

The Scholia Vetera to Pythian 12

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ΣP12.inscr.

The Ode is written for Midas of Akragas. He won the 24th Pythian and the 25th. They say he also had won the Panatheneia. They record some peculiar mishap occurred for this flute-player: for when he was competing, his mouth-piece bent back unexpectedly and was lodged in the roof of his mouth. He played with just the reeds in the manner of the syrinx. The astonished audience was delighted in the sound. And in this way he won the contest.

ΣP12.1a./1

The word is a reference by Pindar to the heroine, Akragas [or the city of Akragas]. "O beauty-loving and most beautiful of cities, you, who are the seat of Persephone, I ask you to propitiously receive the wreath of Midas, who has brought it from Pytho."

ΣP12.1b./1

But the meaning is "I ask you, O most beautiful [and beauty-loving] city of human beings and foundation of Persephone, you, who on the banks of sheep-nourishing Akragas dwell in a city, Akragas, that shares a name with yourself."

ΣP12.3a./2

Φερσεφόνας ἔδος: the whole from the part, since Zeus gave all of Sicily as a gift to Persephone.

ΣP12.3b./2

ἃ τ' ὄχθαις ἐπὶ μηλοβότου ναίεις Ἀκράγαντος: the eponymous river. [Pindar uses] ναίεις "you live" instead of ναίη "you live", as Homer also [does] (Iliad 4.45): "They live in (ναιετάουσι) cities" instead of "they live in" (ναιετάνται).

ΣP12.5./3

ἑϋδματον: the "well-made" (εὐκατασκευαστον) hill. [This] means that [the city] lay up high.

ΣP12.7./4

ἴλαος ἀθανάτων: "O lady, favorable with favor of gods and men, the wreath from Pytho, i.e. the hymn, receive from esteemed Midas, who bested Hellas with his own talent." "receive" (δέξαι) is an instance of zeugma.

ΣP12.12a./6-7

τάν ποτε Παλλάς: "which art of flute-playing Athena once discovered when she wove together in imitation of the dirge of the insolent Gorgons"

ΣP12.12b./6-7

put another way: "she wove together", "she, Athena, put together the dolorous dirge of the

Gorgons"

ΣP12.15a./9

τὸν παρθενίους: "which dirge she heard from the maiden heads of the Gorgons and from the terrible heads of the snake, as it was poured out with painful weariness and mourning"

ΣP12.15b./9

τὸν παρθενίους: The myth goes something like this: A certain Perseus cut off the head of Medusa. The two sisters sang a dirge over their sister; and from the head of these and the snakes on their head, a kind of hissing rose up. When Athena heard this hissing from the snakes, in imitation of the dirge and the hissing that came from the snakes, she contrived flute-playing, which she also named "the many-headed melody" because of this. Since one kind of hissing rose up from the many heads of the snakes, and the snakes by right reason had many heads; because of this, she named this "the many-headed melody" when she constructed flute-playing in imitation [of this].

ΣP12.18./10

δυσπενθεῖ σὺν καμάτῳ: i.e. "of the Gorgons", since they lament their defeated sister. But who are "the maiden heads"? It is obvious that they are the maiden sisters of Medusa: Sthenos and Eurualē.

ΣP12.19a./11

Περσεὺς ὁπότε τρίτον ᾄυσε κασιγνητῶν: ["the third"] that is "one". There were three [sisters]. One must hear it as "she shouted (ᾄυσεν) over one of the Gorgons", so that she shouted (ᾄυσεν) when her head was being cut off because of the pain, and then Athena heard the dirge of her sisters. Or the dirge of Perseus cutting off her head made the noise (ᾄυσεν). But some [commentators] want it to be constructed from [the word for] battle-cry (ἀυτή), [that is,] of a battle, that is, [Perseus] waged war on the third part of them [i.e. the Gorgons].

ΣP12.19b./11

ᾄυσε [can be taken] two ways: ἄνυσεν: "he made it such that she was destroyed" or ᾄυσεν instead of κραύγασεν "he barked"

ΣP12.21./12

ἐναλία Σερίφῳ: "On sea-surrounded Seriphos he brought doom and death to the third part of the Gorgons". And from this [Pindar intends] again "the head of the Gorgon."

ΣP12.23./13

ἦτοι τό τε θεσπέσιον: "Yes, indeed, for Perseus did away with the divine progeny of Phorkos, the Gorgons, when he cut off the head of Medusa with her beautiful cheeks, and he laid out (ἔθηκε) an all-destroying banquet for Polydektēs, and made (ἔθηκε) the inescapable bondage of his mother and her forced bedding [to also be all-destroying for Polydektēs]." ἔθηκεν is an instance of zeugma.

ΣP12.24a./13

Φόρκοι' ἀμαύρωσε γένος: This must be meant for the three, that is he cut off the head of one, and blinded the other two, since the three relied upon one eye.

ΣP12.24b./13

And [Pindar] says "Medusa with her beautiful cheeks" not because she was so by nature but because Medusa, with regard to herself, held that she was beautiful. And so she also contended with Athena about their [respective] beauty.

ΣP12.24c./13

Or thus: "the race of Phorkos, the Gorgons"

ΣP12.24d./13

We must take "he stole the light from the race of Phorkos" [as applying] to all three because he cut the head off one, and he blinded the [other] two when he destroyed the one eye they had [between them], for the three [sisters] relied upon only one [eye].

ΣP12.24e./13

Put another way: "the race" (γένος) in place of "daughter" (θυγατέρα), [i.e.] the aforementioned Medusa.

ΣP12.25a./14

λυγρόν τ' ἔρανον Πολυδέκτα: "when once at the banquet he prepared for each", as though the king [Polydektēs] offered a gift to him and Perseus the head of the Gorgon.

ΣP12.25b./13

ἡμαύρωσε must be taken as an instance of zeugma, [for] it is clearly "the Gorgons".

ΣP12.27./15

τό τ' ἀναγκαῖον λέχος: [the bedding] "being out of necessity and force".

ΣP12.29./17

τὸν ἀπὸ χρυσοῦ φαμεν: "which man, Perseus, we say was born from gold flowing down by itself."

ΣP12.31.18

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ τούτων: "When Athena rescued from these struggles her beloved man, Perseus, then she prepared the melody of pipes with their many sounds." And [Pindar says] "she rescued from struggles": because they pursued Perseus all the way to Boeotia.

ΣP12.35a./20

ὄφρα τὸν Εὐρυάλας: "in such a way that with the instruments of flute-playing she imitated the dirge that emerged from the strong jaws of Euryalē."

ΣP12.35b./20

Otherwise: from the one [sister, Pindar] sufficiently implies as well the pain of the other, Sthenō.

ΣP12.35c./20

Euryalē was the sister of Medusa. [Pindar] says, "in order then for her to imitate the extraordinarily-loud (i.e. really strong [or] loud-sounding) wailing of this [sister]. He draws from part, since Euryalē did not make her dirge by herself, but Sthenō [sung the dirge] as well.

ΣP12.39a./22

ἀλλά νιν εὐροῖσα: "but when she discovered the melody of the flute she gave it to mortals to practice, and she called it the melody that was the many-headed measure" since the heads which made the hissing noise were as many as the snakes. And it was of these [Athena] composed in imitation.

ΣP12.39b./23

Some say he says "many-headed", since there were 50 men from which the chorus was composed and, with the flute-player taking the lead, carried forth the melody.

ΣP12.39c./23

Some take "heads" [to be] the preludes. The ode then is composed out of many preludes, which they say first found Olympus.

ΣP12.42./24

εὐκλέα λαοσσών: glorious reminder of the games that set the people in motion and drive them toward the goddess. [Pindar] means "the melody."

ΣP12.44a./25

χαλκοῦ θ' ἄμα καὶ δονάκων: [Pindar] means "reed pipes" (δόνακας), which grew beside the Orchomenos, from which mouth pieces for flutes came. On the Kēphisos the reeds for flutes grew. And he spoke also in his Paeans concerning the art of flute-playing.

ΣP12.44b./25

Or thus, "the melody went through at the same time both the bronze and the reed," instead of "through the pipes."

ΣP12.45a./26

τοὶ παρὰ καλλιχόρῳ: "which reeds are settled at the city of the Graces," i.e. Orchomenos, in the sacred precinct of Kēphissos, "being faithful and true witnesses of the choral dancers."

ΣP12.45b./26

[Pindar] introduced "reeds *dwell*" (ναῖουσι κάλαμοι) harshly and in a manner more suited to the dithyramb. He ought to have said "grow" (φύονται).

ΣP12.45c./26

"The city of the Graces", i.e. Orchomenos

ΣP12.49./28

εἰ δέ τις ὄλβος: We must supplement something like "is" (ἐστίν) or "exists" (ὑπάρχει). For the meaning is: "But if there is any happiness among human beings, it neither appears nor comes to

pass without struggle."

ΣP12.51./29

ἐκ δὲ τελευτάσει νιν: [Pindar] says, "the daimōn will accomplish happiness," i.e. will bring it to its end, either today or later. For it is necessary to introduce this, which [Pindar] left out.

ΣP12.52./29

ἢ τοι σήμερον: "the daimōn either today or later," i.e. if someone is not fortunate right away, don't be troubled, since the god will accomplish their destiny either today or tomorrow. And [Pindar] says this since [Midas] won against expectation after his reed had broken.

ΣP12.53./30

οὐ παρφυκτόν: i.e. "destiny cannot be guarded against" since what can be guarded against is not destined.

ΣP12.54a./30

ἀλλ' ἔσται χρόνος: The meaning is something like this: "After working hard, even if you don't attain wealth right away, don't be distressed. For the god will act and bring it to completion either today or later." And how will he bring it to completion? With destiny. And so [Pindar] says, "destiny" (μόρσιμον).

ΣP12.54b./30

or thus, "this will be the time, which also takes things in a state of despair and sets them in reverse of opinion and expectation. On the one hand it will give what he did not expect; on the other hand it will not give what seemed the result." [Pindar] says this since Midas won against expectation after his reed had broken.