
This English translation and commentary on Pindar’s epinicians includes Olympian I, Pythian IX, Nemeans II and III and Isthmian I, some of them old favourites, some of them new possibilities. Those who find Pindar a struggle will be grateful for Nemean II, only 25 lines in length. The others are much longer. But the editor has made a good selection of poems, with as much variety in theme as is possible in a collection of Pindaric epinicians, and a lot of useful mythical content. There are illustrations to the poems as well, with some humorous effects.

The introduction deals with the difficulties in the auto/biographical interpretation of the poems, the variety within the epinician form, the ways in which myth can be relevant to the victor’s situation, the nature of the performance, the importance of athletics, and the language and style, including dialect, literary techniques such as the priamel, ring composition, abrupt transitions, striking images and many more. The Nachleben and the textual tradition complete the introduction.

Each poem is then treated in turn, with the Greek text (and such apparatus criticus as is appropriate), the translation on the facing page, and at the end of the whole sequence, an introduction to each individual poem, a commentary on its English translation and a vocabulary list for all the poems.

The English translation of Olympian I is an accurate reflection of the Greek and special care is taken to mimic the position of the Greek words without altogether straining the English. The introduction to the commentary treats the background of the victor, the relevance of the myth and the structure of the poem, as well as the metre. In the commentary, the impressive opening priamel is examined in detail for structure and meaning. Features
of dialect are given their equivalent in Attic. Favourite words and expressions are noted. In the discussion of the myth, reasons are given why Pindar rejects the more brutal version, but then gives it in detail. The crux in which Clotho takes Pelops from the cauldron with his ivory shoulder provokes and receives a long comment, as well as the notorious ‘fourth labour with three’ of Tantalus. Gerber’s commentary is more exhaustive, but this is greater value for money.

The commentary in this series is on the English translation rather than the text. This is obviously good for those who do not wish to command the Greek. Even for those with Greek the current technique in commentaries is to rely on translation rather than grammatical analysis because of its greater economy. I am on the side of those who believe that this approach may not improve command of Greek in every case. There is nevertheless considerable attention to the Greek and the grammar and dialect in this edition, as well as the effect of the Greek order of words. In the translation I cannot get to grips with the sun as a ‘star’, which is entirely my own fault. I appreciate also that a ‘heavenly body’ might disrupt the mimicry of the Greek word order. If I think that the description of a young man’s beard as ‘thin hairs’ is not quite right, then it might be because I am a female reader.

The translation of Pythian IX offers the same combination of readability and accuracy, even literalism. The same format of introduction is followed as in Olympian I. The background, the athletic event in question, the structure, the myths and metre are discussed. The more difficult twists and turns of the poem’s direction are well handled in the commentary, in spite of the poet’s apparent jumble of allusions to Thebes.

It may be useful to analyse a typical passage of comment. Nemean III.43-63 is a ‘memorable portrait of Achilles’ which seeks to demonstrate the point that innate talent counts most for those who achieve (40-2). The points relevant to this demonstration are explained. So is Achilles’ epithet ‘fair-
haired’. ‘To start with’ is noted as a translation of τὰ μέν, with some discussion of where to locate the δὲ to follow. Philyra is identified. The literal translation is given of ‘running wind-swift’. ‘Of wild lions’ is glossed [for the disadvantage of]. Imperfects are noted for repeated action. The emendation of Achilles ‘gasping for breath’ is well defended, with reference also to the scholiasts. ἀν for ἀνά is noted. Artemis and Athene are identified as goddesses of hunting and fighting (Athene is ‘bold’ in any case). Asyndeton is noted as confirmation of a forward reference. Other evidence of Chiron’s teaching of Jason and Asclepius is adduced. There is a brief note on the medicine he taught Asclepius. His relationship with Peleus is explained. So is Achilles’ struggle with Memnon.

There was perhaps a need to explain to some readers that the reference to hunting dogs belongs to Artemis and deceptive hunting nets to Aphrodite, who is also the goddess of the deceptive nets of love. I grant that these things should be obvious. Perhaps too, an explanation is needed of the relevance (or otherwise) of Chiron’s teaching of Jason and Asclepius as well as Achilles. Is Pindar making a comparison of innate qualities?

The translation is often enough to explain the Greek. For example, the accusative singular participle that begins line 51 might otherwise cause difficulty, but is clearly made to refer to Achilles in the translation. The passage does raise questions about the vocabulary list though. ἄθυρε is not there, and ἄρμενα will not be easily found, hidden under ἄραρίσκω. φρασί should perhaps also be identified as the older form of φρεσί.

I recommend this book most warmly to those looking for a good university text-book that will introduce students to the riches of Pindar in translation or otherwise. I have already used it myself
with a graduate Greek class in the Antipodes and it was well received.

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This book is the mature reflection of a highly respected scholar in Graeco-Roman rhetoric. The author investigates the nature of rhetoric over a wide range of cultures (the primates, Australian Aborigine, African, Polynesian and Maori, North American Indian, Ancient Near Eastern, Ancient Chinese, Ancient Indian, and only finally Ancient Greek and Roman). This is in order to illuminate the subject by cross-cultural comparison. In particular the author searches these cultures for the equivalent of the main elements of rhetoric as defined by Aristotle and others. These elements include the five stages in the production of a speech: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery; the three species of speech: judicial, deliberative and epideictic; and the use of ethos, pathos and logos as the means of persuasion.

The first surprise for the traditional classicist will be the very wide definition of 'rhetoric'. K seeks a place for rhetoric in 'nature', not just 'art', and finds that it is a form of mental and emotional energy that arises from the instinct for self-preservation and is therefore a conservative faculty.

Thus the primates and other animals: stags and birds. Here for the first time K demonstrates that broad knowledge of non-