On Implied Wishes for Olympic Victory in Pindar

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Scholars have recently appealed to the convention of the *Siegeswunsch*, or “victory wish,” as an explanation for a number of difficult and vexed passages in Pindar’s epinician poetry which have not usually been recognized as victory wishes. The obscurity of the wish is explained as a result of the unique glory conferred by victory in the Olympic games, requiring a certain diffidence and indirectness on the part of the *laudator*: in the formulation of one critic, “where the stakes are highest and the risk of failure most daunting, there the need for a becoming modesty of approach is most pressing.” Accordingly, it seems worth while to reexamine the convention of the epinician *Siegeswunsch* and also the various passages where scholars have found it implicitly present. In doing so, we find that the passages in question do not in fact conform well with the explicit examples of victory wish in Pindar and Bacchylides. Moreover, consideration of the passage within the broader context of its ode suggests an altogether different explanation in each case. The implied wish for Olympic victory is therefore not a convention which need be added to our grammar book of encomiastic rhetoric.

I. The Explicit Victory Wish

Eight passages in Pindar clearly and unambiguously express wishes for future victory. For the reader’s convenience, I give below a brief and, I trust, unbiased paraphrase of each:


2 Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (previous note) 464.

3 I here adopt the same list as that enumerated by Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above, note 1) 462 n. 3. However, I have bracketed Bacch. 8. 26–32 because of the uncertainty of the text: this passage is a wish if we read τελέσωις and ὀψάσοις with Maas, but not if we accept Blas’ τελέσως and ὀπάσως. Maas’ readings are those printed in the text of Snell–Maehler, defended in H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bacchylides* (Leiden 1982) I.2 141. On the other hand, it should be noted that wishes generally are far less common in Bacchylides than in Pindar.
O. 1. 106–11: “If god does not leave you, Hieron, I hope (ἐλπώμαι) to celebrate an Olympic chariot victory.”

O. 13. 101–06: “Their previous Olympic victories have been told; their future victories I would tell then; now I merely hope (ἐλπώμαι), and it is up to Zeus and Ares to accomplish.”

P. 5. 122–24: “The great mind of Zeus governs the guardian spirit of men. I pray (ἐὔχομαι) to him to grant this prize at Olympia to the race of Battus.”

N. 2. 6–10: “If propitious Time has given Timodemus as a glory to Athens, it is right that he cull the bloom of victory at Isthmia and Pytho.”

N. 10. 29–33: “O Zeus, his mouth is silent about what he inwardly desires. The accomplishment is yours. He does not demand the favor with an untoiling heart. I sing (αἰεῖθω) things known to god and competing men: Pisa is the highest contest.”

I. 1. 64–68: “May he be lifted up on the Muses’ wings, winning glory for Thebes at Pytho and Olympia. If someone hides his wealth, he goes to Hades without glory.”

I. 6. 3–9: “As at a symposium, the first libation is to Zeus for Nemean victory, the second to Poseidon and the Nereids for Isthmian victory. May the third be to Olympian Zeus, to honor Aegina with songs.”

I. 7. 49–51: “Grant us, O Apollo, a crown at Pytho.”

[Bacch. 8. 26–32: “O Zeus, may you grant our prayer and give him a crown at Olympia.”]

What is immediately discernible about all of these wishes is that they name a specific festival or festivals in which victory is desired, usually one at which this athlete has not yet achieved a victory. The second feature which characterizes all the wishes is the attribution of their accomplishment to a divine power: Zeus (O. 13, P. 5, N. 10, I. 6, Bacch. 8), Apollo (I. 7), the Θεός ἔπιτροπος (O. 1). Nemean 2. 7–8 invokes Time (εὐθυπομπός αἰών) as a sort of divine fate responsible for the victor’s success. Isthmian 1. 64–65 does not attribute the accomplishment of victory to the Muses, but the celebration and glorification of the desired victories. Both these passages avoid naming a single god and resort to more abstract figures of divine causality, since they are in fact wishes for victory at more than one festival.

4 Of course, O. 1. 106–11 and O. 13. 101–06 are exceptions, since no victory higher than an Olympic victory can be won. But O. 1 does maintain a sense of future anticipation by wishing for a chariot victory (more prestigious than the mere horse victory already achieved), and O. 13 wishes for other members of the family to achieve Olympic victories.
The wishes are about evenly divided between those which use a first-person verb to convey the hope (O. 1, O. 13, P. 5, N. 10) and those which express the prayer directly with an optative (I. 1, I. 6, and perhaps Bacch. 8) or imperative (I. 7). Again, Nemean 2. 6–10 is somewhat exceptional, using neither a direct nor indirect prayer, but an impersonal verb of appropriateness (6 ὀφείλει); as we have observed, this passage is not really a prayer at all, since it does not name a specific god, but the more abstract notion of Time. The whole is structured as a logical progression in conditional form.

Another element of importance in most of the prayers is the role of the poet himself and allusion to his vested interest in the athlete’s future victories. The poet’s self-involvement may be as slight as the use of a first-person verb (P. 5, N. 10) or pronoun (I. 7), or it may take the form of an explicit declaration that he hopes to be involved as a poetic celebrant of the forthcoming victories (O. 1, O. 13; more implicitly, I. 1 and I. 6).

Several of the prayers come at the conclusion of poems (O. 1, P. 5, I. 1, I. 7, Bacch. 8). Especially interesting is the concluding prayer of Isthmian 7. 49–51, which uses the first-person plural pronoun ὁμιλεῖ to unify poet and victor as the beneficiaries of Apollo’s favor in the Pythian games: in a sense, the crown will be the crown of the singing poet as well as that of the victorious athlete. The athlete’s future triumph will be the poet’s future opportunity for a commission.

What we find nowhere in these wishes is a special “modesty of approach” characteristic of wishes for Olympic victory. These are formally indistinguishable from the others. While Nemean 10. 29–33 does characterize the victor himself as modest in his claims, the poet does not hesitate to render his inward desires explicit and petition the god directly. Such verbal intermediation is indeed the poet’s function.

II. Generalized Wishes for Prosperity and Embedded Victory Wishes

Even more common than the explicit victory wish is the generalized prayer for good fortune. Again, a divinity is always involved, either addressed in the vocative or made the subject of an optative verb: Zeus (O. 2. 12–15, O. 5. 18–23, O. 7. 87–93, O. 8. 84–88, O. 13. 24–30, O. 13. 115, P. 1. 29–38, P. 1. 67–75, N. 9. 28–32), Apollo (P. 1. 39–40), Heracles (N. 7. 86–101), the Fates (I. 6. 14–18), the nymph Aegina (P. 8. 98–100), or the abstract.

5 The Muses’ role in raising the victor aloft in I. 1. 64–65 obviously points to the element of poetic celebration, as does their prominence in I. 6. 1–3, introducing the series of libations in celebration of the victories of Lampon’s sons. The μελιφθόργος ἄοιδας shed over Aegina in I. 6. 9 as a result of Olympic victory are surely meant to be songs of epinician praise.

6 On such wishes, of which victory wishes may be seen as a subclass, see E. L. Bundy, Studia Pindarica (Berkeley 1962) II 77–79; E. Thummer, Pindar. Die isthmischen Gedichte (Heidelberg 1968) 103–05. These are discussed under the rubric of “Future Prayer” by R. Hamilton, Ἐπινίκιον: General Form in the Odes of Pindar (The Hague 1974) 17, 20.
theos (O. 4. 12–16, P. 1. 56–57, P. 10. 17–22). Such prayers for general blessing may be for the benefit of the athlete, his clan, his city, or a combination of these; seldom is the wish for the athlete alone. The purpose of these wishes is to contextualize the victor’s success in the specific athletic event within a broader good fortune which will reach beyond the athlete to include those around him.

Three of these generalized wishes merit detailed examination here, since they involve future athletic victories as at least part of what is prayed for. The most obvious case of such an embedded victory wish is that of Pythian 1. 29–38:

εἰη, Ζεῦ, τίν εἰη ἀνδάνειν,  
δός τούτ᾽ ἔφεσις ὤρος, εὐκάρποιο γαῖας μέτωπον,  
τοῦ μὲν ἐπωνυμίαν 30
κλεινός οἰκιστὴρ ἐκύδανεν πόλιν
γείτοναι, Πυθιάδος δ᾽ ἐν δρόμῳ κάρυς ἀνέειπὲ

vin ἄγγισται Ἱέρωνος ὑπὲρ καλλινίκου
ἀρμασί. ναυσιφορῆτος δ᾽ ἀνδράσι πρώτα χάρις
ἐς πλόον ἄρχομένοις πομπαίον ἐλθεῖν οὖρον·
ἐοικότα γάρ
καὶ τελευτᾷ φερτέρου νόστον τυχεῖν. ὃ δὲ λόγος
ταύτας ἐπὶ συντυχίας ὀδῖζαν φέρει
λοιπὸν ἐσσεσθαι στεφάνοις νυν ἔποιοι τε κλυτάν
καὶ σὺν εὐφώνοις θαλίσσις ὀνομαστάν.

Hieron’s present chariot victory (alluded to here for the first time in the ode) is clearly presented as a good omen for the future of the newly founded city of Aetna, whose namesake god is here invoked (Zeus Aetnaeus). The victory is compared to the omen of a favorable wind at the beginning of a sea voyage. From this comes the expectation that Aetna will be famous for crowns, horses, and musical banquets, all the trappings of great victories in the prestigious equestrian contests. However, the prayer does not stop here: it continues with an address to Apollo to take this wish to heart and make Aetna a land of good men (P. 1. 40 εὐανδρόν τε χάραν). By placing the invocation of Zeus at the beginning and that of Apollo at the end of this

7 A. Kambylis, “Anredeformen bei Pindar,” in Χάρις: Κωνσταντίνος Ι. Βουρβέρη Ἀφίτριωμα (Athens 1964) 104–05 argues that the unspecified θεός in such cases should be understood as the last god addressed. But it may be that the god is intentionally left unspecified if O. 4. 12–16 and P. 10. 17–22 are to be read as, at least in part, victory wishes, since the contests in which victory is desired are not specified and could belong to several gods. On these passages, see below.

8 I. 6. 14–18 is the only clear case of this. O. 4. 12–16 is a wish for the victor Psaumis, but he is praised within the wish for his hospitality and devotion to peace, i.e. his public obligations. Thus, insofar as Psaumis will enjoy good fortune, the whole city of Camarina will also benefit. On this wish, see our more detailed discussion below.

wish sequence, the two gods are effectively linked together as co-guarantors of Aetna’s future prosperity, of which athletic success is merely one tangible manifestation. Invocation of the gods for this purpose is continued as a leitmotif throughout the ode: after gnomic reflections on the power of divine gifts to men (P. 1. 41–46) and a brief myth illustrating divine favor toward Hieron’s fortunes in war (P. 1. 47–55; note especially 48 θεῶν παλάμαις), the theos is asked to be a protector of Hieron in the future (P. 1. 56–57). In Pythian 1. 67–75, Zeus Teleios is invoked to “accomplish” good fortune and peace for the city and its leader. Throughout, Hieron’s fortunes are linked with those of Aetna. The victory wish of Pythian 1. 35–38 is not limited to Hieron or to any specific athletic festival, but is a wish for equestrian victories on behalf of the entire city and is clearly presented within a broader context of divine favor toward this city’s political and military fortunes.

Another such prayer comes soon after the initial announcement of Hippocleas’ victory in Pythian 10. 17–22:

έποιτο μοίρα καὶ υπέρσεια
ἐν ἀμέραις ἀγάνορα πλοῦτον ἀνθεῖν σφίσιν
τῶν δ’ ἐν Ἑλλάδι τερπνόν
λαχόντες οὐκ ὀλίγαν δόσιν, μὴ φθονεραίς ἐκ θεῶν
μετατροπίας ἐπικύρσαιεν. θέδας εἴη
ἄπημων κέαρ.

After announcing Hippocleas’ victory (P. 10. 7–9) and linking it with his father’s Olympic and Pythian victories (11–16), fleshed out with a gnome on divine power (10), the poet wishes “them” (σφίσιν) wealth in the future and hopes they will not encounter a reversal of fortune engendered by the jealousy of the gods. “Them” presumably refers not just to Hippocleas and his father, but to the whole family. As part of this wish, the poet prays that they will receive no small measure τῶν . . . ἐν Ἑλλάδι τερπνόν.10 The geographical designation has led some commentators to see this phrase as a reference to victory in the various contests throughout Greece;11 one could aptly compare Olympian 13. 112–13 πᾶσαν κατὰ Ἑλλάδ’, applied to the Oligaethids’ victories throughout Greece, or Nemean 6. 26 μυχῷ Ἑλλάδος ἀπάσας, in reference to the boxing victories of the Bassidae. Although the term τερπνόν is often used by Pindar with no specific application to athletic victory, at least one other text does seem to use the word with particular reference to agonistic success (N. 7. 74). It may be that Pindar employs the

10 It should be observed, however, that λαχόντες may not itself be part of the wish, but could refer to good things they have already achieved. Such seems to be the interpretation of Σ P. 10. 26 (Drachmann), which glosses it with the perfect participle μετασχηκότες.
11 Such is the view of L. Dissen, Pindari Carmina quae supersunt (Gotha 1830) II 330 and W. Christ, Pindari Carmina prolegomenis et commentariis instructa (Leipzig 1896) 218. However, F. Mezger, Pindars Siegeslieder (Leipzig 1880) 257 denies that the meaning of this phrase should be so limited.
vague expression τὸν . . . ἐν Ἑλλάδι τερπνῶν because he means us to understand more than just athletic victory here. But even if we are meant to see the phrase as specifically agonistic, it is clearly embedded within a context of wishes for the family’s continued prosperity and freedom from divine jealousy.

Also immediately after the initial victory announcement is the wish of Olympian 4. 12–16:

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\begin{align*}
\text{θεὸς εὐφρῶν} \\
\text{εἴη λοιποῖς εὐχαῖς} \\
\text{ἐπεὶ νῖν αἰνέω, μάλα μὲν τροφαῖς ἐτοίμον ἵππων,} \\
\text{χαίροντά τε ἔξεσις πανδόκοις,} \\
\text{kai pròs Ἑσυχίαν φιλόπολιν καθαρὰ γνώμα} \\
\text{τετραμμένον.}
\end{align*}
\]

A number of nineteenth-century commentators considered the λοιποῖς εὐχαῖς of Psaimis to be wishes for a victory in the equestrian contests, highlighted by the mention of horse breeding as the first item in the poet’s ensuing list of his praiseworthy qualities.\(^\text{12}\) Their view is predicated on Olympian 4 celebrating the same mule-team victory as Olympian 5 and that victory occurring in 456 B.C. or earlier. But it seems unlikely that Pindar would write two equally short and unimpressive odes for the same victory, since most double commissions involve one ode being appreciably larger in scale than the other (e.g. O. 10 and O. 11, O. 2 and O. 3, P. 4 and P. 5); the scholia (Σ\(^\text{A}\)\(^\text{B}\)\(^\text{C}\) O. 4 inscr. Drachmann) are probably right in assigning Olympian 4 to Psaimis’ Olympic chariot victory of 452 B.C., in which case the allusion to horses in Olympian 4. 14 is part of the poet’s praise of the present victory and not just a wish for future victories in the chariot race.\(^\text{13}\) Nevertheless, even if we see Olympian 4 as already celebrating an Olympic chariot victory, the “future prayers” of Psaimis could still include further athletic successes as part of what they entail; comparison with the “silent desire” for victory of Theaeus in Nemean 10. 29 is appropriate. But there is no reason to think that Psaimis’ prayers are limited to athletic success: the following list of his praiseworthy qualities contextualizes his horse breeding within a broader field of social and political activity, including hospitality and devotion to the goddess Peace.\(^\text{14}\)


\(^\text{13}\) For a review of the evidence and defense of the scholiastic date, see Gerber (previous note) 7–8.

\(^\text{14}\) The arrangement of the three terms listed in O. 4. 14–16 takes the form of an ascending tricolon, and therefore puts the climactic emphasis upon the third and longest term—devotion to Peace. See Gerber (above, note 12) 19 and W. H. Race, \textit{Style and Rhetoric in Pindar’s Odes} (Atlanta 1990) 22–23.
tremendous social and political resonance, bringing glory to the victor’s city and friends as well as to himself. Psaumis’ prayers are thus likely to be prayers for the good fortune of his city and friends as much as his own.

Our examination of these three passages suggests that prayers for victory which are not tied to a specific named contest (like those listed in Section I) are contextualized within generalized wishes for continued good fortune which extend beyond the victor himself to include his city, family, or friends. They typically occur immediately after the initial announcement of the athlete’s victory, near the beginning of the ode, and serve as a way of sharing the victor’s success with his community. Bearing these considerations in mind, let us now turn to the controversial passages which some critics have seen as implied wishes for Olympic victory.

III. Different Erotes: Pythian 10. 55–63

A number of commentators going back to the nineteenth century have regarded the future infinitive of Pythian 10. 58, combined with the expression ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον . . . θαυτόν, as evidence that Pindar hopes for a future Olympic victory on the part of Hippocleas, which he will be commissioned to celebrate. This view has most recently been defended in an article by Andrew M. Miller. To facilitate consideration of this passage, I shall quote the context (P. 10. 55–66):

ἐλπισμοί δ’ Ἐφυραίων ὥτ’ ἀμφι Πηνείων γλυκεῖαν προχέοντων ἔμαν τὸν Ἰπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν ἀοιδαῖς ἐκατε στεφάνων θαυτόν ἐν ἀλιξι θησέμεν ἐν καὶ παλαιτέροις, νέαισιν τε παρθένοις μέλημα. καὶ γάρ ἐτέρως ἐτέρων ἐρωτες ἐκνιείαν φρένας· τῶν δ’ ἐκαστὸς ὤροις, τυχὼν κεν ἀρσαλέαν σχέθοι φροντίδα τὰν πάρ ποδός· τά δ’ εἰς ἐνιαυτόν ἀτέκμαρτον προνοησία. πέποιθα ἐξενία προσανει Θώρακος, ὅσπερ ἔμαν ποιπνύων χάριν τόδ’ ἐξευξεν ἄρμα Πιερίδων τετράροιν, φιλέων φιλέοντ’, ἁγων ἁγοντα προφρόνως.

This passage comes at the beginning of the poem’s fourth and final triad, after Pindar has closed the myth of Perseus’ fantastic voyage to the Hyperboreans with a gnome declaring that anything is possible with the favor of the gods (48–50), followed by an apologetic break-off formula (51–

15 Miller, “Wish” (above, note 1) 161–72. Among the older critics interpreting the passage this way are C. G. Heyne, Pindari Carmina et Fragmenta (Oxford 1807) 1 336; Fennell (above, note 12) 261; Christ (above, note 11) 221; J. Sandys, The Odes of Pindar, 2nd ed. (London 1919) 287.
54. Such break-off formulae after myths either lead to a new myth or return us to the present epinician topic, featuring praise of the victor and/or his family for their achievements.\textsuperscript{16} I have found no cases in which a myth is broken off, to be followed immediately by a wish for the future. Indeed, our examples of both explicit and implied victory wishes examined in Sections I and II all form part of passages already praising the victor and/or his family; the wishes themselves never constitute the starting point for the focus on the victor.\textsuperscript{17} For this reason alone, I think that Farnell and others must be right in seeing the future \(\theta\eta\sigma\varepsilon\mu\varepsilon\) here as an “encomiastic future,” referring to the present act of choral celebration.\textsuperscript{18}

There are additional reasons why the construction of this passage as a wish for future Olympic victory does not seem tenable. Nothing so much as hints at Olympia or any other athletic festival; those who construe it as an Olympic wish do so merely on the basis that this is the only victory more prestigious than the Pythian crown Hippocleas has already won.\textsuperscript{19} Nor do we find the prayer form and attribution of success to a god that are conventional in both explicit and embedded wishes for victory: no mention is made of god anywhere in this passage, an omission made all the more curious in a wish following a myth whose chief purpose was to prove the power of the gods to work miracles.

Miller has argued that the limitation gnome of \textit{Pythian} 10. 61–63 takes the place of the usual divine element by reminding the athlete of the limits to his ambition.\textsuperscript{20} But the two conventions (the limitation topos and recognition of divine causality behind human success) are really quite separate; nowhere do we find them used interchangeably and only seldom are they even linked. Indeed, the emphasis of \textit{Pythian} 10. 61–63 on keeping one’s sight fixed on the near-term perspective and not speculating about things a year away seems to tell definitively against \textit{Pythian} 10. 55–60 being a wish for an Olympic victory two years down the road. No strong adversative like \(\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\) marks the gnomes off as an antithetical check or break-off formula: the connective \(\delta\) in 61 rather casts them as a logical development of what has just been said.


\textsuperscript{17} Generalized wishes or prayers for prosperity may provide a transition from mythical material back to the encomiastic theme, as in \textit{P.} 1. 29–38 or 56–57; in \textit{O.} 13. 24–30, a prayer for prosperity effects the transition from praise of the city to that of the victor. But victory wishes nowhere serve this function.

\textsuperscript{18} Farnell (above, note 12) II 219. On the encomiastic future generally, see Bundy (above, note 6) I 21–22; W. J. Slater, “\textit{Futures in Pindar,}” \textit{CQ} 19 (1969) 86–94. There is a definite parallel between this phrase and \(\varepsilon\tau\kappa\omega\mu\iota\varsigma\nu\alpha\varsigma\ \alpha\nu\delta\rho\iota\omega\nu\ \kappa\lambda\lambda\tau\tau\alpha\ \iota\sigma\alpha\) (\textit{P.} 10. 6), which clearly refers to the present choral performance. Even if we are to imagine separate performances at Pelinnaion (\textit{P.} 10. 4) and Ephyra (55–56), the future \(\theta\eta\sigma\varepsilon\mu\varepsilon\) would be a real future when sung at Pelinnaion, but an encomiastic future when sung at Ephyra.

\textsuperscript{19} So, for instance, Miller, “\textit{Wish}” (above, note 1) 170–71. Not all wishes for victory need be for more prestigious victories, as the example of \textit{O.} 13. 101–06 demonstrates.

\textsuperscript{20} Miller, “\textit{Wish}” (above, note 1) 169–70.
An alternative explanation for the sequence of ideas in this passage does exist. The poet’s hope/expectation is not for an unexpressed future victory, but for the effectiveness of his present praise.\textsuperscript{21} The power of his encomiastic rhetoric is illustrated in terms of the victor’s enhanced attractiveness to other boys, to older men, and to maidens.\textsuperscript{22} The most obvious parallel passage here is not one of the explicit victory wishes cited by Miller, but another text concerning a victorious athlete’s sex appeal (P. 9. 97–100):

\begin{quote}
pλέιστα νικάσαντα σε καὶ τελεταίς
ωρίαις ἐν Παλλάδος εἴδων ἄφωνοι θ’ ὡς ἕκασται φίλτατον
παρθενικοί πόσιν ἢ
ὑίνι εὐχόντι, ὦ Τελεσίκρατες, ἔμμεν . . .
\end{quote}

The present passage expands the exclusively female interest of \textit{Pythian} 9 (an ode dominated by marriage motifs)\textsuperscript{23} by also including male homoerotic interests, as appropriate in the case of an adolescent boy. That we are dealing with a variety of eroticisms here is made clear by the summary priamel of \textit{Pythian} 10. 59–60, although translators and commentators have in the past often tried to obfuscate the point out of a misplaced sense of modesty.\textsuperscript{24} Both iconographical and literary evidence suggests that erotic

\textsuperscript{21} Compare the use of ἔλπιςαι in P. 1. 42–44 and N. 6. 26–28.

\textsuperscript{22} The praise of the poet’s song and its powers, so clearly the subject of P. 10. 55–57, would only be obscured and ambigated if P. 10. 58–59 turned out to be about a future Olympic victory. Would the athlete be more attractive to boys, men, and girls because of the Olympic victory itself or because of being celebrated by an ode of Pindar? And if the latter, why would a second ode make him so much more attractive than the first?


\textsuperscript{24} See for instance the translation of Sandys (above, note 15) 293: “... cause Hippocleas to be admired still more for his crowns among his fellows and his elders, and to be looked upon with a sweet care by the young maidens.” Or see the paraphrase of W. B. Burton, \textit{Pindar’s \textit{Pythian Odes} (Oxford 1962) 11}: “... will enhance Hippocleas’ distinction among his countrymen and commend him to the hearts of the young girls.” One finds equally watered-down renderings of \textit{θεσιός} in the translations of Bowra, Lattimore, Swanson, Conway, and Nisitch. But the term \textit{θεσιός} unquestionably refers to physical beauty when applied to humans (cf. P. 4. 80, P. 9. 108, N. 11. 12); see my remarks in \textit{The Pindaric Mind} (Leiden 1985) 22 n. 34. The point of this statement can hardly be that he will be more beautiful \textit{in comparison} to his agemates and older men, since older men would not be appropriate objects of comparison for the physical beauty of a youth anyway. The point can only be that Hippocleas will be more beautiful \textit{in the eyes} of his agemates and older men; see the translation of Farnell (above, note 12) 1142, although his commentary is uncharacteristically silent here. O. Schroeder, \textit{Pindars Pythien} (Leipzig 1922) 98 seems to be the only commentator willing to reveal to his readers that this is indeed what the passage must mean: he aptly compares Horace, C. 1. 4. 19–20 “quo calet juventus / Nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt.” See R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, \textit{A Commentary on Horace: \textit{Odes}, Book I} (Oxford 1970) 72. Horace read his Pindar with rather less prudery than many moderns.
activity among youths of the same age (ἐν ὀλίγοι) was more common than often supposed.25 The attractiveness of adolescent boys to older Greek males (ἐν παλαιτέροις), including Pindar himself, was well known; the canonical kouros statues were central in the development of Greek aesthetic sensibility in this period. Homoerotic involvement has long been seen as an essential part of Greek paideia and a form of adolescent initiation, preparing boys for adult responsibilities in both the political and sexual spheres.26 As such, it constitutes a prelude to heterosexual interests and marriage, as we see illustrated most clearly in Pindar’s rendition of the Pelops myth in Olympian 1, where the youth’s homosexual sojourn with Poseidon in Olympus tears him away from his boyhood home and prepares him to compete in the chariot race against Oenomaus to win the hand of Hippodameia.27 It is thus fitting to have Hippocleas’ potential for marriage (νέοισιν τε παρθένοισι) alluded to as the third and climactic term in the series, prepared for with initiatory homoerotic interests.

The homoerotic context of this section may explain the emphasis on limiting one’s perspective to the present moment. The theme of fleeting temporality is central to homosexual love poetry, concentrated as it is on glorification of the desired boy’s brief efflorescence of fragile beauty:28 as Pindar tells himself at the beginning of the famous Theoxenus encomium, χρήν μὲν κατὰ καθόν ἐρῶτων δρέπεθαι, θυμε, σὺν ὀλίκία (fr. 123. 1). At the opening of Nemean 8, the poet addresses a hymn to Hora, the goddess who distinguishes youths and maidens in beauty, giving preeminence to some and not to others, even as the boy Deinias is preeminent in both beauty and athletic prowess.29 The close of Olympian 10 praises the boy Hagesidamus as ἢδες τε καλὸν ὥρα τε κεκραμένον (O. 10. 103–04); praised by poetry, his brief moment of glory and beauty becomes frozen for eternity, even as Ganymede’s beauty is deathless (O. 10.


29 On the doublet of beautiful appearance and noble deeds in Pindar, see Race (above, note 14) 188–91. On the significance of beauty and eros generally in the epinician, see the discussion of Crotty (above, note 9) 76–103.
104–05). For a youth, the present moment is everything, and τὰ εἰς ἐνιαυτόν are ἀτέχμαρτον προνοῆσαι and better left that way.  

A scholium tells us that the king Thorax was the ἐτάξιος of the boy victor Hippocleas; the word is probably to be understood in the sense of erastes. While this is likely to be no more than an inference on the part of the scholiast, it is a reasonable explanation for the ode’s being commissioned not by the boy’s father, as is usual, but by a non-related nobleman. One can compare the banquet which the rich Callias gives in honor of his eromenos Autolycus after the latter’s Panathenaic victory, which forms the setting for Xenophon’s Symposium and its ensuing discussion of beauty, love, and marriage. It is significant that the gnomes on not looking beyond the present good are immediately followed without any connective particle by Pindar’s praise of Thorax as a trustworthy and kindly friend. The implication may well be that Hippocleas should now devote his attention to his present erastes Thorax rather than gazing several years down the road toward his eventual marriage (adumbrated with the νέασιν τὲ παρθένοις μέλμα in P. 10. 59). Despite the new opportunities for love and approbation available to the boy in virtue of his enhanced stature (55–60), he should keep to the coveted good at hand (61–63), exemplified by his friendship with Thorax, a friend even to the poet (64–66) and a just ruler of Thessaly (67–72). None of this is consistent with the future-oriented perspective that would be set up by a wish for Olympic victory in two years’ time.

IV. Praying for Harmony: Pythian 8. 67–78

Miller argues in another long and stimulating article that better sense can be made of the vexed prayer to Apollo in Pythian 8. 67–69 if we understand it as a “first-person indefinite” request, asking the god for his favor toward the athlete’s next undertaking—the pursuit of victory at Olympia. Again, I shall quote the broader context of this passage to facilitate its understanding (P. 8. 61–80):

> τῷ δ’, Ἐκαταβόλε, πάνδοκον
> ναὸν εὐκλέα διανέμων
> Πυθώνος ἐν γυάλλοις.

30 For time as a thematic leitmotif in O. 10, see G. Kromer, “The Value of Time in Pindar’s Olympian 10,” Hermes 104 (1976) 420–36 and Hubbard (above, note 24) 61–70.
31 For the elaborated motif of youth’s immersion in present joys and ignorance of future ills, see Memmert, fr. 2 W and Simonides, frs. 19–20 W2 (= Semonides, fr. 29 D).
32 Σ. P. 10. 99a (Drachmann). Again, Schroeder (above, note 24) 91 is alone among commentators in mentioning this possibility; see also G. Coppola, Introduzione a Pindaro (Rome 1931) 29.
Miller bases his construction of the passage on two original observations: (1) that the prayer to Apollo in 67–69 interrupts a victory catalogue, and the only other objective (i.e. victor-oriented) prayers to do so are Olympian 13.101–06 and Nemean 10.29–33, both explicit wishes for Olympic victory (see Section I), and (2) that 67–69 is really the request component of a cult hymn beginning with 61–66. Miller analyzes such cult hymns according to a tripartite structure of (i) invocation, (ii) hypomnnesis, and (iii) request. Since the hypomnnesis in this case is a reminder to Apollo of past instances in which he has helped Aristomenes win athletic victories (64–66), Miller infers that the request must also be on behalf of Aristomenes and his athletic ambitions. Since Aristomenes has already won a Pythian victory, the desired future success must be a victory at Olympia, which alone is more prestigious.

There are problems, however, with both these lines of argument. Victory catalogues may be interrupted for any number of reasons which have nothing to do with wishing for future victories. The poet may interrupt the victory catalogue to praise a secondary laudandus (I. 2. 22–28, on the charioteer Nicomachus), to insert sequences of gnomic reflection (O. 8. 59–64, on the virtues of teaching), or to pause for a brief mythological digression, often justified by extended apologetic self-justification (P. 9. 80–96, on Iolaus and Thebes, or N. 6. 45–57, on the Aeacidae). The general purpose of such passages is to delay the completion of the victory catalogue and thus make it appear longer, through the typical Pindaric technique of foil and deferral.34

Of particular interest for our purposes are those digressive passages which contain an element of wish or prayer. A good example is Nemean 6.

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34 For such devices as means of lengthening a victory catalogue, see Bundy (above, note 6) II 69–70.
26–30, which is flanked on each side by extended victory catalogue (11–26 and 31–44). After a climactic assertion that the house of the Bassidae has won more boxing victories than any other in Greece (24–26), the poet pauses for a moment to take aim and invoke the Muse before commencing another crescendo of praise (N. 6. 26–30):

ēlpomai
méga eipóν skopóν ánta tuchēn
ót' apó tōδou ieiν éthun' épi toúton, áge, Moiśa, oúron épéwv
euklēa: paraioyméwv γάρ ἄνερων,
áoiodai kai lóghoi tá kalá sφn érγ' ékōmiasan.

We see here a combination of wish/hope (ēlpomai) with direct prayer to a divinity (the Muse) to intervene, followed by a gnomic rationalization of the prayer which acts as a hypomnesis. Pindar’s bow-and-arrow metaphors, like his javelin casts, serve a focussing function in moving us toward the encomiastic theme: here, the movement is from the more general praise of the clan to the specific praise of the kinsmen Callias and Creontidas. The Muse is also directly associated with the arrow metaphor in Olympian 1. 111–12 and is generally connected with spurring the poet on to his task of praise. This passage stands as a seal of divine authority for the climactic vaunt Pindar has already made in Nemean 6. 24–26 and as a regenerative pause preparing him to launch into a new development of praise. It has nothing to do with future victories, but is entirely concerned to validate the poet’s praise of existing victories.

Equally effective as validation of the poet’s praise is the wish that the victor’s uncle Callicles should hear Pindar’s γλῶσσαν κελαδητιν in the Underworld (N. 4. 85–88). This can only take place if the poet’s voice has supernatural powers of penetration which overcome death. In the extended digression of Pythian 9. 80–96, we find a brief prayer that the Graces not abandon the poet (89–90 Χαρίτων κελαδενάν / μή με λίποι καθορόν φέγγος). I have argued elsewhere that this prayer asks for the Graces’ continued favor as Pindar leads a kómos for the Theban heroes mentioned in the preceding digression as responsible for Telesicrates’ victory at the

35 The victory catalogue actually extends to N. 6. 58–63 and is interrupted a second time by a mythological digression on the Aeacidae in 45–57. Thus virtually the entire poem can be visualized as a victory catalogue punctuated by digressions.
36 On the convention of hypomnesis, the traditional reminder to a god either of past services the supplicant has performed for the god or, as here, of past favors the god has granted the supplicant, see H. Meyer, Hymnische Stilelemente in der frühgriechischen Dichtung (Cologne 1933) 4–5; K. Keyssner, Gottesvorstellung und Lebensaussage im griechischen Hymus (Stuttgart 1932) 134; Race (above, note 14) 86, 93–94. For the use of γαρ to signal such a hypomnesia, see my remarks on P. 9. 90–92 in “Theban Nationalism and Poetic Apology in Pindar, Pythian 9. 76–96,” RhM 134 (1991) 35, especially n. 50.
Illolaea.\textsuperscript{39} Again, the prayer invokes the divinity as a guarantor and supporter of the poet’s strategy of praise. Nothing here suggests future victories.\textsuperscript{40}

Miller defends his use of \textit{Olympian} 13. 101–06 and \textit{Nemean} 10. 29–33 as analogues for \textit{Pythian} 8. 67–69 by saying that an “explicit or implicit prayer on behalf of the laudandus and/or his family . . . embedded in a victory-catalogue” must be a \textit{Siegeswunsch}.\textsuperscript{41} But nothing identifies \textit{Pythian} 8. 67–69 as a prayer for the victor and/or his family. The first-person pronoun, at least as conventionally interpreted, points rather to the poet and thus to prayers/wishes of subjective validation such as we have enumerated. Even if \textit{Pythian} 8. 67–69 did involve the victor in a more direct and obvious way, two examples of such prayers being \textit{Siegeswünsche} are hardly enough to justify an ironclad law that they must be such. Pindar is clearly capable of interrupting his victory catalogues for a variety of motives.

More intriguing is Miller’s argument that \textit{Pythian} 8. 67–69 must constitute the final request in a cult hymn which begins with 61–66 and thus asks for future victories as a continuation of the divine benefaction recollected with the hypomnmesis of 64–66 (on Apollo’s grant of previous victories at Pytho and Aegina). Miller’s exposition of the three-part hymn structure here is sound, but one is entitled to question whether a hypomnmesis concerning the god’s previous favor toward the athlete’s agonistic efforts can only preface a request concerning the same. The function of a hypomnmesis is to remind the god of past connections with the prayer’s beneficiary and thus to indicate why this particular god is the appropriate one to invoke. This function is just as well served if we see \textit{Pythian} 8. 64–66 as the hypomnmesis preparing a request for subjective validation of the poet’s strategy of praise: Apollo is the appropriate god to invoke since he has provided the Pythian victory which the poet here celebrates. The benefit recollected by this hypomnmesis reaches both athlete (an athletic victory) and poet (the chance for a poetic commission), even as the request touches both athlete (Pindar’s immediate subject matter among \textit{όσο νέομαι}) and poet (the \textit{ego} of the prayer). The poet’s own stake in the athlete’s success has been emphasized already in the lines immediately preceding this prayer (56–60), where Pindar receives a prophecy concerning the Pythian victory of Aristomenes as he sets out for Delphi.\textsuperscript{42} The lines which follow the

\textsuperscript{39} Hubbard (above, note 36) 33–36.

\textsuperscript{40} However, Dissen (above, note 11) II 318–20 and Christ (above, note 11) 211 believe this wish does refer to future victories. See my objections to this view in Hubbard (above, note 36) 34 n. 44.

\textsuperscript{41} Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above, note 1) 462.

\textsuperscript{42} That this is the probable content of the prophecy was suggested by \textit{Σ Π.} 8. 78a (Drachmann). See also Dissen (above, note 11) II 291–92; B. L. Gildersleeve, \textit{Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes} (New York 1885) 351; Farnell (above, note 12) II 196; J. Duchemin, \textit{Pindare poète et prophète} (Paris 1955) 90 n. 2; C. M. Bowra, \textit{Pindar} (Oxford 1964) 52; G. Kirkwood, \textit{Selections from Pindar} (Chico, CA 1982) 211. See also my remarks in “The Theban Amphiarai and Pindar’s Vision on the Road to Delphi,” \textit{MH} 50 (1993) 198–
prayer also emphasize the laudator's interests as well as those of the laudandus: the request is explained, with μέν and δὲ,\textsuperscript{43} by the poet's assertion of encomiastic propriety (Δίκαος) in his komos and by his declaration that he wishes to avert the jealousy of the gods from the victor.\textsuperscript{44} There is no reason, either in the prayer itself or in its surrounding context, to limit its application to the interests of the victor alone.

Miller's interpretation of this passage as a prayer only on the athlete's behalf confronts the immediate problem of the first-person in Pythian 8. 67–69, which he explains by appeal to the convention of the "first-person indefinite."	extsuperscript{45} But the other examples of the first-person indefinite are uniformly cases in which a wish or declaration is made by a generic "I," speaking for both poet and victor and "all right-thinking persons." The "I" is never identified with the persona of the victor alone, as it would have to be for Pythian 8. 67–69 to constitute a wish for future athletic victories. Nor is it used in highly occasional and context-specific wishes, such as one for Olympic victory; its function in other wish-passages is always gnomic, a kind of moral self-exhortation to conform to a certain pattern of behavioral constraint.\textsuperscript{46} Indeed, the first-person indefinite does not appear to be used in cultic hymns at all. That Pythian 8. 67–69 is unlikely to be spoken in the first-person voice of the victor is confirmed by the victor's father being addressed in the vocative in 72, where the first-person (αὐτής) clearly refers to the poet interceding with the gods on behalf of the victor's family (ὑμετέρας τύχας),\textsuperscript{47} such intercession would hardly be necessary if the victor had already impetrated Apollo's favor in his quest for Olympic victory.

The relationship of this prayer to its general surrounding context is one of the principle obstacles to seeing it as a victory wish. The preceding myth of Amphiarous' oracle concerning the Epigonoi (P. 8. 39–56) emphasizes

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\textsuperscript{49} It may also include some political implications concerning Aegina's future, as suggested by T. Krischer, "Pindars achte Pythische Ode in ihrem Verhältnis zur ersten," WS 98 (1985) 123.

\textsuperscript{42} The illustrative use of μέν/δὲ in asyndeton after a preceding general sentence is common in Pindar: see O. 2. 25–30, P. 2. 15–20, 63–67, P. 5. 15–20, P. 9. 118–20, N. 2. 14–15, N. 5. 44–46. The poet's wish for harmonious vision is here illustrated with two examples of it, his encomiastic propriety (μέν) and aversion of ὑθόνος θεόν (δὲ).

\textsuperscript{44} See Hubbard (above, note 33) 290–91. The ὑθόνος θεόν topos in Pindar constitutes a declaration of encomiastic propriety in that excessive or undue praise beyond what is fitting for the mortal station is what excites the jealousy of the gods.

\textsuperscript{45} Miller, "Apolline Ethics" (above, note 1) 472, citing the seminal discussion of this convention by D. C. Young, Three Odes of Pindar: A Literary Study of Pythian 11, Pythian 3, and Olympian 7 (Leiden 1968) 12–15, 58–61.


\textsuperscript{47} Miller, "Apolline Ethics" (above, note 1) 473 n. 31 points to N. 1. 31–33 as a parallel, where we have a first-person indefinite statement (N. 1. 31–32) followed by a first-person statement in which the "I" is clearly the poet and only the poet (N. 1. 33). However, there is in this case an intervening gnomic statement (N. 1. 32–33 καὶ αὔτα ἀγαθακὴν ἐλπίδας / πολυπόνων ἄνδρῶν) and a strong shift in persona as indicated by the emphatic ἔγο δ' in the poetic statement of N. 1. 33, beginning the poem's myth. In P. 8. 70–72, we have neither of these, but a μέν/δὲ construction growing directly out of the prayer in P. 8. 67–69.
the variability of human fortune; the lesson is applied to present events by the lines breaking off the myth (56–60), in which Pindar tells us that Amphiarautus granted an oracle to the poet himself as he set out for Delphi, presumably about Aristomenes’ forthcoming victory.\(^{48}\) The theme of vicissitude in fortune is continued with the gnomic reflections immediately after the prayer (73–78) and is implied even in the \(\phi\d\nu\delta\nu\z\ \theta\epsilon\omega\nu\) topos of 71–72. It also constitutes the major theme of the fifth triad (81–100); with the final prayer of 98–100, wishing for Aeginetan freedom, the motif of variable fortune is revealed to have political overtones as well.\(^{49}\) In the context of this pervasive emphasis on the instability and reversability of human fortune, a specific prayer for Olympic victory seems out of place. Nothing in this prayer points to Olympia especially, nor is Apollo even the right god to invoke if one wished for Olympic victory.\(^{50}\)

The prayer is far more likely to function as a general wish for continued prosperity and/or good judgment in the face of the ephemeral fragility of human achievements. There has been considerable controversy over the precise meaning of \(\text{Pythian} 8. 67–69:\) some have taken Apollo as the one asked to look, others have taken the poet himself as the subject of the infinitive,\(^{51}\) and many different translations of ἀκτά τιν’ ἀρμονίαν have been proposed.\(^{52}\) I have expressed my own view of these lines elsewhere, but at least three subsequent articles have each adopted a different point of view, and it must be acknowledged that consensus is not close to being achieved.\(^{53}\) If Apollo is to be understood as the subject of the infinitive βλέπειν, the prayer would seem to ask that he favor the poet’s undertakings (ὅσα νέομαι), including Pindar’s praise of the fortunes of the victor and his family (implied in the ὑμετέρας τόχας of 72 and presumably the object of the \(\text{komos}\) in 70–71). Apollo could best favor the poet’s undertaking in this

\(^{48}\) See Hubbard (above, note 42) 193–203 for a fuller explication of these lines.

\(^{49}\) For the political background and significance of this final prayer, see Mezger (above, note 11) 399–401; C. Gaspar, \(\text{Essai de chronologie pindarique}\) (Brussels 1900) 165–68; N. O. Brown, “Pindar, Sophocles, and the Thirty Years’ Peace,” TAPA 82 (1951) 1–6; Krischer (above, note 42) 119–24; T. J. Figueira, \(\text{Athens and Aigina in the Age of Imperial Colonization}\) (Baltimore 1991) 90–91; T. Cole, \(\text{Pindar’s Feasts or the Music of Power}\) (Rome 1992) 101–11.

\(^{50}\) Other wishes specifically for Olympic victory always invoke Zeus; cf. O. 13. 101–06, P. 5. 122–24, N. 10. 29–33, I. 6. 3–9, Bacch. 8. 26–32. The θεός ἐπιτροπος of O. 1. 106–11 should probably be understood as Zeus. I. 1. 64–68 does not name a specific god as responsible for the victory, since it asks for victory at both Olympia and Pytho.

\(^{51}\) For a list of critics taking Apollo as the subject, see Hubbard (above, note 33) 287 n. 2; add Verdenius (above, note 33) 367–68 and Taillardat (above, note 33) 228–29. For a list of those taking the poet as subject, see Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above, note 1) 473 n. 32.

\(^{52}\) Among English translators of this century one finds a variety of renderings: “keep due measure in view” (Sandsys), “see eye to eye with thee” (Farnell), “look even as you look also” (Lattimore), “look down to my harmonies” (Conway), “let your eyes rain melody” (Bowra), “look somewhat in harmony” (Ruck and Matheson), “see a harmony” (Swanson), “see me through my song, in harmony” (Nisetich). My own preference is to take the poet as subject and translate, “look according to some principle of harmony.” Matters are complicated further by the tendency of many early editors to accept de Pauw’s emendation κατά τίν, on which see Hubbard (above, note 33) 286 n. 1.

\(^{53}\) See the references in note 33 above.
regard by continuing to favor the victor and his family in a general sense. If the poet himself is the subject of βλέπειν, the prayer would seem to be a self-exhortation to propriety, whether in his strategy of praising the victor, in making transitions, or some other aspect of his art. Amid the vicissitude and mutability of fortune in the mortal world, the poet must know how to qualify his praise so as not to exceed the bounds of encomiastic Δίκη (70–71) or excite the jealousy of the gods (71–72): this qualification he proceeds to add in 73–78.  

Finally, even if we were to take the first-person of this prayer as a “first-person indefinite,” as Miller proposes, the wish would have to be a general and gnomic exhortation to self-restraint, not a specific wish for a particular benefit to the victor alone. However we choose to translate these lines, their application must be engaged with the broader issues of the ode concerning the transitory and fragile nature of human success and the quickness with which fortune can change.

V. Orion and the Pleiades: Nemean 2. 6–15

The third strophe of the short Nemean 2 has been a hermeneutic crux since the Alexandrian period. The point of the Orion/Pleiades and Ajax/Salamis allusions has been a riddle for commentators, but the solution clearly has something to do with the preceding victory wish, which I quote in full (N. 2. 1–15):

"Ὅθεν περ καὶ Ὀμηρίδαι
βασιλεύς ἔπειν τὰ πόλλα, ἀοιδοῖ
ἀρχονταί, Δίος ἐκ προσιμίου, καὶ ὁ ἀνήρ
καταβολὰν ἱερῶν ἀγώνων νικαφορίας δέδεκται
πρῶτον, Νεμέαντοι
ἐν πολυμνήτῳ Δίως ἄλσει.

ὁφείλει δ’ ἔτι, πατρίδαν
εἴπερ καθ’ ὅδὸν νῦν εὐθυμοπόθος
αιῶν ταῖς μεγάλαις δέδωκε κόσμον Ἀθάναις,
θαμύμα μὲν ἱσθμιάδων δρέπασθαι κάλλιστον
ἀνωτὸν ἐν Πυθιοίσι τε νικάν
Τιμωνόον παιδ’· ἔστι δ’ ἐοικὸς"  

54 This is basically the view I have adopted in Hubbard (above, note 33) 286–92. Miller, "Apolline Ethics" (above, note 1) 470 objects to a subjective prayer here on the grounds that nothing in this victory catalogue is challenging enough to require such an appeal for divine assistance. I would suggest that the fundamental challenge of P. 8 is how to render praise of a triumphant Aeginetan athlete in a time and political atmosphere in which Aegina as a whole is anything but triumphant. Pindar addresses this problem with a myth and extended meditations on the vicissitude and cyclical variability of human fortune. In this context of general pessimism, the praise of the victor’s present happiness must be tempered without being negated; this delicate balancing of high notes and low notes, bright tones and dark tones, is the immediate encomiastic challenge for which the poet invokes divine assistance.

55 Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above, note 1) 475–76 seems to acknowledge this as the nature of such first-person wishes, but fails to explain how such a general wish can also be read as a specific wish for Olympic victory.
With some minor variations and occasional eccentricities,\(^{56}\) essentially three schools of thought have emerged concerning the Orion comparison. One scholium, followed by many modern commentators,\(^{57}\) holds that Timodemus’ victory/victories follow his ancestors’ victories (hinted at in πατρίαν . . . καθ’ ὁδόν) even as naturally as Orion follows the Pleiades. Another scholium holds that his predicted Isthmian and Pythian victories will follow his initial Nemean victory (the καταβολάν ἱερῶν ὁγόνων νικαφορίας), even as Orion follows the Pleiades.\(^{58}\) While these two views differ on the precise identity of what is compared, both agree on ἔστι δ’ ἔοικός . . . being used as a formula introducing a comparison. Some more recent critics have taken an altogether different approach, however, suggesting that Nemean 2. 10–12 is not a comparison to the preceding lines, but a progressive continuation of the preceding wish for Isthmian and Pythian victories, making a veiled wish for Olympic victory: Olympic victory is a giant like Orion, dwarfing all previous victories like the tiny Pleiades.\(^{59}\)

It seems strange that Pindar would choose such a cryptic way of wishing for Olympic victory after making such an explicit wish for victories in the other two contests, where Timodemus’ family had already achieved victories (N. 2. 19–22). And although Olympia was without question the most prestigious of the major Panhellenic festivals, one wonders whether Pindar would really choose so stark a comparison as that between Orion and the Pleiades to describe the degree to which Olympia surpassed the others. Far more in Pindar’s style is the tact of Olympian 1. 1–7, where Olympia is supreme among contests to the same extent that the sun is supreme among

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56. Rauchenstein, Zur Einleitung in Pindar’s Siegeslieder (Aarau 1843) 118 says Orion is in the vicinity of the family even as Acharnae is near Salamis. G. Fracaroli, Le Odi di Pindaro (Verona 1894) 537 and Farnell (above, note 12) I 164 say that the athlete’s family pursues athletic glory even as Orion pursues the Pleiades.


59. Scholz (above, note 1) 20–21 and Instone (above, note 1) 114. Although neither seems aware of it, this interpretation had long ago been proposed by Heyne (above, note 15) I 370–71.
stars or gold among precious metals: the other festivals are assimilated to objects of grandeur and value, but Olympia's value is greatest. The same consideration of encomiastic propriety also casts doubt on the first proposed solution to the crux: Would Pindar really say that Timodemus' victories were so much greater in stature than those of his ancestors as to be like Orion in comparison to the Pleiades? The comparison would not be inappropriate, however, if the contrast is between Timodemus' own first victory and a glorious career of many Panhellenic victories which he has ahead of himself; his later achievements, wished for in Nemean 2. 6-10, will of course dwarf his earliest one. 60

What almost all treatments of this passage have neglected is that we have a second mythological allusion immediately following that to Orion and the Pleiades. The mention of Salamis and Ajax has usually been treated as completely irrelevant to what precedes it. The scholia again give a variety of interpretations, mostly speculating about covert allusion to some external fact, such as Timodemus' membership in the Aiantid phyle, or a childhood spent in Salamis, or a genealogy traced back to Ajax. 61 But the connective particles κόι μόνον are not adversative so much as a progressive continuation of a connected series. 62 What we are dealing with here is an analogical sequence, not unlike the famous opening priamel of Olympian 1, in which the Pleiades are to Orion as Salamis is to Ajax, as X is to Y. 63 The sequence is closed with the vocative address to the victor and pronominal cap σὲ δ’ in Nemean 2. 14, and it is clear that the statement has something to

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60 Krischer (above, note 57) 33 objects to this interpretation on the grounds that the Pleiades are multiple, Orion singular, and thus do not properly match Timodemus' first victory/future victories in terms of number. However, Krischer's own interpretation (see note 57 above) is open to similar objections: nothing in the lines leading up to this passage emphasizes the plurality of Timodemus' ancestors, nor even anything in the resumed victory catalogue of N. 2. 17-24, where the focus is on the number of the family's victories. The emphasis of the preceding passage (6-10) is really not on Timodemus' ancestors at all, mentioned merely with the vague πατριάν κατ’ ὀδόν. Number is not the issue in 6-10, nor is it the issue in the following Ajax/Salamis allusion. Indeed, it cannot be the point of the Orion/Pleiades contrast either, since Orion is if anything a constellation consisting of more stars (38) than the Pleiades (7), which appeared to the naked eye more like a single spot.

61 Σ. N. 2. 19 (Drachmann). The idea that 'Timodemus' father was a clerus and that Timodemus grew up on Salamis has proven a particularly popular assumption among critics: see Mezger (above, note 11) 320; Bury (above, note 57) 29; Fraccaroli (above, note 56) 537; Christ (above, note 11) 246; Farnell (above, note 12) II 251; Scholz (above, note 1) 24; Instone (above, note 1) 115. Wilamowitz (above, note 58) 156-58 even assumes that Timodemus was still a resident of Salamis. It is curious that Pindar makes no explicit mention of Timodemus' former home (or second home), if it is such; he certainly does not hesitate to make much of Hagesias' dual citizenship in O. 6 or Ergoteles' former residence in Crete in O. 12. The emphasis here is entirely on Acharnae and Athens. It is better not to resort to speculation about unexpressed biographical details to explain such passages.

62 See J. D. Denniston, The Greek Particles. 2nd ed. (Oxford 1954) 351-53. Fennell (above, note 57) 21 seems to be alone among commentators in paying attention to the particle usage in this passage.

do with Timodemus’ athletic glory. While Pleiades/Orion might conceivably be interpreted as a figural expression for other victories/Olympic victory, it is difficult to see how Salamis/Ajax can be so interpreted. It is also hard to see Salamis/Ajax as an appropriate relationship to illustrate the virtues of heredity, since Ajax’ ancestry derived ultimately from Aegina and was not native to Salamis.

What does seem to be important in both the Pleiades/Orion and Salamis/Ajax relationships is the issue of relative size. The Pleiades (or “Doves”) were a tiny cluster of stars, whereas the giant Orion was one of the biggest constellations in the night sky. The difference in proportion is immediately obvious to even the most casual astronomical observer. Salamis was a small island, sending only twelve ships to Troy (Il. 2. 557) and thus forming along with Ithaca the smallest military contingent among the Greeks. But Ajax was physically the largest of the Greek heroes, comparable in might even to Achilles himself. That Salamis is said to be δυνατός of nurturing a warrior (N. 2. 13–14) seems to imply that one might not normally expect it to. The point of both comparisons seems to be that the extremes of small and large are connected, that small beginnings may be followed by large consequences: huge, bright Orion may pursue the tiny, pale Pleiades in the rotation of the night sky, and mighty Ajax may come from little Salamis. The Trojan War itself (emphasized in N. 2. 14) came from small and seemingly trivial beginnings. The metaphor of physical size is preserved in the verb ἀέξειτ, which crowns the end of the strophe, describing how Timodemus’ courage in the pancratium “increases” him.

64 On Orion’s expanse, see Aratus, Phaen. 324, 636, 752–55; the tiny size of the Pleiades is frequently noted, as by Aratus, Phaen. 255–56 and Manilius, Astron. 4. 522. Equally significant is the contrast between Orion’s brightness (Aratus, Phaen. 518, 586–88) and the Pleiades’ noted paleness (Aratus, Phaen. 256, 264). According to Ptolemy, Almagest 8. 1, out of Orion’s 38 stars, two are of the first magnitude (Rigel, the seventh brightest star in the sky, and Betelgeuse, the twelfth brightest), four of the second magnitude, eight of the third magnitude, fifteen of the fourth magnitude, three of the fifth magnitude, five of the sixth magnitude, and one a nebula; this would indeed make it the brightest constellation in the sky, or at least one of the brightest. In contrast, the Pleiades contain only one star of the fifth magnitude, all others being sixth magnitude.

65 Hesiod, fr. 204. 44–51 M–W alludes to a much larger Salaminian empire, including Aegina, Megara, Corinth, and Troezen. M. Finkenberg, “Ajax’s Entry in the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women,” CQ 38 (1988) 31–41 has argued that this is likely to be a more archaic version consistent with actual Mycenaean reality, whereas the reduced power of Salamis in the Homeric catalogue is more in keeping with the political interests of influential Greek states such as Athens and Corinth in the 6th century. Given that this ode is written for an Athenian audience, its presuppositions would favor the Homeric catalogue’s characterization of Salamis as “small.”

66 Ajax is frequently called μέγας (Il. 5. 610, 9. 169, 11. 562, 590, etc.), πελάρης (Il. 3. 229, 7. 211, 17. 174, 360), ἤρκως Ἀχιλλ (Il. 3. 229, 6. 5, 7. 211), and is said to carry a “shield like a tower” (σύκος ἐν τῷ πυργῷ, Il. 7. 219, 11. 485, 17. 128). Achilles says that only Ajax’s armor could fit him (Il. 18. 192–93); in Il. 13. 321–25, Ajax is said not to yield even to Achilles.

67 On the basic sense of the Greek αὐξάνω (poet. ἀέξω), cognate with Latin augere, as having to do with growth and increase, see H. Frisk, Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch.
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In the broader context of a first strophe which focused on Timodemus’ first Panhellenic victory as an “earnest deposit of victory in the sacred games” and a second strophe which explicitly claims the fittingness of further victories in even more prestigious contests, it is obvious that the small beginning hinted at in the two allusions of the third strophe must be the present Nemean victory, the great consequence a glorious athletic career in the future.

Small beginnings are thematized as a leitmotif throughout the poem. The allusion to Homeric prooimia at the opening (1–3) reminds us that a short hymn to Zeus or some other god will preface a Homeric rhapsode’s recitation of a longer epic narrative. The text applies this quite explicitly to Timodemus’ Nemean victory, which like a hymn to Zeus, the god of the Nemean games, will presage a longer tale of athletic achievements in time to come. Even so, the ode as a whole may be seen as a small prooimion to the celebratory revel which can be expected to follow: the last two verses (24–25) address Timodemus’ fellow citizens, exhorting them to make a revel for the Nemean victory and “begin” (εξάρχετε) with their voices. The poem thus ends with a beginning (of the komos), even as it self-consciously begins with a prooimion about prooimia. Although an ode of brief compass, among Pindar’s shortest, Nemean 2 elevates itself in stature by presenting both itself and the Nemean victory it celebrates as mere first steps in a longer and more glorious enterprise of achievement and praise. Timodemus’ coming achievements might well include victory even at Olympia, but nothing in this text’s proclamation of his future names Olympia or is limited to it.

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To summarize our conclusions, none of the three passages examined in detail (P. 10. 55–63, P. 8. 67–69, or N. 2. 10–12) conforms with the expected conventions of either the explicit wish for victory in a certain contest or the embedded general wish for victory. Explicit victory wishes always allude to a specific festival and give credit to the power of an


68 For this meaning of καταβολάν, see Farnell (above, note 12) II 252. Most earlier commentators took the term as an architectural metaphor for “foundation.” In either case, the word’s sense clearly reflects a beginning, with more to come in the future.

69 For this technical use of προοιμίον as a term for the Homeric hymn, cf. Thuc. 3. 104. 4; Plato, Phaedo 60d. See also the discussions of R. Böhme, Das Prooimion: Eine Form sakraler Dichtung der Griechen (Baden 1937) 10–36 and W. G. Thalmann, Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic (Baltimore 1984) 120–22.

70 For the idea that the poem’s end is meant as a beginning to the komos, see Wilamowitz (above, note 58) 158. On the general distinction between epinician and komos, see Bundy (above, note 6) I 2 and M. Heath, “Receiving the κόμως: The Context and Performance of Epinician,” AJP 109 (1988) 180–95, although the latter sees the komos, wrongly in my view, as typically preceding the formal epinician.
appropriate god: none of these three passages even hints at Olympia, and only one (P. 8. 67–69) names a god, but that god is the wrong god for an Olympic victory wish. Embedded victory wishes always come immediately after the poem’s initial announcement of victory, wish for victories in general (not in any specific venue), form part of a generalized wish for good fortune, and contextualize the athlete’s victories within a broader structure of social relations to his clan and community. *Pythian* 10. 55–63 and *Pythian* 8. 67–69 fulfill none of these conditions. *Nemean* 2. 10–12 fulfills them only to the extent that it is seen as a generalizing continuation of the specific wish for victory at Isthmia and Pytho made in lines 6–10; it does not fulfill them if we try to read it as an additional and independent wish for victory at Olympia.

On those occasions when Pindar desires to express a wish for victory at Olympia or elsewhere, he feels no reluctance about doing so in clear and straightforward terms, as we have illustrated in Section I. He may also express a general wish for the good fortune of the victor, his clan, and his city, and include further athletic victories as part of that general wish, as we have seen in Section II. Why he should ever choose to communicate a wish for victory at Olympia or anywhere else in less than straightforward terms is incomprehensible to me. Miller has speculated it could be a matter of the commissioning family’s preference. But presumably a family would either desire a victory wish to be included in the ode or not; if they wanted it, Pindar would make it immediately clear and effective, and if they did not want it, he would not make it at all. It does not seem likely to me that one of Pindar’s patrons would request a covert victory wish. Brought up in an intensely goal-oriented, agonistic culture, the ancient Greeks had few inhibitions about praying for success.

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71 Miller, “Wish” (above, note 1) 172 n. 31.

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