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Essay, Notes, and Indexes  
Edited by Basil L. Gildersleeve  
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### Olympian and Pythian Odes

Basil L. Gildersleeve (1831–1924) was an American classicist who spent much of his career at Johns Hopkins University. This is his influential 1895 edition of Pindar's Olympian and Pythian Odes, a body of work notable for its insights into lyric poetry and modes of self-understanding. Gildersleeve's remarkable introductory essay outlines Pindar's lineage, patriotism, and poetic development, as well as his poetic themes and structures. It focuses particularly on Pindar's new approach to old themes, his view of government and the human condition, and his role as a conveyer of Greek ethics. The poems are presented in the original Greek, followed by extensive notes that gloss the historical specificities and grammatical structures. Gildersleeve's index highlights major characters, battles, forms and metaphors. Although the scholarly analysis later in the book is very thorough, Gildersleeve's introduction itself is accessible to anybody interested in ancient Greek poetry.

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Notes, and Indexes*

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PINDAR



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# PINDAR

## THE OLYMPIAN AND PYTHIAN ODES

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY, NOTES, AND INDEXES

By BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE

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## PREFACE.

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THE Text of this edition of the Olympian and Pythian Odes of Pindar has been constituted according to my best judgment, and that best judgment has excluded all emendations of my own. The Notes owe much to preceding editors; it would be affectation to say that they owe everything. The Introductory Essay is intended, as the whole book is intended, for beginners in Pindar, and much of the earlier part has been transferred from a series of semi-popular lectures, the sources of which I could not always indicate with exactness, even if it were worth while. The Metrical Schemes are due to the generosity of Dr. J. H. HEINRICH SCHMIDT, who kindly placed at my disposal the MS. of his unpublished Pindar. In these schemes the comma indicates regular caesura or diaeresis, the dot, shifting caesura or diaeresis. The other points are sufficiently explained in the Introductory Essay. In order to facilitate the rhythmical recitation of the text, I have indicated the stressed syllables by an inferior dot whenever it seemed advisable, the simple indication of the *κῶλα* not being sufficient, according to my experience with classes in Pindar. This has added much to the trouble of proof-reading, and I owe especial thanks to Mr. C. W. E. MILLER, Fellow of the Johns Hopkins University, for his careful revision of text and schemes in this regard. My friend and colleague, Professor C. D. MORRIS, has done me the inestimable favor of ex-

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## PREFACE.

aming the Notes and the Introductory Essay, and the treatment of every ode is much indebted to his candid criticism, his sound scholarship, and his refined taste. Mr. GONZALEZ LODGE, Scholar of the Johns Hopkins University, has lightened, in thankworthy measure, the task of preparing the Indexes; and Dr. ALFRED EMERSON, Lecturer on Classical Archaeology, has aided me in the selection of the illustrations, most of which are reproduced from the admirable work of PERCY GARDNER, "Types of Greek Coins." Every effort has been made to secure typographical accuracy, and in the last stage of the revision Professor DRISLER's practised eye and wide knowledge have been of great service in bringing about such degree of correctness as this edition presents.

BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE,

*January 1, 1885.*

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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

## I.

THE names of Pindar's parents are variously given. If we follow the prevalent statement, he was the son of Daiphantos;

**LIFE.** and his son, in turn, after established Greek usage, bore the name Daiphantos. His brother, of uncertain name, was a mighty hunter, and much given to athletic sports, and this has suggested the unfailing parallel of Amphion and Zethos. The names of his mother, Kleodike (or Kleidike), of his wife, whether Timoxene or Megakleia, his daughters, Protomache and Eumetis, have an aristocratic ring, for there were aristocratic names in antiquity as in modern times. There is no reason for mythologizing Kleodike, Timoxene, Megakleia. As well allegorize Aristeides, Perikles, Demosthenes, because their names happen to fit their fortunes. But Pindar's aristocratic origin rests on surer foundations, and we have good reason for calling him an Aigeid (P. 5, 69-71).

**Pindar an Aigeid.** What the relations were between the Theban and the Spartan Aigeidai is a matter of lively discussion.

It is enough for understanding Pindar that it was an ancient and an honored house, and that Pindar was in every fibre an aristocrat. This explains his intimacy with men of rank, and his evident connection with the priesthood—the stronghold of the aristocracy. To his aristocratic birth, no less than to his lofty character, was due his participation in the *θεοξένια*, or banquet of the gods at Delphi—an honor which was perpetuated in his family; and the story that he was a priest of Magna Mater is confirmed by his own words (P. 3, 77-79), if not suggested by them.



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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

Pindar was born at Thebes, the head of Boeotia—Boeotia, a canton hopelessly behind the times, a slow canton, as the nimble Attics would say, a glorious climate for eels, but a bad air for brains. Large historical views are not always entertained by the cleverest minds, ancient and modern, transatlantic and cisatlantic; and the annals of politics, of literature, of thought, have shown that out of the depths of crass conservatism and proverbial sluggishness come, not by any miracle, but by the process of accumulated force, some of the finest intelligences, some of the greatest powers, of political, literary, and especially religious life. Modern illustrations might be invidious, but modern illustrations certainly lie very near. Carrière compares Boeotia with Austria and the Catholic South of Germany at the close of the eighteenth century, with their large contributions to the general rise of culture in song and music. If such parallels are not safe, it may be safe to adduce one that has itself been paralleled with the story of the Island of the Saints, and to call attention to the part that the despised province of Cappadocia played in the history of the Christian Church. A Cappadocian king was a butt in the time of Cicero; the Cappadocians were the laughing-stock of the Greek anthology, and yet there are no prouder names in the literary history of the Church than the names of the Cappadocian fathers, Basil and the Gregories. But, apart from this, Boeotia has been sadly misjudged. Pindar, Pelopidas, and Epameinondas were not all, nor yet the *πρέσβειρα Κωπῶδων κορῶν* of the Acharnians. There is no greater recommendation of the study of Greek lyric poetry than this—that it enfranchises the reader from Athenian prejudice and Athenian malice, while Athens herself is not less dear than before. Pindar, then, was an aristocrat in a canton<sup>1</sup> that a modern census-taker might have shaded with select and special blackness. Himself born at Thebes, his

<sup>1</sup> Of course it may be said that Pindar was a Boeotian only in name, not in blood—belonging, as he did, to the old pre-Boeotian stock; but as he himself accepts the name with the responsibility (*Βοιωτία ὕψ*), we need go no further.

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## LIFE OF PINDAR.

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parents are said to have come to the city from an outlying northwestern deme, Kynoskephalai, a high hill overlooking the swamp Hylike. Of his infancy we know nothing.

**Pindar  
of Kynos-  
kephalai.**

The tale that bees distilled honey on his lips is told over and over of the childhood of poets and philosophers. *Non sine dis animosus infans*, we are as ready to believe to be true of him as of any other great man. Of course he enjoyed the advantage of an elaborate training. Perhaps Boeotians trained even more than did the Athenians. The flute he learned at home, and it is supposed that at a later period

**Training.**

he enjoyed the instructions of Lasos of Hermione, the regenerator of the dithyramb; although it must be noted that the Greeks have an innocent weakness for connecting as many famous names as possible in the relation of teacher and pupil. The statement imposes on nobody. One goes to school to every great influence. It is only honest to say, however, that if Pindar studied under Lasos he was either an ungrateful scholar or underrated his indebtedness to his master. Unfortunately the jibbing pupils are sometimes the best, and the teacher's fairest results are sometimes gained by the resistance of an active young mind. At all events, Pindar has very little to say about training in his poems, much about native endowment, which was to him, as an aristocrat, largely hereditary. We may therefore dismiss Pindar's teachers—Skopelinos, Apollodoros, Agathokles. It is enough for us to know or to divine that he was carefully trained, and had to submit to the rude apprenticeship of genius. First a drill-master for others, then a composer on his own account, he had to work and wait. His great commissions did not come until he had won a national name. Goethe has commended, as others had done before and others have done since, the counsel of noble women to all who seek the consummation of art, the *caput artis, decere*. Korinna—the story is at least well

**Korinna.**

invented—Pindar's fellow-student, not his teacher, gave him a great lesson. In his first poem, he had neglected to insert myths. Admonished of this omission by Korinna, and remembering that his mistress was herself fa-

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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

mous for her handling of the myth, he crowded his next hymn with mythological figures—the fragment is still preserved (II. 1, 2)—whereupon she said, with a smile: “One ought to sow with the hand, not with the whole sack” (*τῇ χειρὶ δεῖν σπεῖρειν ἀλλὰ μὴ ὄλω τῷ θυλάκῳ*). It is unnecessary to emphasize the feminine tact of the advice. On another occasion Korinna is said to have blamed Pindar for having used an Attic word. This, also, is not a bad invention. It accords with the conservative character of woman; it accords with the story that Korinna won a victory over Pindar by the familiar charm of her Boeotian dialect as well as by the beauty of her person. It was in honor of that victory, or another, that her filleted statue was erected at Tanagra, where Pausanias saw it hundreds of years afterwards. Aelian, an utterly untrustworthy scribbler, adds that Pindar, in the bitterness of his heart, called his successful rival a swine. If Pindar used the phrase at all, it must be remembered that *Βουωρία ὄς* (O. 6, 90) was a common expression—half spiteful, half sportive—and that the moral character of the swine stood higher with the Greeks than it stands with us. The swine-woman of Phokylides, who was neither good nor bad, was not the sow of the Old Testament or the New. The Greeks were brotherly to the lower animals. Bull, cow, heifer, cock, ass, dog, were at all events high-poetic.

Encouraged, perhaps, by Korinna’s success, a younger poetess, Myrtis, attempted to cope with Pindar. She was ingloriously defeated, and sharply chidden by Korinna, with the sweet inconsistency of her sex.

Pindar was twenty years old when he composed the tenth Pythian in honor of Hippokleas of Thessaly. This poem, as Pindar’s earliest poem. the firstling of Pindar’s genius, has a special interest; but it requires determined criticism to find in it abundant evidence of the crudeness of youth. If Pindar was twenty years old at the time when he composed the tenth

Pythian, and the tenth Pythian was written in honor of a victory gained Pyth. 22 (Ol. 69, 3 = 502 B.C.), Pindar must have been born in 522 B.C. A close contempo-

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rary of Aeschylus (born 525 B.C.), Pindar suggests a comparison with the great Athenian; but no matter how many external resemblances may be found, nay, no matter how many fine sentiments and exemplary reflections they may have in common, the inner dissidence remains.<sup>1</sup> One question always arises when the *Μαραθωνομάχης* and Pindar are compared, and that is the attitude of the Theban poet during the Persian war. Was Pindar in thorough sympathy with the Pindar and the Persian party of the Theban nobility to which he belonged war. by birth, by training, by temperament, or was he a friend of the national cause—as it is safe to call a cause after it has been successful? Within the state there seems to be no question that Pindar was a thoroughpaced aristocrat, and those who think they have noticed greater liberality in the middle of his life have to acknowledge that he became more rigid towards the close. Without the state his imagination must have been fired by the splendid achievements of the Hellenes, and his religious sense must have been stirred by the visible working of the divine power in setting up and putting down. He could not but be proud of the very victories that told against his own country, and yet there is no note in all his poems that shows the kinship that reveals itself in Simonides. The story that the famous fragment in praise of Athens brought upon him the displeasure of his countrymen, which they manifested by the imposition of a heavy fine, reimbursed twofold by the Athenians—this story, with all its variations, the statue, the *προξενία*, has not escaped the cavils of the critics, and does not, in any case, prove anything more than a generous recognition of the prowess of an alien state, if, after all, anything Greek could be alien to a man so fully in sympathy with all

<sup>1</sup> “Both Aeschylus and Pindar speak of Etna in volcanic eruption. But Aeschylus—thoroughly Greek in this—fixes our thought on the scathe done to man’s labor. Pindar gives a picture of natural grandeur and terror (P. 1, 20). The lines on the eclipse of the sun [fr. VII. 4] are sublime. But it is not the moral sublimity of Aeschylus. Pindar never rises into the sphere of titanic battle between destiny and will. He is always of the earth, even when he is among the gods.”—JEBB.

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that made Greece what it was. For in the sense that he loved all Greece, that he felt the ties of blood, of speech, above all, the ties of religion, Pindar was Panhellenic. The pressure of the barbarian that drew those ties tighter for Greece generally, drew them tighter for him also; but how? We are in danger of losing our historical perspective by making Pindar feel the same stir in the same way as Aischylos. If he had, he would not have been a true Theban; and if he had not been a true Theban, he would not have been a true Greek. The man whose love for his country knows no local root, is a man whose love for his country is a poor abstraction; and it is no discredit to Pindar that he went honestly with his state in the struggle. It was no treason to Medize before there was a Greece, and the Greece that came out of the Persian war was a very different thing from the cantons that ranged themselves on this side and on that of a quarrel which, we may be sure, bore another aspect to those who stood aloof from it than it wears in the eyes of moderns, who have all learned to be Hellenic patriots. A little experience of a losing side might aid historical vision. That Pindar should have had an intense admiration of the New Greece, should have felt the impulse of the grand period that followed Salamis and Plataia, should have appreciated the woe that would have come on Greece had the Persians been successful, and should have seen the finger of God in the new evolution of Hellas—all this is not incompatible with an attitude during the Persian war that those who see the end and do not understand the beginning may not consider respectable.

The life of a lyric poet was usually a life of travel. Arion is the type of a wanderer, Ibykos and Simonides journeyed far and wide, and although we must not suppose that Pindar went whithersoever his song went, he was not a home-keeping man. His long sojourn in Sicily is beyond a doubt. Aigina must have been to him a second home. Journeys to Olympia, to Delphi, to Nemea, are certain. If he studied under Lasos, he must have studied at Athens, and it is likely that he was familiar with many parts

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## LIFE OF PINDAR.

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of Greece, that he went as far north as Macedon, as far south as Kyrene. Everywhere he was received with respect, with veneration. Myths were woven about him as about **Myths.** few poets, even in myth-loving Greece. Not only did the princes of earth treat him as their peer, but the gods showed him distinguished honor. The Delphic priests, as we have seen, invited him to the *θεοξένια* as a guest of the divinities, and, more than this, Pan himself sang a poem of Pindar's, and Pindar returned thanks for the honor in the *parthenion* beginning ὦ Πάν. Of a piece with this story is the other that Pindar had a vision of a walking statue of Magna Mater, and it is needless to say that Magna Mater, Pan, and the rest are all combinations from various allusions in his poems. Unworthy of critical examination as they are, such stories are not to be passed by in silence, because they reflect the esteem in which the poet was held.

The death of Pindar, as well as his life, was a fruitful theme. The poet prayed for that which was best for man. The god,—Ammon, or Apollo,—sent him death on the lap of his favorite Theoxenos,—according to one legend, in the theatre at Argos, according to another, in the gymnasium. His bones, however, rested in Thebes. Persephone—or was it Demeter?—

**Death of Pindar.** appeared to him in vision, and reproached him with not having celebrated her in song, her alone of all the deities, and she prophesied at the same time that he would soon make up for his shortcomings when he should be with her. In less than ten days Pindar had gone to “the black-walled house of Phersephona” (O. 14, 20), daughter of Demeter. After his death he appeared in vision to an aged kinswoman, and repeated a poem on Persephone, which she wrote down after she awoke, as Coleridge did Kubla Khan, and thus preserved it for after-times. The time of Pindar's death is very uncertain.

**Time of Pindar's death.** It is commonly supposed that he lived to an advanced age. Some make him die at eighty; others see no proof of his having gone beyond sixty-six. One prudent soul, with wise reserve, says he did not live to see the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war. The latest poem

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that we can date certainly is O. 4 (Ol. 82, 452 B.C.), but O. 8 is often assigned to 450 B.C.

Sundry apophthegms are attributed to Pindar. Most of them show the aloofness, so to speak, of his character.

**Apoph-  
thegms.** "What is sharper than a saw? Calumny." "What wilt thou sacrifice to the Delphic god? A paean." "Why dost thou, who canst not sing, write songs? The shipbuilders make rudders but know not how to steer." "Simonides has gone to the courts of the Sicilian tyrants. Why hast thou no desire to do the same? I wish to live for myself, not for others." These expressions at least reproduce the temper of the man as conceived by antiquity. Such a self-contained personage could never have made himself loved by a wide circle. Admired he was without stint, often without true insight. The reverence paid his genius was manifested in many ways. Familiar to all is the story that when Thebes was pillaged and destroyed by the Macedonian soldiery, the house of Pindar was spared<sup>1</sup> by the express order of Alexander the Great, whose ancestor he had celebrated in song (fr. VIII. 3).

## II.

The poems on which Pindar's fame chiefly rests are the *ἐπινίκια*, or Songs of Victory, composed in celebration of successes gained at the great national games. It is **WORKS.** true that these poems constituted only one phase *ἐπινίκια.* of his work, but they are the most important, the most characteristic, of all. Else they had not alone survived entire. They were more popular than the others, says Eustathios, because they addressed themselves more to human interests, the myths were fewer, and the obscurity was less. But these reasons, which are strange to us now, do not account for the survival. That which embodies the truest, inliest life of a people comes down, the rest perishes and passes over into new forms. Antique epos, antique tragedy, the Old Attic

<sup>1</sup> "The great Emathian conqueror bid spare  
The house of Pindarus when temple and tow'r  
Went to the ground."—MILTON.

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## PINDAR'S WORKS.

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comedy, the *ἐπινίκια* of Pindar—for these there is no Avatar, and they live on; and yet it would not be doing justice to the rare genius of Pindar to judge him by the *ἐπινίκια* alone, and fortunately the fragments of the other poems that remain are long enough to justify a characteristic, or at all events long enough to vindicate his versatility. The Pindar of *θρήνος, ὑπόρχημα, σκολιόν*, is the Pindar of the *ἐπινίκια*, but now his mood is sweeter, tenderer, now brighter and more sportive, than in the *ἐπινίκια*.

But a rapid enumeration must suffice here. The Pindaric fragments are arranged under the following heads: 1. ὕμνοι,

**Fragments.** the fundamental notion of which is praise (*κλέος*).

1. ὕμνοι. The fragment of the ὕμνος that called forth the

counsel of Korinna suggests a *κλέος* in every line. 2. Παιᾶνες. The Doric name (*Παιάν* = *Παιών*) shows a Doric origin, and

2. παιᾶνες. the rhythms were Dorian (*τεταγμένη καὶ σῶφρων*

*Μούσα*, says Plutarch). The theme is either petition or thanksgiving. Pindar's paeans are mainly on

Apollo, to whom, with his sister Artemis, the paeon originally was exclusively addressed. The paeon seldom had orchestric

accompaniment, and so forms a contrast to 3. Ὑπορχήματα,

3. ὑπορχήματα. in which the dancing is prominent, and in which there is a close correlation between the

theme and the orchestric movement. The greatest master of this mimetic composition was Simonides of Keos, *αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ*

*κράτιστος*. The hyporchemata were more secular than the paeon, and represented the exuberant joy of the festival.

Pindar composed a hyporchema in honor of Hieron, of which we have fragments; and famous is the passage also from the hyporchemata touching the eclipse of the sun. 4. Of *προσόδια*,

4. προσόδια. or processional songs with flute accompaniment,

Pindar composed two books, the most considerable fragment of which was prepared for a *πομπή* to Delos,

the others for a *πομπή* to Delphi. 5. *Παρθένια*, with flute accompaniment in the Dorian mood for choruses

5. παρθένια. of virgins in honor of gods, as Apollo or Pan,

in the fragments of Pindar; or of men, as Hieron (P. 2, 19).



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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

6. Ἐγκώμια are laudatory poems in the widest sense. In a narrower sense they are songs sung at the Dorian κῶμος in honor of distinguished men, and evidently it would often be difficult to tell an ἐπινίκιον from an ἐγκώμιον.
7. Παροίγια, or “drinking-songs,” of which the 7. παροίγια, σκόλια, or rather σκολιά,<sup>1</sup> were sung by individuals at banquets. The name is puzzling, and has been variously explained in ancient and in modern times; the “obliquity” of the σκολίον being referred now to the zigzag way in which the song was passed on from singer to singer, now to the character of the rhythm. Engelbrecht, the most recent investigator, maintains that it was a generic name for the lighter Æolian (Terpandrian) composition in contradistinction to the gravity of the epic. As developed in literature the σκολία were brief, pithy songs, almost epigrammatic. The themes were love, wine, the philosophy of life, the stirring scenes of history. Clement of Alexandria compares them oddly, but not ineffectively, with the psalms. The most famous of all the Greek σκολιά is that of Kallistratos in honor of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the slayers of Hipparchos (ἐν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φορήσω). Böckh thinks that Pindar developed the σκολίον and put it into a choral form, the chorus dancing while the singer was singing. All which is much disputed.<sup>2</sup> The fragments that we have are dactylo-epitrite. One of them is referred to in the introduction to O. 13.
8. The dithyramb (διθύραμβος)—a half-dozen etymologies might be given, each absurder than the other—
8. διθύραμβοι. is a hymn to Iakchos (Bakchos), the mystic god, whose more mundane side is expressed by the name Dionysos. It is a fragment of one of Pindar’s dithyrambs that preserves to us the memorable encomium of Athens:

ὃ τὰι λιπαρὰι καὶ ἰοστέφανοι καὶ αἰοιδίμοι,  
Ἐλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθάναι, δαιμόνιον προλιέθρον.

<sup>1</sup> See A. G. ENGELBRECHT, *De Scoliorum Poesi*, Vienna, 1882, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> ENGELBRECHT, l. c. p. 95.

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9. Yet one more department must be mentioned—one in which Pindar attained the highest excellence. Simonides, his rival, touched tenderer chords in the *θρήνος*, or “lament,” and the fragment that tells of Danaë’s lullaby to Perseus, the noble tribute to those who died at Thermopylai, are among the most precious remains of Greek poetry. But Pindar’s *θρήνοι* struck a higher key, and at the sound of his music the gates of the world beyond roll back. The poet becomes a hierophant.

## III.

A song of victory is as old as victory itself, and only younger than strife, “the father of all things.” The unrenowned *έν-ΤΗΜΕ*. *δομάχας ἀλέκτωρ*, spoken of by Pindar, chanted his own *epinikion* before the flood. Old songs of victory are familiar to us from the Bible—Miriam’s song, Deborah’s song, the chorals of virgins that sang “Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands.” Pindar himself mentions the old *μέλος* of Archilochos, a hymn on the heroes of the games, Herakles and Iolaos, the *τήνελλα καλλίνικος*, the “See the conquering hero comes,” which was chanted by the victor’s friends in default of any special *epinikion*. No one who has read the close of the Acharnians of Aristophanes is likely to forget it.

There were singers of *epinikia* before Simonides and Pindar, but we shall pass over the obscure predecessors of these two princes of Hellenic song, to whom the full artistic development of the lyric chorus was peculiarly due, pausing only to point out to the beginner in Pindar, who is ordinarily more familiar with the tragic chorus than with any other, the fundamental difference between tragic and lyric. The tragic chorus has been called the ideal spectator, the spectator who represents the people. It is the conscience, the heart of the people. In the best days of the drama the chorus follows every turn of the action, heightens every effect of joy or sorrow by its sympathy, rebukes every violation of the sacred law by indignant protest or earnest appeal to the powers

**Lyric  
chorus.**

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above. If the coryphaeus or head man speaks, he speaks as the representative of the whole.

But in Pindar the chorus is the mouthpiece of the poet, and does not represent the people except so far as Pindar, **Mouthpiece of the poet.** through the chorus, expresses the thought of the Greeks and reflects their nationality. In the tragic chorus old men and young maidens, hardy mariners and captive women are introduced; but under all the dramatic proprieties of expression, we see the beating of the Greek heart, we hear the sound of the Greek voice. In Pindar's *epinikion* we never forget Pindar.

The victories in honor of which these *epinikia* were composed gave rise to general rejoicing in the cantons of the victors, and a numerous chorus was trained to celebrate duly the solemn festivity. This public character brought with it a grander scale, a more ample sweep, and the *epinikion* took a wider scope. It is not limited to one narrow line of thought, one narrow channel of feeling. There is festal joy in the *epinikion*, wise and thoughtful counsel, the uplifting of the heart in prayer, the inspiration of a fervent patriotism; all these, but none of them constitutes its character. That character is to be sought in the name itself. The *epinikion* lifts the temporary victory to the high level of the eternal prevalence of the beautiful and the good over the foul and the base, the victor is transfigured into a glorious personification of his race, and the present is reflected, magnified, illuminated in the mirror of the mythic past. Pindar rises to the height of his great argument. A Theban of the Thebans, an Aigeid, a Kadmeian he is, and continues to be, but the games were a pledge and a prophecy of unity, and in the *epinikia* Pindar is national, is Panhellenic. From the summit of Parnassos he sweeps with impartial eye the horizon that bounds Greek habitation. Far in the west lies Sicily, "the rich," with Syracuse, "the renowned, the mighty city," "sacred pale of warrior Ares," "of heroes and of horses clad in iron, foster-mother divine," and "the fair-built citadel of Akragas, abode of splendor, most beauti-

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ful among the cities of men, dwelling-place of Persephone," and Kamarina, "watered by the Hipparis, with the stedfast dwellings that skirt the stream," and Himera with its hot springs, haunted by the nymphs, and Aitna, "all the year long the nurse of biting snow." He looks across the firth to Italy, to the land of the Epizephyrian Lokrians, and from his height "bedews the city of brave men with honey." Then, turning southward, he descries Kyrene, "rich in flocks, fruitfulest of lands," "third part of the mainland," "stock of loveliness." Eastward then to Rhodes, "child of Aphrodite and bride of the sun," to Tenedos, "resonant with lute and song." Now home to Greece and Argos, "city of Danaos and the fifty maidens with resplendent thrones," "the dwelling of Hera," "meet residence for gods, all lighted up with valorous deeds." Long does his gaze linger on Aigina, no eyesore to him, however it may be to the Peiraeus. One fourth of the *epinikia* have for their heroes residents of that famous island which Pindar loved with all the love of kindred. "Nor far from the Charites fell her lot," "this city of justice," "this island that had reached unto the valorous deeds of the Aiakidai," "her fame perfect from the beginning," "the hospitable Doric island of Aigina." Yet he is not blind to the merits of Aigina's foe. Every one knows by heart the words that earned him the great reward. In the dithyramb Athens is Ἑλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλεινὰ Ἀθῆναι: in the *epinikia* she is lauded as the "surest foundation of song." His glance takes in with rapid sweep Lakedaimon and Thessaly. "If Lakedaimon is prosperous, Thessaly is happy; the race of one, even Herakles, ruleth both." Nearer he comes, now to "famed" Opus, now to Orchomenos, "land of steeds, watered by the Kephissos, dwelling-place of the Charites," and then his eye rests in brooding love on Thebes, the theme of his earliest song, "Thebes of the seven gates, mother mine, Thebes of the golden shield."

It is evident, then, that the theme was no narrow one, that all that was best, highest, most consecrated, all the essential Hellenism in Pindar had ample scope. And now, even to

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those who know nothing of Pindar, except by the hearing of the ear, the great games of Greece have been brought nearer by the recent excavations at Olympia, and the brilliant scene of the Olympian festival is more vivid than ever to the imagination. We see the troops of pilgrims and the hosts of traffickers wending their way to the banks of the Alpheios, the rhetorician conning his speech, the poet hugging his roll of verse, the painter nursing his picture, all seeking gold or glory at the festival. Few landscapes so familiar now as the plain of Pisa, with its sacred river and his mischievous brother, Kladeos. The fancy can clothe the Altis again with the olive, and raise sunny Kronion to its pristine height, and crown it with the shrine to which it owes its name. We see again temples and treasure-houses, the flashing feet of the runners, the whirlwind rush of the chariots, the darting of the race-horses, the resolute faces of the men who ran in armor, the gleaming flight of the javelins, the tough persistence of the wrestlers, each striving to put off on his antagonist the foulness of defeat. The scene is lighted up by the mid-month moon, and the revolving Horai seem to have brought back the music of the past to which they danced more than two thousand years ago. Everything that has been brought to light in Olympia has brought with it new light for the scene, for the games. The Hermes of Praxiteles is henceforth for us the impersonation of the youthful athlete, whose physical prowess has not made him forget tenderness and reverence. The Nike of Paionios revives for us the resistless rush of victory; the breeze that fills her robe quickens the blood in our veins. Stadion, the oldest of all the games, most characteristic of all, as it symbolized Greek nimbleness of wit, Greek simplicity of taste, pentathlon, pancration, the chariot race, the race with horses, all these become more real to us for statue and vase and votive tablet. We mingle in the eager crowds, we feel the tremulous excitement, we too become passionate partisans, and swell the volume of cheers. Many masters of style have pictured to us the Olympic games, but these things belong to masters of style, and no

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futile rivalry will be attempted here with what has helped so many to a clearer image of the great scene. Yet, after all that has been said by word-painter and by archaeologist, the poet must give the poet's meaning to the whole. Reconstruct Greek life and we shall better understand Pindar. With all my heart; but after the reconstruction we shall need the poet's light as much as ever, if not more.

It is only in accordance with the principle of the organic unity of Hellenism that the acme of Greek lyric art should have embodied the acme of Greek festal life. The great games of Greece are as thoroughly characteristic of her nationality as the choral poetry which was the expression of them and the crown of them. Choruses we find everywhere, games we find everywhere, but despite all recent advance in athleticism, the Greek games were superior in plastic beauty to their modern analogues, as superior as were the Greek choruses to the rude dance and the ruder song of May-pole and vintage. The point of departure may have been the same, but the Greeks alone arrived.

The origin of the great games of Greece is to be sought in the religion of Greece,<sup>1</sup> and the influence of Delphi,—  
**Origin of games.** centre of the religious life of the people,—was felt in  
**Delphic influences.** every regulation that controlled these famous contests. The times of the performance were in the hands of the priests, the cycle was a religious as well as an astronomical cycle. Eight years, the great year of expiation, the great *λυκάβας*, the hecatomb of months, the period of the great *πομπή* from Tempe to Delphi, was subdivided into shorter periods for the performance of the games.

The contests themselves may have come over from Asia, as Thukydidēs says, but a marked point of difference was the absence of intrinsically valuable prizes, which so astonished the attendants of Xerxes. At other games prizes of value were bestowed, and lists are given in Pindar, but at the great games the prize was a simple wreath. It is

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<sup>1</sup> This section follows CURTIUS closely.

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true that abundant honor awaited the victor at home, special seats at festivals, free table in the prytaneion, and other immunities and privileges, but the honor was the main thing, and though it was not dearly bought,—for the two great historians, Herodotos and Thukydidēs, unlike in so many things, never forget to mention the agonistic achievements of the characters that cross their pages,—though the honor was not dearly bought, it was bought not only with toil, but with money, whether in training for the contest, or in outlay for horse and chariot, or in the celebration of the victory.

Early noted, early emphasized, was another difference between Greek games and Oriental. The human form, as something sacred in its perfection, was displayed in all its beauty and strength to the eye of day, as to the eye of the god. The Oriental games bore the mark of their bloody origin in self-mutilation. Under Dorian influence, even the Ionian dropped his trailing robes and brought a living sacrifice to his deity, the fresh bloom of young manhood, the rich efflorescence of the gifts of fortune.

Of these festivals the greatest was the Olympian, “the sun in the void ether,” that makes the lesser lights pale into nothingness, the fire that shines in the blackness of night, and makes night look blacker by its brilliancy. The establishment of it, or the re-establishment of it, marks the union of the Doric island of Pelops, and it speedily rose to national importance. The first recorded victory is that of Koroibos (*σταδίου νικήσας*), 776 B.C. The Olympian games were celebrated at the end of every four years, beginning, according to the older view, with the first full moon following the first new moon after the summer solstice, according to the recent investigations of Unger, with the second full moon after the same. The Pythian festival, celebrated in the third year of each Olympiad, was revived and put on a firmer footing in 586 B.C., and the establishment or revival of the Nemean is assigned to 573 B.C., of the Isthmian to 582 B.C., and it is no mere coincidence that the rise of this

**Pythian,  
Nemean,  
Isthmian.**

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new life belongs to the same century that witnessed the downfall of the ambitious houses that had acquired despotic power in Corinth and Sikyon.

There were games all over Greece—one sometimes wearies of such lists as are unrolled in O. 13—but these four were of **National significance of these games.** national significance, all of them Amphiktyonic, all more or less under Delphic, under Apollinic influence. A sacred truce was proclaimed to guarantee the safety of pilgrims to the games, and a heavy fine was imposed on any armed body that should cross the border of Elis in the sacred month. In this peace of God the opposing elements of Greek nationality met and were reconciled. The impulsive Ionian was attuned to the steadier rhythm of the Dorian, and as Greek birth was required for all competitors, the games prepared the way for a Panhellenism which was no sooner found than lost. And yet, despite this Panhellenic character, the games did not entirely lose the local stamp. The Pythian games, for instance, were especially famous for their musical contests, the Isthmian gave the most ample opportunity for commercial exchange.

Two moral elements, already indicated, enter into the games. **πόνος** They are called by homely names, toil and expense, **δαπάνη** *πόνος δαπάνη τε.*<sup>1</sup> They are moral elements because they involve self-sacrifice, submission to authority, devotion to the public weal. “So run that ye may obtain” is not merely an illustration, it is a lesson. Whether it be fleetness of foot or swiftness of horse, it demands the renunciation of self-will, and the glory is, after all, not the winner’s, but the god’s, for the beauty that shone forth on the stadion, the wealth that glittered in the festal display, **Honor paid the gods.** came alike from God. The games themselves are held in honor of the gods, the Olympian and Nemean of Zeus, the Pythian of Apollo, the Isthmian of Poseidon. Their praise is often the burden of the song, and the

<sup>1</sup> O. 5, 15. If, however, that is not accepted as Pindaric, we have I. 1, 42, *ἀμφοτέρων δαπάναις τε καὶ πόνους*: I. 5 (6), 10, *δαπάνη τε χαρεῖς καὶ πόνος*.



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poems in which they are not magnified may be counted on one hand.

The great national heroes of Greece share in the honor.

**Herakles.** Herakles is hardly less vividly present to our mind at the Olympian games than Zeus himself. Indeed the Herakles of Pindar might well claim a separate chapter.<sup>1</sup> And as the games are a part of the worship of the gods, so victory is a token of their favor, and the *epinikion* becomes a hymn of thanksgiving to the god, an exaltation of the deity or of some favorite hero. The god, the hero, is often the centre of some myth that occupies the bulk of the poem, and it may seem at the first glance, perhaps after repeated reading, that mere caprice had dictated the choice of this or that myth rather than another, but closer study seldom fails to reveal a deeper meaning in the selection. The myth is often a parallel, often a prototype. Then the scene of the victory is sacred. Its beauties and its fortunes are unfailing sources of song. We learn how Pelops of yore won the

**Scene of the victory.** chariot-race against Oinomaos, we learn how Herakles planted the Altis with trees, and brought the olive from the distant land that lies behind the blast of shrill Boreas. Not less favored is the land of the victor. Country and city are often blended with goddess or heroine whose history of trial and triumph prefigures the trial and triumph of the victor. Then the history of the house often

**City of the victor.** carried the poet up to the higher levels of poetry, **History of his house.** for the house was not unfrequently an old heroic line going back into the mythic past. The *epinikion* is thus lifted up above the mere occasional poem, and we can well understand how such a crown of glory as a Pindaric ode would be carefully preserved and brought forth on each recurrence of the festal day. Such a poem has often for its theme a grand tradition, traditional hospitality, traditional freedom from *ὑβρις*, that arch-crime against the life of a Greek state, traditional victories. Even when the fortunes of

<sup>1</sup> V. MENGhini, *Ereole nei canti di Pindaro*. Milano, 1879.

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a house have been chequered, what is lost in brilliancy is gained in human interest. The line disowned of Fortune comes to its rights again. The glory of the grandsire is revived in the third generation. Then there is the victory itself with all the splendor that attends it—the sacrifices, the processions, the banquets, the songs; and, not least, the songs, for Pindar magnifies his calling, and large space is given to the praise of poetry.

From this rapid enumeration of the elements of the *epinikion*, it will appear that the range is not narrow. There is scope enough for the highest work, as high as the brazen heaven not to be climbed of men, deep as the hell in which “yon people” bear toil and anguish not to be looked at with mortal eye, broad as the family, the house, the race, mankind. And yet the poetry of Pindar does not lose itself in generalities. He compares his song to a bee that hastes from flower to flower, but the bee has a hive. He compares his song to a ship, but the ship has a freight and a port. His song does not fly on and on like a bird of passage. Its flight is the flight of an eagle, to which it has so often been likened, circling the heavens, it is true, stirring the ether, but there is a point on which the eye is bent, a mark, as he says, at which the arrow is aimed. The victory is not forgotten. The *epinikion* is what its name implies. Not a set piece of poetic fire-works, nor yet, as many would make it out to be, a sermon in rhythm. It is a song of praise. But all extravagance of eulogy is repressed by the dread of Nemesis, by that law of

The *Epini-*  
*kion* a song  
of praise.

**Limits.** balance which kept the Greek in awe of presumption. The victor may see his image transfigured into the form of hero, or even god; only he is reminded that he is of the earth. *Μὴ μάρτυρε Ζεὺς γέρεσθαι*. Sometimes the praise is veiled with the myth, but when it is direct, it is delicate. The victor's garland, he says, demands the song, but the song is not such a trumpet-blast as would blow the garland off the victor's head, if not the victor's head as well. That is modern eulogy. Of course it will be said that Pindar's eulogy was eulogy to order, but it was

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not falsehood with a cunning makeweight of good advice. The eulogy spends itself where eulogy is earned. To whiten Hieron is easier than to blacken Pindar. The excellence of the victors in the athletic contest, of men like Diagoras, of boys like Agesidamos, the liberality of Theron, of Hieron, of Arkesilas in the chariot-race, are assuredly fit themes for praise. The prosperity of the victor and his house, as a sign of God's favor, might well deserve the commendation of the poet. But Pindar was too high a character to make deliberate merchandise of falsehood, and while it runs counter to common-sense to suppose that he availed himself of his commission to read the high and mighty tyrants of Greece lectures on their moral defects, he is too much a reflection of the Apollo, who is his master, to meddle with lies. With all his faults, Hieron was a Doric prince of whom Dorians needed not to be ashamed, but there is reserve enough in Pindar's praise of a man like Hieron to make us feel the contrast when he comes to Theron. Unfortunately, Pindar is not expected to have humor, and the jest of "the Muses with the silvered countenances" has done him harm with certain virtuous moderns, whose pens seldom move except in quest of gain.

In all estimates of Pindar's poetry, it is important to remember that he belonged to the aristocracy of Greece, that his poems were composed for the aristocracy, and that he spoke of them and to them as their peer. No man of the people is praised in his poems. It is the purest fancy that Thrasydaios (P. 11) was other than a man of the highest birth. Now men of aristocratic habits are scrupulously polite to persons of inferior position with whom they may be brought into social contact. Among their own set their manners are less reserved. And Pindar was in his own set when he was among these Olympian and Pythian victors, and there was a strain of familiar banter in his poems that would not have been tolerated or tolerable in any ordinary man. It is not likely that he made an allusion to Ergoteles' gray hair (O. 12). If he did, it would pass. It is undeniable that he made a harmless jest at the insignificant

**Pindar's  
relations to  
the victors.**

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appearance of his townsman Melissos (I. 3). When he hints at envy and feud, he has the tone of one who knows all the secrets of a coterie, and when he sorrows, he sorrows as one who has carried the body of a friend to the tomb. If we had *mémoires pour servir*, Pindar's reserves, his enigmas, his aristocratic intimacies might be forgiven. As it is, those who cannot amuse themselves by reconstructing the scandalous chronicle of the fifth century, often end by hating a poet whose personality for love or hate is stamped deep on all his works.

## IV.

Men who themselves owed everything to form have been found to maintain that translation conveys the essential, and **THOUGHT.** that the highest survives the process of transmission without any considerable loss. Far less dangerous is the paradox of Moritz Haupt, "Do not translate: translation is the death of understanding. The first stage is to learn to translate; the second to see that translation is impossible."<sup>1</sup> In the transfer to a foreign language the word loses its atmosphere, its associations, its vitality. The angle at which it meets the mental vision is often changed, the rhythm of the sentence is lost. The further one penetrates into the life of a language, the harder does translation become; and so we often have the result that the version of the young student is better than that of the experienced scholar, because the latter tries to express too much, and hence falls into paraphrase and sheer cumbrousness. The true vision of a work of literary art is to be gained by the study of the original, and by that alone. And this holds even as to the ethic value of poetry. To put Pindar's thoughts, his views of life, into other words, is often to sacrifice the delicate point on which the whole moral turns. If this is true of the single word, the single sentence, it holds with still more force of the attempt to form an image of the poet's world of thought and feeling by the simple process of cataloguing translations of

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<sup>1</sup> See H. NETTLESHIP, Maurice Haupt, a Lecture, p. 18.

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his most striking thoughts under certain rubrics. This has been done by various scholars, notably by Bippart and by Buchholz.<sup>1</sup> With their help one can give ode and verse for Pindar's attitude towards the beliefs of his time, for his views of the gods and heroes, of human destiny, of politics, practical and speculative, of Pindar's relations to persons.<sup>2</sup> One can give ode and verse for Pindar's belief in blood, in genius, for his contempt of the groundlings, for his tenets of art, of life, of government, if, indeed, we dare break up the antique unity in which all three are merged. But the methodical channels in which Pindar's poetical vein is thus made to run give no notion of the play of the poet's genius. The stream that escapes from the waste-pipe of a fountain gives no notion of the rise and fall and swirl and spray and rainbow glitter of the volume of water that rejoices to return the sportive touch of the sunlight. The catechism has its uses, but it is not the Bible, and as there is no space in this essay for a Pindaric catechism, it must suffice to show how much the study of a few odes will teach us of what Pindar believed concerning God, and what duty he thought God required of man. True, to the great question, "What is God?" Pindar has no answer in any of his odes; he is as silent as Simonides. But when we ask, "Are there more gods than one?" the answer comes speedily from the first Olympian, "There be gods many and lords many." Zeus dominates officially (v. 10), and some see in this, as in the use of *θεός* and *God*. *δαίμων* elsewhere, a tendency to the monotheistic idea, but Poseidon (vv. 40, 73, 75), who held the Peloponnesos in his embrace, rules the myth. We are reminded of Kronos (v. 10); Aphrodite is not forgotten (v. 75), nor one of the great powers behind the throne, Klotho (v. 26),—to say nothing of the unfailing Muses (v. 112). We are in the fa-

<sup>1</sup> BIPPART, *Pindar's Leben, Weltanschauung, und Kunst*, Jena, 1848. BUCHHOLZ, *Die sittliche Weltanschauung des Pindaros und Aeschylus*, Leipzig, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> A. CROISSET, *Pindare*, pp. 162–291, has treated these matters in the right spirit, because he has kept the setting for the most part.

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## PINDAR'S THOUGHT.

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miliar world of Greek divinities. The poet's attitude towards the gods is that of his people, and a study of all the odes would only confirm the impression of the first. Nearly every ode is full of gods. Not one of the shining forms of the great divinities is lacking, not even Hestia, who has a large space in N. 11. Pindar's world of the gods is an organized state, won by the victory of Zeus over the Titanic brood. In the first Olympian, as in all the Olympians, Zeus rules serenely. It is true that his throne, Aitna, rests on the violent hundred-headed Typhoeus (O. 4, 6), but we do not feel the stirrings of the revolted spirit as in P. 1, 15, or in P. 8, 16, for the Pythians magnify the office of Apollo, who is the Word of Zeus, the god that bids harmony and measure reign in state and man. The being of Apollo is much more deeply wrought with the Pythian odes than that of Zeus with the Olympian.

This belief in the gods, or acceptance of the gods, did not involve belief in this or that special myth. The historical books of the unwritten Bible, so to speak, were open to all manner of scepticism, as we know from the annals of the time, as well as from Pindar. Every one remembers Xenophanes' revolt against the fables of Greek mythology. So, Pindar, in the famous passage, beginning (v. 28) ἦ θαυμάτᾳ πολλὰ καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν, κτέ., speaks of legends cunningly set off with glittering falsehoods. He distrusts the myth, he resolutely refuses to believe it when it jeopardizes the honor of God. He who himself invokes Charis for the praise of man, dreads her persuasive power in things divine. "I cannot call one of the blessed cannibal." There is a conflict in Pindar's poems on this subject as on others. We of this time know well what this means, for doubt runs through all our literature. Only the antique poet is not tortured by his doubts; the priestly temper conquers. He keeps his tongue from aught that would offend the god, and leaves the god himself to reconcile the partial views of his worshippers. The cultivation of a religious temper is his resource against scepticism, and this age has seen many shining examples of critical knowledge