

**The Immortalized Poet:  
The Presence of the Poet in Pindar's Second Olympian Ode**

by

Taylor Mckinnon

Senior Thesis, Department of Classical Studies,

Brandeis University

**The Immortalized Poet:  
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Senior Honors Thesis

Presented to  
The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences  
Brandeis University

Undergraduate Program in Classical Studies  
Joel Christensen, Advisor

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

by  
Taylor Mckinnon  
May 2017

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### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to extend my gratitude to Pindar (even though I am not so sure he will receive it) for composing poetry that is not only wonderfully challenging and complicated, but also beautifully written and inspiring to read. I similarly appreciate the efforts of all poets from all ages for putting their works of art into the world for people like me to pick apart. Thank you to my professors in the English Department of Brandeis University: Laura Quinney, John Burt, and Paul Morrison, for teaching me how to properly read poetry.

I would also like to thank Joel Christensen, my advisor at the Department of Classical Studies at Brandeis, for being an always-patient mentor, even though I made him read Pindar. I am, also, forever indebted to Cheryl Walker and Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, also of the Department of Classical Studies, for supporting me and my classical education and for being the most wonderful faculty I could ever ask for.

And to Cierra Morson and Georgie Contreras for being my voices of reason, in spite of my extraneousness at all times, thank you.

### Preface

The idea to write about Pindar, a particularly difficult poet in Greek and in translation, came to me while taking two different poetry classes. First, we were reading Shakespeare in my survey of poetry class, taught by Laura Quinney of the English Department at Brandeis. We read Sonnet 18: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?/ Thou art more lovely and more temperate" (1-2). In spite of the beauty of the first two lines, the couplet at the end stuck out to me: "So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (13-14). This sonnet, famous for its perfect Valentine's Day card language, takes an incredible turn at the couplet. The poet is no longer speaking about the "eternal summer" of the subject that "shall not fade" (9), he is talking about the power of the poem to make that happen. Not only does the assignment of power give the poem agency in commemorating the subject, but it also shows the attitude of the poet. Shakespeare essentially tells the reader that since he has written this poem, the subject will remain relevant, and that is rather rude of him, at least I thought it was. Then, I found an ancient counterpart to these lines, though far subtler, but equally as shady, in Pindar in a Greek Lyric class. Pindar, in his poems, which were paid for and highly sought after, was talking about himself in his poetry. Olympian 2 followed the same theme of Sonnet 18 most closely as it not only commemorated a mortal man, but it also had the same arrogance. The arrogance is what drew me to Pindar the most, but that his poetry felt so modern when it was written in the Archaic Age of Greece, was what made him irresistible. Pindar's poetry is as timeless as Shakespeare's and should be treated as such.

When reading through much of the scholarship around Pindar, specifically in Frank Nisetich or even Elroy Bundy, there was a strong urge to place Pindar against the Homeric epics and read his poetry using the information surrounding the *Iliad* rather than focusing on the body of work as his individual pieces of art. In even more articles, like that of Claude Calame, have focused on creating a comparative study of the effects in Pindar and other genres. Though this is very informative and useful work, the poeticism of Pindar is looked over and ignored by the scholarship's need to find truths in the poetry. This is why I, following a closer model to how I read Shakespeare or T. S. Eliot, focused on the poem itself to understand its intentions and creations, rather than looking too much at the world that surrounds it. Pindar is, as many ancient writers considered him to be, a genius writer and impressive poet.

Although I am not Pindar, nor do I have his genius, all the translations of his poetry are my own and attempt to capture the structure and intention of the poem as closely as possible, to preserve what the essay itself focuses on: how the structure and language creates the poetic power and upon whom it is used.

### Introduction

Ancient Greek lyric poetry, named for its compositional dependence on the musical accompaniment of the lyre, was occasional poetry composed to be performed for an audience. The genre is perhaps well known because of poets such as Sappho, Alcman, and Archilochus.<sup>1</sup> during the Archaic Age of Greece. This type of poetry was shorter than the Homeric and Hesiodic epics and tended to deal with more personal subject matter. Being outside of the oral tradition, lyric poetry, which were written works, had many key differences in the way it was composed in comparison to the epics. The personal lyric poetry of Sappho, Alceus, and Anacreon are few among many popular poems written in the long span of lyric history. Lyric poetry, written purely as individual poems as opposed to the lyric of Greek Drama, occupied the period between about 650 to 450 BCE and was divided into two types: personal and choral lyric.<sup>2</sup> Choral poetry had an added feature of having a chorus to aid in its performance.

Pindar, the subject of this essay, was a native of Boeotia, born around 518 BCE.<sup>3</sup> His earliest poem, the Tenth Pythian Ode, was written in 498 BCE when he was about twenty years old and his rather prolific career lasted into his old age as his last poem was written in

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<sup>1</sup> The Alexandrian Editors included 9 lyric, or melic, poets in their canon: Alcman, Sappho, Alcaeus, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides. See "Lyric Poetry." In *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, edited by Howatson, M. C.. : Oxford University Press, 2011. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199548545.001.0001/acref-9780199548545-e-1863>.

<sup>2</sup>M. M. Willcock, ed., *Pindar's Victory Odes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

446 BCE<sup>4</sup> when he was about seventy-two years old. Aristophanes of Byzantium, one of the Alexandrian scholars who studied the lyric poets, divided Pindar's works into seventeen books.<sup>5</sup> Of these seventeen, the only to survive are four books of *epinikia*, or victory odes, which celebrate victors of major panhellenic games during Pindar's life.<sup>6</sup> Pindar was not the originator of the genre of *epinikia*, nor was he the only one at his time writing them. Simonides, of an earlier generation and considered as the founder of *epinikia*, and Bacchylides, a rival of Pindar's, were both prolific epinikian writers. Bacchylides did not, however, receive the same praise as Pindar. Simonides was a popular performer and predecessor to Pindar.<sup>7</sup> Unlike his contemporaries, Pindar has a much larger surviving body of work of forty-five poems,<sup>8</sup> making him the primary representative of the epinikian genre. Apart from his present popularity—Pindar was highly sought after by not only his contemporaries and used later as educational texts and in many references of other famous poets and dramatists,<sup>9</sup> but was commemorated even later by such figures as Horace.<sup>10</sup>

Pindar's Victory Odes are widely believed to have been performance pieces, or choral poetry, mainly because of the inclusion of first person in his poems. Another idea is

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<sup>4</sup> "Pindar." In *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, edited by Howatson, M. C. : Oxford University Press, 2011.

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199548545.001.0001/acref-9780199548545-e-2410>.

<sup>5</sup> These divisions included: hymns, paeans, two books of dithyrambs, two books of prosodia, three books of partheneia, two books of hyporchemata, encomia, threnoi, and four books of epinikia. See further description of the division in Willcock, *Pindar's Victory Odes*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Note 4.

<sup>7</sup> Willcock, *Pindar's Victory Odes*, vii.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 26

<sup>10</sup> See Horace *Odes* 4. 2. 1-9.



that he composed the poems to be “portable” in order to have them available for performance in several places<sup>11</sup>. Although, we can never be entirely sure about the preferred method of Pindar's delivery, there exists in his body of poetry, specifically in the Second Olympian, plenty of evidence of performance, though the key to understanding the Ode lies in reading or listening to it more than once, as I argue in Chapter 3.

The Second Olympian Ode is a very long and convoluted poem, the assumption is that it was a performance piece because of the many uses of the first person plural, like in the priamel of the poem *κελαθήσομεν* (“we shall sing”) (2). Many scholars have noted the performance quality of the first-person future use in choral poetry and other performed pieces; it is given the name “performative future” by Claude Calame.<sup>12</sup> A disregard exists, however, for the direct address to the poem in the Second Olympian Ode that expands this reading of the first-person future use. Considering that no one but the poet himself has a direct link to the poem to know who the “we” in the first person future is, it does not matter in my analysis if the poem was performed by a chorus or not since it is stated within the poem itself that it is a performance, sung with the accompaniment of the lyre (the poem is referred to as the Ἄναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι or “Lyre-Ruling hymns” in the very first line).

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<sup>11</sup> Hayden Pelliccia, “Simonides, Pindar and Bacchylides,” *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*, 2009, 245.

<sup>12</sup> See Calame, Claude. “From Choral Lyric to Tragic Stasimon: The Pragmatics of Women's Voices,” *Arion* 3, 1994-5, 144: “The future of “here and now,” a future that is above all referential and performative.”

This is to prioritize “intrapoetic” elements of the poem rather than elements considered from an outside view.<sup>13</sup>

The Second Olympian Ode is one of two poems, along with the third Olympian Ode, written to celebrate a victory of Theron of Akragas. Theron was a tyrant of Akragas around 489-473 BCE known for his enrichment of the city as well as his success in the Olympic games.<sup>14</sup> Pindar commemorates Theron in the second Olympian Ode for his victory in the *tethrippon* in 476.<sup>15</sup> This ode is particularly famous for its vivid description of the underworld specifically, the Isles of the Blessed and the precise descriptions of the ways mortals may enter them. It is useful to understand the world surrounding the poem and why it has been studied by many for so long because poems do not exist in a vacuum and are a product of their environment as much as they are a product of the poet’s artistic genius. It is also paramount to my argument in Chapter 1, that the underworld and mortality is a focus of the Ode, as it provides a large body for the interpretation of how time and mortality function together to create immortality.

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<sup>13</sup> Asya C. Sigelman points out that the poems themselves contain enough information to support the idea that the poems were performed: “It is therefore irrelevant for the present work whether the poet himself sang the song or whether it was performed by a chorus; the wording of the odes consistently implies that we are to imagine the poet (in the intrapoetic sense of the word) singing, whether or not the actual performance was choral.” (Asya C. Sigelman, *Pindar’s Poetics of Immortality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11). It is the focus of this essay to focus on the ideas that the poem brings out itself, rather than having an extrapoetic focus as many scholars do, also noted by Sigelman.

<sup>14</sup> See Note 4.

<sup>15</sup> Pindar and William H. Race, *Olympian odes: Pythian odes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 60-61.

Within the complex structure of the Second Olympian Ode, as in most of his odes, Pindar's intentions are not explicitly stated and make the reader (or listener) do quite a bit of work. Because Pindar wrote this poem and expressly stated within the poem that it is for Theron<sup>16</sup>, the reader can make the assumption that this was a commissioned poem. Considering this fact—that Pindar was meant to commemorate this victory—as well as the overwhelming presence of time, fate, and the underworld in this poem, it is evident that the immortalization of itself and its subject is the intention of the poem. The immortalizing power of the poem is a recurring theme across Pindar's victory odes as pointed out by many scholars including Frank J. Nisetich and Asya C. Sigelman.<sup>17</sup> There is, however, an issue with naming Theron, though the most obvious and stated subject of the poem as the sole recipient of immortalization, when the poet is just as present as he is. The poem provides many parallels between the poet himself and Theron, thus, it is fair to assess this poem as a monument not only to Theron, but to the poet as well. In order to do this, I first establish the poem's purpose by understanding the use of time and related immortal figures to create the idea of immortality. The poem subjects the immortals to time in order to free

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<sup>16</sup> See line 5-6: Θήρωνα δὲ τετραορίας ἔνεκα νικαφόρου γεγωνητέον ("But, one must proclaim, Theron, because of his victory bringing four horses").

<sup>17</sup>Nisetich in his article, "Immortality in Akragas", argues that there are two ways in which the poet uses the poem as an immortalizing power: "Two considerations certify that Pindar is thinking of the power of poetry at this point in the ode. One is the imagery employed: the truest beacon-light suggests poetry as the guarantor of immortal fame....The second reason we can be certain that poetry and its immortalizing power have a place in Pindar's thoughts at lines 53-56 is provided by the manner in which he continues to develop his praise of Theron's liberality." Frank J. Nisetich, "Immortality in Akragas: Poetry and Religion in Pindar's Second Olympian Ode," *Classical Philology* 83, no. 1 (1988): 6-7. Similarly, Sigelman talks about the conversion of the "'real,' extrapoetic world" into "poetic material" in order to achieve immortality (Sigelman, *Pindar's Poetics of Immortality*, 10).

mortals from it, thereby immortalizing them. I attempt, using the structure and content of the poem, to prove the poet's intentions of not only immortalizing Theron, but also himself in a subtle process of weaving the two of them together.

## Chapter 1 **The Immortalizing Power of the Poem**

Much of the structure of the Second Olympian Ode is dependent on the opening lines, a method not uncommon in lyric poetry, as Elroy Bundy would understand this as a "summary priamel" which he asserts as a device used in choral poetry to select "some one object for special attention."<sup>18</sup> The object is the subject of the poem, or in this case the man. This priamel, which Bundy does not mention in his descriptions of priamels, also serves as an invocation; the poet asks the *Ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι* (Lyre-ruling hymns) a question: *τίνα θεόν, τίνα ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;* (Which god, which hero, which man shall we sing of?) (2). These questions are ones that the poem itself is attempting to answer and thus anticipate its overall structure.

In the list of three, seemingly in order of importance, the god comes first as an echo of his role in society and perhaps in the poem, and the man comes last because he is, after all, mortal, although the Greek rhetorical practice is to put the more significant thing at the end of the list. The poem promptly answers this question with *ἦτοι Πίσσα μὲν Διός* (3) carrying on a conversation with the poet, and itself simultaneously. "Surely" Zeus is the god of the poem, as he is the king of the gods, and the god of Pisa, in which Olympia lies.

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<sup>18</sup> Elroy L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 5.

Zeus is an obvious candidate for this position given his credentials and his connection to the games, but what connection does he have to the poem, or to the poet? There is no obvious connection, hence the ἦτοι, as the poet is filling in the information with the logical and of course, distracting information as it is almost immediately contradicted. The poet does not pray to Zeus for answers, nor does Zeus provide him with these answers. It is not so explicit that the poet prays to this elusive god as much as he asks it a question, but a question sent above is a type of prayer.

In spite of the fact that he gives answers to the three questions he asks, the poet almost immediately gives alternative answers to them, challenging his reliability to state clearly his intentions and purpose. To complicate the seemingly simple and clear answer to “which god” just a few lines down, the poet prays to the child of Kronos, removing Zeus' name, asking the god to ἄρουραν ἔτι πατρίαν σφίσιν κόμισσον (“take care of the tilled, ancestral land”) (14) a request not at all similar to the request for information from the poem, but another task that can only be fulfilled by someone with access to the divine. Just as the poet asks the poem for help solving an issue, echoing the cultural implications of divine inspiration in poetry, the poet also mentions another god in his prayer in order to begin setting up parallels between elements of the poem, specifically their dependence on time, and Kronos' relationship to Zeus. These parallels also draw attention to the contention for divine rule between the gods, time, and the possibly divine poem.

There are several ways the poem is the overarching power in this celebration of Theron, rather than Zeus, or Kronos, or time, specifically because the poet directly addresses it in the form of a prayer or request. From the very first line, the poet distinguishes himself from the poem by praying to it. That the poet invokes the poem is what brings this line beyond personification, ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι, Τίνα...κελαδήσομεν. The word κελαδήσομεν brings the same type of language from the epics as it asks the poem to sing and further, it asks the poem to sing together with the poet. This language deifies the recipient of the question or plea. Zeus receives a plea to perpetuate the fortune of Theron's family. This is also evident in the passage detailing Thetis' plea to Zeus on behalf of her son's admittance into the Isles of the Blessed: Ἀχιλλέα τ' ἔνευκ', ἐπεὶ Ζηνὸς ἦτορ λιταῖς ἔπεισε, μάτηρ ("And Achilles; after she persuaded the heart of Zeus with supplications, his mother brought him") (79-80). This is a plea to Zeus, whom the poet establishes as the main god of the poem, reiterating the strength of the plea. The Isles of the Blessed are also the last source of immortality in this poem, it is past the Κρόνου τύρσιν so it is outside of Zeus' father's control, which means it has severed connections to Zeus' family, and it is the ultimate goal for the heroes seeking reward and for those who did their due diligence to secure their place in this immortal realm. The recurrence of requests to gods and that the poet addresses the poem directly for the same reason continues to draw parallels between the gods, allowing the poem itself to be considered in this category.

Outside of the parallels with the other major gods of the poem, the poem is the means of immortalization both literally and in reality. A poem, performed and commissioned as it might have been, was for the purpose of celebrating the victory of the subject, Theron. Within the poem, time is overcome by many figures; the poem, the poet, and the victor are all surpassing time, or at least attempting to, using each other as stepping-stones. The cultural implication of immortality to the Greeks was one that existed outside of time, or experienced it as a unified occurrence of past, present, and future. The poem purposefully unifies the past, present, and future for the reader or listener, in performance and within itself.<sup>19</sup> Zeus, at the beginning of the poem, is asked and tasked with watching over Theron's family land, creating a space for time in the poem. Time is limiting to the idea of immortality. Placing Kronos, a suspiciously close-sounding word to χρόνος, in the spectrum of Theron's family begins to complicate Theron's claim for perpetuity. The placement of time applies the idea of finitude to him and his family. Kronos, however, is not the god of the poem, as this line is mentioning Zeus through his parents, and he occupies that category on account of his location in the priamel and his son's involvement in the institution.

The poem redistributes the limits of time from mortals to immortals, as demonstrated by the relationship the poem has with Zeus. Mentioning Zeus through his parents specifically subjects him to time as it shows how he changes, unlike the more static

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<sup>19</sup>Sigelman, *Pindar's Poetics of Immortality*, 3.

figures present. In this, he is Κρόνιε παῖ Ῥέας (12), whereas he is first introduced as the father of Herakles, and later is called Ζεὺς πατὴρ μάλα (27). The diminished version of Zeus, as a child, promotes the poem and its subject as independent from time where he is subjected to it. Towards the end of the poem Kronos, instead of Zeus, is not mentioned by name and referred to in terms of his relationship to Rhea, as the πόσις Ῥέας ("husband of Rhea") and is here called the πατὴρ μέγας ("great father") (76), much like Zeus, the former πατὴρ μάλα and χρόνος the πάντων πατὴρ (17). Connections are clearly meant to be drawn between Kronos and Χρόνος as the similarity of the two words gives these lines a subtle connection. This connection, however, in performance, would likely have been established with little effort. Further parallels are to be drawn among all three of these ruling powers because of their roles as "great fathers" and repeated across the poem. Although Kronos is historically not amalgamated with time as he is in the modern age there is much to be said about his presence in the poem alongside it. Kronos appears only lines away from time and connecting the two binds them together, just as Kronos is bound to Zeus by way of his family ties. In the same sentence he is called the "great father:" πατὴρ ...μέγας ...πόσις ὁ πάντων Ῥέας ὑπέρτατον ἐχοίσας θρόνον ("The great father... the husband of Rhea who holds the uppermost throne of all") (76-77).

Furthermore, the poem mentions Kronos in conjunction with the occupation of a great seat, just like Zeus is when he is introduced through his father: ὦ Κρόνιε παῖ Ῥέας, ἔδος Ὀλύμπου νέμων ("Child of Kronos and Rhea, inhabiting a seat on Olympus") (12),



and with the obvious connection of the genitive use of 'Ρέας, who is identical in each line. Further still, the poem uses the word πάντων here, just as it does when mentioning time as the πάντων πατήρ (17). Time is heavily mixed up with Zeus and his father, two figures who are woven together to the point where they are almost identical. Time, however, is latched on to these gods, not to Theron and certainly not to the poem because of its purpose in general.

The poem effectively dethrones the gods by contrasting the changing role of Zeus and Kronos with the unchanging role of the poem. That time affects Kronos and Zeus and, in a different way, not the poem, establishes that time is not a ruling force in the world of the poem. Overcoming time's power is the first step to immortality and the poem binds it together with these gods in order to establish this subordination. The poem's many gnomic statements, which are purposefully convoluted, give an understanding to this need to overcome time. In the line Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ δύναιτο θέμεν ἔργων τέλος ("Time, the father of all things, is able to make the completion of deeds undone") (17), time is given a power over deeds, but the line suggests the recurring theme of destroying finitude.. Although time is bound together with Kronos and Zeus, this line twists its understanding of time and gives it agency to destroy the bounds which it also created. Time does not appear to be an easy thing to overcome, especially in this convoluted sentence (15-17):

τῶν δὲ πεπραγμένων  
 ἐν δίκῃ τε καὶ παρὰ δίκαν ἀποίητον οὐδ' ἄν  
 Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ

δύναιτο θέμεν ἔργων τέλος·

In the right and besides what's right, if nothing is undone,  
Time, the father of all things, is able to make the completion of deeds undone.

According to this passage, time will seemingly come out victorious over all things no matter what is right. But, in another address marked by the use of the first person *τελευτάσομεν*, the poet and the poem, as the first-person plural includes many parties, reclaims finitude from time as an affliction for mortals (30-33):

ἦτοι βροτῶν γε κέκριται  
πειρασ οὐ τι θανάτου,  
οὐδ' ἡσύχιμον ἀμέραν ὅποτε παῖδ' ἀελίου  
ἀτειρεῖ σὺν ἀγαθῷ τελευτάσομεν·

Truly, indeed, the end of death for mortals  
Is not at all set apart  
When the day, child of the sun, is not peaceful,,  
With untroubled goodness we shall complete it.

Attributing the idea of an end to mortals makes this understanding of time overcoming deeds more comprehensible as it sets mortals and their finiteness against the unending existence of the immortals, who should live outside of time, but are subjected to it in this case. Since this poem is meant to be setting Theron apart from other mortals and propelling him towards the luxuries of the immortals that the king of the gods is no longer party to, establishing that time is a constraint on regular men and unbinding Theron from this constraint throughout the poem creates the desired effect of immortalizing him, in spite of the many obstacles it might face.

Unbinding a mortal man from time is not an easy task, and it is *performed* in many ways by the poem, which has the power over time, now, to dictate who can and cannot be immortal. In order to dethrone time completely the poem disrupts the temporality of the poem, reversing the power dynamic. Mortals are permitted by invite only to the Isles of the Blessed, death's last stop. For the good men who οἴτινες ἔχαιρον εὐνορκίαις ("rejoice in fidelity to oaths") (66) it is easy to pass over to this perpetual plane of perfection, but for not so good men, they must persevere, ἐστρίς ἐκατέρωθι μείναντες... παρὰ Κρόνου τύρσιν ("remaining three times on either side toward the tower of Kronos") (68-70). The mention of Kronos, again, here creates another limit in time for men who have not yet earned their place in paradise as they have to remain "three times," which is a set amount of time. Once in paradise, they have passed Kronos' jurisdiction in a place of perfection rather than time constrained struggle. This is also at the judgment of Rhadamanthys, not Kronos or Zeus, even though Rhadamanthys sits next to the one who hold the "uppermost throne of all." It is his judgment that allows access, which is disregarding Kronos' role as the ruler of the Isles of the Blessed.

The poem uses generations to fracture further the temporality of the poem, subordinating time to the ode. The heroes who are mentioned in the Isles of the Blessed are Πηλεύς τε καὶ Κάδμος ἐν τοῖσιν ἀλέγονται ("Peleus and Kadmos are considered in these") (78). Kadmos is mentioned through his daughters' struggles in the first portion of the poem and Peleus is mentioned before his child is. Kadmos is mentioned as a means to

introduce the struggle and reward theme. His daughters are perfect examples for the generational struggle that results in the immortalization of the family as a whole. This generational struggle is repeated in the myth of Oidipous and in Peleus as well, and creates a parallel with Peleus in the poem structurally. The mention of Achilles is sandwiched by his parents in a continuation of that line: Πηλεὺς... Ἀχιλλέα τ' ἔνευκ', ἐπεὶ Ζηνὸς ἦτορ λιταῖς ἔπεισε, μάτηρ (78-80): Using generations to introduce heroes, at first by the younger generation, and then by the older generation, structures the past and present in a simultaneous occurrence. The structure: parent, child, child, parent is presented in chiasmus, which reiterates the structure of the poem itself, as it is an extended chiasmic response to the priamel. This distorts time completely for the reader. From the beginning of the poem, the poem's temporality is opened up to encompass the past as it introduces three generations of Zeus' family, his father, himself, and his son. There is an occurrence of the past and present in both the mortal and immortal worlds in the prayer for Zeus to protect Theron's πατρίαν land. As Sigelman points out

Poetic-prophetic vision is the guiding force of Pindar's poetics, and the key to much of the complex structure and uncanny imagery of his odes is the realization that we are being made privy here to the poet-prophet's synoptic vision of past, present, and future.<sup>20</sup>

She, in her argument that prioritizes the intrapoetic connections in Pindar's victory odes, asserts that the intention across these poems, is to immortalize the subject, branching from Bundy's tradition of putting the poem first. She does this by asserting the poet's power as a

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<sup>20</sup> Sigelman, *Pindar's Poetics of Immortality*, 6.

prophetic one, whereas here, the poet is not just the speaker of the poem he is also the subject. The simultaneous occurrence of time shows this power of the poem to disrupt linear progression. Introducing the past into Theron's story, as well as the current moment of Theron's victory which is described as γεγωνητέον a verbal adjective meaning "one must proclaim" having no actual tense or voice, interrupts the linear temporality of the poem from the very beginning. The poem, in this act of disrupting time, situates itself as the way by which immortalization may occur since it is now not only outside of time, it commands it. The poem wields a power that only gods wield, or that a prophet would. Thetis' plea to Zeus for Achilles' entrance into the Isles of the Blessed is also evidence of this power, it is only through the god who holds authority, which is not Thetis at all, that the heroes are granted passage into this plane of timelessness.

## Chapter 2

### **The Subject of the Poem: Men and Heroes**

Since immortalization is the clear intention of the poem, the *real* question is who the poem is supposed to immortalize. Theron's presence in the poem is a rather elusive one. He is, technically, the focal point of the poem, but he is not at all at the center of the poem. The priamel of the poem creates "rising elements"<sup>21</sup> for Theron as the climactic figure. After

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<sup>21</sup> See William H. Race, *Style and Rhetoric in Pindar's Odes* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1990), 9: "In this chapter I will address one of the most important manifestations of that interplay in what may be called "rising" elements, where groups of three or more units are marked by an effect of climax."

moving on from the god and the hero, the poem finally arrives at the man in a climactic way after taking its time to get to him, creating build up. The poem positions the man next to the verb: τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν, setting it apart from the rest of the list as it is stretched into four words rather than the regular two.

This priamel sets up the connection between the divine and the mortal. Zeus and Herakles, the divine, are patrons of the games in which Theron, a mortal, is competing. This connection is deepened with exposition about Theron's worth, as, up against these two divine figures, Theron is given attention and accomplishments. The next lines of the poem identify what exactly Theron won a victory in "bringing four horses" and then the rather impersonal "must be proclaimed" or "one must proclaim" as opposed to the poet's full on declaration ἀνδάσομαι (92) at the end of the poem, begins generic epinikian praise of Theron: Θήρωνα...ὅπι δίκαιον ξένων, ἔρεισμ' Ἀκράγαντος, εὐωνύμων τε πατέρων ἄωτον ὀρθόπολιν ("Theron...who, with just regard for foreigners, the pillar of Akragas, is upholder of the best city from honored fathers") (5-7). The poem explains that Theron treats foreigners justly, according to the citizens of Akragas, and that Akragas is and has been the ὀρθόπολιν.

This praise seems a little out of place on account of the fact that there is no actual mention of how Theron treats foreigners, or why it is relevant to his present victory. It is, however, worth noting that this section, in its purpose as an introduction to the subject of the ode, is only scratching the surface of who Theron is and what he has done. The poem

bypasses Theron and explains who he is through his ancestors and their accomplishments. This is a continuation of the distortion of time, allowing Theron to be occupying attention at the same time as his ancestors. Kadmos and Peleus, who are related to Theron in some way, are considered in those judged by Rhadamanthys to enter the Isles of the Blessed. Though this seems random, the inclusion of the story of Peleus allows the poet to include Achilles in the immortalizing light<sup>22</sup> of the poem. In doing so, the poem reconciles the wrong done to Achilles by depriving him of his access to the Isles of the Blessed.<sup>23</sup> Providing Achilles as a foil for Theron escalates the gravity of Theron's situation, still indirectly, but more justifiably and seated in Homeric tradition.

Theron is the driving force of this poem, but is the passive recipient of its practices. Placing Theron as the climax of the poem brings about an emotional revelation that Theron is in fact the purpose and underlying center of this poem. He is not, however, mentioned often enough for him to be the main attraction. Although there is a reason that Theron is not praised too directly, namely that there are limitations religion places on boasting (a display of hubris; the gods do not like boasting and would conceivably punish the boaster for

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<sup>22</sup> See Note 17.

<sup>23</sup> Nisetich's article also argues that the poem is attempting to reconcile the misplacement of Achilles in the afterlife: "A poet who has rescued Achilles from the gloom of Hades or the twilight of Leuce should have no difficulty putting Theron's name beyond the reach of oblivion. Precisely this power of the poet to immortalize achievement had introduced-or almost introduced-the eschatology into the ode. The standard praise of liberality, as we have seen, was not allowed its usual expression: the immortality it normally involves gave way to a different kind of immortality. The relationship between the two is of great importance to our understanding of the ode" (Nisetich, "Immortality in Acragas," 7).

thinking themselves worthy of being placed on the same plane), this fact is still strange. The poet manages to avoid boasting by indirectly praising Theron through his ancestors and by, again, bypassing Theron's accomplishments, comparing them to sand: ψάμμος ἀριθμὸν περιπέφευγεν ("sand escapes numbering") (98) and cannot be quantified. Theron is, in the ending section of the poem, which rounds out the poem climatically, escaping the confines of his deeds, which are subject to time. Though the poem praises him for his deeds, the excuse of not naming them is given as a humble downplay of both the poet and the poem's role (96-98):

ἀλλὰ μάργων ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν,  
τὸ λαλαγῆσαι θέλον  
κρυφὸν τιθέμεν ἐσλῶν καλοῖς  
ἔργοις.

But babbling from intemperate men wants to place a cover  
On the beautiful deeds of the noble.

The poet's act of covering these deeds will "place a cover on" or limit Theron's actions. The poet, through the immortalizing power of his song is able to remove this cover on Theron, which so afflicts other mortal men. Theron is, therefore, compared to one of the "good men" who occupy the Isles of the Blessed. Pindar's description of the underworld is a major reason for the poem's popularity. His idea of good men versus bad men having access to immortality is drenched in epinikian values, which in the beginning of the poem are left vague. Since the poem identifies the man as Theron and creates other parallels with Theron



and the heroes which will be discussed later, "the good men" or "ἔσλοῖ" are welcomed into paradise and do not have to work for it (61-63):

ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,  
 ἴσαις δ' ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον  
 ἔσλοῖ δέκονται βίσιον

And holding the sun always equal in the night and equal in the day  
 The good men receive life without toil,

Time is not imposed on the ἔσλοῖ as it is on regular men, as the night and day are ἴσαις.

The poem is, again, playing with temporality when it comes to a specific group of people.

This section is also a good summary for the philosophy of the Second Olympian Ode, good

men do not have to work in the afterlife after having worked so hard while alive. The

ἔσλοῖ, more than "good men" are "noble men" which explains the poem's view of wealth as

something that φέρει...καιρὸν (53-54) as a member of the ἔσλοῖ will not have to work as

hard for his prosperity on account of his ancestors (53-56):

ὁ μὰν πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένος  
 φέρει τῶν τε καὶ τῶν  
 καιρὸν βαθεῖαν ὑπέχων μέριμναν τ' ἀγροτέραν,  
 ἀστήρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐτυμώτατον  
 ἀνδρὶ φέγγος·

And attempting to be prosperous at contests releases from troubles.  
 Embellished by virtue,  
 Wealth bears opportunity of all sorts of things,  
 Because it supports ambitious, deep care,  
 a conspicuous star, light for a man:

The theme of struggle and reward is prevalent for the heroic figures of the poem. The tragedy of Semele introduces this theme. Semele, who ζῶει μὲν ἐν Ὀλυμπίοις ἀποθανοῖσα βρόμῳ κεραυνοῦ ταυυέθειρα Σεμέλα ("before she lived on Olympus, she died in a roaring thunderbolt") (25-26), provides the first example of facing an atrocity and receiving immortality for her pain. For her miserable end, Semele is rewarded with a happy afterlife among the gods. The myths of Peleus and Kadmos, along with their families, are paramount to the poem's understanding of the underworld as "Pindar sees success against a background of failure and death, as Achilles saw the happiness of the gods against the background of mortal sorrow and affliction."<sup>24</sup> Theron's connections to these tragic families are not stated but would be known to the original listeners of the performance. Through his family ties to Kadmos, Theron has many connections to members of the poem that expand the poem beyond its surface intention of commemorating Theron's victory.

Understanding the more self-serving intention of Pindar lies in identifying why he includes the hero of the priamel. The man and the god are obvious focuses in the poem as they are the first and the last to be listed in the priamel, but what is to be made of the hero? The hero that the poet suggests as an answer to his question, "τίν' ἦρωα" is Herakles, who founded the Olympian games "at the height of war:" Ὀλυμπιάδα δ' ἔστασεν Ἡρακλῆς ἀκρόθινα πολέμου (3-4). Herakles is connected to both the suggested god, his father, and

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<sup>24</sup> Frank J. Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs* (Baltimore, MD: The John's Hopkins University Press, 1980), 24.

to Theron, because the games and his connection to the games is given more emphasis by his father's connection to Pisa. Herakles, who is never mentioned again, is representative of the role of the hero in the poem through the several ways in which he is interwoven with the poem. He is the connective tissue that allows a man and a god to occupy the same space. The hero, as in the priamel, is only present in the middle section of the poem, as well as in the introduction, rather than in the framing structure in which the man and god are mentioned. The middle section of the poem (23-30) mentions Kadmos and his family tragedy as well as Oidipous and his family tragedy (48-51). These two examples both come from Thebes and have connections to each other as well as to both Theron and Pindar himself.

The connective tissue made from the heroes of the poem creates space for the poet to use his first person voice and therefore connect himself with Theron. Heroes and their family members are rewarded for their and their family's struggles. Theron is, potentially, worthy of praise because of Thersandros and his family struggle not because of what he himself did. Praising Theron too directly is not a possibility in the realm of the poem. Thersandros is, again, part of the connective tissue that allows Theron to be praised; the similarity of their names is also nicely aligned, allowing the reader to hear Theron's name in the same talk of Thersandros. Their names blur lines between past and present, as in the mention of one name, two people from now and then are being immortalized by the divine power of the poem. The god, the hero, and the man are present all in the same word.

Another presence that is just as elusive as Theron's, the man, is that of the poet. The speaker's voice finds itself in the poem many times, asking the questions at both the beginning and the end of the poem, declaring things ἐνόρκιον ("sacred") (92) and of course doing the work of spinning the poem. The poet is as surreptitiously present as Theron is. From the very start, the poem frames itself around declaring this man, Theron. Structurally the poem both begins and ends with a question about the man κείνος ὅσα χάριματ' ἄλλοις ἔθηκεν, τίς ἂν φράσαι δύναιτο; ("who would be able to declare how many joys that man accomplished for others?") (99-100). The poet, like in the beginning, asks a question, meaning the poem ends and begins with the poet. Theron is present at the end, but his name is replaced with κείνος rather than even referring to him as ἀνὴρ as he is in the beginning of the poem. Just as when the poet answers the question of what god and what hero with Zeus and Herakles, there is more to the answer than just the one given. When the poem reaches its climactic revelation of Theron, also at the end of the poem the poet is also present (89-95):

ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ· τίνα βάλλομεν  
 ἐκ μαλθακᾶς αὐτε φρενὸς εὐκλέας ὀ-  
 ἴστούς ἰέντες; ἐπί τοι  
 Ἄκράγαντι τανύσαις  
 αὐδάσομαι ἐνόρκιον λόγον ἀλαθεῖ νόφ,  
 τεκεῖν μή τιν' ἑκατόν γε ἐτέων πόλιν  
 φίλοις ἄνδρα μάλλον  
 εὐεργέταν πρᾶπίσιν ἀφθονέστερόν τε χέρα  
 Θήρωνος.

Now hold the bow toward the mark, come my soul, whom do we strike,  
 Releasing glorious arrows again from a gentle spirit?

Verily, after stretching towards Akragas  
 I shall proclaim a sacred word that  
 No city in 100 years shall produce a man  
 More well-working in his friendly thoughts  
 and more ungrudging in his hand than Theron.

This passage connects the poet to Theron in many ways. First, this is the climax, after a long journey beginning with Zeus, moving through the stories of both Kadmos and Oidipous, and then describing in detail the underworld, the poem finally comes back to Theron—and not just Theron—the poet too. The mysterious first person in βάλλομεν returns. But more than just the first person verb is present; the sentence is a direct quotation from the poet ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ· τίνα βάλλομεν" (89). The poet is present νῦν, bringing this to the forefront of the temporal distortion.<sup>25</sup> This νῦν does not, in spite of its reference to time, constrain the poet to time; it actually releases him from it. "Now" is not the same as describing an event, "now" can be any time the poem is being read or performed or when it was written. The poet is also a figure who is released from time as a result of his being featured in the poem as Theron is. The poet also has the authority to speak ἐνόκιον λόγον (92), hinting at his own divinity or divine power. The poet, in his presence at the climax is putting himself where the most important part is. After this passage also comes reference to the word ἐσλῶν in the closing question of the poem (96-98):

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<sup>25</sup> In the discussion about the "performative future" Christopher A. Faraone discusses the use of νῦν as a representation of the process of performing: ", when Pindar says νῦν. . . κελαδησόμεθα (01. 10.78-79), νῦν...κελαδήσω (01. 11.11-14) or ἐγὼ ... ἐπασκήσω (Nem. 9.9-10), he is not promising to sing another poem at some future time, but rather he is talking about the poem he is in the process of performing." Faraone, C. A. 1995. "The "Performative Future" in Three Hellenistic Incantations and Theocritus' Second *Idyll*." *CP* 90: 1.

ἀλλὰ μάργων ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν,  
 τὸ λαλαγήσαι θέλον  
 κρυφὸν τιθέμεν ἐσλῶν καλοῖς  
 ἔργοις,

But babbling from intemperate men wants to place a cover  
 On the beautiful deeds of the noble,

The mention of the ἐσλῶν καλοῖς ἔργοις is reminiscent of the many gnomic statements about these good men. The use of good men in place of Theron, is plural, here; the poet is making a statement that includes more than just Theron whom the poem has been in the process of immortalizing. In his argument about the lack of evidence surrounding the commission narrative of Pindar's poetic intention, Hayden Pelliccia argues that Pindar probably did not need this commission, as he, too was a member of the aristocratic class:

We should not deny ourselves the option, in interpreting a particular poem, of referring it to a model in which [Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides] wrote in praise of Hieron, e.g., not as hired journeymen, but as social equals—*amici*, prized members of his sympotic circle and fellow victors in the great competitive festivals of Greece.<sup>26</sup>

If the poet is supposedly Theron's equal, in status and in the poem itself, it is understandable how he was able to refer to himself in the poem.

### Chapter 3 The Tactful Poet

The poet's references to himself are given as a subtle joke for his reader/listeners. Tying the poet and his subject together is done very carefully and subtly, just as praising Theron is,

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<sup>26</sup> Pelliccia, "Simonides, Pindar and Bacchylides," 247.

but for a different reason. In naming Theron as the subject of the poem, Nisetich points out that it is dangerous for a poet to praise his victor as there is a threat to the poet's status: "He and the victor must face the potential resentment of other men and of the gods. By its very nature, then, the victory ode will demand tact."<sup>27</sup> This "tact" he refers to is not just Pindar's carefulness, but also his cunning. The complexity of his language and the popular stories he weaves together succinctly but effectively, are major ways the reader/listener can get lost in the meaning and the poeticism of his lines. But Pindar was composing a puzzle to be solved, which is why he left clues and connections. Before the climax of the poem, reintroducing Theron, the poet is also present, as he is in several other places. He begins the comparison of himself to an archer and compares the arrows he will shoot to understandable things with no interpreters (83-88):

πολλά μοι ὑπ'  
 ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη  
 ἔνδον ἐντὶ φαρέτρας  
 φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμανέων  
 χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυᾶ·  
 μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι  
 παγγλωσσία κόρακες ὡς ἄκραντα γαρνέτων  
 Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιθα θεῖον·

There are many swift arrows under my bent arm  
 In their quiver they are  
 Understandable to intelligent ones: but in all things  
 They lack interpreters  
 A wise man is one who knows many things through experience  
 And impetuous men learning

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<sup>27</sup> Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs*, 26.

Through babbling, let them sing uselessly  
like crows before the swift bird of Zeus.

The poet talks about these λάβροι, without having introduced something to refer them to. They are a random addition to the poem's flowery philosophy. These λάβροι are men who are μαθόντες...παγγλωσσία (86-87) a sentiment repeated not many lines down as λαλαγήσαι ("to babble"). This passage can act as a summary to this poem, as it is after all φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν (85) but the inclusion of these lines is noteworthy because it gives a hint to the fact that the poet is self-aware of the puzzle he has created. There are two possibilities, here, that the poet is one of the λάβροι or that he is a σοφός. As he is shooting his arrows ἐκ μαλθακάς αὔτε φρενός εὐκλέας ὀϊστούς ἰέντες ("Releasing glorious arrows again from a gentle spirit")(90-91) towards Akragas to find a mark worth praising (89-91):

ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ· τίνα βάλλομεν  
ἐκ μαλθακάς αὔτε φρενός εὐκλέας ὀ-  
ϊστούς ἰέντες; ἐπί τοι  
Ἄκράγαντι τανύσαις

Now hold the bow toward the mark, come my soul, whom do we strike,  
Releasing glorious arrows again from a gentle spirit?  
Verily, after stretching towards Akragas

He sets himself (and also probably Theron, the mark) up to be one of the σοφός who can understand what the arrows are saying. But, he is also one of the λάβροι who has babbled a great bit to arrive at this central moment. The ending of this poem, which reveals duality in



the interpretation of the poet, reflects the nature of the priamel, which always has more than one answer to each question.

To bring it all back to the reigning god of the poem, Zeus, the poet decrees: κόρακες ὡς ἄκραντα γαρυέτων Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον (“let them sing uselessly like crows before the swift bird of Zeus”) (87-88). The poet is downplaying himself, as a subordinate to Zeus, in order to lead up to the climax with Theron. This, however, has the same effect as drawing attention to him and his poem as it brings in the aspect of humor in a particularly sad poem, allowing for the emotional climax with Theron to occur. The poet is talking about himself and his work in a poem meant to be about Theron's victory. Although he certainly succeeds at immortalizing Theron, he does so to himself, too, which is the humor of the poem—it is one big monument to Pindar's ego. Although, the inclusion of the λάβροι implies that it is not as serious as it is self-aware and humorous.

### Conclusion

Pindar's Second Olympian Ode and his body of poetry are major points of contention as the main surviving representations of the epinikian genre. Because of the limited amount of information available, many things are left for the reader/listener to interpret about the patterns and intentions of his poems. Immortalization is the clearest purpose of any written piece, but Pindar weaves immortality into the very language and structure of his poetry,

leaving the audience to sort out his intention for themselves. The way that he plays with time, not only by subordinating the gods to it as evidenced by the many connections between Zeus, Kronos, and time, but also by displacing the reader in time, allows Pindar to free himself and Theron from the restrictions of mortality. In releasing himself, he opens the poem up to mean more than it appears to. And, as he is an expert trickster with his complicated poetic structures and hidden connections, the humor of the poem is not lost when the reader, or listener, realizes that the poet is more present in his poem than the person who likely paid for it. It is because of this that the relationship between the subjects of Pindar's poetry and Pindar himself in his poem should be explored and understood as a parallel journey for the same purpose, to be remembered.

### Appendix: The Poem and My Translation

OLYMPIAN 2<sup>28</sup>

ΘΗΡΩΝΙ ΑΚΡΑΓΑΝΤΙΝΩι ΑΡΜΑΤΙ

Α' Ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι,  
τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἦρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;  
ἦτοι Πίσα μὲν Διός· Ὀλυμπιάδα  
    δ' ἔστασεν Ἡρακλῆς  
ἀκρόθινα πολέμου·  
Θήρωνα δὲ τετραορίας ἔνεκα νικαφόρου  
γεγωνητέον, ὅπι δίκαιον ξένων,  
    ἔρεισμ' Ἀκράγαντος,  
εὐωνύμων τε πατέρων ἄωτον ὀρθόπολιν·  
καμόντες οἱ πολλὰ θυμῶ  
ἱερόν ἔσχον οἴκημα ποταμοῦ, Σικελίας τ' ἔσαν  
10 ὀφθαλμός, αἰῶν δ' ἔφεπε μόρσιμος,  
    πλοῦτόν τε καὶ χάριν ἄγων  
γνησίαις ἐπ' ἀρεταῖς.  
ἀλλ' ὦ Κρόνιε παῖ Ῥέας, ἔδος Ὀλύμπου νέμων  
ἀέθλων τε κορυφὰν πόρον τ' Ἀλφειοῦ,  
    ἱανθεῖς ἀοιδαῖς  
εὐφρων ἄρουραν ἔτι πατρίαν σφίσιν κόμισσον  
λοιπῶ γένει. τῶν δὲ πεπραγμένων  
ἐν δίκῃ τε καὶ παρὰ δίκαν ἀποιήτον οὐδ' ἄν  
Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ  
    δύναίτο θέμεν ἔργων τέλος·  
λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ' ἄν.  
ἔσλων γὰρ ὑπὸ χαρμάτων πῆμα θνάσκει  
20 παλίγκοτον δαμασθέν,  
Β' ὅταν θεοῦ Μοῖρα πέμπῃ  
ἀνεκὰς ὄλβον ὑψηλόν. ἔπεται δὲ λόγος εὐθρόνοις  
Κάδμοιο κούραις, ἔπαθον αἰ μεγάλα·  
    πένθος δὲ πίτνει βαρὺ  
κρεσσόνων πρὸς ἀγαθῶν.  
ζῶει μὲν ἐν Ὀλυμπίοις ἀποθανοῖσα βρόμῳ  
κεραυνοῦ ταυνέθειρα Σεμέλα, φιλεῖ

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<sup>28</sup> In regards to the line numbers of the Greek poem: the line numbers given here align with the principles of A. Boeckh. (See description in Willcock, *Pindar's Victory Odes*, 25). The ancient colometry of Aristophanes of Byzantium has been omitted to reduce confusion.

δέ νιν Παλλὰς αἰεὶ  
 φιλέοντι δὲ Μοῖσαι  
 καὶ Ζεὺς πατήρ, μάλα φιλεῖ δὲ παῖς ὁ κισσοφόρος·  
 λέγοντι δ' ἐν καὶ θαλάσῃα  
 μετὰ κόραισι Νηρηῆος ἀλίας βίοτον ἄφθιτον  
 30 Ἴνοϊ τετάχθαι τὸν ὄλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον.  
 ἦτοι βροτῶν γε κέκριται  
 πείρας οὐ τι θανάτου,  
 οὐδ' ἠσύχιμον ἀμέραν ὅποτε παῖδ' ἀελίου  
 ἀτειρεῖ σὺν ἀγαθῷ τελευτάσομεν·  
 ῥοαὶ δ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλαι  
 εὐθυμῶν τε μέτα καὶ πόνων ἐς ἄνδρας ἔβαν.  
 οὕτω δὲ Μοῖρ', ἅ τε πατρῷον  
 τῶνδ' ἔχει τὸν εὐφρονα πότμον, θεόρτω σὺν ὄλβῳ  
 ἐπί τι καὶ πῆμ' ἄγει,  
 παλιντραπέλον ἄλλω χρόνῳ·  
 ἐξ οὐπερ ἔκτεινε Λᾶον μόριμος υἱός  
 συναντόμενος, ἐν δὲ Πυθῶνι χρησθέν  
 40 παλαίφατον τέλεσεν.  
 Γ' ἰδοῖσα δ' ὀξεῖ' Ἑρινύς  
 ἔπεφνέ οἱ σὺν ἀλλαλοφονία γένος ἀρήϊον·  
 λείφθη δὲ Θέρσανδρος ἐριπέντι Πολυ-  
 νεΐκει, νέοις ἐν ἀέθλοις  
 ἐν μάχαις τε πολέμου  
 τιμῶμενος, Ἄδραστιδᾶν θάλος ἀρωγὸν δόμοις·  
 ὄθεν σπέρματος ἔχοντα ρίζαν πρέπει  
 τὸν Αἰνησιδάμου  
 ἐγκωμίων τε μελέων λυρᾶν τε τυχανέμεν.  
 Ἵλυμπία μὲν γὰρ αὐτός  
 γέρας ἔδεκτο, Πυθῶνι δ' ὀμόκλαρον ἐς ἀδελφεόν  
 50 Ἵσθμοῖ τε κοινὰ Χάριτες ἄνθεα τε-  
 θρίππων δυωδεκαδρόμων  
 ἄγαγον· τὸ δὲ τυχεῖν  
 πειρώμενον ἀγωνίας δυσφρονᾶν παραλύει.  
 ὁ μὰν πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένος  
 φέρει τῶν τε καὶ τῶν  
 καιρὸν βαθεῖαν ὑπέχων μέριμναν τ' ἀγροτέραν,  
 ἀστήρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐτυμώτατον  
 ἀνδρὶ φέγγος· εἰ δὲ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,  
 ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐν-

θάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες  
 ποινὰς ἔτεισαν—τὰ δ' ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχᾷ  
 ἀλιτρὰ κατὰ γᾶς δικάζει τις ἐχθρᾷ  
 60 λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκᾳ·  
 Δ' ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεῖ,  
 ἴσαις δ' ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον  
 ἔσλοὶ δέκονται βίοτον, οὐ χθόνα τα-  
 ράσσοντες ἐν χερὸς ἀκμᾷ  
 οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ  
 κεινὰν παρὰ δίαϊταν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίαις  
 θεῶν οἴτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις  
 ἄδακρυν νέμονται  
 αἰῶνα, τοὶ δ' ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.  
 ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ἐστρίς  
 ἐκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν  
 70 ψυχάν, ἔτειλαν Διὸς ὁδὸν παρὰ Κρό-  
 νου τύρσιν· ἐνθα μακάρων  
 νᾶσον ὠκεανίδες  
 αὖραι περιπνέουσιν· ἄνθεμα δὲ χρυσοῦ φλέγει,  
 τὰ μὲν χερσόθεν ἀπ' ἀγλαῶν δενδρέων,  
 ὕδωρ δ' ἄλλα φέρεβει,  
 ὄρμοισι τῶν χέρας ἀναπλέκοντι καὶ στεφάνους  
 βουλαῖς ἐν ὀρθαῖσι Ῥαδαμάνθους,  
 ὄν πατῆρ ἔχει μέγας ἐτοῖμον αὐτῶ πάρεδρον,  
 πόσις ὁ πάντων Ῥέας  
 ὑπέρτατον ἐχοίσας θρόνον.  
 Πηλεύς τε καὶ Κάδμος ἐν τοῖσιν ἀλέγονται·  
 Ἄχιλλέα τ' ἔνεικ', ἐπεὶ Ζηνὸς ἦτορ  
 80 λιταῖς ἔπεισε, μάτηρ·  
 Ε' ὄς Ἐκτορα σφᾶλε, Τροίας  
 ἄμαχον ἀστραβῆ κίονα, Κύκνον τε θανάτῳ πόρην,  
 Ἄους τε παιδ' Αἰθίοπα. πολλά μοι ὑπ'  
 ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη  
 ἔνδον ἐντὶ φαρέτρας  
 φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμανέων  
 χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ·  
 μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι  
 παγγλωσσία κόρακες ὡς ἄκραντα γαρυέτων  
 Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον·  
 ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ· τίνα βάλλομεν

90 ἔκ μαλθακᾶς αὐτε φρενὸς εὐκλέας ὀ-  
 ἴστοὺς ἰέντες; ἐπί τοι  
 ἼΑκράγαντι τανύσαις  
 αὐδάσομαι ἐνόρκιον λόγον ἀλαθεῖ νόφ,  
 τεκεῖν μὴ τιν' ἑκατόν γε ἐτέων πόλιν  
 φίλοις ἄνδρα μᾶλλον  
 εὐεργέταν πρᾶπίσιν ἀφθονέστερόν τε χέρα  
 Θήρωνος. ἀλλ' αἶνον ἐπέβα κόρος  
 οὐ δίκᾳ συναντόμενος, ἀλλὰ μάργων ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν,  
 τὸ λαλαγῆσαι θέλον  
 κρυφὸν τιθέμεν ἐσλῶν καλοῖς  
 ἔργοις, ἐπεὶ ψάμμος ἀριθμὸν περιπέφευγεν,  
 καὶ κείνος ὅσα χάσματ' ἄλλοις ἔθηκεν,  
 100 τίς ἂν φράσαι δύναίτο;

### For Theron of Akragas<sup>29</sup>

Lyre-ruling hymns,  
 Which god, which hero, which man shall we sing of?  
 Surely Pisa belongs to Zeus  
 and Herakles established the Olympian games at the height of war:  
 But, one must proclaim, Theron,  
 because of his victory bringing four horses,  
 Who, with just regard for foreigners, the pillar of Akragas,  
 Is upholder of the best city from honored fathers:  
 They are working many things in their spirit,  
 10 The shrine holds a home on the river, and they are  
 The eye of Sicily, and they attend the choicest life  
 Leading wealth and grace upon their inherited virtues,  
 But, child of Kronos and Rhea, inhabiting a seat on Olympus  
 The head of contests and the passageway of Alpheus,  
 soothed by my songs,  
 Cheerfully take care of the tilled, ancestral land  
 For the remaining generation. When things done  
 In the right and besides what's right, if nothing is undone,  
 Time, the father of all things, is able to make the completion of deeds undone:  
 20 And forgetfulness from the river is together with the blessed ones.  
 For misery dies because of good things,

<sup>29</sup>The line numbers of my translation roughly align with that of the Greek poem, but not perfectly.

after a malignant thing is overpowered  
Whenever the Fates of the gods might send  
lofty happiness higher. And the word is,  
the daughters of Kadmos, on beautiful seats, who suffered sorrows  
Greatly before greater blessings.  
Before she lived on Olympus, Longhaired Semele died in a roaring  
Thunderbolt. And Pallas always loves her now,  
And Father Zeus loves her greatly, and the ivy wreathed child loves her:  
30 They say in the sea  
that undecaying life with the maidens of Nereos  
has aligned throughout the whole of time.  
Truly, indeed, the end of death for mortals  
Is not at all set apart  
When the day is not peaceful, child of the sun,  
With untroubled goodness we shall complete it.  
And streams at different times  
Flow toward times with both good and bad things.  
Thus, Fate who holds as inheritance  
40 the cheerful fate of those ones with heaven sent bliss  
and additionally leads to change causing misery at another time.  
From the time when his fated son,  
Meeting Laos, killed him. And at Delphi what was proclaimed,  
Long ago, was complete.  
Sharp Erinys, seeing  
Struck his better race with mutual slaughter:  
But Thersandros remained after Polyneices was slain, in games for young men  
And in battles of war he was honored,  
The child of the Adrastides aids in the house from where he is holding the root of  
the seed.  
50 It is fitting that he obtained the victories and songs of the lure.  
For he himself took the prize  
at Olympia and at Pythia and Isthmus  
and he shared the graces  
and the blossoms of the four horses  
Running the course three times he led equal to his brother.  
And attempting to be prosperous at contests releases from troubles.  
Embellished by virtue,  
Wealth bears opportunity of all sorts of things,  
Because it supports ambitious, deep care,  
60 a conspicuous star, light for a man:

and if someone having it, knows what is about to be  
that immediately there, lawless spirits of the dead pay the penalty  
and someone judges the wrongdoings in the realm of Zeus  
uttering words under the earth with hostile force.  
And holding the sun always equal in the night and equal in the day  
The good men receive life without toil,  
not disturbing the earth with the strength of their hand  
Nor the water of the sea  
For that life. But those that rejoice in fidelity to oaths  
70 pass life among the honored of the gods without tears  
and those enduring the work not to be looked upon  
Persevered, enduring to keep this soul away from unjustness  
They complete the road of Zeus, remaining three times on either side toward the  
tower of Kronos.  
There around the island of the blessed, breezes of the ocean blow  
Around and flower of gold are radiant.  
Some are from the ground around the shining trees,  
and others feed the water  
They entwine their hands in links and crowns of them  
80 in the upright judgment of Rhadamanthys  
Whom the great father holds close by, sitting beside him,  
The husband of Rhea who holds a seat on the uppermost throne of all.  
Both Peleus and Kadmos are considered in these  
And Achilles; after she persuaded the heart of Zeus  
With supplications, his mother brought him.  
Achilles who slew Hector,  
The unconquerable, unwavering pillar of Troy, and he gave Cycnus  
And the Ethiopian son of Dawn to death.  
There are many swift arrows under my bent arm  
90 In their quiver they are  
Understandable to intelligent ones: but in all things  
They lack interpreters  
A wise man is one who knows many things through experience  
And impetuous men learning  
Through babbling, let them sing uselessly like crows before the swift bird of Zeus.  
Now hold the bow toward the mark, come my soul, whom do we strike,  
Releasing glorious arrows again from a gentle spirit?  
Verily, after stretching towards Akragas  
I shall proclaim a sacred word  
100 that no city in 100 years shall produce a man



more well working in his friendly thoughts  
and more ungrudging in his hand than Theron.  
But babbling from intemperate men wants to place a cover  
On the beautiful deeds of the noble, whereas sand  
Escapes numbering, who would be able to declare  
How many joys that man accomplished for others?

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