Pindar, fragment 52a (Paean I = D1 Rutherford), 1-4

πρὶν ὀδυνηρὰ γῆρας σῇ... ὁλεῖν,
πρὸς τις εὐθυμίας σκιάζετο
νόημα ἄκοτον ἐπὶ μέτρον, ἰδῶν
δύναμιν οἰκοδοτοῦν.


στένεις may be preferable to the previous suggestions: «grievous straits of old age»¹. The noun is rare outside of epic and elegiac verse, where it normally exhibits the Ionic long vowel -ει- (cf. στε(ι)νός, στε(ι)νόω); however, the short-syllable form is found in Aesch. Eum. 521 (lyr.) and, it seems, Dionys. Bassar. fr. 9 v. 31 Heitsch.

Euripides, fr. 898²

τὴν ἄρροδίτην ὧν όρας ὅση θεώς;
ἂν οὐδ’ ἄν εἰκος δεήσεως ᾽ἀν
ὅση πέρας καῦσ’ ὅσων διέρχεται.

αὕτη τρέφει σὲ κάμῳ καὶ πάντας βροτοὺς.

τεκμήριον δὲ, μή λόγοι μόνον μάθής,
ἐργα δὲ δείξω τὸ σθένος τὸ τής θεοῦ.

ἐρα μὲν ὃμβρου γαῖ’, ὅταν ξηρόν πέδον
ἀκορπον σύμχω νυτίδος ἐνδείχθει ἐπτη.

ἐρά δ’ ὁ σεμυνός σφαννος πληρούμενος
ὕμνος πεσεῖν εἰς γαῖαν ἄρροδίτης ὑπάρ.

όταν δὲ συμμυθητόν ἐς ταῦτον δύσι,
φόρουσιν ἡμῖν πάντα καὶ τρέφοσα ’ἀμα,
δι’ ἂν βρότειον ἐτ’ ἐκ τοῦ ταλάλει γένος.


¹ I have published this conjecture anonymously in the Festschrift Staffan Fogelmark (Dais philēs-stephanos, Uppsala 2004, 5), where the Pindaric fragment served as dedicatory verses.

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Gomperz condemned v. 6, followed by Wilamowitz and Diggle. But most of the rest is just as bad. Euripides, or a competent author of any sort, would not follow up the rhetorical question “don’t you see how great Aphrodite is?” with “she, whom you could not say, nor measure, how great she is”. A demonstrative τηνείδ’ for ἰν (or, as the mss. of Stobaeus have it, ἄλλα’) would be a slight improvement, but only so as to exchange the inane for the banal. The next line (v. 4) is just as flat, with τρέφει taking three undistinguished objects — you, me, and all mortals — each coordinated with καί. This is followed by an extremely artificial λόγος/έργον — dichotomy with failing grammar in the latter half (v. 6).

The versification is cobbler’s work, especially ll. 4-6. Anyone who has attempted Greek iambic composition knows that the natural tendency of the inexperienced versifier is to let word-end coincide with longum: in each one of these three lines, there are four diaereses. This is very rare in single Euripidean trimetres and results in awkward and monotonous rhythm. As far as I can tell, four diaereses do not occur elsewhere in two subsequent verses in extant tragic trimetre.

11-13 are similarly banal in style and content — καί τρέφουσα ἀμα and ζητεὶ καὶ θάλασσα are particularly bad, empty verse-filling. Aristotle cites 7, 9-10 as Euripidean, and this may be so. 8 is perhaps genuine. The rest is stuffing, interpolation by the learned editor of a florilegium (but v. 8 may be interpolated as well: the interpolator, as we, may have received the authentic verses from Aristotle).

[Simonides] AP 7.77

Οὕτως ὁ τοῦ Κείλου Σιμανίδου ἔστι σκεπήρι,
ὦ καὶ τεθνητὸς ἡ ζωντ’ ἀπέδωκε χάριν.

"The elision [of the 3rd-declension dative -i] has no parallel in the literary epigram of the Hellenistic period. It is of a type extremely rare in inscrip-


4 For the present purpose I define “diaeresis” as “word-end coinciding with longum (except at the end of the verse)”, not counting instances before enclitics, after proclitics, or occurring in combination with elision.

5 A modest statistical inquiry into a few plays shows that one in about forty-five (14/630) of the trimetres of the Cyclops has four (or, in the rarest case, five) diaereses. The corresponding figures for Alcestis is 1/33 (24/804), Rhesus 1/39 (17/665), Aeschylus’ Supplices 1/78 (6/467), Prometheus 1/30 (26/788).
grams, even the least literate of them...; it remains very uncommon in the Christian era» (D.L. Page, Further Greek Epigrams, Cambridge 1981, 300-301). Page adopts the tradition found in Tzetzes, Chil. 1.636 (p. 29 Leone = [Aristid.] fr. 28a FHG) and Σ Aristid. Tett. 160.14: ζηνι παρέσχε χάριν. However, Tzetzes’ version would be unlikely to corrupt into the reading of the Palatine ms., whereas the reverse change is explicable as the result of scholarly emendation by someone (perhaps Tzetzes himself) who noticed the unacceptable elision.

ζην might be possible, and produces a sense more pertinent than the dative of the Palatinus: «who, although dead, gave life as thanks»⁷. ἀκοδίδωμι often takes the infinitive as object (LSJ s.v. I 4) and the double construction with the object χάριν and an objectival infinitive finds exact parallels in AP 9.469 σοί χάριν ἔξετέλεσα τό νοσ... | χάριν ἔχειν πολύσοβιον, and App. Anth. 3.399 πάσι δός μίαν χάριν ι τούτου γενέσθαι τον τυφουτα τοις τύπους. Cf. also Bacchylides 9.97-99:

...[μι] δ[---]δ[---]κε χάριν 
ν[ι]αίειν ἀπο[---]εύντας.

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Abstract

In Pind. fr. 52a 1 read στένεα; Eur. fr. 898 is mostly spurious; In AP 7.77.2 read ζην.

Pindaro-Euripide-Epigraphma

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⁶ See also M.L. West, Greek Metre, Oxford 1982, 10.
⁷ The dead man was found by Simonides and buried at his expense, the ghost then appearing to the poet in a dream, warning him from continuing his sea-journey. The ship foundered; Simonides, having followed the dead man’s advice, gratefully added the present verses to the original epitaph (AP 7.516). For sources and scholarly refs. see Page, l.c., n. 1.