigen Stile". Even in less overtly "popular" contexts, Pindar occasionally refers to magical practices, for instance at *Pyth.* 4. 213–219 where Faraone 1993, 6 has argued convincingly that the imagery of burning, flagellation, madness and bondage seems to reflect "the language, the goals and the social context of traditional Greek erotic incantations"; see also Graf 1999, 92–93.

   [23] See Watson 1991, 6–7 ("[Curses] are also typically resorted to by persons who have no other means of redress") and 38 (with n. 182).

for a curse. The thoroughness with which the deceitful citizen weaves the curse (emphasized, as suggested above, by πάγχυ and διαπλέκει [82]) may also reflect another feature of curses. It has been observed that "it is usual for persons uttering a magic spell to express their wishes in the fullest possible terms, in order to avoid any misapprehension on the part of the demons or spirits who will execute it".[24] It is, lastly, accepted that *defixiones* may have originated in Hieron's native Sicily[25] and Pindar would presumably have been aware of the practice.

Nicholas Lane
Ealing, London

njglane@yahoo.com

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[24] Watson 1991, 12.

[25] The earliest evidence dates to the early 5th or late 6th century; see Eidinow 2007, 141–142, who suggests that the Athenians may have adopted the practice of writing curses on tablets from Sicily. Watson 2019, 58 is more categorical that the practice came to Athens from Sicily. For curses in an "agonistic" context, see Faraone 1991, 10–17.

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Heyne's conjecture at *Pythian* 2. 82 has become the modern vulgate. This note argues that there are reasons why editors should resist it and instead proposes a new solution to the crux.

Конъектура Хейне к *Pyth*. 2. 28 стала издательской вульгатой. В статье приводятся аргументы против этой конъектуры и предлагается новое решение проблемы.

CONSPECTUS

Статьи сопровождаются резюме на русском и английском языке
Summary in Russian and English