

Stella P. Revard. *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode: 1450–1700*.

Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 27. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 351. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009. xvi + 360 pp. index. illus. bibl. \$59. ISBN: 978-0-86698-399-0.

One of the striking and long-lasting accomplishments of the literary renaissance that swept Europe from the time of Petrarch was the recovery and adaptation of the Pindaric ode in the Neo-Latin and vernacular literatures of Britain and continental Europe. A half-century ago Carol Maddison introduced Anglophone readers to many of these texts in *Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode*. And it is to this topic that Professor Revard returns in her richly detailed new study.

Her chief aim is to look at how “the Pindaric ode developed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe as the principal medium for political and patronage poetry, whether manifest as a formal or perfunctory mode or more significantly as

a serious means for political introspection and commentary" (xv). In particular she is interested in the ways European humanists used the familiar Pindaric style to blend the personal and political, using the Pindaric "I" at times to reveal their most intimate thoughts. The trend is important, she contends, because it ensured the survival of the pindaric beyond the early modern period as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets rediscovered its potential for subtle lyric expression.

Revard's first chapter discusses poems praising great men by writers such as Giovanni Pontano and Francesco Filelfo in Italy, as well as Jean Salmon Macrin and the expatriot Luigi Alamanni in France. Her second chapter expands the canvas to include the royal encomia of Ronsard and his followers. In addition, she contributes a useful discussion of odes addressed to Queen Elizabeth by Paulus Melissus and Janus Dousa, both of whom dedicated important collections of Latin verse to her when they were in England.

In two complementary chapters on Pindaric encomia in English literature Revard considers first Andrew Marvell's poems on Cromwell and then Abraham Cowley's pindaric odes, which she argues covertly supported the Royalist cause during the Commonwealth. Especially in contrast to Marvell's "Horatian Ode," the use of poetry for political propaganda stands out in her discussion of Cowley's verse. This trend, she notes, increased after the restoration of Charles II. In a chapter on Stuart apologetics she chronicles the use of Cowley's form of the pindaric by major poets like Dryden and Aphra Behn as well as a swarm of lesser writers to comment on important political events such as the tempestuous succession of William and Mary.

Two succeeding chapters look at the development — first in France and Italy and then in England — of the funeral pindaric to commemorate the passing of great leaders. Discussions of odes by Janus Secundus and Benedetto Lampridio bring out how, as with celebratory odes, poets could use funeral pindarics to comment, sometimes subversively, on current events. Revard's chapter on English poets discusses Cowley's extension of the pindaric to commemorate the dead in his ode for Katherine Philips, a trend Dryden followed in his ode for Anne Killigrew. Innovation is the keynote of this chapter: in her stress on the freeness of Jonson's Pindaric imitation in his Cary-Morison ode, and notably in her detailed discussion of John Milton's indebtedness in "Lycidas" to Pindar's odes.

Funeral pindarics could be private and personal, a tendency Revard pursues (before a concluding chapter on the city ode) in a chapter on what she terms the familiar pindaric. Here she challenges Scaliger's dichotomy between Horace as a master of the familiar ode and Pindar of the exalted hymn-ode, showing how poets like Ronsard, Melissus, Cowley, and Behn increasingly made the Pindaric ode into a medium that could encompass the familiar as well as the sublime.

Revard's discussion of "Lycidas" reveals her interest in going beyond formal elements to discover deeper affinities between Pindar's odes and the poems she considers. At times one might feel that she extends these affinities too far. The rewards of her boldness are amply evident throughout the book, however (for this reader one pleasant surprise was her discovery of a link between music and good

government that unites Pindar's Pythian 1 ode with Marvell's poem on Cromwell's protectorate).

In comparison to Maddison's *Apollo and the Nine* Professor Revard's study greatly extends our knowledge of the Pindaric ode's history. *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode* now joins her earlier *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*. Together the two works make available the scholarship and criticism that have appeared in the past half-century together with over thirty years of her own work on Pindaric imitation. No student of humanist literature in early modern Europe will want to be without both volumes.

LEE PIEPHO

Sweet Briar College