



BRILL

Κακὸν κακῶς σε in Demosthenes, *De corona* 267

Verse or Just a Curse?

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Received January 2021 | Accepted June 2021

Abstract

The words κακὸν κακῶς σε at D. 18.267 are printed in quotation marks in many modern editions of the speech. This sequence scans as the beginning of an iambic trimeter and is connected by καί with two quotations from tragedy. This article questions the idea that the sequence should be interpreted as the start of an interrupted quotation by showing that (1) these words are part of a standard, vernacular Greek curse formula, (2) initial καί may be interpreted as a discourse-level connector rather than as a syntactic coordinator, and (3) word order in the curse may be accounted for without invoking metrical effects. In particular, it is suggested that Demosthenes' wording of the curse should be interpreted as a parody of the plea to the judges at Aeschin. 2.180.

Keywords

oratory – rhythm – oral delivery – curses – parody

1 *Status quaestionis*

In his rebuttal of Aeschines' personal attacks at the trial against Ctesiphon, Demosthenes contrasts his own background and career with those of his rival through a sweeping series of antitheses, which culminates with the request for the testimonies of his liturgies to be read by the clerk (18.265-267). Before the reading begins, he claims that Aeschines would have nothing better to respond

with than his own atrocious tragic performances. He then quotes some of the lines that Aeschines used to butcher, and wraps it up with a curse:

φέρει δὴ καὶ τὰς τῶν λητουργιῶν μαρτυρίας ὧν λελητούργηκα ὑμῖν ἀναγνώ.
παρ' ἃς παρανάνωθι καὶ σύ μοι τὰς ῥήσεις ἃς ἐλυμαίνου,
“ἦκω νεκρῶν κευθμῶνα καὶ σκότου πύλας”
καὶ
“κακαγγελεῖν μὲν ἴσθι μὴ θέλοντά με”,
καὶ “κακὸν κακῶς σε” μάλιστα μὲν οἱ θεοί, ἔπειθα οὗτοι πάντες ἀπολέσειαν,
πονηρὸν ὄντα καὶ πολίτην καὶ τριταγωνιστήν.¹

Well then, I wish to read you also the testimonies of the liturgies that I have performed. As a comparison, you, too, read me the tragic speeches that you used to defile,

“I come [having left] the den of the dead and the gates of gloom”
and

“Know that I bring bad news unwillingly”,
and, bad man, may badly first of all the gods, then all these men destroy you, worthless that you are both as a citizen and as a third actor.

The lines that Demosthenes puts in Aeschines' mouth are metrically complete tragic trimeters. The first one is the opening of Euripides' *Hecuba*.² The second quotation is an unidentified fragment from a messenger speech (adesp. fr. 122 *TrGF* = Nauck²). The curse that follows starts with the words κακὸν κακῶς σε, which scan as the beginning of an iambic trimeter, and is connected to the quotations by a simple καί, much in the same way as the quotations are connected to one another. Unsurprisingly, a number of critics and editors have inferred that the sequence κακὸν κακῶς σε is the beginning of a third quotation.³

The metrical character of this sequence was already noticed by Wolf in the sixteenth century.⁴ According to Wolf, the sequence is part of a quotation ending after κακῶς. Its abrupt interruption would be reminiscent of comic *antilabē*, which he exemplifies by referring to an Aristophanic example (*Pl.* 180). In the eighteenth century, Markland commented that the sequence is the beginning of a tragic line and that its interruption is a figure *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*—which, we

1 D. 18.267. Translation by the author.

2 Interestingly, the quotation is not syntactically complete, since the accusatives are governed by the participle λιπῶν in the following line.

3 Cf. Voemel 1862, 316 and Wankel 1976, 1167.

4 It is noteworthy that Hermogenes comments on Demosthenes' use of quotations in this passage but makes no mention of the curse (*Id.* 338.6-10 Rabe).

may add, would also direct us to the realm of the comedic.⁵ Reiske, in turn, conjectures that Demosthenes scrambled two trimeters, which he reconstructs as κακὸν κακῶς σε μάλιστα μὲν πάντες θεοὶ and (catalectic) ἔπειτα δ' οὔτοι πάντες ἀπολέσειαν.⁶

The special status of this 'quasi-quotation' started being indicated in print in the early nineteenth century. Wunderlich prints a dash after κακῶς in the first edition of his text of *De corona*⁷ and Harless prints κακὸν κακῶς σε as a separate line.⁸ The dash, however, disappears from the second edition of Wunderlich's text (revised by Dissen)⁹ and no marking of this sequence as a fragment of a quotation is there in Bekker's, Dissen's and Dindorf's texts.¹⁰ Conversely, Schäfer prints a dash after σε (without referring to Harless) and comments "initium esse trimetri quis dubitabit?"¹¹

A few decades later, Meineke triangulated the curse with a sentence from a prose fragment of some *Aegyptiaca* of Lynceus¹² (κακὸν κακῶς σε, ἔφη ὦ Αἰγύπτιε, ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί, *FGrH* 613 F 4 = Ath. 4.33 Kaibel, 15ob-c) and restored a tragic trimeter that would serve as a model for both.¹³ Meineke comments that his reconstruction (which reads κακὸν κακῶς σε γ' ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί) looks like a line of Euripides and that Dissen failed to identify it. This line was picked up by Nauck and included in the *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* as an *adespoton* (fr. 96 Nauck¹ = 123 Nauck²). Voemel takes note of Nauck's acceptance of Meineke's reconstruction in his commentary on *De corona* and prints κακὸν κακῶς σε between quotation marks. He adds that the restored tragic line was also the model of Aristophanes' invective against Cleon (*Eq.* 2-3) and that

5 See Marini 2007, 236. Among ancient rhetorical sources cf. in particular Hermog. *Meth.* 34. Both Wolf and Markland *apud* Reiske 1774, vol. 1, 312.

6 Reiske 1774, vol. 2, 534-535.

7 Wunderlich 1810 (*non vidi*), according to Schäfer 1824, 348.

8 Harless 1814.

9 Wunderlich 1820, 44.

10 Bekker 1823; Dissen 1837; Dindorf 1846.

11 Schäfer 1824, 348.

12 The only known Lynceus is a comic poet from Samos who was the brother of Duris and a pupil of Theophrastus (Sud. s.v. Λυγχεύς) and flourished a generation after Demosthenes. Athenaeus is clearly citing a prose work. Jacoby posited that the attribution in the text of Athenaeus was corrupted and assigned the fragment to Lyceas of Naucratis (the author of some prose *Aegyptiaca* mentioned elsewhere by Athenaeus as well as Pliny the Younger). However, the attribution of this passage to Lynceus may in fact be reliable (*contra* Renehan 1976, 115). Lynceus' production was not limited to comedy but would include para-historical banquet-related prose literature (mostly in epistolary form), and the title *Aegyptiaca* may refer either to an otherwise unknown work of his or to a section of a different work. See Gambetti 2016 for a full discussion and Dalby 2000 for a survey of the fragments of Lynceus.

13 Meineke 1846, 7.

Aristophanes, Lynceus, and Demosthenes alter it *more parodorum*.¹⁴ Blass, too, prints quotation marks but, unlike Voemel, he refers to Meineke, not Nauck, and objects that the line restored from Athenaeus sounds comic rather than tragic (Ar. *Eq.* 2-3 is only mentioned as a comparandum). According to Blass, Demosthenes is not quoting a third tragic line, but is only pretending to do so.¹⁵

Forms of typographical highlighting of κακὸν κακῶς σε have been replicated in many major editions of *De corona* since Blass,¹⁶ but the nature of, and the potential source for, the curse have continued to be debated. The discovery of Menander's *Dyscolus*, with at least three curses reading almost exactly like the one in the fragment of Lynceus,¹⁷ seemed to support Blass' intuition that the line restored by Meineke was a comic one.¹⁸ However, the idea that a tragic or comic line may be reconstructed from Athenaeus and Demosthenes at all was openly challenged by Renehan,¹⁹ who remarks that the collocation consisting of the adjective κακός and the adverb κακῶς is common in both tragedy and comedy,²⁰ but it also appears elsewhere in Demosthenes and should only be "recognized for what it is—vigorous, colloquial Attic Greek and nothing more". The frequency of this combination would make it "idle to posit a common 'source' for Demosthenes, Lynceus and Aristophanes", since "κακὸν κακῶς σ' ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί is a normal Attic curse-formula". On these grounds, Renehan concludes that "Demosthenes has not cited a specific verse" but still "does achieve a 'tragic' tone in this sentence, not because the words he has chosen are uniquely tragic, or a quotation, but because they express an imprecation". A similar conclusion was reached by Wankel. In his commentary on the passage, he accepts Meineke's restoration of a trimeter but, like Blass, considers it a comic one, which he presents as a reason not to believe that Demosthenes referred to it at all. Wankel agrees with Blass that Demosthenes is just pretending to start quoting another iambic line. On these grounds, he does not print quotation marks around the expression κακὸν κακῶς σε²¹ but would not

14 Voemel 1862, 316. Cf. also Goodwin 1904, 165, who misconstrues Meineke's restored trimeter as attributed to Lynceus and a potential direct source for Demosthenes. As Renehan 1976, 115 shows, this is impossible.

15 Blass 1890, 159.

16 So for instance Butcher 1903 (OCT), Fuhr 1914 (Teubner), and even Vince and Vince 1926 (Loeb), whose text is based on Dindorf's third edition (Teubner, 1866).

17 The passages read: κακὸν δέ σε | [κακῶς ἅπ]αντες ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί (138-139); ἀλλὰ σ', ὦ Κνήμων, κακὸν | κακῶς ἅπαντες ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί (220-221); and κακὸν δέ | κακῶς (σ') ἅπαντες ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί (926-927).

18 So Mette in Snell's *Supplementum* to Nauck (Snell 1964, 25).

19 Renehan 1976, 114-116.

20 After Pearson 1917, 17 and followed by Beroutsos 2005, 81.

21 Cf. Wankel 1976, 97.

consider it wrong to retain them. Like Renehan, Wankel recognizes that this expression is frequent in both drama and prose, and that this is the very reason that allowed Demosthenes to play with the expectations of the audience.²²

Meineke's line does not survive into Kannicht and Snell's edition of the tragic *Adespota*.²³ Nevertheless, the beginning of the curse at *De corona* 267 is still commonly printed as the opening of a quotation²⁴ and continues to be analysed as a snippet of verse by commentators. Yunis, for instance, explains that *κακὸν κακῶς σε* evokes drama and that "we are meant to think that the verse had οἱ θεοί alone as the subject, but D[emosthenes] breaks away from verse and into prose because he makes the audience (οὔτοι πάντες) an additional subject".²⁵ It is not entirely clear whether Yunis means that οἱ θεοί is a predictable subject of a sentence starting with *κακὸν κακῶς σε* or that the iambic rhythm is sustained all the way to οἱ θεοί—in which case, the beginning of the curse would be reminiscent of a comic rather than a tragic line.²⁶ Pontani agrees in turn that *κακὸν κακῶς σε* has a comic flavour even though it need not be interpreted as a direct quotation. If anything, he argues, Demosthenes may be alluding to Ar. *Eq.* 2-3 and, at any rate, "Demosthenes would follow in the poetic tone of the passage while aptly switching from the 'high' to the 'low'" by alluding to a "comic pattern of malediction".²⁷

The iambic rhythm, the structure of the sentence, and the assonances with lines of comedy (especially with Menander) are certainly intriguing, but one is left wondering whether this is enough for us to infer that Demosthenes delivered this sequence as the beginning of a tragic or comic trimeter—and print it as a broken quotation of sorts—and not simply as an imprecation. In order to address this question, we shall (a) examine more closely the uses of the polyp-ton in curses in order to assess if the overlap with lines of comedy is a matter of intertextuality or merely of phraseology, (b) try and pinpoint the function of *καί* in connection with oral delivery, and (c) discuss whether the word order of the curse is primarily motivated by seeking rhythmic effects or other explanations are preferable.

22 Wankel 1976, 1167-1168.

23 Kannicht and Snell 1981, 51. In their view, the curse in the fragment of Lynceus would only amount to an affectation of the sound of tragedy.

24 E.g. by Zürcher 1983; Usher 1993; Natalicchio 2000; Yunis 2001; and Dilts 2002.

25 Yunis 2001, 260.

26 *κακὸν κακῶς σε* μάλιστα μὲν οἱ θεοί scans like two and a half metra of an iambic trimeter, with the second metron consisting entirely of anapaests (~~~~~), a type that is far more common in comedy than in tragedy (e.g. at Ar. *Nu.* 50; cf. West 1982, 82 and 88).

27 Pontani 2009, 402-404.

2 The ‘Curse Formula’ κακὸς κακῶς

Combinations of forms of the adjective κακός in the same sentence are attested as early as Homer and their functions fall entirely into line with those identified by West for polyptoton across Indo-European poetic traditions.²⁸ At *Il.* 16.111, for instance, κακὸν κακῶ ἐστήρικτο (‘evil heaped upon evil’) is an expression of accumulation and continuity (cf. also 19.290),²⁹ while at *Od.* 17.217 κακὸς κακὸν ἡγηλάζει (‘a wretched man leads a wretched man’) expresses reciprocity. Similarly, in a passage from the Hymn to Apollo, two forms of κακός express a reciprocal relation.³⁰

The rhetorical effects of polyptoton, along with the semantics of κακός, make combinations of forms of this adjective particularly suited to gnomic expressions. As a matter of fact, polyptota in which κακός is repeated occur in Theognis of all archaic poets³¹ (1.185; 1.613) as well as in Aesopic (30 and 91 Perry) and Menandrian proverbs (325 Jaekel = 318 Liapis). The text of Theognis also displays the earliest literary attestation of a polyptoton containing the adverb κακῶς (εἰκὸς τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρα κακῶς τὰ δίκαια νομίζειν, 1.279). This expression is a maxim, not a curse, and the juxtaposition of a form of κακός to the adverb is simply one of the possible polyptotic combinations involving this adjectival stem. Overall, these are relatively common in classical Attic literature. They seem especially at home in drama but also appear in philosophical texts, possibly due to their suitability to generalizing, abstract gnomic expressions.³²

28 West 2007, 111–116.

29 Cf. Coray 2016, 134 and Brügger 2018, 64.

30 The polyptoton extends to the following sentence into a wide-ranging repetition: αὐτίκα τόνδε λαβοῦσα βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη | δῶκεν ἔπειτα φέρουσα κακῶ κακόν, ἥ δ’ ὑπέδεκτο | ὅς κακά πόλλ’ ἔρδεσκε κατὰ κλυτὰ φύλ’ ἀνθρώπων (*h.Ap.* 353–355). Such extended polyptota also appear in comedy, cf. e.g. Eub. 115.1–12 Kassel–Austin.

31 Cf. also Hippon. fr. 126.3 Degani, with (restored) (κακῇ) κακόν. This polyptoton would also be at home in iambs, as it would serve both as a parodic reminder of epic poetry (cf. also Hegem. fr. 1.9 Br.) and as an element of invective.

32 The following is the list of the occurrences of the polyptoton (except in curses) up to the age of Demosthenes (by genre). Tragedy: A. fr. 349 TrGF, *Pers.* 253, 531, and 1041 (three forms of κακός), *Th.* 1049 (with κακῶς); S. *Aj.* 362, *OC* 595 and 1238, *OT* 1330 and 1365 (see also Finglass 2018, 381), *Ph.* 1266; E. *Hec.* 588, 690, and 903–904, *HF* 727–728 (with κακῶς), *Hipp.* 649 (dub.) and 874, *Or.* 764, *Tr.* 621, fr. 166, 296, and 495.44 TrGF. Satyr play: E. *Cyc.* 683. Comedy: Ar. *Eq.* 189 and 190, *Lys.* 162, *Th.* 168 (all with κακῶς) and 879 (dub.). Parody: Hegem. fr. 1.9 Br. Prose: Pl. *Ap.* 25d, *Euthd.* 284d (with κακῶς), *Prt.* 344e and 345a (both with κακῶς); Speus. fr. 81a (= Arist. *EN* 1103b10, with κακῶς) and 81b Tarán; Arist. *EE* 1238a33 and 1239b22, *EN* 1105a12 (with κακῶς) and 1173a7; D. 19.227 (repeated κακῶς, restored by Morel/Lambin).

The earliest extant examples of the use of *κακὸς κακῶς* in curse formulae are literary and date to the fifth century. As we shall see in detail, most of them come from Attic comedy and tragedy; in prose, the expression occurs at the earliest in Demosthenes.³³ Interestingly, the oldest epigraphic attestations of *κακὸς κακῶς* in curses are neither metrical nor Attic. The formula is first attested on a fourth-century lead tablet from Pella (*κακὰ κακῶς Θετίμα ἀπόληται*, *SEG* 43 434.7) and in two oaths from Itanos (Crete) dating to the third century (*ἐξόλλυ]σθαι δὲ κακῶς κακούς*, *IC* III iv 7.5-6 and *IC* III iv 8.47-48 = Dittenberger *Syll.*³ 526). As far as the dialect is concerned, the Pella tablet can broadly be described as West Greek. Voutiras, its first editor, has noted that “from the point of view of syntax and style the text of our tablet does not significantly deviate from contemporary Attic usage”.³⁴ This need not imply that the tablet is a sample of an early form of koine,³⁵ with Attic influences extending to phraseology, but it may simply indicate that the curse formula itself was common throughout the Greek world.³⁶ The attestations of this expression in the oaths from Itanos may be interpreted in a similar way. Their dialect is a form of Doric with similar traits to Rhodian,³⁷ which include the closed long vowel /o:/ in *κακούς* (as opposed to *κακῶς* or an unattested Cret. short acc.pl. *κακός*) as the outcome of the sequence /ons/. This may be explained as an areal feature, but it must also be noted that on the east coast of Crete koine forms spread earlier than in the rest of the island, and thematic accusative plurals in -ους may be construed as Hellenistic rather than dialectal forms.³⁸ The idea that the formula *κακῶς κακούς* could be a Hellenistic Atticism, however, is undermined by the fact that this expression does not occur in Attic epigraphic curses.³⁹

Let us now focus on some formal features in order to refine our definition of the curse formula as such. In these early epigraphic attestations, *κακὸς κακῶς* is combined with a compound of *ἄλλυμι*, and the relative order of the adverb and the adjective is not fixed (the adjective comes first in the Pella tablet but it follows the adverb in the Itanos oaths). In all texts, the adjective and the adverb follow each other directly. If we classify the literary attestations of the

33 Cf. LSJ s.v. *κακός*, D.2; Blaydes 1892, 173-174; Gygli-Wiss 1966, 80-82; Renehan 1976, 114-116.

34 Voutiras 1998, 25.

35 Pace Voutiras 1998, 32.

36 Cf. O’Neil 2006, 197.

37 Cf. Dittenberger 1915, 768.

38 See Bubeník 1989, 89-90.

39 The adverb *κακῶς* only appears in Attic epigraphic curses in a number of inscriptions dating to the second century AD in the formula *κακῶς τε ἀπολέσθαι αὐτοὺς* (or *αὐτὸν*) *καὶ γένος* (e.g. *IG* II² 13188-13190; 13192; 13194-13201; 13204-13206).

formula up to the age of Demosthenes according to these features, we may discern a variety of patterns. In the table below, occurrences of κακὸς κακῶς in curses are grouped by genre (column 1), by the relative order of the adjective and the adverb when following each other directly (columns 2 and 3) and when other elements intervene (columns 4 and 5), as well as by the verb in the curse (column 6).

(1) genre	(2) adj adv	(3) adv adj	(4) adj ... adv	(5) adv ... adj	(6) verb
tragedy	E. <i>Med.</i> 805, 1386	E. <i>Tr.</i> 1055-1066			θνήσκω (and compounds)
	E. <i>Tr.</i> 446				θάπτω
				S. <i>Ph.</i> 1369	ἄλλυμι (and compounds)
	S. <i>Aj.</i> 1177				πίπτω (and compounds)
	S. <i>Aj.</i> 1391				φθείρω
satyr play				E. <i>Cyc.</i> 268	ἄλλυμι (and compounds)
comedy	Ar. <i>Pl.</i> 65, 418, Eub. fr. 115.1-2 Kassel-Austin, Men. <i>Dys.</i> 220-221, 442, 600, <i>Epit.</i> 424, Syc. fr. 11.5 ^a		Men. <i>Dys.</i> 138-139, 926-927	Ar. <i>Eq.</i> 2-3	ἄλλυμι (and compounds)
	Aristopho fr. 6.1 Kassel-Austin				γίγνομαι
prose	D. 7.45, 18.267				ἄλλυμι (and compounds)

a One may add Men. *Asp.* 238, where editors commonly restore the curse.

These data are too scanty for statistical analysis, but we may still note that

- (1) the most common forms of the curse are those with a compound of ὄλλυμι as the verb and with the adjective directly preceding the adverb (10 out of 22 occurrences);
- (2) outside tragedy, virtually only compounds of ὄλλυμι are attested (with only one exception);
- (3) Demosthenes only uses one pattern (adjective immediately preceding the adverb, with ἀπόλλυμι as the verb), which matches both the fragment of Lynceus and a number of examples from Hellenistic and Imperial prose.⁴⁰

Even though such a low number of occurrences does not allow us to draw solid quantitative conclusions, these observations at least raise the suspicion that tragedy allows more variety in the configuration of these curses than comedy and direct speech in prose. If comedy and prose are to be taken as more representative of ordinary usage than tragedy,⁴¹ one gets the impression that the most basic forms of the curse are those that feature a compound of ὄλλυμι and the adjective and adverb in the immediate adjacency of one another, as the epigraphic evidence suggests.⁴² The use of other verbs in such expressions would be a departure from the original form of the curse and would first surface in drama.⁴³

This impression is reinforced by the observation that when the curse is alluded to (but not uttered as such) by both Demosthenes⁴⁴ and Aristophanes,⁴⁵ the adjective is immediately followed by the adverb, as if this very sequence were the hallmark of the curse formula itself. In this connection, one may also mention a pun at Ar. *Ach.* 253, where the imprecation is turned into its opposite (καλῇ καλῶς)⁴⁶ but the adjective still immediately precedes the adverb. In tragedy, we find a potential counterexample in a fragment from the *Oedipus* of Euripides, in a line that also seems to play with the language of the curse

40 E.g. Plb. 7.3.2; *EvMatt.* 21.41; Alciph. 2.2.1; Luc. *JTr.* 38 and *Pseudol.* 24, but not Plu. *Cic.* 26, where the adjective and the adverb are separated by a particle and the verb in an imprecation ascribed to Cicero.

41 Cf. e.g. Slings 1992.

42 Literary attestations would suggest that the adjective normally precedes the adverb unless some elements intervene, in which case the reverse order seems more frequent (cf. already Elmsley 1818, 202), but the epigraphic data do not confirm this.

43 Cf. Gygli-Wiss 1966, 82.

44 The passages read: εἴτα θαυμάζεις εἰ κακὸς κακῶς ἀπολεῖ (D. 21.204); ἐκείνος μὲν οὕτως, ὥσπερ ἄξιος ἦν, κακὸς κακῶς ἀπώλετο (D. 32.6, on which cf. Gygli-Wiss 1966, 81).

45 Εὐπολις μὲν τὸν Μαρικᾶν πρῶτιστον παρείλκυσεν | ἐκστρέψας τοὺς ἡμετέρους Ἰππέας κακὸς κακῶς (Ar. *Nu.* 553-554); εἰ | τοὺς συκοφάντας ἐξολεῖ κακοὺς κακῶς (Ar. *Pl.* 878-879).

46 Cf. Gygli-Wiss 1966, 82.

formula (κακὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα χρὴ κακῶς πάσχειν αἰί, fr. 554a.4 *TrGF*). This line is a gnomic expression that somewhat paraphrases the curse or, rather, makes its rationale explicit.⁴⁷ This expression does more than simply allude to the curse formula; in fact, it may be read as a ‘missing link’ of sorts between the two contexts in which this polyptoton appears in archaic and classical Greek—it is a gnomic saying echoing (and implying) a performative utterance (an imprecation).⁴⁸ In this light, it is not surprising that the line would not be a verbatim reprise of a relatively fixed curse formula. By contrast, other tragic materials seem to support the idea that the formula is characterized by the contiguity of the adjective and the adverb. In particular, this pattern can be seen in lines of Sophocles that are likely to have been interpolated (*OT* 248, with ξυναρπάζω, and *Aj.* 839, with φθείρω).⁴⁹ If the curse is an imitation of ordinary speech and, as Finglass puts it, “could have come naturally to the mind of an interpolator”,⁵⁰ it is remarkable that in both cases the curse apparently came to mind (and was recorded) as characterized by the immediate adjacency of the adjective and the adverb, while other verbs are substituted for (a compound of) ὄλλυμι.

To sum up, Renehan is right in describing κακὸς κακῶς as nothing more than a vigorous curse formula—albeit not an exclusively Attic one—that is “appropriate wherever a curse is appropriate—and that includes prose, comedy, tragedy”.⁵¹ More specifically, the formula is at home in texts related to *hypokrisis*—oratorical or dramatic delivery⁵²—rather than in narrative or argumentative discourse. The sequence κακὸς κακῶς (especially in this order) scans iambic with most of the inflected forms of the adjective that could possibly fit in the syntax of a curse.⁵³ Such an intrinsic rhythmicity, which would facilitate

47 I.e. one may curse a bad man with a bad end because bad men must suffer. The fragment itself would be uttered by a character pondering on a hypothetical situation; see Carrara 2018, esp. at 130–132.

48 For a gnomic use of the polyptoton in tragedy cf. for instance πᾶσι γὰρ κοινὸν τόδε, | ἰδίαι θ’ ἐκάστω καὶ πόλει, τὸν μὲν κακὸν | κακὸν τι πάσχειν, τὸν δὲ χρηστὸν εὐτυχεῖν (*E. Hec.* 902–904).

49 See Finglass 2006, 260–263.

50 Finglass 2018, 253.

51 Renehan 1976, 115.

52 As described by Arist. *Rh.* 1403b22–35.

53 The only configurations in which the sequence would not scan iambic are κακέ κακῶς and κακά κακῶς. The first configuration would only be possible if the curse were completed by a participle or a verbal adjective in the vocative (as in e.g. ὦ κακῶς φρονῶν, *E. fr.* 66.12 *TrGF*), but the utterance would amount to an insult rather than a curse. Otherwise, if κακῶς were to be constructed with the verb of a curse, κακέ would be entirely extracausal and part of a different intonation unit from the adverb. The latter configuration would only be possible if the curse were directed at an entity referred to by a neuter plural adjective, which is not inconceivable (in principle, one may curse τέχνη, ξύλα, τέκνα, γένη, ἄστυ, etc.) but would arguably be rare, especially in ordinary, non-literary speech. If the

recall, may have favoured the fixation of the expression into a formula⁵⁴ and certainly makes it easy to fit into iambic trimeters.⁵⁵ Paradoxically, we may argue, its fixedness may have encouraged poets to break the collocation and separate the adjective from the adverb from time to time.

3 Coordination and Oral Delivery

One of the elements that may encourage us to interpret *κακὸν κακῶς σε* as the beginning of a quotation is the fact that it is introduced by *καί*, the same particle as connects the quotations themselves. If we assumed that Demosthenes uttered the second occurrence of *καί* in the same manner as the first one, his listeners would indeed expect a new quotation to follow, and Demosthenes would need to break away from quoting in the persona of Aeschines and resume speaking in prose as himself at some point in the sentence. The earliest possible moment when Demosthenes would be able to switch from quoting to cursing would be located right after *καί*—an idea seemingly adopted by Mathieu in his Budé text.⁵⁶ On this account, the audience would be led to expect another trimeter that would not materialize, since *κακὸν κακῶς σε* and the words that follow would be delivered as a curse right from the start. Alternatively, we need to infer that Demosthenes switched from quoting to cursing in the middle of the curse itself. A natural place to posit a prosodic break marking this switch is right after *κακὸν κακῶς σε*: according to Wackernagel's law, the postpositive particle *μέν* identifies *μάλιστα* as the first prosodic word of a new intonation unit,⁵⁷ which implies that *καί κακὸν κακῶς σε* should be analysed as an extracausal, prosodically independent *colon*.⁵⁸ On these grounds, if we were to print any

adjective follows the adverb, the nominative and accusative masculine singular would still scan iambic before either pause or a word starting with a consonant.

54 Cf. Wray 2002, 70.

55 The same applies to the universal quantifier (ᾗ)παντες, the verb ἀπολέσειαν and any subject whose metrical shape is \sim — (such as θεοί). Apart from *De corona*, these elements recur in the instances of the curse in Menander's *Dyscolus* (138-139; 220-221; 600-601; 926-927). An interesting later example is found in an Aesopic (semi-prosified) fable (*κακοὶ κακῶς ἀπόλοισθε πάντες οἱ λύκοι*, Aesop. H. 164 Adrados). The curse scans as a trimeter, which might be a remnant of a Hellenistic metrical version of the fable (cf. Adrados 1999, 569, see also Adrados 2000, 337 and 339).

56 Mathieu 1958 prints suspension points between *καί* and the curse but does not explain this decision.

57 See e.g. Dik 1995, 36-37 for a brief explanation and Goldstein 2016, 44-84 for the particulars.

58 We can assume that the phraseological connection of the adjective and the adverb can make them function as one prosodic word and as the host of clitic *σε*, whose position would thus not indicate that Wackernagel's law should separate *κακὸν* from *κακῶς*. Cf. Goldstein 2016, 71 for an analogous interpretation of the expression ἴσα πρὸς ἴσα.

part of the curse between quotation marks, *κακὸν κακῶς σε* would certainly be the most reasonable guess. If Demosthenes was to start delivering the curse as a quotation, this would undoubtedly produce a *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* effect as first claimed by Markland. At the same time, such a delivery of the curse may have significantly weakened the rhetorical impact of the curse itself—how exactly are we to envisage Demosthenes to have marked the transition from the impersonation of Aeschines to a forceful, direct attack on him in a clear and effective manner?⁵⁹

On the other hand, if we consider that the curse is an independent discourse act, we may interpret the occurrence of *καί* that introduces it as a coherence device rather than a syntactic coordinator. When *καί* occurs at the beginning of a discourse act, it is an explicit marker of the continuity of discourse at a pragmatic rather than a syntactic level. In this function, which has been called ‘progressive’, *καί* serves the purpose of presenting the new discourse act as part of an existing, active train of thought; if at all, it could be translated as ‘and so’.⁶⁰ This function of *καί* is well attested in oratory, where it generally indicates that the discourse act is connected to—and is meant to reinforce—the argument of the speaker.⁶¹

59 Whether or not Demosthenes recited the iambics in a theatrical manner in order to caricature Aeschines’ antics (cf. e.g. Bers 2009, 31), it is likely that his audience would be able to identify the trimeters as quotations based on their syntax, meaning, and vocabulary, not to mention the fact that the first line of Euripides’ *Hecuba* must have been well known to the audience (it was certainly famous at the time of Aristophanes, who quotes it almost literally in the *Gerytades*, fr. 156 K.-A., and parodies it in one *Aeolosicon*, fr. 1 K.-A.). In particular, the lexeme *κευθμῶν* never occurs in classical prose, and the present infinitive *κακαγγελεῖν* is the only known occurrence of a form of *κακαγγελέω* (Goodwin 1904, 165, who interprets the infinitive as depending on *θέλοντα*, makes the further point that it may not be read as *κάκ’ ἀγγελεῖν*, since *θέλω* does not normally govern a future infinitive). Compounds formed from the roots of *κακός* and *ἀγγέλλω* are attested in tragedy (A. A. 636, S. *Ant.* 1286), but the only one to occur in Attic prose is the noun *κακαγγελία*, which appears in a fragment of the obscure early Attidographer Amelesagoras (of Athens or Chalcedon, *FGrH* 330 F 1, mid-fifth/late-fourth century BC, see Jacoby 1949, 85). The identity of Amelesagoras is evanescent; it is possible that this unusual name was a *nom de plume* used by a politically inactive antiquarian (see Marasco 1977 and Jones 2016) whose writing could in principle have been influenced by poetry or Ionic prose. In this connection, *κακαγγελία* occurs once at Hp. *De arte* 1.9 (and is wrongly glossed by Galen 19.207 as ‘abuse, slander’, cf. Gomperz 1910, 91 and Mann 2012, 70–71), while the current Attic expression of the meaning ‘to bring bad news’ was simply *κακά (ἀπ)αγγέλλειν* (cf. e.g. Lys. 22.14, Arist. *Rh.* 1379b20). Whether or not the *adespoton* was a famous line, a word like *κακαγγελεῖν* must have sounded unusual enough for the audience to understand that Demosthenes was still quoting.

60 See for instance Liapis 2012, 323. A number of the examples presented by Denniston 1954, 322–323 may be interpreted in this direction.

61 Cf. Lambert 2017, 202.

Between the series of antitheses and the curse, the speech is characterized by the build-up of an explicit contrast between the first person and the second person.⁶² The first person refers to Demosthenes and the second to Aeschines, except in the quotations, where the first person may be constructed as referring, through the persona of a stereotypically cautious tragic messenger breaking bad news,⁶³ to Aeschines himself. In particular, Demosthenes may have chosen to put the latter quotation (κακαγγελεῖν μὲν ἴσθι ... με) in the mouth of his rival as part of his characterization as a cowardly schemer who shies away from taking responsibility for the common good in the hour of need.⁶⁴ The curse would then have been uttered as a spontaneous, indignant outburst, with the second-person pronoun σε directly echoing the first-person clitic με in the preceding quotation.⁶⁵ The use of initial καί would not mark syntactic coordination, but would serve the function of presenting the curse as the natural conclusion of Demosthenes' counterattack.

Under this interpretation, the curse would form an entirely independent intonation unit from the quotations and, as far as punctuation is concerned, would simply need to be separated from them by a full stop.

4 Word Order and Rhythm

Now that we have established that neither phraseology nor initial καί compel us to regard the iambic snippet at the beginning of the curse as an allusion to, or a fragment of, a line of tragedy or comedy, it remains to discuss how likely it is that the iambic rhythm was deliberately sought by Demosthenes.

The essential building blocks of the curse are the polyptoton, the verb, and an expression referring to the target of the curse. If we look at variation in the relative position of these elements in literary occurrences of this expression, we may note that the verb precedes the polyptoton only three times, in passages where the curse is ancillary to speech acts of a different type: at *E. Med.* 1386 (κατθανῆ κακὸς κακῶς) the curse is embedded within a prophecy, while at *Ar. Pl.* 65 (ἀπό σ' ὀλῶ κακὸν κακῶς) and 418 (ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐξολῶ κακοὺς κακῶς)

62 τὰ σοὶ καῖμοι (265), ἐδίδασκες ... ἐγὼ δ' ἐφοίτων (265), ἐτέλεις ... ἐγὼ δ' ἐτελούμην (265), ἐγραμμάτευες ... ἐγὼ δ' ἠκκλησίαζον (265), ἐτριταγωνίστεις ... ἐγὼ δ' ἐθεώρουν (265), ἐξέπιπτες ... ἐγὼ δ' ἐσύριττον (265), ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐχθρῶν πεπολίτευσαι πάντα, ἐγὼ δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος (265), ἐγὼ μὲν ὑπὲρ τοῦ στεφανωθῆναι δοκιμάζομαι ... σοὶ δὲ κτλ. (266), ἀναγνώ ὑμῖν ... παραναγνώθι καὶ σύ μοι (267).

63 Cf. de Jong 1991, 71 n. 26.

64 Cf. *De corona* 139-140, 191, 198-199, and 272-273.

65 Cf. Wankel 1976, 1168.

the curse is part of a threat. In all other cases, the verb follows *at least* the first element in the polyptoton.⁶⁶ If anything, this suggests that when used in a curse pure and simple, the polyptoton takes the first place in the linear order of the utterance. From this perspective, the fact that the curse starts with the words κακὸν κακῶς should not alert us *per se* to any special effect.

When it comes to the position of the target, a number of arrangements are attested. As we have just seen, when the verb precedes the polyptoton, the target precedes the verb.⁶⁷ If the polyptoton precedes the verb, the target may follow⁶⁸ or precede the whole group, as is the case with the other Demosthenic occurrence.⁶⁹ In drama, the target of the curse may intervene between the elements in the polyptoton.⁷⁰

The pattern that we observe in *De corona* does not correspond to that of any of the other literary attestations. The polyptoton is immediately followed by the clitic pronoun referring to the target of the curse and, as noted above, they are both extraposed from the clause and form a separate *colon*. Interestingly, this arrangement has a striking parallel in Aeschines' Embassy speech:

παρακαλῶ δὲ καὶ ἱκετεύω σῶσαί με πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς θεοὺς, δεύτερον δ' ὑμᾶς τοὺς τῆς ψήφου κυρίους, κτλ.⁷¹

I beseech and entreat that I may be saved first of all by the gods, secondly by you who have the power of voting, etc.

Aeschines' appeal is the polar opposite to Demosthenes' curse:

σῶσαί	→	κακὸν κακῶς ... ἀπολέσειαν
με	→	σε
πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς θεοὺς	→	μάλιστα μὲν οἱ θεοί
δεύτερον δ' ὑμᾶς τοὺς τῆς ψήφου κυρίους	→	ἔπειθα οὗτοι πάντες

66 The verb intervenes between the adverb and the adjective at *S. Ph.* 1369 (κακῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπόλλυσθαι κακοῦς).

67 At *Ar. Pl.* 65 the target intervenes between the preverb and the verb in tmesis.

68 *Eub. fr.* 115 K.-A. 1-2.

69 *D.* 7.45; cf. also *Men. Dys.* 220-221, *Epit.* 424, etc.

70 *S. Ph.* 1369; *E. Cyc.* 268-269; *Ar. Eq.* 2-3.

71 *Aeschin.* 2.180. Translation by the author.

If we discount the words *παρακαλῶ δὲ καὶ ἱκετεύω* as constituting a different *colon*,⁷² we can identify a neat correspondence between the request for salvation and the curse formula. The clitic pronouns are the mirror image of each other, and the entities evoked as the enactors of the curse or of salvation are virtually the same.

Intertextual exchanges between Demosthenes and Aeschines across different trials are nothing surprising,⁷³ and it is plausible that Demosthenes' wording is a subtle caricature of Aeschines' pathetic oratorical style, while being linguistically justifiable in its own right. In particular, both *παρακαλῶ δὲ καὶ ἱκετεύω* and *σῶσαί με* could be interpreted as independent topicalized phrases. Aeschines had already pleaded with the judges on behalf of his family (*ὑπὲρ ὧν ἐγὼ δέομαι καὶ ἱκετεύω κτλ.*, 2.179); *σῶσαί με* shifts the spotlight onto the appeal itself and introduces Aeschines' naming of the gods and the judges as his addressees ('as to my own salvation, I plead with, etc.').⁷⁴ An analogous interpretation of *κακὸν κακῶς σε* is perhaps less immediate but certainly possible ('as to your being cursed, I call on, etc.').

The most evident formal difference between Aeschines' appeal and Demosthenes' curse lies in the fact that in Aeschines, the verb *σῶσαι* is part of an extracausal *colon*, whereas in Demosthenes, the verb *ἀπολέσειαν* is not. The consistent iambic rhythm of *κακὸν κακῶς σε* may be invoked as a reason for this arrangement—the *colon* would consist entirely of a regular alternation of light and heavy syllables, which the addition of *ἀπολέσειαν* in any position would disrupt. This would amount to a prose-rhythm effect (a form of *eurhythmia*?) and does not imply that the *colon* should be delivered in any way that would aim at identifying it as a broken quotation.

At the same time, other explanations for the position of the verb are possible. To begin with, the sequence *κακὸν κακῶς ἀπολέσειαν σε* would amount to two *cola* due to the position of the clitic and Wackernagel's law, and Demosthenes may have wished to avoid excessive prosodic fragmentation. The arrangement *κακὸν κακῶς σ' ἀπολέσειαν* would break the correspondence with Aeschines' expression, if this is what Demosthenes was after, as well as obfuscate the echo

72 The position of the clitic pronoun *με* identifies the beginning of a new intonation unit starting with *σῶσαι*.

73 See e.g. MacDowell 2000, 29.

74 In general, clitic personal pronouns tend to occur as the last word of a preclausal colon most frequently when they are the extraposed subject of an infinitival clause (e.g. *φημί γὰρ χρῆναί σε τοὺς μὲν Ἑλληνας εὐεργετεῖν, Μακεδόνων δὲ βασιλεύειν, τῶν δὲ βαρβάρων ὡς πλείεστων ἄρχειν*, Isoc. 5.154.3) or in combinations such as *ἐγὼ ... σε* (e.g. *ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐγὼ τοί σε δίκαιον μὲν νομίζω, σοφὸν δὲ οὐδ' ὅπωστίοις*, X. *Mem.* 1.6.11.2), all of which may be interpreted as topicalized phrases.

of the non-elided clitic με from the preceding quotation. From a pragmatic point of view, it is possible that the combination of the polyptoton and the clitic pronoun itself would be enough to make the verb entirely predictable and make its fronting unnecessary. If any combination of these factors holds, it may well be the case that the iambic rhythm of κακὸν κακῶς σε could merely be an epiphenomenon rather than the main motivation for Demosthenes' wording.⁷⁵

5 Conclusion

The results of this study are (a) that the sequence κακὸς κακῶς, while being intrinsically iambic, is a distinctive component of an ordinary Greek curse formula and should not be automatically read as an echo of drama;⁷⁶ (b) that initial καί does not entail that the beginning of the curse should have been delivered as the beginning of a quotation; and (c) that rhythm may or may not have contributed to the wording of the curse, which may be accounted for without invoking it.

The connection between Demosthenes' curse and Aeschines' plea in the peroration in his speech *On the Embassy* is extremely tantalizing. Rather than switching abruptly from quoting to cursing (and deploying a παρὰ προσδοκίαν effect), Demosthenes probably rounded up his vitriolic caricature of Aeschines by parodying his appeal to the gods and the judges and turning its wording into its opposite. In addition, if we look at the wider context, this connection may be extended beyond the curse and the appeal. As we have seen, the second trimeter quoted by Demosthenes is likely to serve the purpose of characterizing Aeschines as someone who denies responsibility (or fails to act altogether) as a stereotypical tragic messenger would. Interestingly, this reflects quite closely the profile that Aeschines adopts before pleading with the judges in the Embassy speech, as he presents himself as someone in control of the words but unaccountable for anticipating the events (καὶ τὸν τῶν λόγων κύριον τὰς τῶν ἔργων προσδοκίας ἀπαιτοῦσι, Aeschin. 2.178).

75 I have tried to reproduce the effect in my translation of κακὸς κακῶς as 'bad man, may badly' (the beginning of an English pentameter). On a closer look, I realized that I inadvertently composed a complete pentameter ('bad man, may badly first of all the gods'). On this point, full trimeters are not a rare find in Greek prose (see e.g. Sandys 1872, 149) but it would be risky to assume that they are all deliberate.

76 Accordingly, it is not necessary to identify a literary or rhetorical source for the curse in the fragment of Lynceus discussed above (*pace* Gambetti 2016).

The quotations and the curse may thus be described as distinct but closely connected verbal devices by which Demosthenes brings about a masterful and sophisticated parody of a number of aspects of Aeschines' figure all at once. By quoting tragedy, Demosthenes mocks both the professional background and the oratorical style of his opponent; at the same time, the stereotypical character evoked through the second quotation and the wording of the curse are a subtle parody of Aeschines' defence strategy as displayed in the Embassy trial. The striking rhetorical effect of interrupting a quotation would probably obfuscate the intertextual echo of the curse and, arguably, detract from the oratorical force of the curse itself. On these grounds, printing the words *καχὸς κακῶς σε* between quotations marks appears unnecessary—if not misleading.⁷⁷

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77 I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editorial board of *Mnemosyne* for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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