

Whose Eyes? Pindar, *Ol.* 3.12

In the first strophe and antistrophe (1-10) of the *Third Olympian*, Pindar introduces Theron of Akragas and his victory in the four-horse chariot-race of 476 B.C. The link to the myth occurs in the first epode, with its description of the (generic) Olympic victor (11-13),¹

ὅ τινι κραίνων ἐφετμὰς Ἡρακλέος προτέρας
ἀτρεκῆς Ἑλλανοδίκας γλεφάρων Αἰτωλὸς ἀνὴρ ὑψόθεν
ἀμφὶ κόμαισι βάλῃ γλαυκόχροα κόσμον ἐλαίας, . . .

As often in Pindar, the linkage is via a relative pronoun, and most of the rest of the poem tells how Herakles brought the olive-tree to Olympia from the Hyperboreans.

The word γλεφάρων in line 12 seems difficult. Gildersleeve's note runs as follows:²

γλεφάρων . . . ὑψόθεν: The eyes of the victor would naturally follow the movement of the prize-giver's hand, hence ὑψόθεν.

Verdenius objects to Gildersleeve's particular point, while agreeing in general:³

ὑψόθεν here does not mean 'from above', but -θεν can denote a static position, as has been shown by M. Lejeune, *Les adverbes grecs in -θεν* (Bordeaux 1940) . . ., so that the word is equivalent to ὑπέρ (LSJ II 2). For the hyperbaton cf. Gerber on O. 1, 17 θαμά.

In the most recent full commentary, Gentili *et al.* agree: 'in iperbato, da unire con ὑψόθεν'.⁴ If so, then, as Hummel notes, 'la préposition est très éloignée de son régime'.⁵ More important, ὑψόθεν ἀμφὶ κόμαισι needs no help from γλεφάρων. We hardly need to be told that the garland will be wrapped around the victor's head above his eyes rather than around them or below them. Even without the adverb, no one would imagine that it is to be used as a leafy blindfold or gag.

¹ My text is quoted from B. Snell and H. Maehler, *Pindarus, Pars I, Epinicia*, Leipzig, 1971⁵, with longer lines printed as units and purely metrical punctuation omitted: there are no pertinent variants.

² B. L. Gildersleeve (ed.), *Pindar, The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Harper and Brothers, 1885).

³ W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on Pindar, Volume I* (Mnemosyne Supplement 97), Leiden, 1987, *ad loc.*

⁴ B. Gentili, C. Catenacci, P. Giannini, and L. Lomiento (edd.), *Pindaro, Le Olimpiche* (Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2013).

⁵ P. Hummel, *Le Syntaxe de Pindare* (Peeters, 1993), 155, § 169.

It seems to me that it is not the eyes of the victor that are pertinent here, but those of the umpire, and that the word γλεφάρων goes much better with the preceding words ἀτρεικής Ἑλληνοδίκας than with anything that follows. It is the umpire or referee (the translation is necessarily inexact) who must display ἀτρεκεία,⁶ and an accurate and unprejudiced pair of eyes is his most important qualification.⁷ The judgment of the *Hellano-dikai* is mentioned again in line 21, where Herakles establishes (among other things) μεγάλων ἀέθλων ἀγνὰν κρίσιν. And my interpretation takes care of the hyperbaton.

Might ἀτρεικής govern a genitive? I must ask the Greek grammarians for help here, but it seems to my inexperienced eye that it might conceivably do so either (1) as an adjective of knowing (*K-G* 1.369), or (2) as an apparent privative, for which cf. Goodwin § 1141, Smythe § 1428 and 1436.⁸

If a genitive with ἀτρεικής does not satisfy, we could always emend to γλεφάροις. LSJ s.v. ἀτρεικής says “The word and its derivs. are rare in Trag. and not found in Att. Prose, ἀκριβής and its derivs. being used instead.” Turning to ἀκριβής, I find (s.v. II.1) “ἀ. τοῖς ὄμμασι sharp-sighted, Theoc.22.194” (of Lynceus). Close enough? Or perhaps a dual would be better: γλεφάροις would be a smaller change, arguably the tiniest possible change, from γλεφάρων, and could also be taken as genitive or dative, whichever the reader prefers.⁹

⁶ Ἄτρεκεία is a goddess in *Ol.* 10.13.

⁷ Even today, slow-motion replays show that, for all the abuse they take, referees and umpires are much more often right against the immediate impressions of the audience than the reverse. This should not be too surprising: they are specially trained, more experienced, and much closer to the action than the spectators.

⁸ In his *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden, 2010), Beekes lists the etymology as unknown, but also writes “The analysis as a compound of privative α- and an s-stem *τρέκος, in the sense ‘undistorted’, finds no further support”. Of course, for my purposes the question is not the true etymology of the word, only whether Pindar would have thought of it as a privative-alpha form.

⁹ One manuscript (B) corrupts a dual to a plural in *Ol.* 13.6 (κασίγνηταί τε for κασιγνήτα τε), to look no further.