

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.¹ 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."² 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.³ For the reader's convenience, I give below a brief and, I trust, unbiased paraphrase of each:

¹ Among the most recent articles to do this are S. Instone, "Pindar's Enigmatic *Second Nemean*," *BICS* 36 (1989) 114, following E. Scholz, "Zum Aufbau eines pindarischen Epinikion: Nemea 2," *WS* 82 (1969) 20–21; A. M. Miller, "Apolline Ethics and Olympian Victory in Pindar's Eighth *Pythian* 67–78," *GRBS* 30 (1989) 461–84 and "A Wish for Olympian Victory in Pindar's Tenth *Pythian*," *AJP* 112 (1991) 161–72.

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 τελέσαις and ὀπάσαις with Maas, but not if we accept Blass' τελέσας and ὀπάσας. 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 (ἐλπόμεαι) 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 (ἐλπόμεαι), 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 (εὐχομέαι) 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 (ἀείδω) 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.⁴ 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 θεὸς ἐπίτροπος (*O.* 1). *Nemean* 2. 7–8 invokes Time (εὐθυπομπὸς αἰῶν) 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 passages⁹ 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).⁵ 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 ἄμμι 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.⁶ 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 μελιφθόγγους ἀοιδαῖς 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) I 103–05. These are discussed under the rubric of "Future Prayer" by R. Hamilton, *Epinikion: 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).⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹

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:

εἴη, Ζεῦ, τὶν εἴη ἀνδάνειν, ὃς τοῦτ' ἐφέπεις ὄρος, εὐκάρποιο γαίας μέτωπον, τοῦ μὲν ἐπωνυμίαν	30
κλεινὸς οἰκιστὴρ ἐκύδανεν πόλιν γείτονα, Πυθιάδος δ' ἐν δρόμῳ κάρυξ ἀνείπε νὶν ἀγγέλων Ἰέρωνος ὑπὲρ καλλινίκου ἄρμασι. ναυσιφορήτοισ δ' ἀνδράσι πρῶτα χάρις ἐς πλόον ἀρχομένοις πομπαῖον ἔλθειν οὖρον· ἐοικότα γάρ	
καὶ τελευτᾶ φερέτερου νόστου τυχεῖν. ὁ δὲ λόγος ταύταις ἐπὶ συντυχίαις δόξαν φέρει λοιπὸν ἔσσεσθαι στεφάνοισί νιν ἵπποις τε κλυτὰν καὶ σὺν εὐφώνοις θαλίαις ὄνυμαστάν.	35

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 εὐάνδρὸν τε χῶραν). 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: Κωνσταντίνῳ Ι. Βουρβέρη Ἀφιέρωμα (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 Psauis, but he is praised within the wish for his hospitality and devotion to peace, i.e. his public obligations. Thus, insofar as Psauis will enjoy good fortune, the whole city of Camarina will also benefit. On this wish, see our more detailed discussion below.

⁹ On the importance of song as an instrument for reintegrating the victorious athlete with his social community, see K. Crotty, *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore 1982) 104–38 and L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* (Ithaca 1991) 15–82.

vague expression τῶν . . . 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:

θεὸς εὐφρων
 εἶη λοιπαῖς εὐχαῖς:
 ἐπεὶ νιν αἰνέω, μάλα μὲν τροφαῖς ἐτοῖμον ἵππων,
 χαίροντά τε ξενίαις πανδόκοις,
 καὶ πρὸς Ἑσυχίαν φιλόπολιν καθαρᾶ γνῶμα
 τετραμμένον.

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A number of nineteenth-century commentators considered the λοιπαῖς εὐχαῖς of Psauis 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.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^{ABC} *O.* 4 *inscr.* Drachmann) are probably right in assigning *Olympian* 4 to Psauis' 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.¹³ Nevertheless, even if we see *Olympian* 4 as already celebrating an Olympic chariot victory, the "future prayers" of Psauis 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 Psauis' 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.¹⁴ Competition in equestrian events and the subsequent celebration of victory are themselves activities with

¹² See A. Boeckh, *Pindari Opera quae supersunt* (Leipzig 1821) II.2 145; Dissen (previous note) II 52; Mezger (previous note) 138; C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Cambridge 1893) 51; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London 1930) II 31. This interpretation is denied by D. E. Gerber, "Pindar's *Olympian* Four: A Commentary," *QUCC* 25 (1987) 18.

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

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, *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 . . . θαητόν, 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.¹⁵ To facilitate consideration of this passage, I shall quote the context (*P.* 10. 55–66):

ἔλομαι δ' Ἐφυραίων	55
ὅπ' ἀμφὶ Πηνεῖον γλυκεῖαν προχεόντων ἑμᾶν	
τὸν Ἴπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν αἰοιδαῖς	
ἕκατι στεφάνων θαητόν ἐν ἄλιξι θησέμεν ἐν	
καὶ παλαιτέροις,	
νέαισιν τε παρθένοισι μέλημα. καὶ γάρ	
ἑτέροις ἑτέρων ἔρωτες ἔκνιξαν φρένας·	60
τῶν δ' ἕκαστος ὀρούει,	
τυχῶν κεν ἄρπαλέαν σχέθοι φροντίδα τὰν	
πᾶρ ποδός·	
τὰ δ' εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἀτέκμαρτον προνοῆσαι.	
πέποιθα ξενία προσανέϊ Θῶρακος, ὅσπερ ἑμᾶν	
ποιπνύων χάριν	
τόδ' ἔξευξεν ἄρμα Πιερίδων τετράορον,	65
φιλέων φιλέοντ', ἄγων ἄγοντα 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) 1336; 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.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.¹⁷ For this reason alone, I think that Farnell and others must be right in seeing the future *θησέμεν* here as an “encomiastic future,” referring to the present act of choral celebration.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.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 *Pythian* 10. 61–63 takes the place of the usual divine element by reminding the athlete of the limits to his ambition.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 *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 *Pythian* 10. 55–60 being a wish for an Olympic victory two years down the road. No strong adversative like *ἀλλά* marks the gnomes off as an antithetical check or break-off formula: the connective *δὲ* in 61 rather casts them as a logical development of what has just been said.

¹⁶ Cf. *O.* 2. 83–90, *O.* 13. 91–97, *P.* 1. 29–33, *P.* 11. 38–42, *N.* 4. 68–72, *N.* 7. 50–58, *I.* 6. 56.

¹⁷ Generalized wishes or prayers for prosperity may provide a transition from mythical material back to the encomiastic theme, as in *P.* 1. 29–38 or 56–57; in *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.

¹⁸ Farnell (above, note 12) II 219. On the encomiastic future generally, see Bundy (above, note 6) I 21–22; W. J. Slater, “Futures in Pindar,” *CQ* 19 (1969) 86–94. There is a definite parallel between this phrase and *ἐπικωμίαν ἀνδρῶν κλυτὰν ὄσα* (*P.* 10. 6), which clearly refers to the present choral performance. Even if we are to imagine separate performances at Pelinnaion (*P.* 10. 4) and Ephya (55–56), the future *θησέμεν* would be a real future when sung at Pelinnaion, but an encomiastic future when sung at Ephya.

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

²⁰ Miller, “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.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.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):

πλείστα νικάσαντά σε καὶ τελεταῖς
 ὠρίαῖς ἐν Παλλάδος εἶδον ἄφωνοί θ' ὡς ἕκασται φίλτατον
 παρθενικαὶ πόσιν ἢ
 υἱὸν εὖχοντ', ὦ Τελεσίκρατες, ἔμμεν . . .

The present passage expands the exclusively female interest of *Pythian* 9 (an ode dominated by marriage motifs)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 *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.²⁴ Both iconographical and literary evidence suggests that erotic

²¹ Compare the use of ἔλλομαι in *P.* 1. 42–44 and *N.* 6. 26–28.

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 ambiguated 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?

²³ On the erotic and marital theme in *P.* 9, see the discussions of L. Woodbury, "Apollo's First Love: Pindar, *Pyth.* 9. 26 ff.," *TAPA* 103 (1972) 561–73 and "Cyrene and the *Teleuta* of Marriage in Pindar's Ninth Pythian Ode," *TAPA* 112 (1982) 245–58; A. Carson, "Wedding at Noon in Pindar's Ninth Pythian," *GRBS* 23 (1982) 121–28; A. Köhnken, "'Meilichos orga.' Liebesthematik und aktueller Sieg in der neunten pythischen Ode Pindars," in *Pindare, Entretiens Fond. Hardt* 31 (Geneva 1985) 71–116. This ode has long been supposed by critics to have some connection to the victor Telesicrates' own expectations for marriage; see the survey of early views in Mezger (above, note 11) 238–39.

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 R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's 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 θαητός in the translations of Bowra, Lattimore, Swanson, Conway, and Nisetich. But the term θαητός unquestionably refers to physical beauty when applied to humans (cf. *P.* 4. 80, *P.* 9. 108, *N.* 11. 12); see my remarks in *The Pindaric Mind* (Leiden 1985) 22 n. 34. The point of this statement can hardly be that he will be more beautiful 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 in the eyes of his agemates and older men; see the translation of Farnell (above, note 12) I 142, although his commentary is uncharacteristically silent here. O. Schroeder, *Pindars Pythien* (Leipzig 1922) 98 seems to be the only commentator willing to object to his readers that this is indeed what the passage must mean: he aptly compares Horace, *C.* 1. 4. 19–20 "quo calet iuventus / Nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt." See R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: 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 ἄλιξι) 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 (νέαισιν 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, χρῆν μὲν κατὰ καιρὸν ἐρώτων δρέπεσθαι, θυμέ, σὺν ἀλικίᾳ (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 ἰδέα 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.

²⁵ See Theognis 1063–64 and Plato, *Chrm.* 154c (on which see M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* II: *The Use of Pleasure*, tr. R. Hurley [New York 1986] 194). For a selection of the abundant vase evidence, see plates R189, R200, R223, R243, R954 in K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA 1978); the age difference between youths on these vases is often minimal or nonexistent. See also M. Golden, "Slavery and Homosexuality at Athens," *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 321–22.

²⁶ See A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome 1969) 35, 120–21; C. Calame, *Les choeurs des jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (Rome 1977) 1 421–27; J. Bremmer, "An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite: Paederasty," *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 279–98; B. Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, tr. A. Goldhammer (Boston 1986) 1–54.

²⁷ See Sergent (previous note) 59–67 and my remarks in "The 'Cooking' of Pelops: Pindar and the Process of Mythological Revisionism," *Helios* 14 (1987) 5–6.

²⁸ See, for instance, Theognis 1069–70, 1303–04, 1305–10. The admonition about impending decay of beauty and loss of desirability becomes a standard commonplace in homoerotic poetry of the Greek Anthology; see S. L. Tarán, "ΕΙΣΙ ΤΡΙΧΕΣ: An Erotic Motif in the *Greek Anthology*," *JHS* 105 (1985) 90–107.

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).³⁰ For a youth, the present moment is everything, and τὰ εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἀτέκμαρτον προνοῆσαι and better left that way.³¹

A scholium tells us that the king Thorax was the ἐταῖρος of the boy victor Hippocleas; the word is probably to be understood in the sense of *erastes*.³² 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 νέαισίν τε παρθένοισι μέλημα 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.³³ Again, I shall quote the broader context of this passage to facilitate its understanding (*P.* 8. 61–80):

τὸ δ', Ἐκαταβόλε, πάνδοκον
ναὸν εὐκλέα διανέμων
Πυθῶνος ἐν γυάλοις,

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 Mimnermus, fr. 2 W and Simonides, fr. 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.

³³ Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above note 1) 461–84. For other recent interpretations of this prayer, see T. K. Hubbard, “Pindaric Harmonia: *Pythian* 8, 67–9,” *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983) 286–92; W. J. Verdenius, “Pindar, *Pythian* 8, 67–72,” *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983) 367–68; J. Taillardat, “Sur deux passages de la VIII^e Pythique,” *REG* 99 (1986) 225–31.

τὸ μὲν μέγιστον τόθι χαρμάτων ἅπασας, οἴκοι δὲ πρόσθεν ἀρπαλέαν δόσιν πενταεθλίου σὺν ἑορταῖς ὑμαῖς ἐπάγαγες· ᾧναξ, ἐκόντι δ' εὐχομαι νόῳ κατὰ τιν' ἁρμονίαν βλέπειν ἀμφ' ἕκαστον, ὅσα νέομαι.	65
κῶμῳ μὲν ἀδυμελεῖ Δίκα παρέστακε· θεῶν δ' ὄπιν ἄφθονον αἰτέω, Ξέναρκες, ὑμετέραις τύχαις. εἰ γάρ τις ἐσλὰ πέπεται μὴ σὺν μακρῷ πόνῳ, πολλοῖς σοφὸς δοκεῖ πεδ' ἀφρόνων βίον κορυσσέμεν ὀρθοβούλοισι μαχαναῖς·	70
τὰ δ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνδράσι κείται· δαίμων δὲ παρίσχει, ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ὑπερθε βάλλων, ἄλλον δ' ὑπὸ χειρῶν μέτρῳ καταβαίνει· Μεγάρους δ' ἔχεις γέρας, μυχῶ τ' ἐν Μαραθῶνος, Ἥρας τ' ἀγῶν' ἐπιχώριον νίκαις τρισσαῖς, ᾧ Ἀριστόμενες, δάμασσας ἔργῳ.	75 80

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) hypomnesis, and (iii) request. Since the hypomnesis 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.

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).³⁵ 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):

ἔλλομαι
 μέγα εἰπὼν σκοποῦ ἄντα τυχεῖν
 ὧτ' ἀπὸ τόξου ἰεῖς· εὐθὺν ἔπι τοῦτον, ἄγε, Μοῖσα, οὐρον ἐπέων
 εὐκλέα· παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων,
 αἰοδαὶ καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλὰ σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν.

We see here a combination of wish/hope (ἔλλομαι) with direct prayer to a divinity (the Muse) to intervene, followed by a gnomic rationalization of the prayer which acts as a hypomnesis.³⁶ Pindar's bow-and-arrow metaphors, like his javelin casts, serve a focussing function in moving us toward the encomiastic theme:³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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 γλώσσαν κελαδῆτιν 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 κελαδενῶν / μή με λίποι καθαρὸν φέγγος). I have argued elsewhere that this prayer asks for the Graces' continued favor as Pindar leads a *komos* 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 Lebensauffassung im griechischen Hymnus* (Stuttgart 1932) 134; Race (above, note 14) 86, 93–94. For the use of γὰρ to signal such a hypomnesis, 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.

³⁷ See M. Simpson, "The Chariot and the Bow as Metaphors for Poetry in Pindar's Odes," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 449, who emphasizes the associations of the bow with accuracy in praise.

³⁸ Cf. *O.* 3. 4–6, *P.* 1. 58–60, *P.* 4. 1–3, *P.* 11. 41–45, *N.* 7. 77–79, fr. 6a.(e) S–M.

Iolaea.³⁹ Again, the prayer invokes the divinity as a guarantor and supporter of the poet's strategy of praise. Nothing here suggests future victories.⁴⁰

Miller defends his use of *Olympian* 13. 101–06 and *Nemean* 10. 29–33 as analogues for *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 *Siegeswunsch*.⁴¹ But nothing identifies *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 *Pythian* 8. 67–69 did involve the victor in a more direct and obvious way, two examples of such prayers being *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 *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 hypomnesis 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 hypomnesis concerning the god's previous favor toward the athlete's agonistic efforts can only preface a request concerning the same. The function of a hypomnesis 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 *Pythian* 8. 64–66 as the hypomnesis 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 hypomnesis 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 ὄσα νέομαι) and poet (the *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.⁴² The lines which follow the

³⁹ Hubbard (above, note 36) 33–36.

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.

⁴¹ Miller, “Apolline Ethics” (above, note 1) 462.

⁴² That this is the probable content of the prophecy was suggested by Σ P. 8. 78a (Drachmann). See also Dissen (above, note 11) II 291–92; B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York 1885) 331; Farnell (above, note 12) II 196; J. Duchemin, *Pindare poète et prophète* (Paris 1955) 90 n. 2; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 52; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico, CA 1982) 211. See also my remarks in “The Theban Amphiarion and Pindar's Vision on the Road to Delphi,” *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 δέ,⁴³ by the poet's assertion of encomiastic propriety (Δίκαια) in his *komos* and by his declaration that he wishes to avert the jealousy of the gods from the victor.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.”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.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 (αἰτέω) clearly refers to the poet interceding with the gods on behalf of the victor's family (ὑμετέρας τύχαις);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 Amphiaraus' oracle concerning the Epigonoι (*P.* 8. 39–56) emphasizes

99; 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.

⁴³ The illustrative use of μέν/δέ 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 φθόνος θεῶν (δέ).

⁴⁴ See Hubbard (above, note 33) 290–91. The φθόνος θεῶν 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.

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.

⁴⁶ Cf. *P.* 3. 107–11, *P.* 11. 50–54, *N.* 1. 31–32, *N.* 8. 35–39, *I.* 7. 40–42.

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 κοιναὶ γὰρ ἔρχοντ' ἐλπιδες / πολυπόνων ἀνδρῶν) and a strong shift in persona as indicated by the emphatic ἐγὼ 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/δέ 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 Amphiaraus 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 φθόνος θεῶν 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 *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 κατά 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 τύχαις of 72 and presumably the object of the *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, *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, *Athens and Aigina in the Age of Imperial Colonization* (Baltimore 1991) 90–91; T. Cole, *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 θεὸς ἐπίτροπος 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" (Sandys), "see eye to eye with thee" (Farnell), "look even as you look also" (Lattimore), "look down to hear 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 73–78.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ 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):

᾽Οθεν περ καὶ Ὀμηρίδαι	
ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων τὰ πόλλ' ἄοιδοί	
ἄρχονται, Διὸς ἐκ προοιμίου, καὶ ὄδ' ἀνήρ	
καταβολὰν ἱερῶν ἀγῶνων νικαφορίας δέδεκται	
πρῶτων, Νεμείου	
ἐν πολυῦμνήτῳ Διὸς ἄλσει.	5
ὄφειλε δ' ἔτι, πατρίαν	
εὔπερ καθ' ὁδὸν νιν εὐθυπομπός	
αἰῶν ταῖς μεγάλαις δέδωκε κόσμον Ἀθήναις,	
θαμὰ μὲν Ἴσθμιάδων δρέπεσθαι κάλλιστον	
ἄωτον ἐν Πυθίοισι τε νικᾶν	
Τιμονόου παῖδ'· ἔστι δ' εἰκόκς	10

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.

ὀρειᾶν γε Πελειάδων
 μὴ τηλόθεν Ἰαριῶνα νεῖσθαι.
 καὶ μὲν ἅ Σαλαμίς γε θρέψαι φῶτα μαχατάν
 δυνατός. ἐν Τροίᾳ μὲν Ἴκτωρ Αἴαντος ἄκουσεν.
 ὦ Τιμόδημε, σὲ δ' ἄλκᾳ
 παγκρατίου τλάθυμος ἀέξει.

15

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 καταβολὰν ἱερῶν ἀγῶνων 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' εἰκότως . . . 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

⁵⁶ R. Rauchenstein, *Zur Einleitung in Pindar's Siegeslieder* (Aarau 1843) 118 says Orion is in the vicinity of the Pleiades even as Acharnae is near Salamis. G. Fraccaroli, *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.

⁵⁷ *Σ N.* 2. 16a (Drachmann). Cf. Mezger (above, note 11) 323 and C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar. The Nemean and Isthmian Odes*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge 1899) 21. J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 30 emphasizes the seven Nemean victories of Timodemus' ancestors (*N.* 2. 23) as equivalent to the seven Pleiades, Timodemus' current victory following them like Orion. T. Krischer, "Pindars Rhapsodengedicht (Zu Nem. 2)," *WS* 78 (1965) 34–35 sees the multiple Pleiades as equivalent to the many ancestors themselves, with Timodemus = Orion as the last and greatest.

⁵⁸ *Σ N.* 2. 17c (Drachmann). Cf. Dissen (above, note 11) II 372; Christ (above, note 11) 245; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 157; and most recently, although without detailed argument, T. Gelzer, "Μοῦσα ἀυθιγενής: Bemerkungen zu einem Typ Pindarischer und Bacchylideischer Epinikien," *MH* 42 (1985) 107.

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 καὶ μὲν 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

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 πατρῖαν καθ' ὄδον. 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 cleruch 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.

⁶³ On the fundamental role of such analogical proportions in archaic Greek thought, see H. Fraenkel, "A Thought Pattern in Heraclitus," *AJP* 59 (1938) 309–37 and G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge 1966) 180–420.

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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ But Ajax was physically the largest of the Greek heroes, comparable in might even to Achilles himself.⁶⁶ 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 *ἀέξει*, which crowns the end of the strophe, describing how Timodemus' courage in the pancratium "increases" him.⁶⁷

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. Finkelberg, "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.), *πελώριος* (*Il.* 3. 229, 7. 211, 17. 174, 360), *ἔρκος Ἀχαιῶν* (*Il.* 3. 229, 6. 5, 7. 211), and is said to carry a "shield like a tower" (*σάκος ἥτε πύργον*, *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 *αὔξω* (poet. *ἀέξω*), cognate with Latin *augeo*, as having to do with growth and increase, see H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*

In the broader context of a first strophe which focussed on Timodemus' first Panhellenic victory as an "earnest deposit of victory in the sacred games"⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ 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" (ἐξάρχετε) with their voices.⁷⁰ 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.

* * *

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

(Heidelberg 1954) I 187–88; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968) I 141.

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 προοίμιον 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 κῶμος: 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.⁷¹ 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.⁷²

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

⁷² My thanks to Andrew M. Miller for kindly agreeing to read this essay in advance of its publication, and to the two anonymous referees of *Illinois Classical Studies* for their helpful comments. None of them should be held responsible for any of its faults or conclusions.