Pindar's Philosophy of Life

Francis Joseph Houdek
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Part of the Classics Commons

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/1591

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1959 Francis Joseph Houdek
PINDAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

by

Francis Joseph Houdek, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

June
1959
MARIÆ, MÅTRI MEÆ CALESTI
MATRÌQUE MEÆ TERRANÆÆ, HÉLENAE
MAXIMA CUM CHARITATE AC GRATIA
HOC OPUS DEDICO
Francis Joseph Houdek, S.J. was born in Cleveland, Ohio, June 16, 1935.

He attended Holy Name Elementary School and Holy Name High School in Cleveland. He was graduated from the latter in June, 1952. In September of the same year he entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio, and from 1952 to 1956 studied the humanities at the Milford division of Xavier University. He was graduated from Loyola University, Chicago, June, 1957, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

During the summer of 1957 the author studied French at the Institute of Modern Languages, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

The author began his graduate studies at Loyola University in January, 1957. In June, 1959 he received the Licentiate of Philosophy degree at West Baden College, Indiana.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Statement of the thesis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Divergence of opinion on thesis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Commentators favoring the thesis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Commentators rejecting the thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Division of the thesis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. PRELIMINARY PINDARIC PROBLEMS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Threefold division of problems</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Historical context in which Pindar wrote</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Political background</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Pindar an aristocrat</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Pindar a priest of Apollo</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Artistic background</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intellectual and philosophical background</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Early Greek philosophy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Traditional aristocratic thought</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Nature of the Greek games</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Great Games</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Olympic games</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Pythian games</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Isthmian games</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Nemean games</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. National character of games; influence on Greeks</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The interpretation of Pindar</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The theories of Dissen and Mezger</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The theory of Professor Gilbert Norwood</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Summary</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PINDAR'S VIEWS ON THE LIFE OF MAN</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Enumeration of Pindar's principal odes</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Procedure. .................................................. 47
C. Concept of $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ in Pindar. .................. 48
  1. Pythian X and $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ ...................... 50
  2. Nemean VII and $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ .................. 51
  3. Olympian II and $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ ................. 53
  4. Nemean III and Olympian IX and $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ .... 55
  5. Nemean VI and Pythian VIII and $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ ... 57
  6. Summary of $\alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \delta$ ....................... 59
D. Doctrine of Transitoriness in Pindar ......................... 60
  1. Transitoriness in Pythian X ............................ 61
  2. Transitoriness in Nemean VII .......................... 63
  3. Transitoriness in Olympian II .......................... 66
  4. Transitoriness in Pythian III ........................... 69
  5. Transitoriness in Pythian VIII ......................... 72
E. Doctrine of $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ in Pindar ................ 77
  1. The degrees of $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ ................. 78
  2. $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ in Pythian IV and V ............... 80
  3. $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ in Olympian VII ................ 81
  4. $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ in Isthmian III .................... 82
  5. $\delta \beta \rho \iota \varsigma$ in Isthmian V, Pythian III, and Nemean XI 84
F. Doctrine of Immortality in Pindar ......................... 87
  1. Immortality in Frag. 136. ............................. 88
  2. Immortality in Olympian II ........................... 89
  3. Summary of doctrine of immortality .................... 92
G. Summary of Pindar's views on the life of man .............. 93

IV. PINDAR'S VIEWS ON THE GODS. .............................. 94

A. Aristocratic picture of gods in Pindar .................... 94
B. Pindar and Homeric anthropomorphism ........................ 95
  1. Similarity of gods and man in Nemean VI ............... 97
  2. Pindar reacts to grosser anthropomorphism ............. 97
C. Major attributes of the gods in Pindar .................... 98
  1. Omnipotence of the gods .............................. 99
    a. Omnipotence in Pythian X .......................... 99
    b. Omnipotence in Isthmian V ......................... 100
    c. Omnipotence in Pythian II ........................ 102
  2. Gods are authors of all good for men .................. 103
  3. Omniscience of the gods ............................. 104
a. Omniscience in Olympian I and Pythonian III. 104
b. Omniscience in Pythonian IX. 106

4. Complete justice of the gods.
   a. Justice in Nemean X and Pythonian V. 109
   b. Justice in Frag. 135. 110
   c. Justice in Isthmian III. 112

D. Pindar's personification and divinization.
   1. Definition of essences. 114
   2. Essence of Child-birth in Nemean VII. 115
   3. Personification of the Graces
      a. The Graces in Olympian XIV 117
      b. The Graces in Olympian IX. 119
   4. Essence of Tranquillity in Pythonian VIII 120

E. Summary of Pindar's views on the gods. 123

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
   A. Summary of the main doctrines in Pindar. 124
      1. Summary ἀγαθόν in Pindar. 124
      2. Summary of transitoriness in Pindar 125
      3. Summary of ἐπίμετρον in Pindar 126
      4. Summary of immortality in Pindar. 127
      5. Summary of divine attributes in Pindar. 128
   B. Inter-relation of the main doctrines of Pindar 130
   C. Conclusion—a consistent philosophy in Pindar. 131
   D. Refutation of main critics 132
   E. Final Conclusion 132

BIBLIOGRAPHY 133
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is perhaps hardly too much to say that no student has ever come away from his first reading of Pindar without disappointment, without a more or less pronounced feeling that he did not realize what the quality was in Pindar which made him an inspired sage in the eyes of Hellas, a saint with a niche beside Homer. The reason for this is at once simple and baffling. Pindar is a great poet. "Ultimately the truth is that, by whatever means, he fills the reader with triumphant illumination. That is what earns a man the title, 'a great poet': triumphant illumination, which he experiences and which he has power to impart."\(^1\) Pindar is a great poet and for this reason so many people find him disappointing. The radiance, the potent vitality, the vigor of great poetry dazzles their weak sight and fatigues their puny strength. They are unable to appreciate the triumphant illumination offered by a great poet and thus are disappointed.

---

As is true with most great poets, the triumphant illumination in Pindar has a number of facets. A complete enumeration of its pertinent phases would include diction and vocabulary, imagery, music and rhythm, and, last but not least, intellectual content. It is this last facet which forms the sum and scope of this thesis.

In examining this intellectual content, two main problems arise. In the first place one must consider its nature; one must obtain a thorough understanding of what this content is in order to give a studied analysis and evaluation of it. Secondly one must face the problem of consistency. After a chronological investigation of Pindar's poetry one must give a somewhat definitive solution to this problem of consistency; one must judge whether the doctrines proposed by Pindar in his poetry are compatible with one another or not. The investigation and solution of these two problems is the purpose of this thesis.

It is, therefore, the author's intention to show that Pindar presents a consistent set of views with regard to the individual, social, and religious aspects of human life. We intend to draw from the odes of Pindar those aspects which form an ethical philosophy of life. The consistent character of this philosophy will be made apparent by a chronological analysis and comparison of the
main doctrines which Pindar proposes.

Among the numerous commentators and interpreters of the works of Pindar, there is a wide divergence of opinion with regard to the nature and consistency of Pindar's philosophy of life. All would seem to be in basic agreement with James Adam's statement, "With the exception, perhaps, of Sophocles, it may be doubted whether there is any other Greek poet, the spirit of whose writings is more essentially ethical and religious." Much the same attitude is manifested by Alfred and Maurice Croiset who remark that, from whatever viewpoint we regard Pindar's thought, it impresses us immediately as philosophically grand and lofty. In the same vein Professor Moses Hadas comments that one should expect a man of Pindar's conservative temper to be religious. He notes further that Pindar's attitude is indeed one of reverence and high morality coupled with aesthetic feeling. There is, therefore, some basic

2James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece (Edinburgh, 1923), p. 115

3Alfred and Maurice Croiset, An Abridged History of Greek Literature, trans. by George F. Heffelbower (New York, 1904), pp. 139, 140.

agreement on the general character of Pindar's philosophy of life.

This accord disappears, however, when one seeks a more detailed analysis of Pindar's doctrines. It is difficult to find even the slightest agreement once one leaves the most general level of interpretation. Thus the opinions on the detailed nature, originality, and consistency of the intellectual content of Pindar's odes are extremely numerous and varied.

The positions with regard to Pindar's intellectual content fall into two general classifications. The first group, led by Hermann Fraenkel, Werner Jaeger, and David M. Robinson, would attribute to Pindar a well-worked, consistent, ethical system. It is Werner Jaeger who tells us that Pindar, by constantly recurring to the mythical relations of the victor whom he celebrates, forms an entire philosophy of life, rich with deep meditations on the merit, the happiness, and the suffering of different generations within one rich, brilliant, and noble family. \(^5\) David M. Robinson's entire book, *Pindar, A Poet of Eternal Ideas*, is nothing by an at-

---

tempt to catalogue the philosophy, human interest, and didactic elements in Pindar's poetry. This first group also includes a more moderate element in such authors as Basil L. Gildersleeve and Lewis Richard Farnell. Both are willing to ascribe a highly moral and philosophical intellectual content to Pindar but are somewhat less willing to attribute a thoroughly consistent ethical system to him. Gildersleeve is adamant on this point. He fears that the attempts to analyze and dissect the intellectual content of Pindar will hinder and even prevent a sound and complete appreciation of the victory odes. He says quite explicitly that "the methodical channels in which the poetical vein of Pindar is thus made to run give no notion of the poet's genius." 6 Professor Farnell agrees with Gildersleeve on this matter. He is of the opinion that Pindar is an exponent of the highest religious thought. He notes that it is easy and interesting to collect religious and moral citations from his works and to compare them with one another and with the current Greek polytheism. He claims, however, that it is far more difficult to decide generally and in regard to any special point

to what extent Pindar formulated his philosophy of life and how far he influenced or modified the popular religion. Despite all this he constantly maintains that Pindar must be reckoned with as an original thinker who spoke words of power. 7

The second group, those holding a different opinion on Pindar's philosophy of life, is headed by Gilbert Norwood, Moses Hadas, and Erwin Rohde. Hadas, as was pointed out earlier, credits Pindar with a spirit of reverence and morality. He hesitates, however, to credit Pindar with any great originality in his philosophy of life. He contends that from Hesiod onward sober Greeks were refining traditional ethics and religion. Pindar's ethics and theology, therefore, only conform to the contemporary norm; there is little or nothing that is new or original in Pindar's philosophy of life. 8 Erwin Rohde offers a somewhat different objection to Pindar's philosophy of life. He points out what he considers a peculiar facet of Pindar's poetry, viz., two contrasted views of


8Hadas, p. 62.
the nature, origin, and destiny of the soul which Pindar seems to combine with equal claim to authority. According to Rohde, Pindar shows, on the one hand, allusions which imply an agreement with the popular views expressed in the sayings of earlier poets and the presuppositions of the cult of souls and the worship of heroes. These allusions show neither system nor originality. On the other hand, a series of passages of quite another order is to be found in which a complete doctrine of the nature, destiny, and fate of the soul is expressed with elaborate fullness and dogmatic exactitude; in these passages a well ordered and, in the main, consistent whole is pictured. ⁹ Rohde would, therefore, agree to a consistent, original philosophy in Pindar provided that one draws this philosophy from the proper passages.

The third and, by far, most important critic of an original, consistent intellectual content in Pindar is Gilbert Norwood. Again and again he recurs to the difficulty or rather the impossibility of presenting and analyzing an adequate yet lucid abstract of Pindar's philosophy of life. His claim is that those who are

fascinated by the history of human thought and civilization will find little of importance or interest in Pindar. It is his opinion that Pindar was unable to do what became easy enough two generations later: namely, to form concerning religion, sociology, ethics, and politics a body of ideas which, however mistaken or insufficient, was yet coherent and defensible.\textsuperscript{10} Professor Norwood then devotes his entire third lecture in \textit{Pindar} to pointing out the inconsistencies and lack of system and originality in Pindar's philosophy of life. His conclusion is quite startling: "His maxims deserve attention only when considered each for the moment in its special context: quite apart from their truth or falsity, they cannot be organized into a body of doctrine or even into coherence of prejudice, save where they show his affection for land-owning aristocracy."\textsuperscript{11} This is a serious and far-reaching criticism. We hope to answer it by our later organization of Pindar's doctrine into a consistent whole.

Along with Gilbert Norwood we find Richard Winn Livingstone

\textsuperscript{10}Norwood, pp. 44, 45.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 69. Italics not in the original.
and Gilbert Murray in this second group. Both Livingstone and Murray have nothing but the highest praise for Pindar's poetic genius; they are much less enthusiastic about his speculation. Livingstone, however, is much kinder in his treatment. He notes that Pindar had no speculative power at all, no ability to illuminate the depths of human nature; he admits, however, that Pindar does have an elaborate intellectual theory which he preaches whenever the opportunity arises.  

Gilbert Murray, on the other hand, considers Pindar's intellectual contributions of little value. He regards him as a poet only; he finds little rhetoric, no philosophy, and less human interest in Pindar's poetry.

These, then are the objections and criticisms which have been offered to a consistent and original philosophy of life in Pindar. These objections are well thought out and documented and present a serious obstacle to our thesis. Nevertheless, by a thoughtful organization and analysis of Pindar's main doctrines we hope successfully to overcome this obstacle.


Our study, therefore, falls neatly into four main divisions:
(1) analysis and solution of problems preliminary to a detailed
sketch of Pindar's philosophy of life; (2) a systematic sketch of
Pindar's ethics, including those general ethical principles which
pertain to the individual's conduct as an individual and as a so-
cial being; (3) a systematic sketch of Pindar's theology, including
those general principles which govern man's relations to the su-
preme gods; (4) summary and conclusion which, we hope, will offer a
final and satisfactory answer to the objections offered above.
CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY PINDARIC PROBLEMS

In the almost total loss of Greek lyric poetry, the modern world has one consolation: the poet who closed the series of the masters was accounted the greatest of all. In range of power and loftiness of inspiration there was no rival to Pindar. This was the general and settled verdict of antiquity in the days when all the materials for such a comparison were in existence.\(^1\) Yet, despite the high commendation of antiquity, the majority of modern readers are disappointed by their first contact with Pindar. This is true because of the numerous preliminary problems involved in a worthwhile reading of Pindar. It is the scope and purpose of this chapter to present and solve the more important of these problems. Our purpose is to clear the ground for a studied analysis of Pindar's philosophy of life.

---

Reducing these problems to three main classifications will facilitate our treatment of them. In the first place we will examine the historical background in which Pindar's odes were written. This historical excursus will do much to explain Pindar's predilection for the aristocracy, his peculiar religious sentiments, and certain topical allusions in his poetry. Secondly we will consider the athletic contests for which Pindar wrote his odes. The religious character of the great games and the labor and expense involved in preparation for them will show that these athletic festivals were a subject worthy of lofty lyric poetry. In the third place we will give a rather lengthy consideration to the interpretation of Pindar's poetry. This consideration will serve to remove many of the stumbling blocks which prevent a deep understanding of Pindar's odes.

Our first problem, then, is the historical background in which Pindar wrote, in its political, intellectual, and philosophical aspects. If we wish to gain a deeper insight and understanding of Pindar's views on life, we must first try to understand Pindar himself. We must place him in an historical context and examine the fonts from which he drew those general principles which constitute his outlook on life. With this in mind, it is necessary for us to
consider the formative elements in the life of Pindar, those political, intellectual, and philosophical trends which were current in his day.²

Pindar was born a citizen of Thebes, the chief city of the Boeotian confederacy, in 518 B.C.³ As Farnell points out, Pindar was indeed fortunate in the time of his birth; it fell on the threshold of the greatest period in the history of human culture and of the most momentous epoch in the world-struggle between east and west.⁴ The date of his death is uncertain; but the last work of his for which we have a date is the Eighth Pythian, written probably in the year 446 B.C.⁵ Thus it is apparent that he lived

²Norman O. Brown, "Pindar, Sophocles, and the Thirty Years' Peace", TAPA, LXXXII (1951), 10. Professor Brown claims that be-Gilbert Norwood has refused to consider Pindar's thought as a historical process in a historical context, he must necessarily see it as only chaotic.

³This is the most probably date for Pindar's birth. Pindar himself assures us that he was born at the time of a Pythian festi-val: "πενταετηρίς ἐστίν θεομομένως, ἐν θρόνῳ εὐνασθεν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ σπαργάνως." Alexander Turyn, Pindari Carmina Cum Fragmentis (Cracoviae, 1948, 1948), frag. 230, p. 369. We will follow this edition throughout the remainder of this thesis as our Greek text.


⁵Turyn, p. 122 and Farnell, Works, I, 129, give this as date.
through a period of crucial change in Greek history. His life is bisected by the great Persian invasion of 480-479 B.C., an invasion in which Thebes, split within by factional rivalries, played a difficult and unhappy part. Against the forces of Xerxes, the combined Greek command chose to defend central Greece by holding the mountain pass of Thermopylae and the sea pass of Artemision. The Persians forced them to give up both positions. According to Herodotus, Theban soldiers fought beside Leonidas at Thermopylae and acquitted themselves well. In any case, when the Greek armies fell back on the Isthmus of Corinth and the fleet to Salamis, Boeotia and all other states to the north were left open to the enemy; nor had the Thebans the opportunity, as did the Athenians, to evacuate their population by sea. Thebes surrendered, and the city was in the hands of the Persians and the Persian sympathizers. The

---


8 Herodotus VII. 202, 225.

9 Richard Lattimore, trans. The Odes of Pindar (Chicago, 1947), p. vi. In this introduction Lattimore stresses the historical setting in which Pindar wrote his odes.
Persian general Mardonius made Thebes his base of operations while he was in Greece. What part, if any, Pindar played in all this is not known; but for some years after Plataea he was a citizen of a dishonored state.\textsuperscript{10} The blame for the Theban treachery fell upon the oligarchy which was in power there and which looked for an extension of its power under a Persian suzerain. The question at stake now is: What stand did Pindar himself take concerning the Persian War? Was Pindar in thorough sympathy with the party of Theban nobility to which he belonged by birth and temperament? Or, on the other hand, was he a friend of the traditional Panhellenic cause? As in most controversies we must seek the answer somewhere in a middle view. In the sense that Pindar loved all Greece, that he felt the ties of blood, of speech, the ties of religion above all, Pindar was Panhellenic. The pressure of the barbarian that drew those tighter for Greece generally, drew them tighter for him also.\textsuperscript{11} No wonder, then, that after the defeat of the invasion of

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}, p. vi.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Gildersleeve}, p. xii.
Xerxes in 479 B.C., the poet rejoiced in the removal of the intolerable burden, ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς/λίθον γέ ταντάλου παρὰ τις ἔτρεψεν ἀμφι θεὸς;/ἀτόλματον Ἔλλας: μόχθον. "For now the stone as it were of Tantalos, poised above our heads, a burden more than Hellas could brook./Some God hath turned aside for us."  

Yet despite his Panhellenic feelings, Pindar still gives us the impression that he is distracted between joy over the deliverance of Greece and loyalty to his own class, the nobles who had favored the national enemy.

Of the cities which fought the Persians, the Athenian community in particular emerged from the struggle with greatly augmented prestige and strength. Thus the later years of Pindar's life coincided with the first clear proofs that Athenian policy would henceforth be controlled by the related facts of democracy and empire. With the emergence of Pericles as the head of the consciously liberated Athenian middle class, it was almost inevitable that Athens

12Isth. VIII. 9-11.

13Farnell, Works, I, 282. Unless otherwise indicated, we will use this excellent translation by Farnell throughout the remainder of this thesis. References will be to the page in the translation.

should follow new and bolder paths. Her formation and maintenance of the Delian Confederacy and her consciously imperialistic policy were already providing the main reasons and causes for the Peloponnesian War. It is interesting to note the gradual lessening of Pindar's admiration for Athens during these years. His openly avowed admiration for Athenian achievement must have been tempered with resentment when in 457 B.C. the Athenians temporarily forced Thebes into the position of a subordinate ally. The same must have been true when Aegina, a city dear to Pindar, fell victim to Athenian imperialism in 447-446 B.C. 

From this brief historical conspectus it is clear that Pindar lived in a period of great political significance for the whole of Greece. Hellas had gloriously survived the great struggle with the Persians. She was now looking with fearful eyes to the inevitable clash between a rising and a declining system, the former of which represented all the revolutionizing forces of the era, democracy.


16 Lattimore, pp. vi, vii.
imperialism, material progress, a commercial economy, while the latter stood for the oligarchic, agricultural, cantonal Greece of the past. Pindar is a child of this age and his poetry reflects these contemporary political changes.

His feelings towards these great happenings are accentuated by two personal factors. First and foremost Pindar was an aristocrat. ἀπὸ Ἐπάρτας ὦθεν γεγενναμένοι· ἱκόντο θήρανδε φῶτες Αἰ- γείδαι, ἕμοι πατέρες, οὐ θεῶν ἄτερ, ἀλλὰ ἱοῖοι τῶν ἄγεν. "From Sparta, whence were sprung my fathers, the Aigeidae, who came thence to Thera, not without the guidance of God: but some high destiny led them on." Thus Pindar belonged to one of the noblest families in Greece, that of the Aigeidae, which had branches at Thebes, Sparta, and Cyrene. Secondly, because of his noble ancestry Pindar stood in an intimate relationship with the priesthood of Apollo at Delphi. He was heir to certain priestly offices of the sort highly prized by the Greek nobility. These facts

17 Finley, p. 301
18 Pyth. v. 74-76.
19 Farnell, Works, I, 118.
are of cardinal importance for a comprehension of his poetry. In his whole view of life, he is an Hellenic aristocrat, profoundly convinced that men who trace their lineage to a hero have a strain of divine blood, which gives them natural advantages, moral and intellectual no less than physical, over other men.\(^1\) He was an aristocrat by race and conviction, born in the sixth century when aristocracy in Greece was nearing its end. The first democracy in the world was coming to birth in Athens. Pindar is the last spokesman for the Greek aristocracy and the greatest after Homer.\(^2\) His poems express to perfection and for the last time in Greek literature the class consciousness of the old Greek aristocracy, their conviction of their own lofty moral and religious value. He shows us the Hellenic ideal of an aristocracy of race in the hour of its noblest transfiguration, when, after centuries of glory extending from the mythical past to the hard modernity of the fifth century, the nobility could still draw the gaze of all Greece upon its exploits in the Great Games.\(^3\) It is because his own nature is es-

\(^1\)Jebb, *Classical Greek Poetry*, p. 144.


\(^3\)Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 204, 205.
sentially aristocratic by birth and nurture that he can give the aristocratic ideal the compelling force which we call Pindaric. Thus Pindar's subjective feelings and personal reactions to current political movements are the key in explaining his aristocratic leanings and many of the topical allusions which occur in his odes.

Another historical factor which must be considered because of its great influence on Pindar is the artistic awakening of the fifth century. The Persian Wars had given Greece a sense of its own moral force and the greatest confidence in its future. Full of grateful recognition toward its gods who had saved it, Greece set about to restore their destroyed sanctuaries and to build new ones. Its heart was set on embellishing them with all the means at its disposal. The art of the sculptors and painters, of decorators of all kinds, was invited to join with that of the architects. The great city-states and the princes rivaled one another, and the general emulation was expressed in rich offerings, statues, and dedicatory monuments. And almost everywhere it was collective sentiments which the artists were called upon to express in figured
representations. We find a twofold link joining Pindar and his poetry to this great artistic movement. The central link is Olympia. The earliest Greek plastic art was directly and exclusively the handmaid of religion: the god and the demigod were considered the only proper subjects for its exercise. But as the glory of the Olympian festival grew, as the worship of the Olympian Zeus became more and more a national bond among all Hellenes, an Olympian victor was raised to a rank so eminent that it seemed no longer irreverent to pay him an honor similar to that which was rendered to some of the demigods. Hence, in the course of the sixth century B.C., sculpture was already finding a new field in the commemoration of athletes. Within Pindar's lifetime many of the masterpieces of the early fifth century were present at Olympia. At Olympia were Myron's Discobolus, his statue of the runner Ladas, of a boy-boxer and a number of other bronzes. Here at Olympia Pindar imbibed the spirit of this artistic revival and displayed it with the splendor

which is so characteristic of his poetry.\textsuperscript{25}

A second but no less important link binding Pindar to this general artistic and cultural rebirth is the school of Aegina. We cannot doubt that Pindar was familiar with this school since he produced no less than eleven odes for the people of Aegina. In his fifth Isthmian ode, he gives a most brilliant treatment to the initial episode of the very theme which occupied the east pediment of the temple at Aegina, Heracles coming to seek the aid of Telamon against Troy. Here, then, is a case in which we can conceive that the poet's imagination was illuminated as he gazed on the sculptor's work in the splendid entablature of this temple.\textsuperscript{26} A similar example can be found in Pindar's first Olympian where he recalls the chariot-race of Pelops and Oenomaus.\textsuperscript{27} This same subject was commemorated on the eastern pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia; this pediment was most certainly completed during Pindar's life-

\textsuperscript{25}Jebb, \textit{Essays}, pp. 91-93.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 95. The great artistic movements of this period can be more systematically studied in Harold North Fowler & James Rignall Wheeler, \textit{Greek Archaeology} (New York, 1909), pp. 96-292.

\textsuperscript{27}I. 65-89.
time. There can be little doubt, then, that Pindar was influenced by this cultural revival and that he felt himself to be a vital part of it.

Thus, both a knowledge of the political movements and a deep insight into the artistic tenor of Pindar's own day are definitely necessary for an adequate understanding of his poetry. Without this twofold knowledge one is cheated of the pleasure which a thorough understanding of Pindar can and does give.

A final element of the historical background which merits consideration is the profound intellectual activity of Pindar's day. The question which claims the interests of thinkers during this period is no longer the cosmological problem but man in his concreteness, namely in his knowledge, his morality, his rights. The chief causes which determined this change of interest from object to subject were: (1) the Greek victory over the Persian

---

28 Jebb, Essays, p. 97.

29 Ibid., p. 44; Croiset, Hellenic Civilization, p. 139.

armies, which showed how much a small but cultured people could do against a numberless but disorganized multitude; (2) contact with other populations living in different countries and practicing different customs, and the resultant investigation of the real value of morality and justice; (3) the democratic constitution of Athens, by virtue of which every citizen could aspire to some position in public administration and, with this end in view, the necessity of everyone's developing his personality through culture and education.  

This intellectual upheaval of the early fifth century is well attested by the beginnings of philosophy and of certain of the sciences. Little by little the childlike wonder of earlier days became the critical reflection which forms the base of true human wisdom. Gradually the spirit of the Ionian philosophers began to permeate the entire Greek world. Thales, the first of these Ionian philosophers, exemplifies the intellectual trends of this period. His title to fame is for having opened the way to a rational explanation of the great phenomena of nature. He was the first one frankly to uphold the idea that the genesis of the world was some-

thing else than a theogony; and he dared to say so. Obedient to a truly Hellenic instinct for simplification, he conceived a primordial substance whose transformations produced an infinite variety of things. This substance was water.\textsuperscript{32}

A little later a compatriot of Thales, Hecataeus, himself also a statesman, tried to give a complete description of the inhabited world. Geography thus developed alongside the new natural philosophy. In the process of their growth these new sciences brought with them mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and calculus.\textsuperscript{33}

Once started, this admirable movement was bound to continue. After Thales, two other Milesians, Anaximander and Anaximenes, were animated by his spirit and devoted themselves to the same research. Always falling back upon the fundamental idea of a single original substance in perpetual transformation, each of them had, nevertheless, his own personal views. This is but another example of the activity of the Greek mind, ever eager and anxious for criticism and research.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32}Croiset, \textit{Hellenic Civilization}, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 66
It appears that the Greek mainland was not immediately captivated by these subtle and profound researches; but they were favorably received in occidental Greece, in Sicily, and in Italy. This same keen intellectual curiosity is apparent in the school founded by Pythagoras. For him philosophy is especially the study of numbers, which in his eyes became the symbolic representation and the ultimate explanation of all things, of all ideas. Although he wandered into abstractions when he sought to grasp the essence of things, he at least grasped their numerical relations with a precision that is entirely new. His investigation entitles him to respect as both a philosopher and promoter of arithmetic and geometry.35

Later in this same period Parmenides, expanding the thought of his master, Xenophanes, investigated the fundamental conception of existence. He applied himself to this problem and derived from it the elements of a metaphysics deeply impressed by the acuteness of his mind. In the name of reason he was led to deny the existence of a vacuum, the divisibility of matter, and the existence of change and motion. Reducing these conceptions to illusions of the senses,
he affirms that inherent unity of being which is indivisible and immovable. 36

Nevertheless, at the same time the Ionian doctrine found an illustrious exponent in the person of Heraclitus of Ephesus. Persisting in the conception of a primary substance subject to a series of transformations, he was led to believe that this substance was fire. He considered this as the most subtle and changing element. The greatest innovation in his system, and that which gave it a particular beauty, was the eternal rhythm which he made the law of these transformations. In admirable prose he recounts a process of perpetual oscillation, and indefinite succession of apparent deaths which were in fact so many births. His entire system is one of universal harmony based on never-ending change. 37

This is the intellectual atmosphere in which Pindar lived and worked. It would indeed be surprising if he were not greatly influenced by these intellectual trends. Yet such seems to be the case. This profound intellectual activity naturally had a more or less appreciable effect upon the majority of contemporaries. Among

36 Ibid., pp. 124, 125.
37 Ibid., pp. 125, 126.
them Pindar is probably the one who by education, environment, and
traditions of the kind to which he owed his glory, remained most
foreign to this prevalent intellectual milieu.\textsuperscript{38} The basis of his
ideas still belongs to the sixth century; his moral sentiment is
rooted in that of Solon, Theognis, and the sages. Nevertheless, he
is distinguished from them, especially by a loftiness and a pro-
fundity which denote a more extensive and more penetrating reflec-
tion.\textsuperscript{39} We feel in listening to him that he sees things from a
higher plane and that he thinks more forcibly. He seems, there-
fore, to have remained completely untroubled by the philosophical
speculations of his own day. The questions treated by the Ionians
were answered as sufficiently as a pious man could desire by re-
course to Hesiod and the cult of Apollo.\textsuperscript{40} Yet we must not forget

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 138.

\textsuperscript{39}Livingstone, The Greek Genius, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{40}Wilhelm Schmid & Otto Stahlin, Geschichte der Griechischen
Literatur (Munich, 1929), I, pt. 1, 551. Von ihr ist der durchaus
praktisch-religios orientierte Dichter zeitlebens unberuhrt geblieben. . . . Die Fragen, die die Ionier behandelten, waren fur ihn
durch Hesiodos und die apollinische Religion soweit beantwortet,
as es dem Menschen fommt."
his belief with regard to the aristocracy. He had a firm belief in the moral regeneration of the aristocracy and found here his life’s work. He wished to secure the religio-moral foundations of the aristocracy and consequently their title to their position of power. His work was addressed to the nobles, who had nothing but repulsion and distrust for the social revolution inspired by current intellectual trends. Yet these nobles did not live in a world which was a peaceful survival from the past, but in one which was incessantly invaded by the new age, and forced to defend itself with passionate energy. It was through that struggle for spiritual and material survival that the aristocracy acquired its fundamental conviction of its own innate value. Pindar was the spokesman for this conviction. In this lies the source of his profound thought.

41 Ibib., 547. "Er glaubt vielmehr fest an die sittliche Re­
generation der Aristokratie und findet seine Lebensaufgabe darin,
sie religio-sittlichen Grundlagen und damit ihre politischen
Anspruche auf Geltung nach Kraften zu befestigen. Sein Optimismus
wird durch die tatsachliche Macht und Wohlordnung der nach dem
Sturz der Tyrannen wiederhergestellten griechischen Aristokratieen
gerechtfertigt."

42 Jaeger, Paideia, p. 184.
We have considered the historical background, the political, artistic, and intellectual trends which shaped the life and work of Pindar. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of this for a sound interpretation of Pindar's poems. It is obvious that no man's thought is in the main molded directly by events themselves. Rather there is an interplay between events and habits of mind. Events, by altering the conditions of life, demand new assumptions and create new habits of mind which in turn, as they become accepted, constitute what is called the intellectual atmosphere of an age.43 Since it is this atmosphere which influences men most directly, we have tried to reconstruct it as it must have been in Pindar's day.

We are now ready to attack the second problem which we set ourselves at the beginning of this chapter, viz., the athletic contests for which Pindar wrote the majority of his poems. According to some, the primary difficulties that many moderns face when they try to appreciate the work of Pindar are concerned with an adequate conception of the ancient games and festivals which called forth

his poetry. It is clear that these games did, as a matter of history, excite a genuine enthusiasm in the Greeks of Pindar's day.

Throughout the Greek world many athletic contest were held at regular intervals. Four festivals, often called "the Great Games" or "the Holy Games", were immensely prominent and attracted competition from the whole Greek world. Foreigners, however, were not allowed to enter them. These four festivals were held at Olympia in the northwest of the Peloponnesus; at Delphi, in central Greece where the festival was called "pythian"; at Nemea in the north of the Peloponnesus; and at Isthmia near Corinth.

By far the greatest was the Olympian, which serves as a model for all the others. Whatever the beginnings of the festival, there is no doubt that Olympia was at an early date a sacred place. There was a village settlement there in the twelfth century, and thousands of votive offerings have been found dating from at least

44 Jebb, Classical Greek Poetry, p. 218.
45 Norwood, Pindar, p. 27.
the tenth century. But times were unsettled. Olympia belonged originally to the Pisatans, but their control was disputed by the Eleans who were later immigrants from the North. In the course of the struggle, it is said that the games were neglected and forgotten. At last Cleosthenes, Kind of Pisa, and Iphitus, King of Elis, weary of the war, made a truce and revived the festival. The terms of the sacred truce were engraved on a bronze disk which was still in existence in the time of Pausanias. The date of this event was fixed as 776 B.C., and this year was reckoned as the first Olympiad. From this date the games were held every four years until A.D. 393. At first the games were of only local importance but later they attracted competitors from all over the Peloponnesus.

The rise of the Olympic festival from a local to a national gathering gave an impulse not only to athletics but to the feeling of nationality, of Panhellenism, which contact with foreign nations was producing among the scattered states of the Greek world. In this festival combining sport and religion the Greeks beyond


48 Ibid., p. 34.
the sea found all that was most typical of their native civilization. At Olympia none but a freeborn Greek was allowed to compete; nothing, it was felt, distinguished the Greek from the barbarian more clearly than his love of athletics. So in the sixth century new athletic festivals sprang up everywhere, and three of them attained Panhellenic rank.49

Delphi with its oracle had long acquired a national and even cosmopolitan fame, and there a Pythian festival had been held every eight years with musical competitions. But in 582 B.C. it was reorganized as a four-yearly festival with the addition of an equestrian and athletic program modelled on that of Olympia. At the same time crowns of bay-leaves cut from the Vale of Tempe were substituted for the valuable prizes hitherto given.50

Almost at the same time, perhaps in the same year, 582 B.C., the Isthmian festival was reorganized. This festival, which claimed an antiquity greater even than that of Olympia, was celebrated at the sanctuary of Poseidon and in his honor. This same-

49 Ibid., p. 36.

50 Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports, pp. 62-64.
tuary stood in a grove of pine-trees at the south-east of the Isthmus of Corinth. The various legends of its origin are all connected directly or indirectly with the worship of Poseidon. Whether its establishment as a Panhellenic festival was due to the tyrant Periander or expressed the joy of the people at their liberation from his rule, the evidence does not allow us to determine. This festival was held not every fourth but every second year and the prize was a wreath of pine leaves. Corinth was the meeting-place of East and West, and the program seems to have reflected in its variety the influence of that luxurious state, including horse races, athletics, musical competitions, and even a regatta.

The last of the four Panhellenic festivals, the Nemean, was reorganized in 573 B.C., and like the Isthmian was held every alternate year. These games were said to have been originally instituted as funeral games in honor of Opheltes, who was killed in course of the expedition of the Seven against Thebes. In any case strictly religious character was apparent from their dedication to

51 Ibid., p. 65.

52 Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, p. 37.
The national character of these four festivals seems to have been recognized from the first, nor was it ever challenged. They were, par excellence, the Panhellenic festivals, the sacred games. They formed a cycle, and highest distinction that an athlete could win was to be a victor at all four Panhellenic games.54

The origin of the great games of Greece is to be sought in the religion of Greece, and the influence of Delphi, center of the religious life of the people, was felt in every regulation that controlled these famous contest. The times of the performances were in the hands of the priests, the cycle was a religious as well as an astronomical period. The games themselves are held in honor of the gods, the Olympian and Nemean of Zeus, the Pythian of Apollo, the Isthmian of Poseidon. There was a sacred truce which preceded and followed the games.55 All travelers to and from the games fell under the protection of the gods. To violate any

53Ibid., p. 36
54Ibid., p. 37.
55Gildersleeve, p. xxi.
such pilgrim was an act of sacrilege. The games were, therefore, decisely under the patronage of the gods. The victorious athlete felt that he was well pleasing to the gods, and owed his success to them. Further, the athlete felt that any violation of the rules of the games, especially any unfairness or corruption, was an act of sacrilege and displeasing to the gods. This feeling undoubtedly tended to preserve the purity of sport at the games even when corruption was rife everywhere else. Religious conservatism also tended to check any innovations and accordingly, though additions were made to the program, the events remained essentially unchanged for nearly twelve centuries. It was to religion that Greek athletics and Greek athletic festivals owed their vitality.

Thus the whole festival was profoundly penetrated by religious feeling, which gave it solemnity without overclouding its free joyousness. The gods, Zeus above all, and the heroes, especially Heracles and Pelops, were present amidst their worshippers, glorious in the creations of art, and were felt as watching, inspiring, and rewarding the competitors. There is therefore nothing in

56 Ibid., p. xxiii.

57 Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, p. 33.
modern life that can properly be compared with a victory in the
great games. The modern horse-race may attract vast crowds, and
may even assume the imprint of a public holiday; but the gatherings
at the great games were more than public holidays. They were pub-
llic festivals of the highest character; they were truly religious
celebrations. A victor at one of the games was a distinguished
man for the rest of his life. He had given glory to his native
city, and was sure of all the honors that it could bestow.58

The four great Greek festivals, then, were of great impor-
tance in various ways. They emphasised the unity of the Greek
race. They encouraged poetry and music by affording opportunities
for hearing the best works. They encouraged painting and sculpture
by the prominence they gave to the physical development of the
human body.59 Above all they were a manifestation and stimulus of
the deep religious feeling of the Greek people.

This brief consideration of the games for which Pindar wrote
his poems gives us some indication of how highly these games were
regarded in ancient times. They were looked upon with great awe

58 Jebb, Classical Greek Poetry, pp. 148, 149.
59 Paul Harvey, ed., Oxford Companion to Classical Literature
and enthusiasm. A victory in these games was a mark of the highest valor. One can therefore easily see why these games exercised such an attraction on Pindar, the aristocrat. In the first place, the games were occasions of high sanctity, held in holy places, and protected by a truce of the gods, invoked to insure competition. Further, success meant a demonstration of power and even wealth and of superb physical prowess, shown through peaceful and harmless means. A victory meant that time, expense, and hard work had been lavished on an achievement which brought no calculable advantage, only honor and beauty. This may sound somewhat romantic, but competition symbolized an idea of nobility and aristocracy which meant much to Pindar. In the exaltation of victory he seems to see a kind of transfiguration, briefly making radiant a world which most of the time seemed, to him as to his contemporaries, dark and brutal. With this understood, we can readily see why the games were for Pindar a source of such lyrical inspiration. They were eminently religious and aristocratic and as such were eminently appealing to the religious and aristocratic spirit of

60 Hamilton, Great Age, p. 94.

61 Lattimore, p. viii.
We now turn to the third problem which we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, viz., the way of interpreting Pindar. There are a number of aspects to this problem. We will consider only one of them.

For appreciating and interpreting Pindar, a susceptibility to the effects of words is eminently necessary. Each of Pindar's words is, as it were, a gem with a luster all its own which the poet had fully appreciated before he set it in its place. Unfortunately this susceptibility is a thing which cannot be taught but comes only from wide reading and experience in any given author. This is especially true of Pindar. Therefore, the best we can do is mention the absolute need of acquiring this susceptibility to the effects of words for an adequate understanding and interpretation of Pindar.

The problem of interpretation which will engage our interest and attention is that of the internal structure, development, and

62 Hamilton, p. 95.
connection of Pindar's odes. What is the construction, the arrangement of topics, the form built up by the creative imagination of the poet? This is the problem which we will now consider.

Briefly we will glance at the two more important theories concerning the construction of the odes. The two answers treated should prove of some value when reading the odes, and lead to a greater appreciation of them. They should also be of great aid in later chapters when we attempt to construct Pindar's philosophy of life.

The first of the two theories is that of Professor Mezger, who complemented the findings of Dissen concerning the construction of the odes. Before the epoch made by the labors of Dissen, Pindar appeared without form and void. His odes of victory seemed a strange medley of disjointed proverbial philosophy and dark mystical allusion, bursting now and then into a grand flash of semi-epical ballad. To Dissen mainly is due the view now held in some form or other by all scholars, that Pindar's odes are by no means mere prize poems or installation odes, but marvelous specimens of the highest constructive skill and the fullest lyrical inspiration.

63This entire section is adapted from Gildersleeve, pp. xlvii-li and John Bagnell Bury, The Nemean Odes of Pindar (London, 1890), pp. xx-xxii; xxx-xxxii.
Professor Mezger is an eager follower of Dissen, but he introduces entirely new principles in his theory about the structure of the poems. Pindar, says Mezger in substance, composed his poems for oral delivery, and consequently wished to be understood at once. But even to his contemporaries, in spite of all their advantages, the immediate comprehension of his poems would have been impossible if they had not some outside help. Of these advantages and extraneous aids, there are three, melody, musical accompaniment and dance, which are lost to us irrecoverably. But there was a tradition, a fixed norm for such compositions, a rule from which the victory odes must not vary, a rule not only for the contents but also for the form. 64

It was reserved for Westphal to set forth and establish the proposition that Pindar in his victory odes followed the nome of Terpander in its general structure. At this point Professor Mezger, using the work of all his predecessors, re-enforced Westphal's theory by a discovery of his own. He maintained with Westphal that Pindar in nearly every case takes for his model the nome of Terpander. Up to this point Westphal and Mezger are in substantial

64 Gildersleeve, p. xlviii.
agreement. It is here that Professor Mezger proposes his own special theory. Mezger claims that the hearer must feel the transition between the various parts leading up to the myth and following it. If he does not hear it his sense of symmetry will most certainly be hurt. Mezger holds, therefore, that when the transitional parts do not by their subject matter show that they are transitional, it is the habit of the poet to make the transition stand out by the repetition of some particular word before and after the myth. This repetition occurs in the same foot of the same verse in corresponding strophes. These recurrent words are all significant, all mark transitions, and were all intended as cues to aid the memory of the chorus and guide the thoughts of the hearers. It is a mnemonic device, but more than that, for it lets us into the poet's construction of his own poem, and settles to some degree the disputed meaning of the odes.65

Professor Mezger pointed out many cases in which Pindar thus employed a recurrent word to guide the hearer to the proper apprehension of the nomic march of his poems. A few examples should

65 Ibid., p. 1 (p. 50 in the introduction).
suffice. In *Olympian VII* we note the use of Τλαπολέμου and then some fifty lines later Τλαπολέμος.⁶⁶ In the same ode we find τρίπολιν balanced by τρίχα δασαμένοι.⁶⁷ *Pythian I* shows ἔλι-, πίδας before the myth and ἔλιπομα after it.⁶⁸

This theory of Professor Mezger concerning the internal structure of Pindar's odes certainly does not end all controversy on the subject, but it does open up a fruitful field of investigation with regard to Pindaric interpretation.

Let us now turn to the more recent theory proposed by Professor Gilbert Norwood:

Pindar instinctively sets himself to create beauty. So when he gazed upon his miscellaneous material - the circumstances of the victory, the athlete's career, family, and native town, contemporary events in general and some particular points suggested by his clients - he broods emotionally upon them until there arises in his imagination some sensible object around which these varied topics crystallize. His favorite means of coordinating them so that they quicken one another with newly discovered kinship of significance and the thrill of relation-

---

⁶⁶ *Olympian VII.* 20 and 77.
⁶⁸ *Pythian I.* 43 and 83.
ship in beauty hitherto unguessed, of transforming a
heap of facts into a radiant body, alive, nimble, and
soaring, is to feel them all and portray them all in
terms of this symbol, this familiar sight which con-
fers upon them a unity not logical but aesthetic. 69

Professor Norwood feels, then, that the secret of Pindaric
construction and interpretation lies in symbolism. Much the same
theory is propounded by John H. Finley, Jr., although not as em-
phatically nor as systematically. 68

Such are the two most popular theories regarding Pindaric
structure and interpretation. Here is a recent evaluation of
them: "Perhaps the most arresting recent essay in interpretation
is that of Professor Gilbert Norwood. His detection of a hidden
symbolism in most of the odes has a Verillian ingenuity. How-
ever one views his imaginative flights, his theory offers a clue
to the otherwise obscure imagery which had previously quite defied
interpretation. For all its obvious dangers of subjectivity,
Norwood's approach is an improvement on earlier ventures along
these lines, such as the outmoded repeated word theory of Mezger,

69 Norwood, p. 99.
70 John H. Finley, Jr., Pindar and Aeschylus (Cambridge, 1955),
pp. 3-22.
Neither of these two theories is in any way conclusive. Both, however, offer aids and clues to a more thorough and comprehensive interpretation of Pindar. Both have as their object to unify the apparently disparate elements in the odes, so that we may get an impression of each poem as an aesthetic whole. In this they are extremely valuable and worthy of consideration.

In this chapter we have considered and offered some solution to three problems: (1) the historical, artistic, and intellectual background in which Pindar lived and wrote; (2) the nature and importance of the religious festivals for which he wrote his odes; (3) the artistic interpretation and appreciation of his odes. With these problems completed, we are now in a much more advantageous position to extract and consider the varied aspects of Pindar's philosophy of life.

Any discussion of Pindar's philosophy of life must necessarily center around two topics, content and consistency. The twofold problem involved in considering the intellectual content of his odes can be expressed in the following questions: Is there a systematic body of doctrine in the odes? What are the actual tenets of this philosophy? Do these tenets remain constant during the poet's life? These questions will form the subject of this and the following chapter.

Our main aim in this chapter will be a lengthy analysis of Pindar's views on the life of man. We will attempt to show that there is a general set of ethical principles in the odes which remain consistent throughout the poet's active life.

In general we will try to confine ourselves to those odes which we consider more important as a source of Pindar's philosophy of life. In this category we include the following: Olympian
II and Olympian XII; Pythian I, III, and VIII; Nemean VI and XI; Isthmian III, IV, and VII. This collection will be supplemented by pertinent passages from the other odes and especially from the fragments.

In choosing these as the most fruitful source of Pindar's philosophy of life we were guided by a twofold consideration and criterion. In the first place we sought intellectual content, i.e. definite statements of a philosophical view of life. In the second place we were guided by considerations of chronology.¹ We feel that the only way to establish the consistency of Pindar's philosophy of life is to consider his philosophical statements in their order of composition.

From this analysis we hope, therefore, to draw the consistent principles of Pindar's philosophy of life. As Professor Finley points out, it is possible to relate the odes of Pindar to various times of his life and trace changes of outlook and emphasis. Still he claims that the final impression one gains from the victory

¹We will base our chronology on the dates agreed upon by Th. Lenschau, in Pauly-Wissowa, Real Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft (Stuttgart, 1941), XX, 1614; Lattimore, pp. 151-160; Farnell, Works, II.
odes is that of constancy. No clear parallel suggests itself to so long a poetic life that changes so little.²

Pindar was the first to make the triumphal hymn a sort of religious poem. Inspired by the old aristocratic conception of the athletic contest, he gave a definite moral and religious significance to the spectacle of men struggling to bring their manhood to perfection in victory.³ By the use of the triumphal hymn he was enabled to give a new authority to the old aristocratic code, even in an age which viewed it with little sympathy. The fact that his poems were each dictated by a purely external, apparently casual occasion was his greatest strength; it was always victory which demanded his song. The fountain of his poetry was his concentration upon a permanent standard.⁴

This, then, will be the first facet of Pindar's philosophy which we will examine—the permanent standard of excellence and which he proposes in his odes. His aristocratic leanings

²Finley, Pindar, p. 23.

³Jaeger, Paideia, p. 208.

⁴Ibid., p. 209.
convinced him that victory in the games was a manifestation of the highest human \( \delta\rho\varepsilon\tau\iota \) and it is that belief which dictates the form of his poems. We cannot apprehend their form unless we understand his belief: for although a Greek artist was severely limited by the ancient and traditional form in which he chose to work, ultimately he chose and developed that form in accordance with the highest convictions of his soul.\(^5\)

Worth and excellence in Pindar consist of \( \delta\rho\varepsilon\tau\iota \), that essential manliness which, beginning with valor, ends in virtue, the working out of noble deeds.\(^6\) This \( \delta\rho\varepsilon\tau\iota \) in general consists of virtue in the ancient sense of the term, i.e., a combination of intellectual, moral, and physical qualities.\(^7\) As such it is the condition and prerequisite of happiness.\(^8\) An examination of Pindar's use of the term \( \delta\rho\varepsilon\tau\iota \) will prove that this is the case. It will also provide us with the first of Pindar's views on the life


\(^7\)Croiset & Croiset, Abridged History, p. 141.

\(^8\)Ibid.
of man.

In the first of Pindar’s extant odes, *Pythian X* (498 B.C.)⁹ we note the following usage:

εὐδαιμονι δὲ καὶ ὑμνητῶς ἄνηρ γίνεται σοφὸς οὗτος

δὲ ἢ πολείω ἀρετῇ κρατήσαι

tὸ μέγιστ' ἄξιον ἔλη τόλμα τε καὶ σθένει

καὶ ζῶν ἐτὶ νεκρὸν

κατ' αἷσαν οὐδὲ τὸν τυχόντα στεφάνων Πυθίων.¹⁰

But a man achieveth happiness and the singer’s praise in the estimation of the wise,

Who having triumphed by strength of hand or the prowess of
his running,

Hath won the greatest prizes in the contest through his
daring and might;

And who while still alive seeth his young son achieving
*Pythian* crowns by the ruling of Fate.¹¹

Here the term seems to have a physical meaning, referring to the
prowess of the runner. One should not miss, however, the close
connection between man’s happiness and the elements which make it
up. The connection is clearly brought out by the relationship of

⁹Throughout the remainder of this thesis we will include in
parentheses the most probable date of the various odes of Pindar.
This will show that we are giving a true chronological analysis.
From such an analysis we hope better to highlight the consistency
of doctrine in Pindar.


¹¹Farnell, *Works*, I, 141. Much the same sentiment is found
in *Od. VIII. 147-148.*
εὐδαιμονία and ἀρετὴ. Another point worthy of consideration is the fact that the man of ἀρετὴ is considered happy by the wise, who are thought competent to judge the matter. The happiness in question, therefore, is not something accidental; it contains the elements of true and essential happiness. Sir John Sandys, commenting on this ode, notes that the victor's father is certainly to be congratulated on his good fortune; he has attained the ultimate in human happiness. 12

In a work of a somewhat later date we find much the same usage of ἀρετὴ. In *Nemean* VII (493/85 B.C.) Pindar makes much of the fact that ἀρετὴ is the one essential source of worldly glory. Recalling Pindar's aristocratic background, we realize the high value he places on this worldly glory. In *Nemean* VII he says:

Aegina, I have this bold speech to utter concerning the race that sprang from thyself and Zeus, that, by the


13*Nem.* VII. 50-52.
brilliant deeds of prowess, they have won from their home a path of glory all their very own.14

The very fact that the poet places so much value on glory would be enough to give us a good insight into what he considers the epitome of human life. A few lines later, however, in the same ode he simplifies matters for us considerably. He emphasizes once again the very close connection between happiness and noble deeds. Here is a clear indication of his mind on the subject:

\[\theta\varepsilon\rho\iota\nu, \tau\in \delta' \varepsilon\οι\κο\τα \kappa\alpha\ι\rho\o\nu \d\varsigma\lambda\beta\o\nu \\
\delta\iota\'\omega\sigma\iota, \tau\o\lambda\mu\a\nu \tau\e \kα\l\o\\nu \a\rho\o\mu\e\nu\psi \\
\s\o\nu\e\s\i\i \o\u\x \a\p\o\b\l\a\p\t\e \f\r\e\n\o\d\nu.15\]

But to thee, Thearion, Fate grants fair measure of happiness,
And while thou bearest a spirit venturesome for noble things,
She marreth not thy mind's quick insight.16

From this short citation we get a definite impression of the poet's mind on the relationship of δλβος and δρετα There is a definite proportion between a man's happiness and his regard for noble deeds. The relationship hinted at in this passage seems definitely to be

---

14 Farnell, Works, I, 200.
15 Nem. VII. 58-60.
16 Farnell, Works, I, 200.
one of cause and effect. There can be little doubt, however, that ἀρετὴ is absolutely necessary for happiness.

Again and again the nature and value of ἀρετὴ is mentioned and stressed by the poet. 17 Thus in a somewhat later ode Pindar provides us with more information concerning his conception of ἀρετὴ.

In Olympian II (476 B.C.) we find three distinct references together. We shall consider these three citations as a unit and try to draw from them some further knowledge of ἀρετὴ.

καμνόντες οἱ πολλὰ θυμῶ
ἰερὸν ἐσχον σῶμα ποταμῷ, Σικελίας τ᾽ ἔσαν
ὀφθαλμὸς, αἰῶν ὅ ἐφεπε μόρσιμος, πλοῦτον τε καὶ χάριν ἄγαν
γνησίας ἐπ᾽ ἀρεταῖς. 18

ὁ μᾶν πλοῦτος ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαμένος φέρει τῶν τε καὶ τῶν καρον. 19

σοφὸς ὃ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυϊ. 20

[Ancestors] Who verily suffered much heart-affliction,
Ere they won the hallowed dwelling on the river,
And were the eye and light of Sicily;

---

17Pyth. VI (490 B.C.) 38-42. This section emphasizes the connection between ἀρετὴ and paternal reverence.

18Ibid., II. 9-12.

19Ibid., 58, 59.

20Ibid., 94.
And a fateful life-span ever waited on them, bringing wealth and all delight, to crown their inborn excellence. 21

Verily, wealth, adorned with all excellence bringeth a man happy opportunity of this and that. 22

He is wise who hath rich lore by the light of nature. 23

This poem belongs to Pindar’s mature period when he was at the summit of his powers and reputation. The princes of the earth sought to be honored by him. His rise in national estimation gave him a higher self-esteem. His own achievements and the achievements of the Persian War have led him to higher views of human power. 24 Thus in the above selections we note a characteristic quality of ἐποιήματα. In the first place the term has taken on a much wider meaning. It has passed from the restricted meaning of "physical prowess" to the more comprehensive conception of "in-born excellence". In this one term Pindar is therefore attempting

---

21 Farnell, Works, I, 10.
22 Ibid., 12.
23 Ibid., 13.
24 Gildersleeve, p. lxi.
to summarize the whole aristocratic ideal. He is attempting to freight this term with the connotations of intellectual, moral, and physical excellence. Outstanding merit in every phase of human endeavor is included in the word ἀρετή. Secondly we note in the above passages the new emphasis which Pindar places on the source of ἀρετή. There can be little doubt that he believed in an aristocracy of blood. ἀρετή is strictly an aristocratic quality.25 The virtues of the individual come to him from his race. A strongly aristocratic theory of heredity permeates all of Pindar's conceptions.26 It is for this very reason that he considers even wisdom an inborn quality and not something to be learned from experience or practice.

Two odes from this same period of maturity emphasize even more the two aspects of ἀρετή which we are now considering, viz., its inborn character and the fact that it is the epitome of all excellence. In Nemean III (475 B.C.) and Olympian IX (468 B.C.) much is made of these two aspects of ἀρετή. Nowhere do we get

25 Jaeger, Paideia, p. 213.
26 Croiset & Croiset, Abridged History, p. 141.
a clearer indication of the aristocratic morality which Pindar is expounding.

A man renowned by nature's gift weigheth down the scale,
But he who only hath what he hath learned from others,
Fareth in the shadow unstable of purpose, and never Entereth the fight unswervingly;
But dabbleth in countless brave adventures with ineffective will. 29

Best of all endowments is that which cometh to us by Nature's gift:
But many men start to win glory by excellence,
learned by rote from others.

Verily everything in which God hath no part is none the Worse if we pass it by in silence. 30

The consistency of doctrine on this point is amazing. In *Olympian*

---

27 Nem. III. 38-40.

28 *I. 108-112.

29 Farnell, I, 167, 168.

II (476 B.C.) he makes it quite clear that wisdom and the poet's art are the gifts of the gods who have planted these qualities in noble natures. Here in Olympian IX (469 B.C.) this principle is extended to ἀρετή in general and includes every human excellence. There is no possibility of cultivating or acquiring intellectual, moral or physical excellences. They are a matter of natural endowment, depending on noble birth.31

That this conception of ἀρετή is consistent throughout the rest of Pindar's life becomes quite clear if we examine two odes from the final period of his life. Nemean VI (465/460 B.C.) and Pythian VIII (446 B.C.), the last of Pindar's poems, make exactly this same point concerning ἀρετή. There can be little doubt that Pindar was serious and consistent when he described ἀρετή as hereditary and as the embodiment of the aristocratic ideal of excellence in human life.


32 Nemean VI, 47-51.
Broadly the paths are open from every point to the framers of tales to deck this isle with praise:
For verily a peerless portion (for their chronicle) do the sons of Aiakos furnish them withal,
Putting forth their mighty deeds of prowess;
And over the land and through the sea from afar flieth the name of them.

'Tis by the gift of Nature that
There standeth forth to view that noble spirit,
Which passeth from sires to sons.

Both of these odes make the same point: ἀρετὴ is hereditary.
Without noble birth a man can never strive for a life of honor.
Aristocratic and virtuous forebearers are the root and the true cause of ἀρετὴ and of true happiness in this life. The consistency of this view of ἀρετὴ is apparent from the beginning of the poet's life to the very end. He is an aristocrat through and through; he preaches the aristocratic code of ἀρετὴ in almost

33 Pyth. VIII. 46, 47.
34 Parnell, I, 193.
35 Ibid., 127.
36 Hamilton, Great Age, p. 97.
We can, therefore, summarize the chief points of ἄρετά thus: it is an inborn, hereditary quality; it is strictly an aristocratic quality depending on noble or aristocratic lineage for its beginning and continuance; it expressed the sum total of all human excellence—physical, moral, and intellectual; its possession is closely connected with happiness in this life.

Indeed, this notion of ἄρετά is so consistent and so pervasive in the odes of Pindar that some have seen it as the true unifying principle of all his artistic creations. Werner Jaeger is certainly of this opinion. He claims that ἄρετά is not only the root of all Pindar's thought, but also the guiding structural principle of his poetry; Pindar's admission or exclusion of any thought is dictated by its bearing on his great task of commemorating true human ἄρετά. In conclusion Jaeger claims that the form of Pindar's poetry can be understood only through the moral standard which it embodies.

Hermann Fraenkel is of exactly the same opinion. His posi—

37Isth. III. 4, 5; Isth. IV. 3, 13, 38; 01. XIII. 13, 15; Nem. XI. 37–39.
tion would be the following: Pindar's entire art is a service to values and especially to human values (_declaration). By this title do we also designate the function of Pindar's poetry. Values live in and through the recognition they receive; they must be theoretically recognized and understood, and they must be practically appreciated and fostered. Otherwise they remain as dead as a law which is unknown and unrespected. It is, therefore, the poet's noble task to provide acceptance for these values. This is the reason for the great emphasis on _declaration_ which we find in the works of Pindar.39

There are a number of other aspects of human life which are

38Jaeger, Paideia, p. 213.


There is an unpublished translation of pp. 613-648 by Aloysius Kemper, S.J.
dwelt on in the poems of Pindar. One strain is heard over and over again, the shortness and the sorrows of man's life, and the transitoriness of its pleasures. Throughout the majority of his poems we hear the traditional Greek outburst against the mortal character of human life. Again, we will present this doctrine chronologically to show that it is consistent throughout the active life of the poet.

We find this idea clearly hinted at in Pindar's first poem, Pythian X (498 B.C.). In this ode the poet prays for the continued prosperity of the victor and his family. This surely implies that there is a possibility of changing fortune. The whole implication of the poet's prayer emphasizes his belief in the essential shortness and sadness of human life:

![Greek text]

May such fair destiny follow them in days to come, so that Their wealth may ever proudly blossom for them; As they have been allotted no small portion of those

---

Pyth. X. 17-22.
Things that Hellas deemeth delightful,  
So may no shifting of envious fortune befall them from the Gods.  
(Only) a God could be forever free from sorrow of heart.41

Pindar is never more truly Hellenic than when he mingles his  
celebration of human glory with reminders of the limit of man's  
destiny. Such sentiments do not, however, cast any prevailing  
shadow over Pindar's poetry. They serve rather to limit the hu-  
man horizon, without discouraging effort, or veiling the sunshine  
which requites it.42 Thus, in discussing the unstable aspects of  
human life, Pindar is presenting a truly Greek concept in a truly  
distinctive, Pindaric manner. We find him deeply imbued with the  
feeling of the weakness of man, as here in Pythian X. His con-  
sciousness of the fitful character of human life is at work for-  
mimg and preserving the ideal of the aristocratic man.43 In this  
as in other typically Greek concepts he follows tradition yet at  
the same time he purifies it.44

41 Farnell, I, 140, 141.  
42 Jebb, Classical Greek Poetry, p. 169.  
43 Schmid-Stahlin, Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur, I,  
pt. 1, 615. There is an unpublished translation of pp. 546-624  
by Michael J. Lavelle, S.J.  
44 Croiset & Croiset, Abridged History, p. 147.
A poet whose theme is so largely bound up with the fortunes of athletic contestants and of noble houses must necessarily contend with the vicissitudes of life. Not all the contestants can be victors, nor can this year's victor hope to win in his next contest; great families, even if favored, must have their ups and downs in a world of change. Youth must pass, and wealth, and fame. This universal theme Pindar sets forth many times, now in a spirit of melancholy, now finding in Man's uncertain lot all the greater challenge to vigorous action.\textsuperscript{45}

In a later important ode we find a re-statement of this doctrine on the changing aspects of human fortune. The main points brought forth in \textit{Nemean} VII (472 B.C.) recall the changing destinies of men; the ode mentions the fact that even though men have different fortunes in life, they still all must meet the same destiny in death.

\[\delta\nu\alpha\nu\nu\nu\nu\varepsilon\omicron\mu\varepsilon\nu\ \delta' \ \varepsilon\omicron\upsilon\chi' \ \delta\nu\alpha\nu\nu\varepsilon\nu\varepsilon\iota\sigma\alpha.\]
\[\varepsilon'\iota\gamma\varepsilon\omicron\iota \ \delta' \ \pi\omicron\mu\omicron\ \zeta\upsilon\gamma\lambda\nu\nu\theta' \ \varepsilon\tau\omicron\rho\omicron\nu \ \varepsilon\tau\omicron\rho\omicron\alpha.\]

\textsuperscript{45}William Chase Greene, \textit{Moira: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought} (Cambridge, 1944), p. 73.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Nem.} VII. 5, 6.
But we do not all draw the first breath of life for equal fortunes, And different men are yoked to diverse constraining destinies.

The rich man and the poor fare together to the bourne of Death.

Nay, but death's rolling wave fareth on without favour,
And falleth equally on him that looketh for it
and him that looketh not,
But honour accrueth to those whose fair-flowering fame a
God cherisheth after death.

We are different, each one of us, in gifts of nature,

47Ibid., 19, 20.
48Ibid., 30-34.
49Ibid., 54-58
50Farnell, Works, I, 198.
51Ibid., 199.
52Ibid.
And one man hath this, and others that,
Having drawn their lot of life.
It is not possible for one man to have the good luck of
achieving full prosperity,
Nor can I tell you of any to whom Fate has offered this
consummation steadfastly.\(^5^3\)

Each of these selections emphasizes a different aspect of Pindar's thought on the passing character of human life. Implicit in this entire ode is the fact that sorrow, disappointment, and death are inherent in the lot of humanity.\(^5^4\) Throughout there is a mood of pious resignation and acceptance. Man must learn to live with the destiny of death which overhangs him.\(^5^5\) Of special interest is the final selection which mentions again the role of nature; despite the fact that there is a diversity of natural gifts among men, still all men must face the same end. Death is a hard master; he claims rich and poor, high and low. Indeed in formulating this doctrine, Pindar reaches for a truth valid in the past, the

\(^{53}\)Ibid., 200. These sections from Nem. VII are certainly the most fruitful for any analysis of Pindar's conception of the extremely varying character of human life and activity.


\(^{55}\)C.M. Bowra, "Pindar, Pythian XI," CQ, XXX (July-October, 1936), 137.
present and always. He is expressing in beautiful lyric poetry the essential, transitory character of human life.

There are a number of other examples of this same doctrine in Pindar. All of them are worth our consideration. However, we will examine only a few of them to show the complete constancy of Pindar in this attitude.

In Olympian II (476 B.C.), the poet points out once again the fluctuating character of all things.

Verily, the final ending of our days in death is never forejudged for a man,
Nor whether we shall bring to an end any single day,
The offspring of the rising sun,
In tranquillity and with untiring bliss.
At various times varying tides of fortune come upon men bearing both joy of heart and sorrows.

Pindar throughout this poem sets himself to console There for

56 Brown, "Pindar and Thirty Years' Peace", TAPA, LXXXII (1951), 8.
57 II. 33-38.
58 Farnell, Works, I, 11.
his sorrows by impressing upon him the law of human life, that
grief and joy come upon us with inevitable alternation. This al-
ternation he displays with august power and variety: Semele died
amid the roar of the thunderbolt, but lives now in Heaven (vv. 27-30).
Cadmus dwells in the isles of the Blest, his griefs all put away
(vv. 86-88); in short the whole race of man meets now pain, now
joy, for such is the true character of human life. 59 Again and
again we hear the somber warning that prosperity is not permanent,
that sooner or later things change. 60

Isthmian IV (476/73 B.C.) gives a rather poetic statement of
this concept:

ελλοτε δ' ἄλλοιος ὀδρος
πάντας ἄνθρωπος ἐπαίσχωσιν ἐλαύνει. 61

The changeful breeze of fortune, varying with the times,
with sudden gusts driveth all men before it. 62

The important aspect of this statement is the fact that it ex-

59 Norwood, Pindar, p. 136.
60 Ibid., p. 59.
61 Isth. IV. 5, 6.
62 Farnell, Works, I, 253.
eludes no one from the vagaries of fortune. It is almost exactly the same sentiment as that of Nemean VII (493/85 B.C.). There can, therefore, be little doubt that Pindar was consistent in this doctrine.

It is interesting to note that, despite Pindar’s great interest in success, he is in one sense always writing of failure. Such is the case in Isthmian IV. He recalls here our incapacity for any but momentary brightness. Happiness is our full awareness of these rare times of success. Courage is a kind of waiting and longing for success; indeed, all the virtues are involved in waiting and thus appear in the doctrine of vicissitude and transitoriness. The important point is that, though the odes look to festal occasions, they carry an undertone of incompleteness because of the long preparation required for success and the actual brevity of the success attained. 63

We now turn to two odes of Pindar’s later life which will serve as a summary of his entire mind on the sorrows of human life and what man can do about them.

63Finley, Pindar and Aeschylus, p. 67.
Pythian III (474 B.C.), written at the height of Pindar's career, gives us some extremely pertinent information. The tone of the following passages is one of great hope. The poet tells us here that, even though man has a very dim future, there is still room for great hope and confidence. The key to happiness is to make the best of the present situation. Let us listen to Pindar's own words:

εἰ δὲ λόγων συνέμεν κορυφᾶς, Ἰέρων, ὄρυξν ἐκπύθα, μανθάνων οἴσθα προτέρων.
ἐν παρ' έκολον πίματα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς
ἀθάνατοι. τα μὲν δὲν οὐ δύναμαι νηπίων κόσμον φέρειν.
ἀλλ' ἀγάθοι, τα καλά τρέψαντες ἔξω.

εἰ δὲ νόσ τις ἔχει
θνατῶν ἀλαθείας ὅδον, χρὴ πρὸς μακάρων
τυχόνοντ' εὖ πασχέμεν. ἄλλοτε ὁ ἄλλοι πνοιαί
ὑψιπετῶν ἀνέμων. ὅλος οὐκ ἔς μαχρὸν ἄνδρῶν ερχεται, ὡς
πολὺς, εὖτ' ἐν ἔπιρισσαῖς ἔχεται.
ομιχρὸς ἐν ομιχροῖς, μέγας ἐν μεγάλοις
ἐσσομαν. τὸν δ' ἀμφεπόντι αἰεὶ φρασίν
δαίμον' ἁσκησον κατ' ἐμν' θεραπεῦων μακανάν.

But if, Hieron, thou knowest how to lay to heart the true crowning-word of wise speech, Thou bearest in mind the lesson of the men of old;

64 Pyth. III. 80-83.
65 Ibid., 103-109.
'For every single blessing two woes
Are meted out to men by the Immortals.'
This dispensation, then, fools cannot meetly bear,
But the good can, turning to view the fairer side of things. 66

If a man's mind hath sense of the true course of life,
   He must be well content with the good things
   He chanceth to win from the gods.
The winds that come down from heaven
   Blow diversely at diverse times;
And a man's bliss remaineth no long time hale and whole,
   when it waiteth on a man in overfull measure.
In lowly fortune I will be lowly;
In great fortune I will bear me greatly.
The fortune that accompanyeth my path from day to day,
   I will ever cherish,
   Tending it according to the measure of my skill. 67

Clearly these lines indicate to us the poet's mind on the instability of human happiness. He gives us the finest examples of this instability in Peleus and Cadmus. These heroes, even after they were fortunate enough to win goddesses as brides, still had much to suffer in this life. 68 The argument here is from analogy. Poor, weak mortals must expect to suffer reverses since such was the lot of heroes like Peleus. Yet we should notice what the poet

66 Parnell, Works, I, 95.
67 Ibid., 96.
suggests that we do when such changes of fortune come. His admonition is that we live in the present and meet life, be it good or bad, with a steadfast spirit. There is a definite anticipation of Horace's famous dictum, "Aequam memento rebus in arduis/servare mentem."69 The secret of success in difficulty seems to be the ability to overlook evil and turn one's attention to the good side of everything. In view of this uncertainty of life, Pindar coun-
sels neither timidity nor rashness, but tact and firm resolution to cope calmly and courageously with the present.70 The most ef-
flective way of meeting every fluctuation of human life is accept-
tance and adaptation. These are the sure road to happiness.71

In this passage Pindar seems to summarize both the character of the good man and his doctrine on the essentially changing cha-
racter of human life and human fortune. He remarks that only the good man can bear the harsher aspects of life because only the good man has the excellent ability to look only on the good side

69 Horace, Carmina, II. 3. 1,2.

70 Greene, Moira, p. 73.

71 Ibid., p. 74.
of all of life's happenings. His very poetic picture of the winds of fortune seems rather trite to us because we have heard it so often. However, it was not so in his day. His statement emphasizes the change which can occur in human affairs and it appeals to the emotions of his listeners. All in all this is one of the finest statements of this doctrine of change in the whole of the works of Pindar.

We draw our final example of mutability in human affairs from Pindar's final poem, Pythian VIII (446 B.C.). This ode not only presents the same teaching as the earlier poems, thus showing the consistency of Pindar, but also epitomizes Pindar's mind on this subject. His sentiments on human life as he expressed them in this ode are among the most famous lines in all of Greek poetry:

εἰ γὰρ τις ἐσθιά πέπαινε, μὴ σὺν μακρῷ πόνῳ,
πολλοῖς σοφῶς δόξει κεῖται ἀγρόνων
μὴν καρυσσόμεν ὀρθοβουλοῦσι μαχαναῖς
τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐπὶ ἄνδραῖς κατεῖ: δαίμονιν ὡς καρπάσει,
ἐλλοι ἐλλοι ἑκεῖνε βάλλων,
ἐλλοι δὲ ὑπὸ κεφάλα
μέτρῳ κατάβαιν.72

ἐν δὲ δήλῳ βροτῶν
τὸ τερτον ωδὴν ἀνεῖται: οὕτω δὲ καὶ πίνει χαμαι.

72 *Pyth. VIII.* 76-82.
For if a man hath won many blessings without exceeding toil, he seemeth to many as a wise man among fools, in crowning his life with counsels of prosperous policy. But such things lie not in man's hands: a divine power meteth out our fortunes, casting up on high now one man, now another, and hurling down another to the ground. For if a man hath won many blessings without exceeding toil, he seemeth to many as a wise man among fools, in crowning his life with counsels of prosperous policy. But such things lie not in man's hands: a divine power meteth out our fortunes, casting up on high now one man, now another, and hurling down another to the ground. Yet the time is brief wherein the joy of mortals blossometh, and even so falleth to the earth again shattered to the ground by some baffling will. We are creatures of a day: what thing is man, or what thing is he not? man is but the shadow of a dream. But when there cometh a heaven-born gleam, men are crowned with bright glory and sweet life.

The first selection puts much stress on the "otherness" of human fortune, i.e., the fact that man's life and fortune are not completely in his control. In such a situation man must enjoy his present prosperity but not consider it as something abiding and unchanging. He must recall the fact that there is a whole sphere

73Ibid., 96-102.
74Farnell, Works, I, 128.
75Ibid., 129.
of activity which is completely outside of him and about which he can do little or nothing. The insubstantiality of human life is transformed only as the god’s brilliance passingly touches it and clarity and happiness briefly return.\footnote{Finley, Pindar & Aeschylus, p. 37.}

The second passage, as we noted above, is one of the most famous statements in Greek poetry. It expressed in short, simple terms Pindar’s conception of the essential aspects of human life. Because it is Pindar’s last utterance on the subject and one of his most famous statements, it is certainly worthy of fuller consideration.

The line which especially interests us in this section is that in which Pindar refers to man as the creature of a day. This is indeed the crucial line in the entire ode. It is interesting to note its position in the poem. It falls between the lines referring to the varying fortune of man and those telling us that it is the god-given light which brings splendor and gentle life to man. The human spirit, then, shifts abruptly from one extreme to another, with confidence and despondency alternating; and such
emotional vagaries are induced by our good or bad luck. We are everything in succession, great and small, proud and humble; and as there is nothing we are not, we are not really anything. Thus the poet tells us that man is but the shadow of a dream.

Yet even here a note of triumph is sounded. The poet has reminded us that man is nothing of himself. However, with the assistance and visitation of the gods, man reaches the very pinnacle of human existence. Beauty, grace, radiance are proclaimed as the summary and epitome of man's present lot. Man may still hope for that splendid hour when the gods deign to comfort and bless him. When this hour comes, man, despite his transitory nature, is raised above himself to the god-given realm of beauty and radiance wherein he finds true human happiness.

Still the approbation and assistance of the gods is a free gift; man remains essentially ἐπάμερος. Applied to man in general


78 Ibid., 135.

79 "Shadow of a dream" is the result of Farnell's mis-translation of σκόπος ὁμορ. Cf. Sandys, Odes of Pindar, p. 269 for the correct translation, "dream of a shadow".
the term ἐπιμέρος which we find in this section reflects the thesis that inconstancy is inherent in human nature.\textsuperscript{80} The concept of man's ἐπιμέρος nature has a number of ramifications. With our outlook determined by the day, our field of vision is limited; we dwell in ignorance of reality at large and fall an easy prey to illusions. In a Pindaric fragment we read: Ὁ νόμος, οἱ ἐπιμέρους φοντικὸς ἐπαμερίων/όχι ἰδυία.\textsuperscript{81} "Alas, how the minds of ἐπιμέρους are deceived, for they know not..."\textsuperscript{82}

From one angle, the ἐφιμέρος aspect of man's character was considered a fundamental weakness of man's nature; but it can also be turned into a source of strength. Adjustment makes the vicissitudes of life easier to bear.\textsuperscript{83} Such adjustment is indeed the mark of a good man. Therefore in Pythian VIII Pindar has summarized his doctrine for us. He has told us that man is, body and soul, at the mercy of any one day, ἐφιμέρος. Yet he does not

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81}Frag. 209 in Turyn edition; Frag. 182 according to Schroe-
der's enumeration
\textsuperscript{82}Fraenkel, "Man's Ephemeros Nature", 137.
\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., 138.
give in to despair. Rather, the freedom and liberty of the human spirit is such that it finds a source of great hope and strength in its most characteristic attribute—variability.  

Pindar's conception of the ills of human life goes deeper than a mere observation of life's vicissitudes; it is not mere luck, or inequality in the dispensation of blessings; it involves a theory of prosperity itself, and of a man's behavior in prosperity. In short, when we seek the foundation of Pindar's doctrine of the variability of life, we discover a definite, systematic view on the nature of sin.  

Pindar, as the Greeks in general, holds that whenever man passes the bounds appointed between a mortal and a god, or between man and his fellowmen, he becomes thereby a sinner. Excess is the form of sin which he makes repeatedly his theme.  

In analyzing the concept of sin according to Pindar, we shall diverge somewhat from our former procedure. Rather than a chrono-

84 Ibid., 141.  
85 Greene, Moira, p. 74.  
86 Clifford Herschel Moore, The Religious Thought of the Greeks (Cambridge, 1925), p. 86
logical study, we will present a systematic analysis of the notion
of ὑπερενταγμός and show how this concept is verified in the works of
Pindar. The consistency of this doctrine will be apparent from
the fact that its various facets remain unchanged throughout Pin-
dar's life.

"ὑπερενταγμός may be regarded as fullness of sin, sin committed, not
out of mortal weakness, but from pride of heart and overweening
self-conceit. "ὑπερενταγμός would seem to have three distinct stages in
its inception and development: (1) In the first degree it dis-
poses a man to ascribe all his success in life to himself, to say
in the depth of his heart, "My own right hand and my own strong
arm, they have gotten me victory." Thus man comes to set an un-
due value upon himself and his achievements. (2) In the second
degree it makes a man in his undue self-esteem arrogant and re-
gardless of the feelings and rights of others, as shown for exam-
ple in the conduct of Agamemnon to Achilles. (3) In the third
and culminating degree it leads a man to defy the gods and to say,
"Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?"87

87E.E.G., Makers of Hellas, p. 350
"ὑπὲρίς, it will thus be seen, is simply the exaggerated development of the ego, and from its intimate connection with a man's self, the tendency to it is constantly present, ready to spring up at any moment. Pindar recognizes this when he calls the offspring of ὑπὲρίς αὐληχώροιν, "everlasting, never-ceasing insolence", the besetting sin that only with difficulty can be put down. Among a people like the Greek, in whom the ego, the individuality, was so intense and marked, that natural and noble self-reliance which is inseparably united to intellectual strength was but too apt to degenerate into its inferior brother, self-exaltation. Hence the poet's most earnest warnings are directed against this fatal excess.\textsuperscript{89}

Pindar combats ὑπὲρίς in the first degree by pointing out that all power, all fame, all success is the gift of the gods.

\textsuperscript{88}Isth. III. 2.
\textsuperscript{89}E.E.G., Makers, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{90}R.O. VIII. 8.
"Fulfilment (of hopes) is achieved by prayers in reward for piety." 9

Pindar's thoughts on this matter are all summed up in his gentle counsel to Arcesilas, king of Cyrene. This ruler, in whose honor Pythian IV (462 B.C.) and Pythian V (462/461 B.C.) were written, seems to have been an extremely accomplished and upright man. He was wealthy, powerful, and honored by all. He is, as it were, the very emblem and example of success and glory. Yet it is to such a one that Pindar addresses the warning:

σοφοί δὲ τοι̇ καλλίον
φέροντι καὶ τὰν θεόσσοτον δύναμιν. 92

tō se μὴ λαθέτω
Κυράνα γλυκὺν ἀμφί κάρον Ἀφροδίτας ἀειδόμενον,
pantί μὲν θεόν δίτιον ὑπερτιθέμεν. 93

The wise among men are able more faithfully and nobly to sustain even the sovereign power bequeathed by God. 94

Wherefore, when thy name is being sung in Kurana round about the sweet flowery shrine of Aphrodite,
Forget not to assign all things to the working of God's hand. 95

91 Farnell, Works, I, 41.
92 Pyth. V. 12, 13.
93 Ibid., 23-25.
94 Farnell, Works, I, 116.
95 Ibid., 117.
It is with admonitions and reminders of this sort that Pindar recalls to his hearers the dangers of ζηριζ and tries to keep them on the path of virtue by recalling for them their debt to the gods.

Pindar has nothing but detestation for ζηριζ in the second degree which advances from the inward to the outward stage, and shows itself openly in insolent disregard for others. His remedy for it is the mean, for the striving after the just mean necessitates self-knowledge, and in that effort a man will learn his true place among his fellows and keep it. At the same time Pindar would seem to associate his abhorrence of presumption with his doctrine of heredity and spirit of noble oblige. This is especially clear in Olympian VII (464 B.C.) where he prays:

ἀλλ` Ὁ Ζεύς πάτερ, νότοισιν Ἄταβριοι
μεθέων, τίμα μὲν θυμοῦ τεθμον Ὀλυμπιονίκαν,
ἀνδρα θεός ἀρετὰν εὐρόντα, δίδοι τέ οἴ αἰὼν τριὼν
καὶ ποτὶ ἀστῶν καὶ ποτὶ ἔξων.

ἐπει θριος ἐχθράν ὁδὸν εὐθυπορεῖ, σάφα
δαείς ἀ τε οἱ πατέρων ὦρθαι φρένες ἐς ἀγαθῶν ἔχοαν.97

But, oh, father Zeus,
That hauntest the slopes of the mountain Ataburion
Receive with honour

96 E.E.G., Makers, p. 351.
97 VII. 87-92.
This our songful service for the Olympian victory
And the man that hath found glory by his boxing.
And grant him reverence and favour alike from citizens and strangers. For he walketh along the straight path that hateth wrong,
Having learned full well the teaching wherewith his upright Heart hath inspired him from goodly ancestors. 98

"Ὑρπίς in this sense, showing itself in insolence, would seem to be the vice of the parvenu; courtesy and consideration for others a feature of the aristocratic character, a part of the legacy handed down as the result of the striving of generations after the noble and the good. However, no one in Pindar's eyes is entitled to honor who gives way to presumption. He reminds us of this in Isthmian III (476/473 B.C.):

Εἰ τις ἄνδρος εὐτυχήσεις ἢ σῶν εὐδόξως ἄξει ὁ
ἡ σήμερον πλουτῶν κατέχει φρασιν ἀλανή κάραν,
ἀξίος εὐλογίαις ἀπόθειον μεμεῖχθαι. 99

If any man is blessed with fair fortune either in following Contests that bring renown or through the might of wealth,
And in his heart subdueth insatiate insolence,
He is worthy to have his name
Blent with the fair speech of his fellow-citizens. 100

This selection gives a clear indication of Pindar's mind with regard to the second stage of ὑρπίς. Presumption is for him the

98 Farnell, Works, I, 37.
99 Isth. III. 1-3.
100 Farnell, Works, I, 252. Italics not in original.
the unpardonable sin. Is the one sin that puts man outside human honor and makes him an enemy of the gods. Only the firm grasp and inborn excellence which come from inborn ἀρετή can guard man from all the dangers of ἀβρααμ.

Finally, the third and most fatal development of ἀβρααμ is that which brings men into antagonism with the gods; it is the tendency which leads a man, either through perversion of the intellect, through failure to recognize his own limitations, or through rebellion of the will, to throw the unwritten laws from his heart and ask, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" 101

Pindar's great remedy against this tendency in the human heart is to consider the end. Again and again in varied forms he warns us to remember that man is mortal. 102 This is his method of reminding us not to overstep our mortal limits. He tells us that we are creatures of a day, and in no way capable of promising ourselves either life or prosperity on the morrow.


102Moore, Religious Thought, p. 87.
That this is his consistent view on Ὄμπρις becomes abundantly clear from an examination of three poems from three different periods of his life. If we inspect Isthmian V (479 B.C.), Pythian III (474 B.C.) and Nemean XI (446 B.C.), the poet's second last poem, we cannot help but be convinced of the consistent character of the doctrine which the poet proposes. A comparison of the pertinent passages in these odes will offer sufficient evidence on this point:

εἰ τις εὗρον λόγον ἑλον ἀκούῃ
μὴ μάτευσε θεοῦς γενέσθαι· πάντ' ἔχεις,
εἰ σε τούτων ὁμορ' ἐφίκοιτο καλῶν.
θενάτ' θνατογοι πρέπει.103

χρὴ τὰ ἑοιχότα πάρ δαίμονων μαστευόμεν θναταις φρασὶν,
γνόντα τὸ πάρ ποδὸς, οἷς εἰμὲν αἰσας.
μὴ, φίλα ψυχή, βίον ἅματον
σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἐμπρακτον ἀντλει μαχανάν.104

εἰ δὲ τις δὴ βοῦν ἔχων μορφῇ παραμεύσεται ἄλλους
ἐν τ' ἀδελθοίσιν ἀριστεῦν ἐπέδειξεν βίαν,
θενάτ' μεμνάσθω περιστέλλων μέλη
καὶ τελευτῶν ἀπάντων γὰν ἐπιεισοδένοις.105

103Isth. V. 15-18.
104Pyth. III. 59-62.
105Nom. XI. 13-16.
Fair fortune and a goodly report thereto cherish
The much longed-for flower of life.
Strive not to become as God: thou hast the fulness of life,
if the lot of these noble gains falleth upon thee.
A mortal estate sorteth with our mortality. 106

It behoveth a man with mortal thoughts
To crave from heaven what fits our lots,
Knowing the near path we must tread, of what destiny we are.
Do not, dear heart of mine,
Press on to win the life of the Immortals,
But draw deeply on the resources that are in thy power. 107

But if a man, blessed with abundant wealth,
Surpass all other men in beauty,
And hath shown his might by prowess in contests of strength,
Let him remember that the limbs
He gaily appareleth are mortal still,
And that at the end of all he will don a garment of earth. 108

These selections show Pindar's consistency in his fight with

Olymp. His weapon remains the same—a reminder of man's essential limitation. The limits imposed by our mortal nature are thus ever present to Pindar's thoughts. Man is doomed to die, and man must remember the gulf that divides him from the divinity. Again and again, like hammer-strokes on the anvil, falls the counsel

106 Farnell, Works, I, 269.
107 Ibid., 94.
108 Ibid., 231.
against cravings for what is beyond man's reach. 109

In summary, then, we note that for Pindar human achievement
is at best limited; moderation and self-restraint are included
among the highest virtues. Despite the great possibilities of
the human spirit, discouragement, disappointment and death are in-
herent in the lot of humanity. 110 The religious standpoint of a
writer may be supposed to be reflected in his general outlook
upon life. If we consider the poems of Pindar from this point of
view, we are struck by the prominence given to the sad and somber
aspects of man's lot. The uncertainty of the future, the fickleness of Fortune, and the inevitability of death—these are the
familiar notes of what is called Greek melancholy; and Pindar is
always sounding them in our ears. Reflections on the frailty of
man, the contrast between aspiration and attainment, the brevity
of life constantly meet us in his poems. His counsel in all life's
circumstances is that we should let our thoughts aspire to greatness, but only within the limits prescribed by the ordinances

109 Greene, Moira, p. 77.

of heaven; in this respect he is true to the fundamental principles of Greek ethics.\footnote{Adam, Religious Teachers, pp. 128-131.}

We pass now to an examination of what is by far the most remarkable and distinctive portion of Pindar's doctrine on the life and lot of man, his conception of the after-life. There are numerous passages which make reference to the souls in Hades and their joy in the achievements of their survivors.\footnote{Nem. IV. 85, 86; Pyth. XI, 21; Ol. IX. 35-38; Isth. VIII. 57-60.} This general and traditional phase of the doctrine of immortality is interesting, but those points which distinguish Pindar's thought from the common Greek doctrine on immortality will constitute the scope of our present consideration. Since much of the evidence is from undated fragments, no attempt will be made to show chronological consistency. Rather we will summarize the main distinctive points of Pindar and show consistency with datable material.

It was the religion of Orphism that gave birth to the most profound ideas in Greek ethical and religious thought: the divine origin of the soul, its eternal nature, and personal immortality.
These are the doctrines reproduced by Pindar along with the traditional ideas mentioned above.\textsuperscript{113}

Stripped of all the embellishments of his poetic imagination, Pindar's teaching on the future state of the soul may be briefly summed up under four heads: (1) belief in a judgment passed upon the dead; (2) a punishment in store for the wicked; (3) belief in a life of bliss reserved for the good; (4) belief in a return to mortal life by certain souls decreed thereto.\textsuperscript{114}

In a remarkable fragment Pindar sets forth a view about the relation of body and soul which is certainly that of the Orphics:

\[\text{δόρις ἐ' ἀποκτε \\nκαί σῶμα μὲν πάντων ἔπεται θανάτῳ περισθεῖν,}\\n\text{ζωόν ἐ' ἔτι λείπεται; ἄλονος εἰσδολον; τὸ γὰρ ἔστι μόνον}\\n\text{ἐκ θεῶν: εὐδεὶ δὲ πρασοῦσιν μελέων,}\\n\text{ἀτό ἐπούντεσσιν ἐν πολλοῖς οὐνεῖροις}\\n\text{δείκνυσι τερπνῶν ἐφερποῖσαν χαλεπῶν τε κρίσιν.}\textsuperscript{115}


\textsuperscript{114}E.E.G., \textit{Makers}, p. 357.

\textsuperscript{115}\textit{Frag.} 136; \textit{frag.} 131 in Schroeder.
By a happy dispensation they won to an ending
That releaseth them from toil.
The body indeed of all of us followeth
the call of death the overstrong:
But there yet surviveth death the shadow of our living self.
For that alone of us is of origin divine:
It sleeppeth when our limbs are in busy motion,
But to us in slumber it revealeth in many a dream
Fate's coming decision concerning our weal or woe.116

By this Pindar means that when the body is awake it hampers
the soul so that the soul is numbed as in sleep; but when the soul
is free from the domination of the imprisoning flesh, it then en-
joys its proper powers.117 Because of its divine origin the soul
is eternally exempt from destruction, everlasting and immortal.118

There is a famous passage in the second Olympian (476 B.C.)
which sets forth Pindar's views of future judgment, reward, and
punishment. According to these lines, sins committed on the earth
are punished beneath the earth, and those done beneath the earth
are punished in the soul's next reincarnation. So heaven and hell
are always present to man's soul, whether here in the light of the

116Parnell, Works, I, 334.
117Moore, p. 89.
118Rohde, Psyche, p. 415; Herbert Weir Smyth, Greek Melic
sun or in the darkness of Hades. Those from whom atonement is
accepted in the lower world are allowed to return to the earth in
high positions; if they have been just, when they have accomplished
their rebirth thrice, they may enter into their final happiness.
This passage, though long, remains as a great landmark in reli-
gious poetry and as a summary of Pindar's views on the future life.
It is therefore worthy of our consideration. Pindar says:

\begin{align*}
\text{et \ de \ miu \ exwn \ tis \ oidev \ to \ mello,} \\
\text{dte \ thandontwn \ men \ evadd' \ autik' \ arhalamvov \ phrenes} \\
\text{poinas \ xteiasan, \ ta \ o' \ ev \ the \ dios \ arxh} \\
\text{aletpa \ kat\a \ gos \ xiazei \ tis \ exeir} \\
\text{logon \ phrasias \ anagkha} \\
\text{isois \ de \ vuktesayn \ alei,} \\
\text{isois \ o' \ amerais \ alion \ exontes, \ aponesteron} \\
\text{esoil \ dekoxnai \ bistoron, \ ou \ xedna \ paradoseontes \ en \ xerdes \ axa} \\
\text{obde \ pention \ sjor} \\
\text{kevenan \ parad \ diaiatan, \ alla \ parad \ men \ timios} \\
\text{theia, oitines \ exaionon \ eudokiai, \ adakren \ nemontai} \\
\text{aion \ to \ e' \ ekdoxaratov \ okhoxnai \ ponon.} \\
\text{doosi \ e' \ exolmisan \ estrios} \\
\text{ekaterei \ melianentes \ apd \ paman \ aionixo \ exei} \\
\text{psxan, xteiasan \ dios \ odo \ parad \ kroonou \ turein. \ xina \ makron} \\
\text{vason \ oxeainides} \\
\text{adrai \ peripneisovin \ anheva \ de \ xrousos \ phigei,} \\
\text{ta \ men \ xerodesen \ ap' \ arlahen \ deonereon, \ sjor \ o' \ alla \ ferbei,} \\
\text{horaioi \ ton \ xera \ anaplekonti \ kai \ stepphous} \\
\text{boulaie \ en \ othagei \ 'radamandinos,} \\
\text{o' patir \ exei \ megas \ etoimov \ autbo \ partoron,} \\
\text{posis \ o' pantov \ reas \ uperatan \ exoias \ thronon. 119}
\end{align*}
If indeed a man possessing wealth knoweth of the life to come,
How that the souls of the wicked,
When they have died on this earth,
Forthwith pay the penalty;
For the sins enacted in this realm of God
There is one below the earth that judges,
Delivering the strict account in bitter terms of Doom:
But the souls of the good win a happy life free from hard toil,
Having an equal measure of the sun by night and day,
No longer ploughing up the earth with might of hand,
Nor ploughing the face of the salt sea
In the barren fashion of the mariner;
But, by the side of the most revered of deities,
All men soever who rejoiced in keeping their oaths' pledge
Enjoy a tearless age:
While those others endure an agony from which the eye turneth away
But all those who, throughout the probation
of three lives on either side of the grave,
Have had the hardihood to stand firm and keep their soul
Wholly from unrighteousness,
These, then, fare along the road of God
to the fenced holy place of Kronos,
Where airs born of Ocean are wafted round the Island of the Blest,
And flowers of gold are gleaming there,
Some, earth's children, born from radiant trees,
Others the water's nurslings;
With clusters whereof they enwreath their hands
and twine garlands for their brows,
Abiding under the righteous laws of Rhadamanthos;
Whom the great Father of the Gods, Kronos, the husband of Rhea,
The goddess enthroned in the highest place,
Cherished as his trusty peer in judgment. 120

Thus, Pindar's faith in immortality is bound up with ethical
conceptions; not only does the soul experience successive incar-
nations or rebirths but it is undergoing a probation the result which, as it chooses well or ill, is to be everlasting bliss or everlasting punishment. Thus Pindar's world includes the equivalent of a purgatory, and an inferno, and a paradise which are based for the first time wholly on vice or virtue. It anticipates the Platonic eschatology and the great tradition, both pagan and Christian, in which the fortunes of the soul are set forth in the light of man's moral responsibility and his deliberate choice.

Good and evil, both in this life and in the world to come, are no longer the simple gift of Fate or the sport of chance; they are rooted partly in man's nature, partly in the will of man.121

Such conceptions of the origin, fortunes, and ultimate destiny of the soul, the more they diverge from commonly held opinions, the more certainly must they be regarded as being part of the personal and real persuasion of the poet himself. While on other occasions he accommodates himself to the traditional views, here he gives himself willingly to hopes and aspirations dealing with the future life. Pindar's doctrine gives us the confident assurance that the divine nature of the soul must in the end

---

121 Greene, Moira, p. 79.
break through, purified and triumphant over the earthliness that obscured it. Never again among the Greeks did the blessed life of the sanctified soul receive such majestic expression, clothed in such ample and resplendent diction, as that which poured so freely from the heart of this richly gifted poet. 122

This concludes our analysis of Pindar's views on the life of man. In this chapter: (1) we have drawn out and systematized Pindar's main doctrines on the life of man; (2) we have shown the life-long consistency of these doctrines by a chronological analysis of the main points and aspects of these views. We turn now to another important section of Pindar's thought, his concept of the gods.

122 Mohde, Psyche, pp. 416, 419.
CHAPTER IV

PINDAR'S VIEWS ON THE GODS

In reading Pindar, as has already been observed, we breathe an aristocratic atmosphere, and are in constant company with the scions of great houses in whom the blood of gods still flows. The men who are celebrated and honored in the victory odes are mostly descendants either of Heracles, or of Cadmus through the Aegeidae, or of Apollo. The Aeolian and Lydian elements in his music tend to soften a little the Dorian exclusiveness and austerity, but the loftiness of his air throughout has a twofold source, the pride of genius and the pride of race. That is his attitude toward the world at large, but the stores of legend and of earlier mythology, which it had been his duty to master, are handled by him not only with unwavering reverence but with a freedom inspired by ruling ideas, drawn partly from a wide experience and partly from the genius of Greek thought, which had now reached an advanced stage of reflection and analysis.¹

¹Lewis Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature (New York, 1898) p. 170.
The singer is closely associated with great families and with the priesthood; yet his mind is not made rigid or conventional as one might expect. The expansiveness of the Greek intellect asserts itself afresh, and the spirit of the poet moves along a higher plan than that of the traditions which afford the material for his art.

Pindar shows throughout the pervasive influence of Homer, both in his conception of the gods and in his style as well. He makes no break with the Homeric anthropomorphism and his divinities are subject to the needs and desires of mortals; but his concept is a noble one, for his gods are mighty and permanent, while men are transitory and weak. The keynote of his religious doctrine is struck in the opening verses of *Nemean* VI (465/460 B.C.):

εὖ ἀνυόρων, εὖ θεῖο γένος· ἔκ μιᾷ ὑπὸ πνεόμεν
ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· διείργετο δὲ πάσα κεχρημένα
dύναμις, ὥς τὸ μὲν οὐδεν, ὁ δὲ χάλκεος ἀσφαλέος αἰεὶ ξύδος
μένει οὐρανός. ἀλλὰ τι προφέρομεν ἐμπρὸς ἡ μέγαν
νόον ἦτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτωις,
χαίπερ ἑγαμερίαν οὐκ οἰδότες οὐδὲ μετὰ νύκτας

---

2See above, pp. 13, 14.
3Campbell, p. 171.
4Moore, p. 83.
Men and Gods are of one race,
And both from the self-same mother we draw our breath.
But measureless difference of power divideth us;
For the one is a thing of nought,
But of the other the adamantine firmament
Abideth the unshaken dwelling-place forever.

Nathless, albeit we know not what path of fortune Destiny
hath marked out for us to fare along,
Either in this single day or during the courses of the night
yet in some measure we come near at least to the Immortals
Either in respect of mind or our outward form.

This passage brings out a number of interesting facets of Pindar’s
doctrine. It reiterates Pindar’s belief in the celestial origin
and nature of the soul. It adds new emphasis to his views on the
weakness and transitoriness of man. At present, however, our main
concern is to observe that Pindar still adheres to the anthropo-
morphic conception of the gods, which is everywhere characteristic
of the national Greek religion. The gods are immortal, and stron-
ger than men; but like us, they are children of Earth, the univer-
sal mother, and resemble us in body and mind. The myths interpr-
eted in the Pindaric odes freely represent the gods as subject to

5Nem. VI. 1-8.
6Farnell, Works. I, 191.
those desires and necessities which are inseparable from bodily existence. They partake of food and drink, take pleasure in dance and song, and are by no means exempt from even the lower passions incident to human nature.7

At the same time, Pindar is far from acquiescing in all the grosser features of the traditional anthropomorphism. Sometimes he pointedly ignores whatever portion of a myth he considers unworthy, true to his principle: το δε μη δι φιλτερον σιγμι παμ-παν.8 "But on all that pleaseth not Zeus, let me keep silence utterly."9 At other times he openly protests against certain legends, on the ground that they are irreligious and profane. The current form of the myth of Tantalus made the hero slay his son Pelops and serve his flesh at a banquet given to the Immortals.

From this part of the story Pindar emphatically dissent:

7Adam, p. 116.
8Frag. 88; frag. 81 in Schroeder.
9Farnell, Works, I, 348.
10I. (476 B.C.), 35, 36; 52.
But 'tis seemly for a man to speak
Fair words about the powers divine,
For lesser is then his reproach.
Oh, thou son of Tantalos!
I will tell of thee a tale counter to the tale of old.

But 'tis hard for me to charge
Foul gluttony to one of the Blessed Ones.
I abhor the thought. 11

All we need note here is the fact that when a legend appears to
Pindar to reflect discredit on the gods, he alters it into some-
thing more in harmony with his own religious feelings.

In such ways as these does Pindar seek to purify the tradi-
tional theology of Greece. On its positive side, his teachings
bring into prominence the nobler and more ideal features of the
Homerian pantheon. A chronological analysis of his odes will show
us that he laid special stress on three attributes of the gods
which definitely distinguish them from the frail race of men. He
presents for our reflection the omnipotence, the omniscience, and
the justice of the gods. By the possession of these attributes
the gods are worthy of the reverence, worship and praise of men.
We will, therefore, systematically analyze these attributes as
they appear in the odes of Pindar.

11 Farnell, Works, 1, 4, 5.
Turning to the poet’s earliest work, *Pythian* X (498 B.C.), we find an indication of his life-long attitude to the omnipotence of the gods. He makes an implicit comparison between the power of the gods and the weakness of man; later in the same work he stands in awe at the immense power of the gods. He refuses to conceive of anything which is beyond the divine power:

\[ \text{Apollo, θεός, ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὸν ἄρχα τοὺς δαίμονος ὁρεύτως αὐξείτα.} \]

... θεὸς εἰς ἄθιμων κλάρ.

... ἐμοὶ δὲ θαυμάσαι

τελεσάντων οὐδὲν ποτὲ φαίνεται

ἐμεῖν ἐκιστον. ¹²

'Tis by impulse divine, oh Apollo,
That man's achievement from its beginning to
Its close waxeth sweet.

(Only) a God could be forever free from sorrow of heart.

When the gods have been at work,
Nothing appeareth to me past belief, too wondrous in my eyes. ¹³

Here the poet puts before our eyes the necessity of divine assistance for the success of any human endeavor. This necessity accentuates the wide gap that exists between the power of the gods and the insufficiency of men. The fact that only a god could be fore-

¹² *Pyth.* X. 10, 21, 48-50.
¹³ *Farnell, Works.* I, 140-142.
ver free from anxiety and sorrow of heart serves but to highlight once again the differences between mortals and immortals. By indirect implication we learn of the poet’s high regard for the power of the gods. They are capable of doing anything, so great is their might. Once they decide to exercise their power, the issue is settled; whatever they wish to do becomes an accomplished fact. All this is suggested by the awe and reverence which the poet expresses at the divine omnipotence.

It is interesting to note that the very construction of the phrase which presents Pindar’s awe and reverence at divine power is marked by the confusion one would expect. The thought of the divinity turns Pindar’s phrase from a grammatical construction to a group of words which defy analysis. Such matching of emotion and language is indeed rare. 14

The omnipotence of Zeus comes to the fore in Isthmian V (482 B.C.), a poem written shortly before Pindar entered the mature period of his work. In this short selection he poetically reminds us of the great power of the father of the gods:

14Farnell, Works, II, 219.
Zeus the lord of all.16

In close connection with this section of Isthmian V we should read one of the undated fragments of the poet. It expresses much the same sentiment as does that ode: τι θεός; τὸ πάντα17 “What thing is God? He is the sum of all things.” In this same matter consideration should also be given to another undated fragment which expresses the relationship of the gods to man: θεός δὲ πάντα τεῦχων γοροτὸς καὶ χρῖν δοσὶ διότι φυτεύει.19

Got it is that fashioneth all things for men
And for song begettest he beauty.
(or Begetteth our joy in song).20

We must be extremely careful of our interpretation of these frag-

\[\text{Footnotes:}
\begin{align*}
15 & \text{Isthm. V. 58, 59.} \\
16 & \text{Farnell, Works, I, 271.} \\
17 & \text{Frag. 145; frag. 140 in Schroeder.} \\
18 & \text{Farnell, Works, I, 347.} \\
19 & \text{Frag. 146; frag. 141 in Schroeder.} \\
20 & \text{Farnell, Works, I, 347.}
\end{align*}\]
ments. It is hardly likely that they were intended to suggest the kind of poetical pantheism that they would have expressed in the mouth of Euripides. To Pindar they probably meant no more than that God is the universal cause of all things, i.e., that Zeus is omnipotent. 21

Perhaps the most famous of the poet's sentiments about the divine omnipotence occurs in Pythian II (477/76 B.C.), which was written at the peak of the poet's career. Here the power of the gods is heightened by comparison with a number of things which are the best in their own line. The transcendent character of divine power is thus made more manifest.

All things are brought to their destined end
by God according as he planned,
He whose swiftness passeth the winged eagle in flight
and the dolphin of the sea,
He who hath oftentimes bent the neck of the high-minded,
And to others hath given undying fame. 23

21 Adam, p. 118.
22 Pyth. II. 49-52.
23 Farnell, Works, I, 88.
In this poem Pindar passes from the praises of Hieron to an encomium on the power of god. In this section the poem emphasizes with unmistakable reduplication the power of god. His repetition of θεος is a firm reminder of the omnipotence of the god.24

Pindar never wearies of reminding his readers that the god, because of their omnipotence, are the authors of whatever good or evil happens to mankind. This is especially clear in Pythian I (470 B.C.). Once again the poet looks to the gods with reverence as he recalls that everything desirable in human life is the result of the divine activity.

η εκ θεον γάρ μακανάι πάσαι βροτέαις ἀρεταῖς,
καὶ σοφοὶ καὶ ἁρεσί βιάται περίγλωσσοι τ’ ἐφυν.25

From the Gods come all the means
For the achievement of every excellence;
'Tis they who dower us with wisdom,
Might of hand, and skill of speech.26

Thus it becomes clear that for Pindar the power of the gods was complete. Theirs is not the limited power of the Homeric pantheon.

24Gildersleeve, p. 254.

25Pyth. I. 41, 42.

26Farnell, Works, I, 79.
Their might is such that it causes man to wonder; despite this the
wonder of man is incapable of limiting the power of the gods. 27
Reverence for the divine power is a strongly marked and ever-pre-
sent characteristic of his work; everything must be ascribed to
the gods as its author. 28 Thus, from the foregoing evidence, there
can be little doubt that Pindar held a consistent doctrine of di-
vine omnipotence which he presented on many occasions and in many
different contexts.

We pass now to the second attribute with which Pindar credits
the gods, omniscience. On this point he is especially emphatic.
To bear this out we will consider but three selections from Pin-
dar's work. We will draw our citations from Olympian I (476 B.C.),
Pythian III (474 B.C.), and Pythian IX (474 B.C.).

In Olympian I (476 B.C.) the reference to the omniscience of
the gods follows the typical Pindaric pattern of indirection. He
clarifies some attribute of the gods by mentioning a corresponding
weakness or deficiency in man. Thus he tells us: εἰ δὲ ἔξον ἄνθρ

27Moore, p. 82.
28Jebb, Essays, p. 53.
"But if any man thinketh when he doeth some sin to escape God's eye, he erreth." 30

Here the poet is making two points: the deceitful nature of man and the perfect knowledge of the gods which overcomes man's deceit. It is impossible for man to deceive the gods because one of the intrinsic attributes of the gods is their omniscience. 31

Pindar makes the same point but more directly in Pythian III (474 B.C.). In this citation we note a number of points. Once again the deceit of man is detected by the omniscience of the gods. Besides the fact that the gods are all-knowing, Pindar also reminds us of their truthfulness. He makes explicit reference to Apollo as the god who neither deceives man nor can be deceived by man.

29 Oft., I. 64.
30 Farnell., I., 5.
31 C. A. M. Pinnell, Pindar, Olympian and Pythian Odes (Cambridge, 1879), p. 3.
Even such great infatuation possessed the passionate heart of fair-robed Koronis,
For she slept in the bed of the stranger-guest that came from Arcadia;
Nor did she escape the eye of the watchful God:
But Loxias, the temple-Lord,
Chancing to be in sacrificial Putho, had knowledge of it,
Having persuaded his own judgment,
At the bidding of his most trusty counsellar, his all-knowing mind.
Falsehood never toucheth him, nor can either God or man
by act or counsel hoodwink him;
He at the instant knew of her couching with the stranger Ischus, son of Eilates, and the lawless treachery. 33

Here Pindar expresses the heart of the highest Hellenic faith concerning Apollo. As the apostle of the god of Delphi, the god of the infallible oracle, it is only natural that Pindar should lay special stress on the omniscience of the god. 34

His great devotion to Apollo and his belief in the omniscience of the gods becomes even clearer in Pythian IX (474 B.C.). His conception of the divine omniscience is expressed in extremely

---

32Pyth. III. 25-32.
33Parnell, Works, I, 93.
34Ibid., II, 462.
beautiful and poetic language. The knowledge of the god of light is complete and perfect in every respect. Neither past, nor present, nor future escapes him. The magnificence and extent of the god's knowledge is made awe-inspiring by the poetic examples which Pindar uses to illustrate it.

Thou, Apollo, who knowest the destined end of all things and all the world-ways:
All the spring-leafage that the earth doth send forth,
And the number of the grains of sand in sea and rivers that are buffeted by the waves and blasts.
And thou discernest well
What is to come to pass and whence it will come.36

The awe expressed here for Apollo's mysterious knowledge recalls all the poet's former praise of the god as he is the patron of healing, music, and prophecy.37 After such exalting praise of the

35Pyth. IX. 45-51.
36Farnell, Works, I, 133, 134.
omniscience of the gods, there can be little doubt that Pindar considered this as one of the essential attributes of the divinity. A further sample of evidence on this point is found in a short section from one of Pindar's fragmentary processional songs. This piece is undated but the thought it expresses is certainly consistent with his other statements on the subject of divine omniscience. In this fragment he attributes this all-knowingness to Zeus:

[pýl]λ υμ [τ]δ πάροι(θ[------]) [δ]αίδαλοις ἐκεῖν,

τα δ' α[------] Ζεύς οἴοις. 38

Many a story of past days I might tell, with the embroidery of song
And much else there is that Zeus alone knoweth. 39

Thus, once again it becomes clear that Pindar held a doctrine of divine omniscience; furthermore this doctrine was a consistent principle throughout his life.

The final quality which Pindar attributes to the gods is justice. The poet conceives the gods as manifesting their justice by rewarding virtue and punishing vice, both here and hereafter.

38 *Frag.* 106; *frag.* 104d in Schroeder.

39 *Farnell, Works*, I, 331.
It may also be noted in this connection that the justice of god, when shown in the recompense of virtue, sometimes appears as a kind of Providence watching over the righteous. According to Pindar, the just are the objects of god's special care. In *Nemean X* (468 B.C.) he refers to the gods and heroes as μέλα μὲν ἄνδρῶν δίκαιων περικαθόμενοι. "Caring first and foremost for righteous men." In *Pythian V* (462 B.C.) he tells us that the gods show special affection and guidance for those whom they love.

Δίός τοι νόσος μέγας κυβερνᾶ
dαιμόν' ἄνδρῶν φίλων.

The great mind of God piloteth the course of the guardian spirit of the men he loves.

It is interesting to note that whereas earlier Heraclitus had conceived of Providence as a philosophical principle, embracing in its jurisdiction the realm of nature as well as of mankind, to Pindar it is a narrower, more personal, for that very reason, perhaps,

---

40 Adam, p. 120.
41 *Nem.* X. 54.
43 Ph. V. 122, 123.
more religious conception which is more correctly compared to Plato's idea of divine providence. 45

...The justice of the gods is manifested by the equitable manner in which they deal with both the good and the evil. Sinners and saints alike receive their due at the hands of the gods. In an undated dirge Pindar illustrates both the reward which is awaiting the virtuous and the place of punishment for the wicked. His account of the lot of the good closely resembles the Isles of the Blest which he describes in Olympian II (476 B.C.).

For them in the world below
The sun gleameth brightly in his strength, while 'tis night with us
And in the meadows ruddy with roses the forecourts of their city

46 Frag. 135; frag. 129, 130 in Schroeder.
Are shaded with trees of frankincense,
And heavily laden with fruits of gold.

Some there delight themselves
With feats of horsemanship and the athlete's sport,
Some with the draught-play, others with the music of lyres:
And among them the fair flowers of happiness bloom in full measure.
And a lovely odour is wafted throughout the land unceasingly,
As they mingle all manner of sacrificial spices with far-gleaming
Fire on the altars of the gods.

From the other region sluggish rivers of murky night
Belch forth gloom that hath no ending.47

Pindar may be said to be the father of eschatologic poetry.
The foregoing fragment and its counterpart in Olympian II are not only great poetic achievements, but landmarks in the history of religion. In them he proclaims a new theory concerning the moral government of the world: namely, that a blessed state of happiness can be secured in the next world by righteousness alone. Because of the justice of the gods and their power the virtuous man can look forward to a future state of bliss, while the wicked are doomed to future punishment. This is clearly his mind in these citations.48

There are numerous passages in which the poet expands on the

47Farnell, Works, I, 333, 334.
48Ibid., 338.
divine justice in the punishment of sinners. In general, however, the poet contemplates with more satisfaction the rewards of virtue. In Olympian VIII (460 B.C.) Pindar calls to our attention the fact that the gods are only too eager to answer the prayers of the virtuous. ἡ γὰρ ἕνα τὸ πρὸς χάριν ἐσεβίας ἀνθρώπων λῆμνος.

"Fulfilment (of hopes) is achieved by prayers in reward for piety and reverence." This is but a re-statement of his sentiment that the gods are the cause of all that is good in human life.

The only addition is his stress on the fact that many of the desirable things in life come from the all-just gods as a reward for piety and reverence.

The same thought is recorded in Isthmian III (476/73 B.C.). He tells again that all of the wonderful aspects of man's lot find their source in the divinity. Divine justice renders them to man as a fitting reward for the reverence, praise, and piety shown to the gods.

49 Pyth. III (474 B.C.) recalls how Apollo punished Coronis for her unfaithfulness to him. Pyth. II (477 B.C.) 21-41 shows the wrath of Zeus against Ixion for his lustful attempts on Hera.

50 Parnell, Works, I, 41.

51 Campbell, p. 178.
But all the high excellence that attendeth mortal men
Hath its source in thee, God!
And of those who reverence thee the prosperity hath longer life.  

The willingness of the gods to reward virtue and piety is apparent.

It would seem that Pindar's purpose here is to remind man that
reverence for the gods is an excellent method of insuring present
prosperity. Once more this is but an indirect illustration of the
justice of the gods and the weakness of man who is absolutely un-
able to provide for his future prosperity.  

This evidence, therefore, shows that Pindar held a non-
fluctuating doctrine of justice among the gods throughout his en-
tire poetic career. He was impressed by this attribute of the
divinity and therefore expressed it in highly lyrical poetry.

It is clear that Pindar ascribed the attributes of omnipotence,
ogniscience, and justice to the gods. It is equally clear that his

53 Isth. III. 4-6.
54 Farnell, Works, I, 252.
p. 52.
doctrine on the nature of the gods remained consistent throughout
his life. There is no contradiction or substantial change of po-
sition in any phase of the poet's theological speculation.

We turn now to the final aspect of Pindar's views on the gods,
viz., his personification and deification of certain universal
forces in human life. Our intention in this section is to indi-
cate Pindar's general tendency in this regard. We wish to show
that his spirit was of such a religious character that all through
his life he endowed certain abstract qualities with a distinctly
religious character.56

We shall call these qualities essences, to distinguish them
from the personal beings who make up the Pindaric pantheon.57
They are rightly called essences, for they always possess a cha-
racteristic nature which is easily understood but not always easy
to describe.

These essences are not fictitious characters but realities of
timeless significance. With the Greeks of archaic times the re-

56 Campbell, p. 173.

57 The term "essence" to describe these impersonal qualities
was first used by Fraenkel, Dichtung, pp. 613, 614.
vergence with which men approach these powers assumes religious forms. Being super-personal life forces, these essences belong both to earth and to heaven. They are so natural that we can wholly understand them, and yet they possess a depth that surpasses anything in material nature. The activity and originality of Pindar in regard to these essences is truly amazing. He has always something new to predicate about them; all his statements concerning them carry conviction and deep religious belief.58

One of the earliest examples of this personifying tendency in Pindar is Nemean VII (493/485). A young man, Sogenes, whose thought is still busy with childish dreams, has won a victory in the pentathlon. Though hardly as yet taking his place in the world, he has already gained wide renown, thanks to his inborn qualities. So the poet in the opening lines of this victory ode turns with grateful reverence to the essence of birth, Eleithyia, which imparts to every youth, together with his existence his own peculiar gifts and thus contributes to determining his lot in life.

58 Ibid.
Oh, Goddess of child-birth,
Thou that art enthroned with the deep-minded Fates;
Daughter of mighty Hera and parent of all child-life,
Hearken to our voice!

Thanks to thy aid,
Sosgenes, Thearion's son, elect among men for his prowess
Is glorified by song as of fair renown
Among combatants in the five-fold contest. 60

The essences cannot be individualized for they have their
meaning only in the structure of the whole which is life. It is
only in this structure that the essence of birth which is hymned
in our present example can be understood. 61

Reverence for the Graces is continually present to the mind
of the poet. Originally nature goddesses of springtime, they had
become the embodiment of all that cheers and soothes the lot of men
--associated with all genial powers, above all with the power of

59Hes. VII, 1, 2; 6-8.
60Parnell, Works, I, 198.
61Fraenkel, Dichtung, p. 615.
song. Indeed it may well be said that the poems of Pindar burn bright with the presence and praises of the Graces. 62

Pindar makes explicit reference to the Graces in a number of places. 63 The two selections which interest us most are in Olympian XIV (488 B.C.) and Olympian IX (468 B.C.). A consideration of the poet’s sentiments with regard to the Graces will give us a clear insight into his method and consistency with regard to the essences. Here too we may note the extremely dynamic character of the essences. The Pindaric essences are not bloodless allegories, which drag themselves with weary steps across a wooden stage. They are forever in our midst; they definitely affect us. That this is the case is apparent from Pindar’s notion of the Graces. 64

In Olympian XIV Pindar reminds us of the divine and human aspects of the essences; he states that the Graces are an essential part for even the activity of the gods. He reminds us that the Graces bring the good and sweet gifts of the gods to mortal

62 Campbell, p. 173.
63 01. XIV (488 B.C.) 1-9; Isth. V (479 B.C.) 21; Pyth. IX (474 B.C.) 1; 01. IX (468 B.C.) 25-29; 01. VII (464 B.C.) 1-14.
64 Fraenkel, Dichtung, p. 616.
men:

καφισίων βούτων λαχογοι ταί τέ ναίετε καλλίπωλον ἔδραν,
δελπαράς ἀδίδιμοι βασιλείας
χάριτες Ἐρχομένοι, παλαίγόνων Μινυάν ἐπίσκοποι,
κλῦτ’, ἐπεὶ εὐχομαί· σὺν γὰρ ὄμιν τά τε περινά καὶ
τὰ γλυκέα γίνεται πάντα βροτοίς
εἰ σοφός, εἰ καλός, εἰ τίς ἄγαλδος ἀνήρ.
οὔτε γὰρ θεοὶ σεμνὰν χαρίτων ἄτερ
κοιρανεύοντι χοροῦς οὔτε δαίτας.65

Ye Goddesses of Grace,
Queen of rich Erethemenos and themes of many a song,
Ye whose portion are the waters of Kephisos,
And your home the fair-horsed plain,
Ye guardians of the Minuai of ancient birth—Hempen, for I pray!
For 'tis only with your aid that all delightful, all sweet
things are brought to bloom for mortals,
Whatever gifts a man hath, wisdom or beauty or radiant life.
For not even the Gods can order their dances or their feasts
without the Graces.66

The essences thus become mediators between man and the great
personal gods; mediators who seldom merit to have altars of their
own, but whom, nevertheless, one should approach in pious rever-
ence.67

In the first strophe, the Graces are joint presiding presences;
in the second, they descend to touch the particular occasion and

6501. XIV. 1-9.
66Farnell, Works, I, 72.
67Fraenkel, Dichtung, 617.
moment and, in so doing acquire separate identities. Their presence is personified harmonious order; Pindar feels this order in
the pleasant stillness of the ancient city where the Graces dwell. At last this harmony is fully seen as a divine principle, forever
present in the beauty of the gods' pure being. Still these personified essences are more than an attendant tone; they are the
completion and actuality itself of right and happy things, and come nearer being principles achieved and expressed in real form.
Thus they accompany Apollo's singing as the fact of its perfection, are present in the gods' entirely beautiful life, and their cele-
bration of Zeus' power is the actuality of his lucid order. 68

Exactly the same method of personification, the same reverence and the same dynamic character is attributed to the Graces in
Olympian IX (468 B.C.). In this ode written toward the latter part of Pindar's poetic career the Graces are again treated as essences
which have profound influence on human life. They are once again the mediators through whose hands pass all the values which man
knows and possesses:

68Finley, Pindar, p. 79.
If with any god-given skill of hand
I work this choice garden of the Graces,
(I will waft these tidings through all Hellas.)
For 'tis the Graces that endow us with all the fair things of life;
and valour and wisdom come to men in accordance with heaven's will.\\nel
Thus, it is very clear that twenty years after the composition of
Olympian XIV (488 B.C.) Pindar is still echoing the same senti-
ments concerning the Graces. He has personified the spirit of art
and beauty and made it something more than human but less than
strictly divine. The Graces thus become a true essence, dynamic
and operative in both human and divine activity.\\nel
Our final example of Pindar's personifying activity is found
in his last ode, Pythian VIII (446 B.C.). In this piece he offers
a beautiful personification of one of the gentler virtues, Hesy-

69 Farnell, Works, I, 48.
70 A useful tabulation of all of Pindar's references to the
Graces and their activity can be found in J.B. Bury, The Nemean
Odes of Pindar, pp. 241-244.
chia, the essence of tranquillity. This personification is original and bold; at the same time it shows Pindar’s relation to contemporary historical events. In this later period of his life the stage was being set for the Peloponnesian War by the increased imperialism of Athens. This personification and invocation to Hesychia is but a protest against the policy of Athens. This essence is not peace at any price; but rather an armed peace, a warrior goddess like Athena, guarding law and order, inspiring wise counsels, whom the powers of evil will attack to their shame and loss.

ϕιλάφρον Ἰουχία, Δίκαιος
δοκοκοπολιθυγατερ,
βουλὰν τε καὶ πολέμων
ἐχοίσα κλαίδας ὑπερτάτας,
Ποιητικούν τιμᾶν Ἀριστομένει δέσκευ
τὸ γὰρ τὸ μαλαδίκον ἔρειται τε καὶ παθέγν ὁμίος
ἐπίστορει καιρὸν σὺν ἀπεκεῖ.
τὸ δ’, ὅποταν τις ἀμείλικον
καρδία κότον ἐνελάδη
τραχία ὑπομενένων
ὑπανιδείνοισα θράτει τιθεῖς
ὑβρίν ἐν ἀντλψ. 75

72Grace H. Macurdy, The Quality of Mercy (New Haven, 1940), p. 70
73Finley, Thucydides, pp. 7-35.
74Farnell, Works, I, 130.
75Pyth. VIII, 1-12.
Oh, loving-hearted Peace, daughter of Justice,
Sovereign-power of cities, holding
in thy hands the master-keys of counsels and of wars,
Welcome this rite of honour for Aristomenes on his Pythian victory:
For thou knowest with unerring timeliness how to do
the deeds of gentleness and to gather her fruits withal;
But at other times, when a man provoketh his heart to pitiless rage,
Sternly thou dost confront the might of the evil-minded,
and whelmest wrong in the deep sea.76

The theme and mood of Pythian VIII reflect Pindar's reaction
to the contemporary political situation. His aristocratic symp-
pathies and his Theban patriotism turned him against Athens, when
Athens turned against Greece. "Peace" or the "Peaceful life", is
a conservative, aristocratic slogan: its meaning is preservation
of the status quo both in the internal constitution of cities,
and in international relations. It therefore distils the essence
of the old order which already was being challenged by Athens.77

These examples, therefore, heighten and clarify what may de-
initely be called a very substantial portion of Pindar's views
on the gods. His proneness to personify and divinize abstract and
immaterial ideas clarifies the deeply religious attitude of the

76 Farnell, Works, I, 126.
77 Brown, "Pindar", 2, 3.
All religious poetry deals with the attributes and actions of the godhead, and its appeal depends partly on how it presents these attributes and actions to us, and on what relations they involve between god and man. The attributes of the divine nature that impress Pindar most deeply are its incalculable power that brings into strong relief our weakness and dependence on divine help, its complete and all-perfect omniscience, and its all-pervading justice. These reflections are the chief source for him of that feeling of awe that is rightly regarded as the source of his high religious poetry. 79

78 A rather complete catalogue of Pindar's numerous personifications can be found in Parnell, Works, II, 467.

79 Ibid., 468.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After this lengthy and somewhat tedious marshalling of evidence, we now can view the matter as a unified whole. It is our intention in this short chapter to correlate the main Pindaric doctrines in the previous pages. From this synthesis it will be clear that Pindar held a consistent set of views and doctrines concerning both man and the gods. This survey will, we hope, offer a sufficient refutation to all those who question Pindar’s views and their consistency.

In the first place, let us summarize and correlate the main points of our foregoing chapters. We began our study of Pindar’s philosophy of life with a systematic analysis of his notion of ἰπεταδ. This concept is the central facet, the very heart of his philosophy. It is the pivot around which swing all the other phases of his doctrine. In a chronological treatment of this concept in Pindar two consistent factors were manifested. In the first place, ἰπεταδ expresses all that is excellent in human life—
physical, cultural, intellectual, and moral excellence. It includes all that is desirable or praiseworthy in human existence. It is, as it were, that which makes man's life worth living. Its second aspect is its inborn character. It is an aristocratic concept; therefore the main source of ἀρετή is aristocratic origin. Heredity along with the will of the gods plays the main role in determining the ἀρετή and character of any individual; according to Pindar, however, heredity seems to be the main contributing factor of ἀρετή.

Our analysis of ἀρετή led quite naturally to a further inquiry into man's essential nature. Once again a chronological study of basic Pindaric texts led to an extremely consistent and logical conclusion on the essentially ephemeral character of man's worldly life and lot. Because the ἀρετή of man is not completely in his control but depends on so many other extrinsic factors—nature, the gods, other free agents—man has no guarantee of his continued prosperity. He is essentially a creature of a day, always subject to change of fortune. That this is Pindar's consistent, considered, and mature view on the nature of man is clear from the chronological consideration of his poems. From the beginning to the end of his poetic career, he echoes and re-echoes...
this doctrine, one of the clearest and most consistent aspects of his views on the life of man.

The next facet of Pindar's thought which merited our consideration was Ἰβρικ. This is the condition in which man consciously and willfully displays his changing nature. In time of prosperity man forgets all the relationships which make up his prosperity; he comes to think of himself as the true cause and sustainer of his ἀρετή and ὅλος. Continued success and good fortune ensnare man; he forgets his essentially ephemeral nature and conceives himself as more than mortal—as on a par with the gods. This is Ἰβρικ in one form or another. We are constantly meeting this notion of Ἰβρικ or sin in the works of Pindar. He frequently endeavors to point out the pitfalls of Ἰβρικ. His constant advice, as a chronological study of his poems shows, is to avoid excess and to recall that man's lot is not in his control.

At this point we should note that both ἀρετή and Ἰβρικ are considered by Pindar in a context of morality. Ἀρετή is more than abstract virtue or excellence; it expresses the sum total of actualized excellence in particular men who are confronted with a particular and concrete set of circumstances. It is a dynamic concept manifesting itself in actions of proven worth and excellence.
It is only the really good man who is possessed of ἀρετῶ. Because of Pindar's concept of heredity and his other limitations on ἀρετῶ it is only the true aristocrat who can and does possess ἀρετῶ. The case is the same with Ἀρετῆς. It does not express a sin or presumption in any general sense; rather it designates sin in the concrete. It expresses the attempt of a particular man in specific circumstances and with particular capabilities to overshoot the limits of these capabilities and to aspire to be something which he is not and never can be. Once again this concept of Ἀρετῆς expresses a dynamic order, an order manifested in presumptuous and sinful actions.

The result of this discussion is the fact that this dynamic order is a moral order, a system of human conduct guided by moral principle. This principle is divine justice. At the foundation of this divine justice is another doctrine which provides for its complete and perfect functioning. This is Pindar's doctrine of human immortality, which provides the perfect sanction necessary for the operation of divine justice. The teaching on human immortality is both clear and consistent in Pindar. It appears early and late, in major and minor works; some of his most beautiful and impressive lines are those which describe the future bliss of the
Blessed. This doctrine clarifies for us the dynamic moral order whose outstanding aspects are ἀγαθόν and Ἢβρις. Belief in immortality thus serves as the foundation of all Pindar's views on the life of man and as the necessary connecting link to Pindar's views on the gods.

Pindar's theology is marked by the traditional Greek anthropomorphism. Man and the gods are similar in many ways: both are intelligent, free beings with both spiritual and bodily needs and desires. An infinite chasm, however, separates man and the gods. The gods are by no means ephemeral and transitory as are men; furthermore the gods can and do guarantee their own continued happiness. Because the gods are so different from man, they are marked by a number of attributes which characterize them and manifest their superiority to man. They have infinite power, complete and all-pervading knowledge, and perfect distributive justice.

These three attributes which Pindar ascribes to the gods necessarily relate the gods to the dynamic moral order of human conduct. Because of these qualities the gods are the efficient and final cause of the entirety of human life; by their justice they provide an adequate and complete sanction for the moral order. Neither ἀγαθόν nor Ἢβρις goes without recompense. Both the good
and the evil, the proud and the humble, the just and the unjust receive their due at the hands of the gods. Further, because man is immortal, divine justice can execute the very ultimate in reward and punishment.

Certainly there can be little doubt that these are Pindar’s views on the gods. The entire corpus Pindaricum is marked by a spirit of religious awe and reverence which is almost unparalleled in Greek literature. In nearly every poem penned by this sublime poet there is a reference to one or other of the main attributes which he ascribes to the gods. The chronological study of his works definitely proves that he considered the gods as all-powerful, all-just, and all-knowing. These concepts and doctrines about the gods are found consistently throughout his works. Certainly, more than a mere denial of consistency is needed to prove the inconsistency of Pindar with regard to his ethical and theological statements.

The final portion of evidence which we offered in the foregoing chapters to show the consistency of Pindar’s religious and ethical views was his tendency to personify and divinize the essences. The texts here showed a definite and uniform inclination to personify abstract ideas and give them a dynamic function
in human life. There was a twofold purpose for presenting this inclination of the poet. In the first place we wished to show another aspect of his consistency throughout his life. In the second place this tendency served to highlight the deeply religious and philosophical nature of Pindar.

We might, therefore, summarize Pindar's ethical and religious views as follows: His basic concept is that of the dynamic moral quality of human conduct. In this order ἄρετα is central; it is manifested by deeds of proven worth. In this dynamic scheme men also show their ephemeral nature by their actions--change and its effects prove that man is a creature of a day. Despite man's weakness, however, there is something divine in him, the seed of immortality. Because man is immortal, the gods, whose existence Pindar never questions, have a definite and essential place within the ambit of the moral order. They are not the gods of the deists who have no relation to man and his activities. Never this, they are rather the omnipotent, omniscient, all just beings who provide all that is good for man in this life and a perfect sanction for the next life. This is the dynamic unity of ethical and religious teachings which Pindar presents to us in his poems. This is the philosophy of life of Pindar.
Turning briefly now to the critics of Pindar, Gilbert Norwood, Gilbert Murray, Professor Livingstone, and others, we will offer a few words in rebuttal. The only member of the opposition who offers any substantial analysis or evidence for his position is Gil-Norwood. His analysis, unfortunately, overlooks the historico-chronological technique which we have used throughout the preceding pages. He limits himself to uncovering apparent contradictions within particular odes; he makes no study of Pindar's doctrine from period to period of his poetic career. Furthermore he has failed to analyze the poems in their historical context. For these reasons he must necessarily see Pindar's doctrine as a hodge-podge lacking form, originality, and above all, consistency. It should be noted that our analysis includes the very elements which Professor Norwood omits. We have placed Pindar in a historical context; we have seen his work as the reaction and protest of an aristocrat to current political, intellectual, artistic, and historic factors. We have isolated the various facets of his doctrine and

1 Cf. Norwood Pindar, pp. 22-72 for the scanty evidence which Norwood advances against a consistency philosophy of life in Pindar.

2 Brown, "Pindar," TAPA, LXXXII, 10. Professor Brown claims that, because Norwood has refused to consider Pindar's thought as a historical process, he must necessarily see it as only chaotic.
shown their recurrence in every period of Pindar's life; we have revealed the interdependence and inter-relation of the various facets of his ethical and theological views. In short we have provided more than adequate evidence of an original, consistent, philosophy of life in Pindar. These remarks should be sufficient to show the invalidity of Professor Norwood's criticism of Pindar. The same is true of the other critics. They all hold much the same arguments against Pindar. They do so, however, without even the evidence which Professor Norwood provides. Until some proof is forthcoming for their assertions, we can only offer our analysis and conclusions as an indication of a consistent philosophy of life in Pindar.

In conclusion, let us reiterate that as Pindar approached old age he did not alter his outlook on life in any essential point. He took a basic position and set of ethical and theological views at the beginning of his poetic career; he kept these views constant throughout his life. He lived and died according to the aristocratic ideal which was his philosophy of life. Proof of this we have—in the eloquence and sublimity of his immortal odes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES


-----. Pindar, the Nemean and Isthmian Odes. Edited with notes explanatory and critical, introductions and introductory essays by C.A.M. Fennell. Cambridge, 1883


II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS


Denniston, J.D.; Page, Denny; Bailey, Cyril, eds. *Greek Poetry and Life*. Oxford, 1936.


Farnell, George, S. *Greek Lyric Poetry*. With prefatory articles, introductory matter, and commentary. London, 1891.


Greene, William Chase. Moira, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought. Cambridge, Mass., 1944.


Macurdy, Grace Helen, The Quality of Mercy. New Haven, 1940.


**B. ARTICLES**


-----. "Pindar, Pythian II," AJP, LXII (July, 1941), 340-343.


-----. "Pindar, Nemean VII," AJP, LXIV (July, 1943), 325, 326.


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


The thesis submitted by Francis Joseph Houdek, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 16, 1959
Date

Raymond V. Scholler, S.J.
Signature of Adviser