

## EQUINOX AT ACRAGAS: PINDAR, OL. 2.61-62

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When in 476 Theron of Acragas won a victory in the chariot-race at Olympia, he was able to add to his great political and military reputation the most splendid prestige that the pan-Hellenic games could give. In 480/79 he had shared with Gelon and his brothers in the defeat of the Carthaginians on the banks of the Himeras and in the very year of his victory at Olympia he suppressed a revolt, in which two of his own kinsmen joined, by the citizens of Himera against the rule of his son Thrasydaeus and delivered a stiff rebuff to the formidable Hieron of Syracuse. Firmly established as tyrant in Acragas for a dozen years, he was at the height of his power and glory. According to common Greek belief so much eminence required an appropriate commemoration and the dazzling magnificence of the Sicilian tyrannies imposed upon the celebrations an extraordinary standard of appropriateness. Pindar was commissioned to provide an ode and himself came out to Sicily to be present at the festivities in Acragas, as well as at Syracuse, where Hieron was to celebrate another great victory, won in the horse-race at Olympia and second in importance only to Theron's victory with the chariot.

For Hieron Pindar produced the famous First Olympian and, half-a-dozen years later, the even more brilliant First Pythian. What he wrote for Theron is represented for us by the Second and Third Olympians, which leave a very different impression. The Third seems to adapt the purpose of eulogy to the occasion of a local festival, a theoxeny in honor of the Tyndarids and Helen. Praise of the Tyndarids at Acragas and Heracles at Olympia is dominant in both the form and content of the ode. Theron is not forgotten, especially at the end, but he is bathed in a reflected light. The Second is even less jubilant, and gives the place of honor, not to the usual myth, but to an eschatology

of a kind that is unexpected in Pindar and unlike common Greek belief concerning the other world. It is evident that at Acragas Pindar found a patron whose interests and situation presented as great and unfamiliar a challenge as were offered by his power and his wealth.<sup>1</sup>

The courts of the Sicilian tyrants in the decade before Hieron's death in 467/6 provided a setting of unprecedented scale for the publication of poetry. Hieron in particular was a munificent patron and we hear of visits paid to him and verses written for him by Xenophanes, Simonides, Bacchylides, and Aeschylus, in addition to Pindar.<sup>2</sup> Epicharmus was of course at home in Sicily and, by report, often in Hieron's company. Only a little later, when the tyranny at Acragas was replaced by a democracy, we meet the strangely compelling figure of Empedocles. Very much of what we should like to know of the literature produced by this hot-house culture is beyond our reach and likely to remain so, because of the cruel extent of our losses. But it would be worthwhile to lay aside our habitual Athenian bias and to give more study than has been given up to the present to the flowers that have survived from this short-lived but gorgeous garden.

One of these is the Second Olympian. It is true that we are uncertain about many points of interpretation, and in particular about the extent of Pindar's accommodation of his usual practices and beliefs to those of Theron and Acragas. But it is beyond doubt that we have in lines 56-83 an eschatology concerning a judgment of the dead beneath the earth and a transmigration of souls that is not in Pindar's manner. Ordinarily his reverence is given to the Olympian gods and to Apollo above all, who have little to tell of such matters. It is only excep-

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the influence of Sicilian Orphism has been discovered at many points throughout the Second Olympian. But with the ebbing of the pan-Orphic tide in modern scholarship most of these interpretations have been abandoned. Cf. (e.g.) the attack on Norden's views by R. Hampe, "Zur Eschatologie in Pindars Zweiter Olympischer Ode" in *EPMHNEIA, Festschrift Otto Regenbogen* (Heidelberg 1952) 46-65. However, it seems impossible to explain the mention of a migration of souls and some of the details of the eschatology as products of the Olympian and Delphic religion from which Pindar elsewhere derives his ideas. And Acragas is in *Pyth.* 12.2 the seat of Persephone, who receives from the souls in fr. 133 Snell the "requital of the ancient grief." For a criticism of modern opinion on the question, cf. E. Thummer, *Die Religiosität Pindars in Commentationes Aenipontanae* 13 (Innsbruck 1957) 121-30.

<sup>2</sup> Sicily seems to have had an influence on Aeschylus like that postulated for Pindar in *Ol.* 2: note especially that an eschatology appears in *Suppl.* 228-31, which is now dated after his first visit to Sicily.

tionally in one of the fragments that we find, presumably from a poem for an Athenian, praise of the blessedness of the initiate in the Eleusinian mysteries (fr. 137 Snell) or, from other special contexts, mention of the blessings of Elysium or the release by Persephone of souls from purgation. The editors of Pindar refer these fragments to dirges (*θρῆνοι*),<sup>3</sup> in which, it might be supposed, unusual attention was given to the religious views of the dead and of their families (fr. 129-33 Snell). The appearance of the eschatology in an epinician ode, such as the Second Olympian, is most exceptional and must be attributed to quite exceptional circumstances.

The thought of the main eschatological passage (56-70) moves in an easy and continuous chain in which the articulations are made, in the common archaic style, by a loose succession of δέ's after an opening μὲν. Stronger connections, like the οὐ . . . οὐδὲ . . . ἀλλὰ of lines 63-65, are reserved for subordinate, internal relations. This informal style presents, as usual, problems of interpretation for anyone who attempts to analyse the thought which it expresses, but it is not unmanageable. A close paraphrase, or fortified translation, will best illustrate the meaning by strengthening some connections and specifying others which the style passes over.

Pindar is concerned with knowledge of the future (τὸ μέλλον), which is immediately identified by the occurrence of *θανόντων* in the next line as the time after death. The whole passage then runs somewhat as follows: Out of those who suffer death here in this world the sinners, or their surviving *φρένες*, pay an immediate compensation, for there exists beneath the earth one who judges and pronounces sentence harsh and implacable for transgressions committed here in the kingdom of Zeus. But others of the departed, viz. the good, have a fate unlike that of the sinners. They enjoy equal nights always, and equal days in the light of the sun. They do no work, but are given their livelihood without it. (61-63: *ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ, / ἴσαις δ' ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον / ἐσλοὶ δέκονται βίοτον*). They have no need to harass the land nor the water of the sea with the might of their hands in search of a scanty subsistence. Instead all who have had joy in keeping their oaths pass tearless lives in the company of honored gods,

<sup>3</sup> But note the doubts about the *genre* expressed by U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 252.

whereas the others undergo labor that cannot be looked upon. Finally, all who, sojourning three times on this side and on that, have manfully kept their souls from all injustice take the way of Zeus to the tower of Cronus. There the breezes of Ocean breathe round the island of the blest. Flowers of gold are ablaze, some growing on shining shrubs along the shore, others in the water's nurture. Of them bracelets are woven round their arms and crowns for their heads, according to the upright counsels of Rhadamanthys whom the great Father keeps always seated by his side, the lord of Rhea whose throne stands highest of all. In their number Peleus and Cadmus are counted, and Achilles whom his mother brought there, when by her prayers she had persuaded the heart of Zeus. It was he who brought Hector down, the invincible, the unyielding pillar of Troy, and delivered unto death Cynus, the Aethiopian son of Morning.

It is impossible to miss the beauty of the language, the vividness of the images, the loving and nostalgic reminiscences of the great myths, the fear and the hope. What has not been seen is the nature of the distinction between the two forms of blessedness, the one given to those who are approved at the judgment that follows immediately after death, the other to those who have passed the three sojourns without injustice. In particular, the significance of the "equal nights and equal days" (61-62) which prevail for the former group has proved elusive. Critics have been driven to make bad textual emendations<sup>4</sup> and commentators to propose unlikely interpretations.<sup>5</sup> Farnell's

<sup>4</sup> The mss. and the papyrus give ἴσας δ' ἐν ἀμέραις; ἴσα δ' ἐν ἀμέραις is a Byzantine conjecture. Modern conjectures include Boeckh's ἴσον ἐν, which is accepted by Bowra in the Oxford edition. But ἴσας gives by repetition a more sonorous and symmetrical emphasis to the phrase, and most editors rightly refuse to alter it. Sandys, in the Loeb edition, even prints without change the text given by the tradition. But to excise ἐν is a trivial alteration which preserves the virtue of the tradition while removing the metrical difficulty. It seems to be widely accepted (as by Turyn, Snell, and Fernandez-Galiano). The repetition of δέ in 62 has the advantage that it effectively binds ἄλιον ἔχοντες to ἴσας . . . ἀμέραις while separating that phrase from 61. All in all, the traditional text is proved to be strong here. Anyone who wishes to change it is obliged to show that its meaning is unsatisfactory or less likely than what is offered by one of the conjectural versions of the line.

<sup>5</sup> For a survey of interpretations, cf. J. van Leeuwen, *Pindarus' Tweede Olympische Ode* (Assen 1964) 1.181-84 and 2.487-88. The notion that Pindar, in speaking of equality of nights and days, intends a comparison *with the conditions of life on earth*, goes back to the Scholiasts. It is obviously present in the view that Pindar conceives in 61-62 of a reversal of our night and day. It is no less certainly implied in the common opinion that

comment, if it has no other merit, is at least both clear and candid. The text, he writes, "could only be interpreted as a clumsy way of saying that in Paradise there was always equinox: this could not be proclaimed as a special privilege of the blest"!<sup>6</sup> It is easy to dismiss Farnell's not uncharacteristic complaint about his author's ineptness. But what is to be made of his main point? What has the equinox to do with blessedness?

Before attempting to answer this question, it is important to see that it is not only in this passage of the poem that Pindar lays weight on nights and days. The equinoctial blessedness of those who pass the first judgment after death is to be compared with the condition of mortal men on earth and with the unqualified felicity of those who,

he is referring to perpetual light, for this meaning can be elicited from Pindar's text only by some such interpretation as, "equally during (our) nights and (our) days." The supplements are necessary because there can be no alternation of nights and days in a state of perpetual light. But there is nothing in 61-62, nor in Pindar's usage elsewhere, to suggest that the poet is thinking of conditions on earth. A belief in this interpretation ought not to survive a reading of fr. 129.1-2 Snell (τοῖσι λάμπει μὲν μένος αἰθέριον / τὰν ἐνθάδε νύκτα κάτω), which shows how clearly Pindar can relate conditions in the other world to those on earth, if he desires to speak of that relation. What is more, it is evident both that the fragment refers to perpetual light and that it is irrelevant to the interpretation of *Ol.* 2.61-62. Plutarch (*De lat. viv.* 7, p. 1130c), who preserves the fragment, contrasts the place of the pious, which is described in fr. 129, with the complete darkness of Hell in fr. 130. This contrast is sufficient, whether the two quotations are from the same poem or not, to show that perpetual light is meant. Gold also appears (fr. 129.5), as in the description of the life of the blessed in *Ol.* 2.72, where alone perpetual light is appropriate. There seems to be a similar significance in the cry of the initiated in Aristoph. *Ran.* 454-55: μόνους γὰρ ἡμῖν ἥλιος / καὶ φέγγος ἱερὸν ἔστιν. Finally, there is no particular point, either in religion or in poetry, in days and nights that are the same as ours or the reverse of ours. (A recent variation is offered by J. Bollack, "L'or des rois: Le mythe de la deuxième Olympique," *RPh* 37 [1963] 234-54. If I understand him rightly, Bollack believes that *Ol.* 2.57-67 does not refer to the other world—except for the judgment in 59-60—and that 61-67 describes the life on earth of the privileged, such as Theron. "Pour les puissants, puisqu'ils possèdent le soleil de la richesse, les jours et les nuits se confondent dans un même rayonnement." This interpretation seems to me to misconstrue the tone and tenor of the passage. For example, Bollack takes θανόντων . . . ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες to refer to those condemned by the infernal judgment and reincarnated to pay their penalties in an earthly life. The description of the felicity of the good is interpreted as depicting the happiness of the great on earth. All this in general, like the reading of 61-62 in particular, seems to me far-fetched.) The alternative is to exclude any comparison with conditions on earth and to permit *Ol.* 2.61-62 to mean what the lines say, that the nights and days are equal (and so, presumably, to one another). The real problem is to understand the significance that Pindar attached to this sentiment.

<sup>6</sup> L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar: 2. Critical Commentary* (London 1932) 18.

after the threefold sojourns, have been transported to the island of the blest. The tides of time, we have already learned from an earlier passage (30-34), bring upon men both joy and labor. It is not so with Semele and Ino, the daughters of Cadmus, who after much suffering enjoy, on Olympus the love of the gods, or in the sea an immortal life in the company of Nereus' daughters. For men, by contrast, it is not clearly marked what end they are to meet, whether the end which is death or the completion of a day of quiet and unwearying good. Here, as usual, Pindar's opposition is between two pictures, not between two concepts. A mind trained in conceptual analysis might put the point more clearly and abstractly thus: the human condition, because of its indeterminacy, cannot be truly said to be simply either good or bad. Pindar however, in order to provide an antithesis of good and bad, sets up two images side by side, the "day" that brings quiet and good beside the "end" which is death. For the latter picture he might have substituted, had he felt the need of a clearer common category, either another "day" or a "night." Homer has images of "the day of fate," "the pitiless day," or "the day of destruction," as well as the "night" that covers the eyes in death.<sup>7</sup> Pindar makes no use of the Homeric formulas, but it is clear that he has the image and the idea in a passage at the beginning of the Sixth Nemean. Fate, he says, has marked out a goal for us; we must run up to it, by day or by night, though we do not know what it is. It is the indeterminacy of the "day," or the "end," that in Pindar's imagination characterizes the condition of human life.

In the description of life in the island of the blest (68-83), by contrast, the word "day" does not occur. But Pindar's picture contains traditional elements, such as the breezes of Ocean and the golden flowers which recall other accounts of mythical bliss. For him gold is like the day in being "the child of the sun" (*Ol.* 2.32 and fr. 222 Snell; cf. *Pyth.* 4.144) and he uses the golden flowers elsewhere, in a fragment quoted by Plutarch and attributed by the editors to a dirge, as part of a description of the life of the blest.<sup>8</sup> There he conceives of them

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Il.* 15.613 and *Od.* 10.175; *Il.* 11.484, 588; 19.294, 409. Achilles speaks in *Il.* 21.106-13 of the inevitable but unknown hour of his fate, whether morning, noon, or night. On the night that covers the eyes, cf. *Il.* 5.310, 11.356.

<sup>8</sup> Fr. 129 Snell. Cf. note 5 above.

enjoying unbroken day, for he says that the sun shines upon them below during our night here. And in the Second Olympian the perpetual day of the blest is readily contrasted with the utter darkness of the damned, whose woes "cannot be looked upon." Even in Homer (*Od.* 6.42-46) the life which the gods enjoy "all their days" on Olympus, their unshaken seat, is illuminated by a bright, never-clouded light, and so, by implication, is the life in Elysium promised to Menelaus (*Od.* 4.561-69). And in Hesiod (*Op.* 109-26) it is the golden race of men who know only one of Pindar's alternative lives, the life of quiet (119), and never meet the common end of death, being overcome as by sleep. So far is it from being true that night covers their eyes, that now, after "death," they are the unfailing watchers who guard mortal men (cf. 252-55). With these traditional associations Pindar intended, I believe, and his hearers understood that the life of the blest was spent by the cool shore of Ocean and in the splendor of gold, amid the uninterrupted light of day.<sup>9</sup>

On this reading of the poem the equinox of 61-62 is a mean,<sup>10</sup> as it were, between the confused and indeterminate combination of night and day which is said to be the fate of mortal men in 30-34, and the unbroken and unending day of the blest in 68-83. The notion of "day" here goes far beyond the abstract order of time and signifies also the determination which the "day" brings with it, as in the Homeric formulas and in the idea, which runs through early Greek poetry, that man is ἐφήμερος, "subject to the day." All this has been expounded in an important article by Professor Hermann Fränkel, who has collected and studied the relevant texts.<sup>11</sup> The essential point, for

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (Leipzig 1893) 21, on the garden of the gods and the blest: "Der Garten wurde immer mit der Sonne und dem Sonnengotte in Verbindung gedacht: er lag dort, wo die Sonne aufgeht oder nach der verbreitetsten Vorstellung, wo sie untergeht, im äussersten Westen."

<sup>10</sup> Cf. (together with *Nem.* 7.1-8) *Isthm.* 7.40-43, where man's subjection to the day in his pursuit of what pleases him until old age and death meet him is associated with the common fate of death on the one hand and the inequality of the *daimôn* on the other (θνάσκομεν γὰρ ὁμῶς ἅπαντες, δαίμων δ' ἄλσος). Castor escapes this fate when Pollux chooses (*Nem.* 10.83-88) that the brothers share equally between life and death, heaven and earth.

<sup>11</sup> H. Fränkel, "Man's 'Ephemeros' Nature According to Pindar and Others," *TAPA* 77 (1946) 131-45; reprinted with some alterations in a German version, "*ΕΦΗΜΕΡΟΣ* als Kennwort für die menschliche Natur," in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*<sup>2</sup>, ed. F. Tietze (Munich 1960) 23-39. But the recognition of the day as the

the present purpose, is that the idea, when applied to men, signifies mutability, in thoughts and emotions as well as in natural change and in fortunes. Even the *νόος* or *θυμός* of men corresponds to the prevailing day. Our text of Hesiod's *Works and Days* collects at the end some sixty-four lines in which the author attempts to give a systematic account by the calendar of the efficacy of each day.<sup>12</sup> Days are conceived as bearing a fate, as we see from 822–24 (cf. 799), where a warning is given against the undetermined days. These are exceptional, being changeable, fateless, and producing no regular effect (*μετάδουποι, ἀκήριοι, οὐ τι φέρουσαι*). The evidence shows that the link between the day and determination by fate is widely recognized in early Greek literature, and it must have been familiar to Pindar. Indeed, he has given, in the famous passage at the end of the Eighth Pythian (88–97), the most eloquent and memorable expression that the idea ever received:

He who, lapped in the enjoyment of magnificence, has won (by his victory) some new distinction as his lot, is inspired by high hope and winged by his victorious prowess to soaring flight, all his thought bent on a height higher than wealth. For a little time whatever is pleasing to mortal men grows up, and as quickly falls again upon the ground, overturned by a reversal of purpose. Creatures of the day (*ἐπάμεροι*)! What is he, what is he not? A dream of a shadow is man. Yet when the god-given gleam comes, then a bright light rests upon men, and a kindly life.<sup>13</sup>

The notion of an equality between the traditional nights and days of mythical thought occurs for the first time in Pindar and appears to be an innovation. It seems possible to think of an origin in cult and it is suggestive that Pausanias (6.20.1) knew that at Olympia at the spring equinox of each year a college of priests offered sacrifice to Cronus on his hill. The parallel, however, is not close, as Cronus in Pindar rules in the uninterrupted light of the blest, not in the equinox. In any case,

bearer of fate has, of course, long been recognized, as (e.g.) by Gronovius (quoted by Blomfield on Aesch. *Pers.* 266): “*ἡμαρ* in hujusmodi locutionibus accipi pro conditione ac fortuna quam dies imponit.”

<sup>12</sup> For a recent, full discussion, cf. F. Solmsen, “The ‘Days’ of the *Works and Days*,” *TAPA* 94 (1963) 293–320.

<sup>13</sup> A brief but equally emphatic statement is found in fr. 94a.14–15 Snell: *ἀθάναται δὲ βροτοῖς / ἄμεραι, σῶμα δ’ ἐστὶ θνατόν*. Cf. also Soph. fr. 950 with Pearson’s note.



the influence of Olympian cult would be an unlikely explanation of the poet's Sicilian eschatology. What is more, the festivals of Greek cult seem to be regulated by a lunar calendar which would take no account of the equinox. Nilsson therefore argues that Pausanias' information is from a later period, and that the Elean month which he also gives is alone relevant to the earliest history of the festival.<sup>14</sup> If so, this cult has nothing to do with Pindar.

Whatever its immediate origin in the Second Olympian, the idea of equality evidently took on some importance in the fifth century.<sup>15</sup> *Ἰσονομία* became a powerful watchword in politics,<sup>16</sup> as we infer from its use in the scolion on Harmodius the tyrannicide<sup>17</sup> and from Herodotus' mention (3.80.6) of it as "the fairest of all names" of constitutions. *Ἰσομοιρία* may have been a rallying cry even earlier among the poor. At any rate, Solon (fr. 23.21 D<sup>3</sup>) opposes it to tyranny and expressly repudiates it. Nevertheless he favors laws that will govern "good" and "bad" alike (fr. 24.18; cf. fr. 5.5-6 and 25.8-9 D<sup>3</sup>) and later antiquity attributed to him the saying, τὸ ἴσον πόλεμον οὐ ποιεῖ (Plut. *Sol.* 14).<sup>18</sup> In medicine, it is used by Alcmaeon of Croton (B<sub>4</sub> VS) who found the cause of health to be an *ἰσονομία* of the powers of the body (the moist, the dry, the bitter, the sweet, and the rest), whereas ill-health was caused by a monarchy of one of these.<sup>19</sup> The

<sup>14</sup> Cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Die Entstehung und religiöse Bedeutung des griechischen Kalenders*<sup>2</sup> = *Scripta minora* 1 (Lund 1962) 27 and note 3.

<sup>15</sup> Cosmic equality occurs in Hesiod's description of the world. The heaven is as far above the earth as Tartarus is below (*Theog.* 720-21) and the earth is equal to the heaven 126-27; cf. *Soph. El.* 86-87). Among the Homeric gods Poseidon claims to be Zeus' equal in portion (*ἰσόμορος*: *Il.* 15.209) as well as his peer in honor (*δμότιμος*: 186).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. G. Vlastos, *ἸΣΟΝΟΜΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ* in *Isonomia: Studien zur Gleichheitsvorstellung im griechischen Denken*, ed. J. Mau and E. G. Schmidt (Berlin 1964) 1-35; and "Isonomia," *AJP* 74 (1953) 337-66; P. Lévêque and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Clisithène l'Athénien* in *Ann. Lit. de l'Univ. de Besançon* 65 (Paris 1964), especially Chap. 2. For a Marxist account, cf. B. Borecký, "The Primitive Origin of the Greek Conception of Equality," *ΓΕΡΑΣ: Studies Presented to G. Thomson* = *Acta Univ. Carol. Philos. et Hist.* 1 (Prague 1963) 41-60; and *Survivals of Some Tribal Ideas in Classical Greek*, being Monogr. 10 of the same series (1965).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. fr. 893 and 896 PMG, and G. Vlastos in *AJP* 74 (1953) 340-44. The role played by *ἰσονομία* in Athenian politics after 514 is much disputed: for the latest discussion, cf. A. J. Podlecki, "The Political Significance of the Athenian Tyrannicide-Cult," *Historia* 15 (1966) 129-41.

<sup>18</sup> On Solon's view of equality, cf. G. Vlastos in *CP* 41 (1946) 78-82.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. G. Vlastos in *CP* 42 (1947) 157-58.

related idea of a "temperament" (*κρᾶσις*) which holds in balanced control opposites, powers, seasons, and humors is a commonplace; it implies *ἰσομοιρία* in Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters, Places* (12). In ethics, equality is connected with justice in the Theognidea (543-44; cf. 678) and by Gorgias (B6 VS), and with friendship by Antiphon (B49 VS). More relevant to Pindar's usage is a passage of Euripides (*Phoen.* 542-48), in which the alternations of night and day in the course of the year are said to be directed by equality, and so (it is implied) by justice. But most important of all for our purpose is the use of the idea by Parmenides of Elea who, in a fragment of the second part of his poem containing his views on physics, has these remarkable words (B9.3-4 VS):

πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου  
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων. . . .

All is full of light and of unseen night together,  
equal both. . . .

He conceives of the physical world as composed of two opposite "forms," light and night, and these are equal, just as Empedocles conceives (B17.27-28 VS) of the four elements, or "roots," of the physical world as equal. A similar notion, that light and dark have equal shares in the cosmos (*ἰσόμοιρά τ' ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ φῶς καὶ σκότος*), was found by Alexander Polyhistor (*ap. Diog. Laert.* 8.26) in certain Pythagorean texts.<sup>20</sup> The date of these texts is unknown, but it is highly interesting to find the idea attributed to the Pythagoreans, because they, like Alcmaeon, Parmenides, and the Second Olympian, are at home in the west, while Empedocles is from Acragas itself.

Something Pindar must owe to the interests and beliefs of Theron and Acragas. Though he asserts that he will speak only to those who have understanding, while the generality need interpreters, this challenge is unlikely to have daunted Theron very much. No doubt he could recognize familiar and comforting images and doctrines in the poem's eschatology. As for his own fate after death, he certainly knew that after Gelon died in Syracuse only two years earlier heroic honors had been given to the dead tyrant, and he probably foresaw a

<sup>20</sup> Light and Darkness occur as a pair, and so equal, in the Pythagorean table of opposites given by Aristotle (*Met. A* 986A22).

similar action at Acragas on his own behalf, which was in fact taken after his death four years later (Diod. 11.38 and 53). In that case he must have found an allusion to this in Pindar's ode. In the praise of justice and faithfulness to oaths as well he may have found something congenial, and even politically useful.<sup>21</sup> Finally, equality must have been an idea familiar to him in the west and cannot have been repugnant, as Pindar gives so much prominence to it here. It is true that in other occurrences in political contexts, the idea of *ισονομία* is consistently opposed to tyranny, and Empedocles, who values equality, is said to have become a democratic leader in Acragas after Theron's death.<sup>22</sup> Still, equality and justice may be at home in other forms of constitution,<sup>23</sup> as we see from Solon and the Theognidea; and it is not impossible, nor particularly unlikely, that in the comparatively unstable social conditions of Sicily, with its mixture of nationalities and vast new political structures, the idea of equality had a stronger appeal than in the old Greece. In that case, the tyrants could turn it to their account, just as Napoleon adapted the Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité of the Revolution to his own Imperial purposes.

In our surviving texts Pindar seems to be alone in his use of the equinox as the form of the ideal cosmic equality. He may, of course, have been followed by other poets in works that are now lost, and one piece of evidence points to such an inference. Diodorus Siculus (2.55-60) has from an unknown Iambulus (2.55.2 and 60.3) a romantic tale of travel to one of a group of islands, evidently in the Indian Ocean, which combines elements taken from popular belief with sailors' yarns and philosophers' utopian speculations. Some features derive from early poetry, including two verses from the description of Phaeacia in the *Odyssey* (7.120-21) and a reminiscence of the men of Hesiod's golden race, to whom was given an abundance of food, a life without physical

<sup>21</sup> It is to be noticed that justice appears a number of times and in significant contexts. The transgressions committed here in "the realm of Zeus" (58-59) recall the mention of the irreversible injustices of the past (16). The good are those judged innocent of these offences (63), and those sent to the island of the blest have abstained from all injustice during the three sojourns (68-70). The praise of Theron's justice in the opening lines (6) therefore takes on a richer meaning in the ode.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Diog. Laert. 8.63 and 66: 31A1 VS.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. G. Vlastos in *AJP* 74 (1953) 365-66, who argues that *ισονομία*, though opposed in the principal texts to tyranny, was first invoked against the hereditary rights of aristocracies, whether by democrats or by tyrants.

deterioration, and a death in the form of sleep (*Op.* 109–20). Their climate, though they live on the equator, has that most temperate character which is praised by Herodotus and others.<sup>24</sup> But the reason for this happy dispensation is evidently connected with the equality that everywhere prevails, in the size of their islands and the intervals between them, their physical stature, the length of their lives, the holding of political office, and the community of children. In particular, their days are always equal to their nights and at noon no shadow is to be seen, because the sun stands directly overhead (2.56.7).<sup>25</sup>

For philosophers like Parmenides and Empedocles the notion of equality provided a means of reconstituting a unity of the visible world. If the arguments of Parmenides had made it impossible for anyone who accepted them to believe, as the sixth century had believed, that there was an obvious unity to be seen in that world, it was possible and seemed necessary to maintain that the constituent parts to which it was now reduced were, though many, united at least by their equality. For Pindar, and no doubt for traditional poets in general, this problem, which was produced by the Eleatic criticism of the common Greek view, did not arise. His language and thought bear none of the stigmata that mark all who were ever nailed to an Eleatic cross. The traditional world of Greek belief, like the immediate experience of Greek life, remains fully real and alive in his verse. He has nothing to say about the postulate of an exact equality among the elements of the physical world, upon which that world could be balanced. Equality takes instead the form of the equinox which, in an age without plentiful artificial light and still near the life of the countryside, was a familiar part of common Greek experience.<sup>26</sup> Still, it is interesting to see that

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Hdt. 1.142.1–2; Hippocr. *De aer.* 12; Arist. *Pol.* 7.6.

<sup>25</sup> The equinox of the blest is implied in other texts also. Aeschines the Socratic (*Axiochus* 20) speaks of the absence of severe cold and heat and the presence of a well-tempered air. Lucian (*Vera hist.* 2.12) describes a perpetual spring, in which flowers and plants flourish and bear abundant crops. It is neither night nor bright day, but like the half-light of dawn before the sun has risen. Note also the six-month nights and days of the Hyperboreans (Pomp. Mela, *In situ orbis* 3.5.36; cf. Pliny, *Hist. nat.* 4.12.89) and of the Lotus-eaters (Arist. *ap.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Γέρμαρα: fr. 564 Rose).

<sup>26</sup> D. R. Dicks, in *JHS* 86 (1966) 31–35, shows what is involved in an exact determination of the equinoxes by astronomical means. The earliest astronomical calculation of the equinox known with certainty is that by Euctemon (Geminus, *Isagoge* p. 216.3 and 228.10 Manitius), to whom, with Meton, is attributed the invention in 432 of a

his use of the idea in the richly variegated world of myth has analogies with the stricter usage of the philosophers. The disunity to which the visible world was consigned by Parmenides' attack has a parallel in what we have called the indeterminacy of the workings of the mythical day and night. The equality of equinox brought order there, just as equality among the disparate elements held together the riven cosmos of the philosophers. We appear to see here the workings of a powerful idea of western origin both in myth and in reason.

Parmenides' proem provides an interesting parallel. He describes a journey that he made in a chariot, attended by the daughters of the Sun, on the way from the house of Night through the gate of the paths of Night and Day, into the presence of a goddess who promises to reveal to him both the truth and the opinions of mortal men. The description is as highly visual and full of concrete details as any myth. Yet it is certainly intended to match, in the context of myth, the doctrines that are propounded, with unprecedented rigor and clarity, in the passages of reasoning that follow. The myth, it seems, offered the

cycle of nineteen years which gave a tolerably exact mean lunar month and solar year. Dicks is reluctant to admit knowledge of equinoxes at an earlier date: cf. also Nilsson (above, note 14) 27, note 3. The earliest occurrence of *ἰσημερία* is in the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* (11). But there the phrase, *αἱ ἰσημερίαι νομιζόμεναι εἶναι*, which gives difficulty to Dicks (33, note 38), can hardly refer to anything but the customarily recognized equinoxes. This text, like Pindar, *Ol.* 2.61-62 and the implications of Parmenides, points to a practical recognition of equinoxes at an earlier date. In addition, a reference to an equinox has often been seen, as by Wilamowitz, in Hes. *Op.* 561-63, though he follows Plutarch in excluding the lines from Hesiod's text. Dicks admits (39) that Hesiod had devised by "rough-and-ready observations" a calendar which would serve as a "guide for the regular business of everyday life, to mark the seasons for different agricultural operations, to ensure that religious festivals connected with the harvest or seed-sowing or the gathering of grapes were carried out at the appropriate times, to give warning of the months when it was safe to put to sea." It seems very likely on our evidence that equinoxes also were fixed by some rough calculation before the fifth century, even if it is the case that no astronomical basis for the calculation was known before 432. E.g. it is easy to divide in half the distance between the solstice-marks, whether these are determined by the position of the sun on the horizon at sunrise or sunset or by the maximum and minimum lengths of daily minimum shadows. As tallies of days after the solstice were made (cf. *Op.* 564-65 and 663), it would be possible to count the days between the solstices and divide them. It is not much more difficult to note the day when the positions of the sun on the horizon at sunrise and sunset can be joined by a straight line, or even when this intersects the line of the meridian at a right angle. On the observation of equinoxes by primitive peoples, cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning* (Lund 1920) Chap. 12.

best, and presumably the only possible, form in which the transition from the opinions of mortal men to the disclosure of truth could be described.

Parmenides rides, it appears,<sup>27</sup> in the chariot of the Sun and under the guidance of his daughters, away from the house of Night up the heaven into the light of Day.<sup>28</sup> The critical point in his passage is marked by the detailed description of the great gate of the paths of Night and Day. For there, we are told, there are "alternate" keys or bolts (*κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς*), which are in the keeping of "avenging Justice" (*Δίκη πολύποινος*).

The function of Justice here is in part to ratify the rightness of Parmenides' journey and argument and, by admitting him through the gate, to certify him as right in his procedure. There is precedent in myth for this, and we are reminded of the judgment after death in the Second Olympian and the requital that Persephone is said, in one of Pindar's fragments, to take from the dead for her "ancient grief."<sup>29</sup> But Justice appears also in a passage of Parmenides' strictest argument (B8.12-15 *VS*), which is quite unlike the mythical proem and where it is a question, not of judging anyone, but of logical necessity. Nothing, he says, can arise from what-is-not. "Therefore Justice does not relax with her fetters and allow it to come into being or perish, but holds it fast." This Justice exists in reality itself, making it stable and lawful, and is directed by reason (cf. B8.30-32 *VS*). It is unlikely that even in the proem Parmenides has forgotten this aspect of the goddess. But it is of course the ordinary visible world, not any noumenal or supernal being, over which she there presides. She must therefore

<sup>27</sup> Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 2 (Cambridge 1965) 6-13. For other interpretations, cf. K. Deichgräber, *Parmenides' Auffahrt zur Göttin des Rechts* = *Akad. d. Wiss. u. d. Lit. in Mainz, Abh. d. geistes- u. sozialwiss. Kl.*, 1958, no. 11; J. Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt* (Assen 1964) 222-73; L. Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton 1965) 7-31.

<sup>28</sup> The parallel of Pind. fr. 30 Snell has been neglected. In a fragment of what appears to be a hymn we learn that heavenly Themis, the giver of good counsel, was conducted by the Fates with their golden mares from the springs of Ocean by a shining road to the awful ladder of Olympus, to be the wife of old Zeus the Savior. Here we have the association of fate with justice, the ascent to the heaven from the end of the world, the chariot with mares, the bright road (leading to Zeus: cf. Pindar's *Διὸς ὁδόν* in *Ol.* 2.70, and *ὁδὸν δαίμονος* in *Parm.* B1.2-3 *VS*).

<sup>29</sup> The basic study in the interpretation of the fragment is H. J. Rose, "The Ancient Grief," in *Greek Poetry and Life*, ed. C. Bailey et al. (Oxford 1936) 79-96.

signify the lawful regularity of the visible world as well as the rightness of Parmenides in his course.<sup>30</sup>

Within the visible world there is much confusion and irregularity, but its basis is the duality that has been introduced into it by human decision to name the two "forms," light and night (B8.53-59 *VS*). In consequence these fill the universe in perfect equality (B9 *VS*). It is evidently here, in the equality of the two elemental "forms," that we are to find the lawfulness of our world and to recognize the order of Justice. Without it the world would lapse into total confusion. Unless the inquirer discovers it, he can never find his way to truth. This must be the significance of the Justice of the proem who keeps the gate of the world.

Once more illumination is given by a comparison with more innocent forms of myth than Parmenides' proem. Hesiod's *Theogony* (746-57) has a description of the alternation of Night and Day at the house of Night. Instead of a gate there is a great threshold of bronze which they cross in opposite directions (ἀμειβόμεναι μέγαν οὐδόν / χάλκεον), speaking to each other as they approach. The one goes in as the other emerges, so that both are never inside at the same time. Whichever is outside ranges over the earth, while the other waits at home until it is time to go forth in turn (τὴν αὐτῆς ὥρην ὁδοῦ, ἔστ' ἂν ἱκηται). The alternation of Night and Day and the notion of a definite time for each is conceived as a social arrangement by which a house is shared by workers on different shifts. Neither justice nor equality is explicitly mentioned, but both are latent in the picture.

Some interesting similarities appear in the description in the *Odyssey* (10.80-86) of the country of the Laestrygonians, where the shepherd who drives his flock home calls and is answered by another who is just starting out. There, it is said, a man who could dispense with sleep might earn double wages, once for herding cattle and once for pasturing sheep. "For the paths of Night and Day are near" (ἐγγὺς γὰρ Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός εἰσι κέλευθοι). It has been commonly believed that this passage describes the long summer days of the Arctic, of which

<sup>30</sup> Note that Plato, in the myth of the *Gorgias*, writes (508A) that the wise call the universe a world-order (κόσμος) because of its order and justice, which rest on geometrical equality. Dodds, in the note *ad loc.* of his edition of the dialogue, argues for a Pythagorean source.

it might be said that Day followed closely on Night. But recently H. Vos has argued persuasively that the lines speak of the nearness of the two paths, not to one another, but to the Laestrygonians.<sup>31</sup> The explanation, Vos suggests, is that "the paths of Night and Day" has a local rather than a temporal meaning and signifies the bright *aithêr* of the heaven. The Laestrygonians live in the extreme east, which was certainly the proper place for Circe's Aeaea, to which Odysseus came next. There the heavenly dome of *aithêr* touches the horizon and all is filled with its light.

Whatever may be the truth in this matter, it is certain that in the exchange of greetings between the returning and the advancing herdsmen we have once more an alternation of action, though this time among men who herd both sheep and cattle and require sleep to match their waking hours. The light of heaven above is never, or only briefly, interrupted. But on earth alternations persist, being imposed either by the variety of men's tasks or by the physical necessities of their bodies. There is no mention of a gate or a threshold, but the exchange of greetings between the shepherds implies the existence of a regular meeting-place, like the gate of an enclosure, and the town of the Laestrygonians bears the significant name of "City of the Far Gate" (*Τηλέπυλος*). It would be surprising if the alternations that occur there did not imply some kind of equality, in time, labor, and human life generally.

After this analysis of Parmenides' predecessors in myth, it is worthwhile to notice that Heraclitus, who is his approximate contemporary in philosophy, touches on the same general subject in his vividly polemical way. "Hesiod," he says (B57 *VS*), "is most men's teacher. They are assured that he knew most things, though he could not recognize day and night. They are the same."<sup>32</sup> Heraclitus appears to be criticizing primarily Hesiod's statement (*Theog.* 124) that Day is daughter of Night, but perhaps also his description of the threshold which they share. Day and Night, he evidently means, are opposite and all opposites are identical. Because he did not know this, Hesiod did not know what alone could convert his polymathy into true

<sup>31</sup> Cf. H. Vos, "Die Bahnen von Nacht und Tag," *Mnemosyne* ser. 4, 16 (1963) 18-34.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. also B67 and 106 *VS*.



knowledge. Though he was acquainted with Day and Night, it was therefore not strictly true to say that he knew them. The relation between Day and Night cannot be grasped by means of the mythical forms offered by the poets, whether these may be the genealogy and the threshold of Hesiod or the shepherds' meeting in the *Odyssey*. For true knowledge something else is required, something less richly pictorial, something more stringently abstract. Heraclitus' reasoning finds what is required in his general principle of the identity of opposites.

Parmenides is similarly critical of the poets, but he presents an even more instructive phenomenon, because in his proem he has chosen, or been compelled, to compete with them in the shaping of myth. Justice, who is a traditional figure of importance at least since Hesiod, is prominent there. I wish to argue that Parmenides intends us to see that equality lurks there as well. If he makes no mention of it by name, that is because he follows the practice of the poets, who prefer images to concepts. Parmenides' idea of an equality between opposites will not fit comfortably into the manifold world of myth any better than Heraclitus' notion of an identity of opposites. If Parmenides means to write as a poet in his proem, and yet to ground traditional Justice in the new equality, he must use traditional, and so indirect, means.

The connection between justice and equality is common in Greek thought in the sixth and fifth centuries, as has been shown most clearly by Professor Gregory Vlastos.<sup>33</sup> In Parmenides' own cosmology the lawfulness of the world rests, it has been suggested, on the equality of the two forms of Light and Night. If the proem is to be related to what follows as a necessarily mythical account of the passage from opinion to knowledge, it is reasonable to see in the traditional Day and Night of the opening lines a mythical analogue of the Light and Night of the cosmology. The other details of the description of Parmenides' journey are numerous and difficult, and no close consensus has yet been reached by the interpreters, though we are fortunate to have been given several commentaries in recent years. For our present purpose it is suggestive that the chariot has "two wheels on either side"

<sup>33</sup> G. Vlastos, "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies," *CP* 42 (1947) 156-78.

(δοιοῖς . . . ἀμφοτέρωθεν) and decisive that Justice, who keeps the gate, has in her charge κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς.<sup>34</sup> It is not entirely clear whether these are keys, as is widely thought, or bars, as I incline to think. Homeric precedent (e.g. *Il.* 12.455 and *Od.* 21.47) permits either meaning, but a number of considerations point to the meaning "bar" here. The plural suits "bar" better than "key"; the phrase seems to be a reminiscence of the ὀχῆες ἐπημοιβοί of *Il.* 12.455-56, where bars are meant; and the use by Homer (*Il.* 23.712) of ἀμείβοντες of the opposed rafters of a pitched roof supports a meaning such as "alternate," "matching," or "on either side," which would be more suitable for bars on each door or post than for keys. The alternative interpretation speaks of keys that open and close, reward and punish, or the like. This requires a sharper break with Homeric precedents, the assumption that the plural is "poetic" (which must mean in fact "not significant"), and a diversion from literal and traditional description of a clearly imagined object to a freer and more allegorical style than is found elsewhere in the poem. It is striking that a few lines further on the great doors are said to swing open "in turn" (ἀμοιβαδόν), where the word has first of all a tangible and ordinary meaning suitable to literal description. Not long afterwards Empedocles uses ἀμοιβαῖος of alternations in time (B30.3; cf. 17.29 *VS*).

It remains true, no matter which of the two interpretations is preferred, that Parmenides here, as in the following ἀμοιβαδόν, lays stress on the idea of alternation. This is in accordance with his poetic precedents in Homer and Hesiod, the latter also using the participle ἀμειβόμεναι in the context. Even in the old poets there is some implication, however latent, of an equality that underlies the alternation. In Parmenides, who has the idea explicitly in his physics, the implication can hardly be doubted. The gate, I take it, is the only passage through the great wall by which the universe is surrounded.<sup>35</sup> Through it Light and Night have entered to fill the world in combination as Day and Night. It is the mythical analogue of the foundation in equality which makes lawful the relations between the

<sup>34</sup> For the connection between justice and κληῖς, cf. the name Κλημισδίκη in *Hom. H. Dem.* 109, and Hesychia who is daughter of Justice and holds the keys of counsels and wars in Pind. *Pyth.* 8.1-4.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Act.* 2.7.1: 28A37 *VS*.

two physical principles and governs the alternations of all their changes.<sup>36</sup>

To return now to the Second Olympian. The equinox which prevails in the other world for the just who keep their oaths and is the cause of their effortless and tearless felicity is a counterpart of Parmenides' gate, Hesiod's threshold, and the place where Homer's Laestrygonian shepherds meet. In each case the myth exhibits an instance of an ideal but visible equality. For Pindar this is to be seen especially in fair-dealing and faithfulness to oaths, but in the equinox he, like the others, contemplates it in the cosmos also. Of these poets Parmenides offers the nearest parallel and the only explicit mention of equality. Pindar is in most ways very unlike him, but he evidently derived this notion from the same sources in the west, from which he took also the migration of souls and their judgment after death.<sup>37</sup>

It is not to be forgotten that there is a more characteristically Pindaric felicity which is higher than equality and is here the lot of those who have during three lives, in this world and that, abstained from all injustice. For them is reserved the gold of Hesiod's golden race and its ruler Cronus, together with the Ocean breezes and other privileges of the island of the blest. There, it has been argued, shines that pure and uninterrupted light which is the commonest and most potent presence in Pindar's poetry and the most revered power of his world. It is "the god-given gleam" by which "a bright light rests upon men, and a kindly life." He sees it present everywhere, and never more clearly than in the moment of victory, but those who are to enjoy it

<sup>36</sup> Cf. G. Vlastos in *CP* 42 (1947) 164: "In the equipoise of opposite powers Parmenides finds the next best thing to the internal equipoise of Being itself."

<sup>37</sup> A possible parallel to equinoctial justice in an eschatology is offered by the corrupt and difficult passage in Aesch. *Choeph.* 61-65 and especially in the words *ἐν μεταίχμῳ σκότου* (to which Professor C. J. Herington of the University of Texas called my attention). There the retribution of Dikê is said to fall swiftly on those *ἐν φάει*, lingeringly on those in the twilight, while the third class are enveloped in night. The difference between the purposes of the Aeschylean and Pindaric passages must be acknowledged, but they appear to share in common a division between the light (Pindar's "here," "the kingdom of Zeus"), the night-day, and the utter darkness of Hell (the woe "that cannot be looked upon"). It is not to be overlooked that Aeschylus in 458, like Pindar in 476, was in a position to reflect Sicilian influences. On the other hand, the parallel expression in *Sept.* 197 (*ἀνὴρ γυνή τε χῶ τι τῶν μεταίχμιον*) may suggest that Aeschylus is using a refinement of common forms of polar opposition which has a currency wider than the Sicilian mystery cults.

and be possessed by it forever must pass from Zeus' kingdom by Zeus' own road to the tower of Cronus. There is a poetic precedent in the unbroken light which, on Vos' interpretation, shines on the Laestrygonians of the *Odyssey* who dwell in the pure *aithêr* at the farthest eastern gate of the world, from which the alternations of Night and Day make their beginning. Is it too much to see even more clearly the parallel of Parmenides' "road of the *daimôn*" by which he passes beyond the diurnal alternation of the world and its regulation by equality into the divine presence? What might he have beheld there, if not the light of unity which constituted the universe before the duality of Light and Night was admitted?<sup>38</sup>

On this line of interpretation it appears that there lies behind these passages from the poets and the philosophers a traditional picture of the world which they share in their imaginations. The dome of fiery *aithêr* brings pure and unbroken light wherever it touches, to the gods on Mount Olympus or to the Laestrygonians and the blest on the shore of the encircling Ocean. Day and Night, by ascending it, bring their respective influences to bear on men, and on all things that are under the heaven. Their paths begin at the same point, presumably in the east. This is marked by a threshold or gate which, by regulating and equalizing their alternations, makes them lawful. The gate is said by Parmenides to be of *aithêr*, presumably because of its position on the boundary between the fiery dome and the world which it encloses. That is the place of exact justice, where the alternations of Day and Night produce a perpetual equinox. Farther out, in the band of the *aithêr* itself, there are no alternations of Day and Night, and consequently no need for justice nor possibility of its existence. To that place come only those who are dear to the gods, and those, like Parmenides, who have found by reason a road that is necessarily right, or those, like Pindar's Sicilian hosts, who during three lives, in this world and in that, have kept themselves from all injustice. Right or justice is the rule of this world, but it is also the way by which the world is transcended.

<sup>38</sup> For a thoughtful discussion of the relation between light and being in Parmenides, cf. W. J. Verdenius, "Parmenides' Conception of Light," *Mnemosyne* ser. 4, 2 (1949) 116-31. Verdenius (131) attributes to Parmenides, rightly I think, a distinction "between a supreme kind of light as the cognitive aspect of Being and Truth, and an inferior kind of light restricted to the world of change and opinion."