PINDAR’S ΚΟΙΝΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
AND PANHellenism IN OLYMPIAN 10*

Panhellenism has increasingly become a topic of scholarly interest in contemporary studies of archaic and classical Greek culture. Broadly understood, Panhellenism refers to a sense of shared cultural identity between Greeks who live in geographic ally separated locales. In general, Hellenists working on Panhellenic identity formation have asserted several different causes for the phenomenon. If not explicitly in discourse, in terms of a joint Greek campaign against the Trojans, Panhellenism can already be found in Homer’s *Iliad*. Scholars have argued, furthermore, that, through trade and colonization (in the late ‘Dark Age’ and early Archaic period), the Greeks’ engagement with others gave them an increasing awareness of themselves. The Persian wars, similarly, have often been cited as an important factor in the development of Panhellenism. After the Greeks defeated the Persians, they developed a more polarized view of themselves in relation to others. A further reason for Panhellenic identity formation was the increasing importance of the Panhellenic sanctuaries and festivals, oracles such as Delphi, and the dispersion of Homeric texts.1 While all of these phenomena, and others, were significant factors in the origin and development of Panhellenism, the last factor, particularly how Panhellenic sanctuaries aided in Greek identity formation, is integral to my current concerns.2

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1) For an influential view on literary Panhellenism see G. Nagy, Pindar’s Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past (Baltimore 1990) 60–73 and passim.

2) This is not the place for an extended overview of Panhellenism. For a good overview and references to phenomena noted here see S. A. Ross, *Barbarophonos: Language and Panhellenism in the Iliad*, CP 100 (2005) 299–316, 301. Two monographs by J. Hall have been particularly influential on Greek identity formation, Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity (Cambridge 1997), and Hellenicity (Chicago 2002). On Panhellenism see particularly the latter 205–208.
This paper contributes to discourse on Panhellenism by offering a new reading for the phrase κοινός λόγος in line eleven of Pindar’s Olympian 10. Modern scholars have offered interpretations of the phrase that I feel are inadequate, and I shall discuss them below. I shall contend that the phrase means ‘common tale’ or, with somewhat more nuance, ‘Panhellenic narrative’. The more nuanced translation derives from reflecting on the content of the centerpiece mythological narrative in Olympian 10. Further support, as we shall see, comes from comparative study with Olympian 7. In closing, I briefly draw out the interpretive possibilities for this reading within its broader historical and poetic context. I shall suggest that this poem and others like it show Pindar engaging with themes of Panhellenic concern specifically in terms of narrative practice.

Pindar’s tenth Olympian begins, as usual in epinician, with nondiegetic text. Pindar says that he has forgotten about Hagesidamos’ ode, recognizes that he now needs to fulfill his debt (l. 8), and implies that he will do so. More specifically, he will pay out a κοινός λόγος for the sake of friendly grace (ll. 11–12). Pindar then gives his reason for telling this κοινός λόγος (γάρ l. 13). He introduces Ἀτρέκεια, ‘Strictness’, who seems to be an oblique reference to contractual propriety. More specifically ‘she’ seems to refer to Pindar’s need to praise Hagesidamos in epinician song. Pindar, thereafter, makes some brief references to Hagesidamos and his competition, comparing Hagesidamos’ fight to that between Kyknos and Herakles. Pindar mentions a debt that Hagesidamos owes

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4) See, for example, Verdenius (above, n. 3) 62. On the historical importance of commerce and contractual strictness to Western Lokroi see, for example, Nassen (above, n. 3) 224–226.
to Ilas, probably his trainer, and analogizes this to the debt of Patroklos to Achilles. In the second and third triad, Pindar narrates Herakles’ battles with the Moliones and Augeas and his concomitant foundation of the Olympic sanctuary. In the fourth triad, the first Olympic games and the festival celebrations form the body of the narrative. In the fifth triad, Pindar exits the centerpiece narration and returns, in closing, to Hagesidamos and his victory in boxing at Olympia.

Since the phrase κοινός λόγος needs to be understood in its broader poetic context, I begin by addressing two textual concerns in Olympian 10. The first is a probable textual crux in line nine, and the second is the phrase’s place in dense poetic imagery. I print here the text of Snell / Maehler and offer a translation for the syntactically self-contained antistrophe of the first triad:

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ἐκαθεν γὰρ ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλων χρόνος
ἐμὸν καταίσχυνε βαθὺ χρέος.
ὁμως δὲ λύσαι δυνατός ἡξεῖαν ἐπιμομφὰν
τόκος ἤθνατὼν· νῦν ψάφον ἐλισσομέναν
ὀπὰ κῦμα κατακλύσσει ρέον,
ὀπὰ τε κοινὸν λόγον
φίλον τείσομεν ἐς χάριν.
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For time to come came from afar
and shamed my deep debt.
But nevertheless interest †of men†
can remove bitter reproach;
now as a flowing wave submerges a rolling pebble,
so shall we pay out a common tale
for the sake of friendly grace.

5) According to the scholiast, whose suggestion modern commentators frequently follow; see, for example, Nassen (above, n. 3) 227, Verdenius (above, n. 3) 64.

6) B. Snell and H. Maehler (Hrsg.), Pindari Carmina cum fragmentis, Pars I Epinicia, Eighth ed. (Stuttgart 1987).

First of all, let us briefly note the apparent textual crux. In line nine, the \( \theta\nu\alpha\tau\omega \) of the better manuscripts, for metrical reasons, may be wrong. W. Race, in his recent Loeb edition, has accepted C. Fennell’s emendation \( \dot{o}r\acute{a}t\omega \). With this suggestion incorporated into the text, Race translates, “let him (Hagesidamos) see now”; this reading suggests a performative context. Hagesidamos, the victor, will watch as Pindar, through performance, pays on his debt, the belatedness of the poem. While the suggestion is attractive, it remains inconclusive. Fortunately, the crux does not render particularly unclear the broader meaning of the antistrophe.

In addition to the textual crux, we should address the highly poetic language of the passage. While the primary meaning of \( \psi\alpha\rho\alpha\varsigma \) (l. 9) in the picturesque simile is ‘pebble’, the noun can (as several others have noted) frequently refer to a ‘marker of debt’. Here the primary (pebble) and secondary meaning (marker of debt) of the noun seem to be activated simultaneously. Pindar, analogous to a wave washing away a pebble, will wash away his belatedness through offering a particularly elegant poem. The \( \tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma \), ‘interest’, that Pindar refers to, as several scholars have suggested,
may be read as the particularly ornate stature of the poem. As B. Gildersleeve noted, “the shame is not in the debt ... but in the delay”.

There are three particularly prominent modern interpretations of the phrase κοινὸς λόγος. The multivalency of both the noun (λόγος) and adjective (κοινὸς) have resulted in these interpretive turns. Κοινός, without a delimiting modifier, leaves vague to whom the λόγος is common, while commentators have activated the common meaning of λόγος ‘tale / narration’, its frequent meaning ‘account’, as well as ‘poem’ broadly understood. This leaves open, especially in combination, several possibilities in interpretation.

One interpretation sees in κοινὸς λόγος a contractual agreement between Pindar and Hagesidamos, poet and patron, for the commissioning and deliverance of this ode. This ‘contractual reading’
may first arise due to items early in the poem that share in an accounting lexicon (τόκος l. 9, ψάφον l. 9, λόγον l. 11, τείσομεν l. 12). Since Greek, however, both does not use the phrase λόγον τείσομεν to express the absolution of debt, and because a pellucid meaning is at hand, I suggest, with other scholars, that we should discard this reading. Since the victor or his family regularly commissioned epinician poems, the historical circumstances of epinician patronage fostered the development of this ‘contractual’ reading.

The second interpretation believes that the ‘poem’ is ‘common’ to the victor, his family, and community. Boeckh suggested “κοινὸς λόγος est carmen commune victori cum commissantibus, familia, patria”. Dissen suggested “communem laudem (quum tria canenda sint)”. Dissen has Boeckh’s “carmen commune victori cum comissantibus, familia, patria” in mind, when he explicitly comments that ‘three things must be sung’: the victor with his fellow revelers, the victor’s family, and his broader community. Boeckh and Dissen are apparently suggesting that the commonality of the poem is not based on the fact that the ode was commissioned for Hagesidamos alone, but that others close to Hagesidamos (including his family and community) are part of the contract of praise. Gildersleeve agreed with this interpretation when he glossed the phrase as “the general account”. What is due to the victor and the victor’s home.

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22) Nassen too, in line with Farnell, follows this interpretation; see Nassen (above, n. 3) 222. On commissioning in general see, among much else, L. Woodbury, Pindar and the Mercenary Muse: Isthmian 2.13, TAPhA 99 (1968) 527–542.

23) A. Boeckhius, Pindari Epiniciorum interpretatio Latina cum commentario perpetuo (Hildesheim 1963 [Original Leipzig 1821]) 199.

24) Dissen apud Schneidewin, Pindari Carmina quae supersunt cum desperditorum fragmentis selectis, Vol. II. Commentarius, 141.

25) As Mezger (above, n. 21) too understands their suggestions.

26) Gildersleeve (above, n. 14) 215. Ellen Wüst followed in this same tradition when she glossed the passage, “abgesehen davon, daß ‘eine Rechnung bezahlen’
mentators developed a specific reference for κοινὸς. They believed
the commonality referred to the victor, his family, and commu-
nity. When Boeckh glossed λόγος as “carmen”, ‘song’, he seems to
have been thinking of the poem in general, while Dissen and
Gildersleeve, less restrictive with “laus”, ‘praise’ and ‘general ac-
count’ respectively, were not particularly specific as to how λόγος
means ‘praise’ or what specifically ‘the general account’ entails.

A third interpretative group believes κοινὸς λόγος is relevant
to a larger group than poet and patron, or even the immediate fam-
ily of the victor (e. g. Race, Verdenius,27 Eckerman). This third in-
terpretive group believes that λόγος refers neither to contracts nor
to the poem itself but rather to a theme, tale, or narrative. Race in
his Loeb translation renders the phrase κοινὸς λόγος as a “theme of
general concern”. If, as I believe, our most recent of English trans-
lations leads us in an interpretively productive direction, we still
need a more explicit interpretation of what this ‘theme of general
concern’, or as I suggest ‘common tale’, is.28

27) Verdenius (above, n. 3) 61: “Not ‘the debt plus the interest’ (e. g.
Me[zheimer]), or ‘the account between us’ (e. g. Farn[ell], Latt[imore], Nassen, 222
n. 9), for Fenn[ell] rightly observes that τίνειν λόγον can hardly mean ‘to settle an
account’. The meaning is an account addressed to the community’: cf. Vilj[oen],
44–45, and see my note on O. 7, 21 ξυνόν λόγον”. The word ‘account’ in English
has several meanings. From this passage of commentary, however, Verdenius clear-
ly refers to a narrative account rather than business accounting.

28) In addition to the readings noted above we could consider the scholia
more directly. Since the scholia, however, are not as pellucid as one may like, I rele-
gate them to this footnote in which I offer text, translation, and brief notes. For the
text I follow A. B. Drachmann, Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina. Vol. I, Scholia in
Olympionicas (Leipzig 1903). The several suggestions of the scholiasts indicate that
the phrase κοινὸς λόγος caused considerable difficulty already in antiquity.

15a. κοινὸν λόγον: Ἄρισταρχος κοινὸν λόγον τὸν ὑμῖν, οὐ πολλοὶ ἐπιθυ-
μοῦσιν πολύκοινος γὰρ καὶ εὔπεπθορὸς ἐστὶν εἰς τὸ λέγειν. (Aristarchus says that
κοινὸς λόγος is the hymn which many people want, because it is common to many
and inclined to recitation). This reading apparently assumes the commonality of the
λόγος lies in several people’s interest in the hymn / λόγος because it is ‘general’, but
this remains vague (On the frequent difficulty of interpreting the Greek word
’hymn’ see A. Harvey, The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry, CQ 5 [1955] 165–
168.). When Aristarchus glossed the ‘hymn’ of Olympian 10 as πολύκοινος, ‘very
common’, I wonder if it was the centerpiece narrative of the poem that motivated
his suggestion.
I suggest that Pindar, with the phrase κοινὸς λόγος, refers to his own soon to follow narrative that is rich in mythology, topology, and aetiology. Κοινὸς, following this reading, refers to the ‘common’ subject matter of the myth (λόγος): the foundation of the Olympic sanctuary, the first competitions, and the first festival celebrations. This centerpiece myth, as a celebration of the Panhellenic sanctuary at Olympia and the Olympic games, is ‘common’ because it is shared by all Greeks and is not relevant to only the victor and his immediate home community.

I suggest that Pindar begins his κοινὸς λόγος after the passage on Hagesidamos and his specific victory (approximately the epode of the first triad). Roughly the next three triads of the poem are devoted to Herakles’ foundation of the Altis, the first athletic contests, and the celebration of the first Olympic games. These three triads, I believe, comprise Pindar’s κοινὸς λόγος. Since the narrative focuses on Herakles’ foundation of the sanctuary at Olympia and offers a depiction of the first Olympic games and the concomitant celebrations, all Greeks can share in this myth: Olympia was a Panhellenic sanctuary. Pindar, in this centerpiece myth, does not base his narrative on myth that might be immediately relevant to only the victor, his family, and his home polis. The κοινὸς λόγος ends, after typical Pindaric semantic overlap between triads, with the beginning of the fifth triad.

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15b. κοινὸν λόγον: ἔτεροι μὲν τὸν περὶ τῶν πολλῶν λόγον· οἱ δὲ τὸν ἴμμον ἦκουσιν, ἢτοι ὅτι πλείονες αὐτοῦ μεθέξουσιν [οἱ νικηφόροι], ἢτοι δὲ πολλῶν ἔσται στομάτων. (Some say κοινὸς λόγος is the λόγος about most people / things, others understand κοινὸς λόγος to mean the hymn, either because more people will share in it or because it will be on many people’s lips). The first lemma of 15b explicating κοινὸς λόγος as a λόγος “about most people / things” offers little clear meaning. The only clear deduction we can make about this scholium is that the λόγος here is not identical with the ‘hymn’, since the second half of 15b offers a reading of the λόγος as the ‘hymn’. The second half of 15b apparently suggests that the λόγος is ‘common’ because other people will share in the hymn. This mirrors the reading of 15a that suggested the poem was ‘common’ because it was, as the Greek seems to suggest, good for recitation.

15c. ὅπα τε κοινὸν λόγον: ἀποτίσωμεν προσφιλῶς τε καὶ κεραισμένος τῷ ἐγκωμιζόμενῳ (so that we shall pay out the hymn both kindly and graciously for the victor who is being celebrated). The ancient scholia 15a and 15b lean towards favoring associating the κοινὸς λόγος broadly with the hymn itself, while 15c seems to interpret the passage in light of the immediately following lexical material, particularly the φίλαν ἐς χάριν phrase in line 12.
An important comparandum for the phrase κοινὸς λόγος in Olympian 10, as others have noted,\textsuperscript{29} is the phrase ξυνὸς λόγος, ‘common tale’, in Olympian 7. At line 21 of Olympian 7, for the famed Diagoras of Rhodes, in a context analogous to that of its use in Olympian 10, Pindar self-referentially draws attention to the myth he will there narrate, while referring to it as a ξυνὸς λόγος. I provide the text of Snell / Maehler as well as a translation:

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\text{ἐθελήσω τούσιν ἔξ ἄρχας ἀπὸ Τλαπολέμου}
\]
\[
\text{ξυνὸν ἀγγέλλων διορθώσαι λόγον,}
\]
\[
\text{Ἡρακλέως}
\]
\[
\text{εὐρυσθενεὶ γέννῃ.}
\]

I (shall) wish, while announcing for them from the beginning from Tlapolemos, to set straight a tale / narrative common to the broad-strengthened race of Herakles (20–23).

The ‘commonality’ (ξυνὸν l. 21) is based on the tale being shared by both Diagoras and his father (the immediate antecedents of τούσιν mentioned in the previous stanza) as well as by the more inclusive ‘broad-strengthened offspring of Herakles’; this implicates both the victor and his father, as well as the broader community of Rhodians at large.\textsuperscript{30}

After this programmatic statement Pindar begins the myth / tale / narrative (λόγον l. 21) of Rhodes and her people. The analogue ξυνὸς \textsuperscript{31} λόγος in Olympian 7 suggests, through comparative evidence, that we are correct in connecting the κοινὸς λόγος of Olympian 10 with the aetiological myth of the Altis that Pindar there narrates.\textsuperscript{32} I contend that the comparandum allows us to

\textsuperscript{29} For example Boeckhius (above, n. 23) ad loc., Farnell (above, n. 20), Lehnus (above, n. 19) ad loc., Verdenius (above, n. 3) ad loc.

\textsuperscript{30} On ξυνὸν see also Verdenius (above, n. 3) 56.

\textsuperscript{31} At Isthmian 1.46 Pindar refers to epinician as a ξυνὸν καλὸν, ‘common beautiful thing’. At Isthmian 6.69 with ξυνὸν ἀστεῖ κόσμον, ‘a decoration common to the city’, both the epinician poem and the athletic victory function as the κόσμον, ‘beautiful thing’. Ξυνὸν in these instances refers to the epinician poem and / or victory as being shared by the victor’s broader respective community / polis.

\textsuperscript{32} In the epinicians and fragmentary genres, Pindar uses the root κοιν- on eighteen occasions. The best comparandum for the phrase κοινὸς λόγος of Olympian 10.11 occurs at Pythian 3.2 in the phrase κοινὸν ἔπος. This phrase means some-
suggest that λόγος refers, in both Olympian 7 and 10, to the centerpiece ‘myth’ of the respective ode. It is a fascinating deduction in and of itself that Pindar thinks of his centerpiece myths as λόγοι, particularly as opposed to μύθοι, since these terms in archaic and classical Greek discourse are highly important. On the three occasions that Pindar uses μύθος, the noun always bears negative connotations, while λόγος has a broader semantic range that incorporates both positive and negative connotations.

To recap, this paper offers two new interpretive turns. The first turn was to limit Pindar’s κοινὸς λόγος to the centerpiece myth of the poem. Olympian 7 provided comparative philological evidence in support of this suggestion. Secondly, I have offered a new interpretation for the adjective κοινὸς, suggesting that the centerpiece myth of this poem is ‘common’ to all Greeks. Pindar’s description of this myth as ‘common’ is, thus, highly appropriate to the subject matter of the narrative.

In light of these findings, we can make a few speculations regarding the relevance of the phrase κοινὸς λόγος within the historical and cultural context of the ode. Here again we touch upon issues of Panhellenism. Why did Pindar choose this ‘common tale / Panhellenic narrative’ for Hagesidamos’ victory of 476 BC? Hagesidamos came from Western Lokroi, a colonial polis on the toe of Italy. Western Lokroi lacked the epichoric mythological heritage that many of the poleis of mainland Greece possessed. When praising a victor from Aegina, for example, Pindar could always turn to the Aeakid sagas for a myth relevant to the vic-

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33) Olympian 1.29, Nemean 7.23, 8.33; noted also by A. Köhnken, Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar. Interpretationen zu sechs Pindargedichten (Berlin 1971) 49, D. Loscalzo, Pindaro tra muthos e logos, in: I lirici greci: Forme della comunicazione e storia del testo, ed. by M. C. Fera and G. B. D’Alessio (Messina 2001) 168. See also Nagy (above, n. 1) 65–68.


35) Race (above, n. 7) 117 partially anticipated my argument. He suggested that “the ‘interest’ that Pindar will pay on his debt will be the ‘account of common concern.’ Initially that applies to the forthcoming praise of the victor’s city, but in a larger sense it includes the ‘account’ of the first Olympic games later in the ode”. My reading constricts Race’s suggestion to the centerpiece narrative.
Perhaps it was the relative lack of strong epichoric myth in colonial Epizephyrian Lokroi that motivated Pindar’s choice of this common, Panhellenic, tale on the origins of Olympia. In addition to Olympian 10, Pindar also narrated the foundation of Olympia in Olympian 3 for Theron of Akragas, similarly a colonial polis in the West. Pindar, again, did something quite similar when he narrated the tale of the first chariot race at Olympia in Olympian 1 for Hieron of Syracuse. Olympians 1, 3, and 10 were for victories in the year 476, and all of them were for victors from Sicily and Magna Graecia. Olympians 1 and 3 were for the tyrants Hieron and Theron, while Olympian 10 was for the boy victor Hagesidamos.

As others have noted, the Western Greeks had particularly close connections with the sanctuary at Olympia. This was due not only to the relative closeness of Olympia across the Ionian sea, but also to the cultural importance of Olympia. For colonies on the periphery of the Greek world the appropriation of symbolic capital was important; the Western Greeks were defining themselves in a, relatively speaking, new colonial world. The literary celebration of the place of victory, Olympia, in Olympians 1, 3, and 10, as an assertion of Olympia’s cultural symbolic capital, allows Hieron and Syracuse, Theron and Akragas, Hagesidamos and Epizephyrian Lokroi, to develop geographic and cultural connections with Olympia, the most prestigious of Greek Panhellenic sanctuaries.

Contemporary critics have shown a growing interest in performance and reperformance scenarios for epinician poetry. In terms of first performance T. Gelzer has suggested that some odes may have been performed at the respective Panhellenic sanctuary where the victory was won, while E. Krummen has argued that
several of Pindar’s odes were performed at public celebrations in the home polis of the victor. B. Currie has recently reminded us of the possibilities of reperformance, such as through informal sympotic song, performances organized by the victor’s descendants, and performances subsidized by the polis at public festivals in the home polis of the victor. T. Hubbard, admittedly speculatively, has recently hypothesized that epinician odes may have been reperformed at the Panhellenic sanctuary, where the victory, for which the epinician ode was composed, was won. Inherent in all of these possibilities for performance and reperformance are issues of identity, both regional and Panhellenic.

Though our positive knowledge of the ‘dissemination of epinician lyric’ remains meager, we do know that Pindar and Bacchylides soon became Panhellenic poets, in the sense that their odes were known beyond the immediate community of a respective victor. This is represented, for example, through the allusion and parody of their poetic texts in Athenian drama. It is a fascinating deduction that a profoundly important socio-cultural issue, Panhellenic identity, can be pinpointed in terms of specific narrative practice with Pindar’s κοινὸς λόγος in his tenth Olympian ode. As a matter of mythopoiesis, ‘Panhellenic narratives’, such as Olympians 1, 3, and 10, show Pindar crafting odes relevant not only to the immediate victor and his family, but also to a much broader Greek audience.

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43) See Currie (above, n. 41), Hubbard (above, n. 42).
44) I wonder if poems that do not restrict their mythical narration to epi-choric myth may have been of particular interest to a broader Greek audience for reperformance. Evidence for such later Greek appreciation may come from the above discussed scholia 15a and 15b. The scholia are, nonetheless, too cryptic to bear the weight themselves of my conjecture. This conjecture would widen our appreciation beyond the importance of ‘purple patches’ and ‘bravura openings’ in terms of widespread Greek epinician consumption. See especially the important article of Currie (above, n. 41) 54.