Pindar's Homer and Pindar's Myths

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IT HAS BEEN generally acknowledged that Pindar owes little to Homer as a source of mythological material—in Bowra's words: "almost nothing."[1] The judgement seems confirmed by the most cursory glance at a catalogue of Pindar's myths: there is much of unknown provenance (presumably, drawn from local traditions), and much from the other poems of the Epic Cycle; but nothing from the main narrative of either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.[2]

This imbalance is, on the face of it, surprising—and becomes more so on reflection. Homer's heroes would be ideal exemplars of many of the virtues of epinician. On a simple level, Achilles' encounter with Hector would seem to be attractive material because it is the fight between the greatest hero of each side.[3] It also offers a richer dimension: Achilles' decision to fight Hector—the symbol of his decision to fight rather than flee to a comfortable old age (*Il.* 9.410–16, 18.79–126)—epitomises the choice between obscure comfort and glorious endeavour: a classic epinician opposition.[4] But in Pindar, Hector appears as Achilles' opponent just three times; each time briefly, in a catalogue—and nowhere as the climactic term (*Ol.* 2.81f; *Isthm.* 5.39, 8.55).

Finally, one would have thought that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would furnish excellent material for Pindar's style of mythological narration, well described as "brief and condensed with sudden flashes to illuminate ... the mythological land-

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[1] C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 283.

[2] See *e.g.* Appendix III of F. Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs* (Baltimore 1980).

[3] The equivalence of warrior and athlete is central to Pindar: D. C. Young, *Pindar, Isthmian 7: Myth and Exempla* (= *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 15 [Leiden 1971]) 39–43; *cf.* B. K. Braswell, *A Commentary on the Fourth Pythian of Pindar* (Berlin 1988) index *s.v.* "games." The *locus classicus* is *Isthm.* 1.50f; *cf. Ol.* 2.43ff, 10.16ff; *Pyth.* 8.26ff; *Nem.* 1.16ff, 5.19ff.

[4] *E.g. Ol.* 1.81–85, *Pyth.* 4.185ff; K. Crotty, *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore 1982) ch. 4, esp. 108–11.

scape."[5] Material as well known as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would provide excellent reference points for such allusive narration.

The absence of Homeric material from Pindar, then, remains surprising. This article is concerned with this absence: exploring it; suggesting a reason for it; and finally drawing wider conclusions from it.

The phenomenon repays exploration because it is not as straightforward as it at first seems: it has been argued that some Homeric myths do in fact appear in Pindar; and, more persuasively, Köhnken and others have shown that Pindar does make some use, highly sophisticated and allusive, of Homer—without actually narrating mythological material from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. (The water of this argument is muddied by the difficulty of pinning down exactly what Pindar means when he refers by name to "Homer": does he mean the author of those two epics only, or of the whole Epic Cycle?) I consider these matters in the first part of this article and conclude that the two Homeric epics are, indeed, not quarried for source material as the other epics of the Cycle are. In the second part, I consider possible reasons for the absence and, through a comparison of the rejection of unsuitable mythological matter in *Nem.* 7 with that in *Ol.* 1, identify the quality that disqualifies Homeric myth from Pindar. In the third, appealing to the generic demands of epinician, I draw wider conclusions.

I

Young offers the two most striking counterexamples to the bald statement that Pindar does not draw mythological material from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. [6] The first is the suggestion, based on verbal similarities, that the Tlepolemos myth (*Ol.* 7) is drawn from *Il.* 2.653–70. But the verbal similarities are not striking.[7]

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[5] S. Fogelmark, " καὶ κείνοις: Pindar, Nemean 5.22," in G. Bowersock *et al.*, edd., *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M. W. Knox on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Berlin 1979) 70–80 at 70.

[6] D. YOUNG, *Three Odes of Pindar: A Literary Study of* P.11, P.3, O.7 (=*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 9 [Leiden 1968: hereafter 'Young']) 114 n.5. Young does neverthless remain broadly in agreement with Bowra.

[7] Young 82f, 83 n.1, 90. The best is *Il.* 2.655f on the Rhodians:

    ... Ῥόδον ἀμφενέμοντο διὰ τρίχα κοσμηθέντες
    Λίνδον Ἰηλυσόν τε καὶ ἀργινόεντα Κάμειρον.

Further, there is good evidence, in the form of details that do
not appear in Homer, that Pindar was using another source.[8]
These non-Homeric components defy explanation as Pindar's
inventions, contributing in some way to the drift of the poem.[9]
For example, Pindar describes Tlepolemos ἐλθόντ' ἐκ θαλάμων
Μιδέας (*Ol.* 7.29). This detail neither appears in Homer, nor can
be situated in the landscape of the Homeric account.[10] The only
plausible explanation is that it is an allusive detail taken from
another version; other accounts certainly existed ([Hes.] fr. 232
M.-W.). It is tempting to conclude that it is to the Homeric
version that Pindar refers in 21.[11]

Young also suggests (55 n.3), arguing from "similarities of
content," that *Pyth.* 3.101ff and *Isthm.* 8.56ff draw on *Od.*
24.58–73 for their descriptions of Achilles' funeral. But what of
the *Aethiopis,* in which the funeral was presented not as
digression, but as part of the main course of the narrative
(*Chrest.* 196–200=*EGF* p.47.24–30)? Given that Agamemnon's
account of Achilles' burial in the *Odyssey* conforms to Proclus'
outline of the same events in the *Aethiopis,* similarity of
content is no warrant for believing that in his descriptions of
Achilles' funeral Pindar was following the Homeric *Odyssey*
rather than the non-Homeric *Aethiopis.*[12] We cannot know

Cf. Ol. 7.73–76 on the Heliadai:

> εἰς μὲν Κάμιρον
> πρεσβύτατόν τε Ἰάλυ-
> σον ἔτεκεν Λίνδον τ'· ἀπάτερθε δ' ἔχον
> διὰ γαῖαν τρίχα δασσάμενοι πατρωίαν
> ἀστέων μοίρας, κέκληνται δέ σφιν ἕδραι.

[8] As M. M. Willcock, who, though he follows Young, conveniently notes
the discrepancies, concedes: *Pindar: Victory Odes* (Cambridge 1995) 118f.

[9] A strategy for the interpretation of odd details in Pindar's myths that
dates back to the scholiast (Σ*Isthm.* 1.15b); Young 54, 34–43.

[10] *Pace* Willcock (*supra* n.8) *ad loc.*; see W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on
Pindar 1* (=*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 97 [Leiden 1987]) *ad loc.,* who suggests that the
story lying beneath these lines is that Likymnios, as a bastard, failed to inherit
his father's kingdom and so remained in his mother's house (θαλάμων
Μιδέας). This hint at a family feud is attractive.

[11] O. Smith, "An Interpretation of Pindar's Seventh Olympian Ode,"
ClMed 28 (1967) 172–85 at 176; Verdenius (*supra* n.10) *ad loc.*

[12] E. Thummer, *Pindar: Die isthmischen Gedichte* (Heidelberg 1968– 69) II
139, thought that *Isthm.* 8.56a was an echo of *Od.* 24.93. But the verbal echo
is slight and the thought different. I consider whether the opposition of
Homeric and non-Homeric would have had any meaning for Pindar at 324f
below.

what allusions to the *Aethiopis*' account might be concealed within the Pindaric text. Certainly, Pindar followed the *Aethiopis* in the immediate sequel to the burial: Achilles is taken to a better place, the White Island; in the *Odyssey*, his shade is left stalking the Underworld.[13]

A comparable preference for the Cycle over the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is shown in the matter of Achilles' infancy. Pindar treats the subject in three places (*Pyth.* 3.100f, 6.21–27; *Nem.* 3.43–58) and nowhere prefers the Homeric version to the Cyclic.

The Iliadic account of Achilles' early life has Peleus and Thetis living together, sending him off to war, and then waiting in vain for his return.[14] A more folkloric version appeared, it is generally agreed, in the *Cypria*.[15] Here Thetis attempts to immortalise her son through alternately burning him and anointing him with ambrosia, and then, surprised by Peleus, hies away.[16] (This version would appear to be the older, for it leaves traces in the Iliadic text.)[17] And this is the one that Pindar prefers.[18]

It would seem, then, most likely that there is not one surviving example of Pindar's dependence on the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* as a mythological source. This indifference is in itself surprising; and it becomes doubly so when juxtaposed with a survey of the use, more sophisticated than simply quarrying him for material, that Pindar does make of Homer.

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[13] *Nem.* 4.49f; *Od.* 11.467ff; A. T. Edwards, "Achilles in the Underworld: *Iliad, Odyssey*, and *Aethiopis*," *GRBS* 26 (1985) 215–227 at 221 with n.14.

[14] *Il.* 16.222f, 574; 18.57ff, 89f, 331f; 19.422; Thetis bringing Achilles up: 1.414f; 18.55ff, 438.

[15] C. Robert, *Der griechische Heldensage* (=L. Preller, ed., *Griechische Mythologie* II [Berlin 1920–26]) 67 n.4; A. Severyns, *Le Cycle Épique dans l'École d'Aristarque* (Paris 1928) 254–58; see Σ_A *Il.* 16.222b=*Cypria* fr. 35 dub. II *PEG*.

[16] Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.869–79; *Apollod. Bibl.* 3.13.6.

[17] For example, Thetis lives in the sea apart from her husband (1.357f, 18.35f, 24.72ff); and Chiron did have some part in Achilles' education (he taught him medicine, 11.831f). This latter is the last vestige of what would appear to be a classic fosterage at the margins of society by a maternal relative: Chiron was, in one genealogy, Thetis' father (Σ Ap. Rhod. 1.558; Hyg. *Fab.* 14; Dict. Cret. 1.4; Tzetz. *Antehomerica* 180). See J. Bremmer, "Importance of the Maternal Uncle and Grandfather in Archaic and Classical Greece and Early Byzantium," *ZPE* 50 (1983) 173–86.

[18] *Pyth.* 6.21–27 (note ὀρφανιζομένῳ, 22), *Nem.* 3.43–58; R. Stoneman, "Pindar and the Mythological Tradition," *Philologus* 125 (1981) 44–63 at 62.

Köhnken triumphantly demonstrated that the enigmatic exchange between Apollo and Chiron the centaur in *Pyth.* 9 is an echo of the exchange between Zeus and Hera in *Il.* 14.[19] Scholars had been puzzled by the dialogue in *Pyth.* 9 between Apollo and Chiron, in which Apollo quizzes the centaur about the girl he sees fighting a lion and asks how he should behave (30–37). Chiron, in his answer, points out the absurdity of Apollo, τὸν οὐ θεμιτὸν ψεύδει θιγεῖν (42), needing information and advice (39ff). Pindar's exploitation of the Homeric original turns on the identity of Hera's response to Zeus and Chiron's to Apollo.[20] Hera would be ashamed to lie with Zeus on Mt Ida, and proposes retreat to her chamber, which Hephaestus has fitted with close-fitting doors (*Il.* 14.330–40), opened κληῖδι κρυπτῇ (168). And so Chiron answers Apollo (*Pyth.* 9.39ff):

κρυπταὶ κλαΐδες ἐντὶ σοφᾶς
Πειθοῦς ἱερᾶν φιλοτάτων,
Φοῖβε, καὶ ἔν τε θεοῖς τοῦτο κἀνθρώποις ὁμῶς
αἰδέοντ᾽, ἀμφανδὸν ἀδεί-
ας τυχεῖν τὸ πρῶτον εὐνᾶς.[21]

The parallel demonstrates the power of Cyrene's beauty and Apollo's desire for her, by allusively comparing first Apollo's urgency to Zeus' on seeing Hera wearing Aphrodite's girdle,[22] and then his witlessness to that of the victim of whispered seduction, ἥ τ᾽ ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων (*Il.* 14.217), embroidered upon the girdle. All this glorifies Cyrene, and thus Pindar's Cyrenean patron.

Homeric forms lurk behind *Pyth.* 3 also. Hayden Pelliccia has argued that the argument of the first part of the poem follows a typical Homeric pattern: unattainable wish followed by "the

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[19] "*Meilichos Orga*: Liebesthematik und aktueller Sieg in der Neunten Pythischen Ode Pindars," in A. Hurst, ed., *Pindare* (=*Entretiens Hardt* 31 [Vandoeuvres 1985]) 71–116, esp. 86–90.

[20] Köhnken (*supra* n.19) 87f.

[21]   They are secret keys
With which Persuasion knows how to unlock
The sanctuaries of love,
Phoibos: Gods and men alike
Shy of it being spoken of, when first they come
To some sweet maidenhead.

This translation, and those from Pindar that follow, is from C. M. Bowra, *The Odes of Pindar* (Harmondsworth 1969).

[22] Zeus' γλυκὺς ἵμερος (*Il.* 14.328) becomes Apollo's μείλιχος ὀργὰ (*Pyth.* 9.43).

expansion of the wish with a narrative, at the completion of
which the wish is recapitulated, and finally dismissed."[23] In
Pyth. 3 the wish is for Chiron to be alive (1–5); the narrative
follows (6–62); the wish is recapitulated and spelled out: if
Chiron were alive he might cure Hieron (63–76); and it is finally
dismissed: Hieron's safety is placed in the lap of the gods (ἀλλ'
ἐπεύξασθαι μὲν ἐγὼν ἐθέλω Ματρί, 77f). The particular
Homeric model is *Od.* 1.253–71,[24] in which Athena/Mentes
first offers a prayer to Odysseus' safe return (255f), follows it
with a short narrative of the first time he saw Odysseus
(257–64), recapitulates and spells out the wish (265f), and finally
leaves it in the lap of the gods:

> τοῖος ἐὼν μνηστῆρσιν ὁμιλήσειεν Ὀδυσσεύς·
> πάντες κ' ὠκύμοροί τε γενοίατο πικρόγαμοί τε.
> ἀλλ' ἤ τοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται,
> ἤ κεν νοστήσας ἀποτίσεται, ἦε καὶ οὐκί,
> οἷσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι.[25]

Another dynamic use of a Homeric model, very similar to
that of the Διὸς ἀπάτη in *Pyth.* 9, occurs later in the same poem
(*Pyth.* 3.80ff):

> εἰ δὲ λόγων συνέμεν κορυφάν, Ἱέρων,
>   ὀρθὰν ἐπίστᾳ, μανθάνων οἶσθα προτέρων
> ἓν παρ' ἐσλὸν πήματα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς
> ἀθάνατοι.[26]

Chief among the προτέρων is Homer, for the image springs
from that of Zeus' urns:

> δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
> δώρων οἷα δίδωσι, κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἑάων·
> ᾧ μέν κ' ἀμμείξας δώῃ Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος,
> ἄλλοτε μέν τε κακῷ ὅ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐσθλῷ·[27]

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[23] "Pindarus Homericus: *Pythian* 3.1–80," *HSCP* 91 (1987) 39–63 at 53.
[24] Pelliccia (*supra* n.23) 55ff.
[25] *Od.* 1.267–71.
[26]   And you, Hieron,
         Having the wit to know
         What sayings are sharp and true, have learned the old proverb:
         "With every blessing God gives a pair of curses."
[27] *Il.* 24.527–30.

Critics have been distracted by the apparent change from Homer's two urns to the equivalent of three in Pindar.[28] So it seems to have been ignored[29] that both Homer and Pindar go on to use Peleus as paradigmatic of the gnome.

> ὣς μὲν καὶ Πηλῆϊ θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα
> ἐκ γενετῆς· πάντας γὰρ ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο
> ὄλβῳ τε πλούτῳ τε, ἄνασσε δὲ Μυρμιδόνεσσι,
> καί οἱ θνητῷ ἐόντι θεὰν ποίησαν ἄκοιτιν.
> ἀλλ' ἐπὶ καὶ τῷ θῆκε θεὸς κακόν, ὅττί οἱ οὔ τι
> παίδων ἐν μεγάροισι γονὴ γένετο κρειόντων,
> ἀλλ' ἕνα παῖδα τέκεν παναώριον.[30]

We compare *Pyth.* 3.85–95, 100–103):

>   αἰὼν δ' ἀσφαλής
> οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὔτ' Αἰακίδα παρὰ Πηλεῖ
> οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται μὰν βροτῶν
> ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἳ σχεῖν οἵτε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων
> 90   μελπομενᾶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισᾶν καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις
> ἄιον Θήβαις, ὁπόθ' Ἁρμονίαν γᾶμεν βοῶπιν,
> ὁ δὲ Νηρέος εὐβούλου Θέτιν παῖδα κλυτάν,
> καὶ θεοὶ δαίσαντο παρ' ἀμφοτέροις,
> καὶ Κρόνου παῖδας βασιλῆας ἴδον χρυ-
>   σέαις ἐν ἕδραις, ἔδνα τε
> 95   δέξαντο.
>
> 100   τοῦ δὲ [*sc.* Peleus'] παῖς, ὅνπερ μόνον ἀθανάτα
> τίκτεν ἐν Φθίᾳ Θέτις, ἐν πολέμῳ τό-
>   ξοις ἀπὸ ψυχὰν λιπών
> ὦρσεν πυρὶ καιόμενος
> ἐκ Δαναῶν γόον.[31]

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[28] Σ *Pyth.* 3.141; Young 51. We should not lose sight of the fact that Pindar does not mention urns.

[29] Although Robbins notes it, he suggests only that it confirms the reference to *Il.* 24.527f: "The Gifts of the Gods: Pindar's Third *Pythian*," *CQ* N.S. 40 (1990) 307–18 at 313.

[30] *Il.* 24.534–40.

[31]   Untroubled life
Neither Peleus had, the son of Aiakos,
Nor godlike Kadmos.
These two, they say, had the utmost bliss of men:
They heard the Muses
singing, with gold in their hair,
On that mountain and in seven-gated Thebes
(When one
Married soft-eyed Harmonia, and one Thetis,
Wise Nereus' golden child)

The passages run parallel, but for Cadmus' intrusion and Pindar's elaborations: Homer's ἀγλαὰ δῶρα (534) are Pindar's ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον (89); *Il.* 24.537 becomes *Pyth.* 8.89–95 and παναώριον (540) becomes 101f. They then continue on broadly similar lines. Achilles notes that Priam was once prosperous, but is now beset with care, and urges him to endure and not endlessly and pointlessly mourn his son (24.543–51). Pindar touches on the same themes in general terms: he notes the precariousness of good fortune and urges that one make the best of one's lot (*Pyth.* 3.104–109).

If *Il.* 24.534ff do lie behind *Pyth.* 3.86ff, then the precise nature of Peleus' disappointment at *Pyth.* 3.100f becomes clear: his only son (μόνον) was not the marvellous progeny he might have expected from his divine bride (ἀθανάτα) and was doomed: οἱ οὔ τι παίδων ἐν μεγάροισι γονὴ γένετο κρειόντων, ἀλλ' ἕνα παῖδα τέκεν παναώριον.[32]

More broadly, the Homeric model enriches the close of this ode. *Pyth.* 3 has a strong consolatory tone;[33] and the consolation that Pindar offers Hieron in this ode is informed by Achilles' consolation of Priam.[34] Pindar exploits the brillance of *Il.* 24 to

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> And with both the Gods feasted. They saw those Kings,
> The sons of Kronos, sitting on golden thrones,
> And took their marriage gifts....

> And Peleus' son, the only son
> Whom immortal Thetis bore to him in Phthia,
> Killed by an arrow in battle, was burned with fire
> And woke the Danaans' tears.

[32] *Cf.* B. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York 1899) 269.

[33] Indeed, there is so little celebration in *Pyth.* 3 that some have thought it not an epinician at all, but instead a consolation in the desirable form of an epinician, which Pindar regrets he cannot bring (72ff; *cf.* Pelliccia [*supra* n.23]). Alternatively, the poem might be at once an encomium and a *consolatio* (so *e.g.* W. J. Slater, "Pindar's *Pythian* 3: Structure and Purpose," *QuadUrbin* N.S. 29 (1988) 51–61). But the only mention of a victory is at 73f, where ποτέ suggests that it was not a recent win. D. Young, "Pindar *Pythians* 2 and 3: Inscriptional ποτε and the Poetic Epistle," *HSCP* 87 (1983) 31–42, attempts to explain ποτέ away (it is to be read from the perspective of the future audience); but see M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode* (Park Ridge 1976) 163 n.42; Robbins (*supra* n.29) 307–12. For the present argument it need only be agreed that it has a consolatory tone.

[34] [Plut.] *Mor.* 105 B–C; *cf.* 107 B; O. Schantz, *De Incerti Poetae Consolatione ad Liviam deque Carminum Consolatioriorum apud Graecos et Romanos Historia* (diss.Marburg 1889) 21f; C. MacLeod, "Homer on Poetry and the Poetry of Homer," in *id., Collected Essays* (Oxford 1983) 1–15 at 14.

buttress his poem in a number of ways. First, Priam, as a pattern of kingship, is a flattering analogue for Hieron.[35] The pathos of his situation in *Il.* 24 generates sympathy for Hieron, his analogue: for, by the time of Aristotle at least, Priam is also the pattern of good fortune turned to bad.[36] In *Pyth.* 3 he is thus a third paradigm, generated only through allusion,[37] exemplifying the frailty of human flourishing and the preponderance of misfortune.

Finally, the shadow of *Il.* 24 prepares us for the claims of the last lines of *Pyth.* 3, formally guaranteed by the examples of Nestor and Sarpedon (112). The epinician theme that poetry gives lasting value to human achievement—some sort of immortality—is a commonplace;[38] but here it provides a surprisingly confident ending for a poem that has focused not on triumph but on the limits of achievement and the universality of misfortune.[39]

In the Homeric poems, however, the thought is not a triumphal boast but a comfort.[40] Alcinous wonders why Odysseus weeps (*Od.* 8.577–80):

εἰπὲ δ᾽ ὅ τι κλαίεις καὶ ὀδύρεαι ἔνδοθι θυμῷ
Ἀργείων Δαναῶν ἰδὲ Ἰλίου οἶτον ἀκούων.
τὸν δὲ θεοὶ μὲν τεῦξαν, ἐπεκλώσαντο δ᾽ ὄλεθρον
ἀνθρώποις, ἵνα ᾖσι καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀοιδή.[41]

The use of the Homeric model at *Pyth.* 3.80ff suggests that the claim of the last lines has this melancholy colour—and this is confirmed by the otherwise curious choice of Nestor and

[35] See *e.g. Il.* 3.105ff, 20.183; M. van der Kolf, "Priamos (1)," *RE* 22.2 (1954) 1848ff.

[36] *Eth. Nic.* 1100a5–9: πολλαὶ γὰρ μεταβολαὶ γίνονται καὶ παντοῖαι τύχαι κατὰ τὸν βίον, καὶ ἐνδέχεται τὸν μάλιστ᾽ εὐθηνοῦντα μεγάλαις συμφοραῖς περιπεσεῖν ἐπὶ γήρως, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς Τρωικοῖς περὶ Πριάμου μυθεύεται· τὸν δὲ τοιαύταις χρησάμενον τύχαις καὶ τελευτήσαντα ἀθλίως οὐδεὶς εὐδαιμονίζει. A little further on he describes a man encountering Πριαμικαῖς τύχαις (1101a8).

[37] *Cf.* the allusive citation of Semele at 98f: Robbins (*supra* n.29) 314f.

[38] E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (=CPCP 18 [Berkeley 1962]) II 86ff.

[39] R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford 1962) 78, with Young 62–68.

[40] J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 96–102.

[41] So too Helen explains that Zeus has given her and Paris κακὸν μόρον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ᾽ ἀοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισι (*Il.* 6.357f); *cf.* 22.303ff; *Od.* 5.309–12, 24.200f.

Sarpedon as exemplars.[42] They are ideal paradigms of the consolatory theme: all must die,[43] for they both represent a maximum:[44] even the oldest must die;[45] and even the most favoured.[46] The failure of each emphasises the failure of the other to cheat death. The force of the argument is: even Nestor and Sarpedon died, but they are at least celebrated in song. The application to Hieron is, of course, left implicit: even they died, and so shall you; but as they were celebrated in song, so shall you be.[47]

The addressee of such remarks could only be *in extremis*. I suspect that the analogy between Hieron and Priam had an even more poignant dimension. Priam's particular grief is that he lived too long.[48] His case shows that the postponement of

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[42] Young suggested (62) that they are "deliberately random names"; Gildersleeve (*supra* n.32: 269), that they were paradigmatic of mourning. The only critic to confront the real difficulty here is D. Sider, "Nestor and Sarpedon in Pindar, *Pythian* 3," *RhM* 134 (1991) 110f, who argues that the two are apposite because they are "among the very few in the *Iliad* who explicitly state the theme of *non omnis moriar*." But the passages he cites, *Il.* 11.761, 12.310–28, do not show this.

[43] R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epigraphs* (Urbana 1942) 250–56. The *locus classicus* is Achilles' confrontation of his own mortality at *Il.* 18.117ff.

[44] A quality central to the paradigm: C. Carey, "The Epilogue of Pindar's Fourth Pythian," *Maia* 32 (1980) 143–52 at 150.

[45] Nestor's age: *Il.* 1.250ff; *cf.* 11.669ff; *Pyth.* 6.35; J. Schmidt, "Nestor, (1)," *RE* 17.1 (1936) 119f. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* tr. W. R. Trask (Princeton 1973) 80ff, notes the use of the extremely old as consolatory material. He cites Tithonus, who is associated with Nestor in old age at *e.g.* Prop. 2.25.10; *cf.* Schmidt 120.

[46] A late epitaph from Teos (*EG* 298.7f):

τῆς ἐπ᾽ ἐμοι λύπης παραμύθιον ἐμ φρεσὶ θέσθε
τοῦτον· καὶ μακάρων παῖδες ἔνερθεν ἔβαν.

Cf. Lattimore (*supra* n.43) 254. Sarpedon is not simply the son of a god, but the dearest son of Zeus (*Il.* 16.432–61). Zeus' dilemma over whether to save him dramatises how near he came to defying his mortality.

[47] The application to Hieron is generated through the first person in 111f: Young 58f.

[48] [Plut.] *Mor.* 113E: "μεῖον᾽ " γὰρ ὄντως "ἐδάκρυσεν Τρωίλος ἢ Πρίαμος, " ⟨καὶ⟩ οὗτος, εἰ προετελεύτησεν ἔτι ἀκμαζούσης αὐτῷ τῆς βασιλείας καὶ τῆς τοσαύτης τύχης; *cf.* Cic. *Tusc.* 1.85; Juv. 10.258; *cf.* too *Il.* 24.244ff.

death does not simply controvert the natural order of things, but is not even desirable (μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον συεῦδε): if no cure is possible, then death may be our physician.[49]

Smaller, more straightforward—but still dynamic—uses of Homeric originals occur at *Ol.* 9.66 and *Nem.* 2.14 (*cf.* n.67 *infra*). The latter is a vaunt about Salamis (2.13f):

> καὶ μὰν ἁ Σαλαμίς γε θρέψαι φῶτα μαχατάν
> δυνατός. ἐν Τροΐᾳ μὲν Ἕκ-
>   τωρ Αἴαντος ἄκουσεν.

ἄκουσεν is a puzzle. Critics have, in the main, interpreted it as "obey" in a metaphorical sense and thus "submit to";[50] but ἀκούω can only mean "submit to" in the sense of obeying orders—which is not what is needed here.[51]

The best explanation remains Monro's.[52] Hector hears Ajax just before their duel in *Il.* 7, when he spoke to him ἀπειλήσας (7.225–32). But the passage specifically referred to here occurs a little earlier, when Ajax, chosen by lot to fight Hector, closes his address to the other Achaeans:

> οὐ γάρ τίς με βίῃ γε ἑκὼν ἀέκοντα δίηται,
> οὐδέ τι ἰδρείῃ, ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἐμὲ νήϊδά γ' οὕτως
> ἔλπομαι ἐν Σαλαμῖνι γενέσθαι τε τραφέμεν τε.[53]

Munro suggests that Pindar has simply made a small mistake in attributing this vaunt to Ajax's exchange with Hector a few lines

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[49] *Cf.* Aesch. fr. 353R; B. Lier, "Topica carminum sepulcralium latinorum," *Philologus* N.F. 16 (1903) 445–77, 563–603; 17 (1904) 54–65 at 596f.

[50] S. Instone, "Pindar's Enigmatic Second Nemean," *BICS* 36 (1989) 109–16 at 115 with n.26.

[51] See R. Kannicht, ed., Euripides *Helen* (Heidelberg 1969) *ad* 733.

[52] D. B. Munro, "On Pindar *Nem.* 2.14," *CR* 6 (1892) 3f.

[53] *Il.* 7.197–99.

later,[54] and translates "Salamis was ever the nurse of heroes: such as the boast of Aias to Hektor." The effect of this is that the vaunt is made again on the present occasion and Ajax becomes a flattering analogue for the *laudandus*.[55]

In *Ol.* 9 Pindar describes the succession of Opous to his father's throne. This, according to Eust. *ad Il.* 2.531, was the upshot of a family feud. Pindar not only glosses over the unhappy quarrel,[56] but by using vocabulary used by Homer to describe Phoenix's happy adoption by Peleus, in which Peleus amicably handed over to him the rule of the Dolopes (*Il.* 9.483), also suggests that Opous' succession was similarly happy:

πόλιν δ' ὤπασεν λαόν τε διαιτᾶν (*Ol.* 9.66)

καί μ' ἀφνειὸν ἔθηκε, πολὺν δέ μοι ὤπασε λαόν (*Il.* 9.483).

Such use of Homer approaches the non-allusive borrowings of vocabulary noted by Bowra (*supra* n.1: 215–19), who emphasised that even on this small scale, Pindar uses Homeric material in novel ways.

These examples of Pindar's sophisticated use of Homer serve to counterpoint Homer's absence as a mythological source. They emphasise its strangeness: it is a genuine phenomenon.

This observation enables comment on an interesting side issue: when Pindar writes of 'Homer', what does the name signify? Does it refer, in accord with our usage, to the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* only or to the author of those and the other poems of the Cycle? The earliest surviving expression of scepticism of Homer's authorship of epics other than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* occurs at Hdt. 2.117 (=*Cypria* fr. 14 *PEG*; *cf. Il.*

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[54] *Cf.* the misquotation of *Il.* 15.207 (ἐσθλὸν καὶ τὸ τέτυκται, ὅτ' ἄγγελος αἴσιμα εἰδῇ) at *Pyth.* 4.277f:

τῶν δ' 'Ομήρου καὶ τόδε συνθέμενος
ῥῆμα πόρσυν'· ἄγγελον ἐσλὸν ἔφα τι-
    μὰν μεγίσταν πράγματι παντὶ φέρειν.

Some have doubted that this does refer to *Il.* 15.207, but see Braswell (*supra* n.3) *ad loc.*; Burton (*supra* n.39) 170f.

[55] The victor was in fact from Acharnai (16) but must have had some connection with Salamis—perhaps as a member of the family Salaminioi: Instone (*supra* n.50) 115.

[56] M. van der Kolf, *Quaeritur quomodo Pindarus fabulas tractaverit quidque in eis mutarit* (Rotterdam 1923) 104.

6.289ff).[57] The question seems to have remained a matter of controversy until the time of Aristotle's *Poetics.*[58]

The name of Homer appears four times in the Pindaric corpus (*Pyth.* 4.277; *Nem.* 7.21; *Isthm.* 3/4.55; *Pae.* 7b.11), and none of these passages can be construed so as to prove definitively either an inclusive[59] or exclusive[60] interpretation.

Rather than studying the passages where Homer is named, however, we may consider what use Pindar makes of Homeric material. Nagy argues that the fact that Hector slips undistinguished into catalogues with the heroes from the rest of the Cycle—Telephus, Cycnus, Memnon—indicates that Pindar regarded them all as characters from the same canon.[61] But a difference of treatment has now emerged: Pindar does not make straightforward large-scale use of Homer as a source of mythological material, as he does of the other poems of the Cycle. This divergence shows that he perceived a qualitative difference between the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* and the other poems of the Cycle; and the simplest inference that he, or anyone, might draw from the perceived difference was that Homer did not write the other poems of the Cycle.[62]

II

What might be the explanation for the absence of Homer? Wilamowitz[63] swept to the conclusion that Pindar found

[57] R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 43ff.

[58] *Poet.* 23 (1459a17ff); Pfeiffer (*supra* n.57) 73f, 117.

[59] E. Fitch, "Pindar and Homer," *CP* 19 (1924) 57–65, argued that *Pyth.* 4.277f did not refer to any known passage in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* but see *supra* n.54.

[60] See F. Nisetich, *Pindar and Homer* (=*AJP* Mono. 4 [Baltimore 1989]) esp. 1–23, 70ff. His arguments rest on two crucial passages. In the first, *Nem.* 7.20–24, Pindar does specify Homer as the author of the *Odyssey,* but this does not, of course, rule out his authorship of other poems in the cycle. The second is *Isthm.* 3/4.53–60, in which Nisetich (10ff) discovers an antithesis between the poet of the *Aethiopis* and Homer (53f: 59f). But the true antithesis there is between Ajax's contemporaries, who failed to honour him, and the epic poet who did.

[61] G. NAGY, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore 1990: hereafter 'Nagy') 414f.

[62] *Cf.* J. Griffin, "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *JHS* 97 (1977) 39–53, esp. 53.

[63] *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 463.

Homer unsympathetic; this unlikely hypothesis is immediately disproved by the familiarity evidenced by the sophisticated use of Homer that we have seen.

On the opposite tack is an intuitively attractive explanation—an appeal to the brilliance of Homer: "the cycle is seen as a repository of saga rather than as a literary work, in sharp contrast to the works of Homer. Pindar did not want to impinge on territory where a supreme poet had already trod."[64] On this course, one might go further and suggest that at the core of the poetics of Homer and Pindar lies the same principle (however obscurely expressed): βαιὰ ἐν μακροῖσι ποικίλλειν ἀκοὰ σοφοῖς (*Pyth.* 9.77f);[65] and it is this identity of aesthetic purpose that makes it unfeasible for Pindar to treat the material, for it has already received a 'Pindaric' treatment at the hands of Homer.

But these explanations simply defer the problem, which now becomes: why should Pindar not cover the same ground as Homer?

Another approach suggests that the answer might be found in the one place where Pindar explicitly challenges the authority of Homer, *Nem.* 7.20–27:

> ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι
> λόγον 'Οδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν
>   διὰ τὸν ἀδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Ὅμηρον·
> ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσί οἱ ποτανᾷ ⟨τε⟩ μαχανᾷ
> σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι· σοφία
>   δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις. τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει
> ἦτορ ὅμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος. εἰ γὰρ ἦν
> ἓ τὰν ἀλάθειαν ἰδέμεν, οὔ κεν ὅπλων χολωθείς
> ὁ καρτερὸς Αἴας ἔπαξε διὰ φρενῶν
> λευρὸν ξίφος.[66]

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[64] Stoneman (*supra* n.18) 63; *cf.* M. Davies, *The Epic Cycle* (Bristol 1989) 10.

[65] For the principle see D. Young, "Pindar, Aristotle and Homer: A Study in Ancient Criticism," *ClAnt* 2 (1983) 156–70, with N. J. Richardson, "Pindar and Later Literary Criticism in Antiquity," *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 5 (=*Arca* 19 [Liverpool 1985]) 383–401 at 389.

[66]   But I hold that the name of Odysseus
        Is more than his sufferings
        Because of Homer's sweet singing;
        For on his untruths and winged cunning
        A majesty lies.
        Art beguiles and cheats with its tales
        And often the heart of the human herd is blind.
        If it could have seen the truth,

Following the lines establishing song as recompense for successful labour (11f), the dictum that Odysseus' *logos* was more than his *patha* must, on first reading (or hearing), suggest that Homer's account of Odysseus' experiences outweighs his travail: that Homer was so good a poet that Odysseus was more than recompensed. But if the account exaggerates, it is false (22f).

πάθαν suggests that this is the Odysseus of the *Odyssey* (1.4, πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν).[67] Reluctant to imagine Pindar impugning Homer and taking advantage of the *hoplon krisis* that follows, some critics have referred the οἱ of 22 to Odysseus, as we know of his *patha* through his own account to Alcinous (Fraenkel [*supra* n.67] 360). But context, metaphor, and vocabulary all suggest that Homer is meant.[68] Certainly, by lines 25f the lies have shifted to Odysseus' lips, for they are the slippery argument with which he triumphed in the contest for Achilles' armour. To enable that slide, there is some ambiguity in lines 21–24, where the unfocused cusp of the shift from the particular of Homer's narration of Odysseus' *patha* to the particular of Odysseus' specious rhetoric embraces σοφία—both Homer's and Odysseus'—and, in ὅμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος, both the majority of mankind (*i.e.,* Homer's audience) and the voting majority amongst the crowd of Greeks at Troy.[69]

In *Nem.* 7, then, Pindar's mistrust of Homer is that he distorts the truth. Is this the reason for Pindar's failure to use Homer as a mythological source—that Homer's myths are un-

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Aias would not, in wrath about armour,
Have driven a smooth sword through his breast.

[67] H. Fraenkel, *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*[3] (Munich 1968) 360. Later in the poem, Pindar allusively casts further doubt on Homer's championship of Odysseus. *Nem.* 7.35ff recalls *Od.* 1.4; and it emerges that Neoptolemos, not (as Homer claimed) Odysseus, was the true sacker of Troy: A. KÖHNKEN, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* (Berlin 1971: hereafter 'Köhnken') 69f.

[68] C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (New York 1981) 145.

[69] See T. Hubbard, "The Subject/Object Relation in Pindar's Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean," *QuadUrbin* 51 (1986) 53–72 at 63f; G. W. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar's Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes* (=*Hypomnemeta* 83 [Göttingen 1985]) 150: "the fact that the four books of Odysseus' fabulations are reported in *oratio recta* means that the words are simultaneously *both* Odysseus' and Homer's."

trustworthy versions; that his depictions of the heroes are
wrong?

This straightforward explanation is immediately ruled out by
another of the occasions on which Pindar names Homer.[70] In
Isthm. 3/4 Ajax is used to demonstrate how we cannot know
our fate πρὶν τέλος ἄκρον ἱκέσθαι (50). The lesser man tricked
Ajax (*Isthm.* 3/4.53–60):

> ἴστε μάν
> Αἴαντος ἀλκάν, φοίνιον τὰν ὀψίᾳ
> ἐν νυκτὶ ταμὼν περὶ ᾧ φασγάνῳ μομφὰν ἔχει
> παίδεσσιν Ἑλλάνων ὅσοι Τροίανδ' ἔβαν.
> ἀλλ' Ὅμηρός τοι τετίμακεν δι' ἀνθρώπων, ὃς αὐτοῦ
> πᾶσαν ὀρθώσαις ἀρετὰν κατὰ ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν
> θεσπεσίων ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν.
> τοῦτο γὰρ ἀθάνατον φωνᾶεν ἕρπει,
> εἴ τις εὖ εἴπῃ τι· καὶ πάγ-
>   καρπον ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ διὰ πόντον βέβακεν
> ἐργμάτων ἀκτὶς καλῶν ἄσβεστος αἰεί.[71]

Instead of being associated with Ajax's adversaries, as he is in
Nem. 7, Homer[72] is here on the side of the angels: setting Ajax's
virtue aright[73] and bringing him the immortality of song in
compensation for his mistreatment by the other Greeks who
went to Troy (Köhnken 110–14).

All the qualities with which the poetry of Homer is credited
in *Isthm.* 3/4—recognition of true virtues, recompense for
πόνος, immortalisation—are, in fact, characteristics of epinician.
Indeed, in *Nem.* 7 it transpires that Pindar is claiming them for

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[70] Nisetich (*supra* n.60) 2, 23.

[71]   You know
    Of the valour of Aias. He ripped it in blood
    On his own sword late at night,
    And brings reproach to all sons of the Hellenes
    Who went to Troy.
    But Homer has done him
    Honour among men; for he set straight
    All his prowess, and to his wand of celestial words
    Told of it, to the delight of men to come.
    For this goes forth undying in speech
    If a man says a thing well.
    Over the fruitful earth and across the sea
    The sunbeam of fine things has gone
    Unquenchable forever.

[72] Either as the author of just *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or of the whole cycle.

[73] On ὀρθώσαις see Young 78 n.2.

himself, in implicit contrast to Homer. In *Nem.* 7, the first
myth introduces the notion of deceptive reputations and gives
two instances—Odysseus' and Ajax's—exemplifying excess and
deficiency of repute.[74] The myth of Neoptolemus, complex,
confused and, in some earlier versions, highly uncomplimen-
tary to the hero, follows.[75] The story is a test case of extreme
difficulty for the praise poet who wishes to honour him, but
Pindar successfully navigates his way through it, rediscovering
the true version and saving Neoptolemus' honour. He stands
back in triumph and claims: he is the true witness for the
Aeacids' deeds;[76] he invites a Molossian, who knows the true
story about Neoptolemus because it is for him traditional
material, to approve of his version (64f);[77] and he prays for the
future—suggesting the ultimate revelation of truth that will bear
him out.[78] All these claims contrast him with Homer, who
exaggerated Odysseus' *patha.*[79]

Seeing the depiction of Homer in *Nem.* 7 as a true and
complete reflection of Pindar's view of him is therefore im-
possible, for in *Isthm.* 3/4, working within the same nexus of
ideas, Pindar produces an exactly antithetical judgement.

[74] D. Young, "A Note on Pindar *Nemean* 7.30f," *CSCA* 4 (1971) 249–63 at
252f; Carey (*supra* n.68) 147.

[75] Evidence for my observations on *Nem.* 7 is to be found in R. Mann,
"Myth and Truth in some Odes of Pindar" (diss.Oxford 1992) ch. 7, esp.
313–68, 445–61 for an examination of the mythological confusion surrounding
Neoptolemus—a confusion exacerbated by his use as a symbol by both the
Crisaeans (who picture him attacking the Delphic shrine) and the
Amphictions (who picture him liberating it).

[76] That Pindar is the witness of 49 follows from my interpretation of 31f, the
kephalaion that 49 recapitulates. θεός in 32 is the divine element in any
egregious human achievement—here, logically, the poet's (the scholiast [*Nem.*
7.46a] thought the god the Muse). There is thus no polar opposition between
the mortal and the divine. It seems to me *prima facie* unlikely that Pindar
should be comparing his own poetry unfavourably with anything; and thus I
rule out the notion that Pindar is here discussing honour that is bestowed by
a divine, rather than mortal power (Most [*supra* n.69] 151). C. Carey,
"Pindarica," in R. Dawe, J. Diggle, and P. Easterling, edd., *Dionysiaca*
(Cambridge 1978) 21–44 at 38, makes the best case for Apollo both in 31f and
49f.

[77] G. W. Most, "Nemean 7.64–67," *GRBS* 26 (1985) 315–31.

[78] H. J. Lloyd-Jones, "Modern Interpretation of Pindar: The Second
Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes," *JHS* 93 (1973) 109–37 at 135 (=*Greek
Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy* [Oxford 1990] 110–53 at 149).

[79] L. Woodbury, "Neoptolemus at Delphi: Pindar *Nem.* 7.30ff," *Phoenix* 33
(1979) 95–133 at 113.

Homer was wrong about Odysseus, but right about Ajax; and this entirely comprehensible verdict, that Homer was wrong in some particulars and right in others, gives no insight whatsoever into the reasons for Homer's absence from most of Pindar.

But there is something to be learnt from the *Nem.* 7 passage. Why should the audience believe his claim that Odysseus' virtues were exaggerated and that Ajax was the better man?

In *Ol.* 1, where Pindar confronts a similar case of exaggeration,[80] consisting of a kernel of truth overlaid with seductive and misleading embroidery,[81] he works hard to ensure the triumph of his own version:[82] he first introduces the possibility of exaggeration (28ff) and then, as he outlines the neighbour's story, sabotages it,[83] and finally recoils from it: it would entail γαστρίμαργον μακάρων τιν' εἰπεῖν (52). The crucial word is γαστρίμαργον—not "cannibal," nor yet simply "gluttonous" (Gerber) but the brutish "belly-crazy" of Howie.[84] Plato (*Tim.* 73A) describes the function of stomach and entrails: men have them ὅπως μὴ ταχὺ διεκπερῶσα ἡ τροφὴ ταχὺ πάλιν τροφῆς ἑτέρας δεῖσθαι τὸ σῶμα ἀναγκάζοι, καὶ παρέχουσα ἀπληστίαν, διὰ γαστριμαργίαν ἀφιλόσοφον καὶ ἄμουσαν πᾶν ἀποτελοῖ τὸ γένος, ἀνυπήκοον τοῦ θειοτάτου τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν. What

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[80] W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on Pindar 2* (=*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 101 [Leiden 1988]) *ad Ol.* 1.27; Köhnken 52; Richardson (*supra* n.65) 385ff.

[81] Nagy 66; P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths?* (Chicago 1988) ch. 5.

[82] W. J. Slater ("Pindar and Hypothekai," *Tiresias* Suppl. 2 [Montreal 1979] 79–82 at 80) wrote that the audience of epinician

> could think of Hesiod where the Muses are said to inspire truth or lies like truth. The audience were then perfectly aware that they could be listening to lies, and like a good orator the poet will do his best to raise this issue and lay their suspicions to rest. That is the whole point I am sure in the elaborate *recusatio* in Olympian 1; it is designed to make us feel that Pindar is honest and religious unlike previous bards.... His audience contained potential sceptics.

[83] *E.g.* rather than Demeter alone eating one part of him, the gods ate Pelops up (φάγον, 51), which makes the business of revival, and the ivory shoulder, problematic. See T. Gantz, "Pindar's First *Olympian*: The Masters of Darkness," *RStCl* 26 (1978) 24–39 at 33f

[84] J. G. Howie, "The Revision of Myth in Pindar's *Olympian* One: The Death and Revival of Pelops (25–27; 36–66)," in *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 4 (=*Arca* 11 [Liverpool 1983]) 277–313 at 295.

is important about γαστρίμαργον is: how unlike a god. It makes no sense. A god could not be γαστρίμαργος.[85]

In *Nem.* 7, however, there is no comparable process of sabotage. The logic herein is a pleasing circularity: Pindar posits that Odysseus' reputation is, thanks to the genius of Homer, inflated (20f); this is because (ἐπεί, 22) there is something marvellous about his lies (22f); and, indeed, such power can deceive (23f)—most people cannot discern the truth (23f); and this is proved (γάρ, 24) by the fact that most of the people at Troy backed Odysseus over Ajax, thus ensuring Ajax's death (24–27); and their blindness neatly tallies with the starting hypothesis that Odysseus was not as good as words painted him. Which is thus, spuriously, confirmed.

This tautology is neat, but goes no way towards the proof of the original hypothesis. Why should the potentially sceptic audience let Pindar get away with pulling himself up by the bootstraps in this way? The answer is that there is one element here that is for them an axiom, on which the whole argument depends—Ajax's superiority over Odysseus. And this is axiomatic because they are Aeginetans, and he is an Aeacid, their hero. He should by rights have been judged best of the Achaeans after Achilles; and thus Homer's glorification of Odysseus throughout the *Odyssey* is necessarily exaggeration. Pindar's challenge to Homer's authority is enabled by the attitudes of the audience: "What the poet tells is true or false, depending on where he tells it: the local traditions on which the poet's immediate audience have been reared constitute the ultimate criterion of 'truth'."[86]

And indeed, these tensions appear in the choice—but typically opaque—slogan that appears immediately after the myth of Neoptolemus at *Nem.* 7.49–52.

> οὐ ψεῦδις ὁ μάρτυς ἔργμασιν ἐπιστατεῖ,
> Αἴγινα, τῶν Διός τ᾽ ἐκγόνων. θρασύ μοι τόδ᾽ εἰπεῖν

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[85] To this whole process, *cf.* Woodbury's reconstruction of Stesichorus' palinode: "Helen and the Palinode," *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 157–76 at 166, with n.16, 170, 173f. In *Ol.* 1 Pindar has sabotaged the traditional version to lend credence to his apostasy.

[86] G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore 1979) 3.6 n. *Cf. Ol.* 7, where Pindar's challenge to Homeric authority is enabled, presumably, by the popularity of another version amongst his audience: P. Sfyroeras, "Pindar's *Olympian 7* and the Panathenaic Festival," *AJP* 114 (1993) 1–26, esp. 22f.

φαενναῖς ἀρεταῖς ὁδὸν κυρίαν λόγων
οἴκοθεν·

It is now broadly agreed that θρασύ μοι τόδ' εἰπεῖν must mean
"I make bold to say this" (Woodbury [*supra* n.79] 113). The
interpretation of the next line then should reflect that it has
been marked by this vaunt: it must accommodate the line being
audacious. A perfectly reasonable interpretation is to see it as an
elaboration of 49.

So, with Carey, I take ὁδὸν in apposition with τόδε, and
supply εἶναι. The ὁδὸν ... λόγων is the course of Pindar's
poetry, as laid out by the deeds he describes there. κυρίαν must
mean, broadly, "right," whether it functions within the road
image ("right road") or outside it ("legitimate").[87] Whichever;
κυρίαν connotes authority: this is the proper road to be on. The
ἀρεταῖς are those of the Aeacids: the deeds of excellence by
which the road of words is led.[88]

οἴκοθεν appears problematic: whose house is involved? It
may refer to the Aeacids' home of Aegina; then the sentence
means "the right version of the song about the Aeacids' deeds is
that of the Aeginetans" (Köhnken 75ff). Or it may refer to
Pindar: "I know the right version of the song." The problem is
that the sense of οἴκοθεν boils down to "here"; it might be
marked by Αἴγινα or μοι (50).

Once we accept, however, that Pindar's preference is for the
tradition favoured locally, the ambiguity becomes unobjec-
tionable: the right version of the song about the Aeacids' deeds
will simultaneously be Pindar's and that of the Aeginetans.

In *Nem.* 7, then, Homeric and local traditions are ranged
against each other; and it is the local tradition that is preferred.
And this opposition dramatises a fact that is implicit throughout
the corpus, of which the absence of Homer is only half the
story, and which is as true for the stories of which no
Iliadic/Odyssean version exists as for the stories of which they
do: for every ode of Pindar in which a myth appears it can be
said that a less well-known myth—be it from one of the lesser
epics of the cycle, or the Hesiodic corpus, or a local
tradition—has been chosen over a Homeric one.

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[87] Carey (*supra* n.76) 37 and (*supra* n.68) 156.
[88] S. Fogelmark, "Pindar, *Nemean* 7.50–52," *ClAnt* 45 (1976) 121–32 at 129.

III

This is the observation that provides a possible solution to the problem of Homer's absence from Pindar; a solution that reveals why Pindar should be reluctant to follow in Homer's footsteps. It is suggested by considering a reductionist restatement of the whole question. If the observation of the preference for the lesser-known myth is combined with Bundy's tenet (*supra* n.38: 3) that "there is no passage in Pindar ... that is not in its primary purpose enkomiastic—that is, designed to enhance the glory of a particular patron," then the question becomes: what encomiastic function did lesser-known myth perform better than Iliadic/Odyssean?

The answer lies, I suggest, in the notion of epinician as monument.[89] This is a topic neglected, I suspect, in part because of the famous lines in which Pindar contrasts his own art with that of the sculptor (*Nem.* 5.1ff):

> Οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργά-
> ζεσθαι ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθμίδος
> ἑσταότ'· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας
> ὁλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ' ἀοιδά,
> στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλοισ'....[90]

But the genuine contrast here is not between sculptor and poet but between ἐπ' <u>αὐτᾶς</u> βαθμίδος and ἐπὶ <u>πάσας</u> ὁλκάδος: between the monument that appears on its plinth and nowhere else[91] and the monument that goes everywhere.[92] The first is sculpture; the second, epinician. Because Pindar contrasts this aspect of his work with sculpture does not mean that the media

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[89] See J. Duchemin, *Pindare: poète et prophète* (Paris 1955) Pt 4, ch. 1, esp. 281f, 296, 343f; C. Greengard, *The Structure of Pindar's Epinician Odes* (Amsterdam 1980) 3f; D. Steiner, "Pindar's 'Oggetti Parlanti'," *HSCP* 95 (1993) 159–80; cf. J. W. Day, "Early Greek Grave Epigrams and Monuments," *JHS* 109 (1989) 16–28.

[90]   I am no maker of statues
        Who fashions figures to stand unmoved
        On the self-same pedestal.
        On every merchantman, in every skiff
        Go, sweet song, from Aigina,
        And spread the news....

[91] See C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: The Nemean and Isthmian Odes*[2] (Cambridge 1899) *ad loc.*; for the idleness of ἐλινύσοντα, cf. *Isthm.* 2.44ff.

[92] Cf. M. Lefkowitz, *First Person Fictions: Pindar's Poetic 'I'* (Oxford 1991) 30.

do not share other qualities, although the poem is superior, because, going everywhere, it is more conspicuous.

The notion of poem as monument is a theme thoroughly explored at *Nem.* 7.11–16:

> εἰ δὲ τύχῃ τις ἔρδων, μελίφρον᾽ αἰτίαν
> ῥοαῖσι Μοισᾶν ἐνέβαλε· ταὶ μεγάλαι γὰρ ἀλκαί
> σκότον πολὺν ὕμνων ἔχοντι δεόμεναι·
> ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς ἔσοπτρον ἴσαμεν ἐνὶ σὺν τρόπῳ,
> εἰ Μναμοσύνας ἕκατι λιπαράμπυκος
> εὕρηται {τις} ἄποινα μόχθων κλυταῖς ἐπέων ἀοιδαῖς.[93]

Now, if song is to preserve deeds, it must itself be memorable. Epinician must mark its victory and myth must play its part in this.[94] Given the degree of familiarity with the Homeric poems evidenced by the sophisticated level of allusion that we have seen, would any retelling of a Homeric story mark the victory it was supposed to celebrate? Certainly, Pindar claimed that Homer had celebrated[95] Ajax permanently (Nisetich [*supra* n.60] 12; *Isthm.* 3/4.55ff):

> ἀλλ᾽ Ὅμηρός τοι τετίμακεν δι᾽ ἀνθρώπων, ὃς αὐτοῦ
> πᾶσαν ὀρθώσαις ἀρετὰν κατὰ ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν
> θεσπεσίων ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν.

Ranged against Homer, any retelling would be a pale shadow: it would not be linked with the victor, but remain rooted in its Homeric source. The occasion would not be marked.

And this, I suggest, is the reason for the absence of Homer from Pindar: Homeric myth could not properly mark his

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[93] If any man's actions prosper, he strikes
  A honey-hearted well of the Muses' streams.
  Even high deeds of bravery
  Have a great darkness if they lack song;
  We can hold a mirror to fine doings
  In one way only,
  If with help of Memory in her glittering crown,
  Recompense is found for labour
  In echoing words of song.

[94] As every part of the epinician must; consider, for example the striking, *memorable* openings (*e.g. Ol.* 1, *Ol.* 6 or *Nem.* 5 itself). Note the theme of conspicuousness in these: ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ ἅτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ (*Ol.* 1.1f); ἀρχομένου δ᾽ ἔργου πρόσωπον χρὴ θέμεν τηλαυγές (*Ol.* 6.3f).

[95] R. A. McNeal, "Structure and Metaphor in Pindar's Fourth Isthmian," *QuadUrbin* 28 (1978) 135–56 at 154, attractively suggests that Pindar, in using ὀρθώσαις, is using the vocabulary of monument.

patrons' victories, because it would have recalled not the victory, but its own Homeric past. It was so fully in the public domain that it could not be particular to any one victory celebration. Homer was too well-known for Pindar to use. The myths that Pindar does relate, on the other hand, offer him the opportunity to provide their authoritative relation,[96] and thus in turn distinctively to ornament his patrons' achievements.[97]

This gives content to the appealing but unsatisfying notion of Pindar's refusal to walk in the shadow of Homer. Pindar avoided Homeric myth because it was so well-known; it was so well-known because of the quality of its narration in Homer.

This nexus of ideas is neatly illustrated by the comparison of Griffin and Nagy on the uniqueness of Homer. Griffin (*supra* n.62: 53) ascribed the difference between the Cycle and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to "the exceptional genius which went into the creation of the two Homeric epics." Nagy, however, uses a model of evolving traditions and concentrates on the panhellenism of the Homeric epics: how well-known they were. He argues that "the cycle epics are so different from the two Homeric epics not because they are more recent or more primitive but rather because they are more local in orientation and diffusion" (*supra* n.86: 8.14 n.4; *cf.* Nagy 70–81). The Homeric epics have evolved to acquire their panhellenic character. Pindar operates within the same tradition of panhellenisation (Nagy 416), transforming local into panhellenic traditions.[98]

This is Pindar's poetry going out on every boat announcing Aegina (*Nem.* 5.1ff), just as Homer blazed out the name of Ajax (*Isthm.* 3/4.55–60), and returns us to the notion of conspicuous monument. The myth makes a bid for panhellenic status,[99] and the patron's fame is secured.

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[96] The authoritative relation thus proves that his praise of the victor is reliable. I argue elsewhere (*supra* n.75) that Pindar's myths are less innovative than is widely believed; hence their authority.

[97] Hence, I am sure, the emphasis on the novelty of song at *Ol.* 9.47ff (*cf.* *Od.* 1.351f) which reveals that *Nem.* 8.20f, a more controversial passage, refers to the risk in the attempt to produce a new authoritative version of a myth.

[98] Nagy 437, 423. J. Strauss Clay uses the model of local evolving into panhellenic in her examination of the Homeric Hymns: *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Homeric Hymns* (Princeton 1989) 92f, 268.

[99] If the myth is drawn, as many are, from traditions local to the victor, then, as the myth is placed in the hellenic canon, so are the city's defining traditions acknowledged throughout Greece.

The notion of myth as monument suggests an approach to the large problem of the function of myth in Pindar. Most contemporary scholarship approaches this question by seeing the myth of an epinician as a paradigm of themes stated elsewhere in the poem[100]—which paradigm either plays a part in an accumulation of significant detail and motif to form a complex unity with every other part of the poem,[101] or explores and illuminates themes that are suggested by the rest of the poem, while resisting neat integration with it.[102] I suggest that the function of myth is to provide a distinctive and distinguishing ornament on the monument to his patron's achievement and thus to mark that achievement.

The two approaches are not, it fact, contradictory but complementary.[103] Indeed, my hypothesis should encourage rather than disappoint interpretative textualists. Bearing it in mind, they need not attempt to force every detail, however recalcitrant, of a myth into a unitarian interpretative schema.[104] Nor, on a larger scale, need they be disturbed by the counterexample of a myth that resolutely resists unitarian assimilation with the rest of the poem in which it occurs, and which thus suggests that the whole paradigmatic approach is wrongheaded. The view of myth as a conspicuous monument to the patron's achievement, comprising striking details that conduce to that end, offers a *sufficient* explanation for any myth or any detail in a myth: they are simply marking the victory. There may be a paradigmatic relation over and above this function; there may not. This having been said, the model of myth as

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[100] The classic exposition is Young (*supra* n.3) esp. 35–38.

[101] An approach exemplified by Young (esp. 2, 106) and Köhnken (esp. 227).

[102] Carey (*supra* n.44) 149f; *cf.* D. P. Fowler, "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis," *JRS* 81 (1991) 25–35, esp. 34f on *ekphrasis*; R. Lyne, *Words and the Poet* (Oxford 1989) 63–68 on epic simile; C. W. MacLeod, "A Use of Myth in Ancient Poetry," *C Q* N.S. 24 (1974) 82–93 (=*supra* n.34: 159–70); and, strikingly, Dodds' comment on Platonic myth at *Grg.* 523A2.

[103] One approaches Pindar as encomiastic poetry; the other as poetic encomium. This convenient formulation appears in H. Lee, "The 'Historical' Bundy and Encomiastic Relevance in Pindar," *CW* 72 (1978–79) 65–70 at 67.

[104] The charge of hyperinterpretation is commonly levelled at the interpretative textualist: S. Radt's review of Köhnken, *Gnomon* 46 (1974) 113–21; Verdenius (*supra* n.10) 4f, 57; *cf.* Young 106. Avoiding hyperinterpretation by seeing the paradigm as an extreme, whose every detail need not be integrated into a unitarian interpretation, simply substitutes one difficulty for another: if these details are not to be related to other elements in the poem, why are they there?

monument can confirm the sceptic's position also: if the hunt for a paradigmatic relation within a poem does not offer a reasonable quarry, it should be abandoned and not elaborated until it works out.[105]

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[105] I would like to thank the anonymous reader for this journal and, especially, Margaret Howatson.