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The Contradiction of the “Hymn to Zeus” in *Nemean 3*

CHRISTOPHER WALDO

ABSTRACT: This article examines the opening lines of Pindar’s *Nemean 3*, which present an interesting problem from the perspective of genre. Pindar characterizes the poem in question as a ὕμνος (11) to Zeus, contradicting the position that the singular purpose of epinician is the glorification of the victor. According to this view, it is impossible for one poem to be both an epinician to a man and a hymn to a deity. I argue that we can in fact understand *Nemean 3* as, at least in part, a hymn to Zeus, since victory odes instantiate praise in relation to multiple audiences.

KEYWORDS: Pindar, Zeus, epinician, genre

The opening lines of Pindar’s *Nemean 3* present an interesting problem from the perspective of genre. Pindar characterizes the poem in question as a ὕμνος (11) to Zeus.¹ Some scholars have argued that this is a terminological contradiction, advancing the position that the singular purpose of epinician is the glorification of the victor. According to this view, it is impossible for one poem to be both an epinician to a man and a hymn to a deity. In this article I argue that we can in fact understand *Nemean 3* as, at least in part, a hymn to Zeus, since victory odes instantiate praise in relation to multiple audiences. In this case, praise of the victor Aristocleides is directed at his household, praise of the Aiakidai honors the entire city of Aegina, and praise of Zeus addresses a Panhellenic audience.

Pindar begins *Nemean 3* by invoking the Muse Kleio to the scene of the present performance:

¹ I call the ὕμνος of line 11 a hymn in the colloquial sense of the word. While ὕμνος acquires a specialized meaning from Plato onward, it does not seem inaccurate to term our ὕμνος (11) a hymn, since Pindar is referring to a song directed at a deity. For further discussion of the evolution of the word ὕμνος, see Harvey 1955; Calame 1995: 2–4; Ford 2002: 12; Ford 2011: 75; Brumbaugh 2019.

ὦ πότνια Μοῖσα, μήτηρ ἀμετέρα, λίσσομαι,
 τὰν πολυξέναν ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι
 ἵκεο Δωρίδα νῶσον Αἰγίνα· ὕδατι γάρ
 μένοντ' ἐπ' Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρύων τέκτονες
 κώμων νεανίαι, σέθεν ὅπα μαϊόμενοι.
 διψῇ δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου,
 ἀθλονικία δὲ μάλιστ' αἰοιδὰν φιλεῖ,
 στεφάνων ἀρετὰν τε δεξιωτάταν ὅπαδόν·
 τᾶς ἀφθονίαν ὅπαζε μήτιος ἀμᾶς ἄπο·
 ἄρχε δ' οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι, θύγατερ,
 δόκιμον ὕμνον· ἐγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ νιν ὁάροις
 λύρα τε κοινάσομαι. χαρίεντα δ' ἔξει πόνον
 χώρας ἄγαλμα, Μυρμιδόνες ἵνα πρότεροι

(Nem. 3.1–13)

O mistress Muse, our mother, I beg you, come to Aegina, the Dorian island that is very hospitable to guests, in the sacred Nemean month, for youthful crafters of melodious odes are waiting by the Asopian waters, searching for your voice. One deed thirsts for one reward, another for another, but athletic victory loves a song most of all, truest companion of crowned glories; of which grant an abundance from my craft, and begin for the lord of the overcast sky, daughter, an acceptable hymn, and I will share it with their voices and lyre. And the glorification of the land will be a graceful labor, which the ancient Myrmidons . . .²

The poet asks the Muse to come to the island of Aegina, where a chorus of local adolescents is waiting for her (3–5). He insists that song is the appropriate recompense for athletic victory and requests that she grant him a wealth of song from his own craft (6–9). He commands her to begin a hymn in honor of her father, the sky god, Zeus, which he will share with the voices of the members of the chorus (10–12). Finally, he proclaims that the praise of Aegina will be “a graceful labor” (12–13).³

The notion that Kleio sings *Nemean* 3 in honor of Zeus is so controversial, because it is antithetical to Bundy’s master principle, which states that “there is no passage in Pindar and Bakchylides that is not in its primary intent encomiastic—that is, designed to enhance the glory of

² All translations are mine. I use the Teubner text of Snell and Maehler 1987.

³ There are various interpretations of this sentence. Wilamowitz 1922: 277n1; Burnett 2005: 141; Maslov 2015: 305 construe χώρας ἄγαλμα (13) as the chorus. Farnell 1932: 255; Slater 1969: 2 understand ἄγαλμα (13) as “glory” or “glorification.” Race 1997 ii: 23 translates “It will be a joyous task to glorify this land,” taking χώρας ἄγαλμα (13) as the act of celebrating Aegina in choral song.

a particular patron.”⁴ Boeke (2007: 8) describes the influence of Bundy’s axiom on contemporary Pindaric scholarship, remarking, “His contention that epinician poetry has the one aim of praise and glorification of the victor can hardly be gainsaid.”⁵ Pfeijffer (1999: 261), following Bundy, adds, “Moreover, it is not a hymn for Zeus that the Muse is asked to begin with, but an epinician for Aristocleides.”

Bremer (2008: 3), on the other hand, opposes Bundy’s axiom, asserting that “in the *epinikion* praise of the gods comes in first place; praise of the gods being the foundation and the echo-chamber of the praise directed at the victorious athlete.” He sees the patron’s glory as bound up in that of the deity: “Pindar is deeply convinced that human excellence and Zeus-given splendor include and presuppose each other. That is the fundamental explanation of why in so many victory odes Pindar combines hymnic praise of the appropriate divinity with an extensive praise of the victor” (Bremer 2008: 16–17). To explain the apparent contradiction of *Nemean* 3 as a simultaneous victory ode and hymn to Zeus, Bremer (2008: 10–11) remarks,

The victory ode is framed by, wrapped in a hymn to Zeus. And—as if this framing were not explicit enough—the poet returns to it at the end of this ode, in lines 65–7: ‘Zeus, yours is the blood, yours is the contest, which this hymn has struck with men’s voices as it celebrates this land’s (Aigina’s) joy’. ‘Yours is the blood’, for Aeacus, founding father of the Aeginetans, is Zeus’s son; ‘yours is the contest’, for the divine patron of the Nemean Games is Zeus, together with his son Herakles; therefore ‘yours is the hymn we are singing’.

Lines 65–67 are notable, as Bremer observes, for their return to the topic of Zeus and their stressing of the ways in which *Nemean* 3 is in fact a

⁴ Bundy 1986: 3. Bundy’s approach was formalist in nature and represented a marked shift away from the previous tendency, as he saw it, to view Pindar’s victory odes as the idiosyncratic creations of a genius poet given to distraction and digression. He understood the epinician genre as a coherent body of texts whose salient features could be identified and catalogued through sufficient attention to the elements of rhetoric and convention therein. The idea that “there is no passage in Pindar and Bakkhulides that is not in its primary intent encomiastic” provided the framework around which to construct this catalogue of rhetorical and conventional features. For examples of Pindar scholarship directly indebted to Bundy’s formalist approach, see Young 1968; Hamilton 1974; Greengard 1980; Miller 1981; Race 1982; Pelliccia 1987.

⁵ For critical discussion of Bundy’s contention, see also Rose 1974: 149–55; Most 1985: 29–41; Hubbard 1987b: 3; Kurke 1991: 19; Hamilton 2003: 77–96; Bremer 2008: 2.

hymn to the sky god. Bremer argues that Pindar's references to αἷμα, "blood," and ἀγών, "contest," signify the parentage of Aeacus and Zeus's status as patron of the Nemean Games respectively. While Bremer is certainly correct in naming Zeus the father of Aeacus, I will argue that Pindar indicates much more than that by referring to Zeus's blood.⁶

At two key moments, Pindar provides temporal clues to an understanding of the hymn to Zeus in *Nemean* 3. In line 10, he commands the Muse, ἄρχε . . . δόκιμον ὕμνον, "begin . . . an acceptable hymn." While the tense of ἄρχε is present, the imperative here is a command for the future. Pindar cannot command the Muse to begin a hymn that has already begun. Thus, at the moment of line 10, the ὕμνος is imagined to be a future event, and the futures κοινάσομαι, "I will share," and ἔξει, "(the glory of the land) will have," continue this idea into line 12. When the ὕμνος returns at line 65, following a series of mythological exempla, Pindar uses the aorist ἔβαλεν, "struck." Thus by line 65, the ὕμνος has already taken place. In the temporal scheme of the poem, Pindar embeds the ὕμνος between lines 10-12 and 65.⁷

The content between these temporal signposts fits the description of a hymn to Zeus. According to Bremer (2008: 10–11), in line 65, "Yours is the blood', for Aeacus, founding father of the Aeginetans, is Zeus's son." This is certainly true, and Pindar mentions Aeacus and his lineage in lines 28 and 64. On the other hand, a simple focus on the sons of Aeacus risks overlooking the larger structure of Pindar's extended praise of Zeus's blood. In a succession of narratives from lines 21–63, Pindar recounts the achievements of three generations of Zeus's offspring. This includes Heracles, although scholars have classified the account of his foundation of the Pillars of Heracles as a digression (Pfeijffer 1999: 224). They have tried to understand this digression as a complement to the preceding praise of Aristocleides, which is "carefully distinguished from the following Aeginetan myths by the break-off which intervenes."⁸ Pfeijffer (1999: 224), on the other hand, seeing a connection between Heracles and the Aeginetans, observes that

⁶ For Zeus as the father of Aeacus, see Gantz 1993: 219–20.

⁷ For temporality in Pindar, see Bundy 1986: 21–22; Slater 1969; Mullen 1982: 27; Nagy 1990: 381; Lefkowitz 1991: 199; Pelliccia 1995: 317–334. Pindar tends to refer to the victory ode itself in the present and future tenses, which makes the aorist at line 65 unusual.

⁸ Carey 1980: 156–57; see also Instone 1996: 158.

Heracles ‘made known the earth’, while Achilles made himself known to the limits of the known earth. Heracles defined the world in order to allow the Aeacids to fill it with their fame. The implicit references to Heracles in the Telamon story (36–39) have the same function. They illustrate the principle of an Aeacid gaining fame and glory in cooperation with Heracles. The idea of Heracles creating the conditions for Aeginetans to flourish also holds true for the victor himself: he won at Games founded by Heracles.

Pfeijffer’s characterization of Heracles as the precondition for Aeginetan fame is useful to an understanding of the Heracleian narrative within the context of a hymn to Zeus. Heracles is a child of Zeus and a half-brother to Aeacus. Peleus and Telamon represent the following generation and Achilles the one thereafter. Together these heroes and their accomplishments offer a generational representation of the blood of Zeus. Heracles serves as the precondition not only for Aeginetan fame but for the fame associated with all of his father’s offspring.

We should also remember that the Muse Kleio is the daughter of Zeus, and Pindar refers to her as his own mother. He stresses this relationship by the use of the terms *μᾶτερ*, “mother” (1), and *θύγατερ*, “daughter” (10), both of which describe the Muse. The creation of this rhetorical kinship between Pindar and Zeus makes the act of poetic composition itself an addition to the enrichment of Zeus’s familial glory.

Bremer (2008: 11) further remarks that “‘yours is the contest’, for the divine patron of the Nemean Games is Zeus, together with his son Herakles.” This is an accurate assertion, according to certain accounts from the Pindar scholia, although another tradition exists in which the Seven against Thebes founded the Nemean Games to honor the slain Amphiaraus (Drachmann iii: 1–5). Regardless of which account is preferable, Pindar understood the Games as honoring Zeus, which the declaration of line 65 confirms. We should therefore examine this interpretation.

The athletes honor Zeus by competing and winning. In this light, the victorious Aristocleides is subservient to Zeus, which supports Bremer’s contention (2008: 3) that “in the *epinikion* praise of the gods comes in first place.” Pindar’s praise of Aristocleides throughout the poem is an element of his praise of Zeus, since Aristocleides’ accomplishments occurred in the process of honoring Zeus. When Pindar sings about Aristocleides, he sings about Zeus, and the divine connection lends further meaning to Pindar’s praise of the victor. Instead of raising the mortal athlete to the status of an immortal, Pindar uses the athlete to celebrate

the divine recipient of the song.⁹ This is an appropriate task for an accomplished singer of hymns.¹⁰

Therefore Zeus is omnipresent in *Nemean* 3, although the mentions of him are few and far between. He is the ancestor of the succeeding generations of heroes and the celebrant of the athletic contest. While the epinician to Aristocleides formally encapsulates the hymn to Zeus from lines 12 to 65, on another level, the encomium of Zeus pervades the poem.¹¹ The Nemean Games were a celebration of the Thunderer. There is nothing to sing without Zeus, because he is the source of all heroic excellence.

Two scholarly arguments do militate against the existence of a hymn to Zeus in *Nemean* 3. The first concerns the construction of the sentence ἄρχε δ' οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι, θύγατερ,/ δόκιμον ὕμνον (10–11). The mainstream contemporary reading, which allows for the hymn to Zeus, takes the dative κρέοντι, “for the lord,” together with the δόκιμον ὕμνον, “acceptable hymn.”¹² Race (1997 ii: 23), for instance, translates, “but begin for the ruler of the cloud-covered sky, daughter,/ a proper hymn.” By contrast, the readings of the ancient commentators attested in the scholia take κρέοντι as a dative of possession with θύγατερ, “daughter of the lord.”¹³ These readings eliminate the hymn to Zeus altogether, leaving the δόκιμον ὕμνον unqualified. Pfeijffer (1999: 260), following the ancient commentators for the construction of κρέοντι, argues that “the Muse cannot be called only θύγατερ, without any qualification indicating whose daughter she is (the less so since she is called upon as μᾶτερ ἀμετέρᾳ in line 1).”¹⁴

⁹ For intimations of hero cult in Pindar’s epinicia, see Currie 2005.

¹⁰ For Pindar’s hymns to divinities, see Bremer 2008: 2.

¹¹ For another instance in which an encomium to a man and a hymn to a god are entangled, see Ford 2011: 152.

¹² See Nisetich 1980: 240; Race 1997 ii: 23; Burnett 2010: 123.

¹³ Drachmann iii: 43–44. Aristarchus reads Οὐρανῷ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ, “daughter of the much-clouded lord, Ouranos.” He cites Mimnermus and Alcman as authorities for the tradition of the Muse as daughter of Ouranos. Didymus reads οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ, “daughter of the much-clouded lord of heaven.” The scholiast paraphrases his understanding of the line as τοῦ πολυνεφέλου κρέοντος οὐρανοῦ θύγατερ, τοῦ Διός, κρέων γὰρ οὐρανοῦ ὁ Ζεὺς, Διὸς δὲ Μοῦσαι, “daughter of the much-clouded lord of heaven, Zeus, as Zeus is the lord of heaven, and the Muses are of Zeus.” The C scholion comments, ὁ δὲ νοῦς· κάταρχε δὲ αὐτὴ ᾧ Μοῦσα μοι καὶ πάρεχε δόκιμον <ὑμνον> καὶ κάλλιστον, ᾧ τοῦ πολυνεφέλου οὐρανοῦ βασιλέως θύγατερ, “and the sense: O Muse, commence and provide for me an acceptable and most beautiful song, O daughter of the king of the much-clouded heaven.”

¹⁴ See also Bergk 1878: 194; Instone 1996: 156.

Contrary to Pfeijffer, I contend that the father-daughter relationship between Kleio and Zeus is understood, given that Hesiod, who represents the mainstream tradition in this case, names Zeus the father of the Muses (Hes. *Theog.* 25). The syntactic placement of οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι directly before θύγατερ is a reminder of this relationship. Pindar’s ancient audience was fully aware of the identity of Kleio’s father.

The second argument concerns Lefkowitz’s thesis that epinician performances were monodic in nature rather than choral. Lefkowitz (1991: 194) writes,

In discussing passages that deal with questions of ‘voicing’ and singing, like everyone else, I have always assumed that victory odes were sung by choruses unless the poet clearly states otherwise. Now I should like to look at these passages again, but with the assumption that, unless there is evidence to the contrary, the ode was sung as a solo, with or without choral-dancing accompaniment.¹⁵

In the course of this argument, she turns to *Nemean* 3, because “The ode that seems to offer the strongest evidence for choral performance is *N. 3*” (Lefkowitz 1991: 197). She avoids the usual choral interpretation of the opening scene of *Nemean* 3 by arguing that Pindar mentions two songs in the opening lines of the poem, the monodic αἰδάν of line 7, which is the victory ode itself, and the choral ὕμνον of line 11 (Lefkowitz 1991: 199). This removes the contradiction of the hymn to Zeus by denying that the victory ode and hymn are one. Lefkowitz (1991: 199) remarks,

the *komos*-song (which Pindar describes a few lines later as a *hymnos* in praise of Zeus) on this occasion requires an additional song (*aoida*), which the poet will compose to celebrate the victory. The song for the *komos* that Pindar asks the Muse to inspire might be a short hymn like the song to Artemis that Hippolytus leads his servants in singing after they have returned from the hunt (58-71), but it is not this victory ode, because *N. 3* is not a hymn to Zeus.

She supports her two-song formulation by attacking the ancient evidence for the choral performance of *Nemean* 3. Lefkowitz (1991: 198) asserts

¹⁵ For further discussion of monodic or choral performance of Pindar’s victory odes, see Davies 1988: 52–64; Heath 1988: 180–195; Burnett 1989: 283–293; Carey 1989: 545–65; Bremer 1990: 41–58; Carey 1991: 192–200; Heath and Lefkowitz 1991: 173–91; Morgan 1993: 1–15; Anzai 1994: 141–50; D’Alessio 1994: 117–39; Lefkowitz 1995: 139–50.

that “The notion that the young men are a chorus waiting to perform Pindar’s victory ode goes back to the scholia. But the commentators’ ignorance of Aeginetan geography suggests that they constructed their scenarios for the ode from guesswork rather than from specific historical sources of information.”

Lefkowitz points to the passage in lines 3–4 in which the youthful crafters of melodious odes are said to be waiting ὕδατι γάρ/ μένοντ’ ἐπ’ Ἀσωπίῳ, “by the Asopian waters.” The scholia take the Asopian waters to signify a river Asopus in Boeotia, Nemea, or Aegina, but modern scholarship demonstrates this to be a stream in Aegina called Asopis.¹⁶ According to Lefkowitz (1999: 198), “the notes that describe the young men who are waiting for the Muse’s voice as a chorus cannot be based on contemporary accounts of the performance, since they are mistaken about the location of the Asopian water.” She finds that the scholiasts’ flawed understanding of local geography suggests a larger unreliability concerning the circumstances of the poem’s performance.

Lefkowitz has devised the scenario of two songs in order to avoid the difficulty of choral performance. By casting off the hymn to Zeus as an entity of its own, she believes that she has allowed for the solo performance of the actual victory ode. The central tenet of her argument is to deny the scholiasts’ authority on this matter, but her refutation of the scholiasts is based on tangentially related details of the poem’s performance. She lends too much weight to the scholiasts’ confusion concerning the location of the Asopis. A fault or a potential fault in one portion of the scholiasts’ reading does not necessarily or automatically mean that every part of their reading is flawed. They might in fact have been mistaken about the Asopis and correct about the choral performance.

At this point, I propose that we consider *Nemean* 3 from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective in order to answer the fundamental question of how the poem might be understood as both a victory ode for Aristocleides and a ὕμνος to Zeus. I will return to the issue of performance after first discussing the relationship between the genres of cult hymn and epinician.

Several modern scholars have called attention to the synthetic nature of Pindaric epinician. Maslov, for instance, drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin’s discussions of heteroglossia in the novel, views the victory ode

¹⁶ See Drachmann iii: 43; Privitera 1988: 63–70.

as a hybrid poetic form incorporating and combining a number of distinct genres and modes of speech.¹⁷ At the same time, Maslov (2015: 276) notes that “Whatever genres a given poem alludes to or embeds, its status as an *epinikion*—an ode composed on the occasion of an athletic victory—is never in doubt.” Cult hymn is one of the key ingredients in the discursive blend of epinician. Maslov (2015: 279) speculates that one of the sources of the genre might have been “hymns to divinities who have a mortal aspect and thus can be more appropriately compared to mortal victors, such as Herakles and the Dioskouroi.” While Zeus does not fit this description, as patron divinity of the contests at Olympia and Nemea, his connection to athletic victory is sufficiently clear.

Keeping this relationship to cult hymn in mind, we might identify a comparandum for the hymn to Zeus in *Nemean* 3 in the “Kastor-songs” that Pindar mentions in *Pythian* 2 and *Isthmian* 1. The poet seems to refer to *Pythian* 2 as a “Kastor-song” in describing the circumstances of its maritime dispersal:

χαῖρε· τόδε μὲν κατὰ Φοίνισσαν ἐμπολάν
μέλος ὑπὲρ πολιᾶς ἀλὸς πέμπεται·
τὸ Καστόρειον δ’ ἐν Αἰολίδεσσι χορδαῖς θέλων
ἄθρησον χάριν ἐπτακτύπου
φόρμιγγος ἀντόμενος.

(*Pyth.* 2.67–71)

Farewell. This song is being sent like Phoenician merchandise over the grey sea, but willingly observe and greet the Kastor-song in Aeolian strains, glory of the lyre with seven tones.

Similarly to *Nemean* 3, there has been much scholarly debate as to whether the “Kastor-song” is actually *Pythian* 2. The scholia claim that τὸ Καστόρειον (69) refers to a *hyporchema* (fr. 105) that Pindar supposedly sent as a supplement to the victory ode itself, and several modern scholars, beginning with Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, have followed this suggestion.¹⁸ Others have argued that the “Kastor-song” does

¹⁷ See Bakhtin 1984 for a famous application of these ideas to the novels of Dostoevsky. Cf. Wells 2009: 129–84, who also applies Bakhtin’s concept of novelistic discourse to Pindaric epinician.

¹⁸ For the “Kastor-song” as the *hyporchema* (fr. 105), see Drachmann ii: 52; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1901: 1311–12; Gentili 1992. Cf. Gantz 1978: 26; Robertson 1960, who argue that the “Kastor-song” is *Ol.* 1; Burton 1962: 123 suggests that “τὸ

in fact refer to *Pythian* 2, offering a number of distinct interpretations. Some assert that the opposition of μὲν . . . πέμπεται (67–68) and δ' . . . ἄθρησον (69–70) highlights the distinction between the poem's sending and performance.¹⁹ Race (1997 i: 239) contends that “‘This song’ apparently refers to the preceding part of the ode, whereas the *Kastoreion*, a song in celebration of an equestrian victory (cf. *Isth.* 1.16), presumably refers to the remainder of the poem.” This idea that the “Kastor-song” corresponds to the final section of *Pythian* 2 is an attractive parallel to my argument that the content of the ὕμνος lies between lines 10–12 and 65 of *Nemean* 3, although Morgan (2015: 194) rightly observes that “The relevance of the Kastor-song is almost overdetermined, just as Hieron's triumph is overdetermined: victory at war and at the games.”²⁰

The “Kastor-song” mentioned in *Isthmian* 1, by contrast, is clearly the victory ode itself. Pindar declares his desire to include the victor, Herodotus of Thebes, in a hymn celebrating Kastor or Iolaos:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ Ἡροδότῳ τεύ-
χων τὸ μὲν ἄρματι τεθρίπῳ γέρας,
ἀνία τ' ἄλλοτρίαις οὐ χερσὶ νομάσαντ' ἐθέλω
ἢ Καστορεῖῳ ἢ Ἰολαοῖ' ἐναρμόζειν νιν ὕμνῳ.

(*Isthm.* 1.14–16)

But I, fashioning an honorable reward for his four-horse chariot for Herodotus, who guided the reins with no one else's hands, wish to blend him with a hymn to Kastor or Iolaos.

From lines 17–31, the poet recounts the numerous athletic achievements of Kastor and Iolaos, explaining this digression with the statement κείνοι γὰρ ἡρώων διφρηλάται Λακεδαίμονι καὶ Θήβαις ἐτέκνωθεν κράτιστοι (17), “for these men were born as the best charioteers in Lakadaimon and Thebes.”²¹ The two heroes serve as mythological precursors to the triumphant Herodotus, whose chariot victory occasions *Isthmian* 1. Pindar concludes this section of the poem with χαίρετ' (32), “farewell,”

Καστόρειον is the poem that Pindar hoped to write but never did, the poem to celebrate the chariot-victory which Hieron eventually won at Olympia in 468.”

¹⁹ See Carey 1981: 47–48; Most 1985: 100–101.

²⁰ Bell 1984: 15 concurs that the characterization of *Pyth.* 2 as a “Kastor-song” fits the poem as a whole.

²¹ Instone 1996: 178 astutely notes that Pindar singles out Kastor here rather than Polydeukes, who is known for his skills as a boxer.

addressed to Kastor and Iolaos and effectively ending their hymn. This imperative form of χαίρω mirrors the uses of χαῖρε in *Pythian* 2 and *Nemean* 3.²² In *Pythian* 2, χαῖρε (67) appears a mere two lines before the reference to τὸ Καστόρειον (67), and, in *Nemean* 3, the content between Pindar’s description of the ὕμνος striking Zeus’s contest (65) and χαῖρε (76) is more direct praise of Aristocleides’ victory at Nemea. All three of these imperatives, then, reflect, if not precisely delineate, the discursive boundaries between the hymns in question and the larger victory odes of which they are a part.

Returning to the question of performance, I would suggest that a consideration of the distinct audiences for *Nemean* 3 might help us to appreciate the function of the hymn to Zeus. The performance context for *Nemean* 3 seems to have been a celebration of

Aristocleides’ pankration victory at the Nemean games. For the most part, it is extremely difficult to make authoritative claims about the details of epinician performances. The specifics of musical and danced accompaniment have been lost, and the scholia, which comment on some of these features, are too late to be reliable (Race 1986: 13). On the other hand, a number of Pindar’s epinicia make internal reference to the specifics of their own performance, and *Nemean* 3 is one such poem.

The standard reading of *Nemean* 3 points toward a choral performance (Lefkowitz 1991: 197–98). This is a consequence of Pindar’s diction in lines 3–5: ὕδατι γάρ μένοντ’ ἐπ’ Ἀσωπῷ μελιγαρύων τέκτονες κώμων νεανῖαι, σέθεν ὅπα μαίόμενοι, “for youthful crafters of melodious odes are waiting by the Asopian waters, searching for your voice.” The phrase μελιγαρύων τέκτονες κώμων νεανῖαι, “youthful crafters of melodious odes,” appears to describe a chorus of adolescents as the performers of *Nemean* 3.²³ Scholars have also interpreted Pindar’s description of the adolescent chorus σέθεν ὅπα μαίόμενοι, “searching for your voice,” and his use of the phrase ὀψέ περ, “however late,” in describing the cocktail of song in line 80 as references to the poem’s lateness of arrival.²⁴ These

²² These are the only attested imperative forms of χαίρω in Pindar’s extant victory odes.

²³ For the ages of chorus members in archaic Greece, see Calame 2001: 26–30; Burnett 2005: 8–9.

²⁴ Instone 1996: 152, 154, 169; Pfeijffer 1999: 245 argue that *Nem.* 3 must be at least two years late, since they take the opening lines to indicate that the poem is being performed during the month of the Nemean festival, which is biennial. Eckerman 2014 construes the phrase ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι (2) with the adjective πολυξέναν (2), divorcing

details are speculative and derived from references within the text, but they provide more of a basis for reconstructing performance contexts than is available for the majority of Pindar's victory odes.²⁵ *Nemean 3* makes better sense as a combined epinician and hymn to Zeus if it is considered to have been a choral performance that likely occurred somewhat later than Aristocleides' actual victory.

The idea of a choral performance is crucial to the constitutive element of the epinician occasion. The epinician serves to reintegrate the victorious athlete into the πόλις.²⁶ The chorus stands at the center of this act of reintegration because, according to Burnett (1985: 42), "the numbers of the chorus generalized the singular success of the victor." The victory can transcend its status as a possession of the individual athlete and his οἶκος to become a possession of the larger community. Hubbard (1987a: 8) adds, "The chorus in Pindar's epinicia is never an independent personality in its own right, but is significant mainly as a reflection of community spirit in celebration of the athletic victory." The chorus is the conduit for this transference of the victory from the individual to the community, which enacts the reintegration of the athlete into his home πόλις.

The idea of the victory ode being late is a reminder of the poet's function in this elaborate ritual. The athlete ventures from home and partakes in the ordeal of the athletic contest.²⁷ If he is successful, he can return home with κλέος (Kurke 1991: 15–34). The poet is subsequently commissioned to celebrate the victory in an epinician which provides, in Gregory Nagy's words (1990: 142), "the final realization, the final constitutive event, of the ritual process of athletics." Notice the poet's essential role in this process, as the athletic ritual concludes with the epinician. Pindar exploits the anxiety of an overdue victory ode in his opening tableau of the adolescent chorus, which is described as σέθεν ὅρα μαιόμενοι (5), "searching for your voice." This element of tension is relieved in actuality by the performance of the epinician.

the performance of the victory ode from the Nemean month, and, therefore, broadening the possibilities for its lateness. While I find the traditional reading of the opening lines most natural, Eckerman's suggestion is ingenious and should certainly be considered a possibility.

²⁵ For the argument, based on the reference to σεμνὸν Πυθίου Θεάριον (69–70), "the august meeting place of the envoys of the Pythia," that the performance of *Nem. 3* was held in that building, see Instone 1996: 166; Burnett 2005: 143–44; Currie 2005: 333–38.

²⁶ See Crotty 1982: 104–38; Slater 1984; Nagy 1990: 136–45; Kurke 1991: 163–256.

²⁷ For the ritual significance of the athlete's ordeal, see Nagy 1990: 136–45.

As for the contents of a song appropriate to the epinician occasion, I argue that such a song should feature three levels of praise: that of the victor, that of the heroes, and that of the divinity. Much like Bremer, Race (1986: 68) declares that “The gods are primary; as Pindar says in *Pyth.* 1.41: ‘the gods provide all the means for human achievements (*aretais*).’ The heroes provide the models of human *areta*. And the man, by his victory at Olympia (with all that it represents), has kept alive that heritage.” This is all true, but I would go one step further and suggest that the tripartite division of praise is essential to the epinician occasion as “the final constitutive event” in the athletic ritual. In the epinician, the praise of the victor is constitutive of κλέος for the οἶκος and the praise of the local heroes is constitutive of κλέος for the πόλις or larger region.²⁸ In the case of *Nemean* 3, I would argue that the praise of the patron deity of the Nemean Games, Zeus, is constitutive of κλέος for Ἑλλάς. The Nemean games were a Panhellenic festival, and Zeus was Panhellenic in his function as their patron. In line 65, Pindar specifically invokes Zeus as the patron of the games and therefore as a Panhellenic deity.²⁹

These three levels of praise are intertwined. They nourish and embolden one another, working in all directions simultaneously. The praise of Aristocleides and the sons of Aeacus enriches that of Zeus, because he is the precondition for their success. The praise of Aristocleides and Zeus enriches that of the sons of Aeacus, because Aristocleides, on the one hand, renews the κλέος of their line, and Zeus, as divine forefather, is the source of their semi-divine heroism.³⁰ Finally, the praise of Zeus and the sons of Aeacus enriches that of Aristocleides, because their accomplishments place his victory in a mythological context that transcends his merely human capacity for achievement. *Nemean* 3 is ideally suited to its occasion of performance because it situates Aristocleides’ pankration

²⁸ This is a simplification, because the praise of the victor is to some extent constitutive of κλέος for the πόλις and that of the heroes constitutive for the victor’s οἶκος. I would argue that the scheme described above represents the primary or immediate distribution of constitutive associations. For the full effect of epinician upon its tripartite audience of οἶκος, πόλις, and Panhellenic aristocracy, see Kurke 1991.

²⁹ I restrict my comments on the Panhellenizing effect of Pindar’s divine praise to *Nem.* 3. For a useful discussion of the interface between Panhellenization and regional interests in Pindar’s *Pae.* 6, see Kowalzig 2007: 181–223; cf. Hornblower 2004: 34–36. For Panhellenization more generally, see Nagy 1990: 82–115.

³⁰ For the renewal and entropy of κλέος, see Nagy 1990: 194–97; Kurke 1991: 18, 35–61. For the sons of Aeacus as ancestors of the Aeginetan victors, see Nagy 1990: 175–81.

victory on the three levels of οἶκος, πόλις, and Ἑλλάς by praising Aristocleides himself, the sons of Aeacus, and Zeus respectively.

The victory ode for Aristocleides and the hymn to Zeus are ultimately reconciled, because the victory ode is the performance context and the hymn to Zeus Pindar's acknowledgment of the divine element that works to Panhellenize *Nemean* 3. The poet weaves his system of praise throughout the spheres of the human, the heroic, and the divine, each of which corresponds to one of the audiences for which Aristocleides' κλέος is constituted. We should remember that Pindaric epinician was a synthetic genre, combining discordant threads from the archaic past and the classical present. Cult hymn is one such thread in this discursive web. The incorporation of cult hymn does not, then, make *Nemean* 3 any less of an epinician, but in fact contributes to the particular encomiastic program that Pindar has designed to praise Aristocleides' victory in the pankration at Nemea.

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