A Note on the Text of Pi. O. 6.54

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Summary: it is argued that Heyne’s emendation ἀπειρήτωι adopted in all modern editions of Pindar is unnecessary. The variant ἀπειράτωι transmitted in two mss. of the Vatican recension (Laur. 32.37, 32.33) should be interpreted not as a form of ἀπειρήτος ‘inexperienced’, but as a form of ἀπειράτος ‘boundless’ (cf. [Hp.] Flat. 3.9 Jouanna): this reading provides the required sense and meter, gives an easy account of the corrupted variant ἀπειράντωι and allows restoring a phonic echo in Pindar’s text. Thanks to the recent progress in our understanding of nominal composition in Greek and Indo-European it has now become possible to offer a linguistic explanation of the form ἀπειράτος and clarify its relation to πειραρχός, ἀπειρὸν and ἀπειρος.

The purpose of this note is to disprove an emendation in Pindaric text which has become standard in the course of the past century. The following text is printed for O. 6.53-54 in most modern editions:

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\text{άλλα' ἐν}
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κέκρυπτο γὰρ σχοίνωι βατινὰ τ' ἐν ἀπειρήτωι \hspace{1cm} (Snell-Maehler)

For he (scil. baby Iamus) had been hidden
in the rushes and the boundless thicket

Our main concern here is the form ἀπειρήτωι. The majority of the manuscripts offer a reading ἀπειράντωι which provides a suitable meaning ‘boundless’ (cf. P. 9. 35 γεώτατι δ’ ἀλκᾶς ἀπειράντου ‘putting to the test her boundless valor’).\(^1\) This reading appears both in the single representative of the Ambrosian recension (Ambr. C 222 inf.) and in most mss. of the Vatican recension. However, it is unmetrical and should therefore be dismissed: the ode is composed in dactylo-epitrite and the fifth verse of the (anti)strophe otherwise scans as – e – D – – (in Maas’ notation). In other words, the adjective modifying βατινὰ is expected to have the prosodic shape – – – –, which is precisely the reason why Christian Gottlob Heyne conjectured here a form of ἀπειρήτος, an adjective that has the same meaning ‘boundless, limitless’ as ἀπειράντος

\(^{1}\) ἀπειράντος / ἀπέραντος is derived from the verb πε(ι)ράνω ‘limit, bring to an end’, compare πηµανώ → ἀπήµαντος ‘unhurt’ or φανόµαι → ἀφαντός ‘invisible’.

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(πόντος ἀπείριτος Od. 10.195, Hes. Th. 109; γαῖαν ἀπείριτον Hes. Th. 878; ὀμίλος ἀπείριτος h.Ven. 120, etc.). This emendation was adopted by nearly all subsequent editors and βατιθι τ’ ἐν ἀπειρίτωι thus became the received text of Pindar.²

But while Heyne’s conjecture is plausible semantically and metrically, it gives no easy account of the presumed corruption: it is doubtful that the word ἀπείριτος was sufficiently rare or unclear to be exposed to supersession by ἀπείραντος as an explanatory gloss.⁴ It might be worthwhile to consider the problem anew by going back to what is transmitted.

While the majority of the pre-Triclinian codices have ἀπειράντωι, two closely related mss. of the Vatican recension, Laur. 32.37 and Laur. 32.33 have a different reading: ἀπειράτωι. At the first glance this seems to be a form of the adjective ἀπειράτος (Ionic ἀπειρήτος) ‘without making attempt, inexperienced’, found elsewhere in Pindar (O. 9.18; N. 1.23), but impossible in this passage both for reasons of sense and meter.⁵ But once we assume that transmitted ἀπειράτωι is in fact a form of a completely different adjective ἀπειράτος with a meaning similar to that of ἀπείραν and ἀπείριτος ‘boundless’, we not only receive a metrically and semantically plausible variant, but we also get two more advantages that Heyne’s ἀπειρίτωι does not seem to offer. First, if ἀπειράτωι stood in the archetype, this reading would be more liable to be corrupted into ἀπειράντωι attested by the majority of the tradition, whether by way of a purely paleographic error or

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² This text was printed by Bergk, Schröder, Turyn, Bowra, Snell–Maehler and Race. The only other emendation on the record is Heinrich’s ἀκηράτωι (1794: 9).
³ ἀπείραντος is in fact not found in Greek outside the Pindaric passage cited above, differently from its more frequent Attic pendant ἀπέραντος.
⁴ One way of explaining the transmitted variants would be by positing an editorial change of original ἀπείραντος to ἀπείρητος (as a hypercorrection, due to the itacistic pronunciation of the latter) and then another editorial intervention correcting ἀπειρητής to “correct Doric” ἀπειράτος which would be the form that stood in the archetype of all our mss. This scenario is of course very artificial and not very probable.
⁵ πειράω ‘make trial of, try’ is a derivative of ἡ πεῖρα ‘trial, attempt’; as in any other contract verb, the penultimate syllable in the verbal adjective of πειράω is expected to be long (cf. Attic τιμητός, etc.).
as a scribal emendation. Secondly, we are possibly able to restore a phonic echo (βατιάτι ἐν ἀπειράτωι), a poetic effect of which Pindar was particularly fond.  

The crucial problem that must have prevented the editors of Pindar (at least those who may have entertained the possibility of a scansion ἀπειράτωι) from adopting this reading in their texts is that the word ἀπειράτος is otherwise unknown in Greek.  

Of all the editors of Olympian 6 only August Boeckh and, following him, Tycho Mommsen, printed the actually transmitted ἀπειράτωι, but their reason for doing so is untenable: Boeckh’s suggestion to derive the word from *ἀπειράστος ‘inexpectus’ (from πειράζω ‘make trial of, attempt, try’) through a loss of -s- lacks the necessary linguistic sophistication. Lexicographers and linguists alike have not been able to provide a

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6 See Watkins 1995: 81-82 (P. 10.60), 98 (N. 2.1-5), 189 (O. 3.4), 364 (O. 13.64), 366 (N. 6.45). However, it is of course impossible to prove that the alliteration ατ..ατ..ατ was intended by Pindar.

7 This reading also appears in the scholia to Pi. O. 6 in Ambr. C 222 inf. and Leid. Q. 4; as is evident from the text of these scholia, the commentators thought they were dealing with a form of περάω with a “Doric” ā and did not worry about the meter, e.g. Schol. 90a ἢν οὖκ ἔστι διαπεράσαι ‘impossible to pass through’ (Drachmann). Even forgetting about the meter for a moment, one sees immediately that -ει- in ἀπειράτωι precludes any identification with (δια)περάω, a denominative verb derived from adv. περά ‘beyond, past’ (cf. ἀπέρατος ‘not to be transgressed’ Aesch. Supp. 1049). This attempt at etymologizing of course merely testifies to the bewilderment engendered by the unfamiliar word ἀπειράτος, but these scholia may have also additionally discredited this reading in the eyes of the scholars.

8 From Mommsen’s comment on the verse (1864: 59) it is clear that in adopting this reading into his text he was relying solely on Boeckh’s analysis.

9 Boeckh (1811: 378) adduces as parallels for his rule of s-loss ἔρατος : ἔραστος ‘beloved, lovely’ and θαυματός : θαυμαστός ‘wonderful’, but neither of these cases is comparable: (1) ἔραστος is a derivative from an -s-stem (*ἔρας, cf. Aeolic ἔραννος < *eras-no- and ἔρως, -οτος from earlier *ἔρως, -oς, see Weiss 1998: 36) of the type γελαστός ‘laughable’, while ἔρατος is a verbal adjective derived from an athematic verb (ἔραμαι); the same explanation is valid for ἔλαστος : ἔλαστος (ἐλαστρέω) ‘ductile’; (2) θαυματός is a derivative from a -men-stem (θαμμα), while θαυμαστός is a verbal adjective derived from the verb θαμαμάω in which the suffixal -στ- is regular, cf. σκυδαστός, ὄνομαστός, (-)σκευαστός.
plausible explanation for ἀπείρατος, and the implicit acceptance of Heyne’s conjecture by Wilhelm Schulze (1892: 116n3), one of the foremost specialists in the history of Greek language of the time (and probably of all times) may have led the classical scholars to belief that the case was closed. The reading of the Laurentiani was discarded by all subsequent editors.

We may now take stock: while one of the transmitted variants, ἀπειράντωι, does not scan and is thus obviously wrong, the other one, ἀπειράτωι, may have a short /a/ and thus comply with the requirements of the meter, but the unique form has resisted all attempts at a plausible morphological analysis. In the absence of such analysis, desperately sticking to the transmitted reading would clearly not be superior to emending the text.

However, Pi. O. 6.54 is not the only place in Greek literature where the word ἀπείρατος can be surmised. A form of this word is also found as a variant reading in the Hippocratic treatise “Περὶ φυσιῶν” (“On Breaths”); this work has often been deemed spurious, but over the past century (ever since the publication of the Anonymous Londiniensis papyrus) a consensus has emerged that this treatise is not incompatible with the doctrines and methods found in the earliest part of the corpus and may in any event be a genuine sample of scientific prose of the 5th or 4th cent.

10 LSJ and Ferrari 1998: 124 favor a derivation of ἀπείρατος from πε(ι)ράνω with a resulting meaning ‘impenetrable’ (for this rare meaning of πε(ι)ράνω cf. Aesch. Choe. 56 δι’ ὥστον φρενός τε δαμίας περανόν ‘penetrated the ears and heart of the people’), but this solution is severely compromised by the fact that the expectable deverbal adjective from πε(ι)ράνω is the actually attested ἀπειράντος / ἀπειράντος, cf. ψάρινο → ψαρτός ‘woven’ and the examples cited above, n. 1, in other words, in denominative verbs derived from -n-stems or -r/-n- stems, the suffix -αν-, itself a modification of the zero grade *-n-, does not alternate with -η > -α-.
11 Schulze cited βατιαὶ τ’ ἀπειράτωι (“quod scripsit pro tradito ἀπειράτω Bergkius”) in support of his view that ἀπείριτος contains a reflex of the root ‘to go’ (“quod circumiri not potest”).
13 Jouanna (1999: 378) dates Flat. to the last quarter of the 5th cent. Beside Menon of the “Anonymous Londiniensis” (col. 5.53ff.) this treatise is referred to by the comic poet Antiphanes (4th cent.), see Langholf 1990.
At [Hp.] Flat. 3.9 Littré printed ὀλκάδες τε ἀπειροι τῷ μεγέθει ἐς ὅψις διαφριστεῖται ‘and vessels of vast bulk are tossed about’, adopting the reading ἀπειροι from the codex M (Marc. gr. 269); however, the other main authority, codex A (Par. gr. 2243), offers ἀπειρατοι μεγέθει.\textsuperscript{14} It is beyond doubt that the intended meaning here is ‘immense’, which makes this attestation vastly different from that in Olympian 6 where the epithet of a bush (βατ(ε)ιύα) can have a whole slew of different meanings. The variant ἀπειρατοι is clearly the lectio difficilior here, while ἀπειροι in codex M, a frequent word, is easily explainable as an interlinear gloss that crept in during the copying of M’s archetype.\textsuperscript{15} Moreover, the reading ἀπειρατοι eliminates the awkward article before the dative of respect (cf. Hdt. 1.51 μεγάθει μεγάλους, Pl. Prm. 144a ἀπειρος ἀριθμος πλήθει).\textsuperscript{16} The reason the 19\textsuperscript{th} century editors have chosen to either print ἀπειροι or recourse to conjectures must have been similar to the one that made the editors of Pindar adopt Heyne’s ἀπειρίτωι: presumably the editors of Flat. considered ἀπειρατοι to be an Attic or Doric form\textsuperscript{17} of ἀπειρητος ‘inexperienced’, ‘unexplored’ which they rightly deemed unsuitable for this passage. The situation here is thus exactly the same as with the text of O. 6.54 discussed above: the reading which most textual critics would put in the text based on transmission alone is discarded because of the uncertainty of the form. However, Jacques Jouanna in his excellent Budé edition reevaluated this passage and printed ἀπειρατοι μεγέθει from codex A in his text of Flat.\textsuperscript{18}

I have no doubt that Jouanna’s editorial decision was right and I think that at Pi. O. 6.54, too, the original truth may have come through the transmission process unscathed. It is time to bring the variant ἀπειράτωι back into the spotlight, since a

\textsuperscript{14} Conjectures: ἀπειρατοι Diels (1911: 278), ἀπλέτοι Danielsson (apud Nelson 1909: 8). Diels thought that transmitted ἀπειρατοι is the equivalent of Ionic ἀπειρητοι (viz. ἀπειρατοι from πειραω) and the form is a scribal correction of ἀπειραντοι ‘unlimited’; however, it remains unclear why the author of a medical treatise (even granted that Flat. is a polished text that has some rhetorical qualities of a lecture) would employ specifically a rare poetic form of the adjective and not its frequent Attic form ἀπειραντος.


\textsuperscript{16} As pointed out by Diels 1911: 278.

\textsuperscript{17} While an Atticism would perhaps be likelier, a Doric form would in theory be not altogether surprising (for Doricisms in Corpus Hippocraticum see Schmidt 1977).

\textsuperscript{18} It should be noted that Heiberg in his CMG text, too, printed ἀπειρατοι, but his reasons for doing so remain uncertain.
linguistic justification for the peculiar form has now become available thanks to recent developments in the theory of Indo-European nominal composition.

The first step towards a solution of the conundrum was in fact made more than a hundred years ago by Basil Gildersleeve, who in his commentary on Olympian 6 wrote: “ἀπείρατος might be to πεῖρας as πέρατος is to πέρας” (1885: 177). But he did not provide any parallels or elaborate on this tentative proposal which, at least in this form, does not inspire confidence, to say the least: it is not immediately obvious that an oblique stem of an athematic noun should be identical to its form in the second member of a compound. (Moreover, as we shall see presently, such analysis is unlikely to be correct). Gildersleeve’s suggestion has therefore gone unnoticed.  

Yet, a privative formation derived from πεῖρας with a meaning ‘limitless, boundless’, e.g. ἀπείρων or ἀπειρος, would indeed fit both passages extremely well. A linguistic forebear of πεῖρας ‘limit’ (Xenoph., Pi., Parm.) is still found in Homeric πέραρ, πείρατος ‘id.’ (e.g. Il. 8.476 τὰ νείατα πείραθ’ ἱκημα γαής καὶ πόντοιο ‘you should go to the nethermost bounds of earth and sea’). The reconstruction nom.-acc. sg. *per-ι, oblique stem *per-ιεν- is confirmed by the Old Indic cognates párur, párvan-, párus- ‘joint, knot, limb’. In Proto-Indo-European this noun belonged to the class of the so-called “heteroclitic” stems which had suffixal *-ι in the nominative and accusative singular, but *-ιεν- in oblique cases. In Old Indic this complex paradigm split into two, with párvan- and párus- functioning as two independent stems, while in Greek the

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19 This idea is echoed by Chantraine (1968-1980: 871) whose tantalizingly short formulation “bâti sur le theme des cas autres que le nom.-acc. sg.” is likewise imprecise.
20 Also πέρας (Anaximand. fr. 15.13).
21 πεῖρας could either be a back-formation to the oblique stem πείρατ- or show an effect of dissimilation of two r’s (πείραρ > πεῖρας, see Buck 1917: 24), presumably also seen in τέρας ‘marvel’ (Hom.+ ) that likely continues *kʷer-ιεν- (note the oblique stem τέρατ- attested early enough, including the PN Τειρόσιος), see Nikolaev 2010a: 190-191.
22 For a book-length treatment of the etymology and semantics of πείραρ and párvan- see Bergren 1975. This etymological relationship is commonly accepted nowadays, see Mayrhofer 1996: 99-100, Beekes 2010: 1163.
23 On this paradigm-split see Hoffmann 1975 who compellingly argued that πάρυπ (the sandhi form of nom. párur < *per-ι) was reinterpreted as an allomorph of an s-stem.
heteroclitic inflection was preserved, but the oblique stem suffix in the zero grade (*-ŋ- or *-µŋ-) was extended by *-t-, as is usual with this type of nouns (cf. Ὀδός, gen. Ὀδότος < ὤδ-ŋ-t-os vs. Hittite ẏatar, gen. ẏitenas ‘water’ or ῦπαρ, gen. ῦπατος < *(h₃)jēkʷ-ŋ-t-os vs. Old Indic ṣākt, gen. ṣākāt, Latin iecur, iæ/ocineris ‘liver’).  

Now, in order to decide whether the core of Gildersleeve’s idea is correct, namely that the mysterious short -ā- in ἀπείρατος is the same -ā- that we find in πείρατ- (< *per-ŋ-t-, cf. *ud-ŋ-t-), the oblique stem of πείρας / πείραρ, and that ἀπείρατος is a legitimate word, formed according to the rules of the Greek grammar, we should look closely at the formation of privative compounds from athematic nouns in Greek and Proto-Indo-European.

This could be a topic of a book-length treatment, but for our present purposes we can limit ourselves to a very concise presentation of basic relevant facts. If one wanted to form a privative compound from */ŋ- ‘no, not’ and an athematic noun X with the resulting meaning ‘not having X’ (viz. a kind of a bahuvrīhi possessive compound), two strategies were available in the proto-language:

1) suffixless (“internal”) strategy: no suffixes are added to the noun used as the second member of the compound, but instead this noun changes its inflectional pattern and shows a different position of the accent and a different vowel ablaut in the suffix. Examples: Greek πατήρ ‘father’ → ἀπάτωρ ‘fatherless’, Old Indic ἀδὰρ / ἀδᾶν- ‘udder’ → anūdhān- ‘having no udder’. The pair πεῖραρ (*perŋ / -ŋ-) ‘limit’ → ἀπείρων (*ŋ-perγον-) ‘limitless’ belongs to this type.

25 See Puhvel 1953; the presentation below follows Malzahn (forthcoming).
26 The use of “possessive” may appear confusing in a discussion of privative formations, but it is important to bear in mind that the meaning of a possessive compound (bahuvrīhi) is ‘having X which is Y’; thus e.g. πολυπείρων (h. Cer. 296) literally means ‘having boundaries that are many’ (viz. ‘with many boundaries’), while ἀπείρων literally means ‘having boundaries that are not’ (viz. ‘with no boundaries, limitless’).
28 Cf. Old Indic aparvān- ‘jointless’ RV 4.19.3 (said about the serpent Vṛtra).
2) suffixal (“external”) strategy: the athematic noun used as the second member of the compound is extended by a suffix *-o-. Examples: Greek ὕδωρ ‘water’ → ἄνυδρος ‘waterless’ (cf. Old Indic anudrá- ‘id.’), ὄνομα / ὄνυμα ‘name’ → νόνυμνος ‘nameless’. The existence of this second way of forming privative compounds (and, generally, bahuvrīhi compounds) has been contested for a long time, notably, by Ferdinand Sommer (in several influential articles and then a monograph on Greek compounds30), but can now be considered established beyond doubt.31

As a result, we sometimes find in Greek pairs of suffixed and suffixless privative compounds with the same meaning. This situation may be conveniently illustrated with derivatives from -men-stems (which, importantly, share with the heteroclitic -r/n- nouns the property of having an oblique stem in -(µ)ατ- < *-/uE017-t-):

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29 Note that while in “internally” derived second members of a compound the heteroclitic nouns use their -n-stem (*περὺ / -n- → *γ-περμόν-), “externally” derived second members of compounds use the -r-stem (*υδρή / -n- → *γ-υδρ-ο-), see Weiss 1994: 95.

30 See Sommer 1948: 99-159. Thanks to the publication of a well-researched biography of Swiss Hittitologist Emil Orgetorix Forrer (Oberheid 2007) it has now become clear that Sommer’s personal feud with this talented but apparently obnoxious scholar was the only reason that triggered his series of polemical writings about Greek compounds (as pointed out by Malzahn 2010: 184n3): in his efforts to disprove Forrer’s theory about Bronze Age contacts between the Mycenaean Greece and the Hittite kingdom (now generally accepted, see e.g. Hajnal 2003 and Hawkins 2010: 217-8), Sommer strove to demonstrate that the PN Ἀλάξανδρος (Alakşanduš in Hittite sources) could not be a genuine Greek compound, precisely because an athematic noun ἀνήρ in a compound of this type should have appeared as -ηνορ, formed according to the suffixless (“internal”) strategy (cf. πατήρ → ἀπάττωρ, ἀνήρ → ἀνήγωρ· ὁ τέκνα οὐ γίνεται Hsch.; ‘defending men’ is a verbal governing compound, but this entire class goes back to bahuvrīhis).

31 Less clear is the situation with *-i-: this suffix is not used in Old Indic bahuvrīhis and in Greek we only have one example (*ἀλκ- ‘strength’ (ἀλκὶ πεποιθῶς Il. 5.299) → ἄναλκις ‘without strength’), but in Latin we find a productive pattern barbarius ‘bearded’: imberbis ‘beardless’.
αἷμα ‘blood’ (< *seh₂-i-mη)\(^{32}\)

→ (1) ἄναιμων ‘bloodless’ (*Il. 5.342+) (< *seh₂-i-mon-)

→ (2) ἄναμος ‘bloodless’ (*Pl. Ti. 70c+) (< *seh₂-i-mn-o-)

The development of expectable *ἀναμίνος to ἄναμος follows a tendency to avoid a sequence -mn- preceded by another non-syllabic element (in this case, a yod in the diphthong -αι-), observed already by Johannes Schmidt (1895: 87-159).\(^{33}\) The pattern αἷμα → ἄναμος, ὄνυμα → ἄνόυμος (Hom.+, beside νόνυμνος cited above), σπέρμα → ἄσπερμος must have been sturdy enough to invite analogical creations with what appears to be a “truncation” of the base suffix: one such creation is ἄσειρος, formed to πείραρ instead of *ἄπερυρος uel sim.\(^{34}\)

It can easily be seen that these phonetic changes did not facilitate the preservation of morphological transparency and it is understandable that speakers availed themselves of another suffix, namely, *-to- which was used in bahuvrīhi compounds already in the protolanguage (cf. Greek ἀλς ‘salt’ → ἀνάλτος ‘not salted’, Old Indic ἁρ- ‘water’ → ἀναπτα- ‘waterless’, Avestan kσρ-, kσρπ- ‘body’ → hukσρπτα- ‘having a beautiful body’).\(^{35}\) The use of *-to- was advantageous since it allowed preserving the oblique stem in *-mn- and the resulting sequence -ματο- was easier to relate to the base word in -μα than the string -μο- (as in ἄναμος). This has led to the creation of a third type of privative compounds with a -men-stem as the second member:

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\(^{32}\) The reconstruction *seh₂-i-mη is based on the assumption that αἷμα is cognate with Old High German sein ‘virgin honey’, Welsh hufen ‘cream’, see Weiss 1998: 55-56n.66; the same reconstruction, but a different root connection (to *seh₂-i- ‘bind’) was proposed by Janda 2005: 46-47.

\(^{33}\) See recently Nussbaum 2010.

\(^{34}\) ἄσειρος thus does not have to be traced back to *ŋ-per-jo-, derivationally unrelated to the *-r/n-stem (Schulze 1892: 116n3), or a “thematized” version of ἄπειρον in the unclear formulation of Chantraine (1968-1980: 871).

\(^{35}\) The use of *-to- in compounds is certainly secondary: in the protolanguage this suffix was used to form possessive adjectives (Greek ἡθαματος ‘wonderful’, Latin togātus, ānsātus, honestus, Umbrian hostatu, Lithuanian ragūotas ‘horned’) and its extension to possessive compounds which likewise could be employed in attributive function is not surprising. Nevertheless, this process of analogical expansion can safely be dated to late Indo-European and the situation was clearly inherited into Proto-Greek.
αἷμα ‘blood’
→ ἀναιμάτος ‘bloodless’ (Aesch. *Eum. 302+) (< *seh₂i-men-to-)

Similarly:
χρήμα ‘property’ (< *geh₁-reh₁-men)
→ (1) ἄχρημων ‘having no property’ (< *g₁-reh₁-mon-)
   (Sol. 13.41, Pi. Fr. 218; Eur. Med. 461)
→ (2) ἄχρηματος ‘having no property’ (< *g₁-reh₁-men-to-)
   (Hdt. 1.89, Arist. Pol. 1271b16, Aesch. Pers. 167)

Or, to take a word with a meaning similar to that of πείρα: 
τέρμα ‘limit’ (< *ter-men)
→ (1) ἄτερμων ‘having no bound’ (< *ter-mon-)
   (Aesch. Eu. 634; Eur. Hec. 926)
→ (2) ἄτερματος ‘having no bound’ (< *ter-men-to-)
   → ἄτερματιστος ‘id.’ (Gal. 19.472, ἄθεμελίστος Hsch.)

We have thus seen that there is ample evidence for the coexistence of synonymous compounds made from stems with the suffix -men- ending in either -μων (“internal” type) or -μ(ν)ος (“external” type). We have also seen how the type in -ματος came into being. The -men-stems were chosen to illustrate the rules of compound forming because of the similarity of their morphological profile to that of the heteroclitic -r/n-stems: while in historical Greek both stem types have an oblique stem in -ατ- / -οτ- < *-/uE017-, in proto-Greek the oblique stem of both classes ended in *-n (before vowels) or *-η (before consonants). We have already seen above that -r/n-stems did not differ from the -men-stems when they were used as compound second members without a suffix (“internal” type: ἀπείρων, ἀναίμων); we have every reason to believe that -r/n-stems

36 In some cases an original formation in -ματος ( < *-men-to- ) is ousted by yet another synonymous formation, a verbal adjective from a verb in -αίνω, e.g. πήμα ‘harm’ → (1) ἄπήμων ‘without harm’; (2) πημαίνω ‘I harm’ → ἄπημαντος ‘unharmed’.
37 Already in Mycenaean, cf. a-re-pa-te = ἀλέιφατi, a-mo-ta = ἄρματa, etc.
38 A pair of doublets of the same type as ἀναιμάτος is attested for another noun with alternating stems that had an oblique in *-n-, namely, οὐς, οὐστος ‘ear’, for which we find in Mycenaean both a-no-we ‘without handles’ and a-no-wo-to ‘id.’ (ἀνούσιος Theoc. *Ep. 4.3).
would not pattern any differently in the suffixed ("external") type either and thus ἀπειράτος ‘boundless’ appears in theory just as well formed as ἀναίματος ‘bloodless’.

It is important to emphasize that the examples listed above (ἀναίματος, ἄχρήματος) contain the same suffixed -το- as ἀνάλτος ‘not salted’, ἀγέραστος ‘not having a gift of honor’, ἀπόφρητος ‘not girt with towers’, ἀπόρωτος ‘not exposed to fire’ and other words that never had oblique stems ending in -τ (there is no *ἀλτ- ‘salt’, *γέραστ- ‘honor’, etc.). The similarity between the oblique stem πε(ι)ρατ- and our ἀπειράτος signaled by Gildersleeve and Chantraine is therefore fallacious.

But is there any parallel to presumed *ἀπειράτος coexisting with ἀπείρων? Compounds ending in -τος, -τον made from stems in -r/n- are indeed hard to find; however, there is now at least one example. The rare Homeric word ἀάστος has recently been interpreted as a reflex of the Indo-European word for ‘sun’: it is argued that this privative compound goes back to *ahāyato- < *n̥seh₂un̥to- ‘deprived of sun’, a meaning that fits the passage Il. 18.271 (ἀγρεῖ νόν μοί ὄμοσσον ἀάστον Στυγῆς ὕδωρ “now swear to me by the sunless water of the Styx”).

Now, as a compound derived from a heteroclitic stem *sēh₂yl, gen. sg. *sh₂yēns (Old Indic svār, Avestan huuarī, gen.sg. xᵛēng, English sun) the form *n̥-seh₂un̥-to- > ἀάστος with a compositional suffix *-to- provides a welcome parallel to the presumed *n̥-peru̯-to- > ἀπείρατος from *peru̯ / -n-.

Based on the results of the preceding discussion, we can safely set up the following system of privative compounds from πείραρ / πείρας:

πείραρ ‘limit’ ( < *peru̯ / -n-)
→ (1) ἀπείρων ‘limitless’ ( < *n̥-peru̯on-)
→ (2) *aperuros uel sim. ( < *n̥-peru̯-o-)

replaced by ἀπείρως ‘limitless’, back-formed to ἀπείρων on analogy to ἀναίμων : ἄναιμος, etc.
→ (3) ἀπειράτος ‘limitless’ ( < *n̥-peru̯-to-)  

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39 See Nikolaev 2010b: 72–123.

40 The form with -ει- in Pindar could be an epic reminiscence (cf. ἀπὸ πειράτων Alc. Z 21 Voigt), a true result of compensatory lengthening with a “mild Doric” kind of treatment, cf. κούρα O. 13.65, etc. (*kōrā) or γούνας Ι. 2.26 (*gan̥at-), or a result of a 4th century metacharacterismos (Pindar’s ΑΠΕΡΑΤΟΙ rendered as ἀπειράτοι in the new Ionic alphabet, see Herzog 1912: 85; Irigoin 1952: 25-28).
As a result of this combined application of textual criticism and historical linguistics we can now conclude that ἀπειράτος ‘boundless’ is a real Greek word and there are no reasons not to promote the reading ἀπειράτωι at Pi. O. 6.54 from the apparatus to the main text.

References:


Editions cited:


