

The Praise of Brothers in Pindar's *Isthmian* 6

Pindar composed *Isthmian* 6 sometime before 480 BCE for the pankratic victory of Phylakidas, a son of the Aiginetan Lampon. Though the poem memorializes the first victory of Phylakidas, it is the second poem that Pindar had written in praise of Lampon's sons, after *Nemean* 5 for the earlier pankratic victory of Pytheas, Phylakidas' brother. Analysis of *Isthmian* 6 has focused on the prominence of the praise of Lampon in the poem (Mezger 1880, 341; Wilamowitz 1922, 181), and on parallels between members of the victor's family and the figures in the myth of Herakles' visit to the home of his guest-friend, Telamon. Parallels have been repeatedly drawn between Lampon and his son Phylakidas on one hand, and Telamon and Aias on the other, as well as between Herakles, who prophesies Aias' birth, and Pindar, who predicts an Olympian victory for Lampon's family (most recently, Indergaard 2010, 306–22).

I extend the work of A. D. Morrison, who has investigated the cross-references of diction and theme in *Nemean* 5 and *Isthmian* 6 (2010, 234–50), and of M. F. Cummins, who has demonstrated that Pindar takes pains to modulate the praises of victorious family members, particularly brothers, so that all victorious siblings of a family receive their individual due, without invidious comparisons, while contributing to a larger collective store of praise for the family (2009, 317–34; 2010a, 321–39; 2010b, 1–22). I argue that Pindar's focus on Lampon and his myth of Herakles' prediction of Aias' birth are just two means in *Isthmian* 6 by which Pindar negotiates the praise of victorious brothers. In the initial strophe of the poem Pindar likens the two victories of Pytheas and Phylakidas to the first two libations in a series of three at a symposium. Though the simile of three libations at a symposium provides a diplomatic means of juxtaposing Pytheas' prior Nemean victory with Phylakidas' subsequent Isthmian victory in a rising crescendo, it does also present a logical difficulty: to whom is the wish for a subsequent

Olympian victory directed? Pytheas or Phylakidas? Pindar cleverly evades this question by framing the wish for Olympian victory first as the chorus' wish that they may prepare a third krater of songs for Olympian Zeus (7-9), and then as Lampon's heartfelt desire (14-18). Both devices eliminate the awkwardness of a specific reference to either brother. The indirection and diplomacy of Pindar's strategy in these lines contrast with the initial three stanzas of *Nemean 2*, where the Nemean victory of Timodemos is described metaphorically as the first installment of a debt that will be paid off by his subsequent acquisition of Isthmian, Pythian, and Olympian wins (1-12), and where the rising series of victories is matched by increasingly specific references to the victor: ὄδ' ἀνὴρ (3), Τιμονόου παῖς (10), and ὃ Τιμόδημε (14).

A similar indirection in the comparison and praise of victorious brothers occurs after the myth of Herakles' visit to his guest-friend, Telamon (25-56). Herakles comes upon Telamon at home banqueting. He makes a libation and prayer for a son for Telamon, and then interprets the omen of an eagle as evidence that Telamon will have a son who is λαῶν / ἐν πόνοις ἔκπαγλος Ἐνυαλίου (53-54). Pindar elsewhere describes ancient or monstrous warriors as ἔκπαγλος (*P.* 4.79; *N.* 4.27; fr. 169.13), but once also a victorious pankratis (I. 7.22). Once he explicitly connects the hero Aias with the current pankratic victor as two different sorts of μαχατάς (*N.* 2.14-15). Warriors and athletes in combat sports are linked by the toils, πόνοι, in which they engage (*N.* 6.23-24, 10.24). When Pindar shifts topic abruptly, he begins with the immediate and prominent mention of Phylakidas (57), but diffuses the parallel with Aias straightaway with praise of other victorious pankratists in the family: Pytheas and Euthymenes, a maternal uncle of the brothers (57-64). Thus Lampon, more blessed than even Telamon, possesses two meritorious sons, but the immediate mention of Euthymenes forestalls a comparison of their achievements.

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