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PHENOMENON OF COLOUR IN THE POETRY OF PINDAR

Many great thinkers have researched and analysed the phenomenon of colour – a universal aesthetic category – from antiquity to our days. Thus there are many different theories and teachings studying the physical-anatomic mechanism of the formation and perception of colours, focused on the philosophical, artistic or symbolical point of view.¹ At the same time colours are used by art-people as an instrument, sometimes unconscious device of self-expression. Thus the phenomenon of colour – with its complexity, depth and diversity – is presented in the works of art not theoretically but practically.

Colour must be considered as an inseparable and organic element, having its important function not only of painting and architecture, the spheres most closely connected to colour, but of belles-lettres as well. A colour is an indispensable element of the artistic world of any literary work.

This study builds upon the above-mentioned tradition by analysing the phenomenon of colour, its various functions in the poetry of Pindar, one of the greatest authors of Antiquity.

Both in odes and fragments of Pindar I identified approximately 60 words associated with colour and classified them into three groups:²

1) Words showing any concrete colour.³ e. g. ἀργαίεις, ἀργινόεις, λευκαυθής, λευκός (white), γλαυκός (bluish green or grey), γλαυκόχρως (grey), ἐρυθρός (red),⁴ κρόκεος, κροκωτός (saffron-coloured), κυάνεος (dark blue), λευκώ (whiten over), μέλας (black), ξαιθός (yellow of various shades), παμπόρφυρος (all purple), πάγχρυσος (all-golden), πολύχρυσος (rich in gold), πορφύρεος, φοίνισσα (purple), φοινίκεος (purple-red), χλωρός (greenish-yellow).

2) Composite words describing both the object and its colour. e. g. ἰοβλέφαρος (violet-eyed), ἰοπλόκαμος, ἰόπλοκος (with violet locks), κελαινεγχής (with black, i. e. bloody spear), κελαινώπις (black-faced), κελαινεφής (shrouded in black clouds), κελαινώψ (swarthy), λεύκιππος, λευκόπυλος (with white horses), λευκώλενος (white-armed), μελάμφυλλος (black-leafed), μελαντειχής (black-walled), ξαιθοκόμας (fair, golden-haired), φοινικάνθεμος (with purple flowers), φοινικόκροκος (of purple woof), φοινικόπεζα (ruddy-footed), φοινικόροδος (red with roses), φοινικοστερόπας (hurling red lightning).

3) Words showing not the colour itself, but provoking its association in the reader's mind. For instance, in stating that an object is of gold or silver, not only material (metal) is imagined, but also its colour – golden or silver as well. The metals – gold and silver – and their colours are inseparably connected to each other. Accordingly, the words related to gold and silver considered as indirectly showing the colour of the object are, for example, ἀργύρεος (of silver), ἀργυρώω (to cover with silver), ἀργυρόπεζα (silver-footed or -sandalled), χρύσεος (of gold), χρυσαλάκατος (with distaff of gold), χρυσάμπυξ (with fillet or frontlet of gold), χρυσάνιος (with reins of gold), χρυσάρματος (with or in car of gold), χρύσασπις (with shield of gold), χρύσαωρ (with sword of gold), χρυσόθρονος (with

¹ Let us remember the thoughts of Alcmaeon and Empedocles, Democritus and Theophrastus, Plato, Aristotle and Plinius, Newton and Goethe, R. Steiner, H. Wagner and other famous thinkers.

² For the vocabulary of Pindar see: Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis, Pars I, Epinicia, Post Brunonem Snell, Editio Hervicus Maehler, BSB B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984; Rumpel Ioannes, Lexicon Pindaricum, Lipsiae, In Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, MDCCCLXXXIII.

³ For English equivalents of Greek words and English translation of Pindar see: Liddell M. G. and Scott R. (ed.), A Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford, 1961; The Odes of Pindar Including the Principal Fragments (With an introduction and an English translation by sir John Sandys), London, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MCMLXVIII.

⁴ This word is met only once, in a geographical name: "Red Sea" (πόντιν ἐρυθρῶν – Py. IV 251).

throne of gold), χρυσόκερος, χρυσόκερως (with horn of gold), Χρυσοκόμας (golden haired), χρυσόπεπλος, χρυσοχίτων (with robe of gold), χρυσόραπις (with wand of gold), δυοφερός (dark, black).⁵

Pindar's range of colours is quite varied. Twelve colours can be identified in his odes and fragments: white, black, red, purple (purple-red), dark-blue, bluish green, grey, saffron, golden-yellow, greenish-yellow, golden, silver. And they are expressed by approximately sixty various terms.⁶ Nine of them (ιοπλόκαμος, μελαντειχής, παμπόρφυρος, φοινικάνθεμος, φοινικόκροκος, φοινικόπεζα, φοινικόροδος, χρυσοχαίτα, χρυσόπεπλος) are found in Pindar's poetry.⁷ The most frequently used colour terms are λευκός (16 times), ξανθός (13 times) and μέλας (10 times). The following frequency of colour use has been calculated: golden (59 times), white and black (18 times), purple and golden-yellow (13 times), silver (7 times), violet (4 times), saffron and greenish-yellow (3 times), dark-blue (twice), red, bluish green and grey (once).

Upon analysis, I found that the colours have different functions in Pindar's works. Namely, some colours – black, dark-blue, white, grey and red – are used as epithets showing the real colour of the objects, without any metaphoric or symbolic meaning.⁸

It can not be said that Pindar is distinguished by originality, when choosing colour as an epithet, showing us original interrelation between the colour and object. In the examples cited below the poet is more descriptive, ascribing real, visible and noted colour to each object. But this conclusion is applied only to a small portion of the colours used by Pindar.

Black can symbolically mean destruction, humiliation, misfortune, grief and mourning.⁹ Such traditional understanding of this colour is reflected in these metaphoric epithets: "black murder" (μέλαι φόνω – Is. VII 50 (VIII 55)), "black (dark) death" (μέλανος θανάτου – Py. XI 56), "black darkness" (κελαινεφεί δὲ σκοτεινὴ – fr. 142 (106), 3), "black-leafed (dark-leafed) heights of Aetna" (Αἴτνας μελαμύλλοις κορυφαῖς – Py. I 27). "The black darkness" can be metaphorically understood as "death", and by the "black-leafed heights of Aetna" something terrible, disastrous and destructive is meant.

The plains of Libya are mentioned as "mantled by the black (dark) cloud" (κελαινεφῶν πεδίον – Py. IV 52), but this phrase is metaphorically understood¹⁰ and it is considered that the fertility of Libyan earth is meant here. As the plains are "mantled by the black clouds", it rains frequently and hence the earth is fertile.

The association of black with murder, death, darkness, natural phenomena is quite logical and at the same time a traditional, well-known artistic device. To the colour black is also attributed absolutely unexpected and extraordinary meaning as well. In Pindar's works it metaphorically means "fertile", which can be considered as an original poetic vision of the poet.

In one of the fragments the word-combination "black heart" is used. As the poet says, "the God sending gladness to the person, to his black heart knocks at first" (ὅποταν θεὸς ἀνδρὶ χάρμα πέμψῃ, πάρος μέλαιναν κραδίαν ἐστυφέλιξεν – fr. 225 (247)).

⁵ The term δυοφερός (dark, murky) can be considered as indirectly showing the colour because it figuratively can mean "black" as well.

⁶ The colour terms used by Pindar: white (ἀργαίς, ἀργινοίς, λευκανθής, λευκός, λευκώ, λευκίππος, λευκόπυλος, λευκώλειος), black (δυοφερός, κελαινώπις, κελαινός, κελαινεγής, κελαινεφής, κελαινώψ, μέλας, μελάμυλλος, μελαντειχής), red, purple, purple-red (ἐρυθρός, παμπόρφυρος, πορφύρεος, φοινίκης, φοίνισσα, φοινικάνθεμος, φοινικόκροκος, φοινικόπεζα, φοινικόροδος, φοινικοστερόπας), dark-blue (κυάνεος, κυάναιγίς, κυανάμπυξ), bluish green and grey (γλαυκός, γλαυκόχρως), greenish-yellow (χλωρός), golden-yellow (ξανθός, ξανθοκόμας), saffron (κρόκος, κροκωτός), (ιοβλέφαρος, ιοπλόκαμος, ιόπλοκος), golden (χρῦσεος, πάγχρυσος, πολύχρυσος, χρυσαλάκατος, χρυσάμπυξ, χρυσάνιος, χρυσάρματος, χρύσασπις, χρύσαωρ, χρυσόθρονος, χρυσόκερος, χρυσοκέρως, Χρυσοκόμας, χρυσόπεπλος, χρυσόραπις), silver (ἀργύρεος, ἀργυρώ, ἀργυρόπεζα).

⁷ For the history and etymology of the colour terms see: Chantaine Pierre, Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque, Histoire des Mots, Tome I – IV-2, Paris, Editions Klincksieck, 1968-1980.

⁸ For example, Pindar associates the black with the earth, cheek, face, night and in this case the colour reflects the empirical reality and reproduces the real colour of the things. e. g. χθόνα μέλαιναν – black (dark) earth (Ol. IX. 50), μέλαινα ἄρουραι – (Ne. IX 39), μέλαν γένειον – black (dusky) cheek (Ol. I 70 (68)), κελαινώπεσι Κόλχοισιν – swarthy Colchi (Py. IV 212), μελαίνας νυκτὸς, δυοφερᾶς νυκτὸς – black night (fr. 130 (95), fr. 142 (106)).

Grey is associated with olives (γλαυκόχροα κόσμιον ἐλαίας – Ol. III 13) and the bluish green or grey – with snakes (γλαυκοὶ δράκοντες – Ol. VIII 37). A flame is red (φοίνισσα φλόξ – Py. I 24) and the earth – dark blue (κυανέας χθονὸς – fr. 87 (58), 4, λόχμας κυανέας – Ol. VI. 40). Milk, ivory and a column are white (λευκῶ γάλακτι – Ne. III 77, λευκὸν γάλα – fr. 166 (147), 2, λευκὸν ἐλεφανθ' – Ne. VII 78, στάλαν λευκοτέραν – Ne. IV 81), and the head of the personage – Melissus of Thebes – is wreathed with myrtle white (λευκωθεῖς κάρα μύρτοις – Is. III 87 (IV 69)).

⁹ On the symbolism of black see: Cooper J. C., Lexicon Alter Symbole (Translated from English), VEB E. A. Seemann Verlag, Leipzig, 1986, p. 52.

¹⁰ For such interpretation see: Rumpel I., op. cit., p. 246.

“The black heart” can be understood in different ways, proceeding from the varied symbolical meanings of the colour. In this case “black” can mean the desperate, suffering, worried, melancholic or humiliated heart. Black has obviously negative meaning here, but what does it specifically mean? The answer to this question can be found in Pindar’s poetry itself. According to another fragment, “someone who does not swell with desire has a black heart” (fr. 123 (88), 4). Hence we can suppose that “black” metaphorically implies the heart without desire, passion and love also in the fragment cited above (fr. 225 (247)). And the happiness or joy sent by the god to the people, and knocking to their “black heart” must be regarded as love, desire, though this is not concretised in the text survived to us.

The use of black with such unexpected, original metaphoric meaning (fr. 123 (88), 4, fr. 225 (247)), such “play on the colour”, to my opinion, can be considered as a splendid artistic device used by Pindar.

In Pindar, colour oversteps the limits not only of simple epithet but of more complex and important artistic device, metaphoric epithet as well. A colour is quite often used as a certain, sometimes hidden symbol, the understanding of which helps us to make deeper analysis of the text and to discover Pindar’s versatile implications. I will try to show on which principles are chosen the colours in Pindar’s works; what do the colours show or hint at?

The fixed-epithets originating from the epic tradition, namely, from the Homeric epoch and usually hinting at features of personages are frequently implied by Pindar. The symbolism of the colours can be the constituting elements of such fixed-epithets.

Black is associated with death, blood, war, earth and the underworld. That’s why Ares, the god of war, according to tradition, is illustrated by Pindar with the spear become black by blood (κελαινεγχεῖ τ’ Ἄρει – Ne. X 84), and the dwelling of Persephone, the goddess of the underworld, is black-walled (μελαντειχέα δόμον Φερσεφόνως – Ol. XIV 20).

In the first Pythian ode Pindar applies to the golden lyre, that by the wisdom of Apollo and Muses makes the god of war, Ares, to set aside his rude spears and sends to sleep the eagle on the sceptre of Zeus, shedding the black cloud over his head (see: Py. I 1-13). The symbolical meaning of “black cloud” (κελαινωπιν νεφέλαν – Py. I 7) is quite evident here.

First of all, let us remember that according to ancient Greek mythology, Apollo is the shepherd and the clouds are his herd.¹¹ In the Pythian ode, the cloud can be regarded as the instrument of Apollo, but one question arises here. Why is the cloud black? It seems strange that in the Pythian ode, the colour with its mainly negative meaning is referring to Apollo, the founder of Pythian games.

We could think that by ascribing a black colour to Apollo, Pindar intended to hint at the ambivalence of this god, not only at his goodness and purity, but also at his destructive and shady side. In this ode, however, Apollo is presented by his positive features, as a protector of the Muses, musicians and music and one of his attributes – the cloud – is only sending to sleep.¹² Thus, we can not expect a negative attitude to Apollo here. To my mind, “the black cloud” is used by Pindar as a symbolic hint of Apollo and, on the other hand, as a metaphor of rendering asleep. And sleeping is naturally associated with black.

White is implied by Pindar as an epithet both of horses and the hands (arms) of the goddesses (λευκίππος, λευκώλενος).

White expresses transcendental perfection and divinity.¹³ At the same time, in the context of the peculiarities of colour perception in Antiquity, this colour means something light and bright as well.¹⁴ The term λευκός initially meant “bright” and later received the meaning of colour.¹⁵ Hence it is quite logical that according to tradition the hands of the goddesses are associated with white-bright (λευκός).¹⁶ But how can the fact be explained that this “divine” colour is also the attribute of horses? Does it hint only at their real colour or has it symbolic meaning as well?

The antique tradition associates a white horse with Apollo and Poseidon. White, “the colour of transcendental and divine perfection”, is quite logically chosen for horses, the attributes of these gods.

Does Pindar associate the white horses with Apollo and Poseidon as well? In Pindar we see the Mycenians, Tyndaridae and Cadmeans, Jason’s forefathers and the daughter of Demeter riding on their

¹¹ Cooper J. C., op. cit., p. 215.

¹² Comp. Herodotus, VIII 36.

¹³ On the symbolism of black see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁴ Comp. the treatise of Democritus “On Colours”; also see: Лосев А. Ф., Принципы античного цветоведения, in: История античной эстетики, М. 1963.

¹⁵ See: Liddell-Scott, op. cit., p. 1042, Chantraine P., op. cit., III, pp. 632-633.

¹⁶ See: Py. III 98, fr. 29 (5), 6, Py. IX 17.

white horses (λευκίππων Μυκηναίων - fr. 202 (216), λευκοπῶλων Τυνδαριδᾶν - Py. I 66, λευκίπποισι Καδμείων μετοικήσαις ἀγυαίς - Py. IX 83, λευκίππων δόμους - Py. IV 117, λευκίππου τε θυγατρὸς - Ol. VI 95).

Though Pindar never indicates the relation of Apollo, Poseidon and white horses directly, to my mind, this interrelation is meant. Following I. Rumpel's and other researchers' points of view, we could consider that white horses are attributes of nobility and royalty;¹⁷ but if we remember that the white horses are found in Pindar's Pythian odes, a particular hint at the founder of the Pythian games will be quite obvious here.

In one fragment of Pindar only three words have survived: λευκίππων Μυκηναίων προφάται (fr. 202 (216)). White horses and oracles are mentioned in the same context that probably implicates Apollo or Poseidon.¹⁸

Regarding the daughter of Demeter with her white horses (λευκίππου τε θυγατρὸς - Ol. VI 95), it may be a hint referring to Poseidon, from whom the goddess gave birth to the horse Areion.¹⁹

The variety of Pindar's poetic vision and thinking is illustrated by the fact that the same colour can have different, sometimes unexpected functions. For example, in the ninth Nemean ode we see white smoke (λευκαυθέα καπνόν - Ne. IX 23) rising from the corpses of shot soldiers. In this context "white" has nothing in common with its symbolic discuss and, to my opinion, can be understood here as a colour of death.²⁰

Zeus is described as "hurling purple-red lightning" (Δία τε φοινικοστερόπαν - Ol. IX 6). In this case purple-red (φοινίκεος) can be understood as a traditional symbol of fire, flame, supernatural force, though this colour symbolises the honour and power of emperor and king mainly, points to the aristocratic origin and royal authority of personages.

In the eleventh Nemean ode, sung in honour of Aristagoras, on his entering on office as President of the Council of the island Tenedos and in the fourth Pythian ode, dedicated to Arcesilaus, the king of Cyrene, purple is pointing out the royalty of these personages. Aristagoras is binding his hair with purple garlands (ἀνδησάμενός τε κόμαν ἐν πορφυρέοις ἔρνεσιν - Ne. XI 28), and Arcesilaus is rejoiced after his victory as the prime of spring with purple flowers (φοινικανθέμου ἦρος ἀκμῆ - Py. IV 64).

In the forth Pythian ode, Pelias illicitly takes property from Aeson, Jason's father and little Jason, in purple swaddling-clothes (σπαργάνοις ἐν πορφυρέοις - Py. IV 114) is sent to Cheiron. The purple swaddling-clothes must be an indication of the aristocratic origin of Jason. "The purple wings" of Zetes and Callias, Argonauts, the son of Boreas and Oreithya (Ὀρείθυια), daughter of Erechtheus, the king of Athens have the same meaning (πτεροῖσιν πορφυρέοις - Py. IV 183).

In the third and fourth Isthmian odes, dedicated to Melissus of Thebes, the purple colour, namely, the purple rose, symbolises the happiness and joy caused by the victory and return of lost glory. Melissus of Thebes lost four members of the family in the war and the Isthmian and Nemean victories restored the honour of the family. These events are implied in the passage: "after the wintry gloom of many-hued months, hath the ground, as it were, blossomed anew with ruddy roses"²¹ (νῦν δ' αὖ μετὰ χειμέριον ποικίλων μηνῶν ζόφον χθῶν ὥτε φοινικέοισιν ἀνθησεν ῥόδοις - Is. III 36 (IV 18)). "The wintry gloom" symbolises defeat and lost glory, and "the ground blossomed anew with ruddy roses" - the joy, victory and achieved fame.

The red roses adorning the meadows of afterlife (φοινικορόδοις λειμώνεσσι - fr. 129 (95), 2) are the symbols of joy, beauty and eternal spring.²² Taking into consideration that the mysteries promised the afterlife blessedness to its participants, and a red rose was an attribute of Dionysus, we can suppose that "the meadows with red roses" implies the mysteries of Dionysus.

In Pindar ruddy-footed Demeter (φοινικόπεζαν Δάματρα - Ol. VI 94), the purple zone of Evadne, the daughter of Nymph Pitane (φοινικόκροκον ζώναν - Ol. VI 39), and purple-red chamber of Horae (φοίνικος θαλάμου - fr. 75 (45), 14) are illustrated. Why does Pindar associate this colour (purple-red) with these personages? What common feature of Demeter, Evadne and Horae makes Pindar to refer the same colour to them?

¹⁷ "Λεύκιπποι dicuntur utpote nobiles et principes, quos constat candidis esse equis usos" (see: Rumpel I., op. cit., p. 272-273)

¹⁸ About Poseidon, the Lord of the Deep and oracles see: Burkert W., Greek Religion, Archaic and Classic (Translated from German), Basil Blackwell, 1985, p. 139.

¹⁹ Comp. Apollod., II 6, 8.

²⁰ Different interpretations and such unusual understanding of "white" see in: Cooper J. C., op. cit., pp. 49-53.

²¹ Translated by J. Sandys (see: The Odes of Pindar, op. cit., p. 463).

²² On the symbolic of red colour and red rose see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., pp. 51, 150-151.

It is quite natural that purple-red as a colour of ripe corn is attributed to Demeter, the goddess of fertility,²³ and a relationship to the fertility can be observed in other personages as well. Nymphs, the goddesses of nature's vital and fertilising forces, and Horae, the goddesses of seasons, nature's vital forces and crop are somehow related to fertility.²⁴ Purple-red as a colour hinting at fertility is presented in Pindar. Besides this, Horae – as the daughters of Zeus and Themis, the goddess of law and justice – keep order in human life, conditioning its natural, regular development. Hence purple can be referred to Horae as a colour symbolising law and justice as well.²⁵

Yellow (ξανθός)²⁶ is a colour of human and animal hair (“fair, golden, auburn”), of different things, mainly, made of gold (“golden”) in all ancient Greek poetry and in Pindar as well.²⁷

Achilles, Menelaus, Athena, Charites and Danaï are golden-haired (ξανθός δ' Ἀχιλλεύς – Ne. III 43, ξανθῶ Μενέλα – Ne. VII 28, ξανθὰν Ἀθάναν – fr. 34 (9), Ne. X 7, ξανθαῖς Χάρισσιν – Ne. V 54, ξανθοκομᾶν Δαναίων – Ne. IX 17), and the hair of the bulls and lion is auburn-coloured (βοῶν ξανθὰς ἀγέλας – Py. IV 149, Py. IV 225, ξανθὸς λέων – fr. 237 (261)).

To my mind, the term ξανθός not only shows the empirical golden-yellow, but is somehow performing a function of gold and golden with their symbolic meaning as well. To such conclusion I am led by the phrase of Pindar, where ξανθός is attributed to the cloud by which Zeus sent gold (πολὺν χρυσόν) to the people. e. g. “[Zeus] caused a yellow (golden) cloud to draw nigh to them and rained on them abundant gold”²⁸ (κείνοις ὁ μὲν ξανθὰν ἀγαγὼν νεφέλαν πολὺν ὕσε χρυσόν – Ol. VII 49). ξανθός is connecting, uniting the Earth and Heaven like χρυσός. It is not coincidence that ξανθός (as “golden”) is the hair of the distinguished personages, of the heroes protected by the gods and of the Olympians themselves.²⁹

It is not accidental that Iamus, the son of Evadne and Apollo and future oracle, “hidden amid the rushes and in the boundless brake, with its dainty form steeped in the golden and deep-purple light of pansies” (ἰων ξανθαῖσι καὶ παμπορφύροις ἀκτῖσι βεβρεγμένος ἀβρόν σῶμα – Ol. VI 55). Golden and purple, colours symbolising the fire and attributed to Iamus, supposedly imply the skill of fire-propheying of this personage.

From the Homeric epoch, greenish-yellow (χλωρός) is attributed to plants and implies not only the colour, but a particular force³⁰ of them that can be observed in Pindar as well. In one fragment the well-known history of the struggle between Centaurs and Lapithae is related.³¹ The Centaurs having lost all hope to win, buried Ceneus by the enormous branches of the tree. Ceneus won by the greenish-yellow pine-tree is described by Pindar (ὁ δὲ χλωραῖς ἐλάταισι τυπείς – fr. 167 (148)). In my opinion, the colour (χλωρός) is used here not only to show the real colour of the tree, but also to hint at its unnatural force as well. This observation is supported by another example found in Pindar. The poet compares the increasing of ἀρετὰ with the growing of the tree with greenish-yellow branches. “The glorious deeds are growing as the tree with greenish-yellow branches” (ἀτίσσει δ' ἀρετὰ χλωραῖς ἐέρσαις ὡς ὅτε δένδρον – Ne. VIII 40). The peculiar features and force of the colour (χλωρός) is evidently implicated here.

Based on analysis of Plato's “Timaeus”, the scientific literature underlines that ξανθός differs from χλωρός, but there are some examples found in Pindar where the colours have the same function. They show the colour of plants and have a specific ritual meaning as well. Namely, ξανθός (golden-yellow) is attributed to the pine-trees (ὑπὸ ξανθαῖσι πεύκαις – fr. 79 (48), 5) and the tears of frankincense in the temple of Peitho (τᾶς χλωρᾶς λιβάνου ξανθὰ δάκρη – fr. 122 (87), 3).

According to European tradition, saffron – a flower and colour – symbolises selflessness, disinterestedness, obedience, love and magic. Saffron is a flower of the sun, found in the cult of Dionysos as well. In his festivals, women dressed in saffron-coloured cloths participate.³²

²³ It is worth mentioning that this colour (rubicundus) is associated with Cerera, the goddess of fertility in Virgil too (Boeckhio aliisque iudicibus ob segetis maturaе colorem, ut ap. Verg. Ge. I 297 seges matura est rubicunda Ceres; aut ob pedes ab artificibus minio pictos, ut ait Winkelmann. Hist. art. III p. 23) (see: Rumpel I., op. cit., p. 474).

²⁴ Let us remember their names: the goddess of growth (Ἀϋξίω), the goddess of increase (Θαλλώ), the goddess of ripe fruit (Καρπώ).

²⁵ On the symbolism of purple-red see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., p. 51.

²⁶ This is a colour of various shades, frequently with a tinge of red, brown, auburn (see: Liddell-Scott, op. cit., p. 1187).

²⁷ See: Chantraine P., op. cit., III, pp. 763-764.

²⁸ Translated by J. Sandys (see: The Odes of Pindar, op. cit., p. 75).

²⁹ See examples cited above.

³⁰ Chantraine P., op. cit., IV – 2, pp. 1261-1265.

³¹ Comp. Apoll. Rhod. I 57-64.

³² See: Cooper J. C., op. cit., p. 153; Chantraine P., op. cit., II, pp. 585-586.

In the fourth Pythian ode, Jason setting his hand to the task given to him by Aeetes, “flung off his saffron robe”³³ (ἀπὸ κρόκεον ῥίψαις Ἰάσων εἶμα – Py. IV 232). In this case the saffron robe of the hero, having taught to the lore of suppliant incantations by Aphrodite and having the antidotes against sore pains given to him by enamoured Medea, can be regarded as a hint at the love and magic, as their symbol and the precondition of Jason’s victory (λιτὰς ἐπαιδὰς – Py. IV 215-217; σὺν δ’ ἐλαίῳ φαρμακώσαισ’ ἀντίτομα στερεᾶν ὄδυνᾶν – Py. IV 220-223). Jason, wearing the saffron robe, is in touch with love and magic; that is why he can not be won. Jason “quailed not before the fire; but seizing the plough, and binding the necks of the oxen in the harness irresistible, and ever thrusting the unwearied goad into their strong-ribbed frame, the stalwart hero accomplished the allotted measure of his task”³⁴ (Py. IV 232-238).

A saffron colour is used by Pindar in other places too. In the first Nemean ode Hera saw Heracles, “laid in his saffron swathing-bands” (κροκωτὸν³⁵ σπάργανον ἐγκατέβα – Ne. I 38). What can be meant by saffron in this case?

Heracles is a powerful helper initiated at Eleusis,³⁶ both the god and hero, uniting the Earth with the Heaven. Gods and heroes form two separate groups and the wall which separates them is impermeable: no god is a hero, and no hero becomes god; only Dionysos and Heracles are able to defy this principle and transfer in the range of god.

The initiation of Heracles at Eleusis protected him from the dangers of the underworld. “But the power inherent in Heracles leaves even Eleusis behind”.³⁷

Heracles has broken the terrors of death and has become the prototype for the most daring hopes for an afterlife. He is a model for the common man who may hope that after a life of drudgery, and through that very life, he too may enter into the company of the gods and attain the highest of mysteries.³⁸

Proceeding from the above, it is evident that “the saffron swathing-bands” of Heracles implicate the relation of the hero with the mysteries, Dionysos and his cult. In this context “the saffron” obviously symbolises the relationship with the mysteries of Dionysos. This colour is a mystery-symbol in another fragment of Pindar, according to which a saffron-coloured cloth is an element of the Daphnephoria festival, dedicated to Apollo (fr. 94 b).

The Muses, Aphrodite and Evadne are associated with violet, a symbol of kindness, beauty, moderateness and temperance,³⁹ in all Greek poetry and in Pindar too. Namely, violet-haired Muses, Evadne and violet-eyed Aphrodite are presented in his works (λοπλοκάμων Μοισᾶν (Py. I 1), ἰοπλόκοισι Μοίσαις (Is. VI (VII) 23, ἰοπλοκὸν Εὐάδναν (Ol. VI 30), ἰοβλέφαρον Ἀφροδίτην (fr. 307 (113))).

The epithets connected with viola are frequently used in the Greek poetry, but association of Evadne with violet can not be considered as an echo of the tradition only. The mention of the violet hair of Evadne (ἰοπλοκὸν <ἴου) and the poison (ἰος) in the same context, must be regarded as an indication on the name of oracle Iamus (Ἰάμος), the son of Evadne and Apollo. “The violet hair” of Evadne and the “poison” can be a poetic attempt of etymologising of Iamus’ name.⁴⁰ That is, the colour has two functions here: on the one hand to describe the woman and make her a visual image, and on the other hand to hint at the name of the personage.

Gold and silver – the sun and moon, the male and female principles – are two aspects determining cosmic reality. Consequently, golden and silver colours are very important symbols. Golden, connecting the Earth with the Heaven, symbolizes divine force, eternity, god, as a undimming light, the highest values, majesty and brightness. In comparison with gold, silver is less divine and sacred.⁴¹

³³ Translated by J. Sandys (see: *The Odes of Pindar*, op. cit., p. 225).

³⁴ Translated by J. Sandys (see: *The Odes of Pindar*, op. cit., p. 225).

³⁵ The word “κροκωτὸν” sometimes is by mistake translated as “purple”, the colour of kings and heroes (e. g. “nam hic et purpureus color sunt regum et heroum” (Dissen); in: Rumpel I., op. cit., p. 262). But, to my mind, it must be understood as “saffron” by its traditional meaning.

³⁶ On the initiation of Heracles see: Burkert W., op. cit., p. 78, n. 37.

³⁷ Burkert W., op. cit., p. 211.

³⁸ Burkert W., op. cit., pp. 78, 198, 205, 208-211, 213, 263, 318.

³⁹ On the symbolism of violet – a colour and flower – see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., pp. 52, 204.

⁴⁰ Пиндар, Бакхилид, Оды, Фрагменты (Издание подготовил М. Л. Гаспаров), Москва, 1980, p. 404, n. 47.

⁴¹ On the symbolism of golden and silver see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., pp. 50, 52.

According to Pindar, "gold is a child of Zeus; neither moth nor rust devoureth it; but the mind of man is devoured by this supreme possession" (fr. 222). Hence in Pindar everything good, divine and eternal is associated with gold.⁴²

In Pindar only the attributes of the different gods, goddesses, kings and heroes, the things related to the prophecy and Olympian games are described as gold or golden.⁴³ Regarding the colour of silver, in comparison with gold, it is attributed to the divine world, although used more rarely.⁴⁴

Only a few examples can be cited where gold and golden are not attributed to the gods and goddesses, kings and heroes, oracles and Olympian games. In spite of this, they symbolically hint at something divine and eternal.

For instance, in the plains of the blessed – where those purified by just life are living after death – the golden fruit is ripening, that is, eternity has reigned (καρποῖς βεβριθός – fr. 129 (95), 3). As Pindar says, a foundation of his odes is gold, metaphorically meaning that the basis of his poetry is divine and eternal (κεκρότηται χρυσέα κρηπίς ἱεραῖσιν ἀοιδαῖς – fr. 194 (206)).

Underlining the importance of any event, personage or geographical point, hyperbolising or ascribing divinity to them, Pindar also implies gold or golden. That is why Thebe with the shield of gold and golden tunic, Cyrene with the throne of gold, the golden palaces and chambers of Libya are presented in his works (χρύσασπις Θήβα – Is. I 1, χρυσοχίτων Θήβα – fr. 195 (207), χρυσοθρόνου Κυρῆνας – Py. IV 260, χρυσοῖς δόμοισιν – Py. IX 56, θαλάμω πολυχρύσω – Py. IX 69).

As my research uncovered, colours are never used by Pindar without artistic intention, specific symbolism or implication. I also noted some peculiarities of colour perception, functioning as an important artistic device.

Some passages I found important not only for the symbolism and implications, but for the artistic expressiveness of the colours used in them. By using colours, Pindar sometimes makes impressive and picturesque visual icons which magnify the impression of the reader. For example, the poet describes "the golden-yellow tears of greenish-yellow frankincense" in the temple of Peitho (τᾶς χλωρᾶς λιβάνου ξανθὰ δάκρη – fr. 122 (87), 3). In one line consisting from four words, two colour terms are presented and a certain gradation of colours is expressed: green – yellow – golden. At the same time the excess of yellow tone is evident here. By intensification of this colour the visual effect is increased. Such intensification of colour can be compared with a method of alliteration, i. e. occurrence of the same letter or sound

⁴² I refrain from analysing of two wrong-survived fragments of Pindar where the "gold" is mentioned but its meaning and function is uncertain (χρυσέων βέλεων – fr. 223 (244), χρύσεια Κηληδόνες – fr. 53 (25)).

⁴³ In Pindar there are presented: the gold eagle of Zeus, the gold snow (χρυσέων αἰετῶν – Py. IV 4, χρυσέαις νιφάδεσσι – Ol. VII 34), the gold coach of Apollo and Poseidon (χρυσέα δίφρω, δίφρον χρύσειον – Py. IX 6, cf. Ol. I 90 (88), Ol. I 90 (88)), the gold horses of Poseidon (χρυσέαισιν ἵπποις – Ol. I 42 (41), ἵπποις χρυσέαις – Ol. VIII 51), the gold plectrum, lyre, glen of Apollo (χρυσέω πλάκτρῳ – Ne. V 24, χρυσέα φόρμιγξ – Py. I 1, πολυχρύσω νάπα – Py. VI 8), golden-haired Apollo with the bow and sword of gold (Χρυσοκόμας, χρυσοχαίτα Ἀπόλλων – Ol. VI 41, Ol. VII 32, Py. II 16, χρυσέα κόμα Λοξίας – Is. VI (VII) 49, χρυσότοξον Ἀπόλλωνα – Ol. XIV 11, χρυσάωρα Φοῖβον – Py. V 104), Orpheus with the sword of gold (χρυσάορ Ὀρφέα – fr. 139), Leto, Amphitrite, Melia, the Nereides with the distaff of gold (χρυσάλακατος – fr. 139, I, cf. Ne. VI 41 (36), Ol. VI 104, fr. 29 (5), Ne. V 36), Hermes with the wand of gold (χρυσόραπις Ἑρμῆς – Py. IV 178), Hera with throne of gold (χρυσόθρονον Ἥραν – Ne. I 37), Nike, Muse, the Nereides of gold (χρυσέας Νίκας – Is. II 26, χρυσέαν Μοῖσαν – Is. VII (VIII) 5, χρυσεῖαν Νηρηίδων – Ne. V 7, χρύσειαι παῖδες Θέμιτος – Ol. XIII 8), one of the Fates, Lachesis, the Muses, the Horae with the fillet or frontlet of gold (χρυσάμπυξ – Ol. VII 64, Py. III 89, Is. II 1, fr. 30 (6), 6, Ol. XIII 65), the gold bows of Artemis (χρυσέοις τόξοισιν – Py. III 9), the deer with golden horns, dedicated to Artemis by Taygete, the daughter of Atlas (χρυσόκερως ἔλαφον – Ol. III 29), Demeter with the reins of gold ((χρυσάνιος – fr. 37 (12)), Mnemosyne with the robe of gold (χρυσοπέπλου Μνημοσύνας – Is. V (VI) 75), gold-crowned Hebe, the daughter of Zeus and Hera, the gold-crowned contests (χρυσοστεφάνοιο, χρυσοστεφάνου Ἥβας – Ol. VI 57, Py. IX 109, χρυσοστεφάνων ἀέθλων – Ol. VIII 1), the golden goats of the Muses and the golden sweet buy (Laurus Nobilis) (μῆλων χρυσῶν – fr. 288 (121), δάφνα τε χρυσέα – Py. X 40), Pythia, oracle of gold (χρυσέα κλυτόμαντι – fr. 90 (60), 2), the golden tripods (χρυσέων τριπόδων – Py. XI 4), the golden light of the sun (χρύσειον σθένης – Py. IV 144), Mena, Castor, Aeacidae (the descendants of Aeacus, the son of Zeus and Aegina) in the golden coach (χρυσάρματος Μῆνα – Ol. III 19, χρυσάρματος Κάστωρος – Py. V 9, χρυσάρματοι Αἰακίδαι – Is. V 19), the golden olives and their leaves (χρυσέας ἐλαίας – Ol. XI 13, φύλλοις ἐλαϊᾶν χρυσέοις – Ne. I 17), Aias with the golden arms (χρυσέων ὀπλων – Ne. VIII 27), the golden palaces and halls of the Heaven (χρυσέοις δόμοισιν – Ne. X 88, Is. III 78 (IV 60), πολυχρύσω δάματι – Py. IV 53, πολυχρύσοις θαλάμοις – fr. 221 (242), 2), the golden thrones of the kings (χρυσέαις ἔδραις – Py. III 94), the golden fleece (χρυσέω θυσάνῳ – Py. IV 231, πάγχρυσον νάκος – Py. IV 68), the golden bowl (by which the people begged to the gods for help) (χρυσέαν φιάλαν – Py. IV 193, φιάλαν πάγχρυσον – Ol. VII 4)).

⁴⁴ e. g. silver-footed Aphrodite (ἀργυρόπεζ' Ἀφροδίτα – Py. IX 9), Apollo with the silver bow (ἀργυρέω τόξω – Ol. IX 32), the Muses of silver (ἀργυρέας Μούσας – fr. 287 (120)), the silver pitcher of Evadne, the daughter of Nymph Pitane (κάλλιδα ἀργυρέαν – Ol. VI 4), the drinking horn of silver from which the Centaurs are drinking wine (ἀργυρέων κεράτων – fr. 166 (147), 3), the silver cups symbolising the victory in the Nemean games (ἀργυρέαισι φιάλαισι – Ne. IX 51, ἀργυρωθέντες φιάλαις – Ne. X 43), the "silvered", that is, sweet odes of Terpsichore (ἀργυρωθείσαι ἀοιδαί – Is. II 8).

at the beginning of two or more words in succession. By the intensification of sound, the acoustic effect is achieved, while the intensification of colour intensifies the visual effect. Both the intensification of sound and colour must be regarded as an important, expressive artistic device. Proceeding from the above stated premise, a new term – an alliteration of a colour – can be introduced.

Some passages of Pindar are distinguished by a great number of colours. To my mind, not only a separate colour but even a combination of colours can have some artistic or mental importance, a certain symbolism. To my observation, in each passage of Pindar different groups of colours can be mentioned. e. g. red and white; black and red; black, white and golden; silver, purple, dark-blue, golden, violet and golden-yellow.

Athena with dark she gives a golden bridle to Glaucus – the son of Sisyphus and king of Corinth – slept in darkness and tells him to sacrifice a white bull (Εὐδεις Αἰολίδα βασιλεῦ; ἄγε φίλτρον τὸδ' ἵππειον δέκευ, καὶ Δαμαίῳ νιν θύων ταῦρον ἀργάεντα πατρὶ δείξον. κυάναιγίς ἐν ὄρφνα κινύσσοντί οἱ παρθένος τόσα εἰπεῖν ἔδοξεν [Πάλας] – Ol. XIII. 67-72).

In this passage two scenes on condition can be distinguished: 1) Athena appears to Glaucus 2) and she gives advice to him. In the first scene black and in the second one white and golden are figured as, that, to my mind, can not be coincidence. Before the appearance of the goddess Glaucus is presented “in black colour”, in sleep and darkness, as it were, in ignorance and despair. The appearance of Athena makes a sudden change in the life of Glaucus that is symbolised by white and golden, colours of divinity, truth and eternity.

Six colours – silver, purple, dark-blue, golden, violet and golden-yellow – are used in six lines of the sixth Olympian ode and, as I have indicated above, each colour has a certain symbolical meaning.

Evadne laid down her purple zone and her silver pitcher, and in the dark-blue brake gave birth to a boy inspired of heaven... golden-haired Apollo sent to her aid the goddess of birth and the Fates... the body of Iamus is steeped in the golden and the deep-purple light of pansies (ἀ δὲ φοινικόκροκον ζῶναν καταθηκαμένα κάλπιδά τ' ἀργυρέαν λόχμας ὑπὸ κυανέας τίκτε θεόφρονα κούρον. τῆ μὲν ὁ χρυσοκόμας πραῦμητιν τ' Ἐλείθυιαν παρέστασ' ἐν τε Μοίρας... ἴων ξανθαῖσι καὶ παμπορφύροις ἀκτίσι βεβρεγμένος ἄβρόν σῶμα – Ol. VI 39-42, 55-56).

As I mentioned above, even the combination of colours can have some symbolic meaning. To my opinion, it is not coincidence that in one fragment of Pindar Demeter is characterised by two colours: purple and white (φοινικόπεζαν ἀμφέπει Δάματρα λευκίππου τε θυγατρὸς ἑορτάν – Ol. VI 95). If we remember that red and white mentioned together are symbols of death,⁴⁵ we can suppose that these two colours – attributed to Demeter in the same context – implicate the mystery-understanding of death.

Pindar describes the surroundings of Aetna. Its purple-red flame and black-leaved heights (φοῖνισσα κυλινδομένα φλόξ... Αἴτνας ἐν μελαμφύλλοις δέδεται κορυφαῖς καὶ πέδω – Py. I 24, 27). By the combination of red and black, by their contrast both visual and emotional effect is attained. A multi-coloured and consequently more impressive, visual icon is created while at the same time the reader is led over terror and despair, because both black and red are understood in this context by their negative features.

The research of the phenomenon of colour and the peculiarities of its perception in Pindar's poetry showed me that the colours have three main functions in the works of this great poet. The colours can be used: 1) as an epithet of different personages and things, based on empirical experience; 2) as a traditional or original metaphoric epithet; 3) as a certain symbol.

Colours are used by Pindar as an important artistic device; by the intensification, that is, “alliteration” or combination of colours the poet creates visual icons and increases the impressiveness of each phrase or passage. On the one hand colours are found in a traditional context, but on the other hand absolutely new, original and unexpected meaning is given to them.

Pindar never uses colours without any function, as an accidental and simple adornment. When choosing colour, the poet always takes into consideration traditional symbolism and peculiarity of colour perception in Antiquity. A colour is frequently used as a certain symbol or hint; and can be some kind of key for discovering the implications of various passages, an important device for better and deeper understanding of Pindar's many-sided poetry.

The peculiarities of colour perception in Pindar are additional evidences of original way of thinking, excellent artistic imagination and skills of this poet.

⁴⁵ see: Cooper J. C., op. cit., pp. 51-52.