This article will help you learn Pindar’s famous first Olympian song. It’s aimed at non-experts like myself. It brings together all the info I had to dig up to be able to read the song, and to imagine how it was sung. Thanks very much to William Annis for checking this article and for helping me put this long document together, for fixing my mistakes, putting together the schema on pages 2 and 3 from Puech, and even researching articles on how to read the hardest sentence (lines 8 to 11): very much appreciated.

Background.

This song is about 3 people:

- Pelops, Zeus’ grandson and Agamemnon’s grandfather;
- Hieron, a Syracusan king; and
- Tantalos, Pelops’ father.

Pindar sings in a cycle about these 3 people:

- 2 paragraphs about Hieron: his glory as king, and his horse’s victory at the Olympics in 476BC. Pindar wrote the song for Hieron to celebrate this;
- 3 paragraphs about Pelops: two different myths explaining why he had an ivory shoulder;
- 2 paragraphs about Tantalos: how Zeus punished him, because he abused his divine privileges;
- 3 paragraphs about Pelops again: the myth about his chariot victory at Olympia (before the Olympic games were created there); then finally
- 2 paragraphs about Hieron again: his glory as king, and hoped-for victory in the more prestigious 4-horse chariot race at the next Olympics.

Half the song (6 paragraphs) is about Pelops. Hieron gets 4 paragraphs, but at the start and end: emphasis positions. Tantalos gets 2 paragraphs, right in the middle of the cycle: his downfall bleakly stands out against the successes and glories of Pelops and Hieron.

Pindar’s songs would have sounded strange to us. They were sung to the oldest Greek scale, called enharmonic (West pg 164). In that scale, notes were set in groups of 4, a tetra-chord. From the top note, the notes dropped in this way (West pg 162):
• top note, then
• about 2 whole tones lower, then
• about a quarter tone lower, then
• about a quarter tone lower.

So, from the bottom up, you have a group of 3 closely-packed rising notes (each a quarter tone apart), then a note 2 whole tones higher.

To imagine how two of these tetrachords put together (into a 7 note scale) roughly sounded:

• in a low voice, hum 3 rising notes, moving up in pitch with each note as little as you can, so that the third note is only about half a tone higher than the first one; then

• in a roughly normal-pitch or middle-pitch voice, do the same thing (hum another 3 closely-packed rising notes); then

• in a higher voice, hum one note.

If you can play this tetrachord on a string instrument you’ll understand it better. But it doesn’t matter if you don’t get it exactly right. You can imagine how strange Pindar’s song would have sounded to us though, with the syllables rising and falling on this old Greek scale. This scale was, by the way, according to Aristides Quintilianus, impossible to perform for the untrained (West pg 166), and according to the ancient Greek musical theorist Aristoxenus, it was the most sophisticated and beautiful of the scales (West 165).

We don’t know what the tuning was for Pindar’s first Olympian (e.g. what the top note was or what the tonic note was). It might have been sung to a Dorian or to an Aeolian tuning (West pg 347), but we don’t know because it would be just guessing from what Pindar says in the song itself.

Next, the rhythm. There are two types of rhythmic paragraph in this song. Every third paragraph has the same rhythmic pattern: they’re called epodes. The other 8 paragraphs are different: they come in sets of 2 paragraphs called strophes and antistrophes, but each of these has the same rhythmic pattern (different to the epodes though). Here are the patterns for the strophes/antistrophes and for the epodes, taken from Puech:

| Strophe | 0—0 0—0 0—0 0—0 0—0 0—0 0—0 |
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To make sense of the strophe/antistrophe pattern, it might help to break it up into sections. Set out below is a simplified way of following Pindar’s complex rhythm pattern. Lines 1 and 2 start with a perhaps unfamiliar combination of longs and shorts, but from μεγάνορος in line 2 you might recognise the ending of a Homeric line (from the feminine caesura):

\[ \dot{\text{αριστον}} \text{ μὲν ὄδωρ, ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθωμένων πῦρ} \]
\[ \dot{\text{άτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μεγάνορος ἕξοχα πλοῦτον.}} \]

Next, lines 3 to 5, which have a quick rhythm, trochaic (long + short), but the middle line (line 4) finishes with a Homeric-sounding long, 2 shorts, then 2 longs, which gives this group of lines balance I think:

\[ \dot{\text{ἐδὲ ξεθλὰ γαρ}} \dot{\text{υἱὸ}} \dot{\text{ν}} \dot{\text{ητὸρ,}} \]
\[ \dot{\text{μηκέθ' ἀλλοῦ σκόπει}} \]

Next, lines 6 to 7, where you have a long string of trochees (treat the last 2 syllables of θαλπνότερον as 1 resolved long syllable), except for choriamb (long + 2 shorts + long) starting at ἄστρον and at φέρτερον:

\[ \dot{\text{ἀλλοθαλπνότερον ἐν ἁμερὰ φαεννόν ἄστρον ἐρήμας δι' αἰθέρος,}} \]
\[ \dot{\text{μηδ' Ὀλυμπίας ἁγὼνα φέρτερον αὐδάσσομεν:}} \]

Next, line 8, which begins with a rush of short syllables, then follows with a quick trochaic rhythm. This line stands out by itself:

\[ \dot{\text{ὁδὲν ὁ πολύφατος ὦμνος ἀμφιβάλλεται}} \]

Next, lines 9 to 10, which begin with an iamb (short + long), and then are trochaic, each finishing with a short + short + long:

\[ \dot{\text{σοφὸν μητίσσαι, κελαδεῖν}} \]
\[ \dot{\text{Κρόνου παιὸ ἐς ἀφνέαν ἕκομένως}} \]

Finally, line 11, which also begins with an iamb, and then has a trochaic rhythm (treat the 3 shorts as a long + short):

\[ \dot{\text{μάκαιραν ἵρονος ἐστίαν,}} \]

Now for the song itself. In the footnotes are the grammatical details for almost every word. For nouns and adjectives, I use this system: dictionary entry + the definite article matching the word’s form + the word’s meaning here. e.g. νυκτί:

\[ νὺξ τῇ in the night. \] The article shows you that the word is in the fem. dat. sg. here.

For verbs, I use this system: dictionary entry + details of the verb’s form + the verb’s meaning here. All verbs are present indicative active unless otherwise stated. e.g. διαπρέπει:
\(\text{διαπρέπω} 3\) sg. \textit{shines}. This shows you that the verb is in the 3rd person sg. present indicative active.

Participles mix both of these together. All participles are present active unless otherwise indicated. e.g. \(\alphaιθόμενον: \alphaιθό τό\) nom. ppl. mid. \textit{blazing}. This shows you that the participle is neut. nom. sg., present middle.

The footnotes explain the words; at the end of each paragraph, I’ve re-written the paragraph in a simpler word order to explain the syntax. Pindar uses a complex and loose syntax: if you can’t work out how a word fits into the sentence, have a look at how it’s used in the re-written simpler paragraph. I’ve put brackets around extra letters I’ve added (where I’ve moved around words and elision no longer works), around words which I’ve brought up from the next paragraph, and around words in Pindar which are technically superfluous.
Paragraph 1 (Strophe 1, lines 1 to 11).

άριστον μὲν ὄδωρ, οἵ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθήμενον πῦρ
ατε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μεγάνωρος ἐξοχα πλοῦτον·
eι δὲ ἄθελα γαρ ὑπὸ
ἐλδετί, φιλὸν ἤτορ.

5 μηθὲ ἀλλὸ σκόπει
ἀλλὸ θαλπνότερον ἐν ἀμέρᾳ φαεννὸν ἀστρόν ἐρήμας δὲ αἰθέρος,
μηδὲ Ὅλυμπίας ἀγώνα φέρτερον αὐθάσομεν·
ὅθεν ὁ πολυφάτος ἕμνος ἁμφιβάλλεται
σοφῶν μητέσσοι, κελαδεῖν

10 Κρόνον παιδ ἐξ ἀφνεάν ἱκνέσσος
μάκαιραι Ἰέρωνος ἑστιαν,
Paragraph 2 (Antistrophe 1, lines 12 to 22).

θημιστείον ὃς ἀμφέπει σκάπτων ἐν πολυμάλῳ
Σικελίᾳ, δρέπων μὲν κορυφᾶς ἀρετῶν ἀπὸ πασῶν,
ἀγλαίζω τε καὶ καί
15 μουσικᾶς ἐν ἀότῳ,
οὐ δὲ παῖζομεν φίλαν
ἀνδρές ἀμβρο δᾶμα τράπεζαν. ἄλλα Δώριαν ἀπὸ φορμίγγα πασσάλου
λάμβαν', εἰ τι τοι Πίσας τε καὶ Φερενίκου χάρις
νῦν ὑπὸ γλυκυτάταις ἐθηκε φροντίσιν,
20 ὅτε πάρ' Ἀλφεός σύντο, δήμας
ἀκέντητον ὑπὸ δρόμους παρέχον,
κράτει δὲ προσέμιζε δεσπόταν,

δος ἀμφέπει θημιστείον σκάπτων ἐν πολυμάλῳ Σικελίᾳ, δρέπων μὲν κορυφᾶς ἀπὸ πασῶν ἀρετῶν, ἀγλαίζω τε καὶ καί ἐν ἀότῃ μουσικᾶς οὐ παῖζομεν ἀνδρές θαμά ἀμβρο φίλαν τράπεζαν. (17) ἄλλα πάντων[ε] Δώριαν φορμίγγα ἀπὸ πασσάλου, εἰ τι χάρις Πίσας τε καὶ Φερενίκου εὐθείᾳ τοι νῦν ὑπὸ γλυκυτάταις φροντίσιν, ὅτε αὐτὸ παρ’ Ἀλφεός, παρέχον δήμας ἀκέντητον ὑπὸ δρόμους, προσέμιζε δὲ κράτει δεσπόταν, [Συρακόσιοι ἵπποχάρμαν βασιλῆα].

12θημιστείον τὸ acc. of law, right. ὃς ὁ who, relative, i.e. Hieron. ἀμβρο-έπω 3 sg. looks after, sways, epic. σκάπτων τὸ acc. sceptre, Doric. ἐν in + dat. πολυμάλος τῷ sheep-rich, goat-rich, Doric.
13Σικελία τῇ Sicily. δρέπων ὁ plpl. plucking, reaping. κορυφᾶς ὁς head, peak, metaphorically height of.
14ἀρετῆ τῶν fem. excellences, Doric. ἀπὸ from + gen.; accent recessive because it follows the noun it goes with.
15πᾶς τῶν fem. all, Doric.
16ἀγλαίζω 3 sg. pass. is glorified, made splended.
17μουσικῆ τῆς of music. ἐν in + dat. ἄωτος τῷ neut. choicest.
18δος τὰ acc. such as, relative. παίζω 1 pl. we play. φίλος τῷ dear, Doric.
19ἀναίρετοι men. ἀμβρο around + acc. δῆμα adv. often. τράπεζα τῆς table, i.e. Hieron’s. Δώριος τῆς Dorian, Doric. ἀπὸ from + gen. φόρμιγξ τῆς phorminx, Greek string instrument. πασσάλου τοῦ masc. peg.
20λαμβάνω 2 sg. imperat. take!, τῆς τῷ acc. as adv. in any way. σοῦ τῷ 2 sg. to you, i.e. your, Doric. Πίσα τῆς of Pisa, fountain at Olympia, Doric. Φερενίκους τοῦ masc. of Pherenikos, Hieron’s racehorse. χάρις ἡ glory, splendour.
21νῦν τῷ mind. ὑπὸ under + dat. γλυκύς ταῖς superl. sweetest. τιθήμι 3 sg. aor. placed. φροντίς ταῖς thoughts.
22ὅτε when. παρὰ alongside, by + dat. Ἀλφεός τῷ masc. Alpheos river, at Olympia. σεῦ τῶν 3 sg. mid. aor. ran quickly, epic unaugmented. δῆμας τῷ acc. body, form.
23ἀκέντητος τῷ acc. needing no spur. ἐν in + dat. δρόμος τοῖς masc. races, epic. παρέχον ὁ plpl. exhibiting.
24κράτει with power, success. προσεμιζεῖμαι 3 sg. aor. mingled, united. δεσπότης τῶν master, i.e. Hieron, Doric.
Paragraph 3 (Epode 1, lines 23 to 29).

Συρακόσιον ἵπποχάρμην βασιλῆς. λάμπει δὲ οἱ κλέος
ἐν εὐάνορι Λυδοῦ Πέλοπος ἀποικίας.

25 τοῦ μεγαθενής ἐράσατο γαϊάοχος
Ποσειδῶν, ἐπεὶ νὶν καθαροῦ λέβητος ἐξελεί Κλωθό
ἐλέφαντι φαιδίμον ὁμὸν κεκαθμένον.

ἡ θευμίτα πολλὰ, καὶ ποῦ τὶ καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθὴ λόγον
dedaiadalménoi ψεῦδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μύθοι.

κλέος δὲ οἱ λάμπει ἐν εὐάνορι ἀποικία Λυδοῦ Πέλοπος· τοῦ μεγαθενῆς γαϊάοχος Πος-
σειδῶν ἐράσατο, ἐπεὶ Κλωθό ἐξελεί νὶν καθαροῦ λέβητος, κεκαθμένον ὁμὸν φαιδίμον ἐλέφαντι, ἡ σολλα θαυμάτα [ἐστὶ], καὶ ποῦ τὶ φάτις βροτῶν καὶ μύθοι ἐξαπατῶντι,
dedaiadalménoi ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθὴ λόγον ποικίλοις ψεῦδεσι.

23 Συρακόσιον τὸν Syracusean. ἵπποχάρμης τὸν fighting-from-chariot, Doric. βασιλῆς τὸν king.
λάμπει 3 sg. shines. ἐν τῷ masc. to him, his, epic. κλέος τὸ nom. fame.
24 ἐν in + dat. ἐφιάλου ἄνταξι man-exalting, glorious, Doric. Λυδὸς τὸν masc. Lydian.
Πέλοϕ τῷ masc. Pelops. ἀποικία τῇ colony, Doric.
25 τοῦ masc. with whom, i.e. Pelops. μεγαθενής ὁ mighty in strength. ἔραμαι 3 sg. mid. aor. fell in love
with + gen., epic unaugmented. γαϊάοχος ὁ earth-upholding.
26 Ποσειδῶν ὁ Poseidon, Ποσειδῶν Doric from older and epic Ποσειδῶν. ἐπεὶ when. νῦν τῷ 3 sg. him,
Doric. καθαρὸς τὸν clean, unsoiled. λέβης τοῦ masc. cauldron. ἐξαρέω 3 sg. aor. took + acc. out of +
gen., epic unaugmented. Κλωθό ἡ Klotho, Spinner, a goddess of fate.
27 ἐλέφας τῷ masc. with ivory. φαιδίμος gleaming. ὁμὸς τὸν shoulder. καίνομαι τὸν ppl. perf. having
been adorned with + acc., Doric.
28 ἡ adv. truly. θαυμᾶτος τὰ nom. wonder. πολὺς τὰ nom. much, many. τῷ no doubt (Verdenius).
τῆς τὸ acc. to some extent (Gerber). βροτῶν τῶν masc. of mortals. φάτις ἡ talk, speech. ὑπὲρ beyond +
acc. ἄληθῆς τὸν true, Doric. λόγος τὸν account, fact(s) (Gerber).
29 δαιδάλλα oí ppl. pass. perf. having been embellished. ἰδέας τοῖς neut. lies, dative of means. ποικίλος
tοῖς neut. crafty, embroidered. ἐξαπατάω 3 pl. deceive, Doric. μύθος oí stories.
Paragraph 4 (Strophe 2, lines 30 to 40).

30 Χάρις δ’, ἄπερ ἀπαντά τεύχει τά μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
ἐπιφέροισα τιμάν καὶ ἀπίστον ἐμησατό πιστών
ἐμμενα το πολλάκις;
ἀμέροι δ’ ἐπιλοιποι
μάρτυρες σοφότατοι.

35 ἔστι δ’ ἀνδρι φάμεν ἐούκος ἠμφὶ δαιμόνων καλά· μεῖων γὰρ αἰτία.
υἱὲ Ταντάλου, σε δ’, ἄντια προτέρουν, φθέγξομαι,
ὅποτ’ ἐκάλεσε σατήρ τον εὐνωμάτατον
ἐς ἔρανον φίλαν τε Σίπυλον,
ἀμοιβαία τοις δείπνα παρέχον.

40 τὸ τ’ Ἀγλαοτριαίναν ἀρπάσαι

Χάρις δ’, ἄπερ τεύχει ἀπαντά τα μείλιχα θνατοῖς, ἐπιφέροισα τιμάν, τό πολλάκις καὶ ἐμησατό ἀπίστον ἐμμενα πιστών ἐπιλοιποι δ’ ἀμέροι σοφότατοι, καὶ ἀνεπήκτεσε τιτάρ τον εὐνωμότατον
ἐς ἔρανον φίλαν τε Σίπυλον,
ἀμοιβαία τοις δείπνα παρέχον,

30 Χάρις ἡ Grace, personified. ἄπερ ὁ who, relative, Doric. ἀπαντά τα acc. all. τεύχοι 3 sg. makes. μείλιχος τά acc. pleasant (things), article + adjective as substantive. θνατοῖς τοις masc. for mortals, dative of advantage, Doric.

31 ἐπιφέροισα ἡ ppl. bestowing, Doric. τιμή τὴν honour, Doric. ἀπίστον το acc. the unbelievable. μείλιχοι τά acc. 情寛 (things), article + adjective as substantive.

32 ἐμι inf. to be, epic. το πολλάκις adv. phrase often.

Paragraph 5 (Antistrophe 2, lines 41 to 51).

δαμέντα φρένας ἵμερο χρυσελείναι τ’ ἄν ἵπποις ὑπάτον εὐφυτιόμον ποτὶ δόμα Διὸς μεταβάσαι, ἐνθὰ δεύτερον χρόνῳ ἥλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης

45 Ζηνὶ τωῦτ ἐπὶ χρέος. ὡς δ’ ἀφαντὸς ἐπέλεξε, οὐδὲ ματρὶ πολλὰ ματιέμενοι φῶτες ἄγαγον. ἐννέπει κρυφὰ τις αὐτίκα φθονερῶν γειτών, ὑδατῶς ὑδατοῦ ζείσαν εἰς ἀκμὰν μαχαίρα σαμῶν κατὰ μέλη.

50 τραπέζαισι τ’, ὑμὶ δεύτατα, κρέων σαβεῖν διεθάσαντο καὶ φάγον.

[φθέγξομαι Αγλαοτρίαιναν,] δαμέντα ἵμερο χρέοις, μεταβάσαι τέ [ἐ] [ἐ], ἄν[ά] χρυσελείναι ἵπποις, ποτὶ ἄφαντον δόμα εὐφυτιόμον Διὸς, ἐνθὰ ἥλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης δεύτερον χρόνῳ, ἐπὶ τωῦτ’ χρέος Ζηνὶ. ὡς δ’ ἐπέλεξε ἀφαντὸς, οὐδὲ φῶτες, πολλὰ ματιέμενοι [περὶ], ἄγαγον [ἐ], ματρὶ, φθονερῶν τις γειτῶν αὐτίκα ἐννέπει κρυφὰ ὑδατῶς ὑδατοῦ ζείσαν εἰς ἀκμὰν μαχαίρα σαμῶν κατὰ μέλη ἀναμίσθοισι καὶ φάγον.

41 δαμάζω τὸν πδ. pass. aor. having been overpowering, agrees with Ἀγλαοτρίαιναν. ὑμέρος τάς in respect of wits, acc. of respect. χρόνος ταῖς golden, epic. ἅνα upon + dat. ἵπποις ἵππος, horses, here chariot (Gildersleeve).

42 ὑπάτος τό acc. highest. εὐφυτιόμον τοῦ masc. wide-honoured. ποτὶ + acc., Epic for πρός. δόμα τό acc. home. Ζεύς τόν masc. Zeus. μεταβάσαι inf. aor. to transfer, follows φθέγξομαι in acc. + inf. indirect disc. with Ἀγλαοτρίαιναν as the acc., Doric.

43 ἐπὶ to where. δεύτατος τῷ masc. second, later. χρόνος τῷ masc. time.

44 ἐρχομαι 3 sg. aor. came. Γανυμήδης ὁ Ganymede, one of Zeus’ lovers.

45 Ζεύς τῷ masc. to Zeus, dative of advantage. ὑμῖν ὅν acc. the same, contracted, Ionic. ἐπὶ for the purpose of + acc. χρόνος τῷ acc. service, duty.

46 ὀς after, when + indic. ἀφαντὸς δ’ invisible, here disappeared. πέλω 2 sg. imperf. you were, you became, i.e. Pelops. οὐδὲ no. μητρὶ τῇ to mother, i.e. Pelops’, Doric. πολοῦ τῷ acc. as adv. much. μαλακὰς οἱ ppl. mid. searching, i.e. despite much searching, poetic. φῶς οἱ men. ἄγαγον = ἄγαγος, ἄγα 3 pl. aor. led, brought, Doric reduplicated.

47 ἐνέπος 3 sg. imperf. said, homeric. κροφη adv. in secret, Doric. τίς οἱ someone, indefinite. αὐτίκα adv. immediately. φθονερῶς τόν masc. jealous, grudging. γείτων τῷν masc. of the neighbours, partitive gen.

48 διόρω τῷ neut. of water. ὃτι that. σῦ τῶν 2 sg. you, i.e. Pelops. πῶρ τῷ neut. on the fire, i.e. boiling water in a cauldron over a fire. ἔξο τῶν ppl. boiling, seething, Doric. εἰς into + acc. ἀκμὴ τῷν eruption, vigour, edge, no exact equivalent English word, Doric.

49 μαχαίρα τῇ knife, dat. of means. τέμνων 3 pl. aor. cut, homeric unaugmented. κατὰ μέλη limb by limb.

50 τραπέζαισι τᾶς tables, epic. ἀμφὶ around + dat. (Slater), as the tables were arranged in 2 rows facing each other, each guest having a table (Gildersleeve). δεύτατος τῷ acc. superl. last (morsels). χράς τῶν neut. of flesh.

51 σῦ τῶν 2 sg. of you, epic. διαδασχομαι 3 pl. mid. aor. they divided up among themselves. ἄγαγον = 3 pl. aor. of ἐσθίω, eat, here Homeric unaugmented.
Paragraph 6 (Epode 2, lines 52 to 58).

ἀπορά δ' ἐμοὶ εἰπεῖν τινὰς μακάρων ἅντε ἐκεῖνος ἀφίσταμαι. ἀκράδεια λέλογδεν θαμίνα κακαγώρους. εἰ δὲ τιν' ἄνδρα θυατον Ὀλύμπου σκοποὶ τίμισαν, ἦν Τάνταλος οὗτος· ἀλλὰ γὰρ καταπέσαν μέγαν ὄλβον, κόρος δ' ἔλευ ξάν ὑπέρσπλεν, ἀν οἱ πατήρ ὑπερκρέμασα καρτερὸν αὐτῷ λίθον, τὸν αἰεὶ μενοινὸν κεφαλὰς βαλεῖν εὐφροσύνας ἀλάται.

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52 ἐκμα τὸ 1 sg. to me, i.e. Pindar. ἀπορος τὰ nom. impossible, the pl. exaggerates the impossibility (Gildersleeve). γαστριμαργος τῶν cannibal, glutton. μακαρ τῶν masc. of the blessed/gods, partitive gen. τίς τῶν one, indefinite. εἰπον inf. aor. to call + acc. of person + acc. of description, Doric. ἀφιστημι 1 sg. mid. stand back from it.

53 ἀκράδεια η̣ profilelessness. λαγχανω 3 sg. perf. is allotted (by destiny) to + acc., gnomic perf., Doric. παθμον τὰς acc. as adv. often. κακήγορος τῶς slanderers, evil-speakers.

54 τίς τῶν a, one, indefinite. ἀνὴρ τῶν man. θυγατέρος τῶν mortal, Doric. Οὐλυμπος τῶν masc. of Olympos. σκοπος οἱ watchers, sentinels, i.e. gods.

55 τιμαω 3 pl. aor. honoured, Doric. ἐμι 3 sg. imperf. was. Τάνταλος ὁ Tantalos, Pelops' father. οὗτος ὁ this. καταπέσασι inf. aor. to swallow down, manage.

56 μέγας τὸν great. ὀδὸς τῶν prosperity. δόναμα 3 sg. pass. aor. was able + inf., epic. κόρος τῷ masc. for greed. αἱρὼ 3 sg. aor. gained, homeric.

57 άτη τῷ the ruin, punishment, Doric. ὑπέρσπλος τῶν overwhelming, ἂν = ἦν, ὃς τῆς which, relative, Doric. ἐ τῷ masc. to him, his, i.e. Tantalos' father Zeus, epic. πατήρ ὁ father. ὑπερκρέμανναι 3 sg. aor. hung up over + dat., homeric unaugmented. καρτερὸς τῶν mighty. αὐτῷ τῷ masc. him. λίθος τῶν stone, does not agree with ἄν but is in apposition (Gildersleeve).

58 τῶν it, article used as demonstr. for stone. αἰε adv. always. μενοινῶν ὁ ppl. longing to + inf., Doric. κεφαλή τῆς from (his) head, Doric. βάλλω inf. aor. to throw. εὐφροσύνη τῆς joy, merriment, Doric. ἀλάομαι 3 sg. mid. wanders, strays from + gen.
Paragraph 7 (Strophe 3, lines 59 to 69).

ἐχεῖ δ’ ἀπάλαμον βίον τούτον ἐμπεδόμοχθον,
60 μετὰ τριῶν τέταρτον πόνον, ἀθανάτων ὁτί κλέψαις
ἀλίκεσσι συμπόταις
νέκταρ ἀμβροσίαν τε
dῶκεν, ὡσεὶ ἀφθιτόν
θήκαν. Εἰ δὲ θεὸν ἁνύρ τις ἠλπετάται ταῖς λαθέμεν ἐρδῶν, ἀμαρτάνει.
65 τοῦνεκα προῆκαν ὑὸν ἀθανάτοι οἱ πάλιν
μετὰ τὸ ταχύποτον αὕτης ἀνέρων ἐθνος.
πρὸς εὐανθέμων δ’ ὡτε φύλλα
λάχναι νῦν μέλαν γένειον ἔρεφον,
ἔτοιμον ἀνεφρόντισεν γάμον

λάχναι ἔρεφον γένειον [οἱ καὶ] νῦν μέλαν, πρὸς εὐανθέμων φύλλα, ἀνεφρόντισεν ἔτοιμον
gάμον [καὶ] ἵπποδαμείαν παρὰ Πισάτα πατρός.

59ἐχεῖ 3 sg. has. ἀπάλαμος τὸν helpless. βίος τὸν life. οὔτος τὸν this. ἐμπεδόμοχθος τὸν unendingly-painful.
60μετὰ along with + gen. τριῆς τῶν masc. three. τέταρτος τὸν fourth. πόνος toil, punishment, another object of ἔχει, i.e. toils of Tantalos (told here) as well as of Tityos, Sisuphos and Ixion (told elsewhere). ἀθανάτος τῶν masc. from the immortals. ὅτι here because. κλέστω ὁ ppl. aor. having stolen, i.e. Tantalos, Aeolic m.nom.sg.
61ὡς τῶς masc. fellow, comrade, epic. συμπότης τῶς masc. drinking friends.
62νέκταρ τὸ ἀκτ. nectar. ἀμβροσίας τῆς ambrosia, food of the gods. Doric.
63δίδωμι 3 sg. aor. gave, i.e. Tantalos, homeric unaugmented. ὁ τῶς neut. by which things, relative, dative of means, homeric. ἀφθιτος τῶν immortal, imperishable.
64τῆλθα 3 pl. aor. made, homeric unaugmented. θεὸς τὸν god. ἁνύρ ὁ man. τὸς ὁ a. indefinite. ἔλπω 3 sg. mid. hopes + inf. τις τὸ ἀκτ. as adv. at all, in any way. λανθανὼ inf. to escape the notice of + acc. ἔρωσ ὁ ppl. acting, doing. ἀμαρτάνω 3 sg. errs, is wrong.
65τοῦνεκα because of this, i.e. the theft. προῆκα 3 pl. aor. sent. νῦν τὸ ἀκτ. son, i.e. Tantalos. ἀθανάτος οἱ gods. τῷ masc. to him, his, i.e. Zeus', epic. πάλιν adv. back.
66μετὰ among + acc. ταχύποτος τὸ ἀκτ. short-lived. αἴθης adv. again, epic. ἁνύρ τῶν masc. of men.
ἐθνὸς τὸ ἀκτ. race.
67πρὸς in accordance with + acc (Verdenius). εὐανθέμως τῆς blooming. ὅτε when. πονὴ τὴν growth, i.e. as Pelops grew into manhood, Doric.
68λάχνῃ ai soft hairs. νῦν τὸν 3 sg. him, i.e. the rest of him apart from his chin, Doric. μέλας τὸ ἀκτ. black, dark, proleptic adj. anticipating the action of ἔρεφον, covered him black. γένειον chin. ἔρεφον 3 pl. imperf. covered, homeric unaugmented.
69τοῦμος τὸν available, tempting (Gildersleeve). ἀνεφρόντιζω 3 sg. aor. woke to the desire of + acc. (Gildersleeve). γάμος τὸν marriage.
Paragraph 8 (Antistrophe 3, lines 70 to 80).

70 Πισάτα παρά πατρός εὐδοξών Ἰπποδάμειαν σχέθηκεν. ἐγγύς ἐλθὼν πολίας ἀλὸς οὐς ἐν ὄρφνῃ ἀπευν διερκύτσυον. Εὐτριαίναν’ ὃ δ’ αὐτῷ πάρ ποδὶ σχεδὸν φάνη.

75 τῷ μὲν εἶπεν: „εἰς τὰ δορὰ Ὀκρίας ἐγγυς εἰ τι, Ποσειδάδων, ής χάριν τέλλεται, πέδασων ἔγχος Οἰνομάου χάλκεον, ἐμὲ δ’ εἶπε τὰχυμάτων πόρευσον ἀρμάτων εἰς Ἀλιν, κράτει δὲ πέλασον. ἐπει τρεῖς τε καὶ δέκ’ ἀνάρας ὀλέσαις.

80 μναστήρας ἀναβάλλεται γάμον

ἀπευν διερκύτσυον Εὐτριαίναν’ ὃ δ[ε] φάνη σχεδὸν αὐτῷ, πάρ ποδὶ. ἐπε μὲν τῷ „εἰς τὰ δορὰ Ὀκρίας τέλλεται τι εἰς χάριν, Ποσειδάδων, πέδασων χάλκεον ἔγχος Οἰνομάου, πόρευσον δ’ ἐμὲ ἐς Ἀλιν ἐπὶ ταχυτάτων ἀρμάτων, πέλασον δ[ε] [εἰς] κράτει. ἐπει ὀλέσαις τρεῖς τε καὶ δέκ’ μναστήρας ἀνάρας, ἀναβάλλεται γάμον [θυγατρός.]

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70 Πισάτας τοῦ masc. Pisan, Doric. παρά from + gen. πατρός τοῦ masc. father, i.e. Oinomaos. εὐδοξώς τῆς glorious. Ἰπποδάμεια τῆς Hippodameia, Oinomaos’ daughter.

71 σχέθηκα inf. mid. aor. to win. ἐγγύς adv. near to + gen. ἔρχομαι ὁ ppl. aor. coming, i.e. Pelops. πολίας τῆς grey, Doric. ἄλε τῆς sea. ὁ ὁς ὁ alone. ἐν in + dat. ὄρφη τῆς darkness, Doric.

72 ἡπίω 3 sg. imperf. called aloud to + acc., Doric. διερκύτσυον τῆς loud-thundering.

73 Ἐγιείλον τὸν 3 sg. imperf. called aloud to + acc., i.e. Poseidon. δ’ he, i.e. Poseidon, article used as demonstr. αὐτοῦ τῷ to him, i.e. Pelops.

74 πάρ right by, before + dat. ποὺς τῷ masc. foot, i.e. Pelops’. σχέθων Adv. near, close. θάλων 3 sg. pass. aor. appeared, showed himself, homeric unaugmented.

75 τῷ to him, i.e. Poseidon, article used as demonstr. ἐπιθὸν 3 sg. aor. said, i.e. Pelops said. πάντως τὰ to nom. dear. δῶρον τὰ nom. gifts. Ὀκρίας τῆς of (Cyprian) Aphrodite, Doric. ἀγω 2 sg. imperat. come now!’ τις τὸ acc. at all, in any way, indefinite. Ποσειδάδων ὁ voc. Poseidon, epic. ἐς το + acc. χάρις τῆς grace, favour.

76 τέλλω are accounted, come up (to favour) (Gildersleeve), i.e. result in any gratitude. πεδάω 2 sg. imperat. aor. restrain!, Doric. ἔγχος τὸ acc. spear. Οἰνομάους τοῦ masc. of Oinomaos. χάλκεος τὸ acc. bronze.

77 ἐγιείλω τὸν 1 sg. me. ἐπὶ upon + gen. ταχητὸς τῶν neut. superl. swiftest, Ionic. πορεύω 2 sg. imperat. aor. convey!. ἄρμα τῶν chariot, pl. used for sg. (Slater).

78 ἐς το + acc. Ἡλια τῆς Elis, west coast of Peloponessus, Doric. κράτος τῶν neut. victory. πελάω 2 sg. imperat. aor. bring! + acc. near to + dat., Doric.

79 ἐπεί for. τρεῖς τῶν 3. δέκα 10, i.e. 13 in all. ἀνήρ τῶν men, i.e. suitors to his daughter. ἄλλως ὁ ppl. aor. having killed, i.e. Oinomaos, Aeolic.

80 μναστήρας τοῦ suitor. ἀναβάλλεσ 3 sg. mid. postpones. γάμος τῶν marriage.
Paragraph 9 (Epode 3, lines 81 to 87).

θυγάτριος ὁ μέγας δὲ κίνδυνος ἀναλκίν όφειτα λαμβάνει. θανείν δ’ οὐσιν ἀνόγια, τί κε τις ἀνόνυμον γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἐψοι μᾶταν, ἀπάντων καλῶν ἀμμορος; ἄλλ’ ἐμοὶ μὲν οὕτως ἀεθλος
85 ὑποκείσεται τῷ δε πράξει φίλαν δίδοι.”

ὡς ἐννεπεν’ οὐδ’ ἀκράντοις ἕφασατ’ ὃν ἐπέσει. τὸν μὲν ἀγάλλων θεος ἐδωκεν δίφρον τε χρύσεον πτεροίσιν τ’ ἀκάμαντας ἵππους.


81 θυγάτριος τῆς of (his) daughter. μέγας ὁ great. κίνδυνος ὁ enterprise, danger. ἀνάλκιν τὸν cowardly.

82 θυγάτριος inf. aor. to die, Doric. ὁς τοὺς masc. for (men), Homer. ἀνάγια ή it is necessary + dat. + inf., Doric. τί why?. κε + opt. for potential mood, would/should. Epic/Aeolic for ᾧς ὁ anyone, indefinite.

83 γήρας τὸ acc. old age. ἐν in + dat. σκότος τῷ masc. darkness, gloom. κάθημαι ὁ ppl. mid. perf. sitting. ἐψω 3 sg. opt. nurse uselessly (Gildersleeve). ματήν adv. aimlessly, Doric.

84 ἀπασ τῶν neut. all, any. καλὸς τῶν neut. fine (things), neut. for things. ἀμμορος ὁ without a share of + gen. ἐγὼ τῷ 1 sg. me, i.e. this struggle shall be my mission, to avoid lack of glory (Gildersleeve). ὁδοὶ ὁ this. ἄθλος ὁ contest. epic.

85 ὑποκείμαι 3 sg. mid. fut. will lie before (Slater) + dat. τῦ = σὺ ὁ 2 sg. you, Doric. πραξεῖς τῆς achievement. ἄθλος τῆς fine, Doric. διδόμαι 2 sg. imperat. grant!, poetic, Pelops speaking to Poseidon.

86 ὁς thus. ἐνέπω 3 sg. imperf. spoke, i.e. Pelops, homeric unaugmented. ἀκράντος τῶν neut. unfulfilled. ἐφάστω 3 sg. mid. aor. employed (Slater) + dat.. Doric. ὅν = ὃν then, Doric. ἐπος τῶν neut. words. τῶν him, Pelops, article used as demonstr. ἄγάλλω ὁ ppl. honouring, θεὸς ὁ god, i.e. Poseidon.

87 διδόμαι 3 sg. aor. gave. διδόσ τῶν chariot. χρύσεος τῶν golden, poetic. πτερον τῶς neut. in wings, instrumental dative, epic. ἄκάμα τῶς untiring. ἵππος τῶς horses.
Paragraph 10 (Strophe 4, lines 88 to 98).

ἐλεν δ’ Ὀινομάου βίαν παρθένον τε σύνενον· τέκε τε λαγέτας ἔξ ἄρταταις μεμαότας υἱός,

90 νῦν δ’ ἐν αἰμακουρίας ἀγλαίσι μέμικται. Ἀλφεοῦ πόρῳ κληθεῖς, τύμβον ἀμφίπολον ἔχουν πολυζενωτάτῳ παρὰ βομῷ. τὸ δὲ κλεός τηλθὲν δέδορκε τὸν Ὀλυμπιάδον ἐν δρόμοις

95 Πέλοπος, ἵνα ταχυτάς ποδῶν ἐρίζεται ἀκμαί τ’ ἱσχύος θρασύπονοι· ὁ νικών δὲ λοιπὸν ἀμφὶ βιότον ἔχει μελιτόεσσαν εὐδίαν


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88 ἀρέω, ἔδον 3 sg. aor. took, i.e. Pelops, has 2 objects, homeric unaugmented. Ὀινόμαος τοῦ masc. of Oinomaos. βία τῆν might, i.e. took the life, Doric. παρθένοις τῆν girl, i.e. Hippodameia. σύνενοις τῆν (as) wife, a noun, not an adj.
89 παχτω 3 sg. aor. gave birth to, i.e. Hippodameia, homeric unaugmented. λαγέτας τοῖς leaders, Doric. ἔξ six, indeclinable. ἄρτης ταῖς valourous deeds, epic. μέμαα τοῖς ppl. perf. striving towards + dat., epic. νικῷ τῶν sons.
90 νῦν adv. now. ἐν in + dat. αἰμακουρία ταῖς yearly black-ram sacrifices.
91 ἀγλαίσι ταῖς glorious, epic. μέμικται 3 sg. mid. perf. has a share in, i.e. Pelops.
92 Ἀλφεῶς τοῦ masc. of Alpheos river, at Olympia. πόρος τῷ masc. beside the course. κλίνω ὁ ppl. pass. aor. laid to rest (Slater).
93 τύμβος τῶν tomb, ἀμφίπολος τῶν much-visited. ἔχω ὁ ppl. having, i.e. Pelops. πολυζενοῖς τῷ masc. superl. most-visited-by-strangers. παρά alongside + dat. βομῷ τῷ masc. altar. κλεός τοῦ nom. fame.
94 τηλθέν adv. from afar. δέρκομαι 3 sg. perf. shines, perf. with pres. sense. τᾶν = τῶν fem. article, Doric. Ὀλυμπιάς τῶν fem. Olympics. ἐν in + dat. δρόμος τοῖς masc. races.
95 Πέλοφ τοῦ masc. of Pelops. ἵνα where. ταχυτῆς ἡ swiftness, Doric. ποῖς τῶν masc. of feet. ἐφίζω 3 sg. pass. is contested, although Gildersleeve says it’s mid. of reciprocal action.
96 ἀκμαῖ αἱ heights, metaphorically “achievements.” ἱσχύς τῆς of strength. θρασύπονος ἀρ πος bold, toil-ready.
97 νυκαῖς ὁ ppl. + article the victor. λοιπῶς τόν remaining. ἀμφὶ during + acc. βιότος τῶν life.
98 ἔχω 3 sg. has. μελιτόεσσα τῆν honey-sweet. εὕδαι τῆν tranquility, Doric.
Paragraph 11 (Antistrophe 4, lines 99 to 109).

άεθλον γ’ ἐνεκέν. τὸ δ’ αἰεὶ πάραμερον ἐσλὸν
100 ὑπατὸν ἔρχεται παντὶ βροτῶν. ἐμὲ δὲ στεφανώσαι κεῖνον ἵππῳ νόμῳ
Αἰολημὼ μολπὰ
χρή πεποίθησε δὲ ἐξένον
μὴ τίν’. ἀμφότερα καλῶν τε ἴδριν ἀμᾶ καὶ δύναμιν κυριώτερον,
105 τῶν γε νῦν κλυταίσι διαδιάλωσέμεν ὑμνών πτυχαίς.
θεὸς ἐπίτροπος εἰὼν τεαίσι μήδεται
ἐχὼν τοῦτο κύδος, ἱέρων,
μερίμνασιν; εἰ δὲ μὴ ταχύ λίποι,
ἐτὶ γλυκύτεραν κεν ἐλπομαι


99 Δάθλον τῶν neut. contexts, epic. ἐνεκα because of, so far as can be found in + gen. (Gildersleeve). αἰεὶ adv. always. παράμερος τὸ nom. daily. ἐσλὸς = ἐσθλὸς τὸ good. Doric.
100 ὑπατὸς τὸ nom. supreme, highest. ἐρχομαι 3 sg. mid. comes. πᾶς τῷ masc. to all. βροτὸς τῶν masc. of mortals. ἐξὼ τῶν 1 sg. me. i.e. Pindar. στεφάνωσα inf. aor. to crown.
101 ἐκεῖνος τῶν that (man). ἐπιστὸς τῷ masc. with horse/riding style. νόμος τῷ masc. melody (Slater).
102 Αἰολῆς τῇ in Aeolian-style. μολπῇ τῇ song, Doric.
103 χρή 3 sg. it is necessary + acc. + inf. πέθω 1 sg. perf. I am persuaded + inf., takes μή for negative (Gildersleeve). ἐξὼν τὸν guest-friend.
104 τίς τῶν one. indefinite. ἀμφότερος ταῖ ac. as adv. both. καλῶς τῶν neut. fine things. ἴδρις τῶν knowledgeable about + gen. ἀμᾶ Doric for ἄμα adv. at the same time. δύναμις τῆν in respect of strength, acc. of respect. κύριος τῶν comparat. more lordly.
105 τῶν νῦν of those living now, partitive gen. article + adv. κλυτὸς ταῖς glorious, epic. δαιδάλλω inf. fut. to be embellished, epic. ὑμοι τῶν masc. of songs. πτυχῆ ταῖς folds, referring to the in-and-out movements of choral music and dance (Gildersleeve).
106 θεὸς ὁ god. ἐπίτροπος ὁ guardian. εἰμί ὁ ppl. being. τῶ ὁς ταῖς your. μῆδομαι 3 sg. mid. is of watchful thought (Gildersleeve).
107 ἔχω ὁ ppl. having, i.e. the god. ὁβῖς τῦ acc. this, i.e. the task of watching over Hieron. κῆδος τῷ acc. concern, object of care, Doric. ἵερων ὁ voc. Hieron.
108 μέριμνα ταῖς ambitions. μὴ not in if-clause of conditional; εἰ μὴ often translated unless. ταχός τῇ acc. as adv. soon. λείπω 3 sg. aor. opt. were to leave.
109 ἐτὶ yet, even with comparat. (Slater). γλυκὸς τῇ comparat. sweeter, Doric. κεν in then-clause after opt. if-clause, epic. ἔλπω 1 sg. mid. I hope + fut. inf. + acc.
Paragraph 12 (Epode 4, lines 110 to 116).

110 ἐφῶν ἐπίκουρον ὀδὸν λόγων, ἔλθον παρ’ εὐδείελον ἐλθον Κρόνιον. ἔμοι μὲν όν
Μοίσα καρτερώτατον ἀλκά τρέφει:
ἐπ’ ἄλλοις δ’ ἄλλοι μεγάλοι. τὸ δ’ ἐσχατὸν
κορυφοῦταί βασιλεύει. μηκέτι πάπταινε πόρσιον.

115 εἴτε σε τα τότον ύψον χρόνον πάτειν, εμὲ τα τοσσάδε νικαφόροις
ομιλεῖν, πρόφαντον σοφία καθ’ Ἑλλάνας ἐόντα παντὰ.

εφῶν ἐπίκουρον ὀδὸν λόγων, ἔλθον παρ’ εὐδείελον Κρόνιον. Μοίσα μὲν όν τρέφει
ἐμοὶ βέλος, καρτερώτατον ἀλκά: ἄλλοι δ’ [εἰσι] μεγάλοι ἐπ’ ἄλλοι. τὸ δ’ ἐσχατὸν
κορυφοῦταί βασιλεύει. μηκέτι πάπταινε πόρσιον. εἴτε σε τε πατεῖν ύψον τοῦτον χρόνον,
[εἴτε] ἐμὲ τα ὀμιλεῖν νικαφόροις τοσσάδε, ἐόντα πρόφαντον σοφία καθ’ Ἑλλάνας παντὰ.

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110 σῶν by means of + dat. ἄρμα τῷ neut. chariot. θῶς τῷ neut. swift. κλῆσω fut. inf. to celebrate in
song, Doric. ἐπίκουρος τῷ help. ἐφίσκω ὑπ. aor. finding, i.e. Pindar. ὀδὸς τῷ path. λόγων τῶν
masc. here of songs (Gildersleeve).
111 παρὰ to the side of + acc. εὐδείελος τῷ acc. far-seen, sunny (Gildersleeve). ἔρχομαι ὑπ. aor.
coming, referring to Pindar. Κρόνιον τῷ acc. Hill of Kronos, near Olympia. ἐγὼ τῷ masc. for me, dative of
advantage, i.e. Pindar. ὁν = ὁν then, Doric.
112 Μοίσα ὁ Muse, Aeolic. καρπερῶς τῷ superl. mightiest. βέλος τῷ acc. missile, metaphor for poetry
(Gildersleeve). ἄλεξη τῇ in courage, Doric. τρέφω 3 sg. keeps (Gildersleeve).
113 ἐπὶ in respect of + dat. ἄλλος τῶν neut. other things, neut. for things, epic. ἄλλος οἱ others, masc. for
people. μεγάς οἱ great. ἐσχατός τῷ nom. summit, adj. + article as a substantive.
114 καρποφῶ 3 sg. pass. is capped (Gildersleeve). βασιλεύς τῶν masc. by kings. μηκέτι adv. no further.
παππαίνω 2 sg. imperat. look!. πρόσω adv. comparat. onwards, poetic.
115 εἴμι 3 sg. opt. may it be + acc. + inf. σοῦ τῶν 2 sg. you, i.e. Hieron. οὗτος τῶν this, your here
(Gildersleeve). ύφω adv. on high. χρόνον τῶν throughout time, acc. of duration of time, i.e. through your
life. πατέω inf. to walk. ἐγώ τῶν 1 sg. masc. me, i.e. Pindar. τοσσάδε τά acc. as adv. all my days
(Gildersleeve), epic. νυκτήρωσας τῶν masc. victors, Doric.
116 ομιλεῖν inf. to associate with + dat. Doric. πρόφαντος τῶν distinguished. σοφία τῇ for poetic art
(Gildersleeve), Doric. κατὰ among + acc. “Ἑλλῆν τῶν Greeks, Doric. εἴμι τῶν ppl. being, i.e. Pindar.
pαντὰ = πάντῃ adv. everywhere, Doric.
Brief scansion notes: I used the scansion schemas in Puech and looked at those other commentaries, but Puech’s was the most useful. I figured out doubtful vowels by checking the words in Homer, Sophocles and Sappho for 1 word. Internal evidence shows that epic corretion is allowed in Pindar (see καί in line 31); also, I allowed correction or the making of position at the end of a metrical line (unless that position is also a clause-end), since I think the pauses in singing would have come at the end of clauses, not at the end of metrical lines.

Authors Cited


LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, revised and augmented by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie, Oxford: 1940.


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2William Annis produced the metrical schema on pp.2-3 with help from both Puech and the Snell-Maehler Teubner.