

NOTES ON PINDAR

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Se ofrece la explicación de varios pasajes de Píndaro que han desconcertado a algunos críticos recientes.

Several passages of Pindar, which had puzzled recent critics, are explained.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN PINDAR

Plato's *Meno* (81b) preserves for us a fragment from Pindar concerning Hades:

οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὺν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει
ἀντιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν·
ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία
τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὖξουσ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες
ἀγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

Translation by Sir J. E. Sandys (*Pindar*, Loeb edition [London 1968] reprint, 593): “But, as for those from whom Persephone shall exact the penalty of their pristine woe, in the ninth year she once more restoreth their souls to the upper sun-light; and from these come into being august monarchs, and men who are swift in strength and supreme in wisdom; and, for all future time, men call them sainted heroes”.

The meaning of this fragment has been much debated¹. I would like to point out, however, that the key to the correct interpretation of this fragment is given by the context. At *Meno* 81b, Socrates states that the soul is immortal and does not die together with the body. Instead it goes to Hades and is then reborn to lead another life on earth. Socrates implies that it is important for men to live “as righteously as possible” because their souls will be judged in Hades and punished for the crimes that they have committed on earth. In order to illustrate this point, Socrates quotes Pindar’s fragment.

It should be noted that Pindar has employed adjectival *enallage*. The phrase ποιῶν παλαιῶ πένθεος means “the ancient penalty of suffering”. For similar cases of adjectival *enallage* cf. my *Studies in The Poetry Of Nicander* (Amsterdam 1987) 51ff. In other words, according to Pindar, men are punished in Hades by Persephone and they are made to suffer for their crimes.

Similarly at *Olympian* 2.56ff. Pindar refers to the fact that the guilty are punished in Hades for the crimes that they have committed during their life on earth:

εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,
 ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐνθάδ’ αὐτίκ’ ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες
 ποιῶς ἔτισαν, -τὰ δ’ ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχᾷ
 ἀλιτρὰ κατὰ γᾶς δικάζει τις ἐχθρᾷ
 60 λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκη·

Translation by Sandys (*op. cit.*, 23): “But if, in very deed, when he hath that wealth, he knoweth of the future, that immediately after death, on earth, it is the lawless spirits that suffer punishment –and the sins committed in this realm of Zeus are judged by One who passeth sentence stern and inevitable–.”

According to Pindar, having been punished in Hades, the souls return to earth where they lead new lives as kings, athletes and philosophers (cf. lines 4f.). They are, moreover, called heroes by men. The souls of good men, on the other hand, enjoy a happy life in Hades (cf. Pindar, *Ol.* 2.61-68):

στρ. δ' ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεῖ,
 ἴσαις δ' ἐν ἡμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον
 ἔσλοι δέκονται βίοντον, οὐ χθόνα ταράσσοντες ἐν
 χερὸς ἀκμᾷ
 οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ
 65 κεινὰν παρὰ δίατταν· ἀλλὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίοις
 θεῶν, οἵτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις, ἄδακρυν νέ-
 μοιται
 αἰῶνα· τοῖ δ' ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.

Translation by Sandys (*op. cit.*, 23ff.): “while the good, having the sun shining for evermore, for equal nights and equal days, receive the boon of a life of

¹ For a recent discussion of this fragment cf. Sir H. Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy* (Oxford 1990) 89f.

lightened toil, not vexing the soil with the strength of their hands, no, nor the water of the sea, to gain a scanty livelihood; but, in the presence of the honoured gods, all who were wont to rejoice in keeping their oaths, share a life that knoweth no tears, while the others endure labour that none can look upon.”²

It is thus obvious that Pindar distinguishes between the happy life of the good souls after death and the miserable life of the guilty souls.

Conclusion. Socrates urges men to keep their souls as pure as possible because they will be punished in Hades for all the crimes that they commit on earth. The punishment will be inflicted on the souls of dead men by Persephone before she sends them back to earth to live another life.

THE CATTLE OF GERYON

At *Gorgias* 484b Plato preserves for us the following fragment from Pindar concerning Heracles and the cattle of Geryon:

νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεὺς
 θνατῶν τε καὶ ἀθανάτων
 ἄγει δικαίων τὸ βιαιότατον
 ὑπερτάτῃ χειρὶ. τεκμαίρομαι
 5 ἔργοισιν Ἡρακλέος· ἐπεὶ Γηρυόνα βόας
 Κυκλωπίων ἐπὶ προθύρων Εὐρυσθέος
 ἀναιτήτας τε καὶ ἀπριάτας ἦλασεν.

Translation by Sir J. E. Sandys (*Pindar*, Loeb edition [London 1968], reprint, 605):

“Law, the lord of all, mortals and immortals, carrieth everything with a high hand, justifying the extreme of violence. This I infer from the labours of Heracles; for he drave to the Cyclopien portals of Eurystheus the kine of Geryon, which he had won neither by prayer nor by price.”

In the *Gorgias*, Callicles uses this quotation from Pindar in order to defend the right of the stronger to rule over the weaker. Scholars have been puzzled by Pindar’s words³. Moreover, they have been unable to understand what *nomos* it is that Pindar is referring to in this fragment.

The solution to this problem is given by Herodotus, who states (3.38) that Pindar was right when he called custom (νόμον) “the king of all” (πάντων βασιλέα). According to Pindar, custom justified Heracles’ violent attack on the cattle of Geryon. He means that Heracles lived in the heroic age when his ac-

² Lloyd-Jones’ proposed interpretation of Olympian 2.56-60 is not convincing. He failed to understand (*op. cit.*, 84ff.) that Pindar contrasts the fate of the evil or bad souls with the fate of the good souls. Moreover, he failed to note (*op. cit.*, 89) that the penalty that the dead souls pay in the underworld is the punishment which is inflicted upon them by Persephone because of the crimes that they have committed during their life on earth.

³ Cf. Sir H. Lloyd-Jones, *op. cit.*, 154ff.

tions, although violent, would not have been considered unusual. In other words, Heracles was not to be blamed for his violent behaviour since it suited the heroic age in which he lived. As Herodotus pointed out, customs vary according to the country that one lives in. Similarly, customs vary according to different periods in history. Thus Pindar means that Heracles was acting according to the customs of the heroic age when he attacked Geryon violently and took his cattle without paying for them. Pindar recognised Heracles' actions as those of a violent man, but he considered that the customs which governed the heroic age explained why Heracles acted as he did. Obviously during the heroic age men were not devoted to philosophical speculation concerning moral questions such as those discussed by Plato in the *Gorgias*. Instead the world was a much simpler place, inhabited by monsters and heroes. Thus the behaviour of the characters of the heroic age should not be judged by the standards of Pindar's age⁴.

A PAIR OF CROWS

At Olympian 2.84ff. Pindar refers to the difference between the true poet and his rivals:

πολλά μοι ὑπ' ἀγκῶνος	150
ὠκέα βέλη	
ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας	
85 φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμηνέων	
χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ· μαθόντες δὲ	
λάβροι	
παγγλωσσία, κόρακες ὡς, ἄκραντα γαρύετον	
ἀντ. ε' Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.	

Translation by Sir J. E. Sandys (Pindar, Loeb edition [London 1968], reprint, 27): “Full many a swift arrow have I beneath mine arm, within my quiver, many an arrow that is vocal to the wise; but for the crowd they need interpreters. The true poet is he who knoweth much by gift of nature, but they that have only learnt the lore of song, and are turbulent and intemperate of tongue, like a pair of crows, chatter in vain against the god-like bird of Zeus.”

The *scholia* explain the dual γαρύετον as a reference to Pindar's rivals, the Cean poets, Simonides and his nephew, Bacchylides: cf. Sandys, *op. cit.*, 27. Lloyd-Jones (*op. cit.*, 88f.) noted that some modern critics doubt the evidence of the ancient *scholia* concerning this passage. He then suggested that the dual γαρύετον is used here by Pindar because “crows are often seen in pairs”. In sup-

⁴ Cf. especially F. Mora, *Religione e religioni nelle Storie di Erodoto* (Milano 1986) 161f. That each epoch adhered to its own code of moral and social behaviour (νόμος) – a code not complied with, indeed alien to, other epochs – is a *Leitmotiv* of Greek thinking: for Herodotus cf. J. Schweighäuser, *Lexicon Herodoteum* (London 1830) s. v. νόμος; for Theocritus cf. my observations in *Emerita* 1976, 403f.; cf. also G. Giangrande in *L'Antiq. Class.* 1972, 131. Unfortunately, in recent years certain scholars have overlooked these obvious points.

port of this statement, Lloyd-Jones then quoted two passages from Aratus which seemed to him to be relevant. The first passage occurs at *Phaen.* 966-9:

καί που κόρακες δίους σταλαγμούς
φωνῆ ἐμμήσαντο σὺν ὕδατος ἐρχομένοιο·
ἢ ποτε καὶ κρώξαντε βαρεῖη δισσάκι φωνῆ
μακρὸν ἐπιρροιζέῃσι τιναξάμενοι πτερὰ πυκνά.

Translation by G. R. Mair (*Aratus*, Loeb edition [London 1960], reprint, 283): “Crows, too, imitate with their note the heavy splash of clashing rain, or after twice croaking deeply they raise a loud whirring with frequent flapping of their wings.”

Lloyd-Jones added that “the same surprising combination of plural and dual is found at 1021-3 of the same poem”:

Καὶ χῆνες κλαγγηδὸν ἐπελεγόμεναι βρωμοῖο
χειμῶνος μέγα σῆμα, καὶ ἐννεάγηρα κορώνη
νύκτερον αἰίδουσα, καὶ ὄψῃ βοῶντε κολοιοί.

Translation by Mair (*op. cit.*, 287): “Sure signs of storm are geese hastening with many a cackle to their food, the nine-generation crow cawing at night, the jackdaw chattering late”.

It should be pointed out, however, that the employment of the dual instead of the plural is not unparalleled in Greek poetry: cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.* 4, 75, note 17. For the combination of the dual and the plural cf. moreover, Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge 1965), reprint, vol. II, 402. It therefore follows that there is no reason to suppose that Aratus was referring to a pair of birds in the two passages which are quoted by Lloyd-Jones. Consequently it seems best, as Sandys has already underlined, to accept the interpretation of this passage which is given by the ancient *scholia* and to understand that Pindar is, in fact, alluding to his two rivals, Simonides and Bacchylides⁵.

It may be noted, in conclusion, that V. Loebe, *De elocut. Arati* (Halle 1864) 17, correctly explains that the dual employed by Aratus in lines 968 and 1023 is intended to be understood as a plural. This point is also explained by Maass, in his edition of Aratus, Index II s.v. “dualis participii cum plurali nominis”. All these facts concerning the use of the dual in Aratus are noted by S. Hatzikosta in her above mentioned article published in *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, vol. IV.

ON ARCHILOCHUS AND PINDAR

At Pythian 2.53ff. Pindar states that he must avoid speaking badly of people:

⁵ Lloyd-Jones argued (*op. cit.*, 137) that it is unlikely that Pindar would have referred to his own rivals in a poem written for a patron. This argument is not convincing. Lloyd-Jones failed to note that Theocritus spoke at length about his own affairs in a poem composed for Hiero of Syracuse: cf. *Idyll* 16.5ff. There is thus no reason why Pindar should not have acted in a similar way.

ἐμὲ δὲ

χρεῶν

φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν.
 εἶδον γὰρ ἐκάς ἐὼν τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ
 55 ψογερόν' Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν
 παινόμενον· τὸ πλουτεῖν δὲ σὺν τύχᾳ πότμου
 σοφίας ἄριστον.

Translation by Sir J. E. Sandys (*Pindar*, Loeb edition [London 1968], reprint, 177): “But I must refrain from the violent bite of slanderous calumny; for, though far removed in time, I have seen the bitter-tongued Archilochus full often in distress, because he battered on bitter abuse of his foes. But wealth, with wisdom allotted thereto, is the best gift of Fortune.”

In a discussion of this passage, Lloyd-Jones (*op. cit.*, 130) argued that Pindar means that Archilochus “profited” in some way from his “enmities”. According to Lloyd-Jones, moreover, the word *παινόμενον* supports his argument. It should be noted, however, that Lloyd-Jones has completely misunderstood Pindar’s words. The point is that Archilochus suffered because he abused his enemies in verse. Pindar states that he does not intend to speak badly of people because he does not wish to suffer like Archilochus did. For the correct interpretation of this passage cf. Farnell, *Pindar*, note *ad loc.*

Pindar next states that wealth is best when it is accompanied by wisdom. It should be noted that Pindar has employed chiasmus. Thus lines 56f. should be translated as follows: “To be rich with the good fortune of wisdom (σὺν τύχᾳ ... σοφίας) is the best fate (πότμου ἄριστον).” Pindar then proceeds to praise Hieron, who is both rich and wise. Cf. also Farnell, *ad loc.*, who noted that “one scholiast” proposes this solution.

THE GRAVE OF NEOPTOLEMUS

At Nemean 7.34f. Pindar mentions the fact that Neoptolemus was buried at Delphi:

ἀλλὰ κοινὸν γὰρ ἔρχεται
 κῦμ' Ἀίδα, πέσε δ' ἀδόκητον ἐν καὶ δοκέοντα·
 τιμὰ δὲ γίνεται
 ὦν θεὸς ἄβρον αὔξει λόγον τεθνακότων
 βοαθῶν, τοὶ παρὰ μέγαν ὄμφαλὸν εὐρυκόλπου
 μόλον χθονός· ἐν Πυθίοισι δὲ δαπέδοις
 35 κέϊται, Πριάμου πόλιν Νεοπτόλεμος ἐπεὶ πράθην,
 τᾷ καὶ Δαναοὶ πόνησαν.

33 βοαθῶν BD: βοαθοῶν Farnell

Translation by Sir J. E. Sandys (*Pindar*, Loeb edition [London 1968], reprint, 383ff.): “But the billow of Hades rolleth over all alike; that billow breaketh on

the dimly known and on the famous; but honour groweth for those, whose fame a god causeth to wax fairer, even the departed champions, who came to the mighty centre of Earth's broad bosom. So in the Pythian soil low lieth the hero Neoptolemus, who erstwhile sacked the city of Priam, where the Danai themselves were sore distressed."

In his discussion of this passage, Lloyd-Jones (*op. cit.*, 144ff.) noted that Farnell altered βoαθóων ("heroes") to βoαθοῶν ("helping"). However, this textual alteration causes more problems than it solves. This point was understood by Lloyd-Jones, who commented as follows (*op. cit.*, 144): "In what sense did Neoptolemus come to Delphi 'bringing help?'" As a consequence, Lloyd-Jones suggested (*op. cit.*, 145) that the word βoαθοῶν ("helping") refers to Pindar and the meaning is "It was to bring help that I came to Delphi". Cf. also page 151, where Lloyd-Jones noted that "at 1.33 Pindar claims to have gone to Delphi to bring help to Neoptolemus". He then added that "this surely refers to his having gone there on the occasion of the performance of the Paeon." Pindar, it will be remembered, had written a Paeon which mentioned Neoptolemus' murder at Delphi. There is, however, no evidence to support Lloyd-Jones' hypothesis. We know nothing of any visit by Pindar to Delphi in order to "help" the dead hero Neoptolemus.

Once again the solution to the problem is simple. Textual alteration is not necessary at line 33, since the transmitted text makes perfect sense. The words τεθνακóτων / βoαθóων ("dead champions"), in line 33, refer to the hero Neoptolemus, who was famous because he had a grave at Delphi. He had gone to Delphi to make an offering and had been killed in a fight there. Thus Pindar means that death comes to us all, even to heroes like Neoptolemus. However, Neoptolemus was fortunate because he has a grave at Delphi which men continue to venerate. Cf. also L. R. Farnell, *Pindar*, reprint 1961, Hakkert, 291ff. Farnell objected to the reading βoαθóων (substantive, "heroes") because he failed to note that the word βoαθóος is frequently used as a noun: cf. W. Peek, *Lexikon zu den Dionys. des Nonnos*, s.v. βοηθóος and *Thes. Gr. Ling.*, s.v. βοηθóος.