IAN RUTHERFORD

PINDARUS ARMENICUS: PAEAN IX, 1–10 AS TRANSMITTED IN PHILO. DE PROV. 2.80 (97 AUCHER)


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A) Introduction

In part of the De Providentia which survives only in Armenian, Philo of Alexandria cites Pindar, Paean IX, 1–10. Philo does not cite poetry very much, but was perhaps more lavish in this respect in his dialogues.1 Paean IX, 1–10 is also transmitted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ De Vi Demosthenis (along with ll. 13–21), and the metrical scheme was illuminated by the recovery of other sections of the poem from POxy. 841, published in 1908 (though the papyrus contributes little else to our knowledge of lines 1–10). Although in general inaccurate, and inferior to the Greek text preserved by Dionysius, the Armenian translation is a superior witness in a few respects.2 Hence it remains an important source for reconstructing the poem, and deserving of close attention.

This translation was produced perhaps in the late 6th or the 7th century A.D.3 It survives in numerous manuscripts to be found today in the Matenadaran library in Yerevan in the Armenian S.S.R. (a particularly rich depository), and in the Mekhitarist library of St. Lazarus in Venice.4 Together with the De Animalibus it was edited with a Latin translation by J. B. Aucher (Mkrtic Augerean) in 1822.5 Path-breaking as Aucher’s scholarship in general was, his translation of the poem was deficient at various points (he seems not to have known the Greek text of the poem);6 and an improved German

* I undertook the research that led to this paper as background for my forthcoming book: Pindar’s Paeans. A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre. I owe thanks to Prof. R. W. Thomson, Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Pembroke College, Oxford, for corresponding with me; the Armenian translation presented here owes a great deal to his detailed comments; I would also wish to thank Prof. A. Terian for his comments.

1 For others, see B. Snell and H. Maehler, Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis (Leipzig, 1989) vol. 2, index. Other citations of poetry in De Providentia include Homer, Iliad 15.18ff. on p. 73; Iliad, 20.234–235 on p. 55; Od. 9.106–111 on p. 105; Hesiod, Th. 23 on p. 73, fragments of Aeschylus on p. 52 and p. 102; a citation ostensibly from Pindar on p. 120, once classed as fr. 281, now plausibly identified with Simonides, PMG 582 in Snell/Maehler (above), 224; the fragments of Aeschylus are discussed by M. Moreni, “Due Frammenti di Eschilo e la Traduzione Armena del De Providentia di Filone Giudeo”, RIL 113 (1979), 489–495. A brief discussion of the poetic citations can be found in M. Alexandre, “La culture profane chez Philon”, in Philon d’ Alexandre, Lyon 1966. Colloque. Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris, 1967), 109.

2 One crucial emendation generally accepted in the text (ἐξίπποκτον in line 5) survives in the Armenian (otherwise only in the superscription of one of the manuscripts of Dionysius). Also the word πτανων which appears in the Dionysian text but seems to be out of place does not appear in the Armenian. And Farnell’s emendation "θεός" in line 7, not generally accepted but too reasonable to be ignored, seems to have been inspired by the Armenian translation.


4 See Terian (above, n.3), 17ff.


6 Aucher’s translation of line 1 was radium Solis, tyro, multum intueri, ne nimis concedis . . .; he wanted his translation to be syntactically coherent, so he supplied the verbal idea “watch”, and has the student contemplating the sun, even though that is not implied in the Armenian. Aucher’s desire to improve the Armenian thus ended up taking us even further from the
translation, this time based on what was then known of the Greek text, was published by Neumann in his review of Aucher in 1829. It has not as far as I can see been translated since, although many observations and comments have been made by scholars on the translation.

The result of my investigation presented here does not have spectacular results for the text of Pindar. It seems worthwhile, however, as a contribution to our knowledge of the history of the text of the fragment (in principle, it seems important that all sources for the text are understood as fully as they can be). And it can also perhaps be justified as a useful supplement to what is already known about methods and failings of the Armenian translators when they encountered Greek poetry. More than that, I hope to show that the Armenian translator missed the point of the lines entirely, probably because he initially misconstrued one crucial phrase, and gave the lines a force which is almost the opposite of the force that they originally had.

B) Texts and Translations

Here is the Greek text of Pindar, Paean IX, 1–10, reconstructed largely on Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Dem. 7 (1.142ff. Us.–R.; MSS M, B, P as in Usener and Radermacher’s edition):

(Ray of the sun! What have you contrived, (2) observant mother of eyes, highest star, (3) in concealing yourself in broad daylight? (4) Why have you made helpless men’s strength and the path of wisdom, (5) by rushing down a dark highway? (6) Do you drive a newer course than before? (7) In the name of Zeus, swift driver of horses, (8–10) I beg you, turn the universal omen, lady, into some painless prosperity for Thebes . . .)

The reader should not receive the impression that the text of these lines is at all certain. A comparison with what comes through in the manuscripts of Dionysius is enough to convince one of that. And it must

original Greek. For line 7 Aucher has: Verum te in curru Jovis equo Deus (aut in Jovis equo Deus), the two alternative translations showing that he found the Armenian ambiguous; in the first translation, the word curru = chariot has been supplied, I am not sure from where Aucher’s translation is reproduced, though with the Greek text, in: Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philon d’Alexandrie. De providentia I et II* [= Les oeuvres de Philon d’Alexandrie, vol. 35] (Paris 1973).


be said that the generally accepted text gives a slightly stilted impression, particularly in the area of lines 3–5.

We turn now to Philo’s citation. De Providentia consists of two books. In the first, he sets out a theory of divine providence; in the second, he introduces as an interlocutor his apostate nephew Alexander,9 who presents the case against providence, to which Philo replies. The immediate context of this citation is that Alexander has cited eclipses of the sun and moon as evidence against the existence of divine providence (p. 93). Philo then replies, arguing that providential explanations can be provided for these and other apparent irregularities, and citing the Pindar fragment, apparently as an example of an unenlightened attitude towards an eclipse. I cite the Armenian text of the fragment, as it appears in Aucher’s edition, together with the preceding lines discussing the eclipse and introducing the citation, and the closing frame. (I set the Armenian text of the fragment out to correspond to the lines of the Greek text as generally reconstructed).10

isk z-pakasut’iwns lusoy, zi t’epet ew diçë ok’ oç nax araçyol qol gorc a(stowacaj), ew nax araçyol elelos z-het ett’eval amenayn iroq’. k’anz e or xostovanesçe ar k’ajalurut’iwn gorçakic linel. Kanzi z-paćarsn stugeal k’o, orovk’ aysok’ik katarin, mec ew awelı gorc gțes ar i zowart’ut’iwn ogwac z-anhasanenli k’ajalurut’iwn. Tesanen or’kanyo 3ndostmamb z-animastasirelin li arar, ayn or nowagawor mataç arariç elew k’ağn Pindaros, z-pakasut’wn lusoy aregakand teseal.

kanzi çaragayt, așe, aregakan, hambak bazmadet, mi tar zk’ez t’oyl marmakin aċac, ansh ger i veragoyn
tow3njean koçeçeval zor edir t’agawor zorutian. Zayn zor ew imastut’eăn çanaparih

5 xawar anhet eșeval.
varel imm mankagoyn k’an t’e yarajan Ayl zk’ez y’aramazday ji (astow)ac alacem anvnas
i barexarnut’iwn imm yelmunk’. Zor ėrgeçiç

10 ov pancali parkeşt amenahasarak arow3st
Ew ayspiseaçn gitut’iwn yaliq ekeryiwdiwut’ene çareç nsanak t’ap’ê . . .

(But eclipses, although one does not posit them to be the primary whole work of God, yet they certainly are a consequence of what was the primary (work of God). For one might admit them to be an accompaniment to encouragement. Because you inquire into the causes, why these [eclipses] are effected, you will find the incomprehensible encouragement a great and superior work for the vigilance (or joy) of souls. For do you see, he says, with how much disturbance the noble Pindar, who was the creator of melodic dactyls,11 fills the unphilosophical one as he observes the eclipse of the sun? Beam of the sun, much-knowing boy,12 do not allow yourself (2) to the eyes of the body, highest star (3) by day invoked, which you, the king, made power (?). (4) Of him (?) whom (?) even to the path of wisdom (5) darkness has become without a trace (6), to drive more childishly than before. (7) But you, by Zeus, horse god (8–9), I beg (that) some changes (are ) in harmless well-mixedness. Which I will sing (10) O glorious, modest and very common art. And knowledge of such things empties the sign of awe and demonic fear of evils.)

9 For Alexander, Philo’s apostate nephew, see Terian (above, n. 3), 25ff. On the work in general, P. Wendland, Philos Schrift über die Vorzehung, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der nacharistotelischen Philosophie (Berlin, 1892).

10 For the purposes of this paper I have not independently verified the text against Armenian manuscripts, even though recent editors of other Philonic and Pseudo Philonic translations (Lewy, Terian) have stressed that Aucher’s texts need revision.

11 A strange expression; the poem is mostly in dactyls, though one would not expect Philo to mention it. Perhaps the text originally had “lyric verses”, and “dactyls” represents a gloss. I am indebted to Prof. R. Thomson for the translation of this phrase.

12 As Prof. A. Terian suggested to me, the Armenian translator has taken πολυσχοπέ (≡ bazmadет) as a vocative addressed to the interlocutor in the dialogue (Alexander), and supplied the idea of “boy” (hambak). The Greek interrogative particle is ignored or garbled. Aucher translated as if the poem said: “novice, you look long at the sun . . . ” Does the idea of “boy” have its origin in a textual corruption in the Greek, e.g. τι might have been corrupted into ταῖ (so Hartung); or τι might have originally been ταί, which would more easily have led to ταῖ (Schoeder (1922), 428, and 37). τι(ε) seems possible also. Or was there a textual corruption in the Armenian, him = τι having been misunderstood as hambak, suggested to me by Prof. R. W. Thomson.)
The text is obscure, but this much is clear. Following Stoic doctrine, Philo distinguished primary works of god (προηγομένα ἐργα) and secondary consequences (ἐπιγενήματα). He places eclipses in the second category. If one understands this relationship, the proper reaction to eclipses is not to be terrified or to abandon hope in providence, but to look beyond the superficial phenomenon of the eclipse to the real nature of the universe. Pindar’s poem was cited to illustrate an unenlightened attitude to an eclipse (how could it not be), in which the eclipse is taken as a terrifying event. But knowledge teaches us not to be afraid of these things.

Philo thus cites Pindar as a negative exemplum in a pretty abrupt manner, just as a little later (Prov. 2.105) he castigates Homer’s account of the land of the Cyclopes (Od. 9.106–110) for representing the erroneous doctrine that in the lands of the impious agricultural crops grow spontaneously. And he articulates a theory of poetry at Prov. 2.75, where he concedes that poets have erred in some respects but maintains that they deserve praise for what they say accurately, and restates the Stoic doctrine that some apparent errors can be explained in terms of allegory (though not presumably the passages he criticises above). It is possible that Philo’s source was a discussion of eclipses from a scientific point of view in which various poets, including Pindar, were criticised for their unenlightened responses to them; also derivative on such a source may be Plutarch, De Facie in Orbe Lunae 17, 931e and Pliny, Natural History 2.54.

C) “Eyes of the Body”

The translator has as the poet appeal to the sunbeam: “do not allow yourself to the eyes of the body”, an expression at first sight bewildering both in its meaning and in its relation to the Greek. “Do not allow yourself” may, as Turyn suggested, represent a misanalysis of the preceeding word, which itself is uncertain in the Greek, but is probably some finite form of some tense of the verb μηδομαί (“contrive”). This is a poetical word, which we should not expect the translator to have known, especially if he was faced with an aorist, which might have defied the dictionary. The first two letters could easily have been misunderstood as a negative μη. After that, it is anyone’s guess. But perhaps ΜΗΣΕΑΙ (if that was the text) has been misunderstood as ΜΗ ΣΕΑ. Or perhaps -ΜΗ∆ΕΤΟ (if that was it) has been converted into ΜΗ ΔΟΤΕ (minor grammatical incongruities do not much matter at this level of the understanding of the language).

What “do not allow yourself” means in this context is another matter, but it may be that the translator was uncertain himself, and tried merely to find some resolution of the transmitted words that made sense.

“The eyes of the body” (line 2) seems at first sight to have no basis in the Greek either. On closer examination, the expression turns out to be a garbled misconstrual of . . . ΩΜΑΤΕΠΟΜΜΑΤΩΝ as

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14 In this sentence the word ηνασακ is particularly difficult; Wendland (page cited above) seems to acknowledge this. I thank Prof. R. W. Thomson for the translation that I have used.


16 H. Görgemanns, Untersuchungen zu Plutarchs Dialog De Facie in Orbe Lunae (Heidelberg, 1970), posits such a source, though he does not seem to be aware of the Philo passage.

17 As Prof. Thomson writes, a translation of the Armenian, taken by itself without reference to the original, does not make much sense.
The problem with the former phrase was not only that the idea was strange and unexpected, the ray of the sun being imagined as the parent of our eyes, as if there is a familiar relationship between the two; it was also that the dialect form MATER was particularly difficult to construe; in the same way, the text of Homer, Od. 17.485–487 is mistranslated in the Armenian translation of Philo, QG IV, 2:

\begin{quote}
καὶ τε θεοὶ ἔξειναι ἐνακότες ἀλοδαπάσι
παντοιοὶ τελεόντες ἐπιστροφᾶσι πόλης
ἀνθρώπων ἄβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἔφορῳτες
\end{quote}

The Armenian translator took the dialect form πόλης (accusative plural of πόλις) as a form of πόλις, construing it with the two nouns in the next line, and this change led him to misunderstand the two nouns in the next line as plurals.19

The Armenian translator of De Providentia, then, being baffled by the poetical expression ὁ μάτερ ὁμμάτων, in desperation thought of the phrase “eyes of the body” (usually SWIMATOΣ OβΜΑΤΩΝ), which occurs many times in Philo, and in at least one other text known to have been translated into Armenian, the so-called De Deo. Paleographically, ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ is acceptably close to ΩΜΑΤΕΡ, particularly when compared with other confusions that the translator makes.

Philo always uses the phrase “eyes of the body” as part of an implicit or explicit contrast with the metaphorical eyes of the mind, which can perceive intelligible reality. A good example is Leg. 2:

\begin{quote}
οὐδʼ ἡμαῖρις μὲν γὰρ τὰ ἐν φανερῷ καὶ ἐν χεραί καταλαμβάνεται, λογίσμῳ δὲ φθανεί καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀόρατα καὶ μέλλοντα, οὐ τὴν ὁμιλεστεράν ὁσιάν τῆς δὴ ὁμᾶτων σώματος ἀμαυρώσαν οί μὲν ἀκράτῳ καὶ πλησιονάσι ὑποσχεγγόνεις, οὐ δὲ τῷ μεγάστῳ τῶν κακῶν ἀμαθίᾳ.
\end{quote}

(With the eyes we perceive what is in the open and to hand, but reason reaches the unseen and the future, reason whose vision, which is sharper than that of the eyes of the body we darken, some of us confused with unmixed wine and over-consumption, others through stupidity, which is the greatest of evils.)

This fits the context of the Pindar citation quite well, because fear of the eclipse could well be interpreted as putting too much trust in the “eyes of the body”. A similar use of “eyes of the mind” (not here with the explicit complement of the “eyes of the body”) occurs earlier in De Providentia 2 (55–56 Aucher), where Philo appeals to men to turn away from worldly values, and consider the nature of god (this is from one of the sections of De Providentia for which Eusebius transmits the original Greek):20

\begin{quote}
eἰ μὲν τοῦ τὸ τῆς φύσες δῆμα τεῖνας βουληθεῖς περιμεθησίς θεοῦ πρόναιαν (διάνοιαν codd.), ὡς ἐνεστὶν ἀνθροπίνῳ λογίσμῳ, τρανιστέραν τὴν τοῦ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθοῦ λαβών φαντασίαν, γελάσῃ τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν, αὶ τέως ἐθανάτες.
\end{quote}

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18 Bötticher (above, n. 8) had already suggested ΣΩΜΑΤΙΚ(), but σώματος is closer palaeographically, as well as being in Philo’s idiom. Böttlicher also suggested that the ΣΩΜΑΤΙΚ() might derive from the reading ἐμὶς ἄπερ in Dionysius (i.e. this gives a neat explanation for the first letter), which is possible, though it would be inconsistent with the explanation for “do not allow” given above.


20 Praep. ev. VIII 14.9. In the Armenian: Zi et'e baçeal [içe — ew z-ogwoçn aç ± zomans, kamesçis tesanel z-a(stowaca)y mitsin, orpes goy hnar mardkayın xorx3rdovk’, hastatagoyn ew čşmarit zoyn or ar čşmari’iw marwory e ınkaleal z-erewwomun, câl arasçes zmen orpês zayn or zamaçarm. As Aucher points out, the translator mistakes τεῖνας for τιμᾶς (> zomans); [içe = subjunctive “if he is” also seems to be erroneous.
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(If you extend the eye of the soul, and want to consider the foreknowledge of god, in so far as this is possible for human reason, you will receive the image of goodness that looks to truth, and you will laugh at the aspects of our world that you marvelled at before.)

The symbol of the “intellectual vision” is sustained through Philo’s speech (57 and 61 Aucher).

What makes the parallel even more suggestive is that Philo regularly associates the “eyes of the body” with the idea of light. At Mut. 4, the eyes of the body need light, whereas those of the soul have their own source of illumination:

καὶ γὰρ ἄλλως ήσα μὲν οἱ σῶματος ὀφθαλμοί θεωροῦσι, συνεργῶν φωτὶ χρώμενοι καταλαμβάνουσιν, ὅ διαφέρει τοῦ θ’ ὅρωμένου καὶ τοῦ ὅρωτος, ὅσα δὲ ἡ φωσὶ, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐαυτὴ ἀνεύ τινος ἄλλου συμπράξεως: αὐτὰ γὰρ ἀνατοίς ἐστὶ φέγγος τὰ νοούμενα.

(What the eyes of the body see they perceive using the light as a cooperator, which is different from the object of vision and the viewer; but what the soul sees, it sees by itself without the cooperation of anything else; for the things perceived are their own light.)

We find a similar contrast in a passage of De Deo, which survives only in Armenian translation (p. 616 Aucher).21 So at Virt. 11–12 wisdom is a sharper instrument of vision than the eyes, which does not need “counterfeit light” (νοψάκι φωτός) and is described as a star and an imitation of heavens (ἄστήρ οὖσα αὐτὴ καὶ σχεδόν τών ἐπουρανίων ἀπεικόνισμα καὶ μίμημα). That idea is reflected earlier on in De Providentia 2 (61 Aucher), where Philo says that we cannot see intellectual light because we are dazzled by the brightness of the external world.22

In yet other passages, the numenal world is described as a source of light itself, and in fact as a star, as at Opif. 31:

. . . καὶ ἐστιν ὑπερουράνιος ἄστήρ, πηγὴ τῶν αἰθήτων ἄστέρων, ἦν οὖκ ἀν ἀντὶ σκοποῦ καλέσειν ἀν τίς παναύγειαν . . .

(. . . it is a star above the heavens, a source of perceptible stars, which one would not err in describing as “all-brightness” . . .)

This ultimate valorisation of light comes in the context of an exegesis of Genesis 1.3 (“let there be light”), but it also reflects a general trend in Philo’s thought.23

These images occur pervasively in Philo’s thought. One of the most memorable examples is the account of Abraham’s conversion to philosophy (Abr. 70).

. . . διαίζει τῷ τῆς φύσις ὁμα μα καὶ καθαρῶν αὐγήν ἀντὶ σκότους βαθέως βλέπειν ἀρξάμενος ἥκολοῦσθε τῷ φέγγει καὶ κατείδει, ὅ μὴ πρότερον ἐθέδαστο, τοῦ κόσμου τινὰ ἴροιον καὶ κυβερνῆται ἐφεστώτα καὶ σωτρίσως εὑθύνεται τὸ ὀίκειον ἔργον . . .

(. . . opening the soul’s eye as though after profound sleep, and beginning to see the pure beam instead of the deep darkness, he followed the ray indiscerned what he had not beheld before, a chrioteer and pilot presiding over the the world . . .)

21 See Siegert (above, n. 19), line 83, Armenian text on p. 18, hypothetical Greek translation on p. 28; cf. Q.G. 4.2 (Loeb, Philo Suppl. 1 (ed. R. Marcus [Cambridge, Mass., 1953], p. 271)). k’anzi zayn or taraçn ew sp’ir p’anç p’um marmnoy yanjneal e aç aç. isk 3zyaytnin y-an-tesanelisn zbnut’iwn orov stelcani ew jewanay niwt’n, mtaç aragates aç ok’n, or zcanrut’iwn tanjuteann baçin (For he set the extended and sown flame next to the eye of the body, while nature visible in unseen things, by which matter is formed and arranged, he put next to the sharp eyes of thought which find a way through what is dense).


23 On Philo’s thought, see E. R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaicus (Oxford, 1962). Other attestations of σῶματος ὀφθαλμοί are Opif. 31.1, Plant. 21.3, Cong. 135.2, Mut. 3.1, 4.1, Abr. 76.1, Mos. 1.166.6, Decal. 60.2, Spec. 1.49.5, Legar. 109.5. The phrase “eyes of the mind” (as opposed to those of the body) is discussed by Terian (above, n. 3), 140, commenting Rat. Anim. 25. Add to these references to τῆς φύσις ὁμα at Plato, Rep. 7.533d, Iambl., Protr. 21k8. There is precedent in the Old Testament conceit of the “eyes of the Lord”: Job, 34.21; Pss. 11.4; 33.18; Prov. 15.3; A. Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago, 1949), 215.
And this is echoed in the autobiographical statement in the *Special Laws* (3.6), where he thanks God that he is not sucked down into the depths:

... ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τῆς φυσῆς ὀφθαλμοὺς, οὓς ἀπογνώσει τινὸς χρηστῆς ἐλπίδος ώθην ἢδε πεπηρ𝑤ίσθαι, δοῦλω καὶ φωτὶ τῷ σοφίᾳ εὐαναγάφεια μὴ πάντα τῶν ὄντω τῷ σκότῳ παραδοθεῖς.

(... but I can actually open the soul’s eyes, which in my despair of comforting hope I thought had now lost their sight, and am irradiated by the light of wisdom, and am not given over to lifelong darkness.)

If the translator knew the works of Philo (as he surely did), the phrase “eyes of the body” might have suggested some such opposition between eyes of body and eyes of soul, between eyes of body and higher source of light, and so on. What we do not know is whether he thought of the the sun-beam as representing the light that “eyes of the body” use to see, or “intelligible light”.

D) An Eclipse Eclipsed

In line 2, κλεπτόμενον is mistranslated, with the translator apparently thinking of a form of the verb καλέω (as Bötticher pointed out).24 What this means is that the idea of the eclipse explicit in the Pindar text has been eliminated. Significantly, all later references to the eclipse are eliminated also.

The same conclusion emerges from line 3, though the translation is a mess. We have a relative pronoun,25 then edir (“you put”), t’agavor (“king”), and zorutiwn (“power”).26 The translation “(a star) which you, the king, made power” seems least offensive. *Prima facie*, t’agavor corresponds to ἀμάχανον, with zorutiwn translating ἵσχυν. Perhaps then the Armenian translator took “ἀμάχανον” in the sense of “invincible” (whereas its real meaning in this context is “helpless”), again jettisoning the idea of the eclipse. However, in this case the truth may be more complex. Bötticher argued in 1852 that the reading ἀγμάχανον in Dionysius (B) might conceal an original Pindaric ἀγέμαθα or ἀγεμώνον, which the Armenian would be an accurate translation of.27 Those possibilities are ruled out by the metre, and a word meaning “leader” does not work well in the context. But it is possible that ἀγμάχανον was misunderstood as a word meaning “leader” (ἀγέμαθα ?); such an error could have been made by the translator himself, or in the course of Greek transmission.28

We find the same loss of the idea of the eclipse in the following lines concerning the “path of wisdom”. The Armenian separates this off as a separate clause, whereas in the Greek it is parallel to the previous clause.29 More significantly, the Armenian translation shows an inversion of the syntax and meaning of the Greek: instead of the path of wisdom being thrown into darkness, darkness has disappeared from wisdom. Anhet (an “without” [like ἀν- in Greek] + het “trace”) seems to represent a

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24 Bötticher (above, n. 8).

25 The Armenian has a relative pronoun. Is a relative impossible in the Greek, e.g. ὃ γ’ (or τό γ’), which, if accusative, the sense might be “... which you have made a helpless strength for men and a helpless path of strength”); or if nominative, the sense might be: “you which have made...” (the sun-light momentarily being pictured as a neuter)?

26 There is at least one respect in which the Armenian is a better witness to the poem here than the MSS of Dionysius, which all include the gloss πτανον (“winged”), but is not reflected in the Armenian (of course, it is possible that it was included, but not translated because the translator could not understand the dialect).

27 Bötticher (above, n. 8).

28 Prof. Thomson independently suggested to me that the Greek text might have had a form of ἤγεμων or ἀναξ.

29 The sentence of the translation starts with a demonstrative pronoun and relative, corresponding apparently to ἀνάφασι. The Armenian for “man” is not dissimilar in sound to what comes through; the dative plural is aranç, which could have been subjected to corruption in Armenian transmission. See R. W. Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the Works Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite* (Louvain, 1987), 4 (Prof. Thomson independently suggested this to me). But perhaps what we have is rather a misanalysis of ἀνάφασι as ἀνάφασι, then as ἀνάφασι, which comes through as zayr zor, and is corrupted into zapar zar.
part by part translation of ἀτραπον, though the sense does not quite work (nor with the reading τροπον in the MSS).30

A final word is necessary about line 6: the Greek text is a worried question addressed to the sun: do you drive a newer path, the premise being that what is new is bad. In the Armenian the sun is said “to drive (behave?) in a more childlike manner”. Varel may be an infinitive of purpose.31 For the Armenian translator, childlike activity on behalf of the sun was not necessarily reprehensible or threatening; after all, the sun is for him a “hambak”, and it would be old behaviour rather than young behaviour that would suggest deviance.

Taking these points together, it is clear that the Armenian translator plays down the eclipse which is the whole focus and motivation of the poem in Pindar. The only place where the eclipse seems to come through is in line 9, with the word yelmunk’, a plural noun meaning “changes”, which seems to represent a misanalysis of τραπολογο as a non-existent plural noun τραπολογο (perhaps the model was τροπολογο which appears in the MSS of Dionysius; Turyn postulates the corruption τροπαι, but that is not really necessary).32 But even the word “changes” does not prove that the translator realised that the poem was about an eclipse.

Thus, there has been a shift from the sun as a object eclipsed to the sun as a subject of encomium. This point is summed up in the very last word of the last line. The whole line has been understood as a vocative phrase, whereas in Greek πάγκουνον τέρας is the object of the verb in the previous line.33 The word “τέρας” has been misunderstood as “art”; it is unclear whether the translator believed that τέχνη was a rough translation of τέρας (“portent” - “amazing object” - “masterpiece” - “art”), or whether he was unfamiliar with the word, and in desperation thought of τέχνη, which at least starts with the same two letters. In any case, the change from “portent” to “art” exactly reflects the change from solar eclipse to encomium of the sun.34

E) The Philonic Frame

All of this seems to indicate that for the Armenian translator the sun might correspond to intelligible reality, which does not undergo eclipse. That is, of the two ideas about light which I suggested earlier the notion of “eyes of the body” might have suggested to him, that idea of light as a symbol of intelligible reality is the likelier of the two.

30 The translation ἐδαλ seems to presuppose that the last word is ἐσομένα, perhaps a misunderstanding of the rare ἐσομένα (cf. ἐσομένα: “putting on”) transmitted in the MSS or ἐσομένα (“fastening”: conjectured and likely).

31 A pretty accurate translation. The infinitive varel corresponds to the reading of P, generally rejected by modern editors in favour of the indicative form preserved in M (it makes sense, if we construe it as dependent on ἐδρακ). The most economical explanation would seem to be that the reading δεῖ is an old corruption which has been corrected in some MSS of Dionysius, but survives elsewhere. imn seems to translate indefinite τι directly, but it is not clear that it makes much sense in Armenian.

32 Θῆβαις seems to have been ignored or misunderstood, understandably, if Thebes was unknown in Armenia. Perhaps the translator in desperation read -αίσω ("will sing") (first in Bötticher (above, n. 8)); the preceding letters OΩΗΙ could perhaps have suggested OCHN, which could well be translated xor = “which”. An objection is that this hypothesis seems to require that the omega be interpreted twice, both as the termination and as the exclamatory particle, but that need not be decisive. It is less likely that “I will sing” represents a line from the part of the poem that is lost (ll. 11ff.).

33 Amenahasarak corresponds nicely to πάγκουνον, but πότινα has been translated with two adjectives (unless we have here a trace of the Greek from the following lines). Has a gloss of πότινα found its way into the Greek text?

34 Later on (p. 110–111 Aucher; the Greek text here is preserved by Eusebius VIII 14,50), Philo referred back to Pindar’s account of the eclipse: ...αι δε μηριμμα εστιν και μετεξανια τελευτης και παλαια φθοραι και Πινδαρος γελατο γενομενης ιταλεικως, δια των προσθεν ειρημενων (ew aysok'ik zekuçmuk' en kam t'agawora vaxc ± ani, kam k'ak'ac apakanu-li'an, xor ew Pindars arakaw asac, eloy pakasut'can lusoy, i jem yarajagoy anaca). This reference seems to refer to the later part of the fragment not cited earlier. In any case, there is no sign that the translator connected this with the preceding.
I find support for this hypothesis in a passage from slightly earlier in *De Providentia* 2 (94–95 Aucher). Near the start of his discussion of celestial bodies, he raises the question (Alexander had not asked it himself) why the constellation of the Plough is double, when the sun is single, and supplies the answer, “there is no way that God’s divine plan could have made it better”. Then he goes on:

*oroy mardkayin xerhurds, zoren bazmaki ar aregaknayin čaragayt’iwk’n, doyzn nsoyl e, taraceloy čaragayt’ačn al-otačal*

(Before which human counsel, like a candle in comparison with the sun’s rays [čaragayt’iwk’-n], is a small light, which is obscured by the diffused rays [čaragaytíç-n]).

This is exactly the use of the image of the sun, and for that matter the word čaragayt, which I have suggested underlies the translator’s analysis of *Paean* IX. It is not unlike the passages about “eyes of the body” which I mentioned earlier. I would suggest that the memory of this image was still fresh in his mind when two pages later he came to translate the fragment.35

If we put the whole sentence together, it seems as if the translator understood Pindar as telling the light of intelligible reality not to reveal itself to mortal eyes; what other sense “do not allow yourself” could have I cannot see. Now, this is not a felicitous sentiment. Pindar could never have uttered it, nor could any rational Greek. But the translator was struggling to make sense out of a text that baffled him; he knew that there was a well established gulf between the numenal world accessible to the eyes of the soul and the physical world which we perceive with the eyes of the body; and “do not allow yourself to the eyes of the body”, strange request as it might seem, occurred to him as an interpretation of the letters he saw which reflected this dichotomy.36

How is this misinterpretation reconciled with the context in *De Providentia*? Philo has just been talking about how various celestial irregularities seem to point against the hypothesis of the existence of providence. Eclipses are an example, but although they are not a primary act of god, they are the consequence of a primary act, and if you look to their cause, you will find a great work, the great constancy of which can exhilarate the mind. Pindar, on the other hand, terrified the unphilosophical person because he (Pindar) was not a philosopher, and did not see beyond the surface appearance. Knowledge frees us from such illusions as those represented in the poem.

The translator, I would suggest, saw it differently: for him, the reason why Pindar terrified the unphilosophical man was perhaps not that he was ignorant of philosophy, but that he himself was a philosopher and had access to higher knowledge. I wonder if he is not also interpreting the lines partly on the basis of the (difficult) preceding sentence describing how knowledge of the hidden principles of the universe can exhilarate the mind, of which attitude Philo, I think, introduced the Pindar fragment as exemplifying exactly the opposite. But the translator sees this very exhilaration expressed in Pindar’s lines. Similarly, in the concluding frame, the translator presumably understands the “knowledge” as the doctrine represented by the poem, as if Pindar was a philosopher, whereas for Philo it was the fear and superstition that Pindar’s lines represented.

To conclude: of the numerous inaccuracies in the translation, most were probably made in the course of translation from Greek into Armenian, although the Greek model itself may have been far from perfect, and we cannot exclude the possibility that Greek scribes were responsible for many of the errors. What I hope to have suggested is that in large part the mistranslation of the fragment was not a random process, but reflects a general and consistent misinterpretation, in which it was taken not as an

35 There is a similar example on p. 69 Aucher (Eus. VIII 14.35), where the power of God to investigate justice is compared to the force of the sun: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἀνθρώπως δικάζει καὶ θεός διστά τὰ μὲν φανερὰ ἡμεῖς ἐρευνῶμεν, δὲ ὅ τι μυῖα μυῖα ἑαυτοῦ ἐνεχομένως ἐνθάπτεται καθάπερ ἐν ἀνάρτω καθαραὶ διάκρισιν αἰγάξει, ἀπαιτῶς ὡς μὲν τὰ περὶ αὐτόν, οἷς ἐγκατελάμβανεν, γεμάτα δὲ περιεχομένα τὰ βουλήματα καὶ διαγνώσιμα εὕθες τὰ τε παράσιμα καὶ δόκημα. The crucial phrase comes out in Armenian as: *ibr y-arewnaw yagtnal z-mits-n lusawore.*

36 Earlier scholars conjectured that some version of the Greek text might have included a sequence of letters that was interpreted as “tiredness” or “weakness” of eyes (see Schroeder, 428 for suggestions), but now that we are reasonably sure what the opening was, there seems no room for this.
alarmed response to an eclipse (which is how Pindar meant it, and how Philo understood it), but rather
as an encomium of the sun as a symbol of the principles of order and rationality that lie beyond mortal
vision, an interpretation in the spirit of Philo’s general philosophical and theological doctrines, but at
odds with Pindar’s meaning.

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