

Footrace, Dance, and Desire: The χορός of Danaids in Pindar's *Pythian* 9

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Abstract: This paper offers a new interpretation of Pindar's *Pythian* 9.112-16, which relates the story of Danaos marrying off his forty-eight daughters. Previously, these lines have been understood as describing a footrace by the daughter's suitors to determine which suitor would marry which daughter. By reanalyzing Pindar's diction I suggest that this passage also depicts Danaos' daughters in the marked terms of choral performance. This interpretation not only matches the representation of the Danaids as a performing chorus in Phrynicus' *Danaids* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, but it also further illuminates the way desire permeates and organizes this particular Pindaric ode.

## Footrace, Dance, and Desire: The χορός of Danaids in Pindar's *Pythian* 9<sup>1</sup>

This paper offers a new interpretation of Pindar's *Pythian* 9.112-16. These verses have been understood as a description of how Danaos married off his daughters through a footrace he held for their suitors.<sup>2</sup> By reanalyzing Pindar's diction I shall suggest that the text also depicts the Danaids in the marked terms of choral performance. This interpretation not only matches the representation of the Danaids as a performing chorus in Phrynichus' *Danaids* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, but it also further illuminates the way desire permeates and organizes *Pythian* 9.<sup>3</sup> I shall propose that Pindar portrays the Danaids in this manner in order to represent the connection between athletics, chorality, and marriage. In the first part of this paper, I attempt to disclose real problems in the traditional interpretation of the Danaid passage. In part two I reconsider the diction of verses 114-14a, finding that Pindar evokes the language of choral performance in his description of the Danaids. In the final section of the paper I explore the significance of this marked choral language in relation to the larger themes of the poem and of Pindaric epinikia.

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<sup>2</sup> The ancient scholion 195b (Drachmann 2.239), followed by commentators, notes that Pindar is not relating the marriage of the Danaids to the sons of Aegyptus, in which Danaos had his daughters kill their husbands. Rather, he alludes to a subsequent marriage. That the number of Danaids is forty-eight, rather than fifty, indicates that this is a later marriage. After the previous wedding, Poseidon took one daughter, Amymone. Another daughter, Hypermestra, saved her first husband, Lynceus. Apollodorus 2.1.5 relates the stories of the earlier wedding and of Amymone and Hypermestra.

<sup>3</sup> It seems there was a Danaid chorus in all the plays in the trilogy of which the *Suppliants* was a part. See A. Garvie (1969) 163-233. On possible connections between this poem and Aeschylus' trilogy see R. P. Winnington-Ingram (1969) 12-13. On Phrynichus' *Danaids* see A. Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 63-5 and *Suda* s.v., quoted at Pickard-Cambridge 293.

The Danaos passage in *Pythian* 9 has provoked limited discussion from commentators.<sup>4</sup> Previous interpretations are concerned with the way the poem interweaves the Danaos story with the narrative of the Libyan king, Antaios, marrying off his daughter through a footrace. This latter race is won by Alexidamos, an ancestor of the poem's *laudandus*, Telesikrates.<sup>5</sup> These two stories comprise the final twenty-two verses of the poem, which are presented here in their entirety (104-25):

δίψαν ἀκειόμενον πρᾶσσει χρέος αὐτίς ἐγεῖραι καὶ παλαιὰν δόξαν ἑῶν προγόνων·	105
οἳοι Λιβύσσης ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς ἔβαν Ἴρασα πρὸς πόλιν, Ἀνταίου μετὰ καλλίκομον μναστῆρες ἀγακλέα κούραν	106a
τὰν μάλα πολλοὶ ἀριστῆες ἀνδρῶν αἴτεον σύγγονοι, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ξεί- νων. ἐπεὶ θαητὸν εἶδος ἔπλετο· χρυσοστεφάνου δὲ οἱ Ἴβας καρπὸν ἀνθήσαντ' ἀποδρέψαι	110
ἔθελον. πατήρ δὲ θυγατρὶ φυτεύων κλεινότερον γάμον, ἄκουσεν Δαναὸν ποτ' ἐν Ἄργει οἶον εὖρεν τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ὀκ- τῶ παρθένοισι, πρὶν μέσον ἄμαρ, ἐλεῖν ὠκύτατον γάμον. <b>ἔστασεν γὰρ ἅπαντα χορόν ἐν τέρμασιν αὐτίκ' ἀγῶνος·</b>	114a
σὺν δ' ἀέθλοισι ἐκέλευσεν διακρῖναι ποδῶν, ἄντινα σχήσοι τις ἡρώ- ων, ὅσοι γαμβροὶ σφιν ἦλθον. οὕτω δ' ἐδίδου Λίβυς ἀρμόζων κόρα νυμφίον ἄνδρα· ποτὶ γραμμᾶ μὲν αὐτὰν στάσε κοσμήσας τέλος ἔμμεν ἄκρον, εἶπε δ' ἐν μέσσοις ἀπάγεσθαι, ὃς ἂν πρῶτος θορῶν ἀμφὶ οἱ ψαύσειε πέπλοις.	115
ἔνθ' Ἀλεξίδαμος, ἐπεὶ φύγε λαιψηρὸν δρόμον, παρθένον κεδνὰν χερὶ χειρὸς ἐλών ἄγεν ἵππευτᾶν Νομάδων δι' ὄμιλον.	120

<sup>4</sup>C. Heyne (1807), B.L. Gildersleeve (1885), C. Fennell (1893), O. Schroeder (1922), U. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1922), and C. Carey (1981) offer only minor comments on the passage. F. Mezger (1880), L. Farnell (1930-32), R.W.B. Burton (1966) 59, G. Kirkwood (1982), C. Froidefond (1989) 56-60, P. Bernardini et al. (1995) and S. Instone (1996) have more to say, but do not consider the choral imagery (see discussion below).

<sup>5</sup>C. Calame (2003) 70-2 offers a good discussion of Antaios and his city, Irasa. See also scholion 185b (Drachmann 2.238) discussed below.

πολλὰ μὲν κείνοι δίκον  
φύλλ' ἔπι καὶ στεφάνους·  
πολλὰ δὲ πρόσθεν πτερὰ δέξατο νικᾶν.<sup>6</sup> 125

...But as I slake my thirst  
for songs, someone exacts a debt from me to reawaken  
as well the ancient glory of his [Telesikrates'] ancestors, such as they 105  
were when they came for the sake of a Libyan woman  
to the city of Irasa, as suitors  
for the hand of Antaios' famous fair-haired daughter,  
whom so many of her noblest kinsmen  
were wooing, and many foreigners as well,  
because her beauty

was splendid and they were eager to cull  
the blooming fruit of golden crowned Hebe. 110  
But her father, planning a more glorious  
marriage for his daughter, had heard how in Argos  
Danaos in his day had devised a means to gain  
a most speedy marriage for his forty-eight  
unwed daughters before noon: at once **he placed**  
**the whole throng at the finish line of the contest** 114a  
and gave orders to decide by trials of a foot race 115  
which daughter each hero would win, of those  
who came to betroth them.

The Libyan made a similar offer for matching  
a groom to his daughter. He adorned her  
and set her at the finish line as the grand prize  
and declared in their midst that whoever first leapt  
forward  
and touched her dress would take her away with him. 120  
Then Alexidamos, after excelling in the swift race,  
took the cherished maiden hand-in-hand  
and led her through the throng of Nomad horsemen.  
Many were the leaves  
and crowns they showered upon him—  
and many the winged wreaths of victories he had won 125  
before.<sup>7</sup>

To summarize: in 104-5 Pindar turns the focus of the poem to the glory of Telesikrates' ancestors; in 106-10 he describes Antaios presented with many suitors for his daughter; in 111-12 Antaios recalls the story of how Danaos married off his forty-eight daughters,

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<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted text of Pindar is from B. Snell and H. Maehler (1987).

<sup>7</sup> W. Race (1997) Trans., 353-5. Race's translation is representative of many of the modern critical interpretations of verses 112-16.

regarding it as a model of a more glorious wedding (κλεινότερον γάμον);<sup>8</sup> Pindar then gives a brief description of the Danaos story in verses 112-16;<sup>9</sup> in 117-20 Antaios has the suitors run a footrace, in which the suitor who first touches his daughter's *peplos* wins her as a bride; the last five verses describe Alexidamos winning the race.<sup>10</sup> Pindar makes the Danaids' wedding-race the inspiration for Antaios' method of marrying off his daughter, thereby connecting a story about one of Telesikrates' ancestors to a mythical exemplar. Therefore, commentators have inferred that the Danaid story is comprised of the same sort of footrace that takes place in the Antaios narrative.<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, two ancient scholia focus on the similarities between the wedding races:

185b (Drachmann 2.238): ἄλλως· Ἴρασσα, πόλις Λιβύης, ἣν ὤκησεν Ἄνταιος, οὐχ ὁ παλαίσας Ἡρακλεῖ· ἐκεῖνος γὰρ διαλλάσσει τοῖς χρόνοις· ἀλλ' ἕτερος, ὃς τὴν θυγατέρα τοῖς μνηστευομένοις προὔθηκεν ἄθλον δρόμου τῷ φθάσαντι λαβεῖν κελεύσας. ὅμοιον δὲ ἐποίησε Δαναῶ· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος τὰς θυγατέρας δρόμῳ προὔθηκε.

Alternatively: Irasa, a Libyan city, where Antaios lived, not the Antaios who wrestled Herakles, for that man is from a different time, but another one, who offered his daughter to her suitors as the prize in a footrace, commanding that the suitor who finished first would take her. **Antaios did the same thing as Danaos, for that man also offered his daughters through a race.**<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The comparative κλεινότερον refers to the sort of wedding Antaios holds for his daughter as being more glorious than one that does not involve competition, and than a wedding that does not have a precedent in myth. See Bernardini et al. (1995) 617. See also scholion 194 (Drachmann 2.2.39) discussed below.

<sup>9</sup> The Danaos passage is a miniature example of 'lyric narrative'. See W. Slater (1983). Pausanias 3.12.1-2 also relates the story of Danaos' footrace for his daughters.

<sup>10</sup> A. Carson (1982) 123 notes that the Nomad's showering of the bridal couple with leaves and crowns in 123-4 represents the καταχύσματα, part of the ritual incorporation of the bride into her new household. R.W.B. Burton (1962) 59 relates this image to the φυλλοβολία for victorious athletes.

<sup>11</sup> H. Fränkel (1975) 450 states this notion explicitly: "Danaos served as a model for Alexidamos' father-in-law [Antaios]." R.W.B. Burton (1962) 59 and C. Calame (2003) 71 make similar judgments.

<sup>12</sup> All translations of scholia are my own.

194 (Drachmann 2.239): πατήρ δὲ θυγατρί: ὁ δὲ πατήρ Ἀνταῖος ἐνδοξότερον τῆ ἑαυτοῦ θυγατρὶ κατασκευάζων τὸν γάμον, **πεποίηκεν ὅπερ ἤκουσέ ποτε ἐν Ἄργει τὸν Δαναὸν ταῖς τεσσαρακονταοκτῶ θυγατρῶσιν ἑαυτοῦ πεποιηκέναι, κάκεινον ἐμιμήσατο.**

‘But her father [planning a more glorious marriage] for his daughter’: and her father, Antaios, preparing a more celebrated wedding for his daughter, **did what he heard Danaos once did for his forty-eight daughters in Argos; he copied that man.**

Scholia 185b and 194 make Danaos’s race the model for Antaios. According to these scholia Antaios makes his daughter the prize in a wedding race (προὔθηκεν ἄθλον δρόμου) in order to copy Danaos (194: ἐμιμήσατο, 185b: ὅμοιον δὲ ἐποίησε).

Two inherent differences between the stories complicate the interpretations suggested by the scholia and by modern critics. First, Antaios’ race involves one daughter and many suitors, whereas Danaos’ race involves forty-eight daughters and an unspecified number of suitors. Pindar emphasizes this difference by repeating πολλοὶ in verses 107 and 108 to describe the many local and many foreign suitors of Antaios’ daughter. In contrast the Danaids’ suitors are described with the rather vague quantitative adjective ὄσοι in 116. Two other ancient scholia elaborate on the number of suitors in the Danaid wedding race, intimating that, in contrast to Antaios’ race, there were only as many suitors as Danaids:

195a (Drachmann 2.239): ἤκουσε Δαναὸν: ἤκουσε γὰρ τὸν Δαναὸν ἐν Ἄργει ὁποῖον ταῖς τεσσαρακονταοκτῶ θυγατρῶσιν αὐτοῦ γάμον εὔρε, πρὶν τὸ μέσον τῆς ἡμέρας γενέσθαι. τὸ γὰρ ἐωθινὸν ἠγωνίσαντο καὶ πρὸ μεσημβρίας διελύθησαν τοῦ δρόμου, **καὶ ἕκαστος ἦν ἠβουλήθη ἔλαβεν.**

‘He heard how Danaos’: for Antaios heard what sort of wedding Danaos came up with for his daughters before midday. For they competed early in the morning, and they completed the race before noon, **and each [suitor] took the girl which he wanted.**

200 (Drachmann 2.239): ὠκύτατον γάμον: ὁ Δαναὸς, φησὶν, ἔστησε τὰς θυγατέρας ἕως μέσης ἡμέρας, ἵνα δηλονότι προθεωρήσωσιν αὐτάς οἱ μνηστῆρες, **καὶ ἕκαστος ἔληται τῶν δρόμῳ πρωτευσάντων ἢν ἂν βούληται.**

‘A most speedy wedding’: they say that Danaos set out his daughters before midday, so that their suitors could look at them clearly beforehand, **and each of them could take which one he wished, according to his finish in the race**

According to scholion 195a each suitor that came for the Danaid wedding race appears to end up with a bride (ἕκαστος ἦν ἡβουλήθη ἔλαβεν). Scholion 200 explains more fully: every suitor was able to choose the bride he wanted based on his finish in the race (ἕκαστος ἔληται τῶν δρόμῳ πρωτευσάντων ἢν ἂν βούληται). The two scholia give the impression that there were forty-eight suitors for the forty-eight Danaids, highlighting a difference between the two wedding races: Danaos' wedding-race is a solution for quickly matching a large number of daughters to a large number of suitors. In contrast, Antaios' wedding race is meant to discern the best suitor for a single bride.

There is a second difference between the wedding races. The Antaios story describes all the suitors in the footrace running for one *telos*, Antaios' daughter. The Danaids on the other hand offer forty-eight *tele* for their suitors to select from as they race. Therefore, the Danaid wedding race involves matching proper grooms to many brides, while the Antaios story is about the analogous, but not identical, activity of choosing one groom out of many suitors. These differences signal that perhaps the Danaid story contains more than just an exact model for the events of the Antaios wedding race. This possibility is further borne out by a look at the diction of the passage.<sup>13</sup>

## II

The traditional interpretation of the Danaos narrative relies on a particular reading of 114-14a: ἔστασεν γὰρ ἅπαντα χορόν/ ἐν τέρμασιν αὐτίκ' ἀγῶνος. Race's translation is representative of the interpretation of many critics: "at once he [Danaos]

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<sup>13</sup> The Danaid wedding race is also iconic for ritualized bride abductions, such as the abductions which were part of Spartan marriage custom according to Plutarch *Lycurgus* 15.3. The Cyrene and Apollo story earlier in the poem offers a mythical exemplar of bride abduction.

placed the whole throng [of the Danaids] at the finish line of the contest...”<sup>14</sup> I will reinterpret these lines based on three aspects of the diction that are evocative of the language of choral performance: the possible meanings of χορόν in 114; Pindar’s use of a technical term ‘χορόν ἕστημι’; and the semantic range of ἀγῶνος in 114a.

Commentators and translators have understood χορόν in 114 to mean ‘a group’ with no performative implications.<sup>15</sup> This meaning of χορός is unparalleled in Pindar. χορός appears eleven other times in the Pindaric corpus and six times more as a part of a compound adjective. All of these other uses of the word refer to a performing chorus or dance.<sup>16</sup> Thus, χορός in 114 coming in the context of a Pindaric ode would likely evoke the notion of a performative chorus. This is all the more likely since the Danaids are

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<sup>14</sup> W. Race (1997) 353. Aside from P. Bernardini et. al. (1995) and S. Instone (1996) critics have not commented specifically on the lines. Nonetheless, several reveal their interpretation through translations. S. Instone (1996) 65 renders it similarly to Race: ‘for he set up the whole group straightaway on the course boundary....’ B. Gentili in P. Bernardini et al. (1995) 259 likewise translates ‘subito pose sul traguardo nell’arena tutta la schiera delle vergini.’ L. Farnell (1930) 136 offers: ‘for he ranged the whole band of them at the ends of a running-course...’ He appears to be the first to translate ἅπαντα χορόν as referring to the Danaids. B.L. Gildersleeve (1885) 337 offers a rather vague translation, which assumes that ἅπαντα χορόν refers to the suitors, rather than to the daughters: ‘by ranging all that had come as suitors for his daughters, to decide who should have them by contests of swiftness.’ A. Puech (1922) translates “il avait placé tout le chœur...” However, Puech offers no further discussion on the meaning of χορόν.

<sup>15</sup> W. J. Slater (1969) 547. S. Instone (1996): 141 cites *LSJ* s.v. II.2 for examples of χορός meaning a group or row of things.

<sup>16</sup> W. J. Slater (1969) 547 understands χορός to mean ‘choir, chorus’ at *N.* 5.23, *Dith.* Fr. 70.16, *Dith.* Fr. 75.19, Fr. 199.3. He takes it as ‘dance, dancing’ at *O.* 14.9, *P.* 10.38, *Pae.* Fr. 52b.99, *Dith.* Fr. 75.1 *Parth.* Fr. 94b.39, *Pae.* Fr. 52c.101, *Pae.* Fr. 52ma.10. καλλιχορον occurs at *P.* 12.26; χοροῖτύπος at Fr. 156.1. At *Dith.* Fr. 70.16, *Pae.* Fr. 52c.101 and *Pae.* Fr. 52ma.10 the fragmentary status of the text prevents a full analysis of the usage. εὐρύχορος appears four times in the corpus: *O.* 7.18, *P.* 4.43, *P.* 8.55, and *N.* 10.52. This word is used in connection with a city or place name, presenting a more oblique reference to choral performance. Slater (1969) 211 defines εὐρύχορος as ‘broad for dancing, spacious’. *LSJ* s.v. takes this word to mean ‘with broad places, spacious’. At the same time, however, *LSJ* notes that the word properly means ‘with broad dancing-places’. Further, it suggests that the word may be used to draw a connection between χορός and χώρος. In light of the other uses of χορός in Pindar, there is a much stronger case for reading a choral allusion into his use of εὐρύχορος, rather than seeing this as a reason for understanding χορός in the Danaos story as meaning only ‘group’. Regarding Slater’s distinction between χορός meaning ‘choir, chorus’ or ‘dance, dancing’ c.f. Nagy (1995) 41, who understands a χορός as a ‘song-and-dance ensemble’, where either the singing or the dancing aspect may be dominant.



*parthenoi*, for whom there is a well-established genre of choral song and dance.<sup>17</sup>

The argument for understanding χορός in 114 as evoking a performing chorus is strengthened further when the word is considered in the context of the phrase in which it appears: ἔστασεν γὰρ ἅπαντα χορόν. Here Pindar utilizes a technical term ‘χορόν ἴστημι’. This phrase appears to have three interrelated and sometimes overlapping meanings: it can mean ‘to lead a chorus’, ‘to form or join a chorus’, or ‘to institute a chorus’ as a recurrent event.<sup>18</sup> ‘χορόν ἴστημι’ is used on one other occasion in Pindar in *Paeon 2* (Fr. 52b.99):

πέτραις ὑψηλαῖς θαμὰ Δ[ε]λφῶν  
λιπάρ]άμπυ[κε]ς ἰστάμεναι χορόν  
ταχύ]ποδα π[αρ]θένοι χάλ-  
κέα] κελαδ[έον] τι γλυκὺν αὐδᾶ

<sup>17</sup> At 114 χορόν appears with ἅπαντα. The phrase ἅπας χορός elsewhere refers to a performing chorus. For instance, in *Politics* 1284b Aristotle notes during a discussion of the importance of proportionality in both governance and in the arts and sciences that a χοροδιδάσκαλος will not allow one who sings louder and more beautifully than the πᾶς χορός to be a part of the chorus:

δῆλον δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστημῶν· οὔτε γὰρ γραφεὺς ἑάσειεν ἂν τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πόδα τῆς συμμετρίας ἔχειν τὸ ζῶον, οὐδ' εἰ διαφέρει τὸ κάλλος, οὔτε ναυπηγὸς πρύμναν ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τι μορίων τῶν τῆς νεώς, οὐδὲ δὴ χοροδιδάσκαλος τὸν μείζον καὶ κάλλιον τοῦ παντὸς χοροῦ φθεγγόμενον ἑάσει συγχορεύειν.

And this is also clear in the field of the other arts and sciences: a painter would not let an animal have a foot of disproportionate size, not even if it was exceptionally beautiful; nor would a shipbuilder allow this with respect to the stern or some other part of a ship; **nor indeed would a *chorodidaskalos* allow one who sang greater and more beautifully than the whole chorus to join in the chorus** (H. Rackham, 1932 text and trans. with modifications)

<sup>18</sup>For discussions of this term and the related word χοροστάτης and χοροστασία see J. Denniston (1939) 71, C. Calame (1997) 41, 45-8, G. Nagy (1990) 361-2, A. Henrichs (1995) 61-3, and F. Naerebout (1997) 279 and M. Alonge (2006). J. Denniston (1939) 71 argues for two senses of ‘χορόν ἴστημι’: leading a chorus or establishing it as a regular event. M. Alonge (2006) 148-153, suggests three senses, although he points out that “the distinction between these senses is often blurred.” As instances of ‘to lead a chorus’ Alonge 149 n. 25 finds, e.g., Aristophanes, *Av.* 219, *Nu.* 271. For the meaning ‘to form or join a chorus’ he offers, e.g. Pindar, *Pae.* Fr. 52b 98-102, Aeschylus fr. 204b Radt, lines 6-8, 15-17, Apollonius, *Arg.* 1.536-8, Callimachus, *Dian.* 240-2. For the sense ‘to institute a chorus’ as a recurrent event, e.g., Bacchylides 11.112, Sophocles, *El.* 280, Herodotus 3.48, Euripides, *Alc.* 1155.

τρόπ]ον....

Around the high rocks the virgins of Delphi with bright headbands often set up a swift-footed chorus and sweetly sing with bronze voice...<sup>19</sup>

Here Pindar describes the maidens of Delphi forming a chorus and performing. Like the chorus in *Paeon 2* the Danaid χορός is comprised of *parthenoi*. Just as the phrase ‘χορὸν ἴστημι’ in this paean means ‘to set up a chorus’, it seems likely that in *Pythian 9* Pindar employs choral imagery with his use of the same phrase.<sup>20</sup>

Based on this reading of ἔστασεν γὰρ ἅπαντα χορὸν in 114, the phrase ἐν τέρμασιν...ἀγῶνος in the following verse can also be understood as having choral implications. Critics have understood ἀγῶνος in 114a as referring to the racecourse or to the wedding race itself.<sup>21</sup> However, in archaic Greek poetry ἀγών may also refer to a space or an assembly where song or dance performance occurs.<sup>22</sup> This is the case in *Od.* 8.258-65, where a group of Phaeakian youths create a dancing area (χορός) within an ἀγών.<sup>23</sup> A bit later in Book Eight the youths stand around the ἀγών stamping their feet,

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<sup>19</sup> I. Rutherford (2001) 262 text and trans. See also Rutherford 273-4 for an analysis of this passage in relation to *Paeon 2* as a whole.

<sup>20</sup> The Danaids are mentioned at one other point in Pindar (*N.* 10.1): Δαναοῦ πόλιν ἀγλαοθρόνων τε πεντήκοντα κορᾶν. The diction in this passage also relates to a choral context: the adjective ἀγλαόθρονος is only used one other time in Pindar (*O.* 13.96), in order to describe the Muses. Further, ἀγλαόθρονος is used to describe the Nereid chorus in Bacchylides 17.124.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., L. Farnell (1930) and S. Instone (1996) suggest the former meaning; W. Race (1997) the latter.

<sup>22</sup> On the meaning of ἀγών in archaic Greek epic see L. Bertelli and I. Lano (eds.) (1977) 2.146-50. For a summary of various interpretations of instances of the use of ἀγών in Aeschylus, Pindar, and Alcman see J. Ellsworth (1976) 228-35.

<sup>23</sup>

αἰσυμνήται δὲ κριτοὶ ἐννέα πάντες ἀνέσταν  
δήμιοι, οἱ κατ' ἀγῶνας ἐὺ πρήσσεσκον ἕκαστα,  
λείησαν δὲ χορὸν, καλὸν δ' εὐρύσαν ἀγῶνα.  
κῆρυξ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων φόρμιγγα λίγειαν  
Δημοδόκῳ· ὁ δ' ἔπειτα κί' ἐς μέσον: ἀμφὶ δὲ κοῦροι  
πρωθῆβαι ἴσταντο, δαήμονες ὀρχηθοῖο,  
πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσίν. αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
μαρμαρυγᾶς θηεῖτο ποδῶν, θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ.

while two dancers perform inside.<sup>24</sup> The opening of Alcman 3 provides a third example which is closer to the choral performance context evoked by Pindar's Danaids. Here the chorus sings of going to an ἀγών, drawn by the desire to hear singing *parthenoi* and to dance.<sup>25</sup>

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The stewards of the course stood up, nine of them in all, chosen out of the people, **who on every occasion set in good order the assembly space: they smoothed the dancing floor and widened the space**, and the herald came bringing with him the clear lyre for Demodokos, who moved into the middle, and about him stood forth young men in the first of their youth, well trained in dancing, and beat the wonderful dance with their feet. Odysseus gazed on the twinkling of their feet, his heart full of wonder (Text: T. Allen 1917. R. Lattimore 1965 trans. with modifications).

χορός is used twice in the passage (260, 264). W. Stanford (1965) vol. 1 338 and A. Heubeck, S. West, J. Hainsworth (1988) 363 note that in 260 χορός is used to describe the level dance space that the young men create within the ἀγών. In 264 χορός describes the choral performance itself. The dancers are marked as a chorus through the description of their actions at 262-4: ἀμφὶ δὲ κοῦροι/πρωθῆβαι ἴσταντο, δαήμονες ὀρχημοῖο, /πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσσίν.... This passages takes place at a point in the poem where Alkinoos' daughter, Nausikaa, is presented as a potential bride for Odysseus. The wedding theme in the *Odyssey* offers a further parallel with the context of the Danaid passage. In addition, L. Woodbury (1972) 568-9, 574 notes the similarity between Nausikaa's αἰδώς about discussing her marriage with her father (*Od.* 6.66-7) and the αἰδώς Apollo exhibits regarding his desire for the nymph Cyrene earlier in *P.* 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Od.* 8.370-1, 378-80:

Ἀλκίνοος δ' Ἄλιον καὶ Λαοδάμαντα κέλευσε  
μουνᾶξ ὀρχήσασθαι, ἐπεὶ σφισιν οὐ τις ἔριζεν....  
ὀρχείσθην δὴ ἔπειτα ποτὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρη  
ταρφέ' ἀμειβομένω· κοῦροι δ' ἐπελήκεον ἄλλοι  
ἔσταότες κατ' ἀγῶνα, πολὺς δ' ὑπὸ κόμπτος ὀρώρει.

Then Alkinoos asked Halios and Laodamas to dance all by themselves, since there was none to challenge them....  
...these two performed a dance on the generous earth, with rapid interchange of position, **and the rest of the young men standing about the assembly space stamped out the time**, and a great sound rose up (Text: T. Allen 1917. R. Lattimore 1965 trans. with modifications).

<sup>25</sup> Alcman 3.1-10:

Μῶσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, περὶ με φρένας  
ἡμέρωι νέας ἀοιδας  
πίμπλατ'· ἰθύ]ω δ' ἀκούσαι  
παρσενηί]ας ὀπός

To summarize, for three reasons the phrase ἔστασεν γὰρ ἅπαντα χορόν/ ἐν τέρμασιν αὐτίκ' ἀγῶνος reflects the language of choral performance: first, χορός elsewhere in Pindar refers only to a performing chorus; second, χορόν ἴστημι is a technical term for forming a chorus; third, ἀγῶν can evoke a space for both athletic and for choral activity. Verse 115 and the description of the parallel wedding race, which Alexidamos wins, make clear that Danaos marries off his daughters through a race. However, the verses which follow 114a require the audience to reconfigure their understanding of the marked choral language which Pindar utilizes in his description of the Danaids. The image of choral performance flickers before the audience, and is then refocused as a wedding race. Nonetheless, the evocation of chorality remains: rather than offer the Danaos story as an exact model for Antaios' race, Pindar takes the opportunity to add further depth to the poem by inflecting it with choral imagery.

### III

The Danaid wedding race depicts male suitors engaging in athletic competition as a precursor to marriage. The theme of athletics leading to marriage is present elsewhere in *Pythian* 9 in the Antaios wedding race and in the Cyrene and Apollo narrative.<sup>26</sup> This

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πρὸς αἰθέρα καλὸν ὕμνιοισᾶν μέλος (5)  
 ].οἰ  
 ὕπνον ἀπὸ γλεφάρων σκεδ[α]σεῖ γλυκύν  
 ]ς δέ μ' ἄγει πεδ' ἀγῶν' ἴμεν  
 ἄχι τάχιστα κόμ[αν] ξ[ανθάν] τινάξω·

].σχ[ ἀπ]αλοὶ πόδες (10)

Olympian (Muses, fill) my heart (with longing for a new) song: **I (am eager) to hear the (maiden) voice of girls singing a beautiful melody** (to the heavens)...: (it?) will scatter sweet (sleep) from my eyes and **leads me to go to the assembly, (where) I shall (rapidly) shake my yellow hair**...soft feet...(D. Campbell 1988 text and trans.).

<sup>26</sup> Verses 106-11, 117-26 and 5-75, respectively. As M. Grant (1967) 43-47 shows, winning a bride through athletics is a folklore motif that occurs often in Greek myth, e.g. Herakles and Deianira, Pelops and Hippodameia, and Atalanta and Hippomenes. On the erotic theme of the

theme is also hinted at in connection with Telesikrates: the maidens of Cyrene who watch his victories in local games wish that he were their husband or son.<sup>27</sup> The poem's use of choral language at the moment of the Danaid wedding race adds another dimension to the connection between athletics and marriage by evoking a complementarity between athletic competition and choral performance. The complementarity of dance and athletics is also present in Homer: Alkinoos desires that Odysseus see that the Phaeakians excel in

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poem and the Apollo and Cyrene (the nymph and the city) story see also E.D. Francis (1972), L. Woodbury (1972) and (1982), E. Robbins (1978), A. Carson (1982), B.H. Fowler (1983), A. Köhnken (1985), C. Froidefond (1989) 49-60, C. Calame (1990) and (2003) 65-79, B. Gentili (ed.) (1990), L. Kurke (1991) 127-133, who notes that all the marriages in the poem contain the theme of Greek-African/Libyan marriage exchange, and C. Dougherty (1993) 136-56.

<sup>27</sup> 9. 97-103:

πλεῖστα νικάσαντά σε καὶ τελεταῖς  
 ὠρίαίς ἐν Παλλάδος εἶδον ἄφωνοί θ' ὡς ἕκασται φίλτατον  
 παρθενικαὶ πόσιν ἧ  
 υἶὸν εὖχοντ', ὦ Τελεσίκρατες, ἔμμεν,  
 ἐν {τ'} Ὀλυμπίοισι τε καὶ βαθυκόλπου  
 Γᾶς ἀέθλοισ ἐν τε καὶ πᾶσιν  
 ἐπιχωρίοις...

When they saw you so often victorious as well  
 in the seasonal festivals for Pallas,  
 each of the maidens wished in silence  
 that you, O Telesikrates, were her dearest husband or her son—  
 also in the Olympic games and in those for  
 the deep-bosomed Earth, and in all the local  
 games.

Pindar plays on the name Τελεσίκρατες with the word τελεταῖς (106) and with τέλος (118). Modern commentators, e.g., S. Instone (1996) 138, agree that the games listed here are all local games, not games in Olympia or Athens, despite the assertion to the contrary in ancient scholion 172 (Drachmann 2.236). The desire for Telesikrates to be one's son is clearly not the same as the erotic desire expressed elsewhere in this poem. Ancient scholion 173 (Drachmann, 2.236) interprets this to mean that *parthenoi* wish he were their husband, while unmentioned *gunaikes* wish he were their son. L. Woodbury (1982) 247 n.8, 249 suggests that the poem assumes that childbearing is a second *telos* for a girl after marriage. L. Woodbury (1972) 561 considers the connection between the marriages in the poem and a possible impending marriage for Telesikrates. However, A. Carson (1982) 121 points out the dangers of using the poem to postulate biographical information about the *laudandus*. B.L. Gildersleeve (1885) 346, followed by subsequent commentators, notes the similarity between the wish of the Cyrenean maidens at 99-100 and that of Nausikaa at *Od.* 6.244: αἴ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τοιόσδε πόσις κεκλημένος εἴη. On *P.* 9.97-103 see also I.N. Perysinakis (1990).

sailing, games and choral performance.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Plato depicts γυμναστική and μουσική as serving parallel functions in education.<sup>29</sup> Plutarch's *Lycurgus* provides a description of Spartan customs where female participation in both choral and athletic activities is preparation for marriage.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>*Od.* 8.250-3:

ἀλλ' ἄγε, Φαιήκων βητάρμονες ὅσσοι ἄριστοι,  
παίσατε, ὡς χ' ὁ ξεῖνος ἐνίσπη οἴσι φίλοισιν  
οἴκαδε νοστήσας, ὅσσον περιγιγνόμεθ' ἄλλων  
**ναυτιλίῃ καὶ ποσσὶ καὶ ὀρχηστῷ καὶ ἀοιδῇ.**

Come then you who among all the Phaeakians are the best dancers,  
do your dance so that our guest, after he comes home  
to his own people, can tell how far we surpass all others  
**in our seamanship and the speed of our feet and dancing and singing**  
(Text: T. Allen 1917. R. Lattimore 1965 trans. with modifications).

<sup>29</sup>*Rep.* 376e:

τίς οὖν ἡ παιδεία; ἢ χαλεπὸν εὐρεῖν βελτίω τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ χρόνου  
ἠύρημένης; ἔστιν δέ που ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ σώμασι γυμναστική, ἡ δ' ἐπὶ ψυχῇ  
**μουσική.**

Therefore, what is education? Or is it hard to find something better than what was  
discovered a long time ago? That it is, I suppose, **athletic activity for the body and  
musical activity for the soul** (Text: J. Burnet 1902. My translation).

*Clit.* 407b-c:

ἀλλ' ὀρώντες **γράμματα καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ γυμναστικὴν** ὑμᾶς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ  
τοὺς παῖδας ὑμῶν ἱκανῶς μεμαθηκότας—ἃ δὴ **παιδείαν ἀρετῆς εἶναι τελέαν**  
ἠγεῖσθε...

But seeing that you yourselves and your children have sufficiently learned **letters and  
musical activity and athletic activity**—the things which you believe to be **the complete  
education of virtue**...(Text: J. Burnet 1902. My translation).

The authorship of *Clitophon* is uncertain. See S.R. Slings (1999).

<sup>30</sup>*Lycurgus* 14.4, 15.1:

...οὐδὲν ἦττον εἴθισε τῶν κόρων τὰς κορὰς γυμνάς τε πομπεύειν καὶ πρὸς  
ἱεροῖς τισιν ὀρχεῖσθαι καὶ ᾄδειν, τῶν νέων παρόντων καὶ θεωμένων.... ἦν μὲν  
οὖν καὶ ταῦτα παρορμητικὰ πρὸς γάμον, λέγω δὲ τὰς πομὰς τῶν παρθένων  
καὶ τὰς ἀποδύσεις καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐν ὄψει τῶν νέων, ἀγομένων οὐ  
γεωμετρικαῖς, ἀλλ' ἐρωτικάις, ὡς φησιν ὁ Πλάτων, ἀνάγκαις.

For young women no less than for young men Lycurgus made it customary for them to  
take part in processions and to dance and sing in certain festivals naked with young men  
present as spectators....Indeed, these things were incentives for marriage, that is the  
maidens' processions, their state of undress, and their contests in front of the young men,

The depiction of the Danaids through choral language as a marker for their imminent marriage makes sense, given the work of Calame and Lonsdale on choruses of young women. They suggest that participation in choruses plays an important role in preparing young women for marriage and womanhood in archaic Greece.<sup>31</sup> Pindar's diction in our passage reflects the Danaids' imminent wedding by evoking a choral performance by *parthenoi*, an activity itself connected with preparation for marriage.<sup>32</sup>

Another theme of the poem is the act of viewing as a cause of erotic desire. The text presents Apollo and the maidens of Cyrene becoming desirous, respectively, of the nymph Cyrene, and of Telesikrates, as they watch their athletic performances.<sup>33</sup> Similarly,

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who were drawn not by geometric, but erotic desire, as Plato says. (Text: K. Ziegler 2002. My translation.)

<sup>31</sup> C. Calame (1997) 207. S. Lonsdale (1993) 174, (1995) 34-7. C. Calame (1997) 231-38 discusses evidence that one of the purposes for young women participating in choruses is to prepare them for marriage.

<sup>32</sup> A. Carson (1982) 121 points out that *P.* 9 creates "an analogy between the *telos* of marriage in female life and the *telos* of athletic victory in a man's life." My suggestion is that in the Danaid story the *tele* of marriage and athletic victory combine. At this moment Pindar creates a further analogy between athletics and chorality.

<sup>33</sup> Apollo finds Cyrene wrestling a lion in the woods, stirring desire in him (*P.* 9.26-31, 36-7):

κίχε νιν λέοντί ποτ' εύρυφαρέτρας  
ὄμβρίμω μούναν παλαίοισαν  
ἄτερ ἐγχείων ἐκάεργος Ἀπόλλων.  
αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ μεγάρων Χίρωνα προσήνεπε φωνᾶ.  
"σεμνὸν ἄντρον, Φιλλυρίδα, προλιπῶν  
θυμὸν γυναικὸς καὶ μεγάλην δύνασιν  
θαύμασον...."

ὄσια κλυτὰν χέρα οἱ προσενεγκεῖν,  
ἦρα; καὶ ἐκ λεχέων κείραι μελιαδέα ποίαν;"

Apollo, the far-shooting god with the broad quiver  
once came upon her as she was wrestling with  
a mighty lion, alone and unarmed.  
At once he called Cheiron from his halls and said,  
'Come forth from your sacred cave, son of Philyra,  
and marvel at this woman's courage and great power....'

Is it right to lay my famous hand upon her  
and indeed to reap the honey-sweet flower from the bed of love?"

the suitors of Antaios' daughter desire her because of her exceptional appearance (θαητὸν εἶδος).<sup>34</sup> Spectating may also play a part in the Danaid passage. Interpretations of the phrase at 113-4 πρὶν μέσον ἄμαρ, ἐλεῖν/ ὠκύτατον γάμον have focused on the notion of timing and quickness.<sup>35</sup> However, ancient scholion 200 (Drachmann 2.239) suggests that Danaos holds the wedding race for his daughters before midday, in order that the suitors can see them clearly:

...ὁ Δαναὸς, φησὶν, ἔστησε τὰς θυγατέρας ἕως μέσης ἡμέρας, ἵνα δηλονότι προθεωρήσωσιν αὐτὰς οἱ μνηστήρες...

They say that Danaos set out his daughters before midday, so that their suitors could look at them clearly beforehand...<sup>36</sup>

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Likewise, the Cyrenean maidens feel desire when they watch Telesikrates. See *P.* 9.97-100 quoted above.

<sup>34</sup> *P.* 9.107-9:

τὰν μάλα πολλοὶ ἀριστῆες ἀνδρῶν αἵτεον  
 σύγγονοι, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ξεί-  
 νων. **ἐπεὶ θαητὸν εἶδος**  
**ἔπλετο...**

whom so many of her noblest kinsmen  
 were wooing, and many foreigners as well,  
**because her beauty was splendid**

Further, Antaios adorns (κοσμήσας) his daughter to make her look beautiful, when he makes her the prize of the wedding race (118). Carey (1981) 100 notes that Pindar's description of the Horai and Gaia beholding (θαησάμενοι) (62) Aristaios, the son of Apollo and Cyrene, provides another example of the power of gazing, though in a non-erotic context. This image of gazing upon a child connects well with Woodbury (1982) 247 n.8, 249 who contends that when the Cyrenean maidens view Telesikrates and wish him to be their husband or son (97-100) that the latter is a second related *telos* rather than two separate ones for *parthenoi* and *gunaikes* (see above).

<sup>35</sup> A. Carson (1982) 125-8. Carson notes that the poem creates an analogy between the importance of time and timing for athletes and for brides. Carson argues convincingly that a shared feature of several of the poem's narratives is instances of people seizing opportunities in a timely fashion.

<sup>36</sup> For the complete scholion see above. Similarly, *Laws* 771e-72a describes choral performance by youths as an opportunity for young men and women to see each other in order to facilitate marriage. See also Plutarch *Lycurgus* 14.4 and 15.1 quoted above. H. Fränkel (1973) 445 n.8, suggests another alternative: the phrase πρὶν μέσον ἄμαρ, ἐλεῖν/ ὠκύτατον γάμον may be a reference to the tradition noted in Pausanias 6.24.1, that the footraces at Olympia were run in the morning. P. Bernardini et al. (1995) 618 suggest that midday, like midnight, has a magical-



We can thus offer an additional way to interpret Pindar's reference: within the context of the other instances in the poem where viewing causes desire, the choral language of the Danaid passage may draw a connection between the desire inspired by viewing an athletic competition and the desire created through watching a choral performance by *parthenoi*.<sup>37</sup>

The choral language in the Danaid passage takes on yet further significance, if a chorus performed *Pythian* 9. The evocation of choral performance by *parthenoi* within the poem could create an analogy with the external chorus performing the poem.<sup>38</sup> The internal chorus of Danaids causes desire in the suitor/athletes. Perhaps Pindar uses the Danaids to imply a related role for the external chorus: to make the athletic victory and the victor himself more desirable.<sup>39</sup> This notion has a parallel in *Pythian* 10.55-9:

ἔλπομαι δ' Ἐφυραίων  
 ὄπ' ἄμφι Πηνειὸν γλυκεῖαν προχεόντων ἑμάν  
 τὸν Ἴπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν ᾠοδαΐς  
**ἔκατι στεφάνων θαητὸν ἐν ἄλι-**  
**Ξι θησέμεν ἐν καὶ παλαιτέροις,**  
**νείσι τ' ἐπαρθένοισι μέλημα καὶ γὰρ**

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religious significance as a liminal moment. Cf. Menelaus' description of his encounter with Proteus, who emerges from the sea at mid-day at *Od.* 4.400, 450.

<sup>37</sup> Examples of desire inspired by choruses of *parthenoi* can be found in Alcman 1 and 3. At *Iliad* 16.180-85 Hermes desires and sleeps with Polymele after watching her dance in a chorus of Artemis. S. Lonsdale (1995) 30-5 notes that this is the earliest instance of the *topos* of girls being taken from the dancing ground of Artemis. Lonsdale also discusses the emphasis on the pleasurable effect of viewing choral performances in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Plato's *Laws*. On this 'abduction' motif see also D. Boedeker (1974) 39-40, 70-1.

<sup>38</sup> On issues of choral performance of Pindar's epinikia see M. Lefkowitz (1963) and (1991), M. Heath (1988), A. Burnett (1989), C. Carey (1991), M. Heath and M. Lefkowitz (1991), and K. Morgan (1993). On the relationship between internal female choruses and external male choruses elsewhere in Pindar see E. Stehle (1997) 131. If one conjectured that a female chorus performed *Pythian* 9, the description of the Danaids would take on yet further significance. This sort of inquiry must remain speculative. However, the poem does make particular use of elements of parthenia, humenaia, encomia, and hymns. On the poem's nod towards the latter two genres see C. Froidefond (1989) 49. On the performance context for *Pythian* 9 see E. Floyd (1968) and J. Belton (1975) and (1976).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. L. Kurke (1991) 163-224, who demonstrates that integrating the *laudandus* into the community of the *polis* is one of the functions of Pindar's epinikia.

ἑτέροις ἑτέρων ἔρωτες ἔκνιξαν φρένας·

I hope, when the Ephyraians  
pour forth my sweet voice beside the Peneios,  
that with my songs I may make Hippokleas  
**even more splendid for his crowns**  
**in the eyes of his comrades and his elders,**  
**and the darling of unmarried girls.** Indeed, desires  
for various things stir the minds of various men...

Here the role of the performers is explicitly to make the *laudandus* appear splendid (θαητὸν) to his peers and elders, and the object of desire (a μέλημα) for *parthenoi*.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Pindar may depict the Danaids with choral language to evoke the role of archaic choruses across genres: to shape important moments for a society, and to make things and people more desirable.

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<sup>40</sup> Θαητὸν (58) is the same word used to describe Antaios' daughter at *P.* 9.108 in Pindar's explanation of why she has so many suitors. μέλημα (59) is clearly related to erotic desire, as indicated by verse 60. The use of this vocabulary to describe the *laudandus* in *P.* 10 can be compared to the use of μέλημα at Alcman 3.73-4 to describe Astymeloisa, a member of the chorus of *parthenoi* which performs that song. I.N. Perysinakis (1990) compares the role of desire in this passage and in *P.* 9.97-103 (see discussion of the latter passage above).

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