

# Pindar's Style at *Pythian* 9.87f

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## I

A PART of Pindar's difficulty lies in his habit of saying ordinary things in extraordinary ways. With his peculiar stamp, the hackneyed thought may pass beyond the banal expression and become spirited poetry.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it may also pass beyond the comprehension of his readers, even the most acute. *Pythian* 9.87f is universally misunderstood; yet if properly construed, it well reveals Pindar's singular style:

κωφὸς ἀνὴρ τις, ὃς Ἡρακλεῖ στόμα μὴ περιβάλλει,  
μηδὲ Διρκαίων ὑδάτων ἀέ μέμναται, τὰ νιν θρέψαντο καὶ Ἴφικλέα.

All commentators and translators agree that *κωφός* here refers to dullness of mind and that Pindar censures any man, real or imaginary, who fails to praise Herakles or grant him his due.<sup>2</sup> They translate accordingly: 'stupid', 'stultus', 'blöd', 'dull', 'dullard', 'sot', 'obtuse', 'indoctus', 'ἀπαίδευτος' and 'dolt' are the translations I find in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my remarks on *Nem.* 7.1ff in *TAPA* 101 (1970) 633ff, esp. 640. Explanation of subsequent references: full bibliographical citations of works cited by author's name or name and short title either in the bibliography of my *Three Odes of Pindar* (Leiden 1968) or in D. Gerber, "Studies in Greek Lyric Poetry: 1967–1975," *CW* 70 (1976) 132–57. For works published after 1967, I specify the Gerber number; e.g., the *TAPA* article mentioned above is Gerber no.657, abbreviated 'G. 657'. In references to a predictable passage of a translation or commentary, as in n.3 *infra*, I omit page numbers. Pindaric references are to H. Maehler's Teubner text (1971).

<sup>2</sup> Of over thirty Pindar books I have consulted, the only exception is E. Grassi (L. Traverso, transl., *Pindaro: Odi e frammenti* [Florence 1956], notes by E. Grassi). Grassi's paraphrase (p.207) suggests a proper construction of the sentence but transforms it to the type of rhetorical question studied (*re* Bacchyl. 9.53–55) below, p.139 ("Chi non esalta l'eroe e Tebe sua patria?"). A few others give potentially correct translations ('dumb' Ruck-Matheson [G. 516], Bowra, *cf.* Puech; even 'mute' Wheelwright [*infra* n.8]), but they reveal their misunderstanding in their commentary ('lui-même' Puech; for Bowra see *infra* n.4) or in an expanded translation ('embrace this chance' Ruck-Matheson; 'unskilled in sacred lore' Wheelwright). Almost all books explicitly present what I here call 'the prevailing interpretation'.

major Pindar books.<sup>3</sup> Rarely has anyone's intellect been so insulted by such an array of pejorative terms as has that of our *κωφὸς ἀνὴρ*.

The prevailing interpretation of the passage and context (*Pyth.* 9.79–96) is as follows: Pindar, returning from Sicily,<sup>4</sup> was confronted with accusations that he was disloyal to Thebes. He took the first opportunity—unfortunately for the cause of relevance, a poem for the Pythian victory of a Cyrenaean—to reassert his own patriotism toward Thebes and to counteract the charges of his Theban detractors. One means for Pindar to proclaim his patriotism was to speak loyally of Theban heroes, especially Herakles; and, by way of contrast, to impugn the intelligence of those who do not keep continuous praise of Herakles on their lips. *He, Pindar, is not such a*

<sup>3</sup> 'Stupid' Lattimore, 'stultus' Boeckh 325 (not translation); cf. Fraccaroli; 'blöd' Thummer (G. 664), Wolde, Hartung; 'dull(ard)' Paley, Sandys, Gildersleeve (336), Finley (47); 'sot' Duchemin (G. 600, p.80); 'obtuse' Swanson (G. 504), 'indoctus' Heyne, 'ἀπαιδευτος' a scholiast *ad loc.*, 'dolt' Burton (2).

<sup>4</sup> Or, alternatively, after he composed a dithyramb for the Athenians. Because the standard interpretation had two separate influential formulations, there are two distinct strains, one by Farnell, the other by Wilamowitz. The question is whether Pindar was traduced as being more loyal to the Sicilian tyrants than to his native Thebes (Wilamowitz); or more loyal to Athens (Farnell). Farnell's version (first in "Pindar, Athens, and Thebes," *CQ* 9 [1915] 193–200) he himself incorporated in his 1932 commentary. The Farnell (Athenian) strain therefore dominates English language scholarship, where it received wide publication in the works of C. M. Bowra (*passim*). Bowra was unusually fond of hypotheses about Pindar's personal relations, especially with Athens (see my *Three Odes* [*supra* n.1] 7 with nn.2 and 4, and my *Pindar Isthmian* 7 [G. 669] 15 and n.106): "[Pindar] wishes to establish himself as a loyal son of Thebes in general terms before he comes to the more difficult task of answering his critics for being too friendly to Athens" (Bowra, *Pindar* p.331). Farnell (II, *Commentary* 201) credits Gaspar (pp.109–12) with anticipating his theory on many points (the roots are even earlier: cf. L. Schmidt pp.170f), and notes that Wilamowitz's interpretation closely resembles his own. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* p.269: "Er hat zuerst in Theben wenig Dank dafür gefunden, dass er von den Tyrannenhöfen heimgekehrt war. Den Freund der Tyrannen sahen die Thebaner mit Misstrauen an . . . Gemeiner Neid kam hinzu; er kehrte wohlhabend heim . . . Rasch waren sie bei der Hand, ihm nachzusagen, dass er ein schlechter Bürger wäre." The influence of the Farnell-Wilamowitz interpretation pervades almost all comment on *Pyth.* 9, from specialist works to the popular translations (*e.g.*, Wolde p.307, Lattimore<sup>2</sup> xiv, Swanson [G. 504] xxviii) and handbooks. "The envious grudged [Pindar] his Sicilian successes: he was traduced as a friend of tyrants, a neglecter of his homeland. The rather violent manner [of *Pyth.* 9] . . . shows how seriously he took reproaches of this sort" (A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, transl. J. Willis and C. de Heer [London 1966] 195). It is little wonder that many non-classicists find Pindar an exasperating bore. More cautious explanations (H. J. Rose, "Iolaos and the Ninth Pythian Ode," *CQ* 25 [1931] 156–61, and Burton pp.49–54) are assailed as soon as they reach print (Farnell on Rose, *CQ* 25 [1931] 162ff; Bowra on Burton, *Pindar* p.144 n.1) by those who prefer the headier nectar of the 'accusations' game.

κωφός ἀνὴρ! This interpretation is at best doubtful;<sup>5</sup> but at least its adherents construe lines 87f consistently with the implications of a personal apology within Telesikrates' epinician. They readily grant the woeful irrelevance of the passage to the poem at hand<sup>6</sup> and almost triumphantly offer it over to the atmosphere of personal name-calling, back-biting and suspicion that many scholars find throughout Pindar's odes.<sup>7</sup>

It is more disturbing that so perceptive a scholar as E. L. Bundy should misconstrue Pindar's ingenuous if not straightforward meaning. Bundy, too, clothes Pindar's sentence with his own preconceptions about the tendency of Pindar's work: "The singer who would not devote himself to Herakles in an ode for one who has been a victor in the Herakleia is κωφός—brutish and insensitive to the proprieties of song."<sup>8</sup> Justly proud of discovering Pindar the encomiast, Bundy sought the 'subjective' element too frequently. That is to say, he viewed many passages as focused on the poet-singer's responsibility as *laudator* when they are better interpreted as 'objective',

<sup>5</sup> See Burton pp.49–54 and Rose (*supra* n.4) 160. Yet Farnell thinks his view obvious (*Commentary* p.208), and Wilamowitz (p.265) presents his as the only solution to an *aporia*. Wilamowitz then writes what is closer to historical fiction than scholarship (*cf.* my remarks in "Pindaric Criticism" in Calder-Stern [G. 496] 39f with notes; C. Ruck, *Hermes* 96 [1968] 661 n.1). Wilamowitz's attempt to maintain a running record of the ups and downs in Pindar's financial position seems especially odd (with *Pindaros* p.269 *et alibi*, *cf.* p.195 *et alibi*).

<sup>6</sup> I quote to show how severe is their charge of irrelevance (also *infra* n.7). "The whole passage has little to do with Telesikrates and illustrates how Pindar uses a public occasion to speak about his own affairs" (Bowra, transl. [G. 502] p.92; *cf.* "might seem to us to be out of place," *Pindar* p.332). "Ihm persönlich lag es daran, seinen heimischen Heroen auch bei dieser Gelegenheit zu huldigen, auch ohne dass der Sieger einen besonderen Grund dazu hatte. . ." (Wilamowitz p.265). "Téléscrate serait en droit de dire qu'il est bien peu question de lui" (Méautis p.213).

<sup>7</sup> "Pindar defends himself against some not very specific charge" (Bowra, transl. p.92). Farnell (*CQ* 25 [1931] 163) wrote: "Professor Rose's original objection to [my] interpretation is that it is irrelevant, breaking the unity of the ode, also that it is obscure. But neither of these charges prove that it is not true, for Pindar is often obscure. . . and very often irrelevant."

<sup>8</sup> E. L. Bundy, "The Quarrel between Kallimachos and Apollonios," *CSCA* 5 (1972) 39ff (76). Bundy's kind of solution is not really new. An obscure (not in D. E. Gerber, *A Bibliography of Pindar* [Cleveland 1969]) translation (C. A. Wheelwright, *Pindar* [London 1830]) offers: "Mute and unskilled in sacred lore were he who would refuse to raise his voice in great Alcides' praise." I suspect that Wheelwright's expansion 'unskilled in sacred lore' was in 1830 very close to 'insensitive to the proprieties of song' in 1972—both revelatory of their age but not of Pindar.

focused on the laudable qualities of the *laudandus*.<sup>9</sup> There are no words in the Greek to suggest either Bundy's notion that the *ἀνὴρ* is necessarily a 'singer' or his expanded paraphrase, 'and insensitive to the proprieties of song'. Both result from interpretive amplification and are, I shall argue, gratuitously invented. I contend that the *κωφὸς ἀνὴρ* sentence has nothing to do with singers, brutishness, insensitivity or propriety; nor with stupidity, dullness or dolts. It deals instead with people who lack the capacity of articulate speech. I believe, to be precise, that the passage refers—literally—to deaf-mutes.

The standard interpretation is vulnerable on many sides. Although LSJ *s.v.* *κωφός* II.5 gives 'dull of mind' for this and a few other passages, each of those passages is disputable. *κωφός*, in the overwhelming majority of its occurrences, clearly has its basic meaning, physiologically 'dumb', 'mute', 'incapable of speech' or 'silent'.<sup>10</sup> Because people are often dumb of speech if they are void of hearing, the Greek word may refer to the deaf and dumb, or merely to the deaf. Because, in turn, the inability to speak or hear is often—however wrongly—attributed to mental rather than physical deficiency, the *English* word 'dumb' (properly, 'unpossessed of speech' or 'silent') has acquired, at least colloquially, the meaning 'stupid'.<sup>11</sup> But we

<sup>9</sup> *e.g.*, Bundy makes *Ol.* 11.19f subjective; I agree with others that it is better taken as objective (G. Kirkwood, *Gnomon* 35 [1963] 131f; R. Stoneman, "The Theban Eagle," *CQ* 26 [1976] 190). To determine whether a passage is objective (Thummer [G. 664] I chs. I–V and, *e.g.*, VII §§1–3) or subjective (Thummer I ch. VI and, *e.g.*, VII §4) is often difficult, and some perhaps cut both ways (*Ol.* 13.13?). Stoneman (*ibid.* 188–97) has recognized the question and presents a specific study. I argue that *Pyth.* 9.87f is wholly objective, bearing on the *laudandus* (here Herakles) rather than on the *laudator*, the poet.

<sup>10</sup> LSJ *s.v.* *κωφός* II.1–4 cites many occurrences for 'dumb, unable to speak', 'silent', and a smaller number for 'deaf'. The entry II.5, 'of the mind, *dull, obtuse*', lists only our passage, Soph. *Aj.* 911, and Pl. *Tim.* 88B. Although I do not here deny the possibility that *κωφός* occasionally means 'dull of mind', neither *Ajax* 911 nor *Timaeus* 88B is cogent; the Sophocles passage emphasizes imperception and inaction, not stupidity; Plato must qualify *κωφός* with an explicit reference to mental activity, τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς κωφόν, which may be a metaphor, 'deafness of mind'. No report about Sophocles' satyr play entitled *Κωφοί* proves that it referred to stupid rather than to deaf or dumb people. But my choice of meanings, 'speechless', is in any case the prevailing value of the word, so my argument will rest mainly on contextual and rhetorical grounds rather than lexical. A full lexical analysis of *κωφός* would require a study of Parmenides B 6.7, Ar. *Acharn.* 681, Hesych. *s.v.* *κωφόν*, and related words, an ambitious task that lies beyond the scope and the needs of this paper.

<sup>11</sup> The *OED* long refused to recognize a meaning 'dumb' = 'stupid' (of persons), and that very common usage was regarded as an American colloquialism in *Webster*<sup>2</sup>. But it is

should be cautious before assuming such a meaning in *Pythian* 9.87 when a comparable shift for the Greek word is rare or even poorly attested. Thus the usual rendering of *κωφός* is lexically weak; the prevailing interpretation must charge the sentence with extreme irrelevance; and Bundy's alternative view must pack the sentence with supplementary ideas which seem to rise more from his own expectations than from Pindar's words. Neither choice, irrelevance or padding, is immediately attractive, and the search for a third approach is not out of order. The matter of lines 87f seems best approached as a question of style.<sup>12</sup>

When the *Auctor ad Herennium* lists the existing fame and reputation of the encomiast's subject among the topics available for him to praise,<sup>13</sup> he merely states what every composer of an encomium no doubt knows: one way to praise one's subject is to claim that others praise him. Since epideictic and encomiastic compositions naturally lend themselves to the expansive, categorical and hyperbolic in expression (Arist. *Rhet.* 1368a), the encomiast may say that his subject's virtues are universally recognized, known and praised 'throughout the world': *Alexandri virtutes per orbem terrae cum laude et gloria vulgatae sunt.*<sup>14</sup> Or he may claim the universality of his subject's

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recorded without stigma in *Webster*<sup>3</sup> and admitted to the *OED* in the 1972 *Supplement* (I 882) as colloquial. E. Partridge, *Dictionary of American Slang* (New York 1970), claims that 'dumb' = 'stupid; dull; silent' was Standard English ca 1530–1650 and later revived in the U.S.

<sup>12</sup> I intend a rather detailed examination of a single rhetorical concept, and must hereafter limit myself to determining what the passage is, not what it is not. I therefore forgo an extensive survey of such vexed questions as the reading in line 91, the reference of *πόλιω τάνδε*, the first person in Pindar, the significance of lines 93f, etc. My interpretation does not really depend on the resolution of these controversies, and so ambitious a study lies outside the stylistic inquiry I here make.

<sup>13</sup> *Laus igitur potest esse rerum externarum, corporis, animi. Rerum externarum sunt... genus, educatio, divitiae, potestates, gloriae* (*Auct. ad Her.* 3.6.10). Lewis and Short, *s.v. gloria* I.α, end: "in plural, reputation, fame, *Auct. Her.* 3, 6, 10." Cf. *Alex. Rhet.*: *οικείαι δὲ τῷ μὲν ἐγκωμίων δόξαι καὶ εὐδοξίαι, τῷ δ' ἐπαίνῳ κλέος καὶ εὐκλεία... οἱ οὖν ἐγκωμιάζοντες εἰκότως ταῖς δόξαις τῶν πολλῶν χρώνται πιθανότητος ἐπιμελούμενοι κτλ.* (Spengel, *Rhet. Gr.* III 3). The distinctions that ancient rhetoricians draw between *ἔπαινος* and *ἐγκώμιον*, between *gloria*, *fama*, *εὐδοξία*, *κλέος*, etc. (e.g., Cic. *Fin.* 3.17.57) may be ignored for our purposes here. Similarly, I do not distinguish between praise accorded to gods and to men (nor to animals—whether 'land or sea'). I am concerned more with style and praise in general than in subject matter and its ancient divisions.

<sup>14</sup> *Auct. ad Her.* 4.22.31. This version is apparently theoretical, from school exercises. Cf., in actual oratory, Cicero speaking of Pompey (*Leg. Man.* 15.43): *Quod igitur nomen unquam in orbe terrarum clarius fuit?*

praise by declaring that 'everyone' praises him. Cicero quotes approvingly A. Atilius Calatinus' epitaphic *elogium*: *Hunc unum plurimae consentiunt gentes populi primum fuisse virum*.<sup>15</sup> He then adds, *Iure igitur gravis, cuius de laudibus omnium esset fama consentiens*. In this paper I concentrate on the latter kind, that which asserts something about *omnes*, and on the forms of expression that it takes in several Greek authors. I shall then offer a new interpretation of *Pythian* 9.87.

## II

*Tractatio varia esse debet, ne aut cognoscat artem qui audiat aut defatigetur similitudinis satietate* (Cic. *De Or.* 2.41.177). The simplest and most banal version of the expression under study would be a straightforward statement that everyone praises the subject or his virtues: *πᾶς ἐπαινεῖ τὸν δεῖνα*. Yet, as Cicero recommends, encomiasts seek to avoid the trite, and *variatio* is the rule rather than the exception.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the most common—even commonplace—variation is the slight modification to a double negative: 'nobody does not praise so-and-so' instead of 'everyone praises'. The double-negative construction is so common that it has its own idiom in Greek and entry in the grammars (*οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ*). Only slightly more sophisticated in conception and expression is pseudo-Xenophon's praise of Achilles (*Cyn.* 1.16): Ἀχιλλεὺς . . . οὕτω καλὰ καὶ μεγάλα μνημεῖα παρέδωκεν, ὥστε οὐτε λέγων οὐτ' ἀκούων περὶ ἐκείνου οὐδεὶς ἀπαγορεύει. Here the virtual double negative, *οὐδεὶς ἀπαγορεύει*, instead of *οὐδεὶς οὐ λέγει*, saves the expression from being absolutely bald, but *qui audiat* can hardly miss the artfulness of the implied double negative. More interesting, both in conception and style, is pseudo-Xenophon's resolution of the phenomenon of praise into a process. He recognizes that praise, like any act of communication, requires two functions, speaking (*λέγων*) and hearing (*ἀκούων*), for which modern com-

<sup>15</sup> Cic. *Sen.* 17.61. Cf. *CIL* I.2 9.1–3: *Honc otno ploirume cosentiont R[omai] duonoro optumo uise viro Luciom Scipione*.

<sup>16</sup> Actual *encomia* do tend to eschew so simple a version, which is more frequent in unemphasized general statements (*ὑπὸ πάντων ἐπαινουμένους*, Isoc. 5.135; *τὸν γὰρ οὐκ ὄντα ἅπας εἴωθεν ἐπαινεῖν*, Thuc. 2.45.1) than in vaunts for an individual encomiastic subject. But *P.Mich.* inv. 2754 (for which see R. Renehan, *HSCP* 75 [1971] 85f) lines 17–19, shows: Ὁμηρος γοῦν διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ζῶν καὶ ἀποθανῶν τετίμηται παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.

munications theory willingly offers the term ‘transmitter’ and ‘receiver’. I shall return to them in §III, below.

Besides the outright double-negative transformation, one can give slight variation to the formula, ‘everyone does such-and-such’, by a negated rhetorical question. Instead of saying ‘no one doesn’t’ the *laudator* can ask the question, ‘Who is there who doesn’t?’, and expect the audience to supply their own resounding *οὐδείς*! Bacchylides asks,

τίς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδεν κυανοπλοκάμου  
 Θήβας ἑύδατον πόλιν,  
 ἢ τὰν μεγαλώνυμον Αἴγιαν;<sup>17</sup>

The rhetorical question may be a little more elegant than the double-negative declarative version; but Bacchylides’ sentence still readily suggests its transformation from a *πᾶς οἶδεν* foundation, and it belies its conventionality. Although we should not charge Bacchylides with a general want of originality on the grounds of one passage, Bacchylides 9.53–55 does not seem especially memorable to me, nor has it seemed memorable to others.<sup>18</sup>

Pindar, too, will use such minor *variatio*, especially in his lesser salvos and in combination. But even then there is a characteristic obliquity of expression, an avoidance of the transformational grammar where a mere double negative or rhetorical question bears the burden of the categorical expression. At *Olympian* 6.4ff (εἰ δ’ εἴη μὲν Ὀλυμπιονίκας. . . , τίνα κεν φύγοι ὕμνον κείνος ἀνήρ;), like Bacchylides at 9.53–55, Pindar uses the rhetorical question. Again the expected answer is *οὐδείς*, and the connotation is ‘everyone praises him’. As is

<sup>17</sup> Bacchyl. 9.53–55. Although Menander Rhetor devotes special study to praise of places, the rhetorical forms do not differ from those that praise persons, heroes and gods.

<sup>18</sup> In *Isthm.* 8.16–18 Pindar links the Asopides twins, Thebe and Aegina. Scholars of the biographical school make much of the passage, as if it were especially revelatory of Pindar’s personal situation. “Aigina wird als Schwester der Theba eingeführt; diese Beziehung zu betonen war dem Thebaner jetzt sehr wichtig” (Wilamowitz p.197; cf. Méautis p.307; *et al.*). “Pindar is conscious that the name of Thebes may not be welcome in Aegina, but he deliberately goes out of his way to recall legendary ties between the two places and to assert his right to pay her due to Aegina.” “He has, *as a Theban*, to reinstate himself in the eyes of his *Aeginetan* patrons. . . Then he dwells on the ancient connexions between Thebes and Aegina” (Bowra, *Pindar* pp.114, 330; emphases added). These scholars, at least, seem not to have noticed that Bacchylides—no Theban courting Aeginetans, but a Cean writing for Phliasians—makes precisely the same connection. (Had Bacchyl. 9.53–55 surfaced as a detached scrap of papyrus, it would now doubtlessly be ascribed to Pindar and fitted into his alleged personal and political pickles.)

pseudo-Xenophon's ἀπαγορεύει, the negative is virtual, φεύγει, not a simple negation of a positive word. Furthermore, the rather surprising word choice (φεύγει instead of something ordinary such as οὐ λαμβάνει) and the active concept, 'he escapes no song of praise' (rather than a passive 'he is praised in all songs'), overshadow the rhetorical substructures. All these things combine to produce a momentarily arresting expression, one that causes the audience to think about what is said here. The sentence probably suggests that such a man need not *seek* songs of praise. They all come to him, and he could hardly escape them should he want to. The student of Pindaric style and *variatio* must indeed observe the standard grammatical transformations and complex syntax. But he must also be prepared for bold expressions and unexpected conceptions.

### III

εὐδοξία δ' ἐστὶν τὸ ὑπὸ πάντων σπουδαῖον ὑπολαμβάνεσθαι (Arist. *Rhet.* 1361a). The passage closest to *Pythian* 9.87 is *Isthmian* 6.24–27:

οὐδ' ἔστιν οὕτω βάρβαρος οὔτε παλίγγλωστος πόλις,  
 ἄτις οὐ Πηλέος ἄτει κλέος ἥρωος, εὐδαίμονος γαμβροῦ θεῶν,  
 οὐδ' ἄτις Αἴαντος Τελαμωνιάδα | καὶ πατρός.<sup>19</sup>

Whatever else it may do, the sentence declares that the fame of Peleus, Ajax and Telamon is universal. In fact it combines, in its own way, both the universalizing *formulae* that I noted at the outset, *per orbem terrae* and *omnes* (the latter typically transformed to an οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ construction). But instead of saying that all men actively praise these Aeacids, Pindar concentrates on the audience, the 'receiver' in communications theory. He says all men *hear* these heroes' fame—no matter where their city's location nor how barbarian and backward their tongue. Since it is characteristically hyperbolic, the basic formula 'Everyone knows Peleus' fame' is potentially vulnerable to the captious ἀμφισβήτησις familiar to us from Plato's dialogues. 'Everyone?' To Bacchylides' rhetorical question, τίς οὐκ οἶδεν Θήβας πόλιν; some φθονερός ἀνὴρ might respond not

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Cic. *Leg. Man.* 15.44: *An vero ullam usquam esse oram tam desertam putatis, quo non illius diei fama pervaserit, cum universus populus Romanus... Cn. Pompeium imperatorem deprecavit? ἐὰν δὲ καὶ παρὰ βαρβάροις [ὁ θεὸς τυγχάνη τιμώμενος], ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ Ἀπόλλων ὁμοίως παρὰ Λυδοῖς, λέξειε ὅτι οὐδὲ οἱ βάρβαροι τὸν θεὸν ἠγνόησαν* (Alex. *Rhet.*, Spengel III 5). Pindar manages to outdo the later rhetorician's prescription, which falls short of asserting that *all* barbarians know the subject.



with the requisite οὐδείς but with ἄγροικος Θρακῶν τις or εἰς βάρβαρος, οἶμαι. Pindar's sentence implicitly anticipates any such objection and outmanœuvres it.

But I do not think Pindar's wording here is a mere rhetorical sally. ἀἶτω implies comprehension—perception as well as reception of the sound. There is something more serious here than a rhetorical game, and something more complex than pseudo-Xenophon's analysis of praise into speaking and hearing. With ἀἶτω and παλίγλωστος Pindar introduces a real human problem, communication in different languages. He thus lifts the commonplace topic of universal praise to a new level of examination, one that touches upon the very concept of communication. The image he gives us, the backward barbarian who knows not Greek but still knows well the fame of Peleus or Ajax, is specific and memorable—more so, I submit, than Bacchylides' rhetorical question. When Pindar claims that these Greek heroes' glory transcends even the ordinary barriers of language, he expands their fame. Yet he also compels his audience to reflect, even if briefly, on what language is, what fame is—in the concrete. Besides the encomiastic vaunt, then, the sentence provides an insight, howsoever minor, into our existence as articulate humans and into a Greek's view of the Greek position among the nations of the ancient world.

In *Isthmian* 6.24–27 Pindar seems clearly interested in the receiving process, hearing, and even in the question of decoding the sound into meaning. The other instrument in the process of fame is the 'transmitter', speaking. Without both there is no κλέος. In *Pythian* 9.87, I suggest, he focuses on the transmitter, vocality itself, production of sound, the process of speech:

κωφὸς ἀνὴρ τις, ὃς Ἡρακλεῖ στόμα μὴ περιβάλλει,  
μηδὲ Διρκαίων ὑδάτων ἀέ μέμνεται, τά νιν θρέψαντο καὶ Ἴφικλέα·

Whatever secondary meanings κωφός may have elsewhere, the completion of the sentence, ὃς Ἡρακλεῖ στόμα μὴ περιβάλλει, plainly shows that here Pindar emphasizes the voice, articulation, the γλῶττα, and uses κωφός in its usual sense.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Commentators dispute the image of περιβάλλει, and στόμα deserves comment. The general meaning 'include' is probably better for περιβάλλει than a vivid image such as 'wrap round' or 'invest'. Then στόμα (which does not mean 'tongue') is easily taken in its rather frequent meaning 'speech' (LSJ *s.v.* 2): "whoever does not include Herakles in his speech."

Here the trite saying would be, 'Everybody speaks praise of Herakles' or 'Everyone's speech includes Herakles'. But Pindar again circumvents the trite, and with it any possible sophistic objections about deaf-mutes who do not even utter Herakles' name. He does not assert universality nor use the *omnes* formula or its normal substitutes. He does not claim that *everyone* speaks of Herakles, and himself presents the exception to his rule that 'All men praise Herakles'. The *only*<sup>21</sup> people who do not include Herakles in their speech are *people who cannot talk at all*. Mutes. *κωφοί*. The physiological detail seems so unexpected that one might at first think that Pindar, in seeking variety, has gone too far. Yet when we recognize what Pindar is doing, the sentence proves to be neither far-fetched nor bizarre. That is Pindar's way, to press close to the boundaries and stay within.

As, in *Isthmian* 6, he hit upon the problem of unintelligible languages to explore the limits of the receiver in the making of fame, so here the poet hits upon the basis of speech, production of sound, to explore the limitation of the transmitter. While there is no profundity in pointing out that dumb people cannot talk or that Herakles is highly praised, in Pindar's peculiar combination the matter seems important and complex enough to command attention. I, at least, cannot refrain from conjuring up a specific image: a *κωφὸς ἀνὴρ*, like the *κωφὸς πᾶς* of Herodotus 1.34 and 85, straining to break into speech, to utter the name on the lips of all other men, 'Herakles'. My image may be a trifle grotesque and emphasize the mute's handicap. But Pindar's sentence, too, emphasizes the mute by making him the grammatical subject and by placing him at the beginning. By reversing the concept 'everybody praises so-and-so' and telling us of those few who cannot, Pindar turns what would be subject of especial focus into the relief instead. Praise of Herakles is the human norm, by which the handicapped are measured. The sentence asserts Herakles' 'universal' praise with far more poetic

<sup>21</sup> There is no word in the Greek for 'only', but it is indisputably implied by the conditional relative clause ('whoever does not' = 'if a man does not'). If the logic confuses: Let P be the class 'praisers of Herakles', and S the class *κωφοί*; Pindar's sentence will be written  $\sim P \supset S$ . By the *rule of contraposition* we may rewrite  $\sim P \supset S$  as  $\sim S \supset P$  ("if a man is not *κωφός*, he praises Herakles"). We thus have the common English equivalents, "All who are not *κωφοί* are praisers of Herakles" and "The only people (if any at all) who do not praise Herakles are *κωφοί*." The logic turns on the fact that *κωφός* is the undistributed term in Pindar's sentence-proposition (not the 'praisers of Herakles').

force (and perhaps more credibility) than would a mere categorical claim of the *παῖς αἰνεῖ* type.

*Pythian* 9.87f is apparently neither a personal defence nor a condemnation of stupidity; it is an unusual version of an encomiastic commonplace. Nor is it mere *amplificatio* or *variatio*.<sup>22</sup> It explores, in a way that is at once both blunt and circuitous, the boundaries of the concepts of praise and language. *Close* verbal parallels can probably be found at will. By chance I come first upon the following from Abraham Fraunce: “Leander and Heroes loue is in every man’s mouth.”<sup>23</sup> But few authors besides Pindar could use the plight of the deaf-mute as a vehicle for the praise of Herakles. The ancient artist himself often outstrips the rhetorical handbooks and leaves their precepts looking feeble or irrelevant. The following extract came from Alexander’s essay, “How one should Praise a God”: ἐὰν μὲν οὖν παρὰ πᾶσιν ὁ θεὸς τυγχάνη τιμώμενος, τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ μέγιστος ἔπαινος· ὑπὸ γὰρ πάντων, ὁ δὴ σπάνιον ἔστι, φήσεις τιμᾶσθαι.<sup>24</sup> Originality lies beyond prescription. Perhaps the fact that Pindar did *not* say ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ὑπὸ πάντων τιμᾶται helps to explain why he is still read.

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<sup>22</sup> Burton (p.49) uses the word *ποικίλματα* in reference to these lines (*cf.* Ruck and Matheson [G. 516]), no doubt looking back to *ποικίλλειν* in line 77; but Pindar does not use the word in the text-book sense of later rhetoricians. I shall treat the meaning of lines 76–79 in a separate paper (*cf.* *ποικιλία* in Arist. *Poet.* 1459a).

<sup>23</sup> *Apud* M. Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (Cleveland/New York 1962) 428.

<sup>24</sup> Alex.Rhet. 338 (Spengel III 5); *cf.* *P.Mich.* inv. 2754.16ff (*supra* n.16).