

Preface to Pindar: Early Greek Choral Song and the Language of Genre

Peter Agócs, UCL Department of Greek and Latin and the CHS

1. Callimachus fr. 260, 65-69 Pfeiffer = *Hecale* fr. 74, 24-28 Hollis and D'Alessio

τὴν μὲν ἄρ' ὡς φαμένην ὕπνος λάβε, τὴν δ' αἴουσαν.
καδδραθέτην δ' οὐ πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρό[νον], αἶψα γὰρ ἦλθεν
στιβήεις ἄγγαυρος, ὅτ' οὐκέτι χεῖρες ἔπαγροι
φιλητέων· ἤδη γὰρ ἑωθινὰ λύχνα φαείνει·
ἀεῖδει καὶ πού τις ἀνήρ ὕδατηγὸς ἱμαῖον·
ἔγρει καὶ τιν' ἔχοντα παρὰ πλόον οἰκίον ἄζων
τετριγὼς ὑπ' ἄμαξαν, ἀνιάζουσι δὲ πυκνοὶ
. . . . φοῖ χαλκῆες ἐναυόμενοι

'So she [the crow] spoke, and sleep then seized both her and the one [female, probably the owl] who was listening, but they slept, those two, for no long while, for soon came the frosty pre-dawn when the hands of burglars are no longer at their work, for already the dawn's lamps are showing, and somewhere the water-drawer sings the well-song (*himaïos*), and the man who has a house by the roadway is wakened by the axle creaking under the wagon, and many people annoy the smiths by asking for a light'.

2. The 'Ambrosian Life' (*Vit. A*) of Pindar, from vol. i of Drachmann's *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina* (Teubner: 1903), p. 3 (ll. 6-9):

γέγραφε δὲ βιβλία ἑπτακαίδεκα· ὕμνους, παιᾶνας, διθυράμβων β', προσοδίων β'· παρθενίων β', φέρεται δὲ καὶ γ' ὃ ἐπιγράφεται κεχωρισμένων παρθενίων· ὑπορχημάτων β', ἐγκώμια, θρήνους, ἐπινίκων δ'.

'He wrote 17 books: *Hymns*, *Paeans*, *Dithyrambs* 1-2, *Prosodia* 1-2, *Partheneia* 1-2, and also the book that is entitled *The Pieces Separated From the Partheneia* is included; *Hyporchemes* 1-2, *Threnodies*, and *Epinicians* 1-4'.

cf. Proclus' *Chrestomathia* (2nd c. CE?) paraphrased by Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople (c. 810-c. 893 CE), *Bibliotheca* 319b (fin.) -320a.

Περὶ δὲ μελικῆς ποιήσεως φησιν ὡς πολυμερεστάτη τε καὶ διαφόρους ἔχει τομάς. Ἄ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς μεμέρισται θεοῖς, ἃ δὲ ἀνθρώποις, ἃ δὲ θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις, ἃ δὲ εἰς τὰς προσπιπτούσας περιστάσεις. Καὶ εἰς θεοὺς μὲν ἀναφέρεσθαι ὕμνον, προσόδιον, παιᾶνα, διθύραμβον, νόμον, (320a) ἀδωνίδα, ἰόβακχον, ὑπορχήματα.

'About melic poetry they say that it consists of many sub-genres and different kinds. For some of these are allotted to the gods, some to men, and yet others to men and gods, and some to in response to particular things that occur. And the ones 'for the gods' are the hymnos, prosodion, paeon, dithyramb, nomos, adonidion, iobacchos, and the hyporchemes'.

3. The *obiter dictum* in Aristotle's *Poetics* (6, 1450b) on the poetic text as autonomous object ('work', cf. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 1994). tr. by S. Halliwell.

On the last two of the six 'parts of tragedy': 'Of the remainder, lyric poetry (μελοποιία) is the greatest embellishment (μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμάτων), while spectacle (ἢ ὄψις) is emotionally potent (ψυχαγωγικὸν μὲν), but falls quite outside the Art and is not integral to poetry, since tragedy's capacity is independent of performance and actors, and besides, the costumier's (σκευοποιῶν) art has more scope than the poet's for rendering effects of spectacle'.

4. Pindar, *Ol.* 9, 1-8: epinician and 'folk-song'

(Pindar translations are drawn from W. Race's Loeb, modified where necessary).

Τὸ μὲν Ἀρχιλόχου μέλος
φωνᾶεν Ὀλυμπία,
καλλίνικος ὁ τριπ' ἴλος κεχλαδῶς
ἄρκεσε Κ' ῥόνιον παρ' ὄχθον ἀγεμονεῦσαι
κωμάζοντι φίλοις Ἐφαρμόστῳ σὺν ἑταίροις·
ἀλλὰ νῦν ἑκαταβόλων Μοισᾶν ἀπὸ τόξων
Δία τε φοινικοστερόπαν σεμνόν τ' ἐπίνειμαι

ἀκ' ῥωτήριον Ἴλιδος
τοιοῖσδε βέλεσσιν...

'The song of Archilochus vocal at Olympia: that thrice-swelling kallinikos sufficed for Epharmostus to lead the way [or alternatively, 'to lead E.')] in *komos* with his close companions by Cronus' hill: but now, from the Muses' far-shooting bow encroach on Zeus, the god who flashes purple lightning, and the august temple-pinnacle of Elis with missiles such as these here [=this ongoing song].'

(On the metaphor ἐπίνειμαι in vv. 5-9, see now Timothy Smith's excellent article, 'Φοινικοστερόπας and ἐπίνειμαι in *Olympian* 9 SM', *Mnemosyne* (2015): 815-24.)

5. Ritual time as a model for traditionalizing the 'new song':

a) Pindar, *Ol.* 10, 73-85.

(The epinician speaker is describing the first, foundational Games held by Heracles and the other heroes at the future site of Olympia. He has just completed a catalogue of victors, and now moves to connect that 'first performance' of epinician song with the present one).

... ἐν δ' ἔσπερον

ἔφλεξεν εὐώπιδος
σελάνας ἐρατὸν φάος.
ἀείδετο δὲ πᾶν τέμενος τερπναῖσι θαλίαις

τὸν ἐγκώμιον ἀμφὶ τρόπον.
ἀρχαῖς δὲ προτέραις ἐπόμενοι
καὶ νῦν ἐπωνυμίαν χάριν
νίκας ἀγερώχου κελαδησόμεθα βροντάν
καὶ πυρπάλαμον βέλος
ὄρσικτύπου Διός,
ἐν ἅπαντι κράτει
αἴθωνα κεραυνὸν ἀραρότα·
γλιδῶσα δὲ μολπὰ πρὸς κάλαμον
ἀντιάξει μελέων,

Ε' τὰ παρ' εὐκλέϊ Δίρκῃ χρόνῳ μὲν φάνεν·

'And then the lovely fair-faced moon lit up the dusk, and all the sanctuary rang with sweet celebrations [*epode* 4] in the komastic mode. **And we now, faithful to these ancient origins, are going to sing a song of glory named for proud victory**, to celebrate the thunder and fire-flung missile of noisy Zeus: the blazing lightning that fits well to every triumph. And the swelling strains of song shall answer [= i.e. are now answering!] to the pipe's reed; [*triad* 5] songs which have at last appeared by famous Dirke.

b) Pindar's ode 'For the Aeginetans to Aeacus' ('paean' no. 15, fr. 52p Snell-Maehler = S4 Rutherford)

Α[Ι]ΓΙΝΗΤΑΙΣ ΕΙ[Σ] ΑΙΑΚΟΝ

Α' Τῷδ' ἐν ἅματι τερπνῷ
ἵπποι μὲν ἀθάναται
Ποσειδᾶνος ἄγοντ' Αἰακ[],
Νηρεὺς δ' ὁ γέρων ἔπετα[ι·
πατήρ δὲ Κρονίων μολ[
πρὸς ὄμμα βαλὼν χερὶ [
τράπεζαν θεῶν ἐπ' ἀμβ[ρο
ἵνα οἱ κέχεται πιεῖν νε?[κταρ ...

ἔρχεται δ' ἐνιαυτῷ]οτ[
ὑπερτάταν [<.><~>]ονᾶ]εμ[
.[]-[

...

..[

..[

'On this pleasant day, the immortal horses of Poseidon are carrying Aiakos (?)... and the old man Nereus follows; and father Zeus, son of Cronus... having cast his eye ... with his hand... to the

(immortal?) table of the gods, where nectar is poured for him to drink... And there comes in a year... the highest...'

6. Traditionalising a 'new' form of dithyramb (Pindar fr. 70b, 1-29 = dithyramb 2 SM), 'The *Katabasis* of Heracles or Cerberus for the Thebans'.

Κ]ΑΤΑ[ΒΑΣΙΣ] ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥ[Σ] Η ΚΕΡΒΕΡΟΣ
ΘΗΒΑΙΟΙΣ

Α' Πρὶν μὲν ἔρπε σχοινοτένειά τ' αἰοιδᾶ
διθυράμβων
καὶ τὸ σᾶν κίβδηλον ἀνθρώποισιν ἀπὸ στομάτων,
διαπέπ[τ]α[νται.....]....[
κλοισι νέαι [...ε]ιδότες
οἷαν Βρομίου [τελε]τάν
καὶ παρὰ σκά[πτ]ον Διὸς Οὐρανίδαι
ἐν μεγάροις ἴσταντι. σεμνᾶ μὲν κατάρχει
Ματέρει πᾶρ μεγάλα ρόμβοι τυπάνων,
ἐν δὲ κέχ'λαδ[εν] κρόταλ' αἰθομένα τε
δαῖς ὑπὸ ξανθαῖσι πεύκαις·
ἐν δὲ Ναϊδῶν ἐρίγδουποι στοναχαί
μανίαι τ' ἀλαλαί τ' ὀρίνεται ριψαύχενι
σὺν κλόνῳ.
ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατῆς κεραυνὸς ἀμπνέων
πῦρ κεκίγη[ται τό τ'] Ἐνυαλίου
ἔγχος, ἀλκᾶεσσά [τ]ε Παλλάδο[ς] αἰγίς
μυρίων φθογγάζεται κλαγγαῖς δρακόντων.

ρίμφα δ' εἶσιν Ἄρτεμις οἰοπολάς ζεύ-
ξαισ' ἐν ὄργαῖς
Βακχίαις φῦλον λεόντων α[---]---
ὁ δὲ κηλεῖται χορευοίσαισι κα[ἰ] θη-
ρῶν ἀγέλαις. ἐμὲ δ' ἐξαίρετο[ν
κάρυκα σοφῶν ἐπέων
Μοῖσ' ἀνέστασ' Ἑλλάδι κα[λ]λ[ι]χόρω
εὐχόμενον βρισαρμάτοις ο[---] Θήβαις,
ἔνθα ποθ' Ἀρμονίαν? [φ]ά?μα γα[μετάν
Κάδ' μὲν ὑψη[λαῖ]ς πραπίδες[σι] λαχεῖν κεδ-
νάν...

'In the past the song of dithyrambs came forth stretched straight like a measuring-line, and the [letter *san* = /s/] came falsely from the mouths of men, but new... have been thrown open... knowing what kind of festival of Bromius the Uranidae hold also beside the sceptre of Zeus in their halls. In the presence of the venerable Great Mother, the whirlings of the tambourines lead off, there too the castanets ring, and the blazing torch beneath the yellow pine-trees; there too the loud-sounding groans of the Naiads and the ecstatic cries are aroused in the agitation of tossing necks. There too the all-powerful, fire-breathing thunderbolt is shaken, as is Enyalios' spear, and the intrepid aegis of Pallas rings out with the hisses of countless snakes.

And lightly comes solitary Artemis having yoked the race of lions in bacchic frenzy... and he [the god Dionysus] is charmed by the dancing herds even of wild beasts. And the Muse has appointed me as her chosen herald of wise verses for Hellas of the wide dancing spaces, boasting for Thebes, powerful in chariots, where, the story goes, Cadmus once won Harmonia as his cherished bride with his lofty mind'.

7. The relation between epinician and heroic song: Pindar, *Nem.* 8, 50-51:

ἦν γε μὰν ἐπικώμιος ὕμνος
δὴ πάλαι καὶ πρὶν γενέσθαι
τὰν Ἀδράστου τὰν τε Καδ' μείων ἔριν.

'Yes, there really was komastic song already long ago, before the strife of Adrastus and the Cadmeians began'.