

## Pindaric (meta)poetics - again

### 1. Pindar fr.209

(τούς φυσιολογοῦντας) ἀτελῆ σοφίας καρπὸν δρέπ(ειν).

‘Pindar said that the physical philosophers plucked the unripe fruit of wisdom’

### 2. P.3.112-4<sup>1</sup>

Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν’, ἀνθρώπων φάτις,

ἔξ ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοί

ἄρμωσαν, γινώσκωμεν·

We know of Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon, whom men speak of, from melodious words which skilled craftsmen join together.

### 3. O.6.1-4

Χρυσέας ὑποστάσαντες εὐ-

τειχεῖ προθύρῳ θαλάμου

κίονας ὡς ὅτε θαητὸν μέγαρον

πάξομεν· ἀρχομένου δ’ ἔργου πρόσωπον

χρῆ θέμεν τηλαυγές.

Raising the fine-walled porch of our dwelling with golden pillars, we will build, as it were, a marvellous hall; at the beginning of our work we must place a far-shining front.

### 4. P.6.5-9

Πυθιόνικος ἔνθ’ ὀλβίοισιν Ἐμμενίδαις

ποταμῖα τ’ Ἀκράγαντι καὶ μὰν Ξενοκράτει

έτοιμος ὕμνων θησαυρὸς ἐν πολυχρύσῳ

Ἄπολλωνία τετείχισται νάπα·

where, for the prosperous Emmenids and Acragas on the river, and especially for Xenocrates, a Pythian victor's treasure-house of songs has been built and is ready in the glen of Apollo, rich in gold.

### 5. Pindar Fr.150

μαντεύεο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ’ ἐγώ

Prophesy, Muse, and I shall interpret.

### 6. Pindar Fr.52k.25-40

ἐκράνθην ὑπὸ δαιμονίῳ τινί

λέχει πέλας ἀμβροσίῳ Μελίας

ἀγαυὸν καλάμῳ συνάγεν θρόον

μήδεσί τε φρενὸς ὑμ[ε]τέραν χάριν.

λιτανεύω, ἐκαβόλε,

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<sup>1</sup> Translations of the victory odes are by Diane Svarlien, 1990..

Μοισαίαις ἀν[α]τιθεὶς τέχνα[ι]σι  
χρηστήριον.[.]πῶλοντ[.(.)]ι  
By some might divine have I been prompted,  
hard by the immortal couch of Melia, to compose,  
for your sake, a noble strain with my flute, and  
with my fancy. I pray to you, O Far-darter,  
while I devote to the Muses' arts your oracular  
shrine, Apollo. (trans Sandys adapted)

**7a. N.3.40-5, 52-60**

συγγενεῖ δέ τις εὐδοξία μέγα βρῖθει.  
ὃς δὲ διδάκτ' ἔχει, ψεφεννὸς ἀνήρ  
ἄλλοτ' ἄλλα πνέων οὐ ποτ' ἀτρεκεῖ  
κατέβα ποδί, μυριαῶν δ' ἀρετῶν ἀτελεῖ νόω γεύεται.  
ξανθὸς δ' Ἀχιλεὺς τὰ μὲν μένων Φιλύρας ἐν δόμοις,  
παῖς ἐὼν ἄθυρε μεγάλα ἔργα·

A man with inborn glory has great weight; but he who has only learned is a man in  
darkness, breathing changeful purposes, never taking an unwavering step, but trying his  
hand at countless forms of excellence with his ineffectual thought. But golden-haired  
Achilles, staying in the home of Philyra as a child, played at great deeds . . .

...

λεγόμενον δὲ τοῦτο προτέρων  
ἔπος ἔχω βαθυμῆτα Χίρων τράφε λιθίνω  
Ἴάσον' ἔνδον τέγει, καὶ ἔπειτεν Ἀσκλαπιόν,  
τὸν φαρμάκων δίδαξε μαλακόχειρα νόμον·  
νύμφευσε δ' αὖτις ἀγλαόκολπον  
Νηρέος θύγατρα, γόνον τέ οἱ φέρτατον  
ἀτίταλλεν <ἐν> ἀρμένιοισι πᾶσι θυμὸν αὔξων,  
ὄφρα θαλασσίαις ἀνέμων ῥιπαῖσι πεμφθεὶς  
ὑπὸ Τροῖαν δορῖκτυπον ἀλαλὰν Λυκίων  
τε προσμένοι καὶ Φρυγῶν

Δαρδάνων τε . . .

have this story as it was told by earlier generations. Deep-thinking Cheiron reared Jason  
under his stone roof, and later Asclepius, whom he taught the gentle-handed laws of  
remedies. And he arranged a marriage for Peleus with the lovely-bosomed<sup>1</sup> daughter of  
Nereus, and brought up for her their incomparable child, nurturing his spirit with all  
fitting things, so that when the blasts of the sea-winds sent him to Troy, he might  
withstand the spear-clashing war-shout of the Lycians and Phrygians and Dardanians

**7b. O.10.15-21**

τράπε δὲ Κύ-

κνεια μάχα καὶ ὑπέρβιον  
Ἡρακλέα· πύκτας δ' ἐν Ὀλυμπιάδι νικῶν  
Ἴλα φερέτω χάριν  
Ἀγησίδαμος, ὡς  
Ἀχιλεῖ Πάτροκλος.  
θάξαις δέ κε φύντ' ἀρετᾶ ποτί  
πελώριον ὀρμάσαι κλέος ἀ-  
νήρ θεοῦ σὺν παλάμαις.

Battle with Cycnus set back even Heracles, strong and violent; let Hagesidamus, victorious as a boxer at Olympia, offer thanks to Ias, just as Patroclus did to Achilles. With the help of a god, one man can sharpen another who is born for excellence, and encourage him to tremendous achievement.

### 8. Aischylos *Agamemnon* 782-83

ἄγε, δῆ, βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ',  
Ἄτρεώς γένεθλον,  
πῶς σε προσεῖπω; πῶς σε σεβίξω  
μήθ' ὑπεράρας μήθ' ὑποκάμψας  
καιρὸν χάριτος;

Come, my king, sacker of Troy,

offspring of Atreus,

how shall I address you, how revere you

without exceeding or undershooting

the right mark of grace?

### 9. O.9.35-42

ἀπό μοι λόγον  
τοῦτον, στόμα, ῥῖψον·  
ἐπεὶ τό γε λοιδορῆσαι θεούς  
ἐχθρὰ σοφία, καὶ τὸ καυχᾶσθαι παρὰ καιρὸν  
μανίαισιν ὑποκρέκει.  
μὴ νῦν λαλάγει τὰ τοι-  
αῦτ'· ἔα πόλεμον μάχαν τε πᾶσαν  
χωρὶς ἀθανάτων· φέροις δὲ Πρωτογενείας  
ἄστει γλῶσσαν . . .

My mouth, fling this story away from me! Since to speak evil of the gods is a hateful skill, and untimely boasting is in harmony with madness. Do not babble of such things now. Keep war and all battles apart from the immortals. But lend your tongue to the city of Protogeneia . . .

**10a. P.9.103-5**

ἐμὲ δ' οὖν τις ἀοιδᾶν  
 δίψαν ἀκειόμενον πρᾶσσει χρέος, αὐτίς ἐγεῖραι  
 καὶ παλαιὰν δόξαν ἑῶν προγόνων·  
 But while I am quenching my thirst for song, someone exacts an unpaid debt from me, to  
 awake again the ancient glory of his ancestors as well.

**10b. N.3.1-12**

ᾠ πότνια Μοῖσα, μᾶτερ ἀμετέρα, λίσσομαι,  
 τὰν πολυξέναν ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι  
 ἴκεο Δωρίδα νᾶσον Αἴγινα· ὕδατι γάρ  
 μένοντ' ἐπ' Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρύων τέκτονες  
 κώμων νεανίαί, σέθεν ὅπα μαιόμενοι.  
 διψῆ δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου,  
 ἀθλονικία δὲ μάλιστ' ἀοιδᾶν φιλεῖ,  
 στεφάνων ἀρετᾶν τε δεξιωτάταν ὀπαδόν·  
 τᾶς ἀφθονίαν ὅπαζε μήτιος ἀμᾶς ἄπο·  
 ἄρχε δ' οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι, θύγατερ,  
 δόκιμον ὕμνον· ἐγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ νιν ὀάροις  
 λύρα τε κοινάσομαι.  
 Queenly Muse, our mother! I entreat you, come in the sacred month of Nemea to the  
 much-visited Dorian island of Aegina. For beside the waters of the Asopus young men  
 are waiting, craftsmen of honey-voiced victory-songs, seeking your voice. Various deeds  
 thirst for various things; but victory in the games loves song most of all, the most  
 auspicious attendant of garlands and of excellence. Send an abundance of it, from my  
 wisdom; begin, divine daughter, an acceptable hymn to the ruler of the cloud-filled sky,  
 and I will communicate it by the voices of those singers and by the lyre.

**11. N.3.26-8**

θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἀλλοδαπὰν  
 ἄκραν ἐμὸν πλόον παραμείβει;  
 Αἰακῶ σε φαμί γένει τε Μοῖσαν φέρειν.  
 My spirit, towards what foreign headland are you turning my voyage? I bid you to  
 summon the Muse in honor of Aeacus and his race.

**12. O.2.1-2**

Ἄναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι,  
 τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;  
 Hymns that rule the lyre,  
 What god, what hero, what man shall we celebrate?

**13. Hom.Od.22.347-8**

αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί, θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἶμας  
παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν·  
I am self-taught, and a god put all manner of songs in my mind.

**14. O.6.1-4**

Χρυσέας ὑποστάσαντες εὐ-  
τειχεῖ προθύρῳ θαλάμου  
κίονας ὡς ὅτε θαητὸν μέγαρον  
πάξομεν· ἀρχομένου δ' ἔργου πρόσωπον  
χρῆ θέμεν τηλαυγές.  
Raising the fine-walled porch of our dwelling with golden pillars, we will build, as it  
were, a marvellous hall; at the beginning of our work we must place a far-shining front.

**15. N.4.33-4**

τὰ μακρὰ δ' ἐξενέπειν ἐρύκει με τεθμός  
ᾧραί τ' ἐπειγόμενα·  
The laws of song and the hurrying hours prevent me from telling a long story.

**16. P.11.41-4**

Μοῖσα, τὸ δὲ τεόν, εἰ μισθοῖο συνέθευ παρέχειν  
φωνὰν ὑπάργυρον, ἄλλοτ' ἄλλα χρῆ ταρασσέμεν  
ἢ πατρὶ Πυθονίκῳ  
τό γέ νυν ἢ Θρασυδάῳ . . .  
Muse, it is your task, if you undertook to lend your voice for silver, to let it flit now this  
way, now that: now to the father, who was a Pythian victor, now to his son Thrasydaeus.

**17. P.9.103-5**

ἐμὲ δ' οὖν τις ἀοιδᾶν  
δίψαν ἀκειόμενον πρᾶσσει χρέος, αὖτις ἐγεῖραι  
καὶ παλαιὰν δόξαν ἐῶν προγόνων·  
But while I am quenching my thirst for song, someone exacts an unpaid debt from me, to  
awake again the ancient glory of his ancestors as well.

**18. N.4.79-88**

εἰ δέ τοι  
μάτρῳ μ' ἔτι Καλλικλεῖ κελεύεις  
στάλαν θέμεν Παρίου λίθου λευκοτέραν·  
ὁ χρυσὸς ἐψόμενος  
αὐγὰς ἔδειξεν ἀπάσας, ὕμνος δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν  
ἐργμάτων βασιλεῦσιν ἰσοδαίμονα τεύχει

φῶτα· κείνος ἀμφ' Ἰχέροντι ναιετάων ἐμάν  
γλῶσσαν εὐρέτω κελαδῆτιν, Ἰορσοτριάνα  
ἴν' ἐν ἀγῶνι βαρυκτύπου

θάλησε Κορινθίοις σελίνοις·

But if in honor of your uncle Callicles you bid me to build a monument whiter than Parian stone, know that gold, when it is refined, shows all radiance, and a song in honor of noble deeds makes a man equal in fortune to kings. May that man, who dwells beside the stream of Acheron, hear my voice singing, where in the contest of the loud-roaring wielder of the trident he flourished with crowns of Corinthian wild celery.

**19a. N.3.26-8**

θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἀλλοδαπάν

ἄκραν ἐμὸν πλόον παραμείβειαι;

Αἰακῶ σε φαμί γένει τε Μοῖσαν φέρειν.

My spirit, towards what foreign headland are you turning my voyage? I bid you to summon the Muse in honor of Aeacus and his race.

**19b. I.6.19-21**

ὑμμε τ', ὧ χρυσάρματοι Αἰακίδαι,

τέθμιόν μοι φαμί σαφέστατον ἔμμεν

τάνδ' ἐπιστείχοντα νᾶσον ῥαινέμεν εὐλογίαις.

And as for you, sons of Aeacus with your golden chariots, I say that it is my clearest law to sprinkle you with praises whenever I set foot on this island.

**20. P.11.38-40**

ἦρ', ὧ φίλοι, κατ' ἀμευσίπορον τρίοδον ἐδινάθην,

ὀρθὰν κέλευθον ἰῶν

τὸ πρὶν· ἦ μέ τις ἄνεμος ἔξω πλόου

ἔβαλεν, ὡς ὅτ' ἄκατον ἐνναλίαν;

My friends, was I whirled off the track at a shifting fork in the road, although I had been traveling on a straight path before? Or did some wind throw me off course, like a skiff on the sea?

**21. N.3.26-8**

θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἀλλοδαπάν

ἄκραν ἐμὸν πλόον παραμείβειαι;

Αἰακῶ σε φαμί γένει τε Μοῖσαν φέρειν.

My spirit, towards what foreign headland are you turning my voyage? I bid you to summon the Muse in honor of Aeacus and his race.

**22. O.13.93-7**

ἐμὲ δ' εὐθὺν ἀκόντων

ἰέντα ῥόμβον παρὰ σκοπὸν οὐ χρή

τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα καρτύνειν χεροῖν.

Μοῖσαις γὰρ ἀγλαοθρόνοις ἐκῶν

Ὀλιγαιθίδαισιν τ' ἔβαν ἐπίκουρος.

But I, while casting the whirling javelins with straight aim, must not miss the mark, as I speed many shafts with the strength of my hands.

**23. P.10.51-4**

κώπαν σχάσον, ταχὺ δ' ἄγκυραν ἔρεισον χθονί

πρώραθε, χοιράδος ἄλκαρ πέτρας.

ἐγκωμίων γὰρ ἄωτος ὕμνων

ἐπ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ὅτε μέλισσα θύνει λόγον.

Hold the oar! Quick, let the anchor down from the prow to touch the bottom, to protect us from the rocky reef. The choicest hymn of praise flits from theme to theme, like a bee.

**24. P. 1.81-2**

καιρὸν εἰ φθέγξαιο, πολλῶν πείρατα συντανύσαις

ἐν βραχεῖ, μείων ἔπεται μῶμος ἀνθρώ-

πων· ἀπὸ γὰρ κόρος ἀμβλύνει

If you speak in due proportion, twisting the strands of many themes into a brief compass, less blame follows from men.

**25. O.6.86-7**

ἀνδράσιν αἰχματαῖσι πλέκων

ποικίλον ὕμνον

while I weave my embroidered song for heroic spearmen

**26. N.7.77-9**

εἶρειν στεφάνους ἐλαφρόν, ἀναβάλεο· Μοῖσά τοι

κολλᾶ χρυσὸν ἐν τε λευκὸν ἐλέφανθ' ἀμᾶ

καὶ λείριον ἀνθεμον ποντίας ὑφελοῖσ' ἔέρσας.

It is easy to weave garlands. Strike up the song! The Muse welds together gold and white ivory with coral, the lily she has stolen from beneath the ocean's dew.

**27. N.10.19-20**

βραχὺ μοι στόμα πάντ' ἀναγή-

σασθ', ὅσων Ἀργεῖον ἔχει τέμενος

μοῖραν ἐσλῶν· ἔστι δὲ καὶ κόρος ἀνθρώ-

πων βαρὺς ἀντιάσαι·

My mouth is too small to tell the whole story of all the noble things in which the precinct of Argos has a share. And there is also the satiety of men, which is grievous to encounter.

### 28. Aristotle *Poetics* 1451a

Μῦθος δ' ἐστὶν εἷς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἓνα ᾗ· πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄπειρα τῶ ἐνὶ συμβαίνει, ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδέν ἐστιν ἓν· οὕτως δὲ καὶ πράξεις ἐνός πολλαί εἰσιν, ἐξ ὧν μία οὐδεμία γίνεται πράξις. διὸ πάντες εἰκόασιν ἀμαρτάνειν ὅσοι τῶν ποιητῶν Ἡρακλήϊδα Θησηΐδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα πεποιήκασιν· οἴονται γὰρ, ἐπεὶ εἷς ἦν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς, ἓνα καὶ τὸν μῦθον εἶναι προσήκειν.

A plot is not single, as some think, if it is about a single person. For many and limitless things could happen to a single person, some of which make no single entity. Likewise there are many act of a single person which do not make up a single action. For this reason it seems that all those poets are wrong who have composed a *Herakleis* or a *Theseis* or poems of the sort. For they think that, since Herakles was a single man, so the story should be single.

### 29. Pindar fr.94b.33-40

ἐμὲ δὲ πρέπει  
παρθενήϊα μὲν φρονεῖν  
γλώσσα τε λέγεσθαι·  
ἀνδρὸς δ' οὔτε γυναικός, ὧν θάλασσις ἔγ-  
κειμαι, χρῆ μ[ε] λαθεῖν ἀοιδᾶν πρόσφορον.  
πιστὰ δ' Ἀγασικλέει  
μάρτυς ἦλυθον ἐς χορόν  
ἐσλοῖς τε γονεῦσιν . . .

For myself, maidenly thought and maidenly speech are fitting.  
Neither for man nor for woman, whose children are  
dear to me, ought I to forget a fitting strain. As a  
faithful witness, have I come to the dance, in honour  
of Agasicles and his noble parents . . . (trans Sandys adapted)

### 30. O.9.81-2

εἶην εὐρησιεπῆς ἀναγεῖσθαι  
πρόσφορος ἐν Μοισᾶν δίφρῳ·  
May I be a suitable finder of words as I move onward in the Muses' chariot

### 31. N.8.19-22

ἴσταμαι δὴ ποσσὶ κούφοις, ἀμπνέων τε πρίν τι φάμεν.  
πολλὰ γὰρ πολλᾶ λέλεκται, νεαρὰ δ' ἔξευ-  
ρόντα δόμεν βασάνῳ

ἐς ἔλεγχον, ἅπας κίνδυνος· ὄψον δὲ λόγοι φθονεροῖσιν . . .

I stand with feet lightly poised, catching my breath before I speak. For many stories have  
been told in many ways. But to find something new and submit it to the touchstone for  
testing is danger itself. Words are a dainty morsel for the envious . . .

### 32. Lysias 3.10

οὕτω δὲ σφόδρα ἠπορούμην ὅ τι χρῆσαιμην, ᾧ βουλή, τῇ τούτου παρανομία, ὥστε ἔδοξέ μοι κράτιστον εἶναι ἀποδημῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πόλεως· λαβὼν δὲ τὸ μειράκιον (ἅπαντα γὰρ δεῖ τὰληθῆ λέγειν) ᾠχόμεν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως.  
So confused was I how to deal with this man's lawless behaviour, council, that I decided that it was best for me go abroad from the city. And taking the boy (I must tell the whole truth) I left the city.

#### Some modern sources

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