# IMMORTALITY IN ACRAGAS: POETRY AND RELIGION IN PINDAR'S SECOND *OLYMPIAN* ODE

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*Olympian* 2 has received more attention than any other of Pindar's odes. The elaborate vision of life after death that begins just after the middle of the poem (56) and continues through the end of its fourth triad (80) is responsible for much of the interest. Within the scope of the present article I cannot account for every feature of this vision, still less attempt to interpret the ode in its entirety. I concentrate, instead, on the way Pindar introduces the vision, and on the way he brings it to a close.

In regard to its introduction, I am pursuing an inkling that came to me some time ago, when I was translating the poem.[1] Since the progress of thought leading to the otherworldly vision struck me as normal for an epinician, I wondered whether the vision itself might be understood in poetic as well as religious terms, whether it might not have almost as much to do with immortal fame as with immortal life. My initial impressions have been confirmed: the two types of immortality are intimately connected with each other. Keeping their relationship in mind enhances appreciation of the poem's complexity and helps to avoid the distortions entailed by an overly literal reading.

In regard to the conclusion of the vision, I am, in a way, taking up where F. Solmsen left off. Pindar's translation of Achilles to the Island of the Blest at the climax of the eschatology (79–80) struck Solmsen as a direct reaction to *Odyssey* 11. 487–91, where the ghost of Achilles utters the famous words that some critics believe cast doubt on the value of a heroic life.[2] Solmsen showed how Pindar here avails himself of a

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All citations of Pindar are taken from *Pindarus*, pars 1: *Epinicia*, post B. Snell ed. H. Maehler (Leipzig, 1971), and pars 2: *Fragmenta*, ed. B. Snell (Leipzig, 1964). Bacchylides is cited from *Bacchylides*, post B. Snell ed. H. Maehler (Leipzig, 1970).

1. *Pindar's Victory Songs* (Baltimore, 1980), p. 86.

2. Achilles' words are quoted by Plato (*Resp.* 3. 386A–87B) as unfit to be heard by the young. According to A. Edwards, "Achilles in the Underworld: *Iliad, Odyssey,* and *Aithiopis*," *GRBS* 26 (1985): 227, Homer depicts Achilles "as dissatisfied in death" and compares him unfavorably with Odysseus. For a different view of the passage as a whole, see R. Schmiel, "Achilles in the Underworld," *CP* 82 (1987): 35–37.


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Homeric motif to assert something quite un-Homeric.[3] I take the discussion a step further, considering the other sources for Achilles' final moments and transfiguration. The differences between them and Pindar have tended to be overlooked because they are not as striking as the differences between him and Homer; they have, however, a good deal to tell us about Pindar's intentions here.

My reading of the passage suggests, finally, that scholars have not been as careful as they should be in bringing the data of Greek religion to bear on the interpretation of this ode. The attempt to explain Pindar's placement of Achilles on the Island of the Blest as a specifically religious symbol is misguided and has ended in contradiction. Coming at the climax of Pindar's eschatology, the translation of Achilles is, among other things, a demonstration of poetic power. The magisterial dismissal of Homeric authority in the matter of Achilles' fate confirms Pindar's ability to countermand that authority in a more general way, concerning the nature and destiny of the soul itself. Pindar's desire to speak on this subject with a panhellenic voice, addressing himself to the world at large, not (as often thought) only to a small circle in Acragas, necessarily brings him into competition with Homer.[4]

## I

Among critics of the ode, Pindar's translation of Achilles to the Island of the Blest has been a matter of religious interest first: most have seen it as part of an expression of faith, the kind of faith known to initiates in the mystery religions. The article published by R. Hampe in 1952 marked a departure from this view.[5] Hampe studied the operation of poetic conventions in the ode, showing that Pindar's praise of wealth is typical of odes written for equestrian victors and so has nothing to do with mystical religion. Similarly, the εὐεργεσία praised at the end of the poem concerns the benefactions typically associated with victory; the victor's hospitality and generosity are at issue, not Orphic or Pythagorean rewards in the next life for philanthropy in this one.

Though Hampe's discussion of these matters threw much light on the poem, it has, until recently, been ignored.[6] Perhaps the narrowness of his conclusions is responsible. He argued, for example, that Pindar's vision of the soul's experiences after death does not apply to all but

3. "Achilles on the Island of the Blessed: Pindar vs. Homer and Hesiod," *AJP* 103 (1982): 19–24.

4. Pindar's most explicit claim to panhellenic authority occurs at frag. 70b. 22–25; it is implicit, however, in his function as guarantor of fame. On ἐς δὲ τὸ πάν (85), see W. Race, "The End of *Olympian* 2: Pindar and the Vulgus," *CSCA* 12 (1980): 253–54. My own rendering of the phrase (*Victory Songs*, p. 91) would have been different had I had Race's article before me.

5. "Zur Eschatologie in Pindars zweiter olympischer Ode," in EPMHNEIA: *Festschrift Otto Regenbogen* (Heidelberg, 1952), pp. 46–65.

6. Cf. G. F. Gianotti, "Sull' *Olimpica* seconda di Pindaro," *RFIC* 99 (1971): 29, regretting the general neglect of Hampe's paper. Though Hampe had refuted the mystical interpretation of the light-imagery of lines 53–57 put forward by Norden in his commentary on Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, N. J. Richardson, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 28, 318, presented it again.

holds out a promise only to a very limited class of persons: those capable of exercising εὐεργεσία on the grand scale, victors in the chariot races at the great games who happen also to be kings.[7] This class would include Theron of Acragas, for whom the ode was composed, but scarcely anyone else.

The narrowness of Hampe's reading is evident in other regards, too. As H. Lloyd-Jones has recently observed, his treatment of *Olympian* 2 left "a solid residuum of matter that shows an unmistakable affinity with what is considered Orphic or Pythagorean."[8] Lloyd-Jones discussed the religious content of the ode in light of the instructions to the soul inscribed on the gold plates buried with the dead at Thurii, Petelia, and elsewhere. Until recently, evidence of a connection between the doctrines expressed on the plates and Pindar's vision of the afterlife in *Olympian* 2 was lacking. The discovery of a new gold plate at Hipponium in 1974 and of inscribed bone tablets at Olbia in 1978 has proved that the cults in question possessed a Dionysiac element. This, according to Lloyd-Jones, also furnishes a clue to the meaning of lines 56–60, where Pindar refers to a penalty paid by the "helpless wits" (ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες) of the dead.[9]

Surely no one would now insist that the only utterance in *Olympian* 2 that cannot be explained in terms of Pindar's typical attitudes occurs at lines 68–70,where he describes the reincarnations of the soul.[10] The tendency to exclude religious in favor of poetic meaning or to overlook poetry in the search for religion has done much harm. Lloyd-Jones rightly cautioned against forgetting the heroic character of Pindar's presentation of the afterlife in *Olympian* 2, but he did not elaborate on this aspect of the poem. It is this aspect, however, that makes the poem an epinician ode, as opposed to a mere expression of faith.

Insistence on the epinician character of the ode is still necessary, for the tendency to view it as something else, most commonly a dirge or a consolation, is not yet dead.[11] Pindar's odes often take on, if only momentarily, the dark coloring of a lament—but so may any poem, without, for that reason, losing its generic identity. It would be crude to argue that Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* is not a tragedy but an epic because it contains descriptions of armed conflict; nearly as crude is the notion that *Olympian* 2 must be a dirge because it strikes a note of resignation or of sorrow. Whether or not the inclusion of an elaborate eschatology would in itself have provided consolation to Theron for

7. "Eschatologie," p. 62.

8. "Pindar and the After-Life," in *Pindare,* Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 31 (Vandoeuvres-Genève, 1985), p. 247.

9. According to Lloyd-Jones ("After-Life," pp. 252–54), the penalty consists in death itself; it is paid for the "ancient grief" Pindar refers to in frag. 133; the latter would be Persephone's sorrow over the death of her son Dionysus, killed and eaten by the Titans, from whose charred bodies Zeus fashioned the human race (ibid., pp. 259–67).

10. E.g., Hampe, "Eschatologie," p. 61; Gianotti, "*Olimpica,*" pp. 29–30.

11. A cautious modification of this tendency appears in G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1979), p. 171.

impending death or the fading of dynastic hopes,[12] the eschatology in *Olympian* 2 has a triumphal feeling about it that is appropriate for a victory ode. Two standard epinician themes—vicissitude and liberality—weave in and out of the first fifty lines, then combine to form the introduction to the eschatology; and the eschatology itself concludes in a passage with marked epinician overtones.

## II

The famous rhetorical question opening the ode provides a framework for what follows. "What god, what hero, what man shall I celebrate?" Pindar asks his song. The god who supplies the first term is Zeus, appropriate under any circumstances but especially relevant here because Pindar introduces him as the god of the Olympian games (3). By implication Theron, the victor in those games, has enjoyed Zeus' favor, and it is as a god bestowing favor of a different kind that we shall meet Zeus elsewhere in the ode.[13] The second subject, Heracles, has his place here as founder of the Olympian games, the first fruits of his war against Augeas (3–4). Theron is third, and he occupies the limelight for a much longer moment. He must be celebrated, in the first instance, because of his victory in the chariot race at Olympia. Each step in the progress, from god to hero to man, is marked by a definite link to Olympia or to victory; each item in the list owes its inclusion to a specifically epinician consideration.

Pindar then proceeds to elaborate on Theron's qualifications. In addition to his victory in the chariot race (5), there is his hospitality, a standard virtue in an epinician context but here described in a striking manner: Theron is ὅπι δίκαιον ξένων (6), "just in his regard for strangers." Two major themes of the ode, justice and hospitality, thus combine in a single expression.[14] Next comes Theron's importance to his city. The phrase ἔρεισμ' Ἀκράγαντος (6) alludes to his part in the battle of Himera,[15] establishing a parallel between him and Heracles, whose triumph in battle led to the inauguration of the Olympian festival. Finally, Pindar praises Theron for his noble ancestry (7), another standard epinician topic.

In the next stanza Pindar goes on to develop his praise of Theron in a manner that will have great significance for the ode as a whole. He speaks of Theron's Acragantine ancestors at lines 8–11 in terms he might use to describe the experience of an individual victor in the games. They

12. U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), p. 246, made the political future of the Emmenidae the reason for Pindar's alleged "consolatory tone" in the Cadmean section of the ode.

13. Lines 26–27: Zeus, together with Athena and Dionysus, fosters the apotheosis of Semele; 79–80: he assents to the salvation of Achilles.

14. References to justice occur at five points in the ode (6, 16, 59, 69, 96). Adequate discussion of the range of meanings would require a separate article.

15. Wilamowitz (*Pindaros*, pp. 242–43) and E. Freeman, *History of Sicily*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1891), p. 207, emphasized the minor role played by Theron at the battle. In *Ol.* 2 Pindar fittingly makes more of Theron's hospitality than of his military prowess.

strove, they achieved, life brought them wealth and glory. The idea that sorrow or effort precedes joy or reward is an epinician commonplace; the extension of its application beyond the experience of an individual person or a single life is peculiar to this ode. Other examples occur in the section dealing with Theron's Cadmean ancestors (21–45). Semele and Ino die and come to life again (25–30). In their case, the suffering belongs to their lives on earth, the ensuing happiness to their transfigurations after death. From them Pindar moves to Laius and Oedipus, Polynices and Thersander (35–45). Here the dark and light destinies are allotted separately. Instead of all the ancestors suffering and all achieving together, as at lines 8–11, or each suffering and achieving individually, as with Semele and Ino, we now have three of them suffering and a fourth achieving. The fourth, Thersander, provides Pindar with a transition to the present moment: the celebration of Theron's Olympian victory (46–49). A summary of the successes of his brother, Xenocrates, in the Pythian and Isthmian games (49–51) leads to a gnomic statement: triumph relieves a man of the anxiety that preceded it (51–52 τὸ δὲ τυχεῖν / πειρώμενον ἀγωνίας δυσφρονᾶν παραλύει). This is the standard epinician notion, illustrated by the experiences of Theron and his brother. The last and most elaborate extension of the theme occurs in the eschatology (56–80), where Pindar describes the ultimate attainment of a reward after the efforts of successive lives.[16]

Among all these variations of the theme, only the victor at the games allows the relationship between suffering and happiness to be viewed within the framework of a single life. The centrality of the victor in this scheme of things is reflected by the position he occupies: we find him exactly at the center of the ode (48–52), putting aside the strain of contention in the relief and satisfaction of triumph.[17] The victor offers Pindar a paradigm for his visionary teachings in *Olympian* 2. The mythical episodes and eschatology of the poem are not as strange for an epinician as they might at first appear.

## III

When Pindar returns to Theron at line 46, he depicts him in the full enjoyment of the fruits of his victory. It is fitting, Pindar says, that Theron attain the victory song and the music of the lyre, because he has triumphed at Olympia. The mention of his brother's victories in the chariot races at Delphi and Isthmia then brings to mind the effort and

16. Pindar's description of the special merit of those who reach the Island of the Blest (68–70 ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ἑστρίς / ἑκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν / ψυχάν) emphasizes what they have avoided, as opposed to what they have done, but the absoluteness of it (πάμπαν) gives it a heroic dimension. "Perseverance" (B. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* [New York, 1890], p. 150) is as much to the fore in ἐτόλμασαν (68) as "courage" (W. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* [Berlin, 1969], p. 509). Peleus exhibits a similarly adamant adherence to principle, for which Zeus considers him worthy of the hand of Thetis (*Nem.* 5. 31–36).

17. F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 168, and J. and F. Newman, *Pindar's Art* (Hildesheim–Munich–Zürich, 1984), p. 162, drew attention, in different ways, to this structural feature.

expense involved in competition. Until this moment, Pindar has kept in view only the immediate aspects of struggle and success. Now he turns to their preconditions (53–56):

> ὁ μὰν πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένος
> φέρει τῶν τε καὶ τῶν
> καιρὸν βαθεῖαν ὑπέχων μέριμναν ἀγροτέραν,
> ἀστὴρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐτυμώτατον
> ἀνδρὶ φέγγος·

The combination of πλοῦτος and ἀρεταῖς signals the presence of a standard topos, praise of the victor's liberality.[18] Not only is he wealthy, he has also taken advantage of the opportunities afforded by wealth. The perfect participle δεδαιδαλμένος suggests that Pindar has Theron's particular situation in view: he has already adorned his wealth with success. His victory at Olympia, in other words, is something added to his wealth, something further ennobling it. But the participle may equally suggest a permanent and general condition, if we take ἀρεταῖς as an abstract instead of a concrete noun:[19] here Pindar would be celebrating the power of wealth to inspire a man with eagerness for achievements, provided he has the character requisite for such inspiration.

It does not matter on which interpretation we insist, for both lead to the same result. Wealth that exerts this kind of influence upon a man (πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένος) is his truest beacon-light: ἐτυμώτατον . . . φέγγος. The use of φέγγος here recalls Pindar's praise of Aegina at *Nemean* 4. 12–13: δίκᾳ ξεναρκέϊ κοινὸν / φέγγος. The assurance of meeting with justice, the stranger's protection, makes Aegina a beacon to the world. What makes wealth a beacon in *Olympian* 2? Wealth has enabled Theron to compete in the games, to be hospitable, to commission the present ode. Such are its attractions to a man of his caliber, but more is at issue than mere attractiveness. As Aeginetan justice assures the world of hospitality, so wealth assures Theron of something. In a poem dominated by the theme of vicissitude, such assurance must be both definite and important. What comes to mind in the immediate context is salvation, not the salvation made available to the initiate through religious mysteries, at Eleusis or elsewhere, but the more familiar deliverance, the rescue of a mortal man's name and deeds from oblivion through the immortality conferred by song.

Two considerations certify that Pindar is thinking of the power of poetry at this point in the ode. One is the imagery employed: the truest beacon-light suggests poetry as the guarantor of immortal fame.[20] Such

18. Πλοῦτος and ἀρετά occur at 10–11 also, but there it is less the noble use of wealth than the way it was acquired, its divine sanction, that is at issue. Wilamowitz (*Pindaros*, p. 246) saw lines 53–56 as consolatory: wealth and virtue enable one to take joy and sorrow in stride; similarly C. Ruck, "Marginalia Pindarica," *Hermes* 100 (1972): 165.

19. Slater, *Lexicon*, pp. 68–70, gave the abstract sense first, the concrete later; he placed *Ol.* 2. 53 in the first category. Either is possible.

20. The association between light and immortalizing fame may derive from what M. Lefkowitz, citing *Il.* 8. 282, called "the Homeric saving light" ("Pindar's *Pythian* V," in *Pindare*, p. 36). On light in Pindar, see H. Gundert, *Pindar und sein Dichterberuf* (Frankfurt, 1935), Register, s.v. "Licht und

is the burden of *Isthmian* 4. 55–60, where Pindar first credits Homer with the redemption of the tragedy of Ajax through the immortalizing power of his song and then compares Homer's poetry to a ray of light darting over land and sea.[21] We meet a similar image and a similar context at *Pythian* 3. 72–76. Here Pindar says that if he had come bringing Hieron renewed health and a victory song, he would have come to him as a radiance brighter than a heavenly star. The passage in *Pythian* 3 is counterfactual: Pindar cannot bring salvation both from death and from oblivion; he cannot shed a radiance of such magnitude. He is not, however, utterly unable to offer assurance in the face of death. The light in *Isthmian* 4 and in *Pythian* 3 symbolizes salvation. In both poems the salvation attained is salvation from oblivion; in both it is a substitute for salvation from death itself; in both the salvation comes through the power of a poet to confer deathless renown.[22]

The second reason we can be certain that poetry and its immortalizing power have a place in Pindar's thoughts at lines 53–56 is provided by the manner in which he continues to develop his praise of Theron's liberality. There are, as I have argued elsewhere, two forms of this kind of praise in Pindar, the simple and the complex.[23] In the latter the poet goes beyond the noble use of wealth in competition and the generous display of it afterward in the victory celebration to include in his encomium the intelligence implicit in all of this. The victor's unwillingness to sit back and enjoy his wealth in obscurity and his desire after his victory to secure the memory of it derive from an attitude toward life that Pindar sees as enlightened. At the root of this attitude is the awareness of mortal limitations: it flowers into strenuous activity in the world and into an appreciation of poetry as the only means for keeping one's name and deeds beyond the reach of oblivion.[24] The use of wealth in the noblest manner (πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένος) expresses not only a man's character but also his keenness of judgment.[25] The final expression of that judgment comes with the victor's engagement of a poet who has the power to give him a permanent place in the memory of mankind.

Such are the associations evoked in our minds by Pindar's diction here. We are in the midst of the conventional praise of liberality (51–56). When, subsequently, understanding and death appear (56–57 οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον, / ὅτι θανόντων. . .), we naturally assume that they have appeared as part of this praise, that Pindar is about to compliment Theron for knowing that poetry alone provides a means of redemption from

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Dunkel"; more recent bibliography in D. Gerber, *Pindar's "Olympian One": A Commentary* (Toronto–Buffalo–London, 1982), pp. 10–11. The idea is succinctly expressed at Bacchyl. 3. 90–92.

21. Pindar emphasizes the panhellenic reach of Homer's poetry also at *Nem.* 7. 22: see A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 54–55. Other poets (including Pindar) aspire to it; cf. Theog. 237–54, Bacchyl. 13. 175–81.

22. Cf. *Ol.* 10. 91–96; *Pyth.* 1. 92–94; *Nem.* 6. 29–30, 7. 11–20, 8. 44–48; *Isthm.* 7. 16–19.

23. For full discussion, see my "Convention and Occasion in *Isthmian* 2," *CSCA* 10 (1977): 133–56.

24. Cf. the poet's praise of the patron's *Kunstverstand:* H. Maehler, ed., *Die Lieder des Bakchylides,* erster Teil: *Die Siegeslieder,* Mnemosyne Suppl. 62.2 (Leiden, 1982), pp. 86–87.

25. Cf. Bacchyl. 3. 11–14: Hieron understands (οἶδε) how to employ his riches.

mortality. The saving power of poetry brought to mind by the light-imagery seems to be the goal of Pindar's musings. But though the diction, up to this point, has been conventional, we soon find that Pindar's purpose in deploying it is not (56–58):

> εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,
> ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐνθάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες
> ποινὰς ἔτεισαν. . . .

This is the most marked instance of anacolouthon in Pindar. The protasis—εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον—never receives an apodosis. Victory, struggle, wealth and its power to enhance human possibilities (49–56) have led Pindar to foreboding about the future (56–57). We would expect him to praise Theron now—as he praises other victors in similar contexts—for having the foresight, the wisdom to invest his wealth (νιν) in poetry, knowing that poetry alone can protect his achievements from oblivion.[26] Coming hard upon the summary mention of Theron's victory, of the efforts that preceded it, of the noble use of wealth, and after the light-imagery suggesting salvation, the words οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον would accord perfectly with the complex praise of liberality. The train of thought leading to mortality and what can be done about it is normal for an epinician ode; but when we have followed it to this point, we find that it leads not to immortal fame, as we would expect, but to immortal life.

If, as several critics believe, Pindar has made the epinician into an envelope for non-epinician contents,[27] we may marvel at the skill with which he has done so. The eschatology enters the poem in a passage that is thoroughly epinician up to its last syllable; and it enters by way of the epinician theme that is most suited to introduce it. Evoked by Pindar's epinician diction, the immortality conferred by poetry comes to our minds, only, it seems, so that it might make way for an immortality of an entirely different sort.

## IV

The eschatology, for all its uniqueness, begins with reflections on the noble use of wealth, a standard epinician theme. It concludes with an even stronger epinician resonance by introducing Achilles into the company of heroes who inhabit the Island of the Blest (78–80):

26. See *Pyth.* 1. 90–94 (μὴ δολωθῇς implies praise of Hieron's astuteness), 6. 44–49 (the comparison of Thrasybulus with Antilochus suggests a parallel between the hero's rescue of his father from death in battle and the young man's preservation of his father's fame by commissioning an ode from Pindar; νόῳ δὲ πλοῦτον ἄγει praises his understanding), *Nem.* 1. 31–33 (κοιναὶ γὰρ ἔρχοντ' ἐλπίδες, gnomically stating the reason for not sitting on one's wealth, implicitly praises the victor's awareness of the mortal condition); cf. *Nem.* 7. 17–20, *Isthm.* 1. 67–68, 2. 28–32.

27. E.g., Wilamowitz, *Pindaros,* p. 240; W. Schadewaldt, *Der Aufbau des pindarischen Epinikion* (Halle, 1928), p. 335; J. Finley, *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 59; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), p. 120.

Πηλεύς τε καὶ Κάδμος ἐν τοῖσιν ἀλέγονται·
'Αχιλλέα τ' ἔνεικ', ἐπεὶ Ζηνὸς ἤτορ
λιταῖς ἔπεισε, μάτηρ.

Solmsen drew attention to the striking novelty of Achilles' appearance here. The most familiar version of his fate must have been the one we find in *Odyssey* 11. 478–91. There, we recall, Odysseus compliments Achilles on the fine figure he cuts among the shades, only to be told that he would rather live as the hired servant of a poor man than lord it over all the wasted dead. Pindar's divergence from the *Odyssey* is dramatic; Solmsen thought it so bold that Pindar himself needed to buttress it by resorting to a motif from the *Iliad:* as Thetis had secured Zeus' promise to restore her son's honor on the field at Troy, so Pindar has her appeal to the god in her son's behalf again; this time her prayer would win him honor not among the living but among the dead.[28]

Solmsen's detection of Homeric influence here opens the way to new understanding, but there are problems with the purpose he ascribed to it. For Pindar, as for the poet of the *Iliad,* Achilles is the hero who chooses to avenge his friend though he knows it will lead to his own death. In the background is another choice, between a long life in obscurity and a brief life filled with heroic action leading to fame. Achilles' early death and his glorification in poetry belong together; to mitigate the first would be to deprive the second of its special, compensatory value.[29] Pindar is not likely to be doing that in *Olympian* 2; he is also not likely to have forgotten the manner in which he had introduced his vision of the afterlife. The presentation of Achilles saved from Hades in the same way and by the same goddess who had saved him from dishonor in the *Iliad* recapitulates, at the conclusion of Pindar's eschatology, the movement from poetic to actual immortality that we have seen taking place at its opening. The appropriateness of Achilles' translation supersedes any need Pindar might have felt to seek support for it elsewhere.

A second shortcoming in Solmsen's argument is his failure to mention any but the Odyssean version of Achilles' fate. Most important, he ignored the version found, according to Proclus, in the *Aethiopis* of Arctinus. The usual assumption made by those who take Arctinus into account is that Pindar was simply following him or others like him.[30] A closer look reveals that Pindar, as far as we can tell, differs from Arctinus and the others in several respects.[31] Though some of these

28. "Achilles," pp. 19–21. Cf. Mezger, *Siegeslieder,* p. 165; H. Vos, review of *Pindarus' tweede Olympische ode* by J. van Leeuwen, *Mnemosyne* 20 (1967): 322.

29. The connection is explicit in *Isthm.* 8. 56a–62, implicit in *Pyth.* 3. 100–103, 112–15. Both passages are modeled on *Od.* 24. 54–73. Cf. Ov. *Met.* 12. 613–19.

30. E.g., A. Kossatz-Deissmann, "Achilleus," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae,* vol. 1.1 (Zürich and Munich, 1981), p. 194; Edwards, "Achilles," p. 221.

31. Ibycus (*PMG* 291) and Simonides (*PMG* 558) put Achilles on the Elysian plain, where he marries Medea—an example of the insipid romanticism criticized by J. Griffin, "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *JHS* 97 (1977): 39–53. The scolium preserved in *PMG* 894 places the Athenian tyrannicide Harmodius with Achilles and Diomedes on the Islands of the Blest; on the date

differences might disappear if we had Arctinus' poem complete, one in particular would remain: Pindar has Thetis take Achilles to the Island of the Blest, whereas in Arctinus she brings him to Leuce. It is unlikely, in view of this difference, that the salvation of Achilles had the same meaning for both poets.

Proclus reports that Arctinus had Eos, the mother of Memnon, obtain immortality from Zeus and bestow it on her son, who was slain by Achilles in a duel over the body of Antilochus. Later, when Achilles too had fallen in battle, Arctinus had Thetis take his body from the funeral pyre and carry it to Leuce.[32] At this point in his summary Proclus returns to the Greeks at Troy; he says nothing more about Thetis and Achilles. E. Rohde, arguing from the evidence of later sources, believed that Arctinus must have had Thetis, like Eos, obtain immortality for her son.[33] Whether she would have done so by appealing to Zeus, Rohde did not say. As far as we know, Pindar was the first to add that detail.

The duel between Achilles and Memnon formed one of the two major episodes of Arctinus' poem.[34] It provided archaic art with a popular subject, often appearing there in the same basic way: the two warriors face one another over the fallen Antilochus; behind each stands his mother, Eos encouraging Memnon, Thetis Achilles.[35] Almost equally popular in art was the representation of the ψυχοστασία in which the two mothers, before the duel, stand as suppliants on either side of a scale: Zeus weighs the souls of their sons, who are about to clash in mortal combat.[36]

Pindar refers to Memnon six times in the epinician odes, five times in connection with the duel between him and Achilles.[37] Only once, at *Olympian* 2. 83, does he neglect to name Memnon himself:[38] instead of his name we have his native land, Aethiopia, and his mother, Eos. The mention of her name is no less remarkable than the omission of her son's: in only one of the four other passages in which Pindar touches on

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and composition of *PMG* 894, see C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 391–96, with the conjecture (p. 396) that the piece might date from the time Harmodius received heroic honors. For the tendency to connect translation to the Islands of the Blest or the Elysian plain with worship as a hero, see L. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921), p. 363; U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hesiodos' "Erga"* (Berlin, 1928), p. 60.

32. T. Allen, ed., *Homeri Opera*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 1969), p. 106. 4–7, 14–15.

33. *Psyche*[8], trans. W. Hillis (London, 1925), p. 65.

34. Allen, *Opera*, p. 106. 1–7. The other episode was the arrival and death of Penthesilea.

35. Kossatz-Deissmann described Achilles' triumph over Memnon as "ein beliebtes Thema der archaischen Bildkunst" ("Achilleus," 1.1:180). Of the thirty-nine representations she listed, only two (nos. 844 and 845) are later than the mid-fifth century B.C.

36. The popularity of the motif may be inferred from its parody by Aristophanes in the *Frogs* (1364–1413); earlier, Aeschylus had made it the theme of a tragedy. The κηροστασία of epic becomes ψυχοστασία on the stage and in pictorial art (Kossatz-Deissmann, ibid., 1.1:172); the ψυχοστασία preceding the duel between Achilles and Memnon is frequently depicted in association with it (1.1:181).

37. *Ol.* 2. 83, *Nem.* 3. 63, 6. 50 (note Pindar's emphasis here, lines 44–54, on the worldwide fame of the duel), *Isthm.* 5. 41, 8. 54. At *Pyth.* 6. 32, Memnon kills Antilochus.

38. Pisistratus, at *Od.* 4. 188, leaves Memnon's name to be inferred, calling him 'Ηοῦς . . . φαεινῆς ἀγλαὸς υἱός. Memnon could, then, be named by reference to his mother; *Ol.* 2. 83 is, however, the only place where Pindar chooses to name him that way.

this event does he see fit to name her.[39] There is, moreover, a curious symmetry: Achilles is named, but not Thetis; Eos, but not Memnon. All four, of course, were famous; still, the abbreviation suggests that Pindar has a typical scene in mind.

In the *Aethiopis* the death of Achilles followed immediately upon that of Memnon (p. 106. 7–9 Allen). The defeat of Memnon was the last of Achilles' heroic deeds.[40] Three times in the odes Pindar catalogs those deeds; only once, at *Olympian* 2. 83, does he put the triumph over Memnon last, as if he were preserving the framework of the *Aethiopis* intact.[41] Pindar does not usually show a slavish loyalty to his sources; his evocation of the *Aethiopis* here has a special purpose. The introduction of Memnon not by name but as the "Aethiopian son of Eos" would bring to mind not only the poem itself but also the role played by Eos in it and in the art inspired by it. As we have seen, Eos and Thetis belong together there, both goddesses figuring in the final moments of Achilles' life.

According to Proclus, Arctinus had Eos obtain immortality from Zeus and bestow it on her son (p. 106. 6–7 Allen); he also had Thetis appeal to Zeus, but for a different reason. Occurring as part of the ψυχοστασία before the duel with Memnon,[42] Thetis' appeal has nothing to do with her activities after the death of her son—nothing to do, that is, with securing immortality for him. Whether this results from the vagueness and incompleteness of Proclus' summary or from the contents of the poem he is summarizing cannot be determined. What is vague (the nature of Achilles' salvation) and incomplete (its sanction by Zeus) in Proclus' summary of the *Aethiopis* does, however, take on a definite and final form in *Olympian* 2 (79–80), whereas what is clearly and fully said to have taken place in the earlier poem (Eos' obtaining immortality for Memnon from Zeus) appears in the later poem only as an allusion (83). If we consider only what Proclus says, not what we suppose him to have omitted, we should conclude that lines 79–80 of *Olympian* 2 transfer to Thetis the act of salvation performed originally by Eos.

The summary nature of Proclus' account makes insistence on this point precarious. We cannot tell whether Pindar or Arctinus first had Thetis appeal to Zeus in this way.[43] What is clear, however, is the

39. At *Nem.* 6. 52 (where the phrasing recalls *Od.* 4. 188) Memnon is named first, and Eos only as an afterthought.

40. But not, in Pindar's mind, the greatest: the emphasis in his catalog of Achilles' exploits (81–83) falls on the first one mentioned, the killing of Hector. Pindar thinks first of the *Iliad,* not the *Aethiopis,* when he is enumerating the deeds for which Achilles might merit special consideration.

41. At *Isthm.* 5. 41 Memnon is followed by Telephus; at 8. 54, by "Hector and others." Only in *Ol.* 2 does Hector lead off the list, a sign that the *Iliad* was also in Pindar's thoughts, as Solmsen believed ("Achilles," pp. 19–21).

42. Proclus' summary does not mention the ψυχοστασία, but the evidence of vase paintings dating from 550 B.C. and of later literary sources indicates that it formed part of Arctinus' epic: see Kossatz-Deissmann, "Achilleus," 1.1:172; cf. also G. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 148–49.

43. Thetis' appeal to Zeus before the duel with Memnon (the ψυχοστασία) is amply represented in archaic vase paintings; the translation of Achilles is not. Only a single vase, an Attic black figure

powerful emphasis in Pindar's statement at lines 79–80. Word order in particular marks the importance of the moment. Two nouns bracket the lines, with the object of the main clause (Ἀχιλλέα) placed first, the subject (μάτηρ) last, so that both are emphatic. Between them fall two verbs, one belonging to the main, the other to an enclosed subordinate clause, giving the impression of a chiasmus between the two parts of the sentence. Zeus, on whom everything depends, occupies the central position: four words precede and four words follow the mention of his name. Though it is conceivable that Pindar took such pains merely to repeat what he had found in Arctinus, it is much more likely that he was adapting Arctinus' version to his own purposes, telling (or retelling) the story of Achilles' salvation with mention only of the details that account for it.[44]

Stylistic considerations such as these indicate that Pindar was striving to be concise, authoritative, and memorable; considerations of another kind may take us a step further. Arctinus was either repeating or building on precedent when he had Eos save Memnon from death. Eos habitually engages in this sort of thing. She seeks immortality, with unfortunate results, for several other favorites; nor are her efforts in this area confined to epic poetry.[45] Thetis, in contrast, seeks immortality for a mortal only once;[46] in doing so she is not repeating but extending a role she had played before, in the *Iliad*. Her rescue of her son has something exclusive about it. Whatever Pindar's vision of the afterlife may mean, it does not belong among the popular solutions to the problem of mortality.

Arctinus may have had Thetis bring Achilles to Leuce merely in order to give him burial, even as Sleep and Death bring Sarpedon to Lycia in the *Iliad* (16. 676–83); but she is more likely to have brought him there for some additional purpose. Leuce, after all, had not been his home in life, nor were the Greeks at Troy about to deny him a proper funeral. Arctinus must have mentioned Leuce in this connection because he knew it as a place where Achilles was worshipped as a hero.[47] Heroic honors in this religious sense, however, have little if anything in common with the kind of immortality Pindar has envisioned for the soul in *Olympian* 2. The one change that we know he introduced when he adapted the *Aethiopis* to his purposes is not without significance for our understanding of the poem as a whole.

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amphora of ca. 540 B.C., seems to depict it (Kossatz-Deissmann, "Achilleus," 1.2:144, no. 901); the vase shows a winged Achilles in flight over the sea.

44. The verbal mosaic may have resulted from other pressures as well: Pindar needed a memorable conclusion for his eschatology.

45. See *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 220–24 (Tithonus), *Od.* 5. 121–24 (Orion), 15. 250–51 (Cleitus). On her role in Greek funeral practice, see E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1979), pp. 162–66.

46. In Eur. *Andr.* 1253–58, Thetis promises not only immortality but also divinity to Peleus; she seems to be doing so on her own authority, although line 1265 suggests that what she says has already been decreed by Zeus. The passage seems indebted to Pindar in another regard: according to the hypothesis of the play, Peleus went to the Islands of the Blest.

47. Farnell, *Hero Cults*, p. 286.

The distinction between Arctinus' Leuce and Pindar's Island of the Blest gradually disappears in the later literature.[48] For Pindar's time an earlier confusion, between the Elysian plain and the Islands of the Blest,[49] is much more relevant. As L. Malten observed, the Elysian plain described in *Odyssey* 4. 561–69 and the Islands of the Blest described by Hesiod in *Works and Days* 166–73 are one and the same.[50] What differentiates them from Leuce is that they are fabulous places, located vaguely at the limits of the known world and set apart for a special group of people who, like Menelaus in the *Odyssey* (4. 561–62), do not have to die. Pindar in *Nemean* 4 knows of Leuce as the place where Achilles had been buried and was worshipped as a hero. Here he wishes to dissociate him from the hero who enjoyed a local habitation and a name on a certain island in the Black Sea in order to present him instead as the hero whose name and deeds would never perish anywhere in the Greek world.[51] He is giving not the hero himself but his transformation a more poetic reality than it had in the *Aethiopis;* he is making it pan-hellenic. His procedure here resembles, in its effects, what Rohde described as a process occurring repeatedly in the pages of Homer: the burial monuments of the heroes cease to be appreciated for what they originally were and become, instead, beacons of immortal fame.[52]

## V

That Achilles deserved such recognition more than a hero of Menelaus' caliber is clear enough. Whether Hesiod had already brought him to the Islands of the Blest we cannot be sure, because of textual problems.[53] Solmsen was probably correct to believe that Pindar would have found Hesiod's final word on this matter unclear.[54] If so, he set the record straight in *Olympian* 2.

48. Cf. C. Fleischer, "Achilleus," in Roscher, *Lex.*, 1:54 (citing Pliny *HN* 4. 13. 93). Whether Leuce, Elysium, and the Islands of the Blest were originally the same (Edwards, "Achilles," p. 215, n. 1) is an entirely different question; the sixth-century identification of Leuce as an island in the Black Sea is the crucial fact here. For the tendency to treat Pindar's Island of the Blest as if it were indistinguishable from Arctinus' Leuce, see Edwards, p. 221, Hampe, "Eschatologie," p. 55 ("Die Entrückung des Achill auf die Insel Leuke nennt Pindar nicht nur in O 2 . . ."), and Nagy, *Achaeans,* pp. 167 and 207.

49. The plural occurs in Hesiod and in *PMG* 894; Pindar's use of the singular may be due to metrical considerations or, perhaps, is an allusion to Leuce. The suggestion that he was thinking of Sicily (Newman and Newman, *Pindar's Art,* p. 42 and p. 174 with n. 25) is too literal; are we to imagine Achilles and the other heroes traveling Zeus' road (70) to Sicily? On Elysium, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion,* trans. J. Raffan (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), p. 198.

50. "Elysium und Rhadamanthys," *JAI* 28 (1913): 37. See also M. L. West, *Hesiod: "Works and Days"* (Oxford, 1978), p. 193 (on line 171). For Pindar they may not have been interchangeable: there is no justice in Homer's Elysium, as there seems to be in Hesiod's Islands (*Op.* 156–60).

51. Cf. Lloyd-Jones' characterization of Leuce as Achilles' "own private island . . . in the Pontos" ("After-Life," p. 256). H. Fränkel, "Pindars Religion," *Die Antike* 3 (1927): 46–47, distinguishing between the belief about the soul as it is set forth in *Ol.* 2 and as it is found in hero-cult, rightly emphasized the local character of the latter. Cf. Burkert, *Religion,* p. 206.

52. *Psyche*[8], pp. 42–43, 54, n. 89; cf. Nagy, *Achaeans,* pp. 116–17.

53. Whether the heroes admitted by Zeus to the Islands of the Blest in Hes. *Op.* 161–73 included those who had suffered death (and therefore Achilles) is hard to determine: it did, if we delete 166, as Solmsen would ("Achilles," p. 24); it did not, if with West ("*Works and Days,*" p. 192) we retain 166.

54. "Achilles," p. 24, n. 19.

But why? A clue to the answer lies in the way that Pindar, having brought Achilles to the Island of the Blest, proceeds to recall his heroic acts at the opening of a new triad (81–83):

> ὃς Ἕκτορα σφᾶλε, Τροίας
> ἄμαχον ἀστραβῆ κίονα, Κύκνον τε θανάτῳ πόρεν,
> Ἀοῦς τε παῖδ' Αἰθίοπα.

Köhnken saw a parallel between *Olympian* 2. 78–83 and Perseus' journey to the land of the Hyperboreans in *Pythian* 10. 27–48. There Athena's favor and Perseus' exploits account for the hero's passage to an otherwise inaccessible land. The assistance of the goddess is explicitly mentioned as the precondition for the marvelous journey (45); the hero's exploits are then allusively enumerated, to suggest his own contribution (46–48).[55] The situation is similar in *Olympian* 2. The divine favor (Thetis' intercession with Zeus) explicitly accounts for the miraculous translation of Achilles to the Island of the Blest (79–80); the following relative clause lists his most famous deeds, putting the accent on his personal worth (81–83).[56] Cadmus and Peleus, who appear before him in the catalog of translated heroes, have the standard Homeric claim to this distinction: like Menelaus (*Odyssey* 4. 569), they both married into the family of the gods (*Pythian* 3. 86–96).[57] Achilles makes his way into their midst by divine favor, and to the reminiscence of his triumphant deeds. His entrance at the climax of the eschatology helps make the eschatology itself relevant to Theron, for divine favor and triumphant deeds distinguish him, as they distinguish any victor.

This epinician resonance at the close of the eschatology harmonizes with that of its introduction. There it involved the victor's awareness of the power of poetry to confer immortal fame; here the emphasis is on a simpler epinician idea. Pindar has specific, ethical reasons for coming to grips with Homer at this juncture. The ease with which Homer in the *Odyssey* can consign the greatest hero of the *Iliad* to the abyss of Hades while reserving for Menelaus, a character considerably less heroic, a place in Elysium would not have sat well with Pindar. His view of life, repeatedly expressed in the epinician odes, strongly emphasizes natural ability and divine favor but never forgets the role played by human effort. The combination of these three is always at work in the achievement of great deeds. Here it is transposed to the life beyond.[58] The prayer of Thetis and Zeus' assent to it effect Achilles' escape from death, but the following relative clause, by listing his most famous triumphs, suggests that he also deserved what he got. Achilles earned his salvation.

55. Köhnken, *Funktion*, pp. 177–78.

56. The relative clause in which the acts are listed dramatically dissolves the involvement of Achilles with his mother that is presented in 79–80, not only because the clause begins at the break between triads but also because it opens with a clash of grammatical genders: . . . μάτηρ· ὃς. . . . Achilles (as object) needed Zeus and his mother for his translation to the Island of the Blest (79–80); his heroic deeds (he is now subject) were another matter (81–83).

57. L. Farnell, *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar* (London, 1932), p. 21.

58. Similarly Finley, *Pindar*, p. 61, and Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 93.

In the process, then, of translating Achilles to the Island of the Blest, Pindar has brought epinician values into play. We have already drawn attention to the pertinence of this strategy; it makes the eschatology, in at least one respect, relevant to Theron. The similarity between him and Achilles, however, goes deeper still. Theron had fought as Gelon's ally against the Carthaginians in the great battle of Himera, where the freedom, if not the very existence, of Greek culture in the west was at stake. Like Achilles, then, he has been victorious over barbarians in battle, and Pindar had alluded to this at line 6. The divine favor shown to him can also be traced beyond that enjoyed by an ordinary victor at the games. Achilles was the great-grandson of Zeus. Earlier in the ode Pindar had traced Theron's lineage to Thersander, son of Polynices. He did not go further, but there was no need to. Polynices was the son of Oedipus the son of Laius the son of Labdacus the son of Polydorus the son of Cadmus, whose wife Harmonia was the child of Ares the son of Zeus. The blood of Zeus flows in Theron's veins also.[59]

Such are the resemblances between Theron and Achilles. Both are recipients of divine favor, descendants of Zeus, victors over barbarian enemies. While few of Pindar's patrons have quite so much to recommend them, similar correspondences between them and the heroes of myth abound in the epinician odes. It would be rash to press a literal interpretation in each case: for example, Pindar certainly does not mean to suggest that Hippocleas, the boy victor celebrated in *Pythian* 10, will journey to the Hyperboreans, as Perseus does in the myth of that ode. Yet readers of *Olympian* 2 are virtually unanimous in positing a near equivalence between the future awaiting Theron and the translation of Achilles to the Island of the Blest. E. Thummer, for example, thought that Pindar meant to draw an analogy between Peleus and Achilles on the one hand and Cadmus and Theron on the other: if Peleus the father is joined by Achilles the son in blessedness, so will Cadmus the ancestor be joined by Theron the descendant.[60] But Pindar has deliberately made Thetis, not Peleus, responsible for Achilles' translation.[61] Peleus is present on the Island of the Blest, but that is all; he takes no active role in his son's salvation.

The similarities between Theron and Achilles, however, have often provided the starting point for interpretation of this passage. Without implying that they lack importance, we must insist that they do not stand in the foreground. Neither Theron nor anyone else in the audience at the ode's original performance would have had the time or the inclination to reflect on them as they heard Pindar announce the translation of Achilles to the Island of the Blest. While awareness of the

59. For Theron's genealogy, see A. Drachmann, ed., *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 81–82.

60. *Die Religiosität Pindars* (Innsbruck, 1957), p. 127, with n. 1; so also N. Demand, "Pindar's *Olympian* 2, Theron's Faith, and Empedocles' *Katharmoi*," *GRBS* 16 (1975): 348–49. The argument had already been made by Mezger, *Siegeslieder*, pp. 165–66.

61. The crucial importance of Thetis is evident in both the literary and the religious phenomena; Achilles owed his cult on Leuce to his relationship with her: Burkert, *Religion*, p. 205.

similarities between the man and the hero contributes to our sense of the complexity of the poem, pressing the similarities too hard inevitably brings into play a kind of logic that ends by distorting or trivializing what it means to illuminate.

According to A. Boeckh, Pindar was inviting us to see the similarities between Theron and Achilles and equate the two men: Theron, like Achilles, would make his way to the Island of the Blest. This in turn must have symbolic meaning, if it is not to verge on puerility. Consequently, Boeckh, Rohde, and others have assumed that it points to Theron's attainment of heroic honors.[62] But quite apart from the fact that Pindar chose not to preserve the link between Achilles' transformation after death and the sort of honors he enjoyed on Leuce, there is a serious problem with the idea that he was, at this point, predicting similar honors for Theron: the Islands of the Blest in Hesiod and their equivalent, the Elysian plain, in Homer are otherworldly paradises, purely poetic creations.[63] The heroes basking in perpetual radiance there are not men who have died, who continue to receive veneration at their tombs, like the recipients of hero worship; being far removed from the world of actual people, they have no claim to attention in cult. It is doubtful whether Pindar would have suggested Theron's attainment of heroic honors by alluding to something quite different, even antithetical: the purely literary translation of various heroes out of this world.[64]

Pindar's treatment of Achilles does not, then, mean hero worship for Theron.[65] Such veneration of a man after his death remains a matter of local concern; it is not in Pindar's power to guarantee. He can, however, suggest reasons why Theron's own people might have seen something divine working in his life; he does as much for other victors, throughout the epinician odes. He can also, in his praise of Theron's benefactions to Acragas, make his people's gratitude toward him understandable, even should it reach beyond the grave. To isolate a particular moment within the ode where this occurs, however, is to disregard Pindar's priorities. He would not use his poetry to predict Theron's future status as a hero. He would promise Theron, as he promises others in the epinician odes, the deathless fame conferred by song. He would promise it, particularly, in return for liberality, an epinician virtue for which he has, in fact, not yet finished praising Theron.

## VI

A poet who has rescued Achilles from the gloom of Hades or the twilight of Leuce should have no difficulty putting Theron's name beyond

62. Boeckh, *Pindari Epiniciorum Interpretatio Latina cum Commentario Perpetuo*, vol. 2.1 (Leipzig, 1821), pp. 121–22; cf. Rohde, *Psyche*[8], p. 445, n. 41; Mezger, *Siegeslieder*, pp. 165–66; Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 122–23, 189; G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford, 1971), p. 338.

63. As Rohde, *Psyche*[8], pp. 62, 76–77, insisted.

64. Hampe, "Eschatologie," pp. 63–64, noted the difference but dismissed it.

65. A more general interpretation, according to which it means some form of personal immortality for Theron, not necessarily hero-worship, is also common; cf. Gildersleeve, *Olympian and Pythian*

the reach of oblivion. Precisely this power of the poet to immortalize achievement had introduced—or almost introduced—the eschatology into the ode. The standard praise of liberality, as we have seen, was not allowed its usual expression: the immortality it normally involves gave way to a different kind of immortality. The relationship between the two is of great importance to our understanding of the ode.

Superficially, it is clear that the immortality conferred by poetry forms a transition to the immortality vouchsafed in Pindar's vision of the afterlife. We have seen how this works for the opening of the eschatology; there is also a connection between the two at the close. The bridge passage in which Pindar takes leave of the eschatology, presenting his poetic credentials and putting his rivals to flight (83–88), leads him directly to renew the praise of liberality he had curtailed at the moment the otherworldly vision began. There, as we have seen, the power of poetry to confer immortal fame was implicit; here it emerges into the light of day. Pindar calls the arrows fired from his poetic bow εὐκλέας / ὀϊστούς, "the arrows of glory" (89–90);[66] he goes on to shoot them first at Acragas, then at Theron, whom he glorifies emphatically and specifically for his munificence (90–100).[67] Without diminishing the usual force or abandoning the normal purpose of the epinician themes employed, Pindar has made his victory ode for Theron into a vehicle of revelation.

So far I have discussed that revelation in terms of its introduction and conclusion. I have also discussed the manner in which the epinician theme of vicissitude informs its presentation. These are mainly literary concerns. For a poet of Pindar's caliber and persuasion, however, poetry itself is no light matter. He means what he says when he opens this ode with a phrase announcing the sovereignty of song (ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι). What Pindar, as master of the medium of immortality, can do for Theron's memory is clear; it remains to be seen what the sovereign power of his song can do for Theron's hopes and beliefs about the life to come.

Here Pindar's attitude toward Homer is crucial. It is often said that his vision of the afterlife is un-Homeric but presented in Homeric colors.[68] This statement lacks the proper emphasis. Pindar's attitude toward Homer is passionate, not passive. Homeric tradition is not for him merely a palette of available hues; it consists, like life itself, of much that is true and much that is false. A great poet not only knows the

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*Odes*, p. 143; Schadewaldt, *Aufbau*, p. 334; Ruck, "Marginalia," pp. 163 and 169; Lloyd-Jones, "After-Life," pp. 259, 277–78; Race, "End," p. 258; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar*, American Philological Association Textbook Series, no. 7 (Chico, Cal., 1982), p. 71.

66. The adjective is causative; cf. *Nem.* 6. 29.

67. The glorification is prefaced (92) by what Race, "End," p. 263, called "a mighty oath, . . . perhaps the most fervent in the *Odes*." Munificence, of course, includes hospitality. Hampe, "Eschatologie," p. 50, saw an implicit comparison at 92–95 between the hospitable Theron and the cruel Phalaris, whose atrocities particularly against strangers were well known; they are mentioned by Pindar at the close of *Pyth.* 1, where Croesus, the counterpart of Phalaris, enjoys immortal fame.

68. E.g., Zuntz, *Persephone*, pp. 87–88.

tradition, he also judges it; and when he finds it not in keeping with his own sense of truth, he alters it accordingly.

This is the deeper significance of the parallels between Achilles and Theron. The poet of the *Odyssey* had left Achilles in the gloom of the underworld; Arctinus had taken him to Leuce. Where will Pindar leave Theron? As an epinician poet, Pindar would answer: in the full blaze of immortal fame. But Pindar has gone a step further in *Olympian* 2. The differences between him and the other poets in the matter of Achilles' fate are only a small part of a much larger issue. Pindar in this ode is making room in poetic tradition for a new, un-Homeric vision of the afterlife. The sovereign power of his song can present to the world Theron's hopes and beliefs about the life to come, in a format that will make them not a single man's or a single group's possession, but the possession of mankind.[69] It is, then, less a question of non-epinician contents being enclosed in an epinician envelope than of mystical doctrines being expressed, with proper reserve, in the medium of poetry.[70] The traces of Homer in Pindar's eschatology are there because Homer needs to be adapted and corrected if the vision of the afterlife in *Olympian* 2 is to have the currency Pindar and Theron would wish for it.[71]

Homer, however, was not the only one in need of correction; the other poets, who assigned Achilles a vague and easy immortality, did not do him justice either. Pindar recognizes the miracle involved in his translation; without Thetis and Zeus, it could not occur. But though Thetis' intervention accounts for the salvation of Achilles in terms consistent with one aspect of Greek religion, it entails an inconsistency with another, the mystical doctrine being set forth in the ode. Those individuals who endure to keep their souls free of all injustice through successive lives make their way to the Island of the Blest (68–72) on their own merits, with no special intercession in their behalf as a prerequisite. Pindar would seem to have been aware of the inconsistency, for he has softened it somewhat by listing, as if by way of justification, Achilles' heroic deeds. Presumably, also, the just could not travel Zeus' road (70) without Zeus' favor.

It is doubtful, again, whether any of these problems, or their partial solutions, would have troubled the minds of the original audience. Pindar too would have been serenely indifferent to them, for he had no intention of sustaining or insisting on a literal correspondence between Theron

69. *Pace* Wilamowitz, who described lines 68–80 as "auf eine Sekte wie die Orphiker beschränkte Geheimlehre" (*Pindaros*, pp. 249–50).

70. For a reconstruction of the Orphic background based on the new evidence from Hipponium and Olbia, see Lloyd-Jones, "After-Life."

71. The Homeric phrasing on the golden plates entombed with the initiates at Hipponium and elsewhere of course has nothing to do with publication. It testifies, rather, to the influence of Homer on the ordinary poet's or the common man's very concept of poetry; the conflict between the content of the verses and their Homeric coloring is unconscious. Pindar's relationship to Homer is, as Köhnken observed (*Funktion*, p. 230), more important than scholars have recognized.

and Achilles, or even between the fabulous Island of the Blest and the final abode of the just. When the just join the heroes of epic at the climax of Pindar's eschatology, a particular religious orientation has all but shed its purely religious trappings and made its way into poetry. Once there, it belongs to the world.

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