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THE ANCIENT GRIEF

A Study of Pindar, Fragment 133 (Bergk), 127 (Bowra)

THE fragment with which this article deals is so interesting in itself, so well authenticated and preserved, and so important for the study of important phenomena in the religious life of Greece, that no apology is needed for submitting it to the closest possible analysis. I begin therefore by printing the text in full, with critical notes, the latter to avoid subsequent mention of the few emendations which have been necessary to restore the exact wording. It has come down to us in one source, the *Meno* of Plato, 81 B.C., and therefore depends upon the good manuscripts of Plato himself and the inferior tradition of Stobaios, *floril.* xliii. 112, which excerpts about a Stephanus page of the *Meno*, without contributing anything of value to the textual criticism of the poem.

οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὺς ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳι φέτει
ἀνδιδῶι ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίαι τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἀγνοὶ πρὸς
ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

οἷσι γὰρ ὃν Plato, *emend.* Boeckh: *furt.* οἷσί κε. δέξεται *uel* δέξηται
Plat.: δέξηται Stob. ἐς Stob.: εἰς τὸ(ν) Plat. ψυχὰς *cod. W.*: ψυχὰν
ceteri: ψυχὰ Stob. τᾶν] τῶν *W.*

I omit merely orthographical variants. The word καλέονται being trisyllabic, according to the scansion generally adopted and probably correct, some editors of Pindar prefer to write καλεῦνται, but this Ionic form is unnecessary here. The metre is the kind which it used to be the fashion to call dactylo-epitritic, and perfectly simple, for choral lyric. The attribution to Pindar, though not vouched for in so many words by Plato, is practically certain. He says, speaking of the doctrine of reincarnation, that it is

taught by the most thoughtful of the priests and priestesses (τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται λόγον οἷσις τ' εἶναι διδόναι), and by poet-prophets (τῶν ποιητῶν ὅσοι θεοὶ εἰσιν), including Pindar. Then, after inviting Menon to examine what they say and see if it is true, he at once cites the above passage, thoroughly Pindaric in style and metre and therefore generally attributed to the one poet whom Plato has named. From what poem it comes, he does not tell us; the usual assumption that it is part of a *threnos* is reasonable enough, although we shall later find reason to doubt the conjecture, made by Boeckh and Lübbert and accepted by Dieterich,¹ that it was composed for the funeral of Gelon.

What Plato does clearly imply is the agreement of the passage with some kind of organized and developed theology, the teaching of an enlightened clergy, whether belonging or not to any State cult, who are ready and willing to give a rational explanation, λόγον, of their practices. Our chief business will be to decide whether or not these theologians are Orphics, and in order to do this it is well to begin by deciding exactly what the passage means. For the most part it is very clear. As many as fulfil a certain condition, Persephone 'sends up their souls again in the ninth year to the sun above;² and from them arise right noble kings, also men swift and strong and pre-eminent in wisdom.³ And thereafter they are called holy heroes in the mouths of men'. The question is, what condition they must fulfil and who they are that fulfil it. Pindar's language here is simple enough, but it has been so strangely misunderstood that we must spend some time in examining it.

¹ *Nekyia*, p. 109.

² This need mean no more than 'the light of the sun in the world above them', cf. the use of ἄνω of this world from the point of view of dwellers in Hades, Aristoph. *Frogs*, 424. It may allude to some such doctrine as that of frag. 129. 1 (= 114), that the sun shines among the blessed dead (so Stallbaum-Wohlrab on Plato, loc. cit.), but this should not be assumed till we know whether the two passages refer to the same eschatology.

³ Perhaps poetry, as so often in Pindar, but not necessarily.

Clearly, he is speaking of more than one class of persons, for the word κείνων implies a οὔτοι or its equivalent in the lost context. This need not detain us long; as in *Ol.* ii. 57 sqq. he contrasts the wicked and the righteous, so here he probably dealt with those who do not and those who do merit a happy reincarnation with a blessed immortality to follow it. We should like to know what he said of the others, but must interpret as well as we can without that help. The sentence we have may be complete at the beginning, a relative clause with the antecedent postponed (οἷσις . . . κείνων), if we suppose that where Plato's γάρ stands, to connect the quotation with what precedes in his own text, the original had something like Boeckh's Δέ, or it may lack a word or two and the syllable the metre calls for be, as I have tentatively suggested, κε, represented by Plato's ἄν. Neither supposition makes any serious difference to the meaning. The favoured ones are those at whose hands Persephone accepts ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος, and it is here that the difficulty of interpretation arises and shows itself in an amazing number of translations and explanations which avoid the issue more or less candidly. ποινὰν is simple enough, for it always means a recompense of some sort in Pindar, though generally keeping close to its proper sense of *wergelt*; but for πένθεος we are offered a choice of interpretations, most of them not merely wrong but, in my opinion, impossible. The Didot Latin version of Plato (Marsilio Ficino, revised by Hirschig) has *antiquae miseriae*. Stallbaum, tacitly approved by Wohlrab, who copies his note without modification or comment, says, 'Est πένθος non tam luctus quam id quod luctum efficit, h.e., culpa in mortali corpore olim contracta'. Of recent commentators on the fragment itself, Rohde¹ turns the word by *Schuld*, though his footnote hedges somewhat: 'Ein πένθος kann diese Schuld nur genannt werden, insofern die Empfängerin der Busse selbst als . . . in Leid gestürzt angesehen wird,' and adds that this sense is

¹ *Psyche*, ii, p. 208. So also Dieterich, op. cit., p. 110, 'die Schuld'.

'auffallend'. Sandys, in the Loeb edition, translates 'exact the penalty of their pristine woe', thus adding a hopelessly wrong interpretation of *δέξεται* and, as I hope to show, misapplying *πένθος* badly. Farnell renders it 'ancient guilt'. The only edition of Pindar I have so far consulted which honestly faces the question of what the word means is that of von Christ, who says briefly, 'i.e., luctus quem cognatis interfecti intulerunt', but does not attempt any explanation of how that sense is applicable here. I propose to begin by asking what *πένθος* means, in Greek literature generally and in Pindar especially, before going on to the exegesis of this line.

The dictionaries, and especially the latest edition of Liddell and Scott, collect numerous examples from writers of various ages, beginning with Homer. The upshot of their researches is that the word is usually subjective, the grief which some one feels at a serious misfortune. Thus, in *l* 3, the Achaian chiefs feel it because a spirit of panic, *φύζα*, is spreading through their army as a result of the Trojans daring to face them in the open for a whole day and even showing signs of taking the offensive: *πένθει δ' ἀτλήτῳ βεβολήατο πάντες ἄριστοι*. In this sense it differs little in meaning from *ἄχος*, for, *ibid.* 9, Agamemnon is *ἄχει μεγάλῳ βεβλημένος* at the same situation. But even in Homer the word is beginning to specialize in the direction of grief caused by the death of a friend or kinsman, as *Λ* 249, where Koon feels *κρατερόν πένθος* at the death of his brother. This becomes and remains the commonest sense, and extends to include the outward signs of grief, or mourning. Quite rarely, it signifies an event causing grief, a bitter or deadly misfortune, as in Herodotus, *iii.* 14. 12, where the condition of an old boon companion reduced suddenly from wealth to literal beggary is called *τὸ τοῦ ἐταίρου πένθος*. Once or twice, as Soph. *Ai.* 615, it means a person over whom his friends grieve, much as *μῖσος* can signify one who is hated; Aias, instead of being the glory of his comrades, *φίλοις μέγα πένθος ἡύρηται*, because he is mad.

Once or twice also, though hardly in the classical period, it signifies a corpse, an easy derivation from the sense of mourning. It is therefore to be expected that in any classical author it will have a subjective rather than an objective meaning, a feeling of grief rather than a cause for it, and rather likelier than not that this grief will be connected with a death in the immediate circle of the one who feels it.

If we search Pindar this is exactly what we find, neglecting this passage. In *Ol.* *ii.* 23 the daughters of Kadmos *ἐπαθον μεγάλα, πένθος δ' ἐπιτνεν βαρὺ κρεσσόνων πρὸς ἀγαθῶν*. Every one of their misfortunes or griefs involved a death, whether of Semele, Aktaion, Pentheus or the children of Ino. In *Nem.* *x.* 76, Polydeukes, mourning over his slain brother, cries to Zeus, *τίς δὴ λύσις ἔσσεται πένθειων*; In *Isth.* *vii* (*vi*), 37, speaking of his own grief for Strepsiadēs' death in battle, Pindar says *ἔτλαν δὲ πένθος οὐ φατόν*. In the next ode, *viii* (*vii*), 6, the situation is not clear, but misfortune of some sort has taken place, and the poet's advice is *ἐκ μεγάλων δὲ πένθειων λυθέντες, μήτ' ἐν ὀρφανίαι πέσωμεν στεφάνων μήτε κάδεα θεράπτει*, where the use of *κάδεα* suggests strongly that the misfortunes he would have forgotten, whether the Persian menace or the inglorious part played by Thebes or some other trouble, either actually involved the deaths of those near to Pindar and his friends or at least such sorrow as men might feel for a like disaster. Finally, at the end of what we have left of the fourth Paean, Euxantios, in Plutarch's quotation of the passage, says, *πένθειων δ' οὐκ ἔλαχον οὐδὲ στασιῶν*, and assuming that *πένθειων* occurred at all, apparently means that he has had neither to quarrel or fight with any one else nor mourn the loss in such frays of his own friends.¹

It follows then that the natural sense to look for is 'grief', especially grief at a death, while 'cause of grief',

¹ For the metrical difficulties and proposed emendations (Plutarch certainly was quoting loosely) cf. the recent critical editions, as that of C. M. Bowra.

though no doubt possible, is not proved for Pindar. In other words, πένθος is pretty certainly an emotion felt by some one, and if we can show that the emotion is caused by the death of a near friend or relative, so much the more characteristically Pindaric. Now, it is doubtless true that sin may cause grief, and bitter grief at that, whether in the form of repentance on the sinner's part or resentment from the one sinned against; but apart from the positive fact that Greek uses words of the kin of μετανοεῖν in the one case, νημεσᾶν in the other, there is the negative fact that I can find no single instance to justify an interpretation such as Stallbaum's (cited above), or that in Farnell's comment,¹ 'we may suppose that Pindar uses a milder and semi-euphemistic word for guilt, so as to spare the feelings of the kinsmen of the dead'. We must, therefore, fall back on the meaning 'grief', 'sorrow', or, much less likely, 'cause of grief', and in either case, the implication that the grief was occasioned by a death would be welcome.

This grief, then, must have been felt either by Persephone herself or by those whose souls she sends up again to the sunlight. That the latter sense is inadmissible is clear. They pay her some kind of compensation; but no one is expected to pay for feeling grief, but only to be compensated for it by whoever is the cause of it. The grief, then, is the goddess's, and it befell her long ago. How long the adjective does not tell us, for in Pindar, as elsewhere, a person or thing may be παλαιός and an event said to have occurred πάλαι with reference to almost any space of time not very short, including the lifetime, even the recent lifetime, of the person in question. We need not, however, suppose too short a space of time when we are dealing with an immortal; Persephone's grief may be as old as mankind, or older. It is simply a question of when and by whom she can have been grieved.

We may begin by excluding, what we should at once

¹ Farnell, *The Works of Pindar*, vol. ii (Macmillan, 1932), p. 435.

have to consider if we were dealing with a Christian eschatologist, the notion that the persons spoken of may have grieved her in their lifetime on earth by their sins and impurities (if any cult of Pindar's day clearly distinguished the two). In Greek theological thought we may look in vain for any equivalent of the Christian idea that the sinner, by his wickedness, crucifies Christ once more,¹ or indeed that man can in any way grieve a divine being (he may of course make him angry) by any conduct, however evil. There are indeed times when a man causes bereavement, and therefore grief, to a god by killing one of his mortal sons, and the god, if he is as hot-tempered as Ares,² may desire vengeance; but the more reasonable deities, such as Zeus,³ do not feel much personal indignation against the doers of such deeds. Or a deity may pity the sufferings of men, like Hera when she sees the Greeks dying of the plague.⁴ But none of these things is possible in the case of Persephone, who has no mortal children for any man to kill in battle, and is not concerned with the good or ill fortunes of men on earth; they come under her charge when they die, not before. We must, therefore, look to her personal history for the cause of her grief.

Two events stand out in her myths as likely causes of sorrow. One is of course her rape by Hades. But even if we allow that this would naturally be called a πένθος, no man had anything whatsoever to do with it from first to last; one or two offended and several were kind to Demeter in her wanderings, but Persephone was out of their reach. No human soul could be expected to make requital to the goddess for what she underwent then. Remains therefore only one possibility, the death of her son, Dionysos or Zagreus, at the hands of the Titans. That this was a πένθος in the fullest possible sense, and also

¹ Hebrews, vi. 6.

² O 113, at the death of Askalaphos; cf. the servitude of Kadmos, commented upon below, p. 89.

³ On the death of Sarpedon, 431 sqq.

⁴ A 56.

παλαιόν, are facts so evident as to need no proof; indeed the one thing which I personally find puzzling about the whole phrase is that any one acquainted with Greek mythology should ever have interpreted it in any other way. But responsibility for this crime descends, in a measure, to the human race, for that is sprung from the ashes of the Titans. In other words, we have in this early document an allusion to Orphic theology with its tenet of original sin, and the priests and priestesses with whom Pindar is classed by Plato are definitely Orphics. Whether Plato meant to exclude Pythagoreans or not I do not know, but think it rather unlikely; however, with regard to those persons whose views Pindar echoes in this passage, I would venture to say with some positiveness that they were Orphics and nothing else.

But first, before discussing the typically Orphic and non-Pythagorean nature of this piece of eschatology, it is necessary to justify myself for speaking of Dionysos, still more of Zagreus, in such a context. A recent dissertation is very emphatic that the earlier Orphic-Pythagorean votaries had nothing to do with Dionysos,¹ and supposes that both he and Zagreus were introduced by Onomakritos in the *Τελεταί* which he is said to have written. In a book eminently sensible and thoughtful, Mr. W. K. C. Guthrie² argues for the Cretan origin of Zagreus and points out that the earliest evidence we have for the murdered son of Persephone and Zeus bearing that name is in Nonnos, the abnormal character of whose doctrine in all matters is familiar to any one stout-hearted enough to have waded through his interminable poem. The former proposition I frankly think a paradox, but am willing to leave Mr. Guthrie to deal with it. For my own part I would rather think of the Apolline elements in Orpheus as due to Delphic propaganda, and that by no

¹ A. Krueger, *Quaestiones Orphicae* (Halle, 1934), p. 36, 'Orphico-Pythagorei sexto saeculo cultum Bacchi non receperunt, quare in 'ἱερῷ λόγῳ omissus est': p. 42 sqq., his chapter *de Τελεταῖς Onomacriti*.

² *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (Methuen, 1935), p. 113 sqq.

means early, or to confusion with Pythagoreanism. It is to be noted that the most famous supposedly early reference, indeed the only one, to Orpheus as in any sense an opponent of Dionysos or his worship is very doubtful. It is listed as frag. 22 of Aeschylus by Nauck,¹ and it goes back to Eratosthenes. The epitome which we call pseudo-Eratosthenes' *Katasterismoi*² has an elaborate tale to the effect that Orpheus neglected Dionysos and considered Helios-Apollo the greatest of the gods; 'wherefore Dionysos was wroth with him and sent the Bassarids against him, as Aeschylus says.' It seems generally to be assumed that the words ὥς φησιν Αἰσχύλος in the Greek and *ut Aeschylus scribit* in the Latin version of this passage³ refer to the whole story, which involves assuming that Aeschylus knew the theory that Apollo was the Sun, an idea which was still fairly new when Euripides wrote the *Phaethon*.⁴ For myself, I do not guarantee that they vouch for more than the tragedian having mentioned or described the death of Orpheus; how he accounted for the anger of Dionysos I confess I do not know. But as to Zagreus, I remain very unenthusiastic in face of the attempts to prove him a Cretan and no Thracian. It is of course true that Euripides places him and certain mysteries of his in that island, associated with Zeus of Ida, in other words with the Cretan child-god;⁵ but before that he had been associated, as 'highest of all gods', with Earth by the author of the *Alkmeonis*,⁶ and made out to be a son of Hades by Aeschylus,⁷ which surely implies that he was a son of Persephone also, for what other consort has Hades? All this is quite equally consistent with the supposition that he was a foreign god from the

¹ *T.G.F.*²

² *Catast.* 24, where Olivieri's ed. (Teubner, 1897) gives two slightly differing excerpts.

³ Preserved in schol. Arat. German., p. 84, 6 sqq., 151, 19 sqq., Breysig.

⁴ Eurip., frag. 781, 11 sqq., Nauck². That τὰ σιγῶντ' ὀνόματα Δαιμόνων includes the identification Helios-Apollo as well as the etymon 'Απόλλων-Ἀπολλύων is I think likely.

⁵ Frag. 472, 11 Nauck².

⁶ Frag. 3 Kinkel.

⁷ Frag. 228 Nauck², cf. frag. 5.

north, probably chthonian, whose functions somewhat puzzled the Greeks of the fifth century, and set them identifying or associating him, first with well-known deities, Zeus and Hades, then with the less familiar Cretan 'Zeus', of whom they knew something. But that he was the son of Persephone and identical with Dionysos was received doctrine by the time of Kallimachos,¹ who, since he took pride in singing naught without a witness,² is unlikely to have invented this identification for himself. Now we know nothing about any such son of Persephone save in connexion with the legend of the Titans' crime; therefore it is at least reasonably likely that the mournful death of Zagreus was an accepted Orphic tenet fairly early, well before the end of the fourth century.

The names, however, are inessential to the exposition of Pindar's lines. We have seen that the only myth which will fit the expressions he uses is the murder of the goddess's son, let him be called what he will; Dionysos-Zagreus, εἰ τόδ' αὐτῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ. Another important point which inevitably follows is that Pindar knew the story of the Titans, their devouring of Zagreus and destruction by the thunderbolts, and the springing of man from their ashes, in substantially the form given us by our much later authorities. For if men are not the descendants of the Titans (again it is of little moment whether they were actually called by this name so early), what share have they in the guilt which grieves Persephone and causes her to accept an atonement at their hands? Again, if their ancestors did not devour the divine infant, what claim have they, their satisfaction once made, to such especial grace as she shows them? Mere Titan-men might well be content if they escape Tartaros, with such an inheritance of guilt; these pardoned sinners are raised to the highest rank on earth and afterwards heroized.

The doctrine, then, is Orphic. It remains to show that it is not mixed with Pythagoreanism, or with that

¹ Frag. 171 Schneider (apparently not in Mair).

² Frag. 442 Sch., 125 Mair.

cult, be it properly called Pythagorean or not, in which Theron of Akragas was so far interested that Pindar when he wrote the second *Olympian* sought comfort for him in his sickness from its hopes of future glories. In order to do this let us start by analysing as best we may the process by which the favoured souls attain their beatitude. We have no description of the ποινά, and perhaps there never was one in Pindar; but one thing of great interest the poet does tell us; it lasted eight years. The significance of this has been well pointed out by Rohde,¹ whether or not he is right in connecting it, as many do, with the *oktaeteris*. It is the proper term of banishment for a serious offence, homicide or, at least in the case of a god, perjury. In Hesiod² we have the latter, with a modification; the god who swears falsely by Styx is unconscious for a year, then banished ἐννέα πάντα ἔτεα, δεκάτῳ δ' ἐπιμίσγεται αὐτὶς εἶρας ἐς ἀθανάτων. This seems at least to be a related idea, though not identical, for the time is a year longer. But an exacter parallel is furnished by the story of Kadmos as told by Apollodoros.³ Having killed the Spartoi, and incidentally the dragon from whose teeth they sprang, and thus been guilty of the blood of Ares' descendants, ἀνθ' ὧν ἔκτεινεν . . . ἐνιαυτὸν ἐθήτευσεν Ἄρει· ἦν δὲ ὁ ἐνιαυτὸς τότε ὀκτὼ ἔτη. Still closer is the same author's account of the Labours of Herakles, again undertaken as atonement for bloodshed:⁴ they were accomplished ἐν μηνὶ καὶ ἔτεσιν ὀκτὼ. Here, then, we have three instances of the same custom and one (the Hesiodic passage) of something similar, and it is perhaps noteworthy that they all are related to Boiotia, two being from Boiotian poets, one occurring in the legend of a

¹ Rohde, op. cit., ii, p. 211, n. 2.

² *Theog.*, 793 sqq. I do not know whether the 9+1 years which the penance occupies altogether have anything to do with the 9+1 divisions of the river Styx, *ibid.* 789 sqq., but think it not unlikely.

³ Apollodoros (I use the traditional name for convenience' sake), iii. 24. After ἔκτεινεν and before ἐνιαυτὸν the manuscripts have the meaningless word ἀζιον, which has never been convincingly emended; possibly the author wrote something like οἱ μὲν ἀζιον, αὐτὸς δὲ (Pherekydes, whom he is quoting) φησιν ἐνιαυτὸν.

⁴ Apollod. ii. 113, cf. 73.

Boiotian hero, Kadmos, and the third in the complicated cycle of tales attached to another hero to whom Boiotia laid claim.¹ That Hesiod was influenced by Orphic ideas is chronologically unlikely, if not impossible; I personally think he belongs to the eighth century, he cannot be later than the early seventh, and Orphism is not attested before the sixth. But that the influence has been the other way, the Orphics picking up a Boiotian custom to build into their growing erection of eschatology, is not at all inconceivable.² Thus we see that the souls of men are the serfs of Persephone for eight years, whether of our mortal reckoning or on some larger scale used by the gods, and in that time they doubtless perform, at her bidding, certain tasks, very likely rites of purification such as those described in the ancient accounts of Purgatory which have come down to us. Some of them, for reasons which Pindar does not give, at least in the scanty remnant of his poem which we have, succeed in satisfying her, and she accepts their labours as full satisfaction for her ancient grief, as the labours of Herakles were accepted in satisfaction for the slaying of Megara and her children. In the ninth year, then, i.e. just after the expiration of the eighth,³ she returns them to earth, and there they become notable persons of one sort or another, including—a detail which we shall consider later on—notable athletes. Immediately upon their quitting this

¹ I agree with those who suppose the Theban claim to Herakles to be based on his identification with a local hero, Alkeides or Alkaïos (latest statement of this view in K. Hanell, *Megarische Studien*, Lund, Lindstedt, 1934, p. 28). In the tenth century (see T 95 sqq.) it was still remembered that the real Herakles was Eurystheus' vassal, though of course it was held that by rights he should have been overlord. The assignment of a cause for the services rendered to the lord of Mycenae is secondary, necessitated by the difficulty of locating the adventures of a Boiotian hero in the Peloponnesos, where the uninterpolated tradition fixed them.

² As Mr. Guthrie (op. cit., p. 220 and elsewhere) rightly emphasizes, there is nothing 'primitive' or very early about Orphism, which is a deliberately constructive system working with materials in part traditional.

³ In passing, I would point out that Apollodoros' eight years and a month mean much the same as this; not unlike is the thirteen-month imprisonment, i.e. a year and a month, of Ares, E 387.

mortal life, and without further ordeals of any sort, so it would seem, their spirits gain the highest possible rank for a mortal, that of hero. So far, therefore, as we know, one period of probation or purification in Hades, perhaps led up to by a virtuous life on earth, is all that is needed in the case of these persons; we may guess that the general run of mankind do not satisfy Persephone, come back to an inferior life, not that of a king, poet, athlete, or other man of distinction, and must once more undergo Purgatory when they die.

Let us now look at an eschatological scheme which we have a right to call Pythagorean, for its author is Empedokles.¹ Clement of Alexandria, on whom Theodoret seems to draw for his information,² has preserved us a scrap of his verse which has before now been compared with Pindar's fragment. It runs:

ἐς δὲ τέλος μάντεις τε καὶ ὕμνοπόλοι καὶ ἱητροὶ
καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται,
ἐνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῇσι φέριστοι.

We know enough of him and his doctrines to see pretty plainly what he means here. The soul, divorced from her native divine state by the workings of νεῖκος, has passed through many reincarnations, as lad and lass, beast and bird and tree, and at last has won near the goal. This advance is shown by the last incarnation of all, as one of a number of persons whose occupations much resemble those in Pindar's list, μάντεις, ὕμνοπόλοι, and ἱητροί making a very intelligible triad of men σοφαί μάλιστα, πρόμοι answering to βασιλῆες, and the athletes being omitted for reasons characteristic of Empedokles, as their inclusion is characteristic of Pindar. Afterwards they become gods, i.e., the soul regains her original station. That all this resembles the Pindaric doctrine is clear; the question is whether or not it is identical with it. Here I would lay

¹ It does not seem necessary here to inquire precisely what were the relations between Empedokles and the Pythagoreans, what was the connexion between the above lines and other fragments of his poems.

² Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv, p. 632 Pott.; Theod. *Graec. affect. curat.* viii, pp. 117, 118, Sylb.

little stress on the fact that Pindar says nothing of previous existences; he may have done so in the lost part of the poem, and if he did, so far as we know it is good Orphic to do so. Nor do I insist that Empedokles speaks of gods, Pindar of heroes. The Orphics themselves, if we may take the Thurian and Petilian tablets as good evidence, were none too clear on this point; for the former contain an assurance that the justified soul shall be a god, the latter that it shall reign among the heroes.¹ That the latter would be Pindar's language is clear; for him, who was, if we may so term his religion, an Apolline and not an Orphic, to try to become a god was mere presumption,² and 'hero' the strongest word he would use. We can, I think, realize his attitude if we consider that of some of our own authors. More than one of these has written sympathetically of faiths which they did not share—George Eliot of Methodism, for instance, Scott of Roman Catholicism. But certainly neither of these would have gone so far as to assert, in a passage which might be taken as giving his or her own views, something utterly contradictory of the tenets of moderate agnosticism in the one case, Protestantism in the other. Pindar, or any ancient, had fewer dogmatic differences with other men of pious mind than a modern might; but there were some points on which he held quite definite and uncompromising views. But the decisive contradiction, as between him and Empedokles, is that, in Pindar, Persephone is the active agent, indeed the only one mentioned; but she found no place in Empedokles' scheme at all, even when he expressed himself in mythological terms.

We therefore turn to the second *Olympian*, which we may at least call Pythagoreanizing, if not exactly Pythagorean. Here the differences, though some have tried to reconcile them, are sufficiently glaring. In that ode, the finally blessed are they who have lived righteous lives

¹ Tablets A, 10 and ba¹, 11 (Olivieri's numbering, in *Kleine Texte*, 133, Bonn, Weber, 1915).

² For Pindar's attitude cf. Guthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

ἐς τρίς ἑκατέρωθι μέινοντες. Even if this means, as I think it does not, one life in one world and two in the other, it is hard to reconcile with the fragment, for the life in the realm of Persephone is apparently spent in something much more passive and less definitely moral than avoiding injustice, while it seems to be assumed that the superior mortals, kings and so forth, will almost automatically become heroes, with no hint that they may backslide before they die. More important than this is the fact that in the Olympian ode Zeus is the prominent figure in the one world, Kronos, Rhadamanthys, Rhea and an unnamed but apparently male τῆς in the other, Zeus' influence still making itself felt, for the blessed travel along his road to the Tower of Kronos.¹ Persephone is never mentioned at all, nor anything said of her sorrows or of retribution for them.

The other eschatological passages in Pindar, such as frags. 129 and 130 (= 114 a, b, c), whether they are of the same poem or not, throw no light on the present problem. They are lovely poetry, but tell us only that they refer to some doctrine of rewards and, apparently, punishments also in another world.

We are therefore driven, as it seems to me, to the conclusion that Pindar is describing, in the passage before us, the eschatological views of Orphics only. We have seen that those views already included, in some form or another, the well-known myth of the murder of Zagreus, to give him the name usual among moderns without insisting upon its correctness. I think we may also conclude that the client for whom Pindar was writing was not a westerner, Sikeliote or Italiote, but of mainland Greece; for had he been the former we might have expected doctrines savouring more of the ideas which either formed a part of or hung upon the skirts of Pythagoreanism in those districts. Possibly we might guess that the poet was not very old when he wrote the

¹ *Ol.* ii. 56 sqq. The τῆς of 59 is indicated as a male only by the gender of φράσαις, which of course might be φράσαισ'.

poem; the straightforward metre suggests that of some early pieces, such as *Pyth.* xii (490 B.C.) and *Ol.* iii (476). But we know too little of Greek dirges to deduce much from so small a piece of evidence; simple metre may have been demanded by any one of half a dozen circumstances having nothing to do with the date. If by any chance it was written for a Thessalian there would be a special appropriateness in Sokrates citing it to Menon; but this is in no way necessary.

The most important result concerns what may be called the social position of Orphism in Pindar's lifetime. We know enough of the two systems to say that whereas Pythagoreanism was essentially an aristocratic movement from its inception to the collapse of its organized existence in the West, Orphism was and continued to be largely of the lower orders. Hence its recognition as something more than what a Roman would call a *religio licita* by Peisistratos, whose power was solidly founded upon the support of the common people. Hence, in literature, its repeated claims to be older and therefore more respectable than the aristocratic Homer.¹ Hence its apparent association with the poetry and some part of the theology of the radical Hesiod;² in particular, the adoption from him, as I would suggest, of the *motif* of swallowing, which, originally a crude myth, becomes in his hands an allegory. Metis, a mere abstraction without cult or other independent existence, is first impregnated and then swallowed by Zeus, in the *Theogony*, thus setting forth in quasi-mythical language the doctrine that the supreme god has always, as part of his own nature, unfailing wisdom, which in turn is in some sense his own creation.³ The likeness between this and the swallowing

¹ See Rose, *Handbook of Greek Literature* (Methuen, 1934), pp. 15 and 71 and references there.

² I do not call Hesiod a revolutionary, for there is no evidence that he contemplated a scheme of either society or theology completely different from those then existing; but 'radical' (in the English, not the American sense) seems to me almost exactly to describe his attitude towards the problems which interested him most.

³ *Theog.* 886 sqq.

by Zeus of Erikapaios-Phanes, in the Orphic cosmogony,¹ is too striking to be mere coincidence and is but one of many resemblances. Yet, with all these plebeian features, it is clear that Orphism in Pindar's time was beginning to attract adherents from the old aristocracy. The combination of king, sage (or poet), and athlete as the outstanding instances of the noble and desirable life is so characteristic that it hardly needs pointing out; parallels will be found in poem after poem of Pindar, not least in those which most obviously voice the sentiments of his own class. Thus it is for a noble client that Pindar describes what we have seen to be an Orphic eschatology. The parallel is obvious between this cult and the fortunes of another which, six or seven centuries later, was rather acrimoniously claiming priority in time for its sacred writings over everything Greek, and began by attracting converts mostly from the lower ranks of society. Like Christianity also, it looks very much as if Orphism had by that date developed a clergy; at least, Plato seems to think so, since he quotes the fragment as an instance of what the most enlightened priests and priestesses teach.

Thus, by a careful consideration of this short but important document, we are able to arrive at some definite conclusions, of a sort all too rare in accounts of Orphism, concerning the doctrines and position of that cult at a date not exactly known but falling within the limits of Pindar's lifetime, in other words, not long before the best thought of Greece turned wholly from theological to philosophic interests and methods, and therefore in the earlier flowering-time of the mystic type of religion, which was not to come again till some three centuries later, and then in a degenerate form, when Greek piety did not so much remould ideas coming from abroad as allow itself to be remoulded by them. I hope that my conclusions have been reached without any undue admixture of guess-work or fanciful hypotheses, whereof there have been far too many in this fascinating but treacherous

¹ Frag. 16, Kern (120-2 Abel).

region of study. It has at least been my endeavour to keep clear of such faults; for I am convinced that much minute and objective analysis is yet needed before we can honestly claim to have answered Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's challenge, 'Eine orphische Seelenlehre soll erst einer nachweisen. . . . Nur die Modernen wissen, dass Platons Hadesbilder und zugleich die Petrusapokalypse von Orpheus stammen. . . . Wo steckt denn nun die Wirkung der 'Ορφικά? . . . Die Modernen reden so entsetzlich viel von Orphikern.'¹

H. J. ROSE.

¹ *Glaube der Hellenen*, ii. 194, 197, 199. Since the publication of this, his last great contribution to scholarship, a certain shyness about mentioning Orpheus seems to have descended on the German scholars; I do not know whether it is a premonitory symptom of this that the very name of the Thracian is absent from the index of names and topics which was added to the work after its author's death.