ALMUT FRIES, *Pindar's ›First Pythian Ode‹. Text, Introduction and Commentary*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 151, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2023, xiv+252 pp., 99,95€, ISBN 978-3-11- 112600-5.

This commentary offers an account of a poem which the author describes as 'a literary masterpiece' as well as 'an invaluable document for the political, social and cultural history of Sicily' during the period when the poem was composed (ix). The book is conventionally structured, although with a greater emphasis on the manuscript tradition and philological questions than on literary interpretation and *Nachleben*. It is a welcome, if unevenly successful, addition to Pindarists' well-stocked shelves.

The introduction gives solid guidance on various important issues. Fries provides a succinct but informative discussion of the poem's date and historical background (8-11), and place of performance. Regarding the long-standing debate about whether a first performance in Syracuse or Aetna should be supposed, Fries takes account of Morrison's arguments against the latter, but remains cautiously agnostic (13). However, she follows numerous scholars in giving some weight to the evidence of Σ *Nem.* 1.7b (iii 11-12 Dr) for possible performance of *Pyth*. 1 at the festival of Zeus Aetnaeus (13-14). Considerable attention is also devoted to a survey of contemporary poems with which *Pythian* 1 might have been in dialogue, such as Bacch. 4 and 20c, Pi. fr. 105a-b, and Aeschylus' *Aitnaiai* and *Persae* (18-29). Fries' approach to connections between these poems is, in general, cautious. She suggests possible verbal parallels between *Pyth.* 1 and Bacch. 20c (21) which 'could have been perceived' if the poems 'were performed on the same day', although she does not venture any further thoughts on the significance that might have been found in such perceptions.

As a metrician, Fries positions herself in the tradition of Boeckh, Maas, West, and Parker. She rejects the arguments of the 'Urbino School' that Alexandrian metrical analysis offers evidence for Pindar's own compositional practices (58). This stance has occasional textual ramifications, as when she follows Boeckh and other modern editors in adopting μεταβάσοντας for transmitted μεταλ(λ)άσ(σ)οντας in order to correct the metre (154), and rejects the arguments of Gentili for the validity of the responsion created by the MSS reading (deemed 'pienamente accettabile' by Cingano ad loc).[1] After staking out the premise of her metrical analysis (the conventional Boeckhian position that the period, established by observation of word-end, hiatus, and *brevis in longo*, is the fundamental unit of composition), Fries provides readers with a metrical analysis (39-43), which includes a colometry (40) and an account of periodic division (41-3), and an description of strophic construction (43-4). Fries sees 'rhythmical progression … founded on thematic development' as the hallmark of the epode, while echoes and repetitions characterize the strophe (43). In general, Fries is an informed guide

[1] In B. Gentili *et al.*, *Pindaro: Le* Pitiche, Roma-Milano 1995, 347.

to metrical issues, but I raised an eyebrow at the claim that 'Pindar would have viewed his D/e periods as single rhythmical systems, not as made up of smaller entities' (40). Given our almost total ignorance of Pindar's musical practices (in regard to which Fries shows herself sensibly cautious, 44), not to mention the cultural and intellectual differences obtaining between Pindar's age and our own, it seems to me overconfident to claim a sure understanding of how Pindar would have conceived the relationship between periods and phrases. How can we be sure that Pindar did not imagine this relationship variously, depending on which stage of composition, rehearsal, or performance he had arrived at? Given, for instance, the length of *Pyth.* 1 s6, which accommodates multiple syntactical constructions (see e.g. μὴ παρίει καλά. νώμα δικαίῳ πηδαλίῳ στρατόν· ἀψευδεῖ δὲ πρὸς ἄκμονι χάλκευε γλῶσσαν, 86), it seems at least conceivable that the relation between the period's 'rhythmical system' and its constituent 'entities' would have been subject to considerations related to delivery (what to do with sentence end after καλά, and what weight of pause, if any, to put after στρατόν?). And what kind of mental activity is being envisaged by 'would have viewed' (prospective calculation, retrospective reflection, lingering on details in the act of composing or performing, or something else)?

Fries offers an extensive discussion of the manuscript tradition. Her assessment of the tradition does not differ radically from that of Irigoin, but contains numerous interesting observations and arguments. Her main focus is on the value of the manuscripts for an establishment of the text, but she also assesses the manuscripts' intellectual contexts. She gives some weight to Irigoin's attribution of the 'Paris recension' to Maximus Planudes, and entertains the possibility that a text edited ('lightly (and perhaps incompletely)') by Planudes might have entered the tradition (49). In her discussion of the 'Thessalonicis recension', she notes that G (Gotting. philol. 29, dated to 1250-1300) is the only pre-Palaeologan codex to be furnished with prosodiacal annotation. On Fries' interpretation, this annotation is likely to have facilitated 'rhythmical reading aloud' (52) as a school exercise, and thus provides valuable evidence for Byzantine education during this period. She also pays careful attention to Vi ('a fascinating historical document', 53), which also dates to the second half of the thirteenth century. The 'meticulous care' with which the text of Pindar has been written over a liturgical text, together with the copying of accompanying scholia, testifies to the value accorded to classical texts in this period. She also confirms Irigoin's argument that U and V derive from Vi, mainly on the basis of Vi's 'idiosyncratic pattern of strophic indentations', which U replicates.

There follows an assessment of the contributions made to the editing of Pindar by Triclinius and pseudo-Moschopoulos. Fries' picture of the former is succinct and helpful. She surveys his conjectures on *Pyth*. 1 (55-6), which in her view confirm that he had a 'superior understanding of Greek metre' to that of his scholarly predecessors. She differs from Irigoin in arguing that 'readings shared by Triclinius and ρ or H … are not conjectues but paradosis' (55; see e.g.

καὶ τελευτᾷ, 35, at ρ + C^{ac}, which Irigoin interprets as a metrical correction by Triclinius), but notes that Triclinius' recognition of these variants' value confirms his status as an editor of distinction. Against Irigoin, she endorses Günther's argument that pseudo-Moschopoulos was a contemporary of Triclinius, in order to account both for the former's not making use of the latter's text and his metrical knowledge (57). She draws her discussion to a close with an assessment of the *editio Romana* (65-5) as a witness for otherwise unattested sources.

As one would expect in the light of the relatively stable textual tradition from which our texts of Pindar derive, Fries presents a text that departs only minimally from that of canonical modern editions such as those of Snell and Race. One such departure occurs at 22, where Fries prints ἀμέραισιν in place of the ἁμέραισιν printed by, for instance, Snell, Bowra, Gentili, and Race. Her justification is that '[t]he psilotic form is regular in Doric, and even in Attic ἡμέρ- did not appear until after 450' (115); she notes that the MSS and papyri give both forms, a phenomenon she attributes to scribal normalization of unaspirated forms. Another is her rejection of Schroeder's ἥροας at 52 (accepted by Bowra, Snell, and Race among others) in favour of MSS ἥρωας (see 155 for discussion). Her apparatus is considerably fuller than those of the most used modern editions; as she puts it (67), she aims to steer a middle course between the minimalism of Snell and Maehler and fuller treatments such as that of Turyn, although with a decided emphasis on the manuscript tradition rather than on modern scholars' conjectures. The result is an apparatus that supplies readers with much information about Byzantine texts and scholia (the note on χαλκοπάραον, 44, which records variation between -πάραον and -πάρηον in a corrector of F and a scholiastic lemma attached to the text, is fuller than many but representative of her general approach).

When turning to the commentary, readers will find numerous useful discussions of language and small-scale interpretative issues. Fries provides translations before each set of lemmata and comments, an approach which offers welcome assistance to less experienced readers of Pindar, and provides the author with a means of clarifying her interpretations. Her comments are mostly focused on exegesis, but she addresses some larger interpretative issues where these are relevant (e.g. 192 on the question of whether the final triad can be interpreted as an instance of a *Fürstenspiegel*: Fries responds in the negative). One resource she deploys with skill in pursuing exegetical considerations is a judicious use of the scholia. In her note on the poem's opening word, for instance, she points out that '[d]ivine accoutrements are regularly 'golden' or 'of gold'', and then endorses the comment of Σ 1.1b (ii 8 Dr): χρυσῆ δὲ κιθάρα ἀντὶ τοῦ τιμία, ὡς χρυσῆ Ἀφροδίτη (*Il.* 22.470). Here, as in other such discussions (e.g. her note on εὐανθεῖ δ' ἐν ὀργᾷ, 204), Fries positions her approach in a tradition that goes back to antiquity, although on occasion one would like to have heard more about the differences of approach that distinguish particular exegetical orientations: the normative force of the Homeric quotation, which appears to assimilate Pindar's phrasing to Homer's,

and the programmatic emphasis of that interpretation for a reading of the poem, might both have been noted.

Another feature of this commentary is the space Fries gives to ancient Near Eastern material. She points out that the picture of the 'drowsy war-god' is paralleled in the late-Babylonian *Erra and Ishtum* (98), and offers an extensive account of mythical patterns in Vedic, Anatolian, and Semitic lore which might be, however distantly, related to that of Zeus and Typhos (105). As she acknowledges, the task of assessing the relation between this material and Pindar's poem is difficult, but her inclusion of these myths is welcome, and prompts fresh consideration of what makes Pindar's poetics and mythography distinctive. The commentary also has much to say, as expected, about the relationship between Pindar and his Greek predecessors. In these discussions, Fries often makes useful points, as when noting the Homeric antecedents of κελαινῶπιν … νεφέλαν (94) or commenting on the relative indirectness, when compared with Thgn. 239-41, with which Pindar treats the prospect of Hiero's commemoration by sympotic performance (211).

Sometimes, however, the reader is left wanting more detailed exploration of the effects that Pindar's extraordinary language and compositional decisions create. In her treatment of καιρὸν εἰ φθέγξαιο (81), for instance, Fries cites parallels for καιρόν as adverbial and internal accusative, and then suggests that the use of the phrase to introduce a new triad, together with the initial position of καιρόν 'perhaps favours the more forceful sense of the adverbial accusative', in the sense of 'opportunely, to the point'. What Fries does not quite bring out here is the enactive abruptness of Pindar's phrasing: the sudden shift of attention and register which the phrase brings about, its interruption of the previous stanza's emphasis, and its semantic compression combine to accomplish a version of the opportune that it commends. A larger interpretative consideration arises in her treatment of the opening strophe. After discussing the conventional idea that music proves 'relief from cares', Fries argues that 'Pindar can hope for his own music to have the same effect on Hieron and the rest of the audience as Apollo's has on his fellow deities (short of being truly soporific, one presumes)' (84). But her parenthesis highlights the problem with the idea that the divine performance creates the 'same effect' as its human counterpart. What needs to be recognized here is the extraordinary contrast which the passage opens up between the purely material, corporeal affects (note e.g. κεραυνὸν σβεννύεις, 5; εὕδει, 6; ἰαίνει καρδίαν, 11) envisaged for the divine music and the heightened state of imaginative engagement and interpretative attention required by the complex verbal event which Pindar puts before his audience. How one then interprets the thematic, metapoetic, or ethical import of that contrast is an open question,[2] but to efface or downplay the contrast is to misconceive the passage.

[2] See T. Phillips, *Pindar's Library: Performance Poetry and Material Texts*, Oxford 2016, 147 for further discussion and references.

The interpretative sections of the introduction are the least successful part of the volume. Fries devotes just five pages to a discussion (albeit helpfully clear) of 'structure and themes' (3-7), and four to an interpretative discussion of the 'strategy of praise' which Pindar employs (14-18). Here, Fries proceeds with a straightforwardly rhetorical and functionalist interpretation of the poem (cf. 'the purpose [of epinician] was to generate 'imperishable fame' … for the honorand', 30). Her approach is similar to that of critics such as (more recently) Pfeijffer, Morgan, and Meister;[3] it adds few if any fresh interpretative insights, and indeed does not try to. Little attention is given to how the poem's rich *Nachleben* in antiquity (33) might have affected readers' reception of its rhetorical aims. The introduction is also methodologically and doxographically minimalist. Little sense is conveyed of how debate about epinician's poetics has changed in the last forty years or so. Symptomatic in this respect is a footnote in which Race and Fearn are cited as offering significant treatments of 'prayers as a structural device' (4 n. 5). The very considerable differences between these critical treatments are not elaborated. A commentator might defend such an omission by claiming that a commentary should present information and references which readers can pursue for themselves. However, in view of the widely varying stances at work in contemporary debate, together with their hermeneutic and indeed political implications, a fuller discussion of the differences between these stances ought to have been a desideratum.

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[3] I.L. Pfeijffer, "Propaganda in Pindar's First *Pythian* Ode", in K. Enenkel and id., eds., *The Manipulative Mode: Political Propaganda in Antiquity. A Collection of Case Studies*, Leiden-Boston 2005, 13-42; K. Morgan, *Pindar and the Construction of the Syracusan Monarchy in the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford 2015; F. Meister, "Hieron and Zeus in Pindar", *CPh* 114, 2019, 366-82.