

PREFACE

Pindar wrote two odes for the Sicilian soldier and statesman Chromios of Aitna, Nemean One and Nine. The present commentary on the Ninth with text and translation, although largely self-contained, is meant to complement in several respects my commentary on the First Nemean (Fribourg, 1992). As I indicated in the preface to that commentary, Nemean Nine, because of its relative neglect by critics, has required more extensive discussion than Nemean One. Although the present commentary is often more detailed, the aim of both is the same: to provide the necessary exegesis and critical comment required to understand the ode as such, i.e., in the first instance, as a work of linguistic and literary art situated in its historical context. It is hoped, however, that each may also provide information useful beyond the immediate context. Specifically, the fuller discussion here of some general problems of Pindaric usage which I have not had occasion to discuss before is intended to supplement my commentary on the Fourth Pythian (Texte und Kommentare 14, Berlin / New York, 1988) and to reduce still further the necessity of repetition in future commentaries which I hope to publish. Similarly, the preliminary sections on the metre, the manuscripts, and the testimonia are features which are intended to present aspects of the text in a wider context without overburdening the commentary. The twelve instances where my Greek text, which has been based on a fresh inspection of the primary manuscripts, differs from that of Snell-Maehler or Turyn are listed in a synoptic table (p. 14).

Since I have already discussed the dates of the two Aetnaean odes as well as the career of Chromios in the Introduction to my previous commentary, it will not be necessary to repeat the discussion here except to remind readers that I date Nemean Nine *prior to* Nemean One suggesting a time not too long before 470 for the Ninth and probably 469 for the First. However, a brief survey of the literary and iconographical evidence for the Amphiaraos legend before Pindar has seemed desirable as part of the Introduction, where the question of the relevance of this particular legend to the victor celebrated in the ode is discussed. To this is added an analysis of the composition of Nemean Nine.

In citation I have followed the same conventions adopted in my previous commentaries. Greek authors are, except for Pindar himself, normally referred to by the abbreviations adopted in the preface to the ninth edition of Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (with the additions in the preface to Supplement²) supplemented by those adopted in the preface to Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. The few divergences should be self-evident. For classical and late Latin authors reference should be made to the abbreviations listed in the second edition of the index volume (1990) of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. The editions of classical authors used are indicated in the Index of Passages Cited at the end of the volume. In the case of authors for whom more than one edition is indicated I have normally recorded my choice of readings where the editions differ. Current periodicals are cited according to the system of abbreviations adopted in *L'Année Philologique*. Secondary works quoted only once or twice are provided with the necessary bibliographical information at the point at which they occur. Other secondary works to which more frequent reference is made are normally cited in abbreviated form. For a guide to these see the select bibliography at the end of the commentary.

Although I intend to publish separately a comprehensive survey of the study and interpretation of Nemean Nine as a contribution to the history of Pindaric scholarship, I take the opportunity at the suggestion of the editors to mention the principal exegetical aids previously available to readers of the ode.

The commentary of Ludolf Dissen published in close collaboration with August Boeckh (1821-1822) provides what may be called with some justification the first modern interpretation of the work. Thanks to the revolutionary discoveries of Boeckh in Pindaric metre Dissen was able to base his commentary on a metrically rational text even if the manuscript basis for it was still inadequate. In the eleven pages devoted to the ode information on the historical background constitutes the major part. This reflects Boeckh's propensity to interpret the odes as historical commentaries. For example, Boeckh saw in the myth of Amphiaraos, Adrastos, and Eriphyle an allusion to the quarrel between Hieron and Theron which was settled with the marriage of Theron's niece to Hieron (apud Dissen, pp. 457-59). At the time Dissen expressed his basic agreement (p. 457), but later felt obliged to refute his friend's interpretation when in 1830 he published his own edition and commentary on the whole of Pindar (ii, 490f.). In it *Ne.* 9 received hardly more space than in the earlier commentary, but somewhat more attention to language and literary conventions. Dissen's treatment of asyndeton e.g. in the new work (i, 273-82) has never been superseded. In the

intervening years Dissen had developed his theory of the *Grundgedanke* according to which the import of a poem can be reduced to a short prose paraphrase. In the case of *Ne. 9* it is: “Chromius fortitudine bellica inde a prima adolescentia insigni maximam gloriam consequutus est, ad quam nunc ludicra ornamenta accedunt; praeterea divitias habet. Fruitur igitur admirabili divinitus data felicitate” (ii, 483). Dissen’s exegesis of the ode dominated most of the nineteenth century as did the two general tendencies to regard myths and literary motifs as historical allusions, even if doubts were occasionally expressed about certain interpretations, and, above all, to seek a simple message in a poem.

The next substantial advance in the interpretation of *Ne. 9* came fifty years later in 1880 with the Pindar commentary of Friedrich Mezger who found no more room for it than had Dissen. Mezger is critical of Boeckh’s attempt to discover historical correspondences with the myth in the ode, but fully accepts Dissen’s theory of the *Grundgedanke*. This he finds best formulated for *Ne. 9* by Leopold Schmidt who argued that the poem intends “auf der Grundlage eines Bildes von Zwietracht und Schrecken, das Glück, den Frieden und die innere Ruhe aus[zu]malen, deren Aetna und Chromios nach Wunsche des Dichters geniessen sollen” (p. 115 = Schmidt, *Pindar’s Leben und Dichtung*, Bonn, 1862, 240). Mezger’s own contribution to the methodology of Pindaric interpretation was his theory of tautometry according to which the repetition of words in the same metrical position of the same verse in corresponding stanzas provides “den Schlüssel zum Verständnis des ganzen Gedichts” (p. 40). In *Ne. 9*. 29 and 54 e.g. the repetition of ταῦτα in the same *sedes* of the same verse of the strophe is supposed to imply that “wie der Dichter jene Waffenprobe weit von sich wegweist..., so freut er sich diese zu preisen” (p. 121).

In 1890 the Anglo-Irish scholar J. B. Bury, who had published his two-volume *History of the Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* the year before, brought out an edition and commentary on the Nemean odes in which *Ne. 9* was treated in greater detail than it had been by his predecessors. A ten-page introduction offers an unstructured mixture of information on historical and mythological background with a speculative literary analysis which discovers such things as “a covert comparison of the life of Chromius to an initiation and education in divine Mysteries” (p. 160). Bury’s Pindar commentaries are perhaps best remembered for the extremes to which he took Mezger’s tautometric theory, of which *Ne. 9* abounds in examples. Bury was not always sure in metre as with the variants πράσσετε | πράσσεται in v. 3 or happy with his conjectures as with αὐτῶν in v. 8, but the sixteen pages he

devoted to the text and commentary contain an ambitious exegesis of the ode which shows him fully abreast with contemporary continental scholarship. If he is sometimes exasperating when e.g. he rewrites verses as at 25, his judgment is nevertheless often sound and his remarks acute. His commentary has continued to influence readers, often unknowingly, to the present day in the form of Sir John Sandys' Loeb translation (1915) which not infrequently is based on an interpretation of Bury.

An edition of the whole of Pindar with an English translation and commentary by L. R. Farnell appeared in three volumes between 1930 and 1932. In the first volume the translation of *Ne. 9* is followed by two and a half pages of "literary comments" (pp. 221-23). After a very brief sketch of the historical and mythical background of the poem, Farnell sensibly rejects any attempt to find in it "a deeper, more inward relevance, some mystic significance attaching to the myth, some cryptic allusion to contemporary events, or some moral warning against an unrighteous war" (p. 222). However, he is convinced that the myth of the ode is irrelevant and serves merely to entertain. After the praise of Chromios (in vv. 34-47) the poem ends for him with an "almost... bacchanalian ring" (p. 223). The actual literary comment restricts itself to strings of descriptive predication: Pindar tells the tale "lyrically, with rapidity, fervour, and thrill, lighting up a few salient points, with moralising reflections" (pp. 222f.), with "fervour" and "thrill" repeated in a similar string summarizing the poem at the end of the comments (p. 223). The heart of Farnell's work is the second volume containing a "critical commentary" intended unlike the first volume, which was "mainly for the literary public", for "the narrower circle of Greek scholars" (p. v). The Ninth Nemean receives only six pages of which the first is devoted largely to a discussion of Pindar's ascription of the foundation of the Sicyonian games to Adrastos (p. 310). As a commentator Farnell is not a reliable guide in metre (v. his arguments against Maas, pp. xxiiif., and his comment on *Ne. 9. 41*) or in grammatical analysis (cf. the comm. ad 18-19 below), nor is he felicitous in his textual criticism (v. his arguments for reading ἐρισσάμενοι and σώματ' ἐπίστανται in v. 23), but he was an expert in the history of religion who had published valuable work on the Greek cults. He put his specialist knowledge to good use in *Ne. 9* when he correctly explained vv. 19f. to mean that Zeus failed to lighten as the Argive expedition was departing for Thebes. Farnell's third volume contains a Greek text without critical apparatus.

The next item chronologically I mention only to warn readers that it is not worth the trouble of consulting. This is a 1988 doctoral dissertation of the University of Iowa by James Stephen Clark, *A Literary Study of*

Pindar's Nemean Nine, in which the author purports to follow “methods which were propounded by Elroy Bundy” (p. 1). The main body of the study (pp. 8-131) consists of a line by line encounter with the text followed by a short “discursus” at the end of the comment on each strophe. Practically no effort is made to deal with the historical and linguistic problems presented by the ode, but instead we are given what is little more than a paraphrase padded out with abstruse speculation about word order and acoustical effects which totally obscures the rhetorical analysis originally intended.

In 1993 Thomas Poiss published a literary study of a very different calibre, *Momente der Einheit: Interpretationen zu Pindars Epinikion und Hölderlins “Andenken”*. As the title indicates the author addresses himself to the perennial problem of the Pindaric odes, the question of their unity. He has thought carefully about methodology and formulates his hermeneutic premisses in a short introductory chapter (pp. 22-28). Poiss’ professed aim (p. 28) is to interpret a poem in the first instance as a work of art which transcends its cultural context rather than merely as a witness to it.

In his search for the unity of the Pindaric epinikion Poiss investigates ten odes, including Nemean Nine, with Hölderlin’s poetic souvenir of Bordeaux introduced as a foil toward the end. Pindaric unity he finds in a Heraclitean coincident opposition, as have others before him, which he thinks is matched by that of the German romantic poet (p. 243). This is a description which would in fact apply to almost any elaborate lyric poem.

Poiss’ contribution to the elucidation of the ninth Nemean is divided into five parts. First come preliminary remarks (pp. 29-40) in which the author explains the relative neglect of the ode. The explanation he finds in its un conspicuousness. For him it is Pindar’s “durchschnittlichstes Lied” (p. 29). This description is hardly more helpful than the appreciative effusions of Farnell. More to the point would be to say that it contains all the typical elements of an epinikion: statement of the occasion, myth, gnomic reflections, and praise of the victor and his city. Poiss then announces his intention of providing a commentary on the ode which will not only purvey the essential information needed by the reader but also the kind of interpretation which he finds conspicuously lacking in recent commentaries on Pindar (pp. 29-31 with n. 3). Thereafter we are given a useful sketch of the historical background in Sicily (pp. 31-33) and an equally useful survey of the mythological background (pp. 35-37). In both the author is well informed in the secondary literature, but seldom attempts to deal with open questions such as whether or not Chromios was appointed guardian of Gelon’s

son (cf. p. 33 with n. 17 where it is taken for granted) as he was later of Hieron's. At the end of the section a two-page excursus discusses the conditions under which the ode might have been performed.

The second part of Poiss' discussion (pp. 40-48) consists of a Greek text without critical apparatus divided into small units followed by a German translation with short interpretative remarks between each section. The text is that of Snell-Maehler with two divergences (28 φοινικοστόλων, and 40 ἐνθα 'Pέας [?]). The translation is less felicitous than that of Dönt (1986), perhaps in part because of an understandable wish to avoid repetition. The accompanying remarks are generally helpful and provide a useful guide for continuous reading. While this arrangement may be justified by the primarily literary intention of the study, it does complicate the consultation of the work.

The detailed commentary on the ode occupies the third part (pp. 48-71). The metre receives short shrift at the beginning with a promise of a brief discussion of some details in the "Zeilenkommentar" which follows; unfortunately the promise is not kept. The commentary itself consists of a series of concise notes on individual words and phrases in which parallels are intelligently collected along with helpful references to secondary literature. For a rapid reading Poiss' notes are a serviceable guide. Seldom, however, does he attempt to work out a knotty problem on his own, and when he does, as with $\alpha\delta\delta\alpha\mu\alpha\nu\epsilon$ in v. 4, the results are not convincing. The separation of the interpretive part of the commentary from the individual notes again makes consultation of the work unduly difficult.

The fourth part (pp. 72-74) offers a new round of interpretation in which the author begins by drawing a disappointing balance resulting from the previous "zweifachen Interpretationsgang": "zahlreiche Topoi, ein Bündel schwer zu funktionalisierender Wort- und Themenbezüge und ein verunglückter Mythos". A renewed reading of the ode is undertaken in an attempt to discover a poetic principle which would allow a meaningful reconstruction of the *disjecta membra*. What follows is a paraphrase of the ode in which elements are polarly linked to one another. Result: "Chromios' gegenwärtiger Segen (V. 3 und V. 45), nicht Panik (V. 27), ist Gabe von seiten der Götter. Das Lied zeigt in seinem Progreß, daß und wie der Adressat auf agonalem Gebiet mit dem Wagen den Heroen gleichkommt, sie aber an Konstanz im werthaften Verhalten übertrifft" (p. 74). At the end the Heraclitean opposites coincide: "Geeint kommen aktueller Verlauf des Liedes, Bahn des Siegers und Wurf des Dichters im letzten Wort zur Ruhe, im Namen der Musen" (p. 74). What Poiss offers is an interpretation which is certainly

more subtle than that of his predecessors, but which no less than that of Dissen or Leopold Schmidt reduces the poem to a *Grundgedanke* strongly coloured by personal preference and taste.

The fifth and final part (pp. 74-76) is devoted to a retrospect in which the author reviews and conscientiously completes his answers to five interpretive questions he had initially postulated to be asked about an ode (p. 27). (1) The context of the ode's performance must have been a symposium or at least a place in front of Chromios' house. (2) and (3) The myth reflects political events in Sicily and offers "ein grundsätzliches, deutliches und zugleich auch erst zu deutendes Handlungsmuster". (4) The choral 'I' is not a real problem, "da keine Aussagen zur Person und zur Weltsicht des Sprechers getätigt werden". (5) The unity of the poem is achieved in that the "Sieg-Lied (= $\chi\rho\epsilon\omega\varsigma$) Thematik ... wird im durch den Mythos perspektivierten Tatenbericht belegt", so that Chromios' success, wealth, blessing, and peace are "proved" (bewiesen) to be deserved and legitimate. After so much effort it is disappointing to find, apart from the generally useful notes of the commentary, such a meagre harvest, not the least in the literary interpretation of the ode where greater expectations were raised. In general, the basic weakness of Poiss' work is its hybrid nature: a literary study which attempts to provide commentaries on no less than ten odes including several of the most difficult. It should be obvious that in a work of some 250 pages it would be impossible to comment adequately on some 750 verses of so difficult a poet and provide at the same time a satisfactory literary analysis replete with theoretical discussion. More or less would have been salutary.

In retrospect the exegesis of Nemean Nine over the past two centuries appears excessively reductionistic. Commentaries have sought some one key which would explain the ode. Boeckh's supposed historical parallels to the mythological narrative reduced the ode to a contemporary *roman-à-clef*. Dissen's *Grundgedanke* reduced it to the moral of a Lutheran sermon. Mezger's tautometry reduced it to a system of Wagnerian *Leitmotive*. In fact there is no passe-partout which will open all the doors to a Pindaric epinikion. The commentator must have at his disposal a whole arsenal of hermeneutic tools and a comprehensive knowledge which he can apply wherever necessary. Only then can we hope to grasp something of the rich variety, the $\piοικιλία$, of Pindar's poetry.

Finally, a word on interpretation. Certain recent critics have the unfortunate tendency to use the term ambiguously. A good example is Poiss who quotes approvingly Schadewaldt's unexceptionable observation that "jede Pindarbetrachtung Interpretation ist" (*Aufbau*,

265) while claiming at the same time that there are Pindar commentators who have completely renounced interpretation (p. 30, n. 3). No one in his right mind would deny that commenting on a Pindaric ode involves interpretation, indeed at many levels. Behind Poiss' ambiguous use of "interpretation" lies the conviction which he expresses but does not attempt to justify that "jedes Verhalten zu einem Text ... auch wertend [ist]" (p. 29). In other words, for him there can be no interpretation without value judgments. Perhaps (though here we must distinguish the psychological from the philosophical problem), but a commentator who attempts to keep the influence of his own private opinions about the worth of a literary work at a minimum will ultimately be of more service to his readers at a scholarly level than those who happen to embody current fashions and prejudices. Such an intention is not a renouncement of interpretation, but a commitment to an ideal of objectivity.

It is with great pleasure that I thank all who have helped me in one way or another in preparing this commentary. In particular, Tilman Krischer and William Race have kindly corresponded with me on points of interpretation, Jean-Marc Moret has freely placed his archaeological expertise at my disposal, and Stefan Radt has generously read an earlier draft and offered me detailed criticism from which I have much profited. Simonetta Marchitelli has repeatedly aided my work with bibliographical assistance as has Christian Zubler who also finished typing as well as formatting the manuscript which François Piccand began. In addition, the latter two have assisted me in the use of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. My sincere thanks are due to the editors of the series "Texte und Kommentare" for their acceptance of my work for publication as well as for the helpful advice which Professors Felix Heimann and especially Adolf Köhnken have placed at my disposal. My greatest debt remains to my wife to whom this work is dedicated.

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