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RESEARCH ARTICLE

'If one knows what is to come': ethics, audience and eschatology in Pindar's *Olympian* 2

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Abstract

This essay uses one difficult sentence from Pindar's *Olympian* 2 as a jumping-off point to address larger issues about the relationship between literature and belief. Section II tackles Pindar's judgement of the dead (56–60) and argues that this passage is better understood as an instance of unusual particle usage rather than as an elliptical expression of recondite doctrine. Here the posthumous fate of humanity is decided on the grounds of ethical conduct. Section III discusses the unfinished conditional beginning in line 56 and probes the connection between eschatological knowledge and pragmatic action. Scholars have focused on the unusual details of Pindar's eschatology, but its overarching practical thrust is to reinforce a conventional ethic. Section IV examines the knowledge of the future mentioned in line 56 and other gestures towards privileged knowledge. Scholars have considered *Olympian* 2 an 'intimate' text intended for a select audience, but there is reason to think that this epinician aimed at a panhellenic reception. Combining motifs from various sources, Pindar creates a unique vision of the afterlife that is capable of transcending doctrinal labels and appealing to many. Section V briefly concludes by considering how this poem works as both a victory ode and a religious text. Pindar's ode is not a 'corrupt paraphrase' of anything else; the text creates a world of its own and inscribes core epinician values into the very architecture of the cosmos.

Keywords: Pindar; epinician; Orphism; Pythagoreanism; religion

I. Introduction

At a key moment in Plato's *Meno*, Socrates introduces Pindar as a privileged representative for a class of 'divine' poets (Πίνδαρος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ὅσοι θεῖοί εἰσιν, 81a–b). Alongside certain priests and priestesses who have taken the care to be able to give a rational account of their affairs (τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται λόγον οἵοις τ' εἶναι διδόναι, *Meno* 81a), Pindar and these other poets say, according to Socrates, that the soul is immortal and born again after death and that one must live as purely as possible. Socrates then goes on to quote from a poem in which Persephone receives 'requital for ancient grief' (ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος, Pind. *fr.* 133.1) in the underworld and sends souls back to the world above. This famous fragment has aroused a debate of its own,[1] but I cite the context of the quotation because it brings into

[1] Bernabé (1999) and Edmonds (2013) 305–26 offer discussion and bibliography. References to Pindar and the Pindaric scholia follow Snell-Maehler and Drachmann, respectively. Translations are my own.

sharp focus central questions about the interpretation of another poem, *Olympian* 2: does Pindar echo the doctrine of special religious groups? How much does his authority, as a 'divine poet', resemble that of a priest? Is he, like Plato's priests and priestesses, concerned to give a rational account?

Olympian 2 is a strange epinician. In place of the standard central myth there is an eschatological section that blends together various motifs attested in a range of other texts. Discussion has focused on identifying Pindar's sources and working out the disputed details of his underworld. Scholarship has often been guided by a dichotomy between poetry and religion, with critics either emphasizing epic intertexts and epinician tropes or tracing potential links with special beliefs, chiefly Orphism, Pythagoreanism and Sicilian mystery cult. There is no reason to see here a set of two exclusive alternatives. The challenge, as I understand it, is to read *Olympian* 2 simultaneously as both an epinician and a religious text, but not necessarily as a personal confession or a sectarian gospel.

This essay uses one difficult sentence as a jumping-off point to address much larger issues about the relationship between literature and belief. Section II tackles Pindar's judgement of the dead in lines 56–60 and argues that this controversial passage is better understood as an instance of unusual particle usage rather than as an elliptical expression of recondite doctrine. There is no need to invoke external evidence from any special school of thought in order to understand these verses; for the first time in extant Greek literature, the posthumous fate of all humanity is decided on the grounds of their ethical conduct on earth. Pindar's depiction of the underworld, like his praise of his patron Theron, emphasizes the causative link between intellectual insight and virtuous action. Section III discusses the unfinished conditional that begins in line 56 and probes the connection between eschatological knowledge and pragmatic action in *Olympian* 2. Scholars have given much attention to the unusual details of Pindar's eschatology, but its overarching practical thrust is to reinforce a generically conventional ethic. The afterlife depicted in this ode offers new rewards for familiar forms of merit praised throughout the epinician corpus. Section IV in turn examines the knowledge of the future mentioned in line 56 and other gestures towards privileged knowledge in Pindar's account of the underworld. It argues that *Olympian* 2 evokes the esoteric without itself being esoteric in any substantial sense. Scholars have long considered this poem an 'intimate' and 'personal' text intended for a select audience, but there is reason to think that *Olympian* 2, like the rest of the epinicians, aimed at a panhellenic reception. Recent research into Orphism, Pythagoreanism and Greek eschatology reframes the age-old question of Pindar's sources. I argue that he does not passively reflect any orthodoxy but rather draws on fluid and overlapping bundles of ideas in order to create something new that is capable of standing apart from doctrinal labels and appealing to a wide audience. Section V concludes by briefly considering how this poem works as both a victory ode and a religious text. Like the myths of other victory odes, the distinctly epinician eschatology of *Olympian* 2 offers a framework for thinking about how excellence fits into the world. Combining motifs from many sources, this poem offers a singular vision of the afterlife ultimately underwritten by a religious authority no greater and no lesser than 'the divine bird of Zeus' (88), Pindar himself. The text is not a 'corrupt paraphrase' of anything else; it creates a world of its own and inscribes core epinician values into the very architecture of the cosmos.

If the arguments of this essay point in the right direction, then *Olympian* 2 emerges as at once a more normal victory ode than it has often been taken to be and also a unique testimonium to the rich variety of ideas about the afterlife that circulated and coexisted in dialogue with each other during the Classical period.

II. Pindar's judgement of the dead

The eschatological section of *Olympian* 2 begins with what Malcolm Willcock deems 'the most outrageously difficult sentence in all the epinician odes' (56–60):[2]

εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,
ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐν-
θάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες
ποινὰς ἔτεισαν, τὰ δ' ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχᾷ
ἁλιτρὰ κατὰ γᾶς δικάζει τις ἐχθρᾷ
λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκᾳ·

And if someone has it [*sc.* wealth] and knows what is to come, that the foolish wits of those who have died here immediately pay a penalty, and someone beneath the earth passes judgement on misdeeds committed in this realm of Zeus, having pronounced sentence with hateful necessity.

More than a century ago Ludwig Deubner could describe this passage as 'a playground of philological acumen' ('ein Tummelplatz philologischen Scharfsinns').[3] These lines have attracted much attention, and for good reason. Here fine-grained philological questions have cosmological consequences: precisely what, according to Pindar, is the posthumous fate of humanity?

Hugh Lloyd-Jones, reacting to the publication of important new 'Orphic' gold leaves, offered an original and influential interpretation:

> the sense must be that when men die here, their feeble minds at once pay the penalty; the penalty consists in their minds becoming feeble, that is to say, in death. If the penalty which those who die pay consists in death, it is not the same as the penalty paid by the souls whose crimes are judged according to the following sentence.[4]

This argument provokes several objections. ἔτεισαν (58) and δικάζει (59) are such a natural pair that it is counter-intuitive to suppose that the verbs refer to two separate quasi-legal proceedings rather than the complementary sides of the same process. Lloyd-Jones' reading would be easier if Pindar had written the present participle γιγνόμεναι, which Lloyd-Jones himself supplied when asked by Douglas Gerber for a more detailed explanation of the syntax in the discussion of his paper at a Fondation Hardt conference that formed the basis for the volume in which Lloyd-Jones' chapter appears.[5] The aorist participle θανόντων (57) strongly suggests a penalty paid *after* death rather than *through* the act of dying.[6] On Lloyd-Jones' interpretation, Pindar leaves unspecified the crime for which some penalty is paid on earth. If earthly misdeeds are punished in the underworld, what then is left to be answered for in this sublunary world? Lloyd-Jones points to the sins of humanity's Titanic ancestors and connects our passage with the 'requital' (ποινάν) that Persephone receives in Pindar *fr.* 133, itself the topic of extensive and ongoing controversy.

[2] Willcock (1995) 150. Departing from Snell-Maehler, I punctuate with a comma rather than a dash after ἔτεισαν (58), as do many editors, including Bowra, Turyn and Willcock. There is no reason to posit (further) anacoluthon here, as will be argued below.

[3] Deubner (1908) 638.

[4] Lloyd-Jones (1985) 254.

[5] Lloyd-Jones (1985) 280.

[6] It would be odd to have a coincidental aorist participle with a present-tense verb: see Braswell (1988) 115–16 with references. Carey (1991) 219 objects that, for Lloyd-Jones' reading, 'one expects θανοῦσαι … not θανόντων'.

Since it is uncertain which doctrine, if any, Pindar is following in *Olympian* 2, it is hazardous to invoke external sources for crucial data which the poet does not provide.

Modifying Lloyd-Jones' approach, Bruno Gentili et al. understand lines 56–60 in close connection with what follows (61–67):[7]

ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεί,
ἴσαις δ' ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον
ἑσλοὶ δέκονται βίοτον, οὐ χθόνα τα-
ράσσοντες ἐν χερὸς ἀκμᾷ
οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ
κεινὰν παρὰ δίαιταν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίοις
θεῶν οἵτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις
ἄδακρυν νέμονται
αἰῶνα, τοὶ δ' ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.

But always having sunlight in equal nights and in equal days, the good receive a life with less toil, not disturbing the earth or the water of the sea with the strength of their hand for the sake of an empty way of living; rather, in the company of the honoured gods those who rejoiced in oath-keeping spend a tearless existence, whereas the others endure toil which one cannot bear to look upon.

Gentili et al. take lines 56–67, as a whole, to articulate a threefold contrast between the moderately bad, the very bad and the good.[8] Yet the binary contrast between 'those in company of the honoured gods' (παρὰ μὲν τιμίοις | θεῶν οἵτινες, 65–66) and 'the others' (τοὶ δ', 67) suggests that in lines 56–60 we are also dealing with a simple dichotomy, not with a more complex 'scale of faults and related punishments' ('gradazione delle colpe e delle relative punizioni').[9] There is little in the μέν-clause beginning in line 57 to suggest that some penalty is paid for only middling misdeeds, and the nature of that penalty would again be left unspecified. Gentili et al. posit a punishment of immediate reincarnation, but this has still less of a textual basis than a punishment of death.[10]

Both of these interpretations, while problematic in other respects, posit a contrast which accords well with the μέν/δέ construction of lines 56–60, as proponents of these readings rightly stress. Others construe the particles in more unusual ways, but none of these solutions carries conviction. Many take μέν (57) to contrast with δέ (61) and interpret δ' (58) as introducing a long parenthetical thought.[11] Lowell Edmunds instead sees a μέν *solitarium* in line 57 while Johannes van Leeuwen takes the particle as emphatic.[12] Yet lines 57–60 treat concepts which are so fundamentally related (the rendering of a judgement and the payment of a penalty) that it is natural to interpret μέν (57) and δ' (58) as closely linking together two clauses.

The problem is seeing how these lines may be lucidly understood as a μέν/δέ construction. As fledgling Hellenists are taught, such constructions are contrastive and the words immediately before the particles are contrasted. Pindar's usage, however, often does not conform to this rough-and-ready formula. As recent scholars have stressed, in dealing with Greek particles we should be sensitive to diachronic change and generic peculiarities,

[7] Gentili et al. (2013).
[8] Gentili et al. (2013) 401. *Cf.* Catennaci (2014) 133–35; somewhat similarly, Ferrari (1998) 94–95 n.29.
[9] Gentili et al. (2013) 401.
[10] Gentili et al. (2013) 401–02.
[11] So Farnell (1930–1932) 2.17, Willcock (1995) 155, Holzhausen (2004) 23 n.17; cf. *Ol.* 2.25–30, *Pyth.* 5.15–20.
[12] Edmunds (2009) 669; J. van Leeuwen (1964) 1.171.

and we should not rigidly impose stereotyped usages on the flow of discourse in a given passage.[13]

John Denniston states that the combination μέν/δέ marks 'a grammatically co-ordinated antithesis' but concedes that 'the strength of the antithesis varies within wide limits'.[14] In fact, Tom Phillips argues, 'μέν … δέ need not have oppositional force in Pindar'.[15] Consider, for example, *Ol.* 8.67 τύχᾳ μὲν δαίμονος, ἀνορέας δ' οὐκ ἀμπλακών ('through the favour of a god and by not falling short of his own manliness …'): Pindar does not contrast divine favour against mortal virtue but rather combines them as complementary reasons for victory in a classic case of double determination. In *Olympian* 2, he similarly uses a μέν/δέ construction to pair athletic victories (48–49).

Denniston writes that 'the words standing immediately before μέν and δέ are usually corresponding elements in the contrasted thoughts' but notes that this rule is 'constantly subject to exception', especially in verse.[16] Chris Carey catalogues many Pindaric cases which do not conform to this tendency.[17] Consider, for example, *Pyth.* 2.48 τὰ ματρόθεν μὲν κάτω, τὰ δ' ὕπερθε πατρός ('the mother's features below, the features of the father above'). *Ol.* 2.73 is comparable: τὰ μὲν χερσόθεν ἀπ' ἀγλαῶν δενδρέων, ὕδωρ δ' ἄλλα φέρβει ('some from the land off brilliant trees, the water feeds others').

In *Ol.* 2.57–60, Glenn W. Most asserts, 'the word order must be abandoned, and with it two separate legal actions'.[18] The μέν/δέ construction links thoughts which are complementary, not contrastive: first the payment of a penalty and then the judgement which imposes that penalty. While the μέν-clause does not specify why a penalty is paid, this information is supplied by the δέ-clause, which helps to explain the μέν-clause.[19] *Pyth.* 4.283–84 presents a comparable discursive structure: ὀρφανίζει μὲν κακὰν γλῶσσαν φαεννᾶς ὀπός, | ἔμαθε δ' ὑβρίζοντα μισεῖν ('he deprives a base tongue of its radiant voice, and he has learned to hate a man who commits *hubris*'). As Bruce Braswell observes, the δέ clause is logically subordinate to the μέν clause and roughly equivalent to γάρ.[20] *Isthm.* 8.11–14 is also comparable to our passage: ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δεῖμα μὲν παροιχόμενον | καρτερὰν ἔπαυσε μέριμναν· τὸ δὲ πρὸ ποδὸς | ἄρειον ἀεὶ βλέπειν | χρῆμα πάν, 'but for me, bygone fear put an end to mighty anxiety, and it is ever better to attend to what is at hand'. As Carey notes, 'the μέν-clause gives the specific … the δέ-clause the general'. As in our passage, the second limb of the construction explicates the first.[21]

If *Ol.* 2.57–60 exhibits unusual but acceptable Pindaric word order and has a complementary μέν/δέ construction in which the second limb helps to explain the first,

[13] See Bakker (1997) 80–85 on Homeric μέν/δέ in particular and Bonifazi et al. (2016) in general. Pindar's usage of μέν/δέ is influenced by a pervasive distaste for predictable symmetry (Dornseiff (1921) 103: 'Symmetrie wird gemieden').

[14] Denniston (1954) 369–70.

[15] Phillips (2013) 47. Slater (1969) *s.v.* μέν 2 lists cases 'where sentences are opposed' and cases 'where sentences are joined'.

[16] Denniston (1954) 371–72.

[17] Carey (1981) 46.

[18] Most (1985) 100 n.27.

[19] Apparently Aristarchus (Σ 106a) already took δ' (58) as equivalent to γάρ; *cf.* Carrière (1973) 440. Hummel (1993) 388 gives the particle 'une simple valeur articulaire' while allowing that explanatory force may be inferred (somewhat similarly, Bollack (1963) 238). The discursive function of explanatory δέ *always* has to be inferred from context. As Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1908) 134 n.9 remarks, 'mit δέ reiht Pindar nur zu oft Gedanken aneinander, deren logisches Verhältnis durch diese Partikel gar nicht bezeichnet wird'. This is a stylistic choice (Dornseiff (1921) 94: 'Der Chorlyriker meidet die logischen Partikeln bewußt'). For the combination of gnomic aorist (ἔτεισαν, 58) and iterative present (δικάζει, 59) see Hummel (1993) 246.

[20] Braswell (1988) 383.

[21] Carey (1981) 191. Generalizations explaining a particular case: *Pyth.* 3.85–86, 10.59–60; *Isthm.* 2.33–34 (all with γάρ). Carey (1981) 190–91 persuasively defends Benedictus' emendation of the transmitted παροιχομένων (*Isthm.* 8.11).

then various subsidiary philological challenges become easier and the nature of Pindar's judgement of the dead becomes clearer. The adverb αὐτίκ' (57) goes with the verb ἔτεισαν (58), as is normal. Together these two words make an important point. In early Greek poetry, a wrongdoer often pays the price 'in time' later in his life, or retribution is visited upon his descendants; divine justice is commonly delayed.[22] In *Olympian* 2, wrongdoers may reap short-term advantage on earth, but they inexorably (ἀνάγκᾳ, 60) and immediately pay the price later below; this impending judgement is 'what is to come' (τὸ μέλλον, 56). Prompt punishment connotes the justice of this subterranean regime (*cf.* Soph. *El.* 1505–07; Ar. *Vesp.* 453–55) and implicitly contrasts with oft-delayed divine justice in the world above. If αὐτίκ' (57) goes with ἔτεισαν (58), then ἐνθάδ' (57) must go with θανόντων (57), as word order suggests. Some query where mortals could die besides earth, but it makes sense to talk of 'those who die here' when directly contrasting upper and lower worlds.[23]

ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες (57) refers to a particular class of the dead (*cf.* 61–66), not to all of humanity. This phrase means, at least primarily, 'foolish wits'. Lloyd-Jones instead translates the adjective as 'helpless' and persuasively argues against the sense 'wicked' espoused by some earlier scholars.[24] Yet the attested sense of 'foolish' may readily assume moral connotations in context ('reckless').[25] In our passage there may be genuine ambiguity as helplessness is at issue (ἀνάγκᾳ, 60; cf. *Ol.* 1.59), but the intellectual sense of the adjective is surely relevant since it pointedly modifies an intellectual organ (φρένες, 57); one might have instead expected ψυχαί ('souls'), which would be more normal in this context.[26]

The 'foolish wits' of those who commit misdeeds contrast with the wise man 'who knows what is to come' (οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον, 56), namely that misdeeds do not pay in the end. Hearing moral overtones in ἀπάλαμνοι (57) also further sharpens a subsequent contrast with 'the good' (ἐσλοί, 63). The reckless pay a penalty (ἔτεισαν, 58); the good receive their reward (δέκονται, 63). Pindar's vision of the underworld, like his praise of Theron, as we shall see in the next section, emphasizes the causative connection between wisdom and ethical action.

There is no need to invoke external evidence from any special doctrine in order to understand lines 56–60. Like Aeschylus slightly later in the fifth century,[27] Pindar depicts humans paying the penalty for earthly misdeeds in the underworld. For the first time in extant Greek literature the posthumous fate of all humanity is decided on the grounds of their ethical conduct.[28]

[22] *Il.* 4.260–62; Solon 13.29–32 *IEG*^{2}; Thgn. 201–02; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.139–40, 8.15, 11.36; Harder (1985) 257; Garvie (1986) 61; Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 164–65.

[23] So, for instance, Dissen (1830) 34; Wilamowitz (1922) 248–49; Lehnus (1989) 54. On the commonplace religious idiom of 'here and there' see van Leeuwen (1896) 20 and Burnet (1924) 247.

[24] Lloyd-Jones (1985) 253–54. Gentili et al. (2013) 400: 'ἀπάλαμνος non significa e non può significare "malvagio", "empio", "criminale"'.

[25] Alc. 360 Voigt; Solon 27.11–12 *IEG*^{2}; [Thgn.] 279–82, 481; Page (1955) 315; van Groningen (1966) 113. The entry for ἀπάλαμνος in LSJ^9 is unsatisfactory; see now *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon s.v.*

[26] At *Il.* 23.104 the dead do not have *phrenes*; at *Od.* 10.493 Teiresias is the exception that proves the rule. In Homer (*Od.* 11.37, 51, 65 and often), as elsewhere in Pindar (*Pyth.* 11.21, *Nem.* 8.44, *Isthm.* 1.68; but note *Pyth.* 5.101), the *psuchē* is more often linked to the underworld than the *phrenes*. Compare and contrast Lloyd-Jones (1985) 254; Currie (2005) 36.

[27] Aesch. *Supp.* 230–31, from after 470 BC: κἀκεῖ δικάζει τἀμπλακήμαθ', ὡς λόγος, | Ζεὺς ἄλλος ('there too, as the story goes, another Zeus judges misdeeds'); cf. *Eum.* 273–74, from 458 BC: μέγας γὰρ Ἅιδης ἐστὶν εὔθυνος βροτῶν | ἔνερθε χθονός ('for great Hades is a corrector of mortals beneath the earth'). Note also *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 367 with Richardson (1979) 271.

[28] *Cf.* Nisetich (1989) 27; Edmonds (2013) 259; Svavarsson (2020) 602.

III. Ethics and eschatology

'And if someone has it [*sc.* wealth] and knows what is to come' (56), Pindar says, but the expected apodosis never comes as the narrator instead gets carried away with explaining precisely 'what is to come'.[29] Earlier scholars, vexed by 'the most marked instance of anacolouthon in Pindar',[30] proposed unconvincing emendations, none of which found general favour. As Basil Gildersleeve writes, 'it would be better to leave the … sentence frankly without an apodosis'.[31] This 'bad syntax' (Lewis Farnell) is a reflex of Pindar's 'oral subterfuge' (Carey), a pervasive rhetorical fiction already embodied in the ostensibly extemporaneous question opening *Olympian* 2 (1–2).[32]

The poetic relevance of Pindar's eschatology is much affected by the interpretation of this incomplete thought, which provokes reflection on what the narrator was about to say.[33] If someone knows the nature of the afterlife, what then follows from that? C.A.M. Fennell supplies 'then he is Theron' as the missing apodosis,[34] but our passage looks different from the idiom exemplified by *Ol.* 1.54–55 and *Pyth.* 3.85–86. Many prefer versions of 'then all will be well for him',[35] but wealth and foreknowledge are not sufficient to ensure a good afterlife in this poem (cf. *Ol.* 2.58–60, 68–70). Citing Elroy Bundy for encomiastic conditionals, Andrew Miller instead suggests supplying 'χρὴ τὸν αἰνεῖν ["one must praise him"] or the like' (43) and argues that the final section more than 40 lines later (89–100) '*enacts* the conventional apodotic injunction to praise'.[36] Yet throughout the epinician corpus and in this particular ode (ll. 5–6, 46–49) what demands praise is not knowledge but accomplishments. Pindar's many general conditionals with transparent relevance to the victor often cite deeds; none cites knowledge.[37] In the sentence immediately preceding our unfinished conditional, βαθεῖαν … μέριμναν ('profound ambition', 54) calls to mind the practical pursuit of accomplishments guided by intellectual insight.[38]

Another possibility presents itself. The omitted apodosis may be understood to concern the proper use of wealth in accordance with the knowledge which Pindar goes on to describe: if one has wealth and knows that misdeeds are punished in the afterlife, then one should employ wealth for just ends.[39] *Pyth.* 3.103–04 provides a parallel for the thought: 'if some mortal has in his mind the road of truth, then he should take pleasure in what he receives from the immortal gods' (εἰ δὲ νόῳ τις ἔχει θνατῶν ἀλαθείας ὁδόν, χρὴ πρὸς μακάρων | τυγχάνοντ' εὖ πασχέμεν). The following lines explicate the 'road of truth' by grounding this injunction in a view of the human condition. Elsewhere in Pindar foreknowledge is closely connected with the proper use of wealth. Consider *Nem.* 7.17–18:

[29] Race (1979) 257–58; Miller (1993) 40–44; Morrison (2007) 47. For broadly comparable instances of anacoluthon, cf. Pind. *Ol.* 10.86–93, *Pyth.* 12.29–32, *Nem.* 4.79–88; Schwyzer (1934–1971) 2.687.

[30] Nisetich (1988) 8.

[31] Gildersleeve (1885) 149.

[32] Farnell (1930–1932) 2.16; Carey (1981) 5.

[33] It will not do to more or less ignore δέ (56) and take the conditional as backward-looking; contrast Σ 102a; Kirkwood (1982) 71; Gentili et al. (2013) 400.

[34] Fennell (1893) 33.

[35] Willcock (1995) 154. Similarly, for example, Bowra (1964) 121; compare and contrast Edmunds (2009) 665–66. Van Leeuwen (1964) 1.162–65 and Hurst (1981) 121–22 provide doxography.

[36] Bundy (1962) 54–62; Miller (1993) 40–44.

[37] *Nem.* 9.46–47 (ἄρηται | κῦδος), 11.14 (ἀριστεύων), *Isthm.* 3.1 (εὐτυχήσαις); *cf.* Bundy (1962) 58, citing further examples.

[38] For the adjective evoking 'deep' insight cf. *Nem.* 3.53, 4.8, 7.1. In Pindar μέριμνα often means '*concern*, *sc.* for ἀρεταί, i.e. *ambition*' (Slater (1969) *s.v.* b); *cf.* Gerber (1982) 163; Maehler (1997) 252 ('das planende, auf ein Ziel gerichtete Denken'). The point made above is stronger if we retain, as I would prefer, ἀγροτέραν (*Ol.* 2.54), 'hunting', 'questing'; see now Lane (2020), who instead proposes ἀγνοτέραν, 'purer'.

[39] Somewhat similarly Σ 102d; Heyne (1824) 1.25–26; Hermann *apud* Boeckh (1821) 129; Deubner (1908) 641; Ciampa (2021) 133.

'the wise have learned the wind coming on the third day, and they are not harmed by profit' (σοφοὶ δὲ μέλλοντα τριταῖον ἄνεμον | ἔμαθον, οὐδ' ὑπὸ κέρδει βλάβεν). Knowledge of the future, which includes the death awaiting rich and poor alike (*Nem.* 7.19–20), prompts intelligent men to eschew transient profits and instead pursue enduring glory through expensive accomplishments and professional poets like Pindar.[40] *Isthm.* 1.67–68 articulates the reverse side of this core epinician theme: 'if someone keeps his wealth hidden and laughs as he attacks others, he does not realize that without glory he is paying his soul to Hades' (εἰ δέ τις ἔνδον νέμει πλοῦτον κρυφαῖον, | ἄλλοισι δ' ἐμπίπτων γελᾷ, ψυχὰν Ἀίδᾳ τελέων οὐ φράζεται δόξας ἄνευθεν).[41]

In the passages just cited, the future in question pertains to death; in our passage, 'what is to come' also includes the post-mortem afterlife. If one knows the shape of that future, then one does not commit misdeeds (ἁλιτρά, 59), one abides by oaths (εὐορκίαις, 66),[42] one abstains from injustice (ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν | ψυχάν, 69–70); in short, one acts like Theron, who knows what is to come and uses his wealth in accordance with that knowledge. He is introduced as a benefactor to both his fellow citizens and *xenoi* (ὅπι δίκαιον ξένων, ἔρεισμ' Ἀκράγαντος, 6), and the final section returns in ring composition to the innumerable 'delights that he has rendered for others' (χάρματ' ἄλλοις ἔθηκεν, 99). When he is described as 'beneficent in his *prapides*' (εὐεργέταν πραπίσιν, 94), the reference to his intellectual organ is pointed. His just *prapides* contrast with the 'foolish minds' (ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες, 57) of those who pay a penalty below for earthly misdeeds.[43] Theron realizes that the good enjoy a better afterlife, and he acts accordingly (ἐσλοί, 63→ἐσλῶν, 97; δίκαιον, 6→ἀδίκων, 69). His deeds are indeed guided by an ambition that shows his profound intellectual understanding (βαθεῖαν … μέριμναν, 54).

As we would expect from any epinician, the conspicuous display of wealth, including competing in the most expensive event at the panhellenic games and commissioning a major professional poet, is being presented as a characteristic manifestation of an admirable ethic which benefits others.[44] As we find in no other epinician, this ethic is grounded in a complex vision of the afterlife. Elsewhere foreknowledge of death inspires liberality that aims for deathless fame; here foreknowledge of what comes after death inspires liberality which aims for fame and more besides. Theron acts in accordance with his knowledge of an eschatology without epinician parallel, but he does not act differently from other epinician *laudandi*.

The eschatology of *Olympian* 2 reframes a conventional ethic for the poet as well as for his patron. Pindar vows that his praise is true and just (ἐνόρκιον λόγον, 92; οὐ δίκᾳ συναντόμενος, 96). These are generic commonplaces, but they sound different when combined with the idea that abiding by oaths secures a better afterlife and that abstaining from injustice can win the best (εὐορκίαις, 66→ἐνόρκιον, 92; ἀδίκων, 69→δίκᾳ, 96).

[40] Cf. *Pyth.* 1.92–94, 8.92; Bacchyl. 1.178–84, 3.13–14 (where note οἶδε). *Nem.* 7.18–19 pertains especially to patrons rather than poets: Carey (1981) 141–42; Most (1985) 144–47; Cannatà Fera (2020) 441. *Nem.* 1.31–33 is closely related, but there ἐλπίδες may refer to a hope for glory rather than an expectation of death.

[41] Bundy (1962) 87–91. I take the much-debated sentence in *Isthm.* 1.40 to describe the reverse of the situation in *Isthm.* 1.67–68: one who has struggled attains foresight (προμάθειαν) and devotes himself to the glorious pursuits mentioned in the following lines.

[42] Oath-keeping can be a synecdoche for virtue (*cf.* Soph. *Ant.* 369–70; Ar. *Plut.* 61), but its prominence is also explained by two Iliadic passages describing underworld gods punishing oath-breakers (3.278–79, 19.259–60). I suspect that Pindar took the dual τίνυσθον (3.279) to refer to Persephone and subterranean Zeus/Hades; *cf.* Bowie (2019) 143 and n. 55 below.

[43] πραπίσιν … χέρα (94) denotes in a significant sequence a disposition and the deeds that flow thence (*cf.* Aesch. *Cho.* 140–41). In Pindar, *prapides* and *phrenes* encompass the intellectual, emotional and ethical spheres: Slater (1969) *s.v.*; Jackson (1989).

[44] Hampe (1952) 47–53 discusses *Olympian* 2 within the context of epinician euergetism; *cf.* Gianotti (1971) 38–39. See, in general, Kurke (1991) chapter 7.

The poet's words, like Theron's actions, express an ethical identity which is in congruence with the cosmos mapped out in this poem.

Pindar's eschatology has an exhortative as well as an encomiastic function. Its ultimate prize is reserved for those who pass a strict test: 'as many as have brought themselves to keep their soul completely apart from injustice, having remained three times on both sides' (ὅσοι δ' ἑτόλμασαν ἑστρίς | ἑκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν | ψυχάν, 68–70).[45] ἑτόλμασαν (68) emphasizes the fortitude required, μείναντες (69) the long duration to be passed; πάμπαν (69) stresses the absoluteness of the requirement. The misdeeds and alternations across the preceding generations of Theron's family history (35–45) further heighten a sense of how hard it is for one to avoid committing any wrong action across multiple lifetimes. He has done innumerable good deeds (90–95), but the ultimate fate of his soul depends on abstaining from injustice (69–70) and benefactions do not entail the absence of malefaction. All that is done, just or unjust (ἐν δίκᾳ τε καὶ παρὰ δίκαν, 16), cannot be undone; this generalization covers not just what Theron has done but also all that he will do. *Olympian* 2 implicitly exhorts him to win a special place in the afterlife by acting justly in this lifetime. *Pythian* 1 concludes with a more explicit but comparable exhortation: Hieron should be generous so that he, like Croesus, may earn eternal praise; if he acts unjustly, he will be reviled among later generations as Phalaris is (89–98).[46] Hieron will be judged in the court of posterity and Theron will (also) be judged beneath the earth, but the paraenetic force and practical implications of both afterlives are similar.

The eschatology of *Olympian* 2, however unusual it may be, serves familiar generic values. The judgement of the dead in lines 56–60 is purely ethical (section II above), but Pindar's afterlife is expansive and plastic enough also to reward other forms of merit which are constantly celebrated across the epinician corpus. His selective census of the Island of the Blessed (ἐν τοῖσιν ἁλέγονται, 78) does not neatly align with the criteria for admission just expounded. Peleus was just (*cf.* εὐσεβέστατον, *Isthm.* 8.40), but pairing him with Cadmus suggests that these two were issued their passport to bliss because they, rather like Menelaus in the *Odyssey* (4.569), enjoyed the exceptional divine favour of marrying goddesses (cf. *Pyth.* 3.86–95). In this ode divine favour, in addition to justice, can win the best afterlife.

The last, longest and hence climactic entry in Pindar's open-ended catalogue buttresses that inference while further expanding the criteria valid for admission to paradise. Achilles, who also enjoyed divine favour, was spirited away to the Island of the Blessed by his mother 'after she persuaded Zeus' heart with entreaties' (ἐπεὶ Ζηνὸς ἧτορ | λιταῖς ἔπεισε, μάτηρ, 79–80).[47] The immediately ensuing roll-call of her son's great opponents (81–83) evokes in summary fashion the totality of Trojan epic while assigning to Achilles an afterlife that diverges markedly from that tradition, which instead places him in the less idealized locations of Hades (*Od.* 11) or the White Island (*Aethiopis* arg. 4 West).[48] In this

[45] With the majority, I take ἑστρίς | ἑκατέρωθι (68–69) to mean six lives, three on earth and three in the underworld. Scholars sometimes infer that Theron is now on the verge of completing this cycle and travelling to the Island of the Blessed: so, for example, Kirkwood (1982) 73.

[46] Phillips (2016) 153–54. *Pyth.* 1.92–98 is closely modelled on *Od.* 19.328–34. An afterlife in fame or poetry is conventionally linked to the underworld and often framed as a consolation: Tyrtaeus 12.31–32 *IEG*^{2}; Sappho *fr.* 65 Voigt; Thgn. 243–50; Pind. *Ol.* 10.91–96.

[47] Since Zeus oversees admission to the Island of the Blessed (79–80; *cf.* Hes. *Op.* 167–73), Διὸς ὀδόν ('the road of Zeus', 70) will describe a road controlled by him, not one that leads into his presence (contrast Lavecchia (2001)). The older Kronos (70, 76–77) now holds a privileged but subordinate place within Zeus' new cosmos; *cf.* [Hes.] *Op.* 173a–c; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.291; [Aesch.] *fr.* 190 *TrGF* with Griffith (1983) 289.

[48] *Cf.* Pind. *Nem.* 4.49–50. See Nisetich (1988) 14–16 and (1989) 59–72 on our passage and Spelman (2018a) on Pindar's relationship to the epic cycle. Burgess (2009) 41 *et passim* discusses Achilles' varied and not necessarily incompatible afterlives.

discursive context, the précis of the hero's epic accomplishments suggests that they constitute the grounds for Thetis' request to Zeus, which was just mentioned: Achilles punches his ticket to the Island of the Blessed on the basis of his achievements.[49] While Thetis' son could hardly exemplify abstinence from injustice, elsewhere in Pindar, for obvious reasons, he often serves as a paradigm for how great deeds can win immortal glory (*Ol.* 10.16–21; *Nem.* 3.64, 6.48–54; *Isthm.* 8.47–48). In *Olympian* 2, he attains a different sort of privileged afterlife on the basis of those same deeds.

The inhabitants of Pindar's Island of the Blessed together show that the cosmos may award its highest prize to the divinely favoured and the exceptionally accomplished, as well as to the just. The relevance of all this to the just, divinely favoured (*cf.* 35–37) and accomplished Theron is too obvious to need spelling out. Epinicians routinely immortalize great deeds, divine favour and ethical conduct; *Olympian* 2 inflates the wages for conventional forms of excellence by adding a special place in the afterlife to deathless glory in song.

Discussing early Orphism, Robert Parker writes that 'an eschatology is not a contract in law, but an imaginative picture, designed … to shape attitudes in the here and now'.[50] This holds all the more for an epinician eschatology written by an international poet. Much attention has been paid to the difficult details of Pindar's underworld, but its practical thrust is clear: it further valorizes traditional values. This eschatology, like Wittgenstein's ideal philosophy, leaves everything as it is, at least for pragmatic purposes on earth. So, far from entailing anything as outré as vegetarianism, Pindar's underworld raises the stakes of normal life and provides new reasons for conventionally praiseworthy actions.

IV. Audiences and eschatologies

Pindar can express uncertainty about the workings of the gods and about the afterlife (ποι, 'in some way', *Ol.* 3.4 and *Pyth.* 5.101). He can report human stories (λέγοντι, 'they say', *Ol.* 2.28) and invoke the Muses for truth about the distant past (*Pae.* 6.50–58). The eschatological section of *Olympian* 2 is introduced in a more marked way: this is the truth of one who 'knows what is to come' (οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον, 56). The best Pindaric parallel for such a phrase concerns the Eleusinian mysteries: 'blessed is he who goes beneath the earth after he has seen those things; he knows the end of life, he knows its Zeus-given beginning' (ὄλβιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κεῖν' εἶσ' ὑπὸ χθόν'· | οἶδε μὲν βίου τελευτάν, | οἶδεν δὲ διόσδοτον ἀρχάν, *fr.* 137). Maria Cannatà Fera observes that the emphatically repeated verb is '"quasi-technical" in the language of the mysteries' ('"quasi tecniche" nella lingua dei misteri'), and the second best Pindaric parallel for our passage (*fr.* 70b.5–8) plays on similar 'telestic' resonances.[51] In *Olympian* 2, eschatological knowledge is framed in striking temporal terms: it is not about 'the things in Hades' but 'what is to come'. In early Greek thought, knowledge of the future is paradigmatically beyond the human ken and often attributed to gods in contradistinction to mortals.[52] Our passage concerns a very special sort of knowledge.

This is only the first signal of privileged understanding in Pindar's underworld. The indefinite pronoun τις (59), coming soon after emphasis on precise knowledge, hints at a definite correlate known to those in the know.[53] 'The honoured among the gods' (τιμίοις |

[49] *Cf.* Nisetich (1988) 14, (1989) 70–71 and, more generally, Edmonds (2015) 552–54.

[50] Parker (1995) 500–01.

[51] Cannatà Fera (1990) 206; Lavecchia (2000) 134–35; *cf.* Eur. *Bacch.* 74, 472–74; [Eur.] *Rhes.* 973; Burkert (1969) 5–6.

[52] *Il.* 3.308, *Od.* 14.119–20, 15.523–24; Spelman (2014). Nisetich (1989) 54 writes that 'the source of this knowledge remains undisclosed, but its divine character is easily inferred: gods, not mortals, know the future'.

[53] Some among Pindar's audience may well have thought of the subterranean Zeus/Hades who features already in Homer (*Il.* 9.457) and Hesiod (*Op.* 465); *cf.* Aesch. *Supp.* 156–58, 230–31, *Ag.* 1386–87, *Eum.* 273–74; West (1978) 276;

θεῶν, 65–66) may likewise be identified by those who can see through the euphemism.[54] Enacting the attitude that he describes, Pindar says that the wicked 'endure a labour that one cannot bear to look upon' (ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον, 67); he conveys a threat all the more potent for its vagueness and suggests that he knows more than he cares to say.[55]

Prompted in part by these hints at privileged knowledge withheld, scholars have long supposed that *Olympian* 2 was composed for a small circle who shared certain special beliefs. Erwin Rohde thinks that Pindar 'reveals for a moment to like-minded friends' what 'he believes himself', and Cecil Bowra asserts that the poet 'speaks as man to man on intimate, personal matters'.[56] Ulrich Wilamowitz infers that, in contrast to *Olympian* 3, this poem was directed towards an intimate circle ('im Gegensatze zu Ol. 3 ist es auf einen intimen Kreis berechnet').[57] Günther Zuntz finds this 'an outstandingly personal and intimate poem', and Gentili et al. similarly judge *Olympian* 2 'more personal and intimate' ('più personale … più intimo') than *Olympian* 3.[58]

There is reason to reject this traditional line of interpretation. One might wonder why the poet would hint at privileged knowledge withheld if he were addressing only those who already share that knowledge. On a more fundamental level, Pindar of Thebes was hardly the person to hire when you wanted to keep a secret. *Olympian* 2, like the rest of his poetry, was meant to circulate as widely as possible. The ultimate goal of this poem (σκοπῷ, 89) is to shower its honorand with 'glorifying arrows' (εὐκλέας ὀιστούς, 90).[59] As often elsewhere, so here Pindar wishes to immortalize his subject through space and time. The elliptical references in his description of the underworld may be 'swift arrows speaking to those who understand' (ὠκέα βέλη … φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν, 83–85), but this poem was supposed to reach many people.[60] There cannot be anything truly 'personal' or 'intimate' going on here.

One might instead understand Pindar's gestures towards privileged knowledge in relation to what Ruth Scodel terms 'pseudo-intimacy'. Scodel writes of Greek lyric generally that 'one of the particular effects of this poetry for outsiders is precisely the sense of eavesdropping, of admission to a small, enclosed world' behind its first performance and argues that poets consciously exploit this effect.[61] *Olympian* 2 grants admission into a special group distinguished by knowledge not about the ephemeral circumstances behind its performance but rather about the afterlife that awaits all mortals. Widespread audiences can join the coterie of the wise who know the shape of the cosmos as it is disclosed in this ode.

Garvie (1986) 144. 'This realm of Zeus' (ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχᾷ, 58) implies another (*cf.* Ζεὺς ἄλλος, 'another Zeus', Aesch. *Supp*. 231). Contrast Kirkwood (1982) 74, who writes that 'the indefiniteness may be necessary, in view of the untraditional nature of the whole passage'.

[54] Already Σ 117b plausibly identifies these gods as Hades and Persephone, as do many modern scholars. The anonymity itself speaks to the correctness of this identification: see West (1966) 369–70. παρὰ μὲν τιμίοις | θεῶν (65–66) means 'among the honoured gods', not 'among those humans honoured by the gods'. The phrase demarcates one part of the underworld from another overseen by other gods (*cf.* 70, 76–77). A subjective genitive with τίμιος would be hard to parallel (Aesch. *Eum*. 967 is not a counter-example); the partitive genitive is normal (Pind. *Ol*. 14.14, *Nem*. 10.18, *Isthm*. 7.5).

[55] *Cf.* Richardson (1979) 315 on *Hom. Hymn Dem*. 481–82: 'the vague threat suggests more than it expresses'.

[56] Rohde (1966) 416–17; Bowra (1964) 120.

[57] Wilamowitz (1922) 240.

[58] Zuntz (1971) 88; Gentili et al. (2013) 45–46. By a somewhat curious logic such judgements sometimes accompany a hypothesis of (exceptional) solo performance; so, for instance, Farnell (1930–1932) 2.12: 'the ode seems unsuitable for choral performance, and there is no reference to a chorus. We can better imagine Pindar reciting it himself to the dynast and a select circle as the message delivered is so intimate and cryptic'.

[59] The adjective has active force: Gerber (1999) 63.

[60] *Cf.* Morrison (2007) 52 and Lewis (2019) 212–13 on *Olympian* 2 in particular and Spelman (2018b) on Pindar in general.

[61] Scodel (1996) 60–61.

Pindar's eschatology evokes the esoteric without being esoteric in any substantial sense; it is pseudo-esoteric, to adapt Scodel's terminology. The poet's reference to 'someone who knows what is to come' (56) recalls the privileged knowledge of esoteric discourse, but he then goes on to divulge explicitly and at length 'what is to come'. Nor is there any hint that such knowledge is insufficient to obtain a better and indeed the best afterlife. *Olympian* 2 mentions no special rite. Since the fate of souls is normally decided on ethical grounds (57–60), there is no decisive role left for any such ritual to play (contrast *frr.* 131a, 133). The final section asserts that 'wise is he who knows many things by nature' (σοφὸς ὸ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ, 86), not he who learns some doctrine. Pindar's reference to 'someone' (59) who judges the dead probably plays a game of indefiniteness designed to be won by more than a select few.[62]

The purported 'intimacy' of *Olympian* 2 is bound up with the disputed question of its sources, a topic of scholarly interest since the time of Aristarchus (Σ 106a), who apparently asserted that Pindar followed Pythagoras. More recently, Willcock reasserts a Pythagorean connection, and Alberto Bernabé includes *Olympian* 2 within his collection of Orphic testimonia (*Ol.* 2.56–72 = 445 V).[63] Aimé Puech hesitates between Orphic and Pythagorean doctrine ('doctrine orphique ou pythagoricienne'), and Gentili et al. speak of Orphico-Pythagorean influence ('orfico-pitagoriche'), as does Albertine Cerrutti.[64] Nancy Demand, by contrast, posits that 'Theron's faith was peculiarly Akragantine, a mystery cult of Cretan origin', and George Gazis suggests that the poet is addressing initiates of a local cult and offering a 'corrupt paraphrase' of their beliefs: 'Pindar was not aware of the exact nature of these ideas'.[65]

Many have sought to trace the 'doctrinal affiliations' of *Olympian* 2 but, as Fritz Graf observes, 'modern scholars have debated … without a clear result'.[66] Why has consensus proved elusive? Perhaps scholars have not yet converged on the best arguments or the decisive evidence has been lost. Alternatively, the problem might run deeper: in the fifth century the divisions between various schools of thought may not have been sufficiently clear-cut for any single doxographical label to be uniquely appropriate to our poem. Several classical texts imply a connection between Orphism and Pythagoreanism, and modern scholars have long debated their doctrinal and historical relationship, without a clear result.[67] Recent research suggests that Orphism and Pythagoreanism were not fixed and uniform orthodoxies but rather flexible bundles of beliefs and practices, rather like the more mainstream Greek religion with which they are often contrasted in older scholarship.[68]

Perhaps *Olympian* 2 adapts ideas which could feature in multiple overlapping and fluid belief systems. Those who trace special religious influence invariably cite the passing reference to reincarnation (68–70), which is agreed to be the single most exotic element in the ode even by those who stress the solidly Homeric and Hesiodic pedigree of much else. Among the myriad beliefs attributed to Pythagoras in antiquity and

[62] See nn.53 and 54 above. Similar games of indefiniteness built to be won: *Pyth.* 9.89–89a (τι), 103–05 (τις), *Nem.* 1.64 (τινα), 10.30–33.

[63] Willcock (1995) 138–39; Bernabé (2004).

[64] Puech (1931) 37; Gentili et al. (2013) 54; Cerrutti (1995) 6 n.4.

[65] Demand (1975) 354; Gazis (2021) 82, 80.

[66] Edmunds (2009) 675); Graf (2018) 23 n.50.

[67] Heraclitus 22 B 129 DK; Hdt. 2.81, 123; Ion of Chios 36 B 2 DK; Betegh (2014) 150–51: 'already the earliest stratum of evidence about Pythagoras … assumes a tight connection with Orphism … modern assessments of the extent, nature and direction of the connection between Orphism and Pythagoreanism remain widely divergent'.

[68] Zhmud (2012) 110–11 and Edmonds (2013) 72–73, discussing Pythagoreanism and Orphism, respectively, both invoke Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblance. Betegh (2014) 152 writes that 'it is highly doubtful whether one can justifiably speak about "systems" to describe either Orphism of Pythagoreanism' and advocates a 'non-essentialist conception' (p. 153).

modernity, metempsychosis claims the clearest basis in the early evidence (Xenophanes 21 B 7 DK). The Pindaric fragment (133) cited by Plato at the start of this essay has in turn been hypothesized to provide the earliest witness to an Orphic belief in reincarnation. Yet the evidence for reincarnation among Orphics is limited and mostly late, and it is not clear that all early Pythagoreans espoused metempsychosis.[69] A belief in the return of the soul to some new terrestrial life was perhaps neither a unique nor even a necessary feature of either Orphism or Pythagoreanism.

It is almost as difficult to deny any influence of special religious beliefs in *Olympian* 2 as it is to identify the poem with any one body of beliefs. Indeed, Pindar may avoid clear hallmarks of 'doctrinal affiliation' because this poem is designed to travel beyond narrow doctrinal boundaries to reach a wider audience. It is worth mentioning what the poet does not mention. Orpheus, named in other contexts arguably eschatological (*fr.* 128c.12) and patently not (*Pyth.* 4.177), is nowhere to be found. Dionysus is the familiar 'ivy-bearing child of Semele' (28), not the son of Zeus and Persephone. Pindar's eschatology, moreover, is fundamentally incompatible with other beliefs and practices linked to early Orphics and Pythagoreans. The majesty, and the basic intelligibility, of this epinician is much diminished if we imagine that Theron, like Pythagoras' friend (Xenophanes 21 B 7 DK), could be reincarnated as a puppy. Since in the underworld mortals are judged on ethical grounds (see section II above), there is no need for rites peddled by Orphic priests (Pl. *Resp.* 364b–365a) or gold leaves disclosing 'Instructions for the Beyond'.[70] Pindar's ode is not a 'corrupt paraphrase' of anything else; rather, this text creates a world of its own.

If *Olympian* 2 is indeed composed in order to circulate and not a private communication to Theron and his co-religionists, then this remarkable text offers evidence for the wider interest and palatability of diverse eschatological ideas in the early fifth century rather than documentation for the reception of one particular strain of thought which has yet to be conclusively identified. Different conceptions of the afterlife coexisted from early on; in this area, as throughout the rest of Greek religion, plurality and adaptability were the norm.[71] While Homer and Hesiod never mention souls returning from the underworld to be reborn on earth, such an idea would not necessarily have been unfamiliar in the Classical period. Writing from the opposite ends of the Greek world before or during Pindar's career, Xenophanes (21 B 7 DK) in Magna Graecia and Heraclitus (22 B 40, 81, 129 DK) in Asia Minor both presume knowledge of, but do not share, Pythagoras' beliefs (*cf.* Hdt. 2.123).

Many among Pindar's panhellenic audience were probably likewise familiar with reincarnation and related concepts but did not belong to any special religious group. Heraclitus and Xenophanes, for their part, both attack Pythagoras, and classical texts sometimes depict Orphics as cranks.[72] Writing for a panhellenic audience, Pindar had reason to avoid being labelled an Orphic or Pythagorean. If *Olympian* 2 incorporates ideas which could feature in such special belief systems, it inserts them into a larger systematic vision of the afterlife which seems designed to defy easy doctrinal classification. If Pindar adapts beliefs espoused by minority religious groups, he presses them into the service of further valorizing core epinician themes and familiar elite ideology (see section III above). Xenophanes and Heraclitus, who had their own unusual ideas, would have also had their reasons to dislike *Olympian* 2, but there is much here to appeal to the widespread audience envisioned in other epinicians. Perhaps for such an ancient audience, as for

[69] Edmonds (2014) 36–41, Betegh (2014) 154–59.

[70] Graf and Johnston (2013) 55.

[71] Gazis and Hooper (2021) 1: 'there was no monolithic view'. Currie (2005) 39 writes that 'we should be prepared to admit a plurality of belief, not just across a whole community, but also within individuals'. Edmonds (2015) and (2021) cautions against assuming that the Homeric model was either primordial or dominant.

[72] See, for example, Eur. *Hipp.* 952–54; Pl. *Resp.* 364b–365a; Edmonds (2013) 5–6.

modern scholars, the interest of this ode in no small part resided in how it blends together the relatively exotic and the more mainstream to fashion something fascinating and altogether original.

V. Conclusion

Olympian 2 begins by articulating a threefold ontology of gods, heroes and men (1–2); the eschatological section culminates with exceptional men who come to live together with heroes and gods (70, 78–79). Pindar describes their happy lot (70–74):

ἔνθα μακάρων
νᾶσον ὠκεανίδες
αὖραι περιπνέοισιν· ἄνθεμα δὲ χρυσοῦ φλέγει,
τὰ μὲν χερσόθεν ἀπ' ἀγλαῶν δενδρέων,
ὕδωρ δ' ἄλλα φέρβει,
ὅρμοισι τῶν χέρας ἀναπλέκοντι καὶ στεφάνους …

There breezes from Oceanus breathe about the Island of the Blessed. Golden flowers blaze, some from the land sprung from brilliant trees, others the water feeds; with chains of those they entwine their hands and weave crowns …

Gold is a conventional symbol of durability, flowers a conventional symbol of transience; these golden flowers thus paradoxically evoke time-dependent flourishing arrested in time (cf. *fr.* 129.5). While Homer (*Od.* 4.565) and Hesiod (*Op.* 172–73) have beneficent nature yield up an easy livelihood in Elysium and on the Island of the Blessed, Pindar transfers this motif to the good region of his underworld (62–65) and reserves something better for his best, who use nature for adornment rather than mere sustenance. Their existence is not only free from sorrow and the banal labour of winning their daily bread but positively joyous. They have transcended biological necessity to achieve something greater, like immortalized victors elsewhere in Pindar, only more so.[73] Whereas Aristotle in his *Protrepticus* apparently imagined that the inhabitants of the Island of the Blessed, released from practical constraints, practise philosophy (*fr.* 58 Rose = 43 Düring), Pindar gives them over to eternal celebration (cf. *Pyth.* 10.37–40, *fr.* 129). 'Such images of life in a hereafter', as Hannah Arendt writes, 'if we strip them of their religious connotations, present nothing more nor less than various ideals of human happiness'. *Olympian* 2 presents a distinctly epinician ideal of human happiness.[74]

The victors of the cosmos crown themselves, and Theron now crowns himself with an Olympic victory (ἄνθεμα, 72→ἄνθεα, 50). The Island of the Blessed is severed from Akragas by oceanic waters, yet the two locations are brought into significant contact. *Olympian* 2 makes Theron's victory synecdochic for the virtues that can win him a special place in the afterlife, and this particular passage transforms his epinician celebration into a foretaste of greater celebration to come. Like the backward-looking myths of other epinicians, Pindar's forward-looking vision of 'what is to come' provides a polyvalent framework for thinking about how excellence fits into the world.

[73] *Cf.* especially *Isthm.* 1.47–51. Race (1981) illuminates the frequent Pindaric opposition between biological necessity and immortal fame.

[74] Arendt (1963) 131.

This essay began by quoting a Platonic passage which elides Pindar's voice with that of certain priests and priestesses. In *Olympian* 2, the poet, for his part, presents himself as 'the divine bird of Zeus' (Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον, 88) using the same adjective that Plato later applies to him (θεῖοι, *Meno* 81b). In this exceptional cosmological poem, his inspiration is, unusually, linked not to the Muses but directly to the supreme deity who rules the cosmos.[75] Pindar really was a religious figure with a special relationship to the divine, as he consistently presents himself to be,[76] but the nature of his authority was profoundly different from that of 'priests and priestesses who give a rational account of their affairs' (Pl. *Meno* 81a). *Olympian* 2 draws eschatological ideas from various sources and mines Homer and Hesiod to anchor its underworld in poetic tradition. Pindar is recombining, repurposing and modifying special eschatological ideas in a manner analogous to the process of bricolage whereby these ideas had themselves been formed.[77] The final authority underwriting this novel blend is no more and no less than 'the divine bird of Zeus' (88), but that does not mean that it is just a flight of fancy. Willcock writes that the eschatology of this ode has 'more to do with Theron than Pindar',[78] but the poet's rhetorical and historical personality cannot, and should not, be erased from the text and replaced with anything else. This ode says something that Theron wanted to hear, but it mattered to him, and to others in the Greek world, that 'the divine bird of Zeus' (88) was the one to say it.

As *Olympian* 2 demonstrates, 'the afterlife is endlessly "good to think with"',[79] both for ancient writers and for modern readers. In this ode, the afterlife offers Pindar an opportunity to inscribe core epinician values into the very architecture of the cosmos. For us today his unique vision of the afterlife provides fascinating insight into the varied, fluid and adaptable nature of all early Greek thinking about 'what is to come' after we die.

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[75] *Cf.* Bacchyl. 5.19–20; Most (1986) 315.

[76] D'Alessio (1994) 139: his contemporaries 'really believed in [Pindar's] closeness to the gods … His poetic excellence is depicted by the poet himself as strictly connected with his religious inspiration and was probably felt as such by the audience too'; *cf.* Gagné (2021) 1–25 and Fowler (2022) 137–44.

[77] *Cf.* Graf and Johnston (2013) 94 and Edmonds (2013) 6 on Orphism.

[78] Willcock (1995) 139. *Cf.* Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1922) 251–52; Bowra (1964) 121 (Pindar 'turns to high poetry Theron's own views'); Demand (1975) 347–48 ('we are dealing with the beliefs of Theron and not those of Pindar'); Lehnus (1989) 46; Gentili et al. (2013) 55–56; Gazis (2021).

[79] Edmonds (2015) 555.

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