

THE GIFTS OF THE GODS: PINDAR'S THIRD *PYTHIAN*

Hieron of Syracuse was the most powerful Greek of his day. He was also, and the two facts are not unrelated, the most frequent of Pindar's patrons. A singular feature of the four poems for this Sicilian prince is their obsession with sin and punishment: Tantalus in the First *Olympian*, Typhoeus, Ixion, and Coronis in the first three *Pythians* – all offend divinity and suffer terribly. But even in this company, where glory comes trailing clouds of pain, the Third *Pythian* stands out. The other three odes are manifestly epinician and celebrate success, both athletic and military. The Second *Pythian*, for instance, is a sombre canvas, and a motif of ingratitude dominates the myth. Yet it rings at the outset with praise of Syracuse and of Hieron's victory. The Third *Pythian*, by comparison, is not obviously a victory ode.

For victory, in the Third *Pythian*, seems remote and is mentioned only in passing. This, ironically, has been one of the principal reasons for the ode's popularity. It can be appreciated even by those who feel distaste for the conventions of epinician poetry, so little does it say about victory.¹ Wilamowitz thought the poem a poetic epistle to an ailing tyrant, not worrying whether such a genre was credible for late Archaic Greece.² Recent criticism, on the other hand, has found in the poem conventions that link it to others that are indubitably epinician, and has consequently been more inclined to view the Third *Pythian* as a normal epinician ode.³

It is my belief that the older, more naive, reading must be the correct one. The poem is consolatory, not celebratory, and no attempt to isolate features of style common to many Pindaric poems will turn it into a convincing victory ode.⁴ A victory is mentioned only once, in a contrary-to-fact condition at line 73, and the mention includes the information that the victory alluded to was *ποτε*, 'once upon a time'. I shall return to this later. For the moment it is important to review indications that help to determine the date of the poem.

Pherenikos, the renowned stallion named in line 74, won for Hieron at Olympia in 476. This, the most illustrious of his victories, is the occasion of both the First *Olympian* and Bacchylides 5. Bacchylides mentions (5.41) that Pherenikos had before this date won at Delphi. He seems to be referring to a single victory. The First *Olympian*, on the other hand, says nothing about previous contests. The scholiast to the Third *Pythian* maintains that Hieron won twice at Delphi with the single horse, in 482 and in 478.⁵ He does not name Pherenikos as the victorious courser, but since

¹ See D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar: A Literary Study of Pythian 11, Pythian 3, and Olympian 7* (Leiden, 1968 [Mnemosyne Suppl. 9]), pp. 27–68.

² U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Lyriker* (Berlin, 1900 [Abhand. der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse. N.F. 4.3]), p. 48, and *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), p. 280. I can find no reference to the Third *Pythian* as a letter before Wilamowitz in 1900, but he mentions the idea so casually that it scarcely seems an innovation.

³ D. C. Young, 'Pindar *Pythians* 2 and 3: Inscriptional *ποτε* and the "Poetic Epistle"', *HSCP* 87 (1983), 31–42; W. J. Slater, 'Pindar's *Pythian* 3: Structure and Purpose', *QUCC* N.S. 29.2 (1988), 51–61.

⁴ So too M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode: An Introduction* (Park Ridge, N.J., 1976), pp. 142–57.

⁵ A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina* ii (Leipzig, 1910), p. 62, *ad* Inscr. a.

he appears to be extracting his information from the poem he may have misread what is a poetic plural (στεφάνοις) in line 73 and have concluded that Pherenikos won on two occasions.⁶ The evidence for two victories at Delphi is, therefore, not strong, though the fact that victories in 482 and 478 are also mentioned by the scholiast to the First *Pythian* may carry some weight (if the basis of this scholium is not the same misreading of the Third *Pythian*'s plural).⁷ It seems certain, then, that Hieron won at Delphi with Pherenikos in 478. He may have won there in 482 as well, but there is no compelling reason to believe that he did, and it is certainly unlikely that Pherenikos was victorious in 482. In 482 Hieron's brother Gelon was king of Syracuse and Hieron was in all probability ruling in Gela where the dynasty originated. Gelon died in 478 and was succeeded in Syracuse by Hieron, who then reigned for eleven years and eight months (Diod. 11.38.7). If Hieron came to the throne before the Pythian festival was held, his victory in 478 will have been a victory as king of Syracuse. He is called king in line 70, though this means, of course, only that the Third *Pythian* was composed subsequent to his accession.

The ποτέ of line 74 certainly seems to indicate a date later than 478 for the poem, with a passing reference to the victory of that year. Farnell wanted the date of composition to be earlier than 476 since there is no mention of the victory at Olympia in 476.⁸ But this is not at all convincing, for none of the odes of Pindar for Hieron contains a reference to a venue other than that of the specific occasion, much less a catalogue of earlier victories. Farnell was untroubled by the ποτέ, but he will likely have thought of it as harking back to both the recent 478 and the more distant 482, accepting what on the whole we have seen to be improbable – that Pherenikos won both times. Young thinks, however, that the ode is the victory poem of 478 and that the ποτέ refers not to the past but is to be understood from the point of view of generations to come who will read, or hear, the ποτέ as referring to days of yore. What we have here is the language of inscriptions.⁹

But can this feature of dedicatory inscriptions simply be understood as operative in Pindaric poetry? Inscriptions are directed to posterity in general, whereas occasional verse has a specific addressee and its primary audience is immediate. The end of our poem looks to the future when it refers to the immortality that poetry conveys, but it does so *para prosdokian*, as a surprise after the burden of the preceding strophes which emphasize the impossibility of immortality (explicitly at lines 61–2, among the most famous in Pindar). The force of the end of the poem depends on the force of the doctrine that this ending corrects: the πρόσω suddenly possible for Hieron at line 111 contradicts the πρόσω that characterized the company of fools at line 22 (the echo is sealed by the repetition of ἐλπίς, 23 and 111). Important too is the Homeric precedent for ποτέ in an 'inscriptional' context:

καί ποτέ τις εἴπησι καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων,
 νῆϊ πολυκλήϊδι πλέων ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον.
 “ἀνδρὸς μὲν τὸδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,
 ὃν ποτ' ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ.”
 ὥς ποτέ τις ἐρέει. τὸ δ' ἐμὸν κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται.
 (Il. 7.87–91)

⁶ For the poetic plural of στεφάνος cf. *Ol.* 6.26, *Pyth.* 2.6, *Isth.* 3.11.

⁷ Drachmann (n. 5), p. 5.

⁸ L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* ii (London, 1932), p. 135. Young (n. 3), p. 42 n. 33 is also inclined to see the silence as significant.

⁹ Young (n. 3), pp. 31–42.

Hector imagines someone yet unborn gazing upon the barrow of Ajax. The framing future *ποτέ*s (87 & 91) establish the time of the backward look to that day, given with the *ποτέ* of 89, when Hector slew Ajax. This is what we would expect in poetry and what is missing in the Third *Pythian*. Without some assistance we can hardly be expected to recognize the retrospective *ποτέ* as spoken in time to come, the time of 'coloro/ che questo tempo chiameranno antico' (Dante, *Par.* 17.119–20). There is nothing to suggest that the words Hector attributes to the future speaker are to be read on an inscription – since they are spoken by someone sailing on the Dardanelles, reading must in fact be precluded.¹⁰

There are other considerations that make 478 unlikely. Hieron is called *Αἰτναῖος* (69) and this is most easily understood as an allusion to his re-foundation of Catania as Aetna in 476 (Diodorus 11.49.1). That the tyrant of Syracuse was intensely proud of his new city is clear from Pindar: in 470, when he won with the chariot at Delphi, Hieron had himself proclaimed *Αἰτναῖος* (*Pyth.* 1.30–3). We cannot argue with certainty from appellations of this sort,¹¹ but there is a *prima facie* case for accepting Diodorus' date for the foundation of the city and for taking the use of the adjective as pointing to a subsequent year. Another consideration, not conclusive in itself but suggesting a time of composition in the latter part of the decade, is Hieron's illness, the central fact of the Third *Pythian*. While not impossible that Hieron was ill in 478 when he ascended the throne, it is significant that the only other reference to Hieron's illness is in the First *Pythian* of 470, the latest securely datable of Pindar's poems for this Syracusan patron. In a remarkable passage Hieron is compared to Philoctetes, who took the field despite his infirmity (50–5). We must not fail to notice that there is a strong contrast here between the mention of the battle of Himera in 480, when Hieron waged war in the company of his brothers and of Theron of Acragas against the Carthaginians (47–9), and a time (*ὅν γε μάν*, 50) closer to the date of the victory that this poem celebrates. It is at the later time that Hieron is like Philoctetes. The most attractive hypothesis is that the reference to an ailing conqueror is a reference to Hieron's decisive intervention in the affairs of Acragas in 472,¹² when, shortly after the death of Theron, Theron's son Thrasydaeus led the Acragantines in a war against Hieron. The war led to the expulsion of Thrasydaeus and a restoration of democratic government in Acragas. Whether this explanation is correct or not, Hieron's illness is, on the evidence of the First *Pythian*, not long before 470.

¹⁰ Young (n. 3), p. 38 n. 24 refers to this passage from Homer but thinks that it means that Homer was aware of inscriptional practice. This begs very large questions – the date and literacy of Homer. It is much more likely that the writers of epitaphs in the sixth and fifth centuries were familiar with hexameter poetry and with passages such as this one. The *ποτέ* of inscriptions may be considered a legacy of epic poetry in another way as well. Those who are thought to have died 'in the olden days' are thereby assimilated to the Heroic Age. Their natural company is the great of the past, not the lesser men of the present (this understanding gives the *ποτέ* of an inscription erected after a battle immediate relevance – it does not have to wait for future generations before it acquires meaning).

Hector typically thinks of what people will say 'at some point in the future': cf. also *Il.* 6.459, 479; 22.106. His mother speaks this way too at Eur. *Troades* 1188–91. Lefkowitz is surely right, *pace* Young (n. 3), p. 38 n. 24, to see the *ποτέ* of 1188 as relevant to the *ποτέ* of 1190 – when Hecuba imagines Astyanax's future we remember Hector's doing the same at *Il.* 6.479. Euripides will have known epitaphs and their language (and we are clearly in the world of writing in these lines), but in the context the passage functions as does the passage from Homer quoted above: poetry makes explicit the future point for the backward glance.

¹¹ Young (n. 3), p. 35 n. 18 makes light of them. He must do so, as they are inconvenient for his theory.

¹² G. Vallet, 'Pindare et la Sicile', in *Pindare* (Geneva, 1985 [Entretiens Hardt 31]), 285–327, p. 311.

All in all, then, the circumstantial evidence points to a date fairly late in the decade. If the poem is subsequent to the First *Olympian*, it is silent about Pherenikos' victory at Olympia in 476, but this silence is not especially surprising, given that the First *Olympian* is silent, as Bacchylides is not, with regard to an earlier Pythian success. The First *Pythian* similarly mentions no previous agonistic triumph (it mentions only previous military triumphs). Three of the poems for Hieron mention only one victory, the occasion of the poem in each case. The Third *Pythian* likewise mentions only one, I think, and it seems to be treated as a relatively remote victory.¹³

The ποτέ of line 74 looks back a few years to a victory of 478. We are in a poem that advocates the acceptance of distances, both spatial and temporal and decries the folly of trying to bridge them (distance is also absence: cf. ἀποιχόμενον, 3).¹⁴ Acceptance of distance is, in fact, a moral obligation, and failure to accept it the root of Coronis' sin (ἥρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων, 20). And so the gap in time between the victory of Pherenikos and the time of the song is indicated by the word that introduces the story of Asclepius (5), on whose death and consequent unavailability the poet dwells.¹⁵ If we take Pindar's words at their face value, he is saying that he can bring neither a healer nor a κῶμος. Lines 72–6 are perhaps the most problematic of the poem. The counterfactual condition has been taken in a variety of ways.

(1) The first person is the first person of the chorus.¹⁶ This interpretation relies on the assumption that the first-person utterance in the poems of Pindar is the voice of the chorus as well as that of the poet. The contrary-to-fact condition cannot, in this case, be genuinely contrary to fact, for it would be patently absurd for a chorus to be chanting in effect, 'I'm not really here!' And so the counterfactual condition that begins at line 72 must apply not to the arrival-motif but only to that of health. Most current opinion is, however, against taking every first-person utterance in Pindar as including the chorus.¹⁷

¹³ Another reason that has been advanced for a date of 474 for the Third *Pythian* is its resemblance to the Ninth *Pythian*, a poem that can be securely dated to that year. Both odes (they are the only two in the corpus to do so) take stories from the *Ehoiai* of Hesiod dealing with the loves of Apollo. On the similarities between the two poems see P. A. Bernardini, *Mito e attualità nelle odi di Pindaro* (Rome, 1983 [Filologia e Critica 47]), pp. 62–7, and A. Köhnken, "'Meilichos Orga'". Liebesthematik und aktueller Sieg in der neunten pythischen Ode Pindars', in *Pindare* (n. 12) 71–116, p. 77. Köhnken, however, without discussion simply dates the Third *Pythian* to 476, the year of the First *Olympian*.

¹⁴ Young has an excellent discussion of these themes in his literary essay on the poem (n. 1).

¹⁵ I do not claim that the ποτέ is significant enough for there to be an echo of line 5 in line 74. ποτέ is a word Pindar regularly uses in introducing mythical narrative. But it appears here in the very phrase that associates Cheiron with Asclepius. When they are next brought together (63ff.) Pindar has himself understood the undesirability of desire for the absent.

¹⁶ E.g. Slater (n. 3), p. 59.

¹⁷ R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes: Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford, 1962), p. 146, observed that the first-person singular pronoun in the epinician odes of Pindar never excluded the poet. About the same time M. R. Lefkowitz, 'ΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΕΓΩ: The First Person in Pindar', *HSCP* 67 (1963), 177–253, investigated the matter in detail and concluded that the first person could refer only to the poet and that there was no choral 'I' at all in the *epinicia*. She returned to this question in 'Pindar's *Pythian* V', in *Pindare* (n. 12), 33–69, pp. 47–9, and in an article, 'Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?', *AJP* 109 (1988), 1–11: her conclusion here is that not only does the first person not include the chorus but that the odes were for the most part not performed chorally. Two further articles that appeared at almost the same time as Lefkowitz's and that share her conclusion – that there is little reason to believe in choral performance of the epinician odes – are M. Heath, 'Receiving the κῶμος: The Context and Performance of Epinician', *AJP* 109 (1988), 180–95, and M. Davies, 'Monody, Choral Lyric, and the Tyranny of the Hand-book', *CQ* 38 (1988), 52–64. Most recently, C. Carey, 'The Performance of the

(2) The first person is the poet, but his arrival is not denied.¹⁸ Indeed, it is wrong to try to elicit biographical information from traditional motifs, and the arrival-motif is traditional. The counterfactual condition is there to create a mood but is not to be taken literally. Part of the unreal condition must still be taken as literally true, though, for it remains a fact that the poet is unable to provide a healer. Against this, and similarly against (1), it is important to point out that even if we interpret this second unreal condition as saying 'I haven't come *bringing health*' (rather than simply 'I haven't come'), the earlier of the two contrary-to-fact conditions (63–9) ends with a bald and unqualified apodosis – Pindar says that because he cannot provide an Asclepius or an Apollo for Hieron he has not come. And so on this interpretation too the passage as a whole must be taken to mean the opposite of what it appears to say.¹⁹

(3) Pindar has remained at Thebes and cannot send a healer (this is consonant with literal understanding of the first of the two counterfactual conditions). But he nonetheless announces or celebrates a victory.²⁰

The above interpretations all assume that the poem is in the last analysis epinician since it mentions a victory. But the victory mentioned is distant, past, as we have seen, and a *κῶμος* no more possible than health, to which the *κῶμος* is parallel.²¹ It is well to remember that the basic meaning of *κῶμος* is revelry, something totally foreign to the spirit of this song. The poet has not come – and since he has not come he cannot be bringing (*ἄγων*) anything. The poet, who is not present, states that he has in this case neither health nor a *κῶμος* to bring. It is further specified that the *κῶμος* he might have brought would have been for an old victory. This puts it in a class with other things the poet has abjured – an old triumph joins the dead Cheiron, the dead Asclepius, and a trip to a far-away land. Pindar turns his back on all of these even when they are, like the provision of a healer, distinct desiderata. There is, of course, a difference in scale of distance. Cheiron is dead (*ἀποιχόμενον*) and his recall impossible. Health is not impossible in the same way, but it is not *παρ ποδός* despite the vivid description of the positive potential of medicine in the strophe devoted to the cures dispensed by Asclepius (47–53). The victory mentioned is simply *ἀπείον*: hence its celebration is, like Coronis' desire, inappropriate in the circumstances. The only reference to it is in the section of the poem that emphasizes concentrating on the immediate. It is not mentioned as a source of Hieron's *εὐδαιμονία* (84–5) but only in the company of what is distant or denied.

Victory Ode', *AJP* 110 (1989), 545–65, and A. Burnett, 'Performing Pindar's Odes', *CP* 84 (1989), 283–93, have defended the traditional belief that the poems were sung chorally. But even if this is the case, the first person is not necessarily the voice of the group. Carey, for instance, believes that lines 63–79 of the Third *Pythian* refer to the poet himself and not to the chorus (p. 561 n. 41).

¹⁸ E.g. Young (n. 1), pp. 45–6.

¹⁹ Of both the foregoing interpretations it is tempting to say with A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* ii (Cambridge, 1965), p. 130 (*re* the Seventh *Idyll*): 'A theory based upon the assumption that he means the reverse of what he says starts at some initial disadvantage.'

²⁰ E.g. C. J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1985), pp. 190–1.

²¹ At *Ol.* 4.9–10 *κῶμος* appears to mean 'celebratory song' and to refer to the poem that is being sung since, unlike festal dance-*κῶμοι*, this one is a *χρονιώτατον φῶος*. D. E. Gerber, 'Pindar's *Olympian* Four: A Commentary', *QUCC* N.S. 25.1 (1987), 7–24, p. 16, thinks that *κῶμος* at *Pyth.* 3.73 is similar and means simply 'song'. But *Ol.* 4 is quite clearly a short processional (whether at Olympia or Camarina is disputed). The *κῶμος*, if it is a song, is also a procession, perhaps a dance: it is mentioned with the deictic pronoun (and with the reception- and arrival-motifs discussed by Heath [n. 17], pp. 185–90). It is a *κῶμος* very like that of *Ol.* 14, another short processional ode which refers to *τόνδε κῶμον* (16).

This reading is, I think, the only one that will adequately fit the tone of the poem. It is, moreover, a poem that can be considered epinician only if we take the single reference to victory as unaffected by the unreal condition in which it is embedded. A former victory (presumably only one) is mentioned because it contributes to an important theme of the poem.²² And the Delphic victory of 478 is mentioned rather than the Olympic victory of 476 because it is more remote. But there is, perhaps, another reason that this victory at Delphi is mentioned.

If the poem is from 474, it is from a year in which Hieron did not win. Did he compete? There may be here a discreet allusion to Hieron's unsuccessful participation in the games of that year.²³ If he competed with Pherenikos and lost, the mention of that horse's name makes good sense. Hieron won prizes in the equestrian contests of mainland Greece at two-year intervals from 478, the year of his accession in Syracuse, until his death, with the exception of 474: 478 at Delphi, 476 at Olympia, 472 at Olympia,²⁴ 470 at Delphi, 468 at Olympia. The regularity of the pattern seems to demand an entry for Delphi in 474. Pherenikos' career, on this reconstruction, would include two victories (478 and 476) and a loss (474).²⁵ Beneath the mention of a former victory may lie the reality of a present disappointment tactfully passed over in silence: ... τὸ σιγᾶν πολλάκις ἐστὶ σοφώτατον ἀνθρώπῳ νοῆσαι (*Nem.* 5.18). This is a poem of consolation in illness – the illness is clear from the text. It may also be a poem of consolation in defeat, the defeat implicit in the fact that the only victory mentioned as a possible source of celebration is old. The last epode of the poem expresses hope for the future. Perhaps, like the final epode of the First *Olympian*, its hope is for future victory and for the poet's association with Hieron in the celebration of that victory. If this is so, it is easy to believe that the poem was sung at Hieron's court, by proxy or indeed by a chorus, much as a normal epinician poem might have been sung, and easy to account for the mood. My own hunch, for what it's worth, is that Hieron, who had won with Pherenikos at Olympia in 476, retained Pindar for 474. Great patrons may well have approached poets in advance of the games, and it is not difficult to imagine that a man who named his horse Pherenikos would have planned a victory celebration beforehand. Pindar had, it is generally agreed, been in

²² *Ol.* 10. *Nem.* 3, *Nem.* 9, and *Isth.* 2 are poems which seem to celebrate a victory at a subsequent date. If it is felt that *Pyth.* 3 is simply another such instance, the question of the dating will be immaterial – it will be a commemorative poem at a date after the victory, but exactly when it was composed will be unimportant. My argument is, basically, that the rhetorical stance of *Pyth.* 3 is internally consistent and that its mood is unique. Special explanation is, consequently, necessary.

²³ See Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (n. 1), pp. 282–3. So too G. W. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar's Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes* (Göttingen, 1985 [*Hypomnemata* 83]), p. 67, with n. 42.

²⁴ Pausanias (8.42.9) gives a dedicatory epigram from Olympia that accompanied a monument erected by Hieron's son, Deinomenes. This epigram records Hieron's two Olympic victories with the single horse and one with the chariot. The victor-list from Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy. II 222 Col. I 19) gives the dates 476 and 472 for the κέλεις-victories. This corroborates a scholium on the First *Olympian* (Drachmann [n. 5] i [1903], pp. 15–16), where the chariot-victory of 468 is also mentioned (this chariot victory was the occasion of Bacchylides 3).

²⁵ If there was a victory at Delphi in 482 the pattern is not so neat. But, as I have argued, the case for victories in both 482 and 478 is not strong, and 478 seems certain. 482 is in any case not during Hieron's reign in Syracuse.

On the length of the career of a racehorse in antiquity (and in modern times), see H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* I.ii (Leiden, 1982 [*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 62]), p. 79 n. 6. If we accept that Pherenikos was not Hieron's horse at Delphi in 482 and that he was in 474, we have certain victories in 478 and 476, when he was at his peak, and no victory in his final competition. There is no reason for thinking that the victory of 472 was a victory of Pherenikos.

Sicily in 476 and knew Hieron personally. In the event Pindar produced a song and mentioned an earlier victory at Delphi.²⁶ It was not a *κῶμος* for a recent victory. There was no recent victory to celebrate.²⁷

II

Formally the Third *Pythian* falls into two sections. The first part begins with an unattainable wish and ends with the two counterfactual conditions we have noted. Linguistically the *εἰ*-clause of line 2 is echoed by the *εἰ*-clauses of lines 63 and 73, and the *εὖξασθαι* of 2 by the *ἐπεύξασθαι* of 77. This section contains the meditation on the impossible and the distant. Line 80 forms at once the climax of the first part and the beginning of the second.²⁸ Hieron is now directly addressed for the first time and an alternative is set out in a new *εἰ*-clause. The second part, like the first, contains a double myth, for the first tells the cautionary tales of Coronis and Asclepius while the second tells the consolatory stories of Cadmus and Peleus. This second part also issues, at the conclusion of the myth, in two *εἰ*-clauses (103 and 110), slightly closer together than those of the first part, just as the second section is shorter than the first.²⁹ Line 80 is, thus, the hinge on which the poem turns. It introduces a quotation which Hieron is said to be able to understand aright: *ἐν παρ' ἑσλὸν πῆματα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς / ἀθάνατοι* (81–2).³⁰ The line is a paraphrase of Achilles' famous words to Priam about the urns in the doorstep of Zeus:

δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
δῶρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἕων·

(Il. 24.527–8)

Even the immediate application helps to secure the reference to Homer, for Pindar in admonishing Hieron, like Achilles in his pity for Priam, applies the general truth to two old men made sorrowful through their children. Peleus is common to both paradigms.

But Pindar appears to make something specific that is left unclear in Homer. The majority of commentators, beginning with the Pindaric scholiast,³¹ say that Pindar

²⁶ I prefer this explanation to the idea that the poem is an unsolicited offering.

²⁷ If the first person of the poem is the voice of the poet and not that of a chorus and if the poet has not come to Syracuse, *παρ' ἑμὸν πρόθυρον* would appear to refer to Thebes. But the primary implication of the phrase is that the poet is making a public prayer: cf. the prayer of the Locrian maiden *πρὸ δόμων* at *Pyth.* 2.18 and the presence of the Cyrenean kings *πρὸ δωμάτων* during the festal procession at *Pyth.* 5.96. Pindar has already drawn attention to the public nature of his prayer in line 2 with the word *κοινόν* (proleptic, 'so daß es alle hören können'; cf. O. Schroeder, *Pindars Pythien* [Leipzig and Berlin, 1922], p. 27).

Victory and peril belong to the world of men, ignominy and ease to the world of women: a defeated athlete returns home to his mother, *Pyth.* 8.85. The prayer to the mother goddess is, thus, especially appropriate if there has been an actual defeat. Cf. my 'Nereids with Golden Distaffs: Pindar, *Nem.* 5', *QUCC* N.S. 25.1 (1987), pp. 25–33, esp. p. 32.

²⁸ H. Pelliccia, in a subtle and sensitive analysis of the rhetorical articulation of the first part of the poem, 'Pindarus Homericus: *Pythian* 3.1–80', *HSCP* 91 (1987), 39–64, has shown that the *ἀλλ'* of line 77 is not the alternative to the preceding impossible conditions but that this function is fulfilled by the new condition of line 80.

²⁹ The importance of conditional statements in the Third *Pythian* is noted by C. Greengard, *The Structure of Pindar's Epinician Odes* (Amsterdam, 1980), p. 107 n. 66.

³⁰ The practice of quoting a poetic text and then commenting upon it first becomes common in Greek poetry about this time: see M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin and New York, 1974 [*Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte* 14]), p. 180.

³¹ Drachmann (n. 5), p. 82. Cf. C. W. Macleod, *Homer: Iliad Book XXIV* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 133. Among editors of the *Iliad*, Monro, Leaf, Ameis-Hentze, and Willcock, e.g., maintain that the proper understanding of the passage is that there are but two urns.

has misunderstood the Homeric passage, which should be taken to mean that there are two, not three, urns from which allotments come (Plato took the passage to mean that there were only two and at *Rep.* 379d he gives a version that changes line 528 to *κηρῶν ἐμπλειοι, ὁ μὲν ἐσθλῶν, αὐτὰρ ὁ δειλῶν*).³² Pindar apparently understands that there are three urns, two of bad things and one of good, when he makes explicit a 2:1 ratio. Why? Such a formulation is not necessary if all Pindar wants to suggest is the preponderance of evil in the world³³ – this much was never in question. It is a reasonable answer that the particular form of the quotation (not a misreading, as so often charged, but one of two possibilities implicit in the original) is important for the poem.

Each of the mythical sections might be expected to illustrate the adage. Gildersleeve, somewhat whimsically, was tempted to apply the numbers to the children of Cadmus and Peleus but found he could do so only loosely. He points out that in the case of Cadmus there is 'one joy to three sorrows' and that in the case of Thetis the death is of an only son 'and so more than a double sorrow'.³⁴ If we press these numbers we have, of course, 3:1 and 1:1. And the story of Cadmus' daughters is puzzling, for it is not an ideal example of a good set alongside evils. The mention of Thyone (= Semele) seems to offer something positive, a momentary respite from the woe that Agave, Autonoe, and Ino caused old Cadmus through their madness and murder of Pentheus. This is, after all, another marriage of a mortal with divinity and since the divinity is Zeus there is recall of the *Διὸς χάριν* of 95. Mention of Semele is, however, an odd interruption in a narrative that moves from joy to ensuing sorrow – the death of Achilles follows forthwith, and Cadmus and Peleus have been adduced because they are strictly parallel in the unhappy fates of their children (*τὸν μὲν...θύγατρης*, 97; *τοῦ δὲ παῖς*, 100) as they were parallel in their fortunate marriages, each having taken a goddess as a bride. The unexpected reprieve, if reprieve it is, proves ambiguous on closer inspection.³⁵ The story of Semele is a third instance of the union of divinity with a mortal, but in this case the sexes are reversed and it is the bride who is mortal. We are, thus, more likely to be put in mind of Coronis' liaison with Apollo than of the marriages of Cadmus and Peleus. Pindar's audience was, moreover, unfamiliar with the story, known to us from Callimachus (*Hymn* 5.107–18) and from Ovid (*Metam.* 3.138ff.), of Actaeon's death for disturbing Artemis at her bath. Actaeon was, for them, punished on Zeus' orders for wooing Semele (see, e.g., Stesichorus 236 *PMG*), and they may have recognized Semele's death as punishment for the sin for which Coronis died, i.e. seduction by a mortal when she was carrying

³² M. Cannatà Fera, 'Pindaro interprete di Omero in "Pyth." 3, 81–2', *GIF* 38 (1986), 85–9, maintains that controversy over the correct understanding of the lines from Homer already existed in Pindar's time.

Plutarch is fond of the passage and quotes or alludes to it five times in the *Moralia*. Only once (105c) does he give the version we find in our texts of Homer. He quotes Plato's text at 24a–b and at 600d provides a commentary obviously based on Plato's version. It is unclear which version he has in mind at 369c and 473b, but quite clear that here too he thinks that there are but two jars in all.

³³ As H. Friis Johansen and E. W. Whittle believe, *Aeschylus: The Suppliants* iii (Copenhagen, 1980), p. 343 *ad* 1070. One of the scholia to *Ol.* 1.60, *μετὰ τριῶν τέταρτον πόνον* (Drachmann [n. 5], i [1903], pp. 40–1), tries, not very convincingly, to bring the expression into line with the passage in *Pyth.* 3. For a discussion of this phrase, 'the most controversial in *O.* 1', see D. E. Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One: A Commentary* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1982 [*Phoenix* Suppl. 15]), pp. 99–103.

³⁴ B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes*² (New York, 1890), p. 269.

³⁵ Though the *ἀτάρ* is adversative it is not strongly so: for a similarly weak contrast between *ἀτάρ* and *μὲν* cf. *Pyth.* 4.168–9. The *δέ* of line 100 also provides continuity rather than contrast.

the seed of a god.³⁶ The λέχος of Semele (99) recalls the λέκτροισιν of Coronis (26). In this way a link is provided with the earlier myths of the poem. And the name of Semele inevitably conjures up in imagination one thing more than any other – her death by fire and the saving of a child from her womb. Fire is prominent in the account of the deaths of both Coronis and Asclepius (36, 40, 58), as it is in the death of Achilles (102).³⁷ Semele is, like Achilles, whose example follows, an instance of a child's being a source of both joy and sorrow.

The numbers of the children may support a fundamental idea of the preponderance of pain (cf. the use of numbers to reinforce a basic idea at *Ol.* 1.79, *Nem.* 7.48, 104). But the exact pattern 2:1 is discernible more generally in the shape of each of the mythical sections of the poem. Cadmus and Peleus move from indeterminate sorrows (ἐκ προτέρων καμάτων, 96) to joy (the joy is marital) and then to sorrow again. The triple rhythm is emphatic: κάματος (πήμα), χάρις, πήμα again. And there is a similar rhythm in the first section, where we find the death of Coronis, elaborately told at the outset (accounts of her death begin and end her story), the brilliant medical career of Asclepius, and finally his death by the blazing thunderbolt. The moment of cheer between the framing fires that consume Coronis and Asclepius is a detailed account of Asclepius' cures extending through the entire third strophe (47–53). The aretology (Asclepius' successes are listed in this poem, not Hieron's!) is, then, the ἐσλόν between πήματα. This list of cures includes mention of Asclepius' power to restore from wasting fire, and it ends with the words ἔστασαν ὀρθούς (53). We remember these words at the moment of joy between sorrows in the second myth (ἔστασαν ὀρθὰν καρδίαν, 96).

Are we also entitled to seek further relevance in Hieron's own situation? The nineteenth century, with its penchant for biographical criticism, felt most emphatically that we were. Dissen, quoting Tafel, says, 'carmen ... plane ineptum esset, nisi re vera Hiero tum duo mala uno cum bono habuisset.'³⁸ The list of *duo mala* found by the commentators makes fascinating reading.³⁹ Boeckh, for instance, discusses the matter at some length and decides that one of the most striking things about the Third *Pythian* is the emphasis on the death of children in the myths. And so the poem must be a sort of *Kindertotenlied*, with a biographical referent in the death of some otherwise unknown child of Hieron's.⁴⁰ I am inclined to think that we are invited to

³⁶ See R. Janko, 'P. Oxy. 2509: Hesiod's *Catalogue* on the Death of Actaeon', *Phoenix* 38 (1984), pp. 299–307.

³⁷ Achilles was, like Asclepius, taught by Cheiron (cf. *Nem.* 3.43–55). Both mythical sections of the poem thus end with the fiery death of a ward of Cheiron, and both deaths are followed by a gnomic reflection about what mortals must (χρή: 59, 103) expect from the gods.

There are two actual pyres in the poem, that of Coronis and that of Achilles. Coronis is killed τόξοισιν ὕπ' Ἀρτέμιδος (10), Achilles τόξοις (101) of an unnamed assassin. The parallelism is surely deliberate, and another connection is thus established between the two mythical sections of the poem. Pindar suppresses direct mention of the agent of Achilles' death. That agent was Apollo, who also had Coronis slain. Apollo is mentioned neither as the source of the arrows that killed Achilles nor as having sung at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (cf. *Nem.* 5.22–5 and *Il.* 24.63), perhaps because the one would suggest the other and Pindar's presentation of the wedding as a moment of unalloyed felicity between ills would thereby be damaged: the wedding redounds to the discredit of Apollo in Homer (*Il.* 24.63) and in Aeschylus (cf. *TrGF* ii.350, where Apollo speaks dishonestly). On the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in Pindar and earlier, see J. R. March, *The Creative Poet: Studies on the Treatment of Myths in Greek Poetry* (London, 1987 [*BICS* Suppl. 49]), pp. 3–26, esp. pp. 20–3.

³⁸ L. Dissen, *Pindari carmina quae supersunt* ii (Gotha and Erfurt, 1830), p. 211.

³⁹ For a selection, see F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 65–6.

⁴⁰ A. Boeckh, *Pindari opera quae supersunt* II.ii (Leipzig, 1821), p. 255: 'De ipsa filii vel filiae morte ne dubites.' The second *malum* for Boeckh is, of course, Hieron's illness.

find in Hieron's own fortunes the *duo mala* that are the artistic and emotional centre of the poem in Pindar's reformulation of Homer. Hieron's invitation to right understanding frames the second part of the poem in two *εἰ*-clauses (80, 103). *ὀρθάν* (80) is characteristic of his understanding as it is characteristic of the moment of brightness in both illustrative myths.

It should be clear, I hope, where this is leading. *σύνδυο πῆματα* picks up *διδύμας χάριτας* (72). Both phrases are striking: twin joys, a brace of woes. But the twin joys are known by their absence, I have argued, and are thus *πῆματα*. To Theron of Acragas Pindar had pointed out that *ἐσλὼν... ὑπὸ χαρμάτων πῆμα θνάσκει* (*Ol.* 2.20).⁴¹ This is an ode where much the same myths are arranged in rather more characteristic Pindaric fashion to show the dominant light – the stories of Ino and Semele end with apotheosis, the story of Achilles with his translation to paradise. In the Third *Pythian* we are left wondering what the *ἐσλόν* is beside which the *πῆματα* of sickness and absence of victory, possibly actual defeat, are set. The phrasing of the famous maxim emphasizes that there must be *ἐν ἐσλόν*, for it is given the emphatic position.

In Achilles' description of the gifts of Zeus, the verb is *δίδωσι*; Pindar uses *δαίονται*. The choice of verb is once again deliberate and significant, for it emphasizes one of the principal themes of a poem which gives a clear and consistent picture of man's fate. *μοῖρα* (84), *αἶσα* (60), and *πότημος* (86) are all roughly equivalent terms for expressing what the gods award. And since the gods are repeatedly *δαίμονες* (34, 59, 109), there is probably an etymology suggested by *δαίονται*.⁴² The gods grant good and bad fortune alike – Coronis' misfortune came from a *δαίμων* (34), hence her story is not simply a lesson about the mistake of longing for the distant but an example of the gods' direction of human affairs. *δαίσαντο* (93), which further underscores the theme of divine participation in the lives of mortals, fits into the pattern. Immediately after the passage that tells of the gifts of the gods Hieron is told to contemplate his share of *εὐδαιμονία* (84) rather than his sorrows. His *εὐδαιμονία* is, generally, his high station. But this is, I think, made more precise.

Boeckh's interpretation at least has the merit of trying to bring the myths of the two sections of the poem together. For a recent discussion of the problem of the unity of the two sections of the poem, which remains broken-backed in most interpretations, and for a proposed solution, see A. M. Buongiovanni, 'Sulla composizione della III Pitica', *Athenaeum* N.S. 73 (1985), pp. 327–36, esp. 331ff.

⁴¹ W. Mullen, *Choreia: Pindar and Dance* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 100–9, has studied the interaction of *χάρις* and *πῆμα* in the odes. His statistics show (not altogether surprisingly) that *Pyth.* 3 is exceptional in its emphasis on *πῆμα*.

⁴² A correct etymology, as it happens: see H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* i (Heidelberg, 1973), p. 341. But for purposes of the poem it is the word-play that is important. The correctness of the etymology is not.

If we are tempted to look for a *Grundgedanke* in the poem, the quotation from Homer, with its strategic position in the structure and its resonance in the language and the myths of the poem as well as in the personal situation of the addressee, would be an excellent candidate. Young, though he is critical of the theory of *Grundgedanken*, finds the Third *Pythian* more amenable to this theory than the other odes of Pindar. But the *Grundgedanke* that has traditionally been found in this poem is something rather different, i.e. *γνώθι σεαυτὸν* (see Young [n. 1], p. 65). The fundamental idea of both good and bad fortune's being of divine origin suits the myths of both parts of the poem, however, whereas the idea of self-knowledge or self-restraint is less applicable to the stories of Cadmus and Peleus than to the stories of Coronis and Asclepius (for a discussion of the inadequacy of most analyses of the poem to account for the myths of the second section, see Buongiovanni [n. 40]). There is a more sympathetic treatment of the idea of *Grundgedanken* now by M. Heath, 'The Origins of Modern Pindaric Criticism', *JHS* 106 [1986], 85–98.

It is the *δαίμων* that makes a man *μέγας* (86, 107).⁴³ By paying attention to its dispensation we find our *ἐμπρακτον...μαχανάν* (62, 109). Hieron's god-given *πλοῦτος* (110) can give his *εὐδαιμονία* permanent form despite the winds of change (104–6), for it enables him to engage a poet.

And so the real answer is given, with customary Pindaric delicacy, in the surprise ending: the *ἐν ἐσλόν* is the poem itself. The final *εἰ*-clause repeats the idea of divine dispensation from the conditional sentence of line 80 and advances a hope for future *κλέος* for the addressee. Since this *κλέος* is, primarily, what Hieron wins in the great games (cf. *Ol.* 1.23), there may be here a covert prayer for future victory. More certainly, the theme of singing, so delicately woven into the poem (cf. 17, 64, 90), reappears at the end to remind the king that poetry *does* allow the distant (*πρόσω*, 111) which up to this point it appeared folly to seek. Hieron's *εὐδαιμονία* comes into final focus. It is a supreme paradox, we learn at the close, that immortality, which is the future and the distant, is given in the present in the form of the poem: it is *ἐοικότα* and *παρ ποδός* (59–60) after all. Alongside it there may be the two sorrows that dishearten the ailing Hieron, and Pindar cannot remedy these directly. And so he has not come to Syracuse. Nonetheless Pindar has, for Hieron, changed his absence to delight.⁴⁴

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APPENDIX: HIERON AND POLYZELUS

The dynasty founded by Gelon in Syracuse lasted not quite twenty years, from 485 to 466 (Diod. 11.38 and 68.5–7). Gelon left three brothers at his death – Hieron, Polyzelus, and Thrasybulus. Hieron and Thrasybulus both ruled Syracuse, Hieron from 478–67, Thrasybulus from 467 until his expulsion a year later. Polyzelus, of whose enmity with Hieron we learn from both Diodorus (11.48.3–5) and the Pindaric scholiast,⁴⁵ never ruled at Syracuse. The inscription that was found in 1896 with the charioteer of Delphi names, in the mutilated second of its two lines, Polyzelus as the dedicator. A different version of the first line is still legible *in rasura* beneath the emended line which has been inscribed over it. In the original Polyzelus was called *Γέλας...ἀνάσσω*; in the second version all reference to his kingship has been suppressed.

It may be inferred that Polyzelus came to rule in the ancestral Gela after Hieron succeeded Gelon in Syracuse. Polyzelus presumably predeceased Hieron. We do not

⁴³ Lines 103–4 say much the same thing: prosperity comes *πρὸς μακάρων*.

⁴⁴ '...en délice il change son absence....' The phrase is from Paul Valéry's *Le Cimetière marin*, a poem that takes its epigraph from *Pythian* 3. Another fine poem that shows the direct influence of the Third *Pythian* is Hölderlin's hymn, *Der Rhein*: see the study by A. Seifert, 'Die Rheinymne und ihr Pindarisches Modell: Struktur und Konzeption von Pythien 3 in Hölderlins Aneignung', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch* 23 (1982–3), 79–133.

⁴⁵ Drachmann (n. 5), i [1903], p. 68, *ad Ol.* 2.29c. Diodorus and the scholiast agree on the essential point, that Hieron wished to get rid of Polyzelus by sending him to fight in a mainland war, but disagree on other points (e.g. whether Polyzelus actually went).

Polyzelus and Gelon are never mentioned in Pindar's poetry – the situation at Syracuse was strikingly different from that at Acragas, where Theron and Xenocrates were on the best of terms and both patrons of Pindar. At *Pyth.* 1.48 the plural *εὐρίσκοντο* is surprising immediately after the singular *παρέμειν*' (referring to Hieron). No subject is expressed, but the reference is to the leaders at the battle of Himera where it is likely that both Polyzelus and Hieron were with Gelon. Line 79 is likewise vague, with the plural able to accommodate a Polyzelus and a Hieron who are not mentioned by name.

know how or when he died. He disappears from the literary sources after the incident mentioned above: when Hieron tried to get rid of Polyzelus, he took refuge with Theron of Acragas, at once his father-in-law and son-in-law. This episode nearly led to the outbreak of war between the two royal houses but the strife was apparently composed peacefully and led to Polyzelus' establishment in Gela.

474 was, in all likelihood, the year in which Polyzelus won the victory for which he dedicated the charioteer at Delphi. This is the date proposed by Chamoux⁴⁶ and it appears to be generally accepted.⁴⁷ The year cannot have been 482, certainly, for in that year Hieron, not Polyzelus, was lord of Gela. 478 is not so good a candidate as 474 since, as we have seen, it is the year of Hieron's accession in Syracuse, and Polyzelus may not have been securely established in the Geloan viceroyalty immediately upon Gelon's death and in time for the Pythian festival of that year. As guardian of Gelon's son and commander of the Syracusan army he may well have had designs on Gelon's Syracusan throne but found himself forced by events to take Gela as a consolation prize (that it was a second-best that he only grudgingly accepted is suggested by the stories of his falling-out with Hieron and his appeal for help to Theron). In 470 Hieron was the quadriga-victor. This victory is recorded in the First *Pythian*.

Two supreme masterpieces – the Third *Pythian* and the Charioteer of Delphi – may well date, then, from the same year. It adds a certain piquancy to our contemplation of either or both if we consider the possibility that one issues from defeat, the other from victory in the equestrian games at Delphi in 474 and that the works commemorate two hostile brothers. Wilamowitz aptly remarked that the chariot victory of Theron of Acragas in 476, being a more splendid victory than Hieron's with Pherenikos in the same year, was something that Hieron cannot have contemplated without envy.⁴⁸ His envy must have been even greater in 474 when, no victor himself, he contemplated the victory of his hated brother. It is sometimes believed that it was Hieron who, since he survived Polyzelus, was responsible for the re-writing of the inscription in such a way as to exclude reference to any kingship of Polyzelus.⁴⁹ He could not, of course, eliminate the reference to the victory which the charioteer proclaims.

The praise-poet regularly sees it as his duty to counter the *φθόνος* that attends the victor. Pindar's sense that Hieron was the victim of envy that worked from within as well as from without may have contributed to the general darkness of the poems in his honour.

⁴⁶ F. Chamoux, *L'Aurige de Delphes* (Paris, 1955 [*Fouilles de Delphes* 4.5]), pp. 26–31.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., S. Woodford, *An Introduction to Greek Art* (Ithaca, 1986), p. 86; C. C. Mattusch, *Greek Bronze Statuary: From the Beginnings through the Fifth Century B.C.* (Ithaca and London, 1988), pp. 127ff.

⁴⁸ *Pindaros* (n. 2), p. 237.

⁴⁹ E.g. Mattusch, loc. cit. (n. 48). L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 1961), p. 266, thinks that the change was made by the Geloans about fifteen years after the date of the original inscription.

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