

# PINDAR AS INNOVATOR: POSEIDON HIPPIOS AND THE RELEVANCE OF THE PELOPS STORY IN OLYMPIAN 1<sup>1</sup>

THIS paper will be concerned with Pindar's often-discussed innovations in the Pelops-Tantalos myth of the first Olympian, where Pindar explicitly rejects the traditional story of Tantalos' cooking his son Pelops and serving him up to the gods, one of whom inadvertently ate from the cannibalistic dish. Does Pindar really alter traditional features of a story from religious considerations only, as the *communis opinio* takes him to do?<sup>2</sup> D. C. Young<sup>3</sup> has recently drawn attention to the astonishing formal symmetry of the ode. As to the contents, however, the old charges against Pindar's poetry, inconsistency and irrelevance, still remain ('His method and his conclusion are not easy to unravel', Bowra<sup>4</sup> says with regard to the central myth in *O. 1*). What are the connections between the starting-point of the ode, King Hieron's victory in the single horse-race at the Olympic Games of 476 B.C., and the mythological matter in the centre?

From an impressive array of possible themes mentioned in the proem Pindar finally selects the Olympic Games with Zeus as their divine patron and Hieron as the present victor: the complicated introductory priamel (1-7) leads up to Hieron as the focusing point of the poet's thoughts (8-11): to praise his victory seems to be Pindar's first concern, at least in the framing parts of his poem (1-23 and 97-116). At first (in lines 8-11) he stresses this central concern in a general manner ('an Olympic victory', he says, 'works on the poets' minds to praise Zeus and Hieron'), then (in lines 17-23) he repeats it in a more particular form with reference to the case in question ('let us take the lyre from its nail, if the glory of Olympia and Pherenikos, the victorious horse, works on our minds to make us start singing; Pherenikos, who by his swiftness made his master famous, the horse-loving king of Syracuse').<sup>5</sup> Obviously Hieron's royal status and his victory are of foremost importance for Pindar. But how does the lengthy narrative of Pelops (and Tantalos), which occupies the centre of the ode (23-96), fit in with this repeated stress on the addressee's royalty, his Olympic honours, and the prominence of his race-horse Pherenikos? A great victory calls for a fitting comment in a song of praise, Pindar says;<sup>6</sup> how far does the Pelops story suit Hieron's victory?

The present Olympic success is pointed out at the beginning as well as the end of the mythical narrative which forms the body of the ode:<sup>7</sup> Pindar starts

<sup>1</sup> First of three lectures on 'The art of composition in Pindar' which I gave in Edinburgh, 1-3. 5. 1973.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), 56 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Three Odes of Pindar*, *Mnemosyne* Suppl. ix (1968), 121-3; see also Young, *Pindar Isthmian* 7 (1971), 37 f. with n. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Bowra, *Pindar*, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Like the first stanza, the second, too, ends by proclaiming Hieron (cf. line 11 μάκαρ'αν 'Ιέρωνος ἑστίαν; and line 22

δεσπότην); and like the second stanza the third as well starts with a characteristic of Hieron (cf. line 12 θεμιστεῖον ὃς ἀμφέπει σκάπτων ἐν πολυμήλῳ | Σικελία; and line 23 Συρακόσιον ἵπποχάρμαν βασιλῆα).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. lines 17-23 and 97-105 and see, e.g., *N. 7*. 11-16; cf. especially W. Schade-waldt, *Aufbau des pindarischen Epinikion* (1928), 277 with n. 1; 278 n. 1; 294 n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Young, *Three Odes*, loc. cit.; and already K. Fehr, *Die Mythen bei Pindar* (1936), 107.

his narrative in line 23 with the sentence: λάμπει δέ οἱ (sc. 'Ιέρωνι) κλέος | ἐν εὐάνορι Λυδοῦ Πέλοπος ἀποικία, and he closes his long story in lines 93–5 by literally recalling the beginning: τὸ δὲ κλέος | τηλόθεν δέδορκε τᾶν 'Ολυμπιάδων ἐν δρόμοις | Πέλοπος. In these two corresponding sentences Pindar thus puts Hieron's and Pelops' glory on the same level: they are equally glorious (λάμπει δὲ 'Ιέρωνι κλέος ~ τὸ δὲ κλέος τηλόθεν δέδορκε Πέλοπος). These framing sentences ('Hieron's glory shines in Olympia, the city of Pelops' and 'far shines the glory of Pelops in the Olympic races') show that Hieron's recent victory in the horse-race is in a line with the success which Pelops won in a famous mythical horse-race: Pelops, who is called by Tyrtaios (fr. 9, 7 D.) 'the most royal among the mythical hero-kings' and who is therefore an obvious counterpart to the most princely of contemporary kings, Hieron of Syracuse.

By stressing the relation between Hieron and Pelops at the beginning and end Pindar seems to provide his audience with a clue for the understanding of his mythical narrative. But what are the points of contact between the narrative itself and Hieron's present victory? Does Pindar present the mythical race in some peculiar form to suit his addressee's needs, or is it simply, as Young<sup>1</sup> puts it, 'the idea of superlativity as presented in such themes as those of the heroic act, of the Olympic Games, and of Hieron's position in the world' which accounts for Pindar's choice of the Pelops story for the celebration of Hieron's success?

The mythical section of *O. 1* roughly consists of three main parts:

1. Young Pelops' rape by Poseidon and his acceptance among the immortals (25–51);
2. Crimes and punishment of Tantalos (54–64);
3. Pelops' return to mortal life, and his victory over Oinomaos, king of Elis, with the aid of his former lover Poseidon (65–93).

This first rough survey already indicates that it is misleading to speak of three different myths, the Tantalos story and the 'first' and 'second' Pelops myth (as commentators often do):<sup>2</sup> the role of Poseidon and his love for Pelops is a most conspicuous common feature in both parts of the Pelops story; it plainly shows that we are to understand the two sections of the Pelops narrative as two connected parts of the same story.

But why does Pindar bring in Poseidon, and for what purpose is he given such a prominent place in Pindar's version?<sup>3</sup> Is not the introduction of Poseidon's love for Pelops, which takes the place of the original motif of the cooking of Pelops, as remarkable in Pindar's version as the poet's famous rejection of the cooking itself?

Pindar explicitly calls the traditional story of Tantalos' meal a lie and a blasphemy, which he himself could not accept for religious reasons (28–35 and 52 f.). This declaration is very often taken as an example of Pindar's religious piety:<sup>4</sup> it is, however, remarkable that, in spite of his horror, Pindar does not

<sup>1</sup> *Three Odes*, 123.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. recently Young, *Three Odes*, 122.

<sup>3</sup> Poseidon cannot have been part of the Pelops story before Pindar, as his love replaces the former cooking (lines 25 ff.; 36 ff.; 52) and his help for Pelops (71 ff.) presupposes his love: see below. For the meaning of line 26 see J. Kakridis, *Philo-*

*logus*, xxxix (1930), 475.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., U. v. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (1922), 235 f.; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie*<sup>2</sup> (1962), 547; Bowra, *Pindar*, 57 ff.;—E. Thummer (*Pindar Isthmien*, i [1968], 122) is, I believe, right in saying 'Pindar erzählt diesen Mythos . . . nicht — wie vielfach angenommen wird — aus einem

refrain from telling the abominable story quite explicitly and *in extenso*;<sup>1</sup> Pindar confronts the traditional story with his own new version:

‘Son of Tantalos, in opposition to the men of old, I am going to pronounce, that when your father called you<sup>2</sup> for a harmonious feast to his dear Sipylos, when he gave a meal in return to the gods, at that time Poseidon carried you off, overcome by love, and on golden horses transferred you to the supreme house of widely honoured Zeus, where later on also Ganymede came to perform the same service for Zeus [as Pelops for Poseidon]; and when people looking for you could not bring you back to your mother, one of the envious neighbours at once secretly said that they had cut your limbs into boiling water with a knife, and at the last course of the meal distributed your flesh and ate from it. For me, however, it is impossible to call one of the immortals a cannibal’ (36–53 *νιὲ Ταντάλου, σέ δ’ ἀντία προτέρων φθέγξομαι, | ὅπότε ἐκάλεσε πατὴρ τὸν εὐνομώτατον | ἐς ἔρανον φίλαν τε Σίπυλον | ἀμοιβαῖα θεοῖσι δείπνα παρέχων, | τότε Ἀγλαοτρίαιναν ἀρπάσαι, | δαμέντα φρένας ἱμέρω, χρυσέαισι τ’ ἀν’ ἵπποις | ὕπατον εὐρυτίμου ποτὶ δῶμα Διὸς μεταβάσαν· | ἔνθα δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ | ἦλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης | Ζηνὶ τωῦτ’ ἐπὶ χρέος. | ὥς δ’ ἄφαντος ἔπελες, οὐδὲ ματρὶ πολλὰ μαιόμενοι φῶτες ἄγαγον, | ἔννεπε κρυφῇ τις αὐτίκα φθονερῶν γειτόνων, | ὕδατος ὅτι τε πυρὶ ζέοισαν εἰς ἀκμὰν | μαχαίρᾳ τάμον κατὰ μέλη, | τραπέζαισι τ’ ἀμφὶ δεύτατα κρεῶν | σέθεν διεδάσαντο καὶ φάγον. | ἐμοὶ δ’ ἄπορα γαστρίμαργον μακάρων τιν’ εἰπεῖν).*

Pelops disappeared not because his father had murdered him but because Poseidon had fallen in love with him and had transferred him to Olympos. Did Pindar really alter the traditional myth from religious awe only? Why did he choose Poseidon? Has the story of the rape any significance within the poem? Curiously enough, these questions have not been asked, although interesting observations have been made with regard to Pindar’s handling of his sources. The first clue is Pindar’s hinting at the Ganymede story in lines 43–5 (*ἔνθα δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ | ἦλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης | Ζηνὶ τωῦτ’ ἐπὶ χρέος*). As J. Kakridis<sup>3</sup> has shown, Pindar here names the original after which he has modelled his new version of the Pelops story. Kakridis has made clear the connection between the ‘rape of Ganymede’ and Pindar’s rape of Pelops by comparing *hy. Hom. Aphr.* 200–17 (cf. 202–4 *ἡ τοι μὲν ξανθὸν Γανυμήδεα μητιέτα Ζεὺς | ἤρπασεν ὃν διὰ κάλλος ἔν’ ἀθανάτοισι μετείη | καὶ τε Διὸς κατὰ δῶμα θεοῖς ἐπιονοχοεῖν*). Just as Zeus later on with Ganymede, Pindar says, so Poseidon carried off Pelops and brought him to Olympos. But why substitute Poseidon for Zeus? And what does Poseidon’s action mean in Pindar’s context? A first hint is to be found in line 41: Poseidon carried off Pelops ‘on golden horses’ (*χρυσέαισι τ’ ἀν’ ἵπποις*). Now, famous horses played an important part in the Ganymede myth, too. As a recompense for his lost son Zeus presents Ganymede’s father Tros with horses of wind-like swiftness (*hy. Aphr.*

vertieften religiösen Empfinden . . .’, but he spoils Pindar’s whole story by inaccurately paraphrasing: ‘Pelops, so erzählt er, wurde . . . von Zeus als Mundschenk in den Olympos entführt’: Pindar’s point is precisely that not Zeus but *Poseidon’s love* is responsible for Pelops’ disappearing.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, 380.

<sup>2</sup> As Prof. Beattie has suggested to me, the

prominent *σέ* in line 36 should go with *ἀρπάσαι* (central clause) as well as with *ἐκάλεσε* (subordinate clause), and thus supply *ἐκάλεσε* with the necessary object (*ἐκάλεσε* without object seems to be unparalleled).

<sup>3</sup> *Philologus*, lxxv (1930), 463 ff. *Pindaros und Bakchylides* (Wege der Forschung 134), edd. W. M. Calder/J. Stern, 1970, 175 ff.

210–12 and 216 f.; these horses are already mentioned in the *Iliad*, *E* 265 f.). Wind-like horses like these are part of Pindar's story, too, but they are used for different ends: while in the Ganymede story the horses are only mentioned as a recompense and Ganymede is seized and carried off to Olympos by a gust of wind (*hy. Aphr.* 208 *θέσπις ἄελλα*), Pindar instead makes Poseidon rape Pelops with the help of divine horses (*χρυσέαισι τ' ἂν' ἵπποις*). Why does Pindar shift the motif of the divine horses from its less prominent place in the 'rape of Ganymede' to a central position in his own story?

The answer is to be found in the setting of the ode, which is designed to praise Hieron's victory, won by Pherenikos in the Olympic horse-race. The 'golden horses' of line 41 point forward to the finale of the myth, where they reappear in Pelops' decisive race against Oinomaos. The theme of the divine horses therefore seems to be one of the most important unifying elements in the structure of the ode.

Before we turn to the finale, however, we have to consider Pindar's somewhat peculiar arrangement of events in the three parts of his story. First young Pelops had been carried off to heaven by his lover Poseidon and had been advanced to a position like Ganymede. What that means is shown by, e.g., *O.* 10. 104 f., where Pindar says Ganymede had become immortal because of his beauty and the love of Zeus. This would apply to Pelops, too. Immortal status for Pelops, however, is irreconcilable with tradition, because Pelops is to become the founder of the family of the Atridae later on and is by no means counted as immortal among the heroes of old. Pindar's problem is, therefore, how to bring Pelops back from heaven to earth. How did Pelops lose his immortality?

At this point Tantalos comes in again, whom Pindar has just freed from the crime of cooking and serving up his own son; instead, Tantalos is introduced with another crime, the theft of nectar and ambrosia (54–64), which leads among other punishments to the banishment of his son Pelops from heaven (65 f. *τοὔνεκα προήκαν υἱὸν ἀθάνατοί οἱ πάλιν | μετὰ τὸ ταχύποτμον αὖτις ἀνέρων ἔθνος*). Tantalos' guilt makes Pelops lose his immortality. This is Pindar's main reason for telling the short story of Tantalos' guilt and punishment, which separates the first from the second part of the Pelops story.

Thus returned to earth, Pelops in due time makes up his mind to marry and he decides to woo Hippodameia, daughter of Oinomaos, king of Elis (= Olympos: lines 69–71).

She, however, was not so easily obtained, and Pelops needed divine help. At this point it becomes clear why Pindar has invented his new story of Poseidon's love and rape of Pelops. In the darkness of night Pelops went to the sea, called for Poseidon, who immediately appeared, and said to him:

'If there is a reward for the gifts of love, Poseidon, bring down the bronze-spear of Oinomaos, and let me go to Elis on the swiftest chariot, and let me be victorious. For, having killed thirteen suitors he postpones the marriage of his daughter' (75–81 *Φίλια δῶρα Κυπρίας ἄγ' εἴ τι, Ποσειδάων, ἐς χάριν | τέλλεται, πέδασον ἔγχος Οἰνομάου χάλκεον, | ἐμὲ δ' ἐπὶ ταχυτάτων πόρευσον ἄρμάτων | ἐς Ἄλιν, κράτει δὲ πέλασον· | ἐπεὶ τρεῖς τε καὶ δέκ' ἄνδρας ὀλέσαις | μναστῆρας ἀναβάλλεται γάμον | θυγατρός*).

Pelops finishes his prayer by repeating his request, which is then granted by Poseidon: 'Now this contest will be set before me [I will take this contest

upon me], but do you let me be successful.'—'So he said, and his words were to be fulfilled. To him the god, honouring him, gave a shining chariot and winged unwearied horses, and [by these: τὸν μὲν . . . ἔλεν δέ corresponding] he conquered mighty Oinomaos and won the maiden for a wife' (84–7 "ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ μὲν οὔτος ἀεθλος | ὑποκείσεται· τὸ δὲ πρᾶξιν φίλαν δίδου." | ὥς ἔννεπεν οὐδ' ἀκράντοις ἐφάψατο | ἔπεισι· τὸν μὲν ἀγάλλων θεὸς | ἔδωκεν δίδρον τε χρύσειον πτεροῖσιν τ' ἀκάμαντας ἵππους· | ἔλεν δ' Οἰνομάου βίαν παρθένον τε σύνεινον).

The girl, whose name 'Hippodameia' (line 70: 'tamer of horses') is significant for Pindar's poem, could only be won by her suitor's beating her father Oinomaos in a horse-racing contest. As a divine helper in a contest such as this Poseidon suggests himself before others, Poseidon, who is normally called upon as patron of horsemanship and horse-racing<sup>1</sup> and who is worshipped as Poseidon Hippios.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, it seems, Pindar has introduced Poseidon into his narrative and on the precedent of the old story of Zeus and Ganymede has made Poseidon lover of Pelops.

In the finale of Pindar's narrative, therefore, Pelops calls upon Poseidon, and Poseidon presents him with winged horses for the contest with Oinomaos (cf. Pelops' prayer to Poseidon, lines 77 f.: "ἐμὲ δ' ἐπὶ ταχυτάτων πόρευσον ἄρμάτων ἐς Ἄλιν, κράτει δὲ πέλασον", and the fulfilment of this prayer, lines 86 f.: τὸν μὲν ἀγάλλων θεὸς ἔδωκεν δίδρον τε χρύσειον πτεροῖσιν τ' ἀκάμαντας ἵππους). These horses correspond to those on which Poseidon had carried off Pelops to Olympos in the first part of the myth (line 41: χρυσαίαισι τ' ἄν' ἵπποις). The important detail, however, that the wind-like horses, which Pelops is provided with, are regarded as *ἄποινα φιλίας* (cf. line 75), is again, as we have seen, taken from the story of Ganymede. These horses and Poseidon's love provide the links between the third and the first part of Pindar's story; and as in the first Poseidon's love for Pelops is Pindar's invention (as he says himself, line 36), so in the third part Poseidon's help for Pelops, which is based on the invented love, cannot be traditional either and seems to have been introduced by Pindar, too. Now we know from later sources that Pelops was elsewhere credited with winning the competition only by bribing Oinomaos' charioteer Myrtilos. It may well be that this element of a bribe, which is certainly not quite fit for an enkomastic presentation of Pelops' and Hieron's achievements, was the original motif, which in Pindar's account is replaced by Poseidon and his gift of divine horses. By means of these horses Pelops at any rate succeeds in defeating Oinomaos and winning Hippodameia (line 88), just as King Hieron's success at Olympia is due to the extraordinary swiftness of his race-horse Pherenikos (expressly stated in lines 18 ff.). This parallelism is further brought out by the literal resemblance of lines 22 and 78: Pherenikos is victorious for his master Hieron (κράτει δὲ προσέμειξε δεσπότην), and similarly Pelops successfully asks Poseidon for chariot and horses to make him winner in the race against Oinomaos (κράτει δὲ πέλασον).<sup>3</sup>

Pindar's purpose, which has become clear in the finale of the mythical section, to present the contest of Pelops at Pisa as the heroic model for Hieron's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. in Pindar, e.g., *P.* 2. 12 (Hieron: ξεστὸν ὅταν δίδρον ἐν θ' ἄρματα πεισιχάλινα καταξενυγνὴ σθένος ἵππιον ὀρσοστρίαιναν εὐρυβίαν καλέων θεόν); *P.* 4. 45 (ἵππαρχος Ποσειδάων); *I.* 1. 54 (Κρόνου σεσίχθων υἱὸς . . . ἵπποδρόμος) *O.* 5. 21 (Ποσειδανίοισιν

ἵπποις).

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., Bacch. 17. 99 f., where Theseus dives into the realm of his father Poseidon, πατρός ἵππιου δόμον.

<sup>3</sup> For this correspondence cf. Young, *Pindar Isthmian* 7, 37 f., n. 126.

Olympic success, explains all the changes which Pindar has made in the traditional Pelops story. It even explains why Pindar incorporated a further additional feature from the Ganymede tale into his story of Poseidon's love for Pelops: Poseidon transfers his beloved Pelops to Olympos, 'the house of Zeus' (42 ὕπατον εὐρυτίμου ποτὶ δῶμα Διός). Why to Olympos, commentators ask, and why to the 'house of Zeus'? Is not rather the sea the traditional realm of Poseidon? And even if it should be Olympos, why did not Pindar choose the Olympic house of Poseidon, which does exist too?<sup>1</sup> But: does not *O. 1* praise a victory in the Olympic Games, and is not Zeus the divine patron of Olympia (cf. line 10)? To honour Pelops, the local hero of Olympia, the supreme palace of the supreme Olympic god therefore seems to be much more apt and relevant. Pindar thus keeps the house of Zeus of his model, the Ganymede story, and by doing this even more closely adapts his story to the present Olympic background of his ode. Poseidon is responsible for the horses, but the victory is within the competence of Zeus.

By all his innovations (the abduction of Pelops to Olympos, the love and help of Poseidon) Pindar's gain is that Pelops and through him indirectly Hieron, for whose victory the myth is meant, are put in a close connection with the gods and thereby the fame of victory takes on a special glory. Pindar himself gives his ode a name which makes clear these central relations:

'I am obliged to crown him with a ἵππιος νόμος in Aiolic sound' (100–3 ἐμὲ δὲ στεφανῶσαι κείνον ἱππῖω νόμῳ | Αἰοληῖδι μολπῇ | χρῆ).

The expression ἵππιος νόμος in this place has always been taken as an indication of a special melody lost to us. Wilamowitz, e.g., writes:<sup>2</sup> 'I cannot explain the name, but I have no doubt that it means something technical and musical.' The name, though, is much more likely a reference to the theme and contents of the ode: Pindar sends Hieron (101 κείνον) the horse-loving king of Syracuse (23 ἱπποχάρμαν βασιλῆα) a poem for the Olympic victory of his horse Pherenikos (18 ff.), a poem the central myth of which is determined by Poseidon Hippios (41 χρυσέαισι τ' ἂν ἵπποις), Poseidon's gift of winged horses to his favourite Pelops (87 ἔδωκεν δίφρον τε χρύσειον πτεροῖσιν τ' ἀκάμαντας ἵππους), and by the final winning of Hippodameia with the help of Poseidon's horses (lines 70 and 88): an ode, after all, that may rightly be called a 'horse-song' or a horseman's ode with regard to its central topics. There is therefore no need to assume some obscure musical term to be found nowhere else, as Wilamowitz did. By the name ἵππιος νόμος Pindar rather refers to the theme which is the point of his ode. But Wilamowitz's idea of a ἵππιος νόμος clearly shows how little he considered even the possibility of a well-organized whole in Pindar.

If now in contrast we start from the assumption that the three-part myth in *O. 1* has to be understood from its third part, the clear arrangement of the mythical parts and the organization of the poem as a whole becomes evident. Poseidon's help in the chariot-race of Pelops against Oinomaos presupposes Poseidon's love for Pelops, which is told in the introductory part of the myth. The middle part (the guilt and punishment of Tantalos) gives the reason why Pelops, although transferred to heaven by Poseidon, reappears—unlike Ganymede—amongst men and is able to court Hippodameia. The motif of divine favour is a leitmotif in all three parts of the myth: Poseidon stands at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kakridis, loc. cit., *Pindaros und Bakchylides*, 177 ff., who compares A 606 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Pindaros*, 234.

the beginning and end (lines 25 f. *Γαῖαχος Ποσειδάν*; line 40 *Ἀγλαοστρίαντας*; on the other hand: lines 72 f. *βαρύκτυπος Εὐτρίαντας*; line 75 *Ποσειδάων*; line 86 *θεός*); in the middle we find 'the gods' in general, who honoured Tantalos and were deceived by him (lines 54 f. *εἰ δὲ δὴ τιν' ἄνδρα θνατὸν Ὀλύμπου σκοποὶ | ἐτίμασαν ἦν Τάνταλος οὗτος*).

If therefore we take the myth together with the beginning and end of the ode it becomes clear that Pindar always keeps in mind the Olympic riding-competition in which Hieron's horse has come first by divine favour. Pelops' victory in the race and the favour of the gods thus shown (which any victor necessarily needs) even has a twofold significance for Hieron. At the Olympic Games there were two different kinds of racing-competition: the single-horse race (*κέλης*) and the apparently more highly rated chariot-race (*ἄρμα*; *τέθριππον*). At the Olympic Games of 476 B.C., to which *O. 1* refers, Hieron's horse Pherenikos was victorious in the single-horse competition. The Pelops myth, though, deals with a chariot race (cf. 87 *δίφρον τε χρύσειον [καὶ] . . . ἵππους*). The end of the poem shows that this, too, is well considered: Hieron is looking forward to a victory in an Olympic chariot-race:

'God like a guardian takes care of your ambitions, Hieron: if he does not suddenly leave you, I hope I shall be able to celebrate you, having found with the help of the swift chariot an even sweeter path of song, when coming to the sunny hill of Kronos' (106–11 *θεὸς ἐπίτροπος ἐὼν τεαῖσι μῆδεται | ἔχων τοῦτο κᾶδος, Ἰέρων, | μερίμναισιν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ταχὺ λίποι, | ἔτι γλυκυτέραν κεν ἔλπομαι | σὺν ἄρματι θεῷ κλεῖζειν ἐπικούρον εὐρῶν ὁδὸν λόγων | παρ' εὐδείελον ἐλθὼν Κρόνιον*: I take *γλυκυτέραν* with *ὁδὸν λόγων* and *σὺν ἄρματι θεῷ* with *εὐρῶν*: 'with the help of', 'in consequence of a victory of yours in the chariot-race having found . . .': cp. *N. 1. 7* *ἄρμα δ' ὀτρύνει Χρομίον . . . ἐγκώμιον ζευξαι μέλος*: 'Chromios' victory in the chariot-race makes me . . . compose a song.')

So the Pelops story, like a mirror, shows both what Hieron has so far got and what he still hopes to get. For Pindar does not present the success of Pelops in its development, but only mentions the preceding request of the hero to Poseidon and then states its fulfilment. By that he stresses the crucial importance of divine favour, which he again refers to in the final passage with regard to Hieron.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The short Tantalos story (for which see above p. 202) exactly in the centre of the myth and of the ode as a whole (54–64) illustrates that this favour can be lost, if a man honoured by the gods becomes presumptuous. Pindar's reference to the king (Tantalos) who did not appreciate the divine favour conferred upon him and lost it because of his presumption, is on the one hand certainly meant as a contrast which makes the favour of the gods enjoyed by Pelops and Hieron shine all the more brightly (so recently Young, *Isthmian 7*, 37 f.). On the other hand, however, the Tantalos story is also designed to remind the proud victor of the limits and the transitoriness of his good luck (a warning frequently found in Pindar, e.g. *P. 12. 28–32*; *N. 11.*

46–8; cf. my *Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* (1971), 149–53; 185 with n. 134). On the one hand we find the dreary life of Tantalos (59 *ἀπάλαμον βίον τοῦτον ἐμπεδόμοχθον*) contrasted with the bright successful life of the victor (97–9 *ὁ νικῶν δὲ λοιπὸν ἀμφὶ βίον ἔχει μελιτέεσσαν εὐδίαν ἀέθλων γ' ἔνεκεν*); on the other hand we find the warning addressed to the victor not to take his good luck for granted (108 *εἰ δὲ μὴ ταχὺ λίποι, . . .*) and not (like Tantalos, cf. 55–7) to try and surpass the limits that exist even for kings (113 f. *τὸ δ' ἔσχατον κορυφούται βασιλεῦσι μηκέτι πάμπαν πόρσιον*). Consequently, Pindar ends his poem with the wish: *εἴη σέ τε τοῦτον ὑψοῦ χρόνον πατεῖν, ἐμέ τε τοσαύδε νικαφόροις ὁμιλεῖν πρόφαντον σοφία καθ' Ἑλλαντας ἐόντα παντῇ. τοῦτον χρόνον*

We started from the question whether the conspicuous innovations, which Pindar undertook in his narrative of the Pelops myth in *O.* 1, have to be explained exclusively or at least primarily by religious considerations (as is generally thought and as Pindar himself seems to indicate). I have tried to show, that—though the relation god–man, the dependence on and limitation of human fortune by divine influence, plays a considerable part in this poem—the primary reason for Pindar’s innovations in the traditional myth is to adjust the story of Pelops as a ἵππιος νόμος to the special needs of Hieron’s present victory at Olympia. Pindar’s mythical narrative is then based primarily on purposes of composition and not on religious ones. The religious motivation of Pindar (‘I cannot possibly speak of gods as cannibals’) is much rather a poetical pretence, by which Pindar ‘morally’ justifies his radical change of a well-known myth to make it suitable for Hieron’s Olympic victory.

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here means ‘during this life’, ‘for the time of life coming’ (see my *Funktion des Mythos*, 148), corresponding to line 97 λοιπὸν ἀμφὶ βίον (cf. 59 βίον τοῦτον). The temporal accusative line 115 τοῦτον . . . χρόνον seems to support G. Tarditi’s explanation (‘Il τέταρτος πόνος di Tantalos’, *Parola del Passato*, xxxvi [1954],

209) of line 59 ἀπάλαμον βίον τοῦτον ἐμπεδόμοχθον as accusative of temporal extension (in the case of Tantalos, however, ‘the time of life to come’ means ‘eternity’, because the gods gave him ‘eternal life’, ll. 63 f. ἀφθιτον θέν νυν).