

The Mind Is Its Own Place: Pindar, *Olympian* 1.57f

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IN PINDAR *Olympian* 1.57f Zeus punishes Tantalus by hanging over his head “a stone that is harsh for him” (*καρτερὸν αὐτῷ λίθον*). In attempting to interpret this passage it is useful to recall Kakridis’ advice that when Pindar presents us with an isolated tableau of a mythic scene, as he does here, we must seek to reconstruct the entire story that underlies this picture in the poet’s mind.¹ We should therefore ask what the story of Tantalus’ punishment is and, in particular, where it takes place. This is no idle question, as we shall see, but one that affects our understanding of the moral idea that Pindar is using Tantalus’ story to convey.

The most obvious answer, and the first to have been offered, is that Tantalus is punished in Hades, where he is to be found (suffering quite different torments) at *Odyssey* 11.582–92.² Recent discussion suggests that this answer remains the *communis opinio*,³ although it rests on the assumption—demonstrably false—that the passage in the *Odyssey* enjoyed a canonical authority in antiquity.

In 1873 Comparetti proposed that Pindar’s Tantalus was punished not in Hades but in the presence of “the gifts of the gods.”⁴ This

¹ J. T. Kakridis, *Philologus* 85 (1930) 463–77, esp. 469 (=W. M. Calder III and J. Stern, ed., *Pindaros und Bakchylides* [Darmstadt 1970] 175–90, esp. 182): “Was ich für das Verständnis Pindars methodisch für sehr wichtig halte, ist die Pflicht, in solchen Fällen zu versuchen, die ganze Sage zu rekonstruieren, wie sie in dem Moment des Schaffens in des Dichters Phantasie stand, und aus welcher er uns gewöhnlich sehr wenig in schönen Bildern zeigt.”

² This is the view, for example, of Σ *ad Ol.* 1.97 (I 40 Drachmann); cf. P. E. Lawrent, *The Odes of Pindar in English Prose* (Oxford 1824) 6 n.p.; J. T. Mommsen, *Des Pindaros Werke* (Leipzig 1852) 5 ad 54 (“Daher wurde er in die Unterwelt geschickt . . .”); and F. D. Morice, *Pindar* (Edinburgh/London 1897) 95.

³ E.g. E. Mandruzzato, *Pindaro: L’opera superstite* (Bologna 1980) 52; D. E. Gerber, *Pindar’s Olympian One: A Commentary* (= *Phoenix* Suppl. 15 [Toronto 1982]) ad 59; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico [Cal.] 1982) 43f; W. Mullen, *Choreia: Pindar and Dance* (Princeton 1982) 173; and J. K. Newman and F. S. Newman, *Pindar’s Art: Its Tradition and Aims* (Hildesheim/Munich 1984) 149f and 152.

⁴ D. COMPARETTI, *Philologus* 32 (1873 [hereafter ‘Comparetti’]) 227–51. Although Comparetti is not, in fact, concerned to establish the location of Tantalus’ punishment, he resists the assumption that it takes place in Hades (238–41), noting that the *Nostoi* (fr.10 Allen) places it “im himmel beim tische der götter” (242), and concludes

view soon won widespread acceptance.⁵ Wilamowitz, comparing the story of Tantalus to that of Ixion in *Pyth.* 2.21ff, declared that “Beide Geschichten sind älter als der Glaube an ein allgemeines Totengericht.”⁶ Some went so far as to affirm that Pindar’s Tantalus was punished on Olympus itself.⁷ Others, without accepting Comparetti’s view outright, were nevertheless willing to accept it as a plausible alternative to the notion that Pindar intended an infernal punishment for Tantalus, or adopted the view that a decision between Hades and Olympus was impossible.⁸ Thus from the time of Comparetti until

that “Tantalus ist zwischen zwei dinge, den fels und die gaben der götter, gestellt” (248). Comparetti is cautious in stating his views; it is not entirely certain that he means us to think of Olympus, but that is certainly the likeliest place to find “die gaben der götter.”

⁵ E.g. L. Preller and C. Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*⁴ I (Berlin 1894) 822 n.2; J. E. Hylén, *De Tantalos* (Uppsala 1896) 55 n.5; cf. G. Lambert, *EtCl* 2 (1933) 182–94, esp. 185; G. van N. Viljoen, *Standpunte* 35 (1961) 27–39, esp. 32; G. Méautis, *Pindare le Dorien* (Neuchâtel 1962) 122.

⁶ *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 288. Wilamowitz’s view is surely correct. Of all Pindar’s sinners (Tantalus, Ixion, Coronis, Asclepius, Typhon) only Typhon is explicitly punished in the underworld (*Pyth.* 1.15): he is sent home to his father Tartarus (Hes. *Theog.* 822), where he lies under Aetna, causing its volcanic activity as a manifest sign to mortals of his sin and punishment (*Pyth.* 1.25f). These reasons for punishing him in the underworld have nothing to do with any general eschatological principle. (In this respect, Acragantine religion is markedly abnormal; cf. *Ol.* 2.59.) On punishment in the afterlife in general see N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) ad 367–69, with bibliography.

Regarding Ixion, B. L. Gildersleeve, ed., *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes*² (New York 1890) ad *Pyth.* 2.31, assumes that he is punished in hell; but as L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* II (London 1932), points out on *Ol.* 1.60 and *Pyth.* 2.23, Pindar says nothing explicit about the location. The early tradition seems to be that represented by Apollod. *Epit.* 1.20, where the wheel is *φερόμενος διὰ πνευμάτων ἐν αἰθέρι*. Evidence from vase-painting supports this concept. A red-figure kantharos in the British Museum (*ARV*² 832.37) shows Ixion being attached to his wheel by Olympian, rather than infernal, deities (see C. Smith, *CR* 9 [1895] 277–80, esp. 277, and E. Simon, *JOAI* 42 [1955] 5–26), and a Campanian amphora in Berlin shows Ixion hovering in the air on his wheel (Simon 19 and pl. 7). That Pindar has this setting in mind for the punishment is assumed by Fraccaroli (n.7 *infra*) 177, Wilamowitz 288 and *Euripides. Herakles*² (Berlin 1909) ad 1297, and Méautis (*supra* n.5) 132 (“Ixion est lié à une roue entraînée dans les airs”). Such views best suit Pindar’s text, where Ixion does not seem to be fixed in a single location (*παντᾶ κυλινδόμενον*, *Pyth.* 2.23), and is in contact with mortals (*βροτοῖς λέγειν*, 2.21f). Cf. also E. Röhde, *Psyche*⁴ I (Tübingen 1907) 309 n.1, and L. Radermacher, *RhM* 63 (1908) 445–64 and 531–55, esp. 532.

⁷ E.g. G. Müller, *RivFC* 1 (1873) 30–32; H. Jurenka, *Pindars erste und dritte Olympische Ode* (Vienna 1894) ad 1.58; G. Fraccaroli, *Le Odi di Pindaro* (Verona 1894) 177; F. Dornseiff, *Pindar übersetzt und erläutert* (Leipzig 1921) 72 ad 1.60. Cf. G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1945) 216 n.49; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 79 (who regards this view as “quite possible”); and T. Gantz, *RivStCl* 26 (1978) 35 n.48 and 37 n.55.

⁸ E.g. Farnell (*supra* n.6) ad *Ol.* 1.54–58 and M. A. Grant, *Folktales and Hero-tale Motifs in the Odes of Pindar* (Lawrence [Kansas] 1967) 74.

this decade, few scholars were content with the earlier interpretation of a punishment in Tartarus.⁹

In what follows we shall examine the reasoning behind Comparetti's conclusions, consider why, after a century of widespread influence, his view has so totally lost favor, and suggest the advantages of retaining it for an adequate interpretation of the passage.¹⁰

There were in antiquity three traditions concerning the punishment of Tantalus. The first is that of *Odyssey* 11.582–92, where Tantalus is located in Hades' realm among the great sinners, tortured with unfulfilled hunger and thirst. Neither the stone nor his crime is mentioned.

The second version is, originally, quite distinct from that in the *Odyssey*. According to Athenaeus 7.281b (who seems to be quoting *Nostoi* fr.10 Allen), Zeus asked Tantalus what sort of luxury would please him, and the man greedily replied that he wanted to live like the gods. Zeus was angered by the *hybris* evident in these words and fulfilled Tantalus' request with the addition of the hanging stone ὅπως δὲ μηδὲν ἀπολαύη τῶν παρακειμένων ἀλλὰ διατελῆ ταραττόμενος. This story must have been an early one, because it is told by Alcman fr.100 Calame (= *PMG* 79):

ἀνὴρ δ' ἐν ἀσμένοισιν
ἀλιτηρὸς ἦστ' ἐπὶ σάκας κατὰ πέτρας
ὄρέων μὲν οὐδέν, δοκέων δέ.

Although Gerber (on *Ol.* 1.57b) dismisses this passage as metrically corrupt, Calame regards the text as sound, and the statement that the sinner is sitting among the blessed ones during his punishment seems to be a clear reference to the story Athenaeus has in mind.

⁹ E.g. G. Coppola, *Introduzione a Pindaro* (Roma 1931) 81.

¹⁰ In making this inquiry, it is well to stay clear of another problem with which ours is often connected, *viz.* the meaning of the phrase μετὰ τριῶν τέταρτον πόνον (line 60). This *locus conclamatus* was declared insoluble by Wilamowitz (*supra* n.6) 236 n.4; Gerber (*supra* n.3) *ad* 60 catalogues four main possibilities of interpretation: (1) Tantalus is the fourth sinner among three others: Ixion, Sisyphus, and Tityus; (2) the three torments are hunger, thirst, and a combination of the rock and immortality (or a similar list); (3) Tantalus enjoyed the three lives mentioned at *Ol.* 2.68 and now must endure a fourth; and (4) the expression is proverbial, amounting to 'torment upon torment'. Of these, Comparetti championed the second in particular. Farnell supposes (on *Ol.* 1.54–58) that the first is incompatible with an Olympian punishment for Tantalus because it "vaguely suggests the *Inferno* for the scene"; but this is not a serious objection, for as Farnell himself admits, Pindar's great sinners are not all punished in Hades. Ixion, for example, is whirled on his wheel in the air between heaven and earth (*Pyth.* 2.21–24; see *supra* n.6). We are free to choose among these readings of *Ol.* 1.60, and since they are all compatible with an Olympian punishment for Tantalus, they constitute a question separate from my concern here.

Other references to the punishment of the stone appear in the early poets, e.g. Archilochus (fr.91.14f West), Alcaeus (fr.365 Voigt), and Pindar himself (*Isthm.* 8.9–11). These references are somewhat elliptical, but it seems possible that they allude to the same version as that found in the *Nostoi* and Alcman, and were so understood by the scholiast on *Ol.* 1.91 (I 37f Drachmann), who cites the passages of Alcman, Archilochus, and Alcaeus to illustrate our line. Not only is this version attested early, it was influential in later antiquity as well. It is clearly the story that inspired Dionysius, Hieron's successor to the Syracusan throne, to invent the sword of Damocles, for the effective operation of which the setting at a banquet is essential (Cic. *Tusc.* 5.21.61f).¹¹

The third version is the punishment with the stone in a setting other than the divine banquet. In his mural in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi, Polygnotus imported the stone into Hades (Paus. 10.31.12),¹² but Euripides (*Or.* 5–8, 982–85) has Tantalus flying in the air beneath the stone. Euripides is here apparently drawing upon a philosophical tradition at least as old as Anaxagoras (Diog. Laert. 2.8.1 [=Diels, *Vorsokr.*⁵ 59A1]; Σ *ad Ol.* 1.91 [I 38 Drachmann]) that locates Tantalus' punishment in the heavens, associating him with certain celestial bodies.¹³ Although it functions within the imaginative system of physical philosophy, this notion is compatible with the myth known to the *Nostoi* and to Alcman but cannot be reconciled with the Odyssean version.

A closer look at the passage in *Ol.* 1 will establish the particular tradition Pindar has in mind. Tantalus' punishment is imposed by Zeus (πατήρ, 57), whose jurisdiction is distinct from that of Hades (cf. *Il.* 15.189–92), suggesting that Tantalus is punished in Zeus' realm, not Hades'. εὐφροσύνας ἀλάται at 58 means, "he is an exile from the feast," understanding εὐφροσύνα in the concrete sense¹⁴ and taking

¹¹ Later references to the story of Tantalus and the stone can be found in Eust. *Od.* 1700.64, and Erasmus, *Opera Omnia* I (Leiden 1703) 888.

¹² The stone sometimes appears in Hades to punish other sinners as well: at Verg. *Aen.* 6.601ff it tortures both Ixion and Perithous. Critics have attempted to work Tantalus into this passage, but their efforts are rejected by E. Norden, ed., *P. Vergilius Maro. Aeneis Buch VI* (Leipzig 1903) *ad loc.*, who recognizes the diversity of traditions concerning his punishment. The motif is echoed by Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 3.10.58, where Malbecco is tortured in his earthly cave by the threat of a falling stone.

¹³ See R. Scodel, *HSCP* 88 (1984) 13–24; cf. C. W. Willinck, *CQ* n.s. 33 (1983) 25–33.

¹⁴ See Jurenka (*supra* n.7) *ad Ol.* 1.60 ("εὐφροσύνα ist der stehende Ausdruck für 'Freude des Mahles'") and E. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* I (CPCP 18 [Berkeley/Los Angeles 1962]) 2. The feast motif is important for the poem; it may indeed be that its occasion was a banquet at Hieron's palace. Tables are mentioned twice (17, 50), as is

ἀλάομαι in connection with the substantive ἀλήτης ('exile', used by Homer [*e.g.* *Od.* 17.420] and Aeschylus [*Ag.* 1282; *cf.* *Cho.* 1042]) and with a metaphoric sense;¹⁵ for if the verb is understood literally, as it is by Lefkowitz,¹⁶ we must imagine a stone that follows Tantalus wherever he goes. Although the phrase is vague enough to be ambiguous, it is typical of the narrative manner of this poem that while Pindar begins with an unspecific picture, as well-suited to a version he rejects as it is to the version he accepts (*cf.* 26f), the focus becomes sharper and the scene clearer as the narrative continues.

In line 59 we see that Tantalus has a βίος during his punishment. This is more likely to mean a 'way of life' (Slater, *Lexicon s.v.*) or simply 'life' (depending on whether we take βίον in apposition to πόνον [60] or as an accusative of extent of time)¹⁷ than it is to mean *vita apud inferos*, a rendering suggested to Dissen by the use of βιώτος in *Ol.* 2.63.¹⁸ If Tantalus is alive, he is unlikely to be in Hades, which is most naturally thought of as the realm of the dead. It would be anomalous for a living man to be in Hades,¹⁹ and we would expect that if Pindar thought Tantalus was in this unusual position he would say so explicitly.

In line 63, at the end of the Tantalus narrative, Pindar says that the gods have made Tantalus ἄφθιτος.²⁰ This is why his βίος is "on-

"sweetness" (19, 109). "Satiety" (56) leads Tantalus to ruin, but Pelops is rewarded as a hero with "satiety of blood" (90). There is an abundance of explicit terminology of the feast: ἔρανος (38), δείπνον (39), γαστριμαργός (52), εὐφροσύνα (58), ἀμβροσία (62), ἀμφίπολος (93, usually 'attendant'), and μελιτόεις (98). The verbs φαγεῖν (51), κλίνω (92, "to recline as though at table": see J. Palm, *OpusAth* 4 [1962] 1–7, esp. 3) are used literally, and striking metaphors are created with the verbs καταπέσσω (55), ἔψω (83), and μείγνυμι (91, regularly of wine). In addition to the vocabulary of eating, there are numerous references to drinking, from ὕδωρ (1, 48) through συμπότας (61) and νέκταρ (62). Not least of these is the name Tantalus itself, which calls to the mind of Σ ad 90 the proverbial 'thirst of Tantalus' (*cf.* G. Piccaluga, *Lykaon* [Rome 1968] 179–86), and the name Oenomaus (76, 88), which means 'Wine-seeker' or the like. The effect of this emphasis on feasting is that we are constantly aware of the banquet from which Tantalus is excluded.

¹⁵ *Cf.* Slater, *Lexicon s.v.*; so also Comparetti 248.

¹⁶ M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode: An Introduction* (Park Ridge [N.J.] 1976) 87.

¹⁷ See G. Tarditi, *ParPass* 9 (1954) 204–11, esp. 211.

¹⁸ A. Boeckh and L. Dissen, *Pindari Carmina* II (Gotha/Erfordia 1830) 15; so also C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: the Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Cambridge 1893) ad 59. Comparetti 241 disagrees: "Daher ist βίον hier nicht, wie Dissen meint *de vita post mortem*, sondern in der ganzen fülle seiner eigentlichen bedeutung gebraucht."

¹⁹ The living can, of course, on rare occasions enter Hades (Heracles, Theseus); appropriate gods (Hades, Persephone) dwell there; and Styx is called ἄφθιτος at Hes. *Theog.* 389, 397, and 805. But these cases represent exceptions to the general rule that Hades' is the realm of the dead.

²⁰ Tantalus began life as a "mortal man" (54) and remained essentially human (64) in spite of the gift of immortality. Pindar stresses the humanity of Ixion also (*Pyth.*

going” (ἐμπέδο-, 59). If he has been made immortal, then he must be alive: one would hardly expect Pindar to pass over his subsequent loss of immortality if such a thing were intended (or indeed even possible in Greek religion), when he was so clear in specifying Pelops’ mortality upon his return to earth (66)—a state that is emphasized again at 68 by the resumption of the aging process and the growth of a black beard to actualize the significance of his name, ‘Dark Face’. Tantalus, on the other hand, shows no sign of aging during his own punishment (contrast *Od.* 11.585 and 591, where he is described as γέρων). If Tantalus is alive, he is unlikely to be in Hades. If he is not in Hades, where is he?²¹

Some scholars believe that the locus of his punishment is left deliberately vague.²² Others suppose that Tantalus is punished (as he seems to be in *Eur. Or.* 5–8), like Pindar’s Ixion (*Pyth.* 2.21–24), between heaven and earth.²³ If we examine the words of *Olympian* 1, however, Pindar’s text offers two different possibilities: either he remains on Sipylus (mentioned in line 38) or he remains on Olympus (54, the site of the ὕπατον . . . δῶμα Διός of 42).²⁴

Comparetti’s view has, as we indicated earlier, lost favor in recent years. Del Grande objected to the Olympian punishment of Tantalus on the grounds that Pindar, as a traditionalist, would never have deviated from the Homeric version of Tantalus’ suffering.²⁵ Our review of the diversity of ancient accounts of Tantalus’ punishment obviates this objection. Pindar was indeed a traditionalist, but there were many traditions, often in conflict with one another, and Pindar’s purposes in choosing among them did not always coincide with Homer’s. Pindar did not regard Homer as an unchallengeable authority (*Nem.* 7.20–24) and is on several occasions indebted to the *Nostoi*.²⁶

2.29 and 37; see J. M. Bell in D. E. Gerber, ed., *Greek Poetry and Philosophy: Studies in Honour of Leonard Woodbury* [Chico 1984] 1–31, esp. 9).

²¹ Cf. Comparetti 239.

²² H. Huntingford, *Pindari Carmina* (London 1821) on *Ol.* 1.89–94: “cum fabula variis modis tractata et ornata fuerit, nec constet, quid Pindarus maxime sequutus sit.” Cf. M. Fernandez-Galiano, *Pindaro, Olimpicas* (Madrid 1956) ad 1.58.

²³ E.g. O. Schroeder, *ArchRW* 21 (1922) 47–57, esp. 49: “Also: wie Ixion auf seinem Sturmrade, so leidet Tantalos auch bei Pindar seine Strafe auf der Oberwelt, zwischen Himmel und Erde.”

²⁴ G. van N. Viljoen, *ProcAfrClAs* 4 (1961) 22–26, esp. 23, notes that “the reference to Zeus’ home . . . is merely a variation for Ὀλυμπος (54).”

²⁵ C. Del Grande, *Filologia Minore*² (Milan/Naples 1967) 145–48, esp. 148: “Pindaro, dicevo innanzi, è tradizionalista. È da credere il suo Tantalo fosse nell’ Ade, nel Tartaro, anzi, con gli altri dannati famosi, secondo le linee già determinate nella *Nekyia* omerica.”

²⁶ On Pindar’s disdain of Homer see Wilamowitz (*supra* n.6) 173: “Ereignisse der Ilias und Odyssee hat unseres Wissens Pindar niemals herangezogen.” The subject of

In this case Pindar is indeed following a tradition, but it is the tradition of the Epic Cycle and of the lyric poets rather than that of the *Odyssey*, and there is no cogent reason to believe that it is not as ancient and popular as the Odyssean version.

Gerber raises a different objection: “I cannot think of anyone else in Greek mythology who suffers punishment on Olympus. Furthermore, I find it hard to conceive of Pindar’s representing the gods as deriving a certain sadistic pleasure from the constant sight of Tantalus present at their banquets, but prevented from enjoying them.”²⁷ This is a serious objection, but one that can, I think, be overcome. Punishment on Olympus is in fact attested elsewhere. Hephaestus, crippled when Zeus threw him to the earth in punishment for taking Hera’s side against him (*Il.* 1.590ff), lumbers awkwardly about the gods’ home, and his fellow-Olympians feel no compunction about laughing at his crippled state (599f). A still clearer (if only temporary) parallel to Tantalus’ situation is that of Ares and Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.266–366), who are publicly exposed in an invisible net in retribution for their adultery, provoking much amusement among the other gods.²⁸ These examples are relevant, even though the malefactors are Olympian gods, because the point at issue is less the status of the transgressor than the use of punishment as an admonitory example.

In publicly humiliating a wrongdoer the Olympians merely reflect the normal human practice of the day. Archilochus’ threat to Lycambes, who had violated a sacred trust (fr.173 West), was *νῦν δὲ δῆ πολὺς ἀστοῖσι φαίνεαι γέλως* (fr.172). Pindar, the poet of praise, has few occasions to mention public ridicule, but we know from *Pyth.* 8.85f, for example, that for him as much as for Archilochus, the cruel *γέλως* of society awaited those who overstepped their limits.²⁹

the *Odyssey* repels him (*cf. Nem.* 8.25–34) as does its poet (*Nem.* 7.20–24), and in an apparent allusion to the *Odyssey* in our ode (*Ol.* 1.17f ~ *Od.* 8.67) Pindar distances himself from Homeric tale-telling (*cf. Méautis [supra n.5]* 116: “Pindare s’oppose à Démodocos”). Among examples of Pindar’s apparent use of the *Nostoi* are Neoptolemus’ journey to the Molossians (*Nem.* 7.38–42, *Pae.* 6.110) and Pylades’ appearance as Orestes’ companion (*Pyth.* 11.15; see Procl. *Chr.* 108f Allen [=52f Kinkel]). I am assuming here that Pindar knew of Homer as the author of something very like our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and that he attributed the *Nostoi* to someone other than Homer (Agias? Eumelus?).

²⁷ Gerber (*supra* n.3) on *Ol.* 1.59. In a similar vein Scodel (*supra* n.13), esp. 17 n.9, terms the idea of an Olympian punishment for Tantalus “grotesque.”

²⁸ In light of this parallel between Tantalus and the divine adulterers, it is perhaps more than coincidence that earlier in the ode (17f) Pindar alludes to the same story (esp. *Od.* 8.67). See Méautis (*supra* n.5) 114–16.

²⁹ On the mechanics of shame in Greek culture see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1951), esp. Ch. 2; A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Re-*

Because Tantalus is punished publicly, his fate is apparent to and exemplary for mankind. So Ixion on his wheel is said *βροτοῖς λέγειν* (*Pyth.* 2.21f),³⁰ and so Typhon sends warnings to men through the eruptions of Aetna (*Pyth.* 1.25f). This would be true even if Tantalus were punished in Hades, since communication between the living and the dead is, in unusual cases, considered possible.³¹ But Tantalus' punishment is singularly admonitory because it takes place on Olympus itself, though its extension, through the return of his son among men, is more directly perceptible on earth.³²

Once we recognize that Tantalus is punished on Olympus, the moral import of his story becomes much clearer. It is obvious that our ode contrasts Tantalus and Pelops as a negative and a positive example of approaches to the limits of mortality; but now the full extent of this contrast can be measured. Tantalus is punished publicly, in the presence of those from whom he has stolen nectar and ambrosia. By contrast, Pelops prays in private to his patron (71), the god to whom he has given the friendly gifts of sex (75). The contrast between the public punishment of one who is even now on Olympus at the divine banquet, but whose satiety and theft have brought him the torment of the stone, and the private honor (with its public consequences, of course) of one who gave to the gods and whose daring in the face of his mortality has been rewarded with satiety even after death in the form of blood-offerings, indicates in the clearest possible way how far Pelops' acceptance of mortality surpasses Tantalus' attempts to circumvent it.

The presence of Tantalus at the gods' banquets means that the stone serves—in a far more subtle and ingenious way than the magic lake and trees of *Odyssey* 11—to tantalize the sinner with the sight of delights he cannot enjoy. This teasing constitutes the *contrappasso* effect of the torment: the thief of nectar and ambrosia is punished by being deprived of their enjoyment. Tantalus knows of the table-fellowship he is denied because he sees it before him. “Men say that this is most irksome of all: to know good things and yet abstain from them under compulsion” (*Pyth.* 4.287ff).

sponsibility (Oxford 1960) 154–56; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford 1974) 236–42.

³⁰ Cf. Lefkowitz (*supra* n.16) 19 on Ixion: “[he] tells his story first of all because his wheel is whirled round where all can see it.” Ixion is actually *speaking* to mortals, not merely indicating a truth to them by his example; cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* 93 (1973) 109–37, esp. 120f.

³¹ See C. Segal, *AJP* 106 (1985) 199–212.

³² Just as Tantalus' punishment has a terrestrial component in the return of Pelops, so Ixion's crime is shown on earth itself in the race of centaurs descended from him (see J. F. Oates, *AJP* 84 [1963] 377–89, esp. 380).

Unlike the brutal and physically painful rocks, wheels, and vultures reserved for sinners in Tartarus, Tantalus' stone is a refined psychological torture. Prohibited thus from the visible pleasures of Olympus, he might conclude with another great sinner that "the mind is its own place, and in itself Can make . . . a Hell of Heav'n."³³

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³³ Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.254f. I am grateful to Professors Emmet Robbins and Christopher Brown for discussing this question with me: I owe many insights to them. I would also thank Professor Douglas Gerber for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.