

PYTHIAN 11: DID PINDAR ERR?

Pythian 11 is usually reckoned to be a particularly problematic Pindaric ode. I hope to show that it is not, and in the process make some points which will have a bearing on interpretation of some of Pindar's other odes. Rather than go through the whole poem step by step, I shall concentrate on the main problems and on some particular passages.

The most disputed problem is the myth. What is the relevance of the story of Agamemnon's return from Troy, his murder by Clytemnestra, and her murder by Orestes, all of which takes up the central part of the poem? The myth appears even more irrelevant because after telling it Pindar seems to acknowledge that it was a mistake to have told it in the first place. What does he mean by saying (lines 38–40) that he went off course when he told it?

The second major problem comes after the myth and again concerns Pindar's apparently veering off suddenly into irrelevance. No sooner has he catalogued the victories of the winner's family than he launches into a denunciation of tyrannies and announces his support of moderation (lines 52–3). Why does he do that?

The poem ends, after the social and political comments, with an epode devoted to Castor and Polydeuces, Spartan heroes, and the Theban hero Iolaos. Are they a sign that Pindar puts his hope in an alliance of Thebes with Sparta to win freedom from Athens?¹ And was Pindar in the myth 'telling us not only what Thrasydaos of Thebes the victor is, but also what he is not: he is not exposed to the kinds of peril that plagued the great house of Atreus?'²

Finally, how do all these apparently disparate items fit in? Is it possible to explain them all in terms of praising the victor? Or is the ode more 'a suitcase filled rather at random', the impression often left by the odes on Professor M. L. West?³

The poem was written for Thrasydaos of Thebes, almost certainly for a victory in the stadion race (a length of the stadium), probably in the boys' event rather than the men's, and in 474 B.C. The scholia are not unanimous on these points, having brought together alternative recensions of the details, and Pindar himself is confusing because in the passage where he catalogues the family's victories (lines 46–50) he links father and son together and attributes all their victories to both of them.⁴

The start of *Pythian* 11, containing an address without the particle *ὦ* followed by one or more phrases in apposition, is Pindar's favourite way of beginning his epinicians: there are 12 examples. Opening addresses of all kinds occur 22 times in the 45 or 46 epinicians and get the odes off to a vigorous start that demands attention. But the victor is addressed in the opening sentence either once or never (depending on whether *Isthmian* 4 is a continuation of *Isthmian* 3). One must be cautious before saying that Pindar's primary objective in his epinicians is praise, in the sense of

¹ C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), 154–5.

² F. J. Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs* (Baltimore, 1980), 48.

³ M. L. West in *Ancient Greek Literature*, ed. K. J. Dover (Oxford, 1980), 46.

⁴ The scholia: Sch. P. 11. Title (= Drachmann ii.253.11), Sch. P. 11. Inscriptio *a* and Inscriptio *b* (= Drachmann ii.254). Bowra's interpretation of these Inscriptioes (op. cit. Appendix 1), which is that the victory commemorated occurred in 454 when T. won the men's diaulos, contradicts both the scholiast's title to the poem and lines 49–50 of the poem itself (*γυμνὸν ἐπὶ στάδιον καταβάντες; στάδιον* in Pindar and Bacchylides always means a race the length of the stadium, and Pindar regularly includes in his victory catalogues the victory being commemorated).

personal commendation, of the winner. That is what the winner may have wanted, but often, as in this ode, Pindar has other ideas. Not until lines 9 and 10 do we hear why Ino, Semele, and the other Theban heroines are being summoned, and then it is for them to sing praises not of the winner Thrasydaïos but of Pytho, where he won, and of justice (*θέμις*). Those who say that Pindar's main aim in his epinicians was to praise the winner should distinguish e.g. (1) personal commendation; (2) myth where there are clear parallels with the victor's case; (3) myth where there are external, e.g. geographical, connexions but no parallels of situation, though the story may illustrate a moral. Praise in sense (1) is regular, but Pindar is sparing with it (confined in *Pythian* 11 to lines 43–9); (3) is of course common, but it is cheating to call it praise.

Pindar does not say much about Thrasydaïos' victory before he turns to the myth, but what he does say and the way he says it is important: *Θρασυδάος ἔμνασεν ἑστίαν τρίτον ἔπι στέφανον πατρώων βαλὼν* (lines 14–15), 'Thrasydaïos caused his father's hearth to be remembered by adding a third crown'. What this means is that Thrasydaïos' victory brought to the spectators' minds his father's hearth; the reason why is that a victor was announced by the herald as 'son of x'.⁵ Note the separation of *πατρώων* from its noun *ἑστίαν*. This emphasises *πατρώων*; *τρίτον* is also emphasised by its separation from its noun *στέφανον*. This one clause about Thrasydaïos' victory concentrates on one aspect of the victory, how Thrasydaïos renewed his father's honour. That in itself provides a thematic connexion with the myth: Orestes, by killing Aigisthos and Clytemnestra, his father's murderers, renewed the honour of his father and his father's *ἑστία*.

The thematic connexion provides one type of unity between the myth and the rest of the poem; there is also the regular syntactical connexion, the relative connector *τὸν* (line 17) referring to Orestes and linking the end of the first triad with the beginning of the second; and there is also a metrical and musical connexion: in this ode the epode continues the basically aeolic rhythm of the end of the strophe and antistrophe, and the beginning of the new strophe at line 17 does not differ markedly in rhythm from the end of the epode.⁶ These types of connexion all make a contribution to the poem's unity; critics have often referred to the unity of a Pindaric ode, as if there were for each, or even for all, of his odes a single unifying factor which one must look for.⁷ But what unity there is in an ode depends on what sort of unity you are talking about: syntactic, musical, metrical, thematic and so on.

Another word in this ode connecting the first triad and the myth is *Λάκωνος* (line 16) used of Orestes. According to Homer (*Il.* 7.180; 11.46), Agamemnon's palace was in Mycenae. But since in the fifth century Sparta, not Mycenae, was flourishing, Pindar follows Stesichorus (*PMG* 216) in placing Agamemnon's palace in Lacedaimon. Below (lines 31–2) he says that after sacking Troy Agamemnon came home to Amyclai, a village or deme of Laconia. The phrase *Λάκωνος Ὀρέστα*, therefore, bridges the place Cirrha, the scene of the Games and where Orestes' host Pylades lived, and Sparta,

⁵ Cf. *Pi. O.* 5.8, *Hes. Theog.* 438.

⁶ Compare the close metrical affinity between the end of the antistrophe and the beginning of the epode at *O.* 1.22–3, and between the end of the epode and the beginning of the new strophe at *O.* 1.58–9; in *P.* 5 both the first colon of the strophe and the end of the last colon of the epode consist of an iambic + cretic; in *I.* 8 the first and last eight syllables of each strophe are metrically identical; there is near-parallelism between end of epode and start of strophe in *N.* 3 and *O.* 2.

⁷ On the search for unifying factors in Pindar's epinicians see D. C. Young, *Pindaric Criticism* in W. M. Calder III and J. Stern, *Pindaros und Bakchylides* (Wege der Forschung 134 (Darmstadt, 1970)), 2f.; id. '3 odes of Pindar', *Mnemosyne*, suppl. 9 (1968), 23–6, 63–8, 101–5, 111; H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* 93 (1973), 114–15; id. 'Lecture on a master mind', *PBA* 68 (1982), 139–63 esp. 143–54.

the hometown of Orestes and the scene of the murders to follow. To those who knew of the relocation of Agamemnon's palace *Λάκωνος* was a hint at what myth was to come. But in other respects the myth is not unified with what precedes: *Pythian* 11 has no gnomic passage prior to the myth linking myth and victor; Spartan Orestes only indirectly, via Pylades, has any connexion with where Thrasydaïos won;⁸ Pindar begins the myth at the beginning of a new triad: the lack of enjambement separates what is to follow from what has preceded.

Different odes have different degrees and types of connexion between myth and victor, just as mythical exploits themselves in Pindar take many forms (11 triads in *Pythian* 4; seven words at *Olympian* 10.15 *τράπε δὲ Κύκνεα μάχα καὶ ὑπέρβιον Ἡρακλέα* – 'in his fight with Cynos even mighty Heracles retreated', and that is all Pindar says about the incident). Generalisations can smudge these important differences, as when Mary Lefkowitz speaks of 'the standard form of the victory ode', or when Bundy says that as far as concerns the epinician 'there is no passage in Pindar and Bakchylides that is not in its primary intent encomiastic – that is, designed to enhance the glory of a particular patron'.⁹ Thrasydaïos might have hoped Pindar would follow Bundy's dictate, but Pindar, by saying after the Agamemnon myth that he must now turn to praise Thrasydaïos (line 44), shows he is aware that the myth itself, despite its points of contact with Thrasydaïos and his achievements, might not have been regarded by Thrasydaïos as aimed at praising him and his victory. In general, a sliding scale operates both for the praise-content of Pindar's epinicians, which ranges from direct and personal to general and allusive, and for the epinician content, with the victor and victory (or victories) sometimes dominating the poem (e.g. *Olympian* 13), sometimes (as in *Pythian* 11) only briefly and intermittently mentioned, sometimes mentioned en passant as a thing of the past and not the cause of the poem's composition at all (e.g. *Nemean* 11).¹⁰

I will translate the myth (lines 17ff.); even within it, the nature and the closeness of the connexions between the events it describes and between the phrases used to describe them vary considerably:

Orestes, while his father was being murdered by Clytemnestra's violent hands, was snatched away from a grievous plot to kill him by his nurse Arsinoë, when that pitiless wife sent Cassandra, daughter of Priam son of Dardanos, together with Agamemnon's soul to the side of the shady shore of Acheron with her shining bronze weapon. Was it the killing of Iphigeneia by the Euripos far from her homeland that incited Clytemnestra to rouse her anger and her heavy hands, or was she led on by her night-time relationship with the other man she was subdued to? In young wives the latter is an utterly detestable sin and impossible to cover up from other people's tongues; fellow-citizens talk evilly about it, for wealth and success create proportionate bad feeling; in contrast, an insignificant sniveller can roar and no one notices. He, son of Atreus, a hero, died when at last he came home, at famous Amyclai; and he brought the prophetic girl Cassandra to her death too, after he had stripped of their wealth the homes of the Trojans, which had been set on fire all because of Helen. Orestes, young lad, went and stayed with his old friend Strophios, who lived at the foot of Parnassos. But later with Ares' help he killed his mother and put Aigisthos amid bloodshed.

It is hard to find any praise of Thrasydaïos here. Up to line 22 *νηλὴς γυνά* all Pindar is giving is a very succinct lyric version of a well-known epic myth. Stesichorus is a likely source, but the narrative order in lines 19–21 – first mention of Cassandra,

⁸ Orestes did, of course, kill Neoptolemus at Delphi, according to Euripides (*Andr.* 1151), but this is not a Pindaric version of the story.

⁹ M. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode: an Introduction* (New Jersey, 1976), 156; E. R. Bundy, 'Studia Pindarica i', *U. Cal. P. Cl.* 18 (1962), 3.

¹⁰ For due emphasis on the heterogeneity of Pindar's odes, and on how the myths in different odes are relevant to the rest of the poem in differing ways, see Lloyd-Jones, *PBA* 68 (1982), 151–3.

then the sword, then Agamemnon's journey across Acheron, and finally the harsh judgement on Clytemnestra – follows in the sequence of each of these four elements Agamemnon's description of what happened to him which he gives to Odysseus in Hades (*Od.* 11.421–9). Lines 33–4, ἀμφ' Ἑλένα πυρωθέντας Τρώων ἔλυσε δόμους ἀβρότατος are perhaps another Homeric echo, making explicit what Homer in the *Iliad* only reports others as saying, namely that Helen was the cause of the Trojan war: εὔνεκα ῥιγεδανῆς Ἑλένης Τρωσὶν πολεμίζω says Achilles over the body of Patroclus (*Il.* 19.325); οὐ νέμεσις... τοιῇδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολλὸν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν say the old Trojans chattering like cicadas as they watch the fighting from the Skaian gate (*Il.* 3.156–7). χρονίῳ σὺν Ἀρει (line 36) is a précis of five lines of the *Odyssey* where Nestor tells Telemachus how eight years after Agamemnon's death Orestes returned to Mycenae to kill Aigisthos (*Od.* 3.304–8).

But in several respects Pindar has tailored the story to suit Thrasydaïos: first, he rejects the *Odyssey* version, in which Orestes is sent away to Athens, and follows later epic poets who said he went to Phocis (*Od.* 3.307 with scholia *ad loc.*), so providing a topographical connexion since Pytho was in Phocis; Orestes' journey to Strophios, who lives at the foot of Parnassos (line 36), and triumphant return later thus becomes analogous to Thrasydaïos' journey to Parnassos for the Games and his triumphant return. Parnassos, here used to indicate Strophios' residence, is often mentioned by Pindar as the venue for the Pythian Games.¹¹

Also relevant to Thrasydaïos is the moralising in lines 28–30, κακολόγοι δὲ πολῖται. ἴσχει τε γὰρ ὄλβος οὐ μείονα φθόνον· ὁ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων ἄφαντον βρέμει. On the one hand it concerns Clytemnestra: the citizens of Amyclai gossip maliciously about her relationship with Aigisthos. The point of ἴσχει τε γὰρ ὄλβος οὐ μείονα φθόνον (best interpreted as 'an amount of ὄλβος brings with it (ἴσχει) no less an amount of φθόνος') is that being the wife of Agamemnon was ὄλβος, and therefore people were always on the look-out for some aspect of her behaviour they could be spiteful about. If she had not been Agamemnon's wife, but an insignificant housewife, whatever she did would more easily have gone unreported and unenvied. But the lines are couched in general enough terms to be relevant to the victor's success (ὄλβος): he will get his share of spiteful remarks from his envious fellow-citizens – something Pindar often says about victors.¹² Line 30, ὁ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων ἄφαντον βρέμει means in the context of athletics: he who stays at home and does not even try to be successful at the Games remains inconspicuous and achieves nothing – another common observation.¹³

The precise tone of Pindar's own comment on the myth is open to question, depending on whether lines 38–40 are interpreted as questions, statements, or a mixture of the two. The Snell–Maehler Teubner text reads ἦρ', ὦ φίλοι, κατ' ἀμευσίπορον τρίοδον ἐδιναῖθην, ὀρθὰν κέλευθον ἰὼν τὸ πρίν· ἢ μέ τις ἄνεμος ἕξω πλόου ἔβαλεν ὥς ὅτ' ἄκατον ἐνναλίαν; Maehler tells me that despite the high stop after πρίν (which suggests that ἦρ'...πρίν should be taken as a statement), he intended the text to be interpreted as two questions.¹⁴ I agree with the interpretation (though a comma after πρίν would make the sense clearer): I think it best to take ὦ φίλοι as addressed to Thrasydaïos and his father¹⁵ and to interpret the two clauses as rhetorical questions offering two explanations by Pindar for what he has been up to: 'Hey, I was going straight along the right road, my friends, when was it that I

¹¹ Cf. *O.* 13.106, *P.* 10.8, *N.* 2.19.

¹² Cf. *O.* 6.74, *P.* 7.18–19, *P.* 10.20, *I.* 2.43.

¹³ Cf. *P.* 4.185–7, *Parth.* Fr. 104c.6ff.

¹⁴ For ἦρα introducing a question cf. *I.* 7.1ff., *P.* 9.37, *Bacch.* 5.165.

¹⁵ For φίλος used to address the recipient of the ode, cf. *P.* 1.92, *N.* 3.76.

darted up a wrong turning at the cross-road, or did a wind blow me astray and put me all at sea like a little boat?’

According to one of the scholiasts talking about the whole myth from line 17 onwards, ‘It is as if Pindar censures himself for having indulged in an irrelevant digression’ (ὥσπερ ἐπιπλήττει ἐαυτῷ ὁ Πίνδαρος ἀκαίρῳ παρεκβάσει χρησάμενος Sch. P. 11.58b); there is a similar comment earlier by another scholiast: ἄριστα ὁ Πίνδαρος τὸ ἐγκώμιον εἰργάσατο· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐξῆς σφόδρα ἀκαίρῳ παρεκβάσει ἐχρήσατο, ‘Pindar has made a brilliant encomium only to use an utterly irrelevant digression in what follows’ (Sch. P. 11.23b). Modern scholars have tended to agree with the ancient commentators. But if one looks at the other passages censured by the scholiasts as *παρεκβάσεις* or digressions, it is clear that they work with a narrow conception of what counts as suitable for a Pindaric ode: they take it for granted that Pindar’s chief concern was ebullient praise of the winner, and are quick to call anything else a *παρέκβασις*. Compare, for example, what they say on *Pythian* 10 when Pindar starts the story of Perseus’ journey to the Hyperboreans: *μέχρι δὲ τούτων ὁ Πίνδαρος καλῶς τὸν ἐπίνικον γράφει· ἥστόχησε δὲ τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀλόγῳ παρεκβάσει χρησάμενος* (Sch. P. 10.46b), ‘So far Pindar has written the epinician well, but in what follows he went off course in a pointless digression’; in similar vein is the comment on *Nemean* 6.55–7 (τὸ δὲ παρ ποδὶ ναὸς ἐλισσόμενον αἰεὶ κυμάτων λέγεται παντὶ μάλιστα δονεῖν θυμόν): *λέγει δὲ τοῦτο ὁ Πίνδαρος ὅτι παρεξέβη εἰς τὸ ὑμνεῖν τοὺς Αἰακίδας· ἔργον δὲ οὐκ ἐξέλαβε τοῦτο, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὸ ὑμνήσαι Ἀλκιμέδην* (Sch. N. 6.94a), ‘Pindar says this because he digressed into praising the Aiacidai, when the job he undertook was not this but to praise Alcimides.’

The lines in *Pythian* 11 when Pindar says to Thrasydaïos and his father that he accidentally went off course are not a guilty admission that he made a mistake in including the myth; rather, they are analogous to the many other occasions when he says, for instance, ‘I must stick to the target’, or ‘I must be brief’, or ‘I must stop now’, or ‘I shall recount only τὰ κεφάλαια’, or ‘silence on some matters is best.’ Compare the lines after the Perseus myth in *Pythian* 10: *κῶπαν σχάσον, ταχὺ δ’ ἄγκυραν ἔρεισον χθονὶ πρῶραθε, χοιράδος ἄλκαρ πέτρας. ἐγκωμίων γὰρ ἄωτος ὕμνων ἐπ’ ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλον ὥτε μέλισσα θύνει λόγον* (P. 10.51–4), ‘Hold fast your oar; quick, throw the anchor from the prow so it grabs the ground and protects us from the reef; for the best encomium hymns like to dart from one theme to another like a bee’; straight away he returns to sing of the victor, Hippocleas. Similarly in *Olympian* 13, after the adventures and death of Pegasus: *ἐμὲ δ’ εὐθὺν ἀκόντων ἰέντα ῥόμβον παρὰ σκοπὸν οὐ χρὴ τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα καρτύνειν χεροῖν* (O. 13.93–5), ‘I must spin my javelins straight, and not fling my store of weapons off target’; there follows an immediate return to the victor’s family.¹⁶

These reminders about sticking to targets, saying enough and no more, derive from the importance Pindar attached to preserving a balance between the different parts and themes of his odes. They are not heartfelt apologies for irrelevance, but a rhetorical means of passing from one relevant subject to another, and they help him resolve a difficulty he was faced with: to reach a compromise between on the one hand praising the winner who was buying the poem, and on the other hand retaining the freedom to mention other subjects he wanted to include in his poems which were not about the winner. However much the victor himself may have wanted to be praised, it is a mistake to suppose Pindar had no other matters he wanted to include.

Yet lines 38–40 in *Pythian* 11 are significantly unusual in one respect: Pindar does

¹⁶ See also Sch. N. 3.45b, Inscr. a P.4, Inscr. P. 5, Sch. P. 8.43a.

not say he must watch out in case he goes off course; he says he has gone off course. In view of the context, especially the following clause and its mention of the financial contrar 'ε is under with Thrasydaïos (lines 41–2 *Μοῖσα, τὸ δὲ τεόν, εἰ μισθοῖο συνέθεν παρέχειν φωνὰν ὑπαργύραν*), I think Pindar is speaking tongue in cheek and representing what he has done from the victor's viewpoint, from which I think he would want to distance himself. A good parallel to this disingenuous admission that he has gone off course comes in his self-rebuke in *Nemean* 3 after some words about Heracles' achievements: *θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἄλλοδαπὰν ἄκραν ἐμὸν πλόνον παραμειβέαι; Αἰακῶ σε φαμί γένει τε Μοῖσαν φέρειν*, 'Come on, heart, what foreign headland are you steering my boat to? I say you should take the Muse to Aiakos and his family' (*N.* 3.26–8). I like Professor Winnington-Ingram's¹⁷ interpretation, which makes this a slightly humorous rebuke: just as its purpose was perhaps to elicit from the victor's father a reaction such as 'Thank god he's not going to compare my son to Heracles on the rampage', so the purpose of the three lines of explanation in *Pythian* 11 was to elicit from Thrasydaïos' father something like 'Thank god he's not going to suggest a close parallel between my son and the murderous Orestes'. In both odes the going-off-course metaphor offers a clever way out of having said something that he (Pindar) wanted to tell, but which he realised the victor's family might not be so keen on.

It is not just because of the myth that Pindar has been accused of irrelevance in *Pythian* 11, but also because of his talk in the last strophe of tyrannies and *τὰ μέσα*. The first thing to notice is the asyndeton in line 50 after he has run through the family's victories: the odes are full of different types of asyndeton.¹⁸ It can, as here, loosen the connexion between the parts of an ode; but what follows does have a bearing on Thrasydaïos.

Line 50, *θεόθεν ἐραίμαν καλῶν δυνατὰ μαιόμενος ἐν ἀλικίᾳ* means 'May I desire *καλά* that come from the gods (i.e. may I never desire things in despite of the gods), aspiring to what is feasible (i.e. not to too much) and suitable for the occasion (*ἐν ἀλικίᾳ*)'. The transition to this moralising seems less abrupt when one remembers that the *καλά* (just mentioned in lines 43–50) achieved by Thrasydaïos and his father also came *θεόθεν*: athletic success, in Pindar's view, depended on, among other things, the gods; compare *Pythian* 1.41–2 *ἐκ θεῶν γὰρ μηχαναὶ πᾶσαι βροτέαις ἀρεταῖς, καὶ σοφοὶ καὶ χερσὶ βιαταὶ . . . ἔφυν*.¹⁹ The idea underlying the participial clause is that winners in the Games should be moderate in their ambitions for further success. The thought here is similar to *Nemean* 10.29–30, where, after a similar résumé of all the victor's past achievements, Pindar says, 'Father Zeus, his mouth is silent about what he deep down desires (i.e. an Olympic win, which he has not yet got); the outcome of everything one does lies with you' (*Ζεῦ πάτερ, τῶν μὰν ἔραται φρενί, σιγᾷ οἱ στόμα· πᾶν δὲ τέλος ἐν τὴν ἔργων*).

The next clause has caused much trouble: *τῶν γὰρ ἀνὰ πόλιν εὐρίσκων τὰ μέσα μακροτέρῳ σὺν ὀλβῷ τεθαλότα, μέμφομ' αἴσαν τυραννίδων*. The *γάρ* connects the phrase with *δυνατὰ μαιόμενος*: 'One should not aspire too high, in athletics or anything else, for in a city I find that *moderation* flourishes with *ὀλβος* for longer and hence I find fault with the lot of tyrannies (which are not examples of moderation).' The form of the statement and its meaning are conventional; the statement merely

¹⁷ At a discussion in London on 11 Nov. 1983.

¹⁸ The basis for any discussion on asyndeton in Pindar is still the excursus by Dissen in his edition of Pindar (Gotha, 1843), section I, pp. 341–8.

¹⁹ Cf. also (for the dependence of athletic success on the gods) *O.* 8.67, *O.* 10.21, *O.* 13.104–6, *N.* 6.24–6.

expresses a reason why people in general, and Thrasydaïos in particular, should be moderate. Pindar, like other Greeks, did not think ὀλβος was easily kept, especially in large doses or if wickedly acquired;²⁰ therefore, be moderate in your desire for ὀλβος. Compare for the expression Theognis 335 πάντων μέσ' ἄριστα and Phocylides 9 W πολλὰ μέσοισιν ἄριστα μέσος θέλω ἐν πόλει εἶναι. Though Pindar does not elsewhere use the particular word μέσος like this, the same idea is common in his poetry, as when in *Isthmian* 6 he praises the victor's father Lampon for benefiting his city and being hospitable to his guests μέτρα μὲν γνώμα διώκων, μέτρα δὲ καὶ κατέχων (71), 'by having moderate aspirations and moderate possessions'. The fates of Ixion and Tantalus in *Pythian* 2 and *Olympian* 1 show what too much can do for you, and in *Pythian* 3 (lines 105–6) he tells Hieron how ὀλβος οὐκ ἐς μακρὸν ἀνδρῶν ἔρχεται σάος, πολὺς εὖτ' ἂν ἐπιβρίσας ἔπηται, 'Men's wealth and happiness do not journey safely for long whenever a lot of it comes weighing down heavily'.

The point about τυραννίδες is that tyrants or kings are particularly ὀλβιοι and tend to be particularly immoderate, and are therefore particularly liable to disaster. The traditional idea, running from at least the 1880s to the 1960s (held by e.g. Gildersleeve, Wilamowitz, Bowra and Burton),²¹ that Pindar is castigating a particular tyranny, cannot be substantiated: note the plural τυραννίδων, not τυραννίδος. Doubtless Pindar's views on ὀλβος and τυραννίδες were moulded by his observations of the experiences and darker qualities of the tyrants, like Hieron, whom he knew,²² but what he says here is general and conventional, as someone might say, 'I like a quiet life; I'd hate to be Prime Minister', meaning not that one would hate to be Mrs Thatcher, but that one would hate to have the cares and responsibilities that go with high office. Compare the remarks of Charon the carpenter (Archil. 19 W) Οὐ μοι τὰ Γύγω τοῦ πολυχρύσου μέλει...μεγάλῃς δ' οὐκ ἔρέω τυραννίδος. A second point: by τυραννίδων Pindar does not mean only 'tyrannies' in the narrow and modern pejorative sense of the word, but any rich and powerful ruler including amicable βασιλεῖς. Note how he calls Hieron both βασιλεύς (*O.* 1.23) and τύραννος (*P.* 3.85); Herodotus (1.13–16) uses both βασιλεύω and τυραννέω of both Gyges and Ardys.

Line 54, ξυναῖσι δ' ἀμφ' ἀρεταῖς τέταμαι means 'I'm at full stretch after virtues open to all'. The thought underlying the phrase is that the ὀλβος of tyrannies is only ever enjoyed by a very few and not shared in by the public; by 'shared virtues' Pindar here has in mind in particular the victory of Thrasydaïos, which is shared in by the Theban community: at *Pythian* 9.93 he calls the victories of Telesicrates τό γ' ἐν ξυνῷ πεποναμένον, 'effort exercised for the common good', and above (*Pythian* 11.10–12) Thrasydaïos' victory is a χάρις to Thebes.

The manuscripts give an impossible reading for the end of line 54 and the beginning of 55: they give ἀμύνοντ' (or ἀμύνονται) ἄτα (plural verb, singular nominative noun), and I think Hermann was right to delete ἄτα on the grounds that it had been created after the end of ἀμύνονται had mistakenly been written twice. Some editors put in

²⁰ Cf. *N.* 8.17 σὺν θεῷ γάρ τοι φυτευθεὶς ὀλβος ἀνθρώποισι παρμονώτερος; also Hes. *Op.* 321–6 (what happens if you acquire ὀλβος at the wrong time), Solon 6.3–4, Aes. *Pers.* 250–2, id. *Sept.* 769–71 (the dangers of too much ὀλβος).

²¹ U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922); B. L. Gildersleeve, *The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (London, 1906); R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford, 1962).

²² For details of the less pleasant characteristics of the Sicilian tyrants, cf. Diod. Sic. 11.67 (on Hieron) ἦν γὰρ καὶ φιλάργυρος καὶ βίαιος καὶ καθόλου τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ καλοκαγαθίας ἀλλοτριώτατος; id. ib. (on Thrasyboulos) ὑπερέβαλε τῇ κακίᾳ [sc. *Ἱέρωνα*]...βίαιος γὰρ ὦν καὶ φονικός...ἀεὶ δὲ μάλλον τοῖς πολίταις ἀπεχθόμενος, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν ὑβρίζων, τοὺς δὲ ἀναιρῶν, ἠνάγκαζε τοὺς ἀδικουμένους ἀποστήναι; in similar vein are Solon Fr. 32 W, Xenoph. Fr. 3 W, Theogn. 823, 1181, 1203–4.

a part of *ἄτα* at the beginning of line 55, fitting it into the sense of the previous clause; but down to the end of line 54 the Snell–Maehler Teubner text (*ξυναίσι δ' ἄμφ' ἀρεταῖς τέταμαι· φθονεροὶ δ' ἀμύνονται*) gives better sense. *φθονεροὶ δ' ἀμύνονται* is ambivalent. It could mean, 'But the envious take revenge' sc. on the *ἀρεταί* of the victor, of which they are envious. Pindar regularly follows a reference to successful achievement (athletic or other) with mention of the envy it will arouse: compare *Parth.* 1.8–9 *παντὶ δ' ἐπὶ φθόνος ἀνδρὶ κείται ἀρετᾶς*, 'envy of virtue lies on every man' – i.e. every man is envied for his virtue. But the context favours taking *ἀμύνονται* as passive, 'are repelled', the point being that successes (like Thrasydaïos' victory) which are shared in by the community do not attract *φθόνος*; in contrast, the *ὄλβος* of tyrannies is not shared in by the citizens, who, because they are excluded, are envious – a point the Agamemnon story illustrated (lines 28–9).

The best remedy for the textual crux at the beginning of line 55 is, I think, the suggestion made by Thiersch in 1820 and accepted by Bowra: *τᾶν* genitive plural feminine of the article and referring to *ἀρεταῖς* in line 54. *τᾶν* could easily have been displaced by the mistakenly inserted *ἄτα*, and it is the *mot juste* because elsewhere whenever (as in line 55) Pindar uses *ἄκρον* substantivally and metaphorically a partitive genitive always accompanies it, as at *N.* 6.23–4 *οἱ τρεῖς ἀεθλοφόροι πρὸς ἄκρον ἀρετᾶς ἦλθον*, 'The three prizewinners have reached the pinnacle of virtue'.²³

All this yields the following sense for lines 54–8:

I am at full stretch for successes, like a victory, which all can share in; any envious people are thus ward off. If someone has managed to achieve the pick of these successes (i.e. a win at the Games) and, living peaceably, has escaped hybris, then he journeys to an end [reading, I propose, in lines 56–7 *ἀν' ἔσχατιὰν στείχει*²⁴] better than dark death, providing for his beloved family the best possible possession, namely a good name, which they will take pleasure in (*εὐδώνυμον χάριν*).²⁵

The idea is that athletic success, though the crowning achievement, requires a successful life afterwards, free from hybris; if you can achieve all that, then you will not meet a dark death, i.e. oblivion, the fate of the unsuccessful; rather, the successful and peaceable victor even when dead provides honour to future members of his family. By this last clause, which renews the father and son theme, Pindar means that the victor's future family will be able, thanks to poetry like Pindar's, to remember their ancestor's achievements.

The final epode resumes the theme of poetry bestowing immortality on athletes: 'χάρις spreads abroad the name of Iolaos, son of Iphicles, because he is sung of in poetry, and of mighty Castor too, and of you too, lord Polydeuces, sons of gods both of you living on alternate days at your home in Therapne and inside Olympus'.²⁶ I doubt if this has anything to do with an alliance between Thebes and Sparta, the idea of Bowra,²⁷ who thinks Iolaos and the Dioscuri are mentioned as representatives of

²³ Cf. also (for the construction) *Pi. N.* 1.10–11, *Sim.* 579.7 (PMG), *Tyrt.* 12.43 (W), *A.P.* 7.448, Peek, *V.I.* 1974.

²⁴ Cf. *Od.* 23.136 *ἀν' ὁδὸν στείχων*; *Archil.* 185 (W) *ἦει... ἀν' ἔσχατιήν*; also *Pi. Fr.* 172.4–5, id. *Pa.* vii.12. For *ἀνά* used of motion *to* rather than *along*, cf. *Od.* 22.239–40 *ἀνὰ μεγάροιο μέλαθρον ἔζετ' ἀναίξασα*. After the indicative *ἀπέφυγεν*, an indicative apodosis is better than *ἄν*+optative.

²⁵ *εὐδώνυμος χάρις* is *χάρις* that consists in a good *ὄνομα*: the victor bequeathes to his family a good name, which they will take pleasure in (*χαίρειν*).

²⁶ Lines 63–4 are best construed *οἰκέοντας παρ' ἅμαρ τὸ μὲν ἔδραισι Θ., τὸ δὲ ἔνδον Ὀ. οἰκέοντας* takes two constructions, and *ἔνδον* governs *Ὀλύμπου*; 'Olympus' denotes the gods' settlement at the top of the mountain (not Mt Olympus itself) as probably at *Hes. Theog.* 37 (see West *ad loc.*).

²⁷ *Pindar* 154.

Thebes and Sparta; the three are chosen because of their connexions with athletics, and in particular horsemanship (especially relevant in a poem for a family who had excelled ἄρμασι and σὺν ἵπποις, lines 46–8 above).²⁸ The implications of the lines of Thrasydaïos are that he too will be distinguished and remembered, like the three heroes he has sung of, and as a Games victor he too will gain a temporarily enhanced status as Castor and Polydeuces did.

The poem ends with style: the first and last lines both refer to the Olympians; both Semele and the Dioscuri share Olympus only by special dispensation; Heracles' mother is in the first strophe, his companion and nephew in the final epode; two sisters open the ode, two brothers end it.

CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, the few lines in *Pythian* 11 (either side of the myth) which Pindar explicitly devotes to Thrasydaïos' victory emphasise above all one thing: in winning, Thrasydaïos took over where his father left off and renewed his family's esteem; moreover, this father–son theme is taken up by the myth and reappears in a different form at the end of the poem.

Secondly, though the narrative order of the myth and the details in it are a succinct lyric version of a story well known from epic, nevertheless Pindar has inserted into it, and made prominent, features which are also relevant to Thrasydaïos: ὄλβος, φθόγος, a journey to Parnassus and back.

Thirdly, the part after the myth about moderation in pursuit of καλή, about how the ὄλβος of people with moderate ambitions lasts longer than that of kings or tyrants, about how envious people tend to attack virtuous achievements – all these elements have a bearing on Thrasydaïos' new success in winning at the Games.

Fourthly, when Pindar says to Thrasydaïos and his father that he went off course in telling the myth, he is being disingenuous, representing what he thinks is *their* attitude to the myth.

Finally, the idea that all parts of the ode somehow or other have to be doing what the winner will have wanted, i.e. praising the winner, is a mistake, and a mistake that has been largely to blame for *Pythian* 11 being thought problematic and eccentric. 'Praising the winner' is a very nebulous concept; only lines 45–50 of this poem can reasonably be said to be praising the winner. Other parts of the poem are certainly relevant to the winner, but in other ways which have nothing directly to do with praise; moreover, some parts of *Pythian* 11 are *not* relevant to the winner or his victory. Thrasydaïos may have wished they had been, but Pindar had other ideas. This attitude is not untypical of his manner in his epinicians.

University of Kent at Canterbury

S. J. INSTONE

²⁸ Iolaos, Herakles' charioteer, was honoured at Thebes with Games (Sch. Pi. *O.* 7.153e, Sch. N. 4.32; cf. Pi. *I.* 5.32, Paus. 9.23.1, Wilamowitz, op. cit. 47, 264f.). For the Tyndarids as horse-men cf. Pi. *O.* 3.39 κῶδος εὐίππων διδόντων Τυνδαριδᾶν and see A. Köhnken, *HSCP* 87 (1983), 60.

²⁹ I am indebted to Professor M. L. West for the help he has given me during my work on Pindar, and I am grateful to Mr J. Griffin and Mr P. J. Parsons for their helpful criticisms of this paper.