

Interpreting the Crux at *Pythian* 6.14-18, an "Occasion for Bad Scholarship"
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Pythian 6 contains a famous proem in which Pindar constructs his ode as a treasury of hymns; however, the imagery of this proem has not yet been successfully clarified. In his commentary on Pindar's odes, L. Farnell stated, on lines 14-18, that "this is the crux of the ode, and [it] has been the occasion for bad scholarship" (186). In this paper, I argue that scholars have not recognized that πρόσωπον (l.14) and the following phrase εὐδοξον ἄρματι νίκαν ("victory, glorious with a chariot," l.17) refer to the façade of a treasury that Pindar imaginatively builds *and* decorates with an equestrian scene. It is important to clarify the imagery so that the proem may be successfully understood. I begin by surveying the current, mutually exclusive, competing interpretations regarding lines 14-18 and explain how these interpretations do not clarify the passage. I then put forth a new interpretation that relates the passage to the architectural imagery that pervades this ode's proem; furthermore, my interpretation makes clean syntactical sense with the Greek, which the scholiasts and other scholars have considered difficult.

The word πρόσωπον has been variously interpreted. L. Farnell argued that πρόσωπον referred "to the actual face of the messenger" (186) who brings the news of victory to Akragas, the patron's home *polis*; but the patron and his family already know about the victory. F. Mezger (post Schmidt) argued that the πρόσωπον was Thrasyboulos' face; but this interpretation requires an improbable emendation. Contemporary epinician critics have continued to miss the reference to architectural sculpture as the motivating factor for the passage. A. Verity, for example, in the most recent translation of Pindar's odes, translates πρόσωπον as "frontage," F. Nisetich translates it as "portal," and W. Race translates it as "face." Although these translations are not completely incorrect, they are telling. They show us that the following εὐδοξον ἄρματι νίκαν phrase remains misunderstood because the translators do not capture the architectural denotation that πρόσωπον here bears: front of a building.

Although some critics have interpreted πρόσωπον correctly as façade (e.g. B. Gildersleeve, R. Burton, B. Bernardini et al.) they have not recognized that εὐδοξον ἄρματι νίκαν derives its meaning only when understood in relation to equestrian, architectural sculpture. It is this misunderstanding that I hope to correct. In my talk, I give examples such as the eastern pediment of the Alkmaeonid temple at Delphi and the eastern pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia to show the types of equestrian programs that were prevalent in public Greek art. The intended audience of this ode would have been aware of Greek architectural sculptural practice and would have been familiar with the iconographic programs frequently deployed on public temples and treasuries; accordingly, it would not have been hard for the audience to envision an equestrian scene such as the one that Pindar portrays on Xenocrates' imagined treasury of hymns. Therefore, I argue that Pindar's "façade that will announce a victory, glorious with a chariot" makes perfect sense: the equestrian decoration will announce the victory of Xenocrates to every passerby. If my argument is accepted, the imagery of this famous ode's proem is now clear.

Bibliography

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