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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, *Paeon IX, 1–10*. Philo does not cite poetry very much, but was perhaps more lavish in this respect in his dialogues.¹ *Paeon 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 (ἐπίσκοτον in line 5) survives in the Armenian (otherwise only in the superscription of one of the manuscripts of Dionysius). Also the word πτανόν 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.

³ See H. Levy, *The Pseudo Philonic De Jona Part I: The Armenian Text with a Critical Introduction* [= *Studies and Documents VII*] (London, 1936), 9–16; A. Terian, *Philonis Alexandrini De Animalibus. Armenian Text with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* [= *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, n. 1*] (Ann Arbor, 1981), 7–8 for the dating of phases of the process of Armenian translation; Philonic works belong to the earliest phase. See also L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*³ (Oxford, 1991), 58 and 256. Other studies include: R. Sgarbi, *Analisi linguistico-filologica dell' interpretazione armena della trattazione greca filoniana intorno all' altare* = *MIL* 1989, 39.3; id., *Problemi linguistici e di critica del testo nel De Vita Contemplativa di Filone alla luce della versione armena*, *MIL* 1992, 40. 1; G. Bolognesi, "Note sul testo armena del De Providentia di Filone", in *Armeniaca: Mélanges d'études Arméniennes, publiées à l'occasion du 250e anniversaire de l'entrée des Pères Mekhitaristes dans l'île de Saint-Lazare (1717–1967)* (Venice, 1969), 190–200.

⁴ See Terian (above, n.3), 17ff.

⁵ Jo. Bapt. Aucher, *Philonis Iudaei sermones tres hactenus inediti: I. et II. de providentia et III. de animalibus; ex armena versione antiquissima ab originali textu graeco ad verbum stricte exequuta nunc primum in Latinum fideliter translata* (Venice, 1822), 1–121.

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 1829.⁷ 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.⁸

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):

Ἄκτις ἀελίου, τί πολύσκοπ' ἐμήσαο,
 ὦ μᾶτερ ὀμμάτων, ἄστρον ὑπέρτατον
 ἐν ἀμέρα κλεπτόμενον; <τί δ'> ἔθηκας ἀμάχανον
 ἰσχύν τ' ἀνδράσι καὶ σοφίας ὁδόν,
 5 ἐπίσκοτον ἀτραπὸν ἐσσυμένα;
 ἐλαύνεις τι νεώτερον ἢ πάρος;
 ἀλλά σε πρὸς Διός, ἵπποσόα θοάς,
 ἱκετεύω, ἀπήμονα
 εἰς ὄλιβον τινὰ τράποιο Θήβαις,
 10 ὦ πότνια, πάγκοινων τέρας

1 ἐμήσαο Bergk: ἐμήσ MBP: μήσεαι Blass θοῦν Bergk: θεῶ MBP || 2 μᾶτερ Boissonade: μ' ἄτερ M, μ' ἄτερ B, μ' ἄτερ P: δμάτειρ' Hermann || 3 <τί δ'> Diehl, <μάλ'> Wilamowitz <τύ γ'> Grenfell and Hunt; ἀγμάχανον B || 4 ἰσχύν B τ' Blass: κτανὸν MBP || 5 ἐπίσκοτον M p.c., Arm: ἐπίσκοπον M a.c., -πτον B, ππεν P | ἄτροπον ἐσσαμένα MBP: corr. J. G. Schneider || 6 ἐλαύνεις M: εἰς M: εἰν P, Arm. || 7 ἵπποσόα Bergk, θοάς Blass: ἵπποσθαθός MBP θεός Farnell (cf. Arm) || 9 τράποιο Sylburg: τροπ- MBP

(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).

⁷ C. F. Neumann, *Jahrbücher der wissenschaftlichen Kritik* 102, Dec. 1829, 808–816 (translation on pp. 811–812).

⁸ P. Bötticher, "Zu Pindaros", *Zeitschrift für Altertumswissenschaft* 1853, 184; O. Schroeder, *Pindari carmina* (Leipzig, 1900; Appendix, 1923); A. Turyn, *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis* (Cracow, 1948).

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 diçē ok' oç nax arajoy gol gorc a(stowaca)y, ew nax arajoy etelos z-het ert'eal amenayn irok'. k'anzi e or xostovanesçe ar k'ajalerut'iwn gorcakiç linel. Kanzi z-patçarsn stugeal k'o, orovk' aysok'ik katarin, mec ew aweli gorc gtçes ar i zowart'ut'iwn ogwaç z-anhasaneli k'ajalerut'iwnn.

Tesanen ork'anwoy 3ndostmamb z-animastasirelin li arar, ayn or nowagawor matanç arariçn elew k'ajn Pindaros, z-pakasut'wn lusoy aregakand tesimal.

kanzi çaragayt, ašē, aregakan, hambak bazmadēt, mi tar zk'ez t'oyl

marmnakin ačac, astl- ger i veragoyñ

tow3ñjean koçeçeal zor edir t'agawor zorutiwn.

Zaynr zor ew imastut'ean çanaparhi

5 xawar anhet eleal.

varel imm mankagoyn k'an t'e yarajn

Ayl zk'ez yAramazday ji (astow)ac

alacem anvnas

i barexarnut'iwn imm yelmunk'. Zor ergeçiç

10 ov pancali parkešt amenahasarak arow3st

Ew ayspiseaçn gitut'iwn yahe ew yerkiwdiwut'ene çareçn nšanak t'ap'e . . .

(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 Vorsehung, 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 πολυσκόπε (= bazmadēt) 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. τί might have been corrupted into παῖ (so Hartung); or τί might have originally been τᾶ, which would more easily have led to παῖ (Schroeder (1922), 428, and 37). ὕ(ε) seems possible also. Or was there a textual corruption in the Armenian, *him* = τί 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 (προηγούμενα ἔργα) and secondary consequences (ἐπιγεννήματα). He places eclipses in the second category.¹³ 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.¹⁴

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).¹⁵ 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* 2.54.¹⁶

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 preceding word, which itself is uncertain in the Greek, but is probably some finite form of some tense of the verb μήδομαι ("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 μή. After that, it is anyone's guess. But perhaps ΜΗΞΕΑΙ (if that was the text) has been misunderstood as ΜΗ Σ' ΕΑ. Or perhaps -ΜΗΔΕΤΟ (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.¹⁷

"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 . . . ΩΜΑΤΕΡΟΜΜΑΤΩΝ as

¹³ Chrysippus at Aulus Gellius, *N. A.* 7.1,7 = *SVF* II.1170; J. B. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* [= *Philosophia Antiqua* XVII] (Leiden, 1970), 157; Wendland (above, n. 9), 71, n. 5. A similar distinction between primary acts of god and secondary consequences is made later on at 2.111 Aucher (where the Greek survives). There is a brief discussion of Philo's views of providence in J.-P. Martin, *Providentia deorum: recherches sur certains aspects religieux du pouvoir impérial romain* (Rome : École française de Rome, 1982) [= Collection de l'École française de Rome 61], 180–182.

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

¹⁵ There is a convenient English translation in *Philo of Alexandria. The Contemplative Life, The Giants and Selections, tr. with Introduction by D. Winston, Preface by John Dillon* (London, 1981), 183–184.

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.

ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣΩΜΜΑΤΩΝ.¹⁸ 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 ΜΑΤΕΡ 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:

καί τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν εὐκότες ἄλλοδαποῖσι
παντοῖοι τελέθοντες ἐπιστρῶφῶσι πόλης
ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες

The Armenian translator took the dialect form πόλης (accusative plural of πόλις) as a form of πολὺς, 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 ὠ μάτερ ὀμμάτων, in desperation thought of the phrase “eyes of the body” (usually σώματος ὀφθαλμοί, once σώματος ὀμματα), 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:

ὀφθαλμοῖς μὲν γὰρ τὰ ἐν φανερῷ καὶ ἐν χερσὶ καταλαμβάνεται, λογισμὸς δὲ φθάνει καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀόρατα καὶ μέλλοντα, οὗ τὴν ὄψιν ὀξυωπεστέραν οὖσαν τῆς δι’ ὀμμάτων σώματος ἀμαυροῦμεν οἱ μὲν ἀκράτῳ καὶ πλησιοναῖς ὑποσυγχέοντες, οἱ δὲ τῷ μεγίστῳ τῶν κακῶν ἀμαθίᾳ.

(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

εἰ μὲν τοι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα τείνας βουλευθείης περιαθρῆσαι θεοῦ πρόνοιαν (διάνοιαν codd.), ὡς ἔνεστιν ἀνθρωπίνῳ λογισμῷ, τρανωτέραν τὴν τοῦ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθοῦ λαβῶν φαντασίαν, γέλαση τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν, ἃ τέως ἐθαύμαζες.

¹⁸ Bötticher (above, n. 8) had already suggested σωματικ(), but σώματος is closer palaeographically, as well as being in Philo’s idiom. Bötticher also suggested that the σωματικ() might derive from the reading ἐμῆς θεῶ μ’ ἄτερ 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.

¹⁹ So F. Siegert, *Philon von Alexandrien Über die Gottesbezeichnung “wohltätig verzehrendes Feuer” (De Deo). Rückübersetzung des Fragments aus dem Armenischen, deutsche Übersetzung und Kommentar*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 46 (Tübingen, 1988), 9. See also G. Bolognesi, “Postille sulla tradizione armena delle Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin di Filone”, *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 55 (1970), 52–57.

²⁰ Praep. ev. VIII 14,9. In the Armenian: Zi et’ e bačēal [içē] ew z-ogwočn ačs zomans, kamesčis tesanel z-a(stowaca)y mitsin, orpēs goy hnar mardkayin xorh3rdovk’, hastatagoyñ ew čšmarit zoyn or ar čšmartut’iwn barwoy e 3nkaleal z-erewowmn, calr arasčes zmern orpēs zayn or zamačarn. As Aucher points out, the translator mistakes τείνας for τινας (> zomans); içē = subjunctive “if he is” also seems to be erroneous.

(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 ὅσα μὲν οἱ σώματος ὀφθαλμοὶ θεωροῦσι, συνεργῶ φωτὶ χρώμενοι καταλαμβάνουσιν, ὃ διαφέρει τοῦ θ’ ὀρωμένου καὶ τοῦ ὀρώοντος, ὅσα δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ, αὐτὴ δι’ ἑαυτῆς ἄνευ τίνος ἄλλου συμπράξεως· αὐτὰ γὰρ ἑαυτοῖς 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” (νόθου φωτός) and is described as a star and an imitation of heavens (ἀστήρ οἷσα αὐτὴ καὶ σχεδόν τι τῶν 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 ἔστιν ὑπερουράνιος ἀστήρ, πηγὴ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀστέρων, ἣν οὐκ ἂν ἀπὸ σκοποῦ καλέσειεν ἄν τις 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).

... διοίξας τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα καὶ καθαρὰν αὐγὴν ἀντὶ σκότους βαθέος βλέπειν ἀρξάμενος ἠκολούθησε τῷ φέγγει καὶ κατείδεν, ὃ μὴ πρότερον ἐθεάσατο, τοῦ κόσμου τινὰ ἡμίοχον καὶ κυβερνήτην ἐφειστώτα καὶ σωτηρίως εὐθύνοντα τὸ οἰκεῖον 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 and discerned what he had not perceived before, a chieftain and pilot presiding over 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’ançumn marmnoy yanjneal e açaç. isk 3zyaytnin y-an-tesanelisn zbnut’iwnn orov stelcani ew jewanay niwt’n, mtaç aragates açok’n, or zcanrut’iwn t’anjruteann 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).

²² Eus. VIII 14,19 ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἔξω περιουρασθέντες λαμπρότητος, in Armenian: *Ard arjm artak’noys çaragayt’iwk’ lusaworealk’ paycarut’eamb.*

²³ On Philo’s thought, see E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*² (Oxford, 1962). Other attestations of σώματος 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, *Legat.* 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 τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα 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*² (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 ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμούς, οὓς ἀπογνώσει τινὸς χρηστῆς ἐλπίδος ὡήθην ἤδη πεπηρῶσθαι, διοίγω καὶ φωτὶ τῷ σοφίας ἐναυγάζομαι μὴ πάντα τὸν βίον 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'agawor* (“king”), and *zorutiwn* (“power”).²⁶ The translation “(a star) which you, the king, made power” seems least offensive. *Prima facie*, *t'agawor* corresponds to ἀμάχανον, with *zorutiwn* translating ἰσχύν. 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 ἀγέτιδα or ἀγεμόναν, 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” (ἀγέμαχον ?); 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 ἀ(ν)- in Greek] + *het* “trace”) seems to represent a

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 πτανόν (“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 ἡγεμών or ἄναξ.

²⁹ The sentence of the translation starts with a demonstrative pronoun and relative, corresponding apparently to ἀνδράσι. The Armenian for “man” is not dissimilar in sound to what comes through; the dative plural is *aranc*, 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), x (Prof. Thomson independently suggested this to me). But perhaps what we have is rather a misanalysis of ἀνδράσι as ἀνδρασι, then as ἀνδρα-ῶν which comes through as *zayr zor*, and is corrupted into *zaynr zor*.

part by part translation of ἀ-τραπον, 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 τραποιοι as a non-existent plural noun τραποιοι- (perhaps the model was τροποιοι- which appears in the MSS of Dionysius; Turyn postulates the corruption τροπαί, 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 πάγκοινων 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 *eteal* seems to presuppose that the last word is ἐσομένα, perhaps a misunderstanding of the rare ἐσσαμένα (cf. ἐσσαμένα: “putting on”) transmitted in the MSS) or ἐσσυμένα (“hastening”: 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 ἔθηκας). The most economical explanation would seem to be that the reading τειν is a 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 Θήβαις seems to have been ignored or misunderstood, understandably, if Thebes was unknown in Armenia. Perhaps the translator in desperation read -αἶσω (“ will sing”) (first in Bötticher (above, n. 8)); the preceding letters ΟΘΗ could perhaps have suggested ΟΘΗΝ, which could well be translated *zor* = “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 πάγκοινων, but πότνια has been translated with two adjectives (unless we have here a trace of the Greek from the following lines). Has a gloss of πότνια 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: . . . αἱ δὲ μηνύματά εἰσιν ἢ βασιλέων τελευτῆς ἢ πόλεων φθορᾶς· ὃ καὶ Πίνδαρος ἠνίξατο γενομένης ἐκλείψεως, διὰ τῶν πρόσθεν εἰρημένων (ew aysok’ik zekuçmuk’ en kam t’agaworaç vaxçani, kam k’alak’ac apakanuti’an. zor ew Pindaros arakaw asaç, eleloy pakasut’ean lusoy, i jern yaraçagoyñ asaçaç). 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 nšoyl ē, taraceloy čaragaytičn ał-otačaal

(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 [čaragaytič-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 *Paeon* 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 οὐχ ὁμοίως ἄνθρωπος δικάζει καὶ θεός διότι τὰ μὲν φανερά ἡμεῖς ἐρευνῶμεν, ὁ δὲ ἄχρι μυχῶν ψυχῆς εἰσδυόμενος ἀψοφητὶ καθάπερ ἐν ἡλίῳ. λαμπρὰν διάνοιαν ἀυγάζει, ἀπαμπίσχω μὲν τὰ περιὰπτα, οἷς ἐγκατείληται, γυμνὰ δὲ περιαθρῶν τὰ βουλήματα καὶ διαγινώσκων εὐθύς τὰ τε παράσημα καὶ δόκιμα. The crucial phrase comes out in Armenian as: *ibr y-arewow yaytneal 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.