

Conscious Ambiguities in Pindar and Bacchylides

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IN certain passages of Pindar and Bacchylides, the recognition of the literary device of conscious ambiguity can serve to clarify the poet's meaning. 'Ambiguity' is a vague term and wants closer definition: I mean the deliberate selection of one word intended to convey simultaneously several meanings. It is, of course, a commonplace that a poem may admit of a variety of literal, symbolic and allegorical interpretations, some conscious, some not, some real and some imaginary. My concern in this essay is with no such grand theme, rather with but one quite specific, though elusive, poetic device. This device consists in the conscious use of a word that either (a) has itself several legitimate meanings, each of which is suited to a particular context, or (b) suggests at the same time through similarity of sight and sound a second distinct word.

The phenomenon of ambiguity has received more attention from English scholars than from classicists; the best known treatment in English literature is William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*² (London 1947). For the Hellenist W. B. Stanford's *Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford 1939)—a work inspired, in part at least, by Empson's book—is the standard study. Both works, however, with their intricate analyses, deal with a variety of ambiguities far beyond the scope of this essay; Empson's third type (p.102) comes closest to my use of the term: "An ambiguity of the third type, considered as a verbal matter, occurs when two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously. This is often done by reference to derivation." A single passage will illustrate (Aesch. *Ag.* 699–701):

Ἴλιω δὲ κῆδος ὀρθ-
ώνυμον τελεσίφρων
μῆνις ἤλασεν . . .

The κῆδος is Helen; the word means here both ‘grief’ and ‘marriage alliance’, as the scholiast correctly perceived: τὸ κῆδος σημαίνει καὶ τὴν ἐπιγαμβρίαν καὶ τὸ πένθος. Fraenkel comments “scarcely translatable” and aptly quotes H. Voss’s “Eh und Weh.”

In the case of Pindar few would still deny the reality of conscious ambiguities, but I may remind the reader that so recently as 1932 Farnell could write (on *Ol.* 9.80–81): “. . . The modern commentators mainly agree, and some try to save their consciences by supposing that Pindar uses the word in two senses at once—a *sin that Pindar never commits . . .*” (my italics).

For the passages of Pindar and Bacchylides discussed below I use the Teubner editions of Bruno Snell.¹

1. PINDAR, *Olympian* 8.23–25, 70–71:

. . . ὃ τι γὰρ πολὺ καὶ πολλᾶ ῥέπη,
ὄρθᾳ διακρίναι φρενὶ μὴ παρὰ καιρὸν
δυσπαλές·

πατρὶ δὲ πατρὸς ἐνέπνευσεν μένος
γῆραος ἀντίπαλον·

LSJ s.v. *δυσπαλής* give “difficult, c. inf., διακρίνειν (*sic*) . . . *δυσπαλές* [ἔστι] *Pi.O.*8.25, cf. *P.A.*273 . . .”; s.v. *ἀντίπαλος* they state “properly, *wrestling against*: hence, *antagonist, rival* . . . c.gen., μένος γῆραος ἀντίπαλον *Pi.O.*8.71 . . .” Already in the oldest extant piece of Attic prose, the Old Oligarch,² ἀντίπαλος occurs in the fully transferred sense of ‘enemy’ without any reference to the literal meaning. In this ode there can be little doubt that Pindar chose both *δυσπαλές* and ἀντίπαλον deliberately and intended his audience to understand the words in both literal and metaphorical sense at once: the ode was composed in honor of Alkimedon, the *wrestler*. Compare *Nem.* 11.26 *δηριώντων* . . . ἀντιπάλων, where ἀντίπαλος suggests both ‘wrestler’ and ‘rival’ (note πάλα in verse 21). Similar is *Isthm.* 5.59–61:

αἰνέω καὶ Πυθέαν ἐν γυιοδάμαις
Φυλακίδα πλαγᾶν δρόμον εὐθυπορήσαι,
χερσὶ δεξιόν, νόῳ ἀντίπαλον.

¹ *Pindari Carmina cum fragmentis* I⁴, II³ (Leipzig 1964); *Bacchylidis Carmina cum fragmentis*⁸ (Leipzig 1961).

² 2.12. The most recent editor of this treatise, G. W. Bowersock, dates it between 445–441 B.C. (*HSCP* 71 [1967] 38). Despite Bowersock (pp.34–35) the phrase *περὶ τοῦ πολέμου* in 3.2, according to normal Greek usage, should refer to a definite war, as Kirchhoff maintained. As Bowersock’s arguments for the approximate dating of the work seem to me to have much force, I would refer *περὶ τοῦ πολέμου* specifically to the Samian Revolt and propose 440–439 as a date.

Sandys in his Loeb edition of Pindar, p.389 n.3, makes the observation that Pindar “. . . uses metaphors suggested by the particular athletic contest which he is commemorating.” See for example *Isthm.* 2.2 ἐς δίφρον Μοισᾶν ἔβαινον; this ode celebrates a victory in the chariot race. So also *Ol.* 6.22–25 (for a victory with the mule chariot):

ὦ Φίντις, ἀλλὰ ζευξόν ἤ-
 δη μοι σθένος ἡμιόνων,
 ἄ τάχος, ὄφρα κελεύθῳ τ' ἐν καθαράῃ
 βάσομεν ὄκχον, ἵκωμαί τε πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
 καὶ γένος.

Here Fennell comments, “The poet identifies the ἀπήνη of Agesias [the victor] with the Μοισᾶν δίφρος.” Curiously, Farnell, despite his stricture about the “sin that Pindar never commits,” has the following note to verse 23: “κελεύθῳ ἐν καθαράῃ: the epithet may have a double value here, (a) clear of obstacles, unencumbered; (b) unsullied, referring to the ideal path of song.”³ Compare below, verses 72–73 τιμῶντες δ' ἀρετάς | ἐς φανεράν ὁδὸν ἔρχονται and *Isthm.* 5.23 κέλευθον ἄν καθαράν.

2. PINDAR, *Olympian* 1.7–11:

. . . μηδ' Ὀλυμπίας ἀγῶνα φέρτερον αὐδάσομεν·
 ὅθεν ὁ πολύφατος ὕμνος ἀμφιβάλλεται
 σοφῶν μητίεσσι, κελαδεῖν
 Κρόνου παιῖδ' ἐς ἀφνεῖαν ἰκομένους
 μάκαιραν Ἰέρωνος ἐστίαν . . .

ἀμφιβάλλεται in verse 8 has prompted the most divergent interpretations: *LSJ* s.v. ἀμφιβάλλω I.1.c. render “song is cast (like a net) over the minds of poets.” Lattimore’s translation suggests a similar image: “It is thence that the song winds strands in the hearts of the skilled.” Gildersleeve writes “P.’s usage (see *O.*2,98; 9,5; 13,93 al.) indicates a shower of poetic βέλη or κῆλα whirring about the minds of the bards.” Farnell and others believe the verb to be a “metaphor from folding a cloak round one.” According to Fennell, Cookesley and Mezger

³ Farnell shows a similar inconsistency in his interpretation of ἐπωνυμίαν χάριν νίκας ἀγερώχου at *Ol.* 11(10).78: “. . . Pindar may have had two simpler expressions in his mind, χάριν τῆς νίκης, ‘for the sake of the Victory’, and χάριν ἐπινικίαν, an accusative in apposition to the verbal action=‘as a victory-tribute (or thanksgiving) we will sing of the thunder’ (the scholiasts’ doubtful interpretations support the suggestion of a twofold origin of the phrase).”

thought the image to be of a “garland round the head”; in this they were following the lead of one of the scholia on the passage: ἡ μεταφορὰ ἀπὸ τῶν στεφάνων (p.22 Drachmann). Fennell himself pronounced “The verb simply means ‘comes about,’ ‘encompasses’, *no definite metaphor being intended*” (my italics). For Pindar of all poets this is incredible; the image may be compound and vague, but an image there surely is.

These differences of interpretation are all due to ὕμνος: Pindar does not seem to have indicated what metaphor he was applying to ὕμνος here. Without a knowledge of this we cannot know in what sense poetry “is being thrown round.” In fact, Pindar’s language reveals exactly what picture he had in mind; the clue is in the adjective πολύφατος. The scholiasts paraphrase πολύφημος, ὑπὸ πολλῶν φημιζόμενος καὶ λεγόμενος, πολυθρύλλητος; for a comparable expression see *Ol.* 6.91 ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν. Etymologically, the epithet of course divides into πολυ-φατος (<φημί). I suggest that Pindar intended *simultaneously* a second division πολ-υφατος, as if from ὑφαίνω. As the scholiast observes on *Nem.* 7.116 (p.133 Drachmann) . . . τὸ ποίημα ὑφάσματι παρέοικεν, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἄλλοις (fr.179 Snell). ὑφαίνω δ’ Ἀμυθαιονίδαισιν ποικίλον ἄνδημα. The ὕμνος here, therefore, is a *garment*; the “mantle of poesy is thrown round the minds of poets.” A glance at *LSJ* will show that a very common (perhaps, in fact, the most common) usage of ἀμφιβάλλω is specifically with clothing. Supporting evidence for this interpretation, which will undoubtedly strike some as *outré*, is unusually abundant. Whether correctly or not, in Pindar’s day ὕμνος was thought to be etymologically connected with ὑφαίνω; the *figura etymologica* ὑφάναις ὕμνον occurs in Bacchyl. 5.9–10. Compare 13(12).223–24, where, if the passage is correctly restored, this same poet wrote ὕμνων τινὰ τάνδε ν[ερόπλοκον δόσιν] | φαίνω . . .

Even more striking is 19(18).5–10:

ιοβλέφαροί τε† καὶ
 φερεστέφανοι Χάριτες
 βάλωσιν ἀμφὶ τιμάν
 ὕμνοισιν· ὕφαινε νυν ἐν
 ταῖς πολυηράτοις τι καινὸν
 ὀλβίαις Ἀθάναις . . .

(Note βάλωσιν ἀμφί.) In Pindar himself there are numerous parallels for the metaphor: *Nem.* 4.44–45 ἐξύφαινε . . . μέλος πεφιλημένον; *Ol.* 6.86–87 πλέκων ποικίλον ὕμνον; *Nem.* 4.94 ῥήματα πλέκων; fr. 179 ὑφαίνω . . . ποικίλον ἄνδημα (compare above). It is perhaps significant that πολύφατος recurs in connection with ὕμνος, *Nem.* 7.81: πολύφατον θρόον ὕμνων. There is further confirmation at *Ol.* 1.105 where the poet, in ring fashion, takes up the same metaphor: κλυταῖσι . . . ὕμνων πτυχαῖς. Despite the doubts of some commentators, πτυχαῖς is surely a figure taken from the folds of a garment; see *LSJ* s.v. πτύξ I.2 and III. More tenuous as evidence is μητίεσσι in verse 9; this noun is frequently coupled with ὑφαίνω in epic poetry. Bacchylides twice uses μῆτιν as the object of ὑφαίνω, at 16(15).24–25 and 17(16).51. What place such associations may have had in our passage I cannot say.

One final question remains to be considered: is πολύφατος in fact actually cognate with ὑφαίνω rather than with φημί? I do not think so; the resultant compound would normally be *πολυφάντος. In Bacchyl., 13(12).61 πολύφαντον occurs (from φαίνω). The termination -ᾶτος, incidentally, is not an insuperable objection. In *Ol.* 8.16 πρόφᾶτον = πρόφαντον (s.v.l.) occurs; in *Ol.* 6.54 the variant ἀπειράτω (πειραίνω) may be correct; in fr. 33c.6 (Snell) the Mss have τηλέφατον (τηλέφαντον Bergk). In such compounds -ᾶτος would result from -N̄-τος; scholars are perhaps too quick to emend them away. *Pyth.* 11.47 ἀγώνων πολυφάτων seems to me to exclude a derivation from ὑφαίνω; compare also *Ol.* 6.91 ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν (cited above).

3. a. PINDAR, *Olympian* 2.43–45:

λείφθη δὲ Θέρσανδρος ἐριπέντι Πολυ-
 νείκει, νέοις ἐν ἀέθλοις
 ἐν μάχαις τε πολέμου
 τιμώμενος, Ἄδραστιδᾶν θάλος ἀρωγὸν δόμοις.

b. PINDAR, *Olympian* 6.67–71:

. . . εἶτ' ἂν
 δὲ θρασυμάχανος ἔλθῶν
 Ἡρακλῆς, σεμνὸν θάλος Ἀλκαῖδᾶν, πατρί
 ἑορτάν τε κτίση πλειστόμβροτον τε-
 θμόν τε μέγιστον ἀέθλων,
 Ζηνὸς ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ βω-
 μῶ τότε' αὖ χρηστήριον θέσθαι κέλευσεν.

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I wish to consider the force of *θάλος* in these two passages; *LSJ s.v. θάλος* state “prop.= *θαλλός*, but only . . . in metaph. sense of *scion, child*.” This is simply not true in the case of Pindar. He does use it in the sense of ‘scion’ at *Parth.* 2.36, but consider *Isthm.* 7.23–24:

*φλέγεται δὲ ἰοπλόκοισι Μοῖσαις,
μάτρωτ' ἦ ὀμωνύμω δέδωκε κοινὸν θάλος . . .*

Farnell’s note is as follows: “*κοινὸν θάλος*, ‘a share in his wreath of fame’. Wilamowitz, [*Pindaros*] p.411, n. 1, comments on this use of *θάλος* as unique; elsewhere it only = ‘scion’ of the human family: the word used for ‘shoot’ or ‘bough’ is *θαλλός*, very frequently in association with *στέφανος*. If *θάλος* was a variant for *θαλλός*, it is strange that the metaphorical use of a word should be expressed by such a difference of form. This passage suggests that this distinction between the two forms was not rigidly observed.” *θάλος* in the sense of ‘wreath’ is now fully confirmed for Pindar by a papyrus fragment, *Dith.* 1.14 (Snell):

ἀέξετ' ἔτι, Μοῖσαι, θάλος ἀοιδᾶν.

The only other extant example of *θάλος* in Pindar is *Nem.* 1.1–2.

*ἄμπνευμα σεμνὸν Ἀλφειοῦ,
κλεινᾶν Συρακοσσᾶν θάλος Ὀρτυγία . . .*

Since Ortygia was the original settlement at Syracuse, scholars have been puzzled by the expression *Συρακοσσᾶν θάλος*, which they took to mean ‘scion of Syracuse’. The evidence cited above shows that there is no need to interpret *θάλος* as ‘scion’ here; Pindar is calling Ortygia the ‘crown of glory’ of Syracuse. Some scholars, heeding the demands of context, have understood this: Farnell rendered the phrase “Flowering-branch of famed Syracuse” (?); Paley translated *θάλος* ‘pride’. Thus, in three of the six occurrences of *θάλος* in Pindar the word is used metaphorically in the sense of ‘wreath of glory’, despite the lexica.

What is its meaning in the two *Olympian* passages given above? ‘Scion’ gives an appropriate sense in each place and has always been so interpreted there. Both passages, however, mention specifically athletic contests (*νέοις ἐν ἀέθλοις, τεθμὸν μέγιστον ἀέθλων*); it seems to me not impossible, in the light of Pindar’s usage elsewhere, that he

selected *θάλος* precisely because this word would also suggest the victor's chaplet.

4. PINDAR, *Nemean* 9.28–32:

εἰ δυνατόν, Κρονίων,
 πείραν μὲν ἀγάνορα Φοινικοστόλων
 ἐγγέων ταύταν θανάτου πέρι καὶ ζω-
 ᾶς ἀναβάλλομαι ὡς πόρσιστα, μοῖραν δ' εὖνομον
 αἰτέω σε παισὶν δαρὸν Αἰτναίων ὀπάζειν,
 Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἀγλαΐαισιν δ' ἀστυνόμοις ἐπιμεῖξαι
 λαόν.

This ode was composed in honor of Chromius of Aetna, probably in 474. *Φοινικοστόλων* in verse 28 has caused difficulty; *LSJ s.v. φοινικόστολος* state “epith. of ἔγχεα, i.e. ἔγχεα τοῦ τῶν Φοινίκων στόλου [Pi.] N.9.28.” Farnell’s note reads in part “*Φοινικοστόλων ἐγγέων* can only mean what the scholiasts and most modern editors have seen in the phrase, ‘spears—i.e. a spear-bearing host—sent by the Punic people’. Mezger was the first to propose the far-fetched and impossible explanation ‘purple-mantled’—‘mit Blut überzogen’ (adopted by Bury and Sandys), as if the last part of the compound were *στολή* and not *στόλος*: that is the case in *λινόστολος* applied to someone who can wear a *στολή*; but a spear cannot . . .” This last objection is not valid; a spear can quite easily be described as “clothed in blood” if the poet so chose to express himself. *φοινικοεάνων* . . . ‘*Ωρᾶν* occurs (*s.v.l.*) in fr.75.14 (Snell); in Epicharmus, fr.45 Porson conjectured *φοινικεΐμονας*. For the connotation of ‘bloody’ connected with the root *φοινικ-* see *LSJ s.v. φοινίσσω*, where abundant examples are cited; e.g. *αἷματι Ἄρης πόντον φοινίξει* Orac. ap. Hdt. 8.77.2. Sandys, following Mezger’s interpretation, translates ‘empurpled spears’ and comments “*φοινικοστόλων* is an adjective (like *λινόστολος*, *φοινικοεΐμων*, not a proper name, as supposed by the scholiast. But the adjective, while referring primarily to such a sanguinary enterprise as that of the Seven against Thebes above-mentioned, also alludes to the Phoenicians of Carthage, who were continually threatening Sicily.” I myself, contrary to Sandys, have no doubt that the primary reference is to the Carthaginians and that the adjective should be printed with a capital (so Bowra, Turyn, Snell). At the same time it seems to me perfectly apposite that Pindar should choose a word

which also had ‘bloody’ overtones. There is no need for scholars to decide between the two meanings; both are intended. Eur. *Phoen.* 818–21 offers a parallel:

ἔτεκες, ὦ Γαῦ', ἔτεκές ποτε,
 βάρβαρον ὡς ἀκοὰν ἐδάην ἐδάην ποτ' ἐν οἴκοις,
 τὰν ἀπὸ θηροτρόφου φοινικολόφοιο δράκοντος
 γένναν ὄδοντοφυῆ, Θήβαις κάλλιστον ὄνειδος.

φοινικολόφοιο in verse 820 certainly means ‘purple-crested’ (or better ‘of blood-red crest’?); the δράκων referred to, however, is the one whom Cadmus the *Phoenician* killed. The speakers are the chorus of *Phoenician* women, and they refer explicitly to a report which they once heard “at home” (ἐν οἴκοις), that is, in *Phoenicia*. How much the context determined Euripides’ choice of φοινικόλοφος and whether his audience would make the association I cannot say. In such a case coincidence cannot be excluded—but neither can purposeful selection. Those who would dismiss this example as being *certainly* nothing but coincidence err in method.

5. PINDAR, *Isthmian* 4.27–31:

ὄσσα δ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ἄηται
 μαρτύρια φθιμένων ζωῶν τε φωτῶν
 ἀπλέτου δόξας, ἐπέψαν-
 σαν κατὰ πᾶν τέλος· ἀνορέαις δ' ἐσχάταισιν
 οἴκοθεν στάλαισιν ἄπτονθ' Ἡρακλείαις·
 καὶ μηκέτι μακροτέραν σπεύδειν ἀρετάν·

In the phrase ἀνορέαις ἐσχάταισιν (29) the adjective ἔσχατος is used in a metaphorical sense, to indicate the highest degree of ἀνορέα (= *summus, extremus*). In place of it Pindar had to hand a wide selection of alternative epithets, including the approximate synonyms ὑπατος and ὑψιστος. See for instance *Pyth.* 6.42 . . . ὑπατος . . . πρὸς ἀρετάν. Why did he choose specifically ἔσχατος? Such questions are more often answered with assurance than certainty. Nevertheless, in some cases the evidence justifies speculation; the present passage comes, I believe, under this category. The ‘Pillars of Herakles’ represented to Pindar a geographical boundary; they were, in a local sense, quite literally ‘furthest’. In Greek the one adjective which specifically denotes furthest geographical limits is ἔσχατος; apparent synonyms

such as ὑπάτος and ὑψιστος have a quite different literal denotation, however similar they may be when used metaphorically. Pindar chose ἐσχάταισιν here for two reasons: to express ‘ultimate’ virtue and to serve as a suggestive link with στάλαισιν . . . Ἡρακλείαις. To demonstrate that this interpretation is not so fanciful as it might at first appear, I append for comparison the following passages:

(a) *Ol.* 3.42–45:

εἰ δ' ἀριστεύει μὲν ὕδωρ, κτεάνων δὲ
 χρυσὸς αἰδοιέστατος,
 νῦν δὲ πρὸς ἐσχατιὰν
 Θήρων ἀρεταῖσιν ἰκάνων ἄπτεται
 οἴκοθεν Ἡρακλέος
 σταλᾶν. τὸ πόρσω δ' ἐστὶ σοφοῖς ἄβατον
 κᾶσόφοις.

(b) *Pyth.* 10.27–30:

ὁ χάλκεος οὐρανὸς οὐ ποτ' ἀμβατὸς αὐτῶ·
 ὄσαις δὲ βροτὸν ἔθνος ἀγλαταῖς ἀ-
 πτόμεσθα, περαίνει πρὸς ἔσχατον
 πλόον· ναυσὶ δ' οὔτε πεζὸς ἰών <κεν> εὖροις
 ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυμαστὰν ὁδόν.

6. PINDAR, *Paeon* 6.123–31 (Snell):

ὄνομακλύτα γ' ἔνεσσι Δωριεῖ
 μεδέοισα πόντῳ
 νᾶσος, ᾧ Διὸς Ἑλ-
 λανίου φαεννὸν ἄστρον.
 οὔνεκεν οὐ σε παιηόνων
 ἄδορπον εὐνάξομεν, ἀλλ' ἀοιδᾶν
 ῥόθια δεκομένα κατερεῖς,
 πόθεν ἔλαβες ναυπρύτανιν
 δαίμονα καὶ τὰν θεμίζενον ἀρετάν.

The poet is addressing the island Aegina in these splendid verses; ἀοιδᾶν ῥόθια in verses 128–29 is rendered “surging songs” by Sandys and “the torrent-flow of our songs” by Farnell. The adjective ῥόθιος

is used especially of waves; *LSJ* define τὰ ῥόθια ‘waves dashing on the beach, breakers, waves’. The whole context of the passage (πόντω, νᾶσος, ναυπρύτανιν) shows that Pindar chose his image with the literal meaning of ῥόθια clearly and simultaneously present to him. For a modern parallel to the figure, compare perhaps the familiar lines from Dylan Thomas’ *Fern Hill*—

Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

7. BACCHYLIDES 17(16).86–90:

τάφεν δὲ Διὸς υἱὸς ἔνδοθεν
κέαρ, κέλευσέ τε κατ’ οὐ-
ρον ἴσχεν εὐδαίδαλον
νᾶα· μοῖρα δ’ ἐτέραν ἐπόρσυν’ ὁδόν.
ἔετο δ’ ὠκύπομπον δόρυ·

Is ὁδόν in verse 89 to be taken literally or metaphorically? D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (London/New York 1967) p.438, annotates: “ἐτέραν . . . ὁδόν: ‘a different course’ but ὁδόν refers also to the voyage.” A. E. Housman discussed this passage in *CR* 12 (1898) 218: “. . . but fate ordained another course. The Greek word ὁδόν, between the words ἴσχεν νᾶα and ἔετο δόρυ, means the course of the ship . . .” Notice the ambiguity of Housman’s English, especially the words which I have italicized. It is not clear, at least to me, whether he interpreted ὁδόν in a double sense here; it is not even clear whether he was conscious of the possibility. The Greek is fully as ambiguous as the English and I cite this passage to demonstrate that Bacchylides as well as Pindar affects this device.

8. BACCHYLIDES 16(15).30–35 (Snell):

ἅ δύσμορος, ἅ τάλαιν’, οἶον ἐμήσατο·
φθόνος εὐρυβίαις νιν ἀπώλεσεν,
δνόφρον τε κάλυμμα τῶν
ὑστερον ἐρχομένων,
ὄτ’ ἐπὶ {ποταμῶ} ῥοδόεντι Λυκόρμα
δέξατο Νέσσου πάρα δαιμόνιον τέρας.

These verses, which conclude the dithyramb, refer to Deianeira and the blood-drenched garment with which she killed Herakles.

Kenyon renders *δνόφεόν τε κάλυμμα τῶν ὕστερον ἐρχομένων* “and the dark veil which hid the things to come”; similarly, Edmonds translates “and the murky veil that hid the future.” They seem to be taking *κάλυμμα* in a metaphorical sense; *τῶν ὕστερον ἐρχομένων* is, as Kenyon observes, an objective genitive. This interpretation, so far as it goes, seems to me to be correct. *κάλυμμα*, however, though it usually means specifically ‘head-covering’, ‘veil’, does not invariably do so. Literally, the word means ‘that which covers’ and when applied to clothing is not used exclusively of veils. Thus Aesch. *Cho.*494 uses it of the garment which Clytaemnestra threw over Agamemnon, and this surely was no mere veil (it is called *πλοῦτον εἴματος κακόν* at 1383). Here *κάλυμμα* seems to be used in a double sense: the “murky concealment of things to come” is soon to stand revealed as the deadly covering, the *Νέσσου . . . δαιμόνιον τέρας*. Those who would dismiss this reading of the passage as mere fancy must reckon with the words which the poet has set down immediately above (verses 23–25):

*τότ' ἄμαχος δαίμων
Δαϊανείρα πολύδακρυν ὕφανε
μῆτιν ἐπίφρον' . . .*

What is the *μῆτις* which the irresistible divinity has “woven” for Deianeira? It is the death-bringing garment. *ὕφανε* here is used with a half-literal, half-metaphorical force. Compare the similar pregnant usage of *τολυπεύω* in *Od.* 19.136–40:

*ἀλλ' Ὀδυσῆ ποθέουσα φίλον κατατήκομαι ἦτορ.
οἱ δὲ γάμον σπεύδουσιν· ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω.
φᾶρος μὲν μοι πρῶτον ἐνέπνευσε φρεσὶ δαίμων
στησαμένη μέγαν ἱστὸν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὑφαίνειν,
λεπτὸν καὶ περίμετρον·*

Penelope is the speaker. *τολυπεύω* (137) is the denominative verb to *τολύπη*, ‘clew’, ‘ball of wool for spinning’, and literally means ‘to make a clew’. *LSJ* render ‘wind off carded wool into a clew for spinning’; for this meaning see *Ar. Lys.* 587. Normally, however, the verb is used metaphorically, in two senses: (1) ‘to wind off, achieve, complete’, and (2) ‘to endure’. The Latin *exancto*, though the image is different, shows a similar semantic development. Here literal and metaphorical

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meaning are both intended, for Penelope's δόλος is her φᾶρος, of which she says below (verses 149–50):

ἔνθα καὶ ἡματίη μὲν ὑφαίνεσκον μέγαν ἰστόν,
νύκτας δ' ἀλλύεσκον . . .

The poet chose the verb *τολυπεύω* deliberately; Penelope “winds off” both wile and wool (compare *LSJ s.v.*).

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August, 1969