

PINDAR'S RAVENS (*OLYMP.* 2. 87)

A problem in the text of Pindar, the interpretation of γαρύετον, *O.* 2. 87, seems to be vanishing, swept away by a remarkable consensus of recent criticism, a consensus the more remarkable in that it accepts a false solution to a genuine difficulty. This article has two purposes, the first and more important of which is to argue that the currently prevailing answer is manifestly wrong, the second to offer evidence in support of a different approach.

Simply read γαρύετων, recent critics maintain, and all problems disappear. Since -ο- and -ω- were not yet distinguished in the orthography of Pindar's day, γαρύετων is as correct as the unanimous γαρύετον of the MSS, *testimonia*, and scholia. By this simple change, the argument proceeds, the troublesome dual of the MSS is purged and with it the 'historicist hare', as one critic has recently called it,¹ which less enlightened Pindarists chased for so long. If there is no dual, there is no need to speculate as to the identity of the 'pair' likened to κόρακες and contrasted with the 'divine bird of Zeus', the man who is wise φῦλα. We need no longer suppose that the μαθόντες are Simonides and Bacchylides – the traditional answer – or any other specific rivals.

Unfortunately for this view, there is no evidence to justify taking γαρύετων as a plural, which is of course precisely what critics have been doing. It is – if anything – a third dual imperative (an extremely rare form), and every bit as much a dual as the γαρύετον of the MSS.

Mr Stoneman is not alone in his ready dismissal of the 'historicist hare'. Here is the view of Professor Lloyd-Jones: '... the lightest possible alteration converts the dual to a plural imperative, so that the number two vanishes'.² A year before, Professor C. A. P. Ruck had chided the scholiasts for 'reading out of Pindar's ΓΑΡΥΕΤΟΝ the dual... rather than the plural'.³ Bowra had declared that γαρύετων 'would be the plural of the imperative'.⁴ The belief is widespread and persistent; those who wish a full conspectus of earlier views on the matter may consult the massive compilation made by Dr J. van Leeuwen in 1964.⁵

Not all critics and editors have endorsed the change from the traditional reading. While it has been in the successive Teubner editions since Schröder adopted it in 1900, neither Turyn nor Bowra accepted it.⁶ But among those who have argued for γαρύετων, only one has expressed any doubt that it is a plural, and that one is Theodor Bergk, who first proposed it. Indeed Bergk expressed no doubt about its being a dual.

In all of extant Greek literature, there are no acceptable examples of a thematic third plural imperative in -των. The form ἀνεστακόντων is found for the third plural imperative once, in Archimedes (*De Conoid.* 20), where it is reasonable to change to the normal -ντων. Archimedes uses the third plural imperative in -ντων several times, and the likelihood that he actually used this otherwise unexampled form in this one

¹ Richard Stoneman, *CQ* n.s. 26 (1976), 190.

² *JHS* 93 (1973), 127.

³ *Hermes* 100 (1972), 167.

⁴ *Greek Lyric Poetry*² (Oxford, 1961), p. 361. Bowra did not, however, accept the reading in his *OCT* Pindar.

⁵ *Pindarus' Tweede Olympische Ode* (Assen, 1964). The discussion of the passage occupies Deel 1, pp. 232–52.

⁶ By the time of his *Pindar* (Oxford, 1970) Bowra had begun to have doubts about the form, expressed on p. 122.

place is so exceedingly slight that we can, I hope, dismiss the passage as evidence.⁷ There is no sign of such a plural form elsewhere in Greek literature or in the grammarians of Greek. Neither Kühner-Blass nor Schwyzler knows of it, though both give careful discussions of the dual and plural imperative forms.⁸

There are a few athematic third plural imperatives which do not conform to the usual -ντων (or, later, -τωσαν): ἔστων is plural at *Odyssey* 1. 273, and the grammars give examples of ἔστων from Plato, Xenophon, and inscriptions; ἔτων occurs in Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 32. Smyth's *Greek Grammar* lists ἔστων as third dual and plural of οἶδα. But these athematic forms in no way justify positing -των as a thematic third plural imperative.

When Bergk, in *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*⁴, proposed in his *apparatus* (without adopting in his text) the imperative γαρνέτων, he was under no illusion that he was changing the dual to a plural; he just liked the imperative here. He called it an 'imperativus acrimoniae', and, recognizing that the third dual imperative is an exceedingly rare form, justified his conjecture by noting that it occurs at *Iliad* 8. 109, τοῦτο μὲν θεράποντε κομείτων. While κομείτων has become the modern vulgate, there was, as Bergk comments, some doubt about the form in antiquity. It may have been a conjecture by Aristarchus; Zenodotus' reading was κομείτην. A comment of Bergk's on κομείτων is noteworthy: 'ineptit gramm Cram. κομείτων ex κομείτωσαν decurtatum esse dictitans'. Bergk was clear in his mind that the imperative -των is not a plural.⁹ The notion of a plural first appears in the apparatus of Schröder's edition, 1900: 'emendavit locum Bergk⁴ nulla fere mutatione γαρνέτων coniciens, ut esset imperativus acrimoniae (cf. notissimum οἱ δ' οὖν γελώντων Soph Ai 961) numero plurali'. The final two words are Schröder's interpretation of Bergk's intention and are in no way justified by what Bergk says. Schröder adds no evidence, apart from the arbitrary declaration that κομείτων, *Iliad* 8. 109, is a plural, on the strength of the statement in Cramer's *Anecdota Oxoniensia* which Bergk had already justifiably dismissed with contempt.¹⁰ Schröder's interpretation of the conjecture gained the approval of Wilamowitz¹¹ and its popularity has not flagged since. Whether accepting it or not, critics have regularly paid their respects to this 'plural' of Bergk's.¹²

⁷ In addition to the general improbability of the form ἀνεστακότων, it is surely unthinkable that the thematic vowel -ο- rather than -ε- would precede -τ-. On the third plural imperative in Archimedes see H. L. Ahrens, *De Graecae Linguae Dialectis* 2. 296.

⁸ Kühner-Blass 2. 49-51, Schwyzler 1. 801-2. Schwyzler specifically rules out such a form: 'φερέτων u. ä. fehlen'. So also C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago, 1955), p. 114. After acknowledging 3rd pl. ἔστων 'in Ionic only', Buck adds: 'A corresponding thematic φερέτων is unknown'.

⁹ Bergk's mention of the comment by a grammarian in Cramer's *Anecdota Graeca* refers to an entry in the 'Ομήρου ἐπιμερισμοί, Cramer 1, p. 398, in which κομείτων is declared a plural, short for κομείτωσαν, on the grounds that οὐδέποτε δυϊκῶ τρίτου προσώπου ἐχρήσατο Ὅμηρος. Since the grammarian then proceeds to explain that ἔστων, *Iliad* 1. 338, is short for ἔστωσαν, Bergk's unflattering description is justified. J. van Leeuwen, *Enchiridion Dictionis Epicae*² (Leyden, 1918), p. 234, accepts this explanation, but Bergk is manifestly right in dismissing it and most modern grammars implicitly agree with him. Schröder, in his *apparatus*, mentions a letter from J. Wackernagel supporting the interpretation of γαρνέτων as a plural, comparing the Lesbian termination -ντων. So far as I know Wackernagel did not pursue this thought beyond his letter to Schröder. Some nineteenth-century grammarians decided, with very little evidence, that dual forms could be used as plurals (so K. W. Krüger, *Griechische Sprachlehre* 2. 63. 3 A2) and some Pindarists followed their lead. Thus Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder*, p. 166, argues, with a reference to Krüger, that here Pindar uses the dual form for metre only and with a plural sense. This is a mere evasion of the issue.

¹⁰ See preceding note for discussion.

¹¹ *Sitzungsberichte der Preuss. Akad.* 1901, p. 1302.

¹² There have been exceptions. Jebb, in a footnote on p. 17 of his edition of Bacchylides (Cambridge, 1905), has an admirably direct and authoritative note dismissing Schröder's

It is time to abandon this misguided approach. The dual remains, and few will want to return to such earlier conjectures as *γαρνέμεν*, the most influential alternative to the dual before Bergk. Are we left with the traditional answer, that Pindar is referring to Simonides and Bacchylides? At least the burden is on those who deny a historical reference in the passage to find an acceptable justification of the dual, or a persuasive emendation.

If we cannot remove the dual, we can, I think, go farther toward understanding its presence here than commentators generally have, by observing that the concept of duality may be inherent in the 'vehicle' of the comparison, the ravens themselves.¹³ In Greek fable and folklore, *κόραξ*, *κορώνη*, and *κολοιός* appear frequently, and Van Leeuwen has shown the relevance of some of this traditional material to the interpretation of our passage. But Van Leeuwen does not call attention to one persistent tradition of ancient folklore that concerns, very specifically, *κόρακες*: they come in pairs.¹⁴

The entry on *κόραξ* in D'Arcy W. Thompson's *Glossary of Greek Birds* (2nd ed. London, 1936) lists a number of these stories. One, recorded in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus* (844b 5–9), reports that in the Carian city of Pedasa 'there are always two ravens about the temple of Zeus, and no other raven approaches the place, and one of the two has a white throat'. Elsewhere in the same work (842b 7–10) we read that 'in Crannon, Thessaly, they say that there are only two ravens in the city. When these have produced young, they apparently remove themselves from the place and leave behind a like number of their offspring'. Antigonus, *Historia Mirabilium*¹⁵ (Westermann, *Scriptores Rerum Mirabilium Graeci* 64) gives the same tradition about Crannon, naming Theopompus as his source, and adding (perhaps not from Theopompus) that on this account the emblem of the city bears, among other devices, two ravens sketched upon it. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 10. 15, has the same story, preceded by the general statement that, because ravens drive away their young, 'parvis in vicis non plus bina coniugia sunt'. As for Crannon, 'singula perpetuo; genitores suboli loco cedunt'. Aelian (7. 18) tells a like story concerning Koptos, in Egypt: 'Those who live around the place called Koptos say that only two ravens are seen'.

Furthermore, Strabo records three more traditions about two ravens, which are not mentioned by Thompson: that there was a certain harbour in the land of the Celts, called the 'harbour of two ravens', where two white ravens were to be seen (4. 4. 6); that the story ('told by Pindar' – i.e. fr. 54) of the two eagles that, released by Zeus, met at Delphi, was said by some to be about two ravens rather than eagles (9. 3. 6); and that on one occasion Heracles was guided by two ravens (17. 1. 43).

None of these traditions is recorded for Pindar's time, but they are enough to indicate that there was later in the Greco-Roman world widespread lore concerning 'two ravens' and there is nothing to rule it out for an earlier period. It is notable that this type of story is very specifically the property of ravens and is never attached to the crow (*κορώνη*) in spite of the enormous wealth of myth, fable, and tradition concerning the crow.

interpretation; Farnell, *Critical Commentary* (London, 1932), p. 22, warns against it; and Van Leeuwen, on p. 244 of the book cited in note 5, rules it out.

¹³ The following comments expand on suggestions made in Van Leeuwen's discussion, op. cit., especially pp. 243 and 251–2. I am indebted to Mrs Icky Hohendahl and Professor Gordon Messing for help in reading Dutch. I am grateful also to the anonymous reader for *CQ* for valuable criticism.

¹⁴ The story of the conjugal fidelity of *κορώναι* (Aelian 3. 8) which is cited by Van Leeuwen, is essentially different, since it emphasizes that a widowed *κορώνη* stays single.

Duality may well, then, have been naturally associated with ravens by Pindar and his audience, and the need to find a pair in the 'tenor' of the simile is the less pressing. There seems little doubt that Pindar had specific rivals in mind, but the dual probably springs less from *their* duality than from that of the ravens of the simile.

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