

PAYBACK TIME: METAMORPHOSES OF DEBT AND COMMODITY IN PINDAR'S *OLYMPIAN* 10*

1. The poet as debtor: *Olympian* 10 and the language of commerce

The beginning of Pindar's *Olympian* 10 for Hagesidamos of Lokroi Epizephyrioi, winner of the boys' boxing contest at the Olympic games of 476 BCE, revolves, untypically, around ideas of debt, interest, and repayment:

Τὸν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν ἀνάγνωτέ μοι
Ἀρχεστράτου παῖδα, πόθι φρενὸς
ἐμᾶς γέγραπται· γλυκὴ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέλος ὀφείλων
ἐπιλέλαθ'. ὦ Μοῖσ', ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ θυγάτηρ
Ἀλάθεια Διός, ὀρθῶι χερί
ἐρύκετον ψευδέων 5
ἐνιπᾶν ἀλιτόξενον.
ἔκαθεν γὰρ ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλων χρόνος
ἐμὸν καταίσχυνε βαθὺ χρέος.
ὅμως δὲ λῦσαι δυνατὸς ὄξεϊαν ἐπιμομφάν
τόκος. ὀράτω νῦν ψᾶφον ἐλισσομέναν
ὅπῃ κῦμα κατακλύσσει ῥέον, 10
ὅπῃ τε κοινὸν λόγον
φίλαν τείσομεν ἐς χάριν.

8 καταίσχυνε Boeckh : καταισχύνει codd. 9 ὀράτω Fennell : θνατῶν codd. :
ὀράτ' ὄν Schneidewin : ὀνάτωρ Hermann : ἀνάτως (uel ἀνατί) Erbse

Read out to me the name of the Olympic victor, the son of Arkhestratos, where it is written in my mind; for I forgot that I owed him a sweet song. O Muse, and you, Truth, daughter of Zeus, do ward off, with a straightening hand, the reproachful claim that I have transgressed, with lies, against a guest-friend.

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Indeed, future time, coming from afar, put my deep indebtedness to shame. Still, interest on a debt has the power to dissolve strident censure. Let him [viz. Hagesidamos] now see¹ how a flowing wave will wash away a rolling pebble, and how we shall (likewise) repay him, in the way of friendly gratification, with an account common to all.

Pindar's promise to deliver the ode is conceptualized in terms of a debt (3) he has so far failed to honour. The forgotten debt has accumulated over time (7), and Pindar now finds himself 'shamefully' in arrears (8). Nonetheless, he is at long last able to make up for the delay by paying Hagesidamos back with interest (*tokos*; 9), that is, by offering him the present ode.²

The idea of the epinikian ode as a debt owed to the recipient is not uncommon in Pindar.³ What is remarkable in *O.* 10 is the unusually explicit language of business and credit in which the idea is couched. The terms *opheilon* (3), *chreos* (8), *tokos* (9), and *teisomen* (12) speak for themselves. Financial record-keeping is also evoked: *πόθι φρενὸς | ἐμῶς γέγραπται* (2–3) suggests a debtor's ledger, which would record amounts owed to creditors.⁴ Of particular interest here is *psaphon* (9), a word whose ambiguity is crucial for the interpretation of the passage and, I would suggest, of the entire ode. The word can mean not only 'pebble' but also 'abacus pebble' or 'counter'. The image of a pebble swept away by an onrushing sea wave (9–10) is fused with that of a

¹ For a defence of Fennell's ὀράτω, see S. W. Barrett, *Greek Lyric, Tragedy, and Textual Criticism. Collected Papers*, ed. M. L. West (Oxford, 2007), 61.

² Contrary to some ancient commentators, who maintained that the τόκος is in fact the ensuing *Ol.* 11 (e.g. Σ1b on *O.* 10), modern scholarly consensus rightly affirms that the 'interest' is to be found in the quality of *Ol.* 10 itself; see e.g. E. L. Bundy, 'Studia Pindarica: (i) The Eleventh Olympian Ode; (ii) The First Isthmian Ode', *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 18.1 (1962), 1 n. 4, and 33; Barrett (n. 1), 55.

³ See principally Bundy (n. 2) 10–11, 54–9; L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise. Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* (Berkeley, CA, 2013; corrected reprint of the 1991 edition) 85–90, 93–4, with earlier bibliography.

⁴ For the language, cf. *Ar. Nub.* 19–20. See also B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes*, second edition (New York, 1890), 214; W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on Pindar, vol. II. Olympian Odes 1, 10, 11, Nemean 11, Isthmian 2* (Leiden, 1988), 55; B. Gentili, C. Catenacci, P. Giannini, and L. Lomiento, *Pindaro. Le Olimpiche* (Milan, 2013), 556. *Contra* D. Steiner, 'Catullan Excavations: Pindar's *Olympian* 10 and Catullus 68', *HSCPh* 102 (2004), 282; R. Thomas, 'Fame, Memorial, and Choral Poetry: The Origins of Epinikian Poetry – an Historical Study', in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (eds.), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons, and Festivals. From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2007), 151–2; D. Fearn, 'Kleos Versus Stone? Lyric Poetry and Contexts for Memorialization', in P. Liddel and P. Low (eds.), *Inscriptions and Their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford, 2013), 248–9; D. Fearn, *Pindar's Eyes. Visual and Material Culture in Epinikian Poetry* (Oxford, 2017), 12–13. These scholars argue (improbably, I think) that the victor's name is imagined in the form of an inscription, perhaps from a dedicatory statue's base (see N. Nicholson, *The Poetics of Victory in the Greek West. Epinikian, Oral Tradition, and the Deinomenid Empire* [Oxford, 2016], 119) or from a victors' list.

counting pebble to suggest that the lavishness of Pindar's epinikian offering will go far beyond mere repayment of the debt owed: indeed, it will eliminate all need for counting pebbles, overwhelming, like a sea wave, the rigorous scrupulousness of financial record-keeping.

The prominence of the idea of debt in the first strophic system prompts the question: what is it, exactly, that Pindar conceives as his debt towards his patron? It has been suggested that the debt consists in the poet's contractual obligation to deliver the ode – a service for which he may even have received advance payment. This has been argued most emphatically by Gretchen Kromer, who maintained that Pindar and Hagesidamos 'are seen as parties in a business contract' and that the ode's opening reference 'to certain "written" words' implies

the existence of a contract between the poet and the victor. ... The existence of the contract, as well as the use of the language of debt, implies that the song is part of a commercial transaction: it is worth a certain amount of money.⁵

However, this interpretation has been forcefully resisted by scholars such as Willem Verdenius and Leslie Kurke.⁶ Verdenius objects that such a candid admission of a contractual relationship between poet and patron would undermine the liberal ethos of the Pindaric *epinikion*, which typically represents Pindar's patrons as his personal friends. In a similar spirit, Kurke argues that the ode actually inverts the terms of the contract, so that it is Pindar who appears to be paying the victor by offering him interest, and that the business imagery is at any rate swept aside by the wave imagery of lines 9–12; moreover, at the poem's conclusion it is the continuity of the *oikos* (and its property) into the future, rather than any specific business transaction, that is foregrounded as a value of lasting importance.

As we shall see, there is much of importance and value in Kurke's remarks. Still, as Kromer has shown, the two aspects of the poem – the contractual obligation and the relationship of friendly reciprocity between poet and victor – are far from incompatible.⁷ Acknowledgement of the

⁵ Quotations from G. Kromer, 'The Value of Time in Pindar's *Olympian* 10', *Hermes* 104 (1976), 421, 422.

⁶ Verdenius (n. 4), 55, 57; Kurke (n. 3), 202–3. See also L. Woodbury, 'Pindar and the Mercenary Muse: *Isthm.* 2.1–13', *TAPhA* 99 (1968), 531: 'An obsession with fees is the least likely of themes for a Pindaric poem'; G. Nagy, 'The "Professional Muse" and Models of Prestige in Ancient Greece', *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989), 141; Steiner (n. 4), 278.

⁷ Kromer (n. 5).

'business' aspect of the relationship need not preclude or undermine its affective interpersonal aspect, as is usually the case in capitalist economies; in fact, it may even reinforce and solidify the interpersonal bond. And (*pace* Kurke) it is not true that, in contexts where Pindar foregrounds his debt-like obligation to celebrate the victor, 'the fact of payment is *completely suppressed*'.⁸ On at least two occasions, Pindar refers explicitly to his contractual obligation to deliver the ode, and in both cases he uses the (apparently) business term συντίθεμαι. The relevant passages are *Nem.* 4.75: κάρυξ έτοιμος έβαν | ...συνθέμενος ('I contracted to come as a ready herald' of the athletic prowess of the Theandridae); and *Pyth.* 11.41–2: Μοῖσα...εἰ μισθοῖο συνέθευ παρέχειν | φωνάν ύπάργυρον ('Muse, ...since you have contracted to hire your voice for silver').⁹ Especially in the latter passage, μισθοῖο and φωνάν ύπάργυρον leave no doubt as to the monetary aspect of the transaction.¹⁰ An avowal of the mercenary aspect of Pindar's art also underlies the famous opening of *Isthm.* 2 (1–12), even though, as Kurke compellingly argues, Pindar, in the course of that ode, reintegrates wealth as a factor conducive to the enhancement of aristocratic prestige in the new *polis* context, through a dialectic interaction with earlier negative valuations of material incentives as motives for poetic composition.¹¹

It may be objected that Pindar cannot have expected *monetary* compensation from his Lokrian patron, because Lokroi did not begin to issue coins before some (uncertain) date in the fourth century.¹²

⁸ Kurke (n. 3), 86 (my emphasis).

⁹ Translations from W. H. Race, *Pindar*, vols. I–II (Cambridge, MA, 1997), ii.41 and i.373, respectively. For συνθέμενος / συνέθευ denoting the poet's contract in the above passages, see M. M. Willcock, *Pindar. Victory Odes. Olympians 2, 7 and 11; Nemean 4; Isthmians 3, 4 and 7* (Cambridge, 1995), 106–7; B. Gentili, P. A. Bernardini, E. Cingano, and P. Giannini, *Pindaro. Le Pinche* (Milan, 1995) 660; cf. B. Gentili, 'Verità e accordo contrattuale (σύνθεσις) in Pindaro, fr. 205 Sn.-Maehl.', *ICLS* 6 (1981), 219. For the question of the poets' commission and payment, see S. Hornblower, 'Greek Lyric and the Politics and Sociologies of Archaic and Classical Greek Communities', in F. Budelmann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric* (Cambridge, 2009), 39–44; for a more sceptical approach to assigning economic motives to the poets' activity, see H. Pelliccia, 'Simonides, Pindar and Bacchylides', in Budelmann (this note), 243–4.

¹⁰ In fact, the latter passage is quoted elsewhere by Kurke herself (n. 3), 210, as evidence for Pindar's awareness that his own poetry is not exempt from mercenary motives.

¹¹ Kurke (n. 3), 208–22. See also Woodbury (n. 6), 540.

¹² See, e.g., B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, second edition (Oxford, 1911), 101–4; N. K. Rutter, 'The Coinage of Italy', in W. E. Metcalf (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (Oxford, 2012), 137–8. For a concise history of Lokrian coinage, see T. Fischer-Hansen, T. H. Nielsen, and C. Ampolo, 'Italia and Kampania', in M. H. Hansen and T. H. Nielsen (eds.), *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis* (Oxford, 2004), 277, with earlier bibliography.

However, issuing money is one thing; *using* money is another. In fact, as hoard evidence demonstrates, by the time that Pindar composed *Ol.* 10, Lokroi was using the coins of cities such as Kroton, Taras, and Temesa.¹³ Early hoards buried in the wider region of Calabria also contain coins from Taras, Metapontion, Sybaris, Poseidonia, Kaulonia, and Kroton.¹⁴ And Italiote cities on the Ionian coast (Metapontion, Sybaris, Kroton) had been minting coins since the second half of the sixth century, with Kaulonia, at a distance of some 35 kilometres from Lokroi, following suit in the last quarter of the same century, and using the same ('Achaean') weight standard.¹⁵

2. The poet as integrator: from commensurability to homosociality

We saw earlier how Pindar's image of a pebble swept away by the sea evokes, at the conclusion of the first strophic system, the idea of unstinting liberality prevailing over the rigorous meticulousness of precise record-keeping. It may therefore come as a surprise that, at the beginning of the second strophic system, he should choose to praise his Lokrian hosts for (among other things) the very quality which he seems to have disclaimed immediately before, namely *Atrekeia*, 'exactitude', or 'strict accuracy':

νέμει γὰρ Ἀτρέκεια πόλιν Λοκρῶν Ζεφυρίων,
 μέλει τέ σφισι Καλλιόπα
 καὶ χάλκεος Ἄρης. τράπε δὲ Κύ- 15
 κνεια μάχα καὶ ὑπέρβιον
 Ἡρακλέα· πύκτας δ' ἐν Ὀλυμπιάδι νικῶν
 ἴλαι φερέτω χάριν
 Ἀγησίδαμος, ὡς
 Ἀχιλεῖ Πάτροκλος.
 θάξαις δέ κε φύντ' ἄρετῆι ποτί 20
 πελώριον ὀρμάσαι κλέος ἄ-
 νῆρ θεοῦ σὺν παλάμαι.

15 Κύκνεια Hermann : κυκνέα codd. 21 παλάμαις codicum pars

¹³ See Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards, <<http://coinhoards.org>>, accessed 12 November 2019 (henceforth IGCH), 1880 (buried c.490 BCE); Nicholson (n. 4), 111 with n. 39.

¹⁴ See IGCH 1881 (buried c.480 BCE), 1886 (c.470 BCE), 1887 (c.470 BCE). For a numismatic history of those regions, see Fischer-Hansen, Nielsen, and Ampolo (n. 12), 266 (Kaulonia), 269–70 (Kroton), 281–2 (Metapontion), 289 (Poseidonia), 298–9 (Sybaris), 302 (Taras), 303 (Temesa).

¹⁵ Rutter (n. 12), 128–9.

After all, Exactitude rules the city of the Western Lokrians, and they care for Kalliope and brazen Ares. The battle against Kyknos did put even mighty Herakles to flight; but Hagesidamos, having won the boxing contest at the Olympic Games, should be grateful to Ilas, as Patroklos was to Akhilleus. With a god's help, a man can sharpen someone born into excellence and urge him to immense glory.

The relevance of *Atrekeia* in this context is not immediately obvious. The word has often been taken to allude to traditions about Lokroi Epizephyrioi as one of the very first Greek cities to have introduced written legislation (attributed to Zaleukos, perhaps c.650 BCE).¹⁶ It is precisely for the ‘exactitude’ with which they applied their ancient laws (τοῖς δὲ πάλαι κειμένοις [sc. νόμοις] ἀκριβῶς χρῶνται) that Demosthenes (24.139–40) would later praise the Lokrians, pointing to Lokroi as an example of a ‘well-legislated city’. This interpretation is consistent with a characteristic trope of the Pindaric *epinikion*, namely praise for a city’s (or person’s) concern for justice or good government.¹⁷

Others see in the reference to *Atrekeia* an anticipatory affirmation of the ‘accuracy’ of the mythic account of the foundation of the Olympic Games that will follow in lines 24–77.¹⁸ This, too, would tally nicely with the frequent invocations of *alatheia* or personified *Alatheia* (already invoked at 3–4) as guiding principles throughout Pindaric poetry.¹⁹ But one cannot help suspecting that *Atrekeia* must also conceal an allusion to the meticulousness associated with the record-keeping and debt ledgers evoked at the beginning of the ode. Surely, the γάρ (‘after all’) with which the reference to *Atrekeia* is introduced encourages us to think back to the preceding apology over Pindar’s forgotten debt and his determination to make up for it.²⁰ Elsewhere, the prose synonym of *atrekeia*, namely *akrubeia*, means ‘exactness over money matters’ (Polyb. 31.27.11: ἀκρίβεια περὶ τὸ διάφορον, ‘strictness in matters of expenditure’), or ‘parsimony’ (Plut. *Vit. Per.* 16.5–6: τὴν...συνηγμένην εἰς τὸ

¹⁶ See, e.g., F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig, 1880), 428; P. J. Nassen, ‘A Literary Study of Pindar’s *Olympian* 10’, *TAPhA* 105 (1975), 225–6; W. Mullen, *Choreia. Pindar and Dance* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 202. The point is argued in detail by Kromer (n. 5), 428–9.

¹⁷ Cf. e.g. *Ol.* 2.6, 8.21–30, 9.15–16, 13.6–8; *Nem.* 4.12–13, 11.8; *Isthm.* 5.22. See also Bundy (n. 2), 25 n. 58; Verdenius (n. 4), 63, on *O.* 10.13 (Ἀτρέκεια).

¹⁸ See e.g. Gentili et al. (n. 4), 559–60 *ad* 13/14.

¹⁹ See fr. 205.2: ὄνασσεῖ Ἀλάθεια (‘Queen Truth’); *Ol.* 2.92, 6.89–91, 13.11–12, 98–100; *Pyth.* 4.279.

²⁰ See G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley, CA, 1945), 111–12; D. L. Burgess, ‘Pindar’s *Olympian* 10: Praise for the Poet, Praise for the Victor’, *Hermes* 118.3 (1990), 274. *Contra* Verdenius (n. 4), 62 *ad* 13 (γάρ); Gentili et al. (n. 4), 559 *ad* 13/14.

ἀκριβέστατον δαπάνην...τὴν τοιαύτην...ἀκριβείων, 'his extremely parsimonious expenditure...the aforementioned parsimony'); and a penny-pincher in Menander is ἀκριβῆς τοῦς τρόπους ('niggardly in his behaviour'; fr. 176.4 K–A).

None of the interpretations of *atrekeia* mentioned above is incompatible with the others; in fact, they can all be amalgamated into a coherent whole. The Lokrians' fame for strict integrity in government, legislation, and (we may assume) business transactions obliges Pindar to respond with equal integrity, both in paying back his long-outstanding debt and in providing an accurate account of the foundation of the Olympic Games. But in order to grasp the full significance of the reference to *Atrekeia* here, we must look at the company it keeps in this context, in which it is associated with two other qualities especially characteristic of the Western Lokrians. These are devotion to poetry and song, metonymically represented by the Muse Kalliope; and distinction in warfare ('bronze Ares'). The coupling of excellence in music and excellence in war is a standard trope of Pindaric praise.²¹ But it is also important to realize that the virtues Pindar ascribes to his Lokrian hosts are, implicitly, qualities also associated with his own poetry. The Lokrians' concern for Kalliope (that is, the Muses in general) is matched by Pindar's frequent affirmations, throughout his poetry, that his song is under the patronage of the Muses.²² As for the Lokrians' warlike pursuits, they are, again, matched by the martial images (arrows, javelins, bows, chariots) which Pindar frequently applies to his own song-making.²³

A pattern begins to emerge. Just as the Lokrians are renowned for their devotion to the Muses and for their excellence in war, so Pindar is a protégé of the Muses and a composer of songs that are often envisaged as military pursuits. And just as the Lokrians are under the aegis

²¹ See Bundy (n. 2), 24–5. Cf. *Ol.* 11.16–19, composed for the same occasion as *Ol.* 10; *Pyth.* 5.114–15 (Arkesilas is both ἐν τῇ Μοῖσαισι ποτανός, 'soaring on the wings of the Muses', and ἀρματηλάτας σοφός, 'a dexterous charioteer'); *Ol.* 13.22–3 (in Corinth ἐν δὲ Μοῖσ' ἄδύπνοος, | ἐν δ' Ἄρης ἀνθεῖ, 'there blossoms the sweet-breathing Muse, there [blossoms] Ares').

²² E.g. *Ol.* 1.111–12, 3.4; *Pyth.* 1.58–9; *Nem.* 3.1; *Isthm.* 8.5a–6; and many other examples.

²³ The song as arrow or javelin: *Ol.* 1.111–12; 2.83–5, 90; 9.5–8; 13.93–5. The song as bow: *Ol.* 2.89; 9.5; *Nem.* 6.28. The song as chariot (of the Muses): *Ol.* 1.110; 6.22–4; *Pyth.* 10.65; *Isthm.* 8.61. See further M. Simpson, 'The Chariot and the Bow as Metaphors for Poetry in Pindar's Odes', *TAPhA* 100 (1969), 437–73; M. R. Lefkowitz, 'The Poet as Athlete', *Journal of Sport History* 11.2 (1984), 19–20, 21 = *First-Person Fictions. Pindar's Poetic 'I'* (Oxford, 1991), 163, 165; W. Fitzgerald, *Agonistic Poetry. The Pindaric Mode in Pindar, Horace, Hölderlin, and the English Ode* (Berkeley, CA, 1987), 20–1. All these metaphors are of Indo-European ancestry: M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007), 41–3, 45.

of *Atrekeia*, so Pindar sets great store by integrity and is fully committed to scrupulousness.²⁴ In assimilating the qualities of his patron (and his broader community) to those of his own poetry, and, implicitly, of himself, Pindar creates a continuum that integrates the object, the medium, and the agent of epinikian praise into a seamless whole. His strategy of integrating his song with its object is far from peculiar to *Ol.* 10. As has been shown by Mary Lefkowitz, in a number of odes Pindar speaks of his poetry in language that evokes aspects of the athletic contest (such as accuracy, speed, and distance), stressing the challenge both of competitive sports and of poetic composition, and emphasizing his own superiority as well as that of the victor he praises.²⁵ On occasion, he even takes care to match the metaphors describing his own poetic endeavour with images evoking the specific nature of the contest at which the victor distinguished himself.²⁶

By creating this type of homology between himself and the athlete, Pindar not only ‘expresses his friendship for and appreciation of the victor’s own sport’, as Lefkowitz puts it, but also subsumes both the agent and the object of epinikian praise under a single set of values, in which athletics and poetics are amalgamated.²⁷ In so doing, he eliminates the distance separating poet and patron, eclipses their hierarchical (‘vertical’) relationship, and establishes inclusiveness, communality, and non-hierarchical (‘horizontal’) homosociality.²⁸ Having begun his ode with a scenario of disjunction and imbalance, as a debtor in arrears, and at risk of disadvantaging his guest-friend (ὀλιτόξενον; 6), Pindar subsequently initiates a reparatory movement towards redress, unification, and equilibrium. In this context, he redeploys *Atrekeia* as an element of cohesion and solidarity: from a potential factor of depersonalized hierarchization (debtor vs creditor) and social disruption, *Atrekeia* is now reshaped into an agent of integration, communal celebration, and liberal reciprocity.²⁹

²⁴ See Gildersleeve (n. 4), 215: ‘The Locrians have honesty. I am honest. They love song. I sing. They are warlike. I will tell of war.’

²⁵ Lefkowitz 1984 (n. 23), 18–24 = Lefkowitz 1991 (n. 23), 161–8.

²⁶ See e.g. *Ol.* 6.22–7; *Nem.* 4.35–41, 91–6; *Pyth.* 10.64–6; Lefkowitz 1984 (n. 23), 19–20, 23 = Lefkowitz 1991 (n. 23), 163, 167; T. K. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind. A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry* (Leiden, 1985), 23.

²⁷ Lefkowitz 1984 (n. 23), 23 = Lefkowitz 1991 (n. 23), 168.

²⁸ On the distinction between vertical and horizontal homosociality see further N. Hammarén and T. Johansson, ‘Homosociality: In Between Power and Intimacy’, *SAGE Open* (Jan.–Mar. 2014), 1–11.

²⁹ See Fitzgerald (n. 23), 117.

3. The poet as Herakles: re-enacting origins

Between his reference to Lokrian virtues and his praise of the boy's coach, Pindar has wedged line 15, which has long puzzled commentators:³⁰

τράπε δὲ Κύκνεια μάχα καὶ ὑπέρβιον
Ἡρακλέα

the battle against Kyknos did put even mighty Herakles to flight.

According to the ancient scholia to the passage (19a–b Drachmann), Stesikhoros' now-lost *Kyknos* (fr. 166a–b Davies/Finglass) included an episode in which the eponymous Kyknos, a son of Ares who assaulted and killed passers-by near Pagasai, was valiantly confronted by Herakles, although the latter was forced to take flight when Ares came to his son's assistance. Nonetheless, sometime after his initial discomfiture, Herakles returned and defeated Kyknos – possibly thanks to Athena's intervention (Stesich. fr. 167).³¹

The relevance of the Herakles vs Kyknos episode in this context is not at all clear. Hugh Lloyd-Jones suggested that Kyknos had associations with Lokroi in myth, and that the allusion to his feat of strength is meant to lend authority to Pindar's preceding praise of the Lokrians' military valour.³² This explanation, however, runs into difficulties. Kyknos' Lokrian associations are anything but certain; even if they were, a barbaric slayer of travellers would be an egregiously inappropriate exemplum for Pindar to use in praise of his hosts.³³ A more promising scenario is the one suggested in the ancient scholia. According to this, Hagesidamos must have shown dispiritedness before entering the contest, or even suffered defeat at a previous contest, but was spurred on to renewed effort and final victory by his trainer Ilas. While this is

³⁰ For this line in its context see the quotation at the beginning of section 2 above.

³¹ On Stesikhoros' version of the myth, and on its presumable innovations (Herakles' flight, Athena's intervention), see M. Davies and P. J. Finglass, *Stesichorus. The Poems* (Cambridge, 2014), 465–8.

³² H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Lykaon and Kyknos', *ZPE* 108 (1995), 41–2 = H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Further Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford, 2005), 55–7, with further bibliography on the earlier scholars from whose arguments his own thesis developed. On the supposed associations of the Kyknos story with Lokroi, see also T. K. Hubbard, 'Pindar's Κύκνεια μάχα: Subtext and Allusion in *Olympian* 10. 15–16', *MD* 23 (1989), 139–40.

³³ See H. J. Rose, 'Herakles and Kyknos (Pindar, O.X. 15)', *Mnemosyne*, ser. 4, 10.2 (1957), 115.

almost certainly some ancient scholar's conjectural deduction from Pindar's text (compare the tentative phrasing of the scholium 21a Drachmann: *ἔοικε* δὲ ὁ Ἀγησίδαμος ἠττήσθαι πρῶτον, 'Hagesidamos seems to have been defeated at first', etc.), its likelihood is not necessarily diminished by its speculativeness.³⁴ If Hagesidamos had indeed suffered defeat, or shown lack of determination at an Olympic contest, the news would have probably produced a discomfiting effect at home analogous to that described elsewhere by Pindar in regard to vanquished athletic opponents (*Pyth.* 8.81–7).³⁵ In such a case, Pindar's assertion that even Herakles suffered defeat may have been just the sort of discreet reminder needed, under the circumstances, to dispel malice.

While I hold this scenario to be certainly conceivable, and even perhaps probable, I do not think it exhausts the interpretive possibilities of the Herakles vs Kyknos exemplum. The significance of the exemplum cannot be fully grasped unless we take into account Pindar's strategy (described above) of homologizing the agent of the epinikian song with its object. The Herakles vs Kyknos exemplum is the common denominator between athletic victor and praise poet: it is applicable both to Hagesidamos (assuming that he did suffer initial defeat or dispiritedness) and to Pindar himself, who could not deliver the promised ode the first time around, but has now returned, with renewed determination, to pay back his debt with lavish interest. Indeed, the Herakles figure will prove to be of central importance to the ode as a whole, as part of yet another exemplary mythic narrative, in which the hero suffers initial failure but, thanks to renewed effort, achieves final success.

This is the topic of the central portion of the ode. In the second strophic system (especially 26–42), the crucial notion of unpaid debt resurfaces in connection with the events leading to the foundation of the Olympic Games by Herakles. The narrative is convoluted, and does not unfold in linear fashion, but the temporal succession of the events narrated may be reconstructed as follows. Herakles' Tirynthian army was initially defeated by the Moliones, the brothers Kteatos and Eurytos, at Elis (31–4); however, at a later stage, Herakles succeeded, by gaining a second wind, in vanquishing the Moliones at an ambush near Kleonai (26–30). The Moliones had

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁵ Fitzgerald (n. 23), 20. *Contra* Hubbard (n. 32), 138; Barrett (n. 1), 62–3.

apparently allied themselves to King Augeias, who had withheld Herakles' payment for cleaning his stables, and was eventually also killed by the hero as a punishment for his broken promise, 'so that [Herakles] might willingly exact from overweening Augeias, unwilling that he was, the wage for his service' (ὡς Αὐγέαον λάτριον | ἀέκονθ' ἐκὼν μισθὸν ὑπέρβιον | πρόσσοιτο; 28–30). The Herakles vs Augeias/Moliones exemplum shares two significant features with the Herakles vs Kyknos episode, as well as being applicable to Pindar's own situation. First, initial defeat is followed by renewed effort and final victory: Herakles' over Kyknos, Herakles' over the Moliones and Augeias, Pindar's making up for his initial failure to deliver the ode. Second, an outstanding debt is either repaid voluntarily with interest (Pindar's to Hagesidamos) or exacted forcibly, again with 'interest', through Herakles' depredation of Augeias' city (cf. 34–42).³⁶

In the latter case, the repayment, with interest, of Augeias' debt to Herakles leads to the foundation of the Olympic Games: in 56–7 (cf. 44) we are told specifically that Herakles instituted the festival by offering to the gods the best portion of the booty obtained from his battles. There is a significant parallelism here with Pindar's repayment, with interest, of his debt to the victorious athlete. Pindar repays his debt by offering an ode which not only honours the victor but also re-enacts, narratively, the establishment of the Olympic Games, itself the outcome of a (violent) debt settlement. Failure to repay his debt would cause Pindar to 'harm his guest-friend' (ἀλιτόξενον; 6) and thus equate him with Augeias the 'cheater of guests' (ξεναπάτας; 34).³⁷ True, in his epinikian fiction, Pindar is the one who owes the debt, whereas in myth Herakles is the person to whom the debt is owed; however, the poet and the hero are progressively homologized, not least thanks to the isomorphy implicitly established between them in line 15, as analysed above. At the same time, the central portion of *Ol.* 10 is, in effect, an aetiological re-enactment of the foundation of the Olympic Games – 'a literal re-enactment of *illud tempus*', as Agócs has put it.³⁸ And since '[t]he *aitia* of the festival and the song are the same', the epinikian song 'is an instance of a contract between the god and men living and

³⁶ See also Hubbard (n. 32), 141–2; Burgess (n. 20), 275–6; J. Kabiersch, 'Humor bei Pindar: ein Deutungsversuch zu τόκος (Pind. Ol. X,9)', *Hermes* 127.3 (1999), 370–1.

³⁷ Nassen (n. 16), 229–30; Kromer (n. 5), 432; Fitzgerald (n. 23), 120.

³⁸ P. Agócs, 'Performance and Genre: Reading Pindar's κῶμοι', in P. Agócs, C. Carey, and R. Rawles (eds.), *Reading the Victory Ode* (Cambridge, 2012), 216; cf. 51: ἐν πρωτογόνου τελετῇ ('at that first-created festival'); 58: σὺν Ὀλυμπιάδι πρώτῳ ('with the first Olympic festival').

dead, established by Herakles and re-enacted through history'.³⁹ In *Olympian* 10, 'the mythical event and the present victory mutually realize one another's identity'.⁴⁰

Pindar repays his debt with interest indeed: by instituting a homology between the first Olympic Games and the present occasion, he consolidates the latter's symbolic value as an instantiation of the archetypal, foundational event, the mythic origin of all Olympic contests.⁴¹ In this context, Time also undergoes a crucial transformation and revalorisation. At the beginning of the ode, Time, as the crucial factor that could render a debt overdue, was liable to disrupt interpersonal relations insofar as it could 'shame' the poet (χρόνος | ...καταίσχυνε; 7–8) and potentially 'harm' his patron. By 53–5, however, Time has evolved into an integrative force, overseeing and guaranteeing, as 'the sole assayer of genuine truth (*alatheia*)' (53–5),⁴² the unbroken continuity between the foundational Olympic contest and its present instantiation.⁴³ Thus, the initial 'forgetfulness' (ἐπιλέλαθ'; 4), as a result of which the passage of time rendered Pindar's debt overdue, now leads to the negation of forgetfulness, to a veritable ἀ-λάθεια, thanks to which the rift separating poet/debtor from victor/creditor is healed by establishing an equally unbroken continuity between them.⁴⁴

4. The poet as purveyor of immortality

As we have seen, *Olympian* 10 performs a transition from the strict commensurability of credit transactions (debt, repayment, interest) towards the liberal homosociality between poet and patron, and towards the festive togetherness of epinikian celebration. In this

³⁹ Agócs (n. 38), 217, and see further 212–18.

⁴⁰ Fitzgerald (n. 23), 123; see also Burgess (n. 20), 277–8.

⁴¹ See also H. Spelman, *Pindar and the Poetics of Permanence* (Oxford, 2018), 196–203.

⁴² ὁ τ' ἐξελέγγων μόνος | ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον | Χρόνος; translation from Race (n. 9), i.169.

⁴³ On the role of Time, see also H. Erbse, 'Bemerkungen zu Pindars 10. olympischer Ode', in M. von Albrecht and E. Heck (eds.), *Silvae. Festschrift für Ernst Zinn zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1970), 31–4 ≈ H. Erbse, *Ausgewählte Schriften zur Klassischen Philologie* (Berlin and New York, 1979), 100–2; Nassen (n. 16), 232; Mullen (n. 16), 185–208 (passim); Fitzgerald (n. 23), 121–2; Steiner (n. 4), 293–4; Agócs (n. 38), 216–17; M. Pavlou, 'Kronos, Cronos, and the Cronion Hill: The Spatialization of Time in Pindar's *Olympian* 10', *CHS Research Bulletin* 2.2 (2014), esp. §11, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hlnc.essay:PavlouM.Chronos_Kronos_and_the_Kronion_Hill.2014>, accessed 13 November 2019.

⁴⁴ See Fitzgerald (n. 23), 122. For the etymology of ἀλήθεια (<ἀ+λήθη), see P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, second edition (Paris, 1999), 618. For the etymological play between ἐπιλέλαθ' and ἀλάθεια, see Pavlou (n. 43), §10.2.

transition, Pindar's (voluntary) payment of his debt to the victor gives rise to the epinikian ode that is *Ol.* 10, just as Augeias' (forcible) payment of his debt to Herakles gave rise to the foundation of the first Olympic Games, the primordial event of which the present ode is a celebration and, to an extent, a re-enactment.

It is in the fifth, and final, strophic system that the essential themes developed in the ode are brought together in a culminating synthesis that locks the whole poem together. The image with which the strophic system begins (86–90) is that of a longed-for son born to the relief of an ageing father, who would otherwise have seen his wealth fall to a stranger's hands – since, in Pindar's words, 'wealth that has found a foreign master from elsewhere is most hateful to a dying man' (88–90). The sudden emergence of this image may seem abrupt or unmotivated, but the idea of physical progeny (παῖς ἐξ ἀλόχου πατρί | ποθεινός, 'a son born from a legitimate wife is yearned for'; 86–7) must evoke the figurative, financial 'progeny', the *tokos*, with which the ode memorably began (9). As the Greeks were fully aware, the use of *tokos* to signify interest accrued on a principal sum was a figurative extension of the idea of natural reproduction.⁴⁵ In other words, the financial *tokos* or 'interest' that Pindar promised to pay at the beginning of *Ol.* 10 now morphs into physical *tokos*, or 'progeny', which ensures the safety and continuation of family wealth, and thus supersedes the metaphorical *tokos*, the 'progeny', or monetary interest, that would have been paid in the context of a regular debt transaction.⁴⁶

This movement – from the figurative (financial) use of *tokos* at the beginning of the ode to the evocation of literal, physical offspring at its end – is part of the ode's broader movement from the detached individualism of commodity transaction, through the communality of epinikian celebration and the reciprocity of aristocratic munificence, to the conferment of (poetic) immortality upon the victor and his family. The crucial role of epinikian praise in this movement is made explicit in the fifth antistrophe (91–6). Pindar's song makes sure that Hagesidamos' victory can become a vehicle of immortality for his ageing father and for his paternal *oikos* in general; for 'without song' (ἀοιδᾶς ἄτερ; 91) a man's achievements will be obliterated after his death (cf. 91–3: 'his aspirations have been in vain, and he has achieved only a brief

⁴⁵ See e.g. Pl. *Resp.* 555e–6a; Arist. *Pol.* 1258b5–7; and the extended pun on τόκος = 'offspring'/'monetary interest' in Ar. *Thesm.* 839–45. And see Mullen (n. 16), 202.

⁴⁶ See Fitzgerald (n. 23), 30–1, 123; Burgess (n. 20), 273, 279.

pleasure for his toil').⁴⁷ The 'far-reaching glory' (εὐρὸν κλέος; 95) that is the gift of the Muses is actualized through 'the sweet-sounding lyre and the delightful aulos' (93–4), which confer 'gratifying lustre', or *charis* (χάρις; 94), on the victor.

Indeed, *charis* is of paramount importance in consolidating the integrating bountifulness of epinikian celebration. Leslie Kurke has amply emphasized and analysed, in the context of Pindaric poetry, the reciprocal aspects of *charis* as a factor encouraging the aristocratic exchange of gifts or favours and constructing a network of mutually reinforcing relationships of giving and counter-giving. More specifically, she has shown how *charis* is crucial in enabling the Pindaric ode's modulation 'from the hierarchical, ranking function of gift exchange to its integrative function', which reaffirms and solidifies the bonds linking the poet with the victorious athlete and his community.⁴⁸ Moreover, as Bonnie MacLachlan has shown, *charis* is a socially constructed experience, associated with 'the disposition to react when confronted with pleasure of a personal, social nature' – to respond with a feeling of gratification to a beautiful object, person, or act. As a socially conditioned response, *charis* is not a one-off or self-contained phenomenon; rather, it is part of an ongoing mechanism of social cohesion and solidarity, a factor conducive to the creation of networks of mutuality that persist over time.⁴⁹

The power of *charis* to construct networks of homosociality, mutual obligations of beneficence, and reciprocal gratification is evident in all occurrences of the word in *Olympian* 10,⁵⁰ but particularly so at line 94, in which the *charis* theme reaches its peak: by 'besprinkling' (ἀναπάσσει) the victor with the *charis* of his song, the poet both repays his debt with interest and deploys the beauty of his song to invest the object of his praise with qualities that invite responses of delight. This is evinced by the repeated emphasis on the victorious boy's loveliness (ἐρατόν; 99), beautiful form (ιδέαι τε καλόν; 103), and youth

⁴⁷ On the Pindaric idea of immortality ensured by both offspring and poetry, see H. Boeke, *The Value of Victory in Pindar's Odes. Gnomai, Cosmology and the Role of the Poet* (Leiden, 2007), 66–9.

⁴⁸ See Kurke (n. 3), 89–94 (quotation from p. 89).

⁴⁹ See further B. MacLachlan, *The Age of Grace. Charis in Early Greek Poetry* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), 10–11, 37, 66, 113 n. 38, 131, 136 (quotation from p. 11); see also C. Brillante, 'Charis, bia e il tema della reciprocità amorosa', *QUCC*, n.s. 59.2 (1998), 20–4, with further bibliography. Cf. *Pyth.* 1.75–7, with Nagy (n. 6), 136, 138.

⁵⁰ Cf. the promise of 'friendly gratification' (φίλων...χάρην) at 12; *charis* as gratitude at 17–18; and the epinikian song itself as an instantiation of *charis* at 78, not only because it transforms into graceful song the attractive splendour of the Olympic victory but also because it embodies the relationship of reciprocal gratification between the victor and his community, as well as between the victor and the poet. See Kurke (n. 3), 91. On Pindar's own songs as χάρμιτες, see *Isthm.* 1.6; 3.8.

(ῶρα τε κεκραμένον; 104), which are declared comparable to those of Ganymede, the mythic paragon of youthful male charm and attraction (105). Archetypically, Ganymede's beauty was a preamble to his immortalization: with help from Aphrodite, it kept the boy safe from 'ruthless death' (105).⁵¹ The implication for the situation envisaged in *Ol.* 10 is clear: Hagesidamos' beauty will likewise ensure him immortal fame, with crucial help from Pindar's poetry.⁵²

5. Transactional orders, the transvaluation of commodity, and inalienable gifts: the paradoxes of *Olympian* 10

Let us summarize our findings so far. From an assumed position of inferiority, at the beginning of *Olympian* 10, as a shamefaced debtor in arrears, Pindar gradually progresses to one of unsurpassable superiority. The 'interest' (*tokos*) the poet took it upon himself to pay in order to make up for his long delay in delivering the ode has materialized in the form of a lavish offering – *Olympian* 10 itself. Despite his use of financial language, Pindar repays his debt in a way that far surpasses the framework of business transactions: what his ode confers on the recipient is not material benefit but immaterial assets – social value, prestige, and a release from the fetters of mortality. Although *Ol.* 10 starts life as a commodity, *qua* repayment for debt, it progressively undergoes 'a special kind of transvaluation, in which objects are placed beyond the culturally demarcated zone of commoditization'.⁵³

As part of this process of transvaluation, the ode is not simply withdrawn from the sphere of commodity exchange, but it also undermines the market logic behind commodity exchange. Although offered as 'repayment' for a

⁵¹ The exemplum of Ganymede's immortalization on account of his beauty is referenced in Hom. *Il.* 20.232–5; Hom. *Hymn Aphr.* 202–6.

⁵² See Gentili et al. (n. 4), 576. For possible paederastic nuances here as a reflection of the relationship between Hagesidamos and his trainer, Ilas, see T. K. Hubbard, 'Pindar's Tenth Olympian and Athlete-Trainer Pederasty', *Journal of Homosexuality* 49.3–4 (2005), 137–71; see also Nicholson (n. 4), 162, 188. On epinikian celebration of the physical beauty of victorious athletes, see Boeke (n. 47), 115–22; R. Rawles, 'Eros and Praise in Early Greek Lyric', in L. Athanassaki and E. Bowie (eds.), *Archaic and Classical Choral Song. Politics, Performance and Dissemination* (Berlin, 2011), 146–8; L. Athanassaki, 'Recreating the Emotional Experience of Contest and Victory Celebrations: Spectators and Celebrants in Pindar's Epinicians', in X. Riu and J. Pörtulas (eds.), *Approaches to Archaic Greek Poetry* (Messina, 2012), 187–91. On the erotic aspects of Greek athletics, see T. F. Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford, 2002).

⁵³ A. Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 23.

debt overdue, the ode far exceeds the commensurability principle that normally regulates credit transactions. For, by constructing itself as the embodiment of an inordinately generous counter-gift – nothing less than the conferment of (poetic) immortality on the recipient – *Olympian* 10 becomes singularized and invested with the status of a singular, non-exchangeable, transcendent item.⁵⁴ To adapt a scheme famously proposed by Bloch and Parry, *Ol.* 10 moves from a ‘short-term transactional order’, in which individual exchange and competition prevail, to a long-term one, which is concerned with the reproduction of the household and the consolidation and perpetuation of the wider community (see the final section below for further discussion of this distinction and its applicability to *Ol.* 10).⁵⁵

The movement from the short-term transactional order to that of absolute, non-market valuation is actuated through an agonistic model of munificent rivalry. By repaying his patron with non-material offerings (including the ultimate gift, that of immortality), Pindar not only transcends the narrowly financial terms in which he had initially encapsulated the transaction, but also sets in motion a reciprocity game – a ‘tournament of value’, to use Appadurai’s term⁵⁶ – in which the poet’s victory is assured, since the game is played on his own, radically redefined terms.⁵⁷ While seemingly paying back an outstanding debt, Pindar’s counter-offering in fact creates a new debt, one which the recipient of the ode can never hope to repay. For, by reserving for himself the privilege of conferring immortality, Pindar has set the reciprocity bar so high that further reciprocity on a comparable scale appears to become impossible. The ode thus presents itself as a monument of Pindar’s unsurpassable munificence, but also as a material

⁵⁴ On the singularization of commodities, see I. Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process’, in Appadurai (n. 53), 73–7.

⁵⁵ See M. Bloch and J. Parry, ‘Introduction: Money and the Morality of Exchange’, in J. Parry and M. Bloch (eds.), *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (Cambridge, 1989), 23–8. For applications of their concept of transactional orders on ancient Greek society, see, e.g., S. von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece* (London, 1995), 3–4, 96, 172; L. Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold. The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), 14–22, 31–2, 89, 99–100, 105, 126, 150–9, 222–3, 237–9, 284–96; R. Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind. Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy* (Cambridge, 2004), 13–15.

⁵⁶ Appadurai (n. 53), 21.

⁵⁷ See Fitzgerald (n. 23), 29–30. For competitive reciprocity in early Greece, in the light of comparative anthropological material, see H. van Wees, ‘Greed, Generosity and Gift-Exchange in Early Greece and the Western Pacific’, in W. Jongman and M. Kleijwegt (eds.), *After the Past. Essays in Ancient History in Honour of H. W. Pleket* (Leiden, 2002), 341–78.

embodiment of his ascendancy over his commissioning patron in the contest of lavish liberality which the ode itself has set up.

In other words, *Olympian* 10 transcends the essentially cyclic, repetitive logic of the traditional exchange of gifts, incremental or otherwise, which tends to involve a series of transactions that are structurally undifferentiated: they ensure the perpetual circulation of gifts in an endless circle of reciprocity, and thus maintain and reaffirm a network of societal bonds and relationships, all the while keeping the transactors distinct from each other. By contrast, Pindar replaces this essentially static model of social hierarchization with one that is fundamentally dynamic and ambiguous, even paradoxical, insofar as it appears to perform a number of seemingly contradictory functions:

- (i) It makes the ode into simultaneously a commodity and a non-commodity;
- (ii) It appears to make impossible the perpetuation of reciprocity on the recipient's part and, at the same time, it creates the potential for future acts of reciprocity;
- (iii) It makes the ode into a possession that is both an inalienable and a fungible asset of the ode's addressee, all the while being ultimately controlled and owned by the poet himself.

We shall explore these novel and paradoxical qualities of Pindar's transactional model below.

Let us begin with the qualities that make this ode at once a commodity and a non-commodity. *Olympian* 10 appears to be a commodity insofar as it enters the marketplace in exchange for a (possibly monetary) fee; at the same time, it is a non-commodity insofar as it confers immortality, which cannot be bought and sold. Moreover, the ode on the one hand transcends the commensurability principle that normally regulates commodity transactions, since its value far exceeds that of the payment received (hence the wave-and-pebble imagery at the outset of the poem); on the other hand, it advances *atrekeia*, 'exactitude' (including in business matters), as a desirable quality sublimated into a socially cohesive force. Further, whereas commodities are typically homogeneous – that is, possessed of a minimum set of standard common features that render them suitable for exchange – *Olympian* 10 and the *charis* and immortality it confers are singular, non-homogeneous, inalienable, and unexchangeable. At the same time, however, the conferment of these singular, non-commoditized qualities is made possible by an instance of commodity exchange, an ode in exchange for a fee,

although the ode is gradually withdrawn from the sphere of commercial exchange to become an offering of transcendent value – all the while assuring the *material* well-being of the patron's household (86–90). This point will be further developed below.

Applying Karl Polanyi's conceptual framework, we may say that *Olympian* 10 begins life in the context of a seemingly 'disembedded' economic transaction – a transaction transpiring in a distinct and autonomous sphere of economic activity concerned exclusively with the production of wealth – but is progressively integrated into an 'embedded' economic scheme, in which the preservation of wealth, although an undeniably important pursuit, is only part of a broader system of fundamentally social values; these values may in some cases include material assets but they emphatically serve the individual's social standing and social capital rather than his personal material interests.⁵⁸ What Pindar propounds in *Olympian* 10 is, in essence, a model of social interaction in which material gain, albeit not repudiated (since it is the patron's commission that allows the *epinikion* to come about), is subordinated to the broader objective of establishing and maintaining a relationship of mutually honorific reciprocity between poet and patron.

In particular, the delay in the repayment of the 'debt' and the incomparably higher value of the repayment (that is, the *charis* and immortality conferred by the ode) reveal certain affinities with what Marshall Sahlins has called 'generalized reciprocity'. The term denotes interactions in which 'the material side of the transaction is repressed by the social', the expectation of material return is considered unseemly (and is, at best, implicit), and the obligation to reciprocate, although present, is not subject to limitations 'stipulated by time, quantity, or quality: the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite'. In generalized reciprocity, 'reckoning of debts outstanding cannot be overt and is typically left out of account',⁵⁹ more or less as Pindar evokes the reckoning of

⁵⁸ On embeddedness in premodern societies, see K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston, MA, 2001 [1944]), 45–58. Polanyi's 'embedded vs disembedded' dichotomy is confirmed by anthropological data: see, e.g., E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer. A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford, 1940), 90: 'One cannot treat Nuer economic relations by themselves, for they always form part of direct social relationships of a general kind'; also M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago, IL, 1972), 86: 'A great proportion of primitive exchange, much more than our own traffic, has as its decisive function this latter, instrumental one: the material flow underwrites or initiates social relations.' See also L. A. White, *The Evolution of Culture. The Development of Civilization to the Fall of Rome* (New York, 1959), 237–60.

⁵⁹ All quotations are from Sahlins (n. 58), 194.

debts at the beginning of *Ol.* 10 only so that he may render it irrelevant by the incommensurate prodigality of his counter-offering.

Let us now move to the second of the aforementioned paradoxes. Pindar's repayment of his overdue debt releases his patron from the ultimate debt, the debt of mortality, which is proverbially 'owed by every single mortal'.⁶⁰ However, at the same time it creates, paradoxically, further debt for his creditor; indeed, it creates the largest possible debt, the debt that cannot be repaid, insofar as the recipient of the ode is not in a position to reciprocate, let alone surpass, the gift of immortality. The impossibility of further counter-giving may appear, at first sight, to spell the dissolution of the relationship between poet and patron, and therefore to risk reducing that relationship to a business transaction, in which the fleeting interaction between the two parties is terminated once the exchange of commodities is over. But this is far from being the case. As well as being obligated to extol his patron's Olympic victory, Pindar is at the same time in full and sole control of the narrative of the primordial Olympic Games, which he re-enacts through his ode. While his song would have been impossible without the Olympic victory of his patron's son, that victory would have slipped into oblivion without the ode and its reconstitution of the originary event, which crucially enhances the prestige of the present occasion by homologizing it with the archetypal, foundational games (see section 3 above).⁶¹ Pindar's control over the foundational narrative, coupled with his potential to renew his gift of epinikian immortality on a future occasion, seem to put him in a position of ascendancy over his patron(s), insofar as he appears to be uniquely placed either to withhold or to release the *charis*-bestowing quality of his song.⁶²

However, this poetic omnipotence is, in fact, partly illusory, since the creation of epinikian song is contingent on the patron's willingness to actuate it by offering a stipendiary commission. What is more, the

⁶⁰ For the idea, see Eur. *Alc.* 782: βροτοῖς ἅπασι καθοπεῖν ὀφείλεται ('all mortals must pay the debt of death'); Eur. *Andr.* 1272; Nep. *Reg.* 1.5: *morbo naturae debitum reddiderunt* ('with their death they repaid their debt to nature').

⁶¹ See also Fitzgerald (n. 23), 28–9.

⁶² Withholding that quality would be an instance of φθόνος ('envious resentment'), occasioned, as often in Pindar, by the victor's outstanding achievement. On epinikian *phthonos* see Kurke (n. 3), 169 with n. 1 (with earlier bibliography); Athanassaki (n. 52), 199–202, 204–7, 212, 214. The possibility of withholding praise out of *phthonos* is evoked, and repudiated, in *Isthm.* 5.24–5: μὴ φθόνει κόμπων τὸν εὐοικότερ' αἰοῖδαι | κιννάμεν ἀντὶ πόνων ('do not begrudge mixing appropriate boast into your song as a reward for [athletic] labours'). Even if it is repudiated, however, the possibility of begrudging praise is still one to be reckoned with.

epinikion produces symbolic capital in the form of prestige and renown for the patron, and this symbolic capital, as Bourdieu remarks, 'is readily convertible back into economic capital', insofar as the enhancement of social status and esteem may be translated into 'material and symbolic *investments*, in the form of political aid against attack, theft, offence, and insult, or economic aid, which can be very costly, especially in times of scarcity'.⁶³ As Bourdieu further observes, symbolic capital is likely to be in itself the source of *material* profit in economies in which social standing is the best, if not the only, economic guarantee.⁶⁴ In other words, there is no real risk of the relationship between poet and patron being dissolved as a result of Pindar's unrivalled lavishness potentially precluding further reciprocity on the recipient's part. For it is understood that the symbolic, non-material privileges conferred upon the recipient by the *epinikion* are convertible into material assets, such as power, social ascendancy, and a concomitant increase of economic power, all of which will then give the recipient the means to offer a new commission to the poet on a future occasion. As a result, the relationship between poet and patron, albeit seemingly at risk of being terminated, becomes infinitely renewable.

The transvaluation of Pindar's encomiastic 'debt' into symbolic capital, the sublimation of what is initially a business transaction into something that transcends the commercial sphere, paradoxically originates in a *quid pro quo* commodity exchange (the patron's commission) and is able to re-actuate itself by generating a future commodity exchange (a future commission). This is consistent with Bourdieu's analysis, in which material and symbolic capital are the two poles of a single continuum, rather than of a dichotomy, and symbolic capital is but 'a transformed and thereby disguised form of physical "economic" capital', so that either of them is readily convertible into the other.⁶⁵ Poet and patron thus become enclaved in a relationship of mutual interdependence as part of a potentially interminable cycle of mutual conversions of material and symbolic capital into one another.⁶⁶

⁶³ P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, transl. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977), 179, 180 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 180–1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁶⁶ On the relationship of mutual interdependence between the praise poet and the recipient of the praise (including in matters related to debt and its repayment), see also Fitzgerald (n. 23), 25; Burgess (n. 20), 278, 281.

While the symbolic assets conferred by the ode may be convertible into material privileges, in the manner described above, they are at the same time – in yet another of the paradoxes informing *Olympian* 10 – envisaged as a permanent, inalienable addition to the family wealth of the ode's addressee. As mentioned earlier, in the fifth strophic system Pindar enacts the transvaluation of his ode from economic *tokos* ('interest on a debt'), paid in the context of a commodity exchange, into physical *tokos*, the 'offspring' born to an ageing father, ensuring that the family wealth will not pass into a stranger's hands (86–90). While constituting symbolic capital (as a medium conveying *charis* and immortality), the ode never loses sight of its value as material capital, which makes sure that the material affluence of the patron's *oikos* ('household') will continue undiminished for generations to come, as implied in lines 86–90.

The preservation and continuation of material wealth remain a central concern of the ode, a concern that can happily coexist with Pindar's evident anxiety to sublimate his business relationship with his patron by investing it with non-material qualities. We are here confronted with an instantiation of what Annette Weiner calls an 'inalienable possession', a possession which lends its owner the authority of the ancestral, memorial, and/or cosmological qualities with which it is imbued, and which ensure intergenerational permanence and protection from change, loss, or decay. What is more, inalienable possessions, thanks to their singularity, enhance the owner's prestige and invest him or her with the power to attract further possessions by virtue of his or her ownership of the original inalienable possession, which in itself is non-fungible.⁶⁷ At the same time, as we saw above, true ownership of the power of song to convey such assets resides, permanently and inalienably, with Pindar, the true repository of poetic aggrandisement and ennobling commemoration. Thus, in a sense, the ode, for all its circulation as material or symbolic capital, remains a possession of Pindar himself, as a manifestation of the paradox that Weiner calls 'giving without giving'.

⁶⁷ See A. B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions. The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley, CA, 1992), e.g. 6–7, 10, 26, 33, 36–7. For a case study of valuable, highly aestheticized objects made by skilled artisans (in the eastern Solomon Islands of the south-western Pacific), which are beyond the potential of exchangeability and thus outside the commodity network, see W. H. Davenport, 'Two Kinds of Value in the Eastern Solomon Islands', in Appadurai (n. 53), 95–109. For a case study of inalienable possessions in Pueblo societies, see B. J. Mills, 'The Establishment and Defeat of Hierarchy: Inalienable Possessions and the History of Collective Prestige Structures in the Pueblo Southwest', *American Anthropologist* 106.2 (2004), 238–51.

6. Epilogue

As we saw in the previous section, *Olympian* 10 is informed by dynamic ambiguity and paradox in that it performs functions that may appear contradictory: it is both a commodity and its opposite; it both enables reciprocity and makes it impossible; it both embraces exactitude and negates commensurability; and it gives without giving. These paradoxes, I submit, can best be made sense of by once again invoking Bloch and Parry's concept of transactional orders. As we saw, Bloch and Parry posit the existence of two distinct but interrelated spheres of exchange, which they term 'transactional orders'. The short-term transactional order is oriented towards the individual pursuit of material gain, a pursuit which involves 'a myriad of short-term transactions' and in which 'individual competition, if not sharp practice, is acceptable'.⁶⁸ The long-term transactional order, by contrast, is 'concerned with the reproduction of the long-term social or cosmic order' and consists of 'transcendental social and symbolic structures'. The two spheres are distinct from each other, with the sphere of individual acquisition being 'ideologically articulated with, and subordinated to, [the] sphere of activity concerned with the cycle of long-term reproduction'. At the same time, however, there is an organic connection between the two spheres, since 'transcendental social and symbolic structures must both depend on, and negate, the transient individual'. As a result, there is a continual (and far from unproblematic) interplay, or tug-of-war, between the two spheres, which must at once be insulated from each other and maintain a systematic, integrated relationship with each other.

The paradoxical relationship between the two transactional orders is of paramount importance in explaining the seemingly contradictory economic functions of *Olympian* 10. The ode appears to encompass both the short-term and the long-term transactional orders: it comes into being in the context of a short-term commodity exchange; it is subsequently transvalued by entering the long-term cycle of social and meta-physical validation; and it has the potential of re-entering the short-term order as symbolic capital convertible into material assets. By embracing both transactional orders, the ode acquires its paradoxical ability both to enable and to negate reciprocity and commensurability.

⁶⁸ Bloch and Parry (n. 55), 23. All quotations in the remainder of this paragraph are excerpted from Bloch and Parry (n. 55), 23–7.

The expectation of material return in exchange for commodities belongs to the short-term order of commercial pursuits, whereas the long-term cycle transcends the *do ut des* logic of reciprocity and commensurability, which has no place in the socially driven preservation and reproduction of household and community in the *longue durée*. Finally, the paradox of Pindar's 'giving without giving' – of offering the ode as an inalienable gift to Arkhestratos and his posterity, all the while keeping it as his possession – is, again, a corollary of the ode's articulating the organic link between the two transactional orders. As a commodity starting life in the short-term cycle of individual transactions, the ode is alienated from its maker and passes into the ownership of the patron as payment for an outstanding debt. At the same time, as an instrument of social aggrandisement and an agent of immortality, it enters the sphere of long-term transactions to become an inalienable possession both of the patron and of his community. What is more, the ode's candidacy for the long-term transactional order remains contingent both on the poet's will or ability to deliver it – that is, on its status as an *inalienable* possession of its creator – and on the patron's will or ability to commission it – that is, on its status as an *alienable* object capable of passing into the ownership of another person.

The economics of *Olympian* 10 revolve around an inextricable and dynamic interrelationship between poet and patron, as well as between commoditization and its negation. In this interrelationship, the opposition between distinct transactors is perpetuated, while at the same time it is dissolved into a mutual amalgamation, with the transactors' roles remaining in a state of continual flux and dynamic ambiguity.

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