

## Commemorative Competition: Pindar's *Nemean 5*

This paper examines the engagement between literary works and material craftsmanship in *Nemean 5*. I argue that Pindar employs words of motion and sound in order to emphasize the commemorative superiority of song over statue. This analysis attempts to complement a number of studies on the relationship between literary and material memorials in Greek lyric poetry (Carson 1992, Barchiesi 1996; Leach 1998, and Ford 2002).

My starting point is the opening line of *Nemean 5* in which the author declares what his role is not (Ὀὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', 1). As has long been noted, by invoking the trade of a sculptor Pindar immediately engages with a tradition in which poets highlight the shortcomings of material monuments (see Kurke 1993, 147-48 Steiner 2002, 251-52, and Ford 2002, 105). What has been lacking, however, is an analysis of the kinetic and acoustic vocabulary in *Nemean 5*, which I argue is the method by which the poet accentuates the superiority of his medium.

Pindar continues this imagery in subsequent lines by referring to statues as standing motionless upon their pedestals. He immediately contrasts this rigidity with the mobility of his song. While the statue would be rooted to his pedestal, his song would traverse lands and seas (ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας ὀλκάδος ἐν τ' ἀκάτω, γλυκεῖ ἀοιδά, στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλοισ', ὅτι...). The verb *steiche*, in alliteration with *estaota*, provides a stark contrast between the mobility of the two mediums.

The author also presents images of sound throughout the poem. The imagery of the poem is not only meant to be mentally seen and felt, but heard. As can be seen in going back to the beginning, not only will the song travel, but it functions in the role of a herald. In line 3, it will announce (*diangelloisa*) the victory of Aegina's victor. This is similar to the conversational tone

of funeral monuments, though a difference is seen in that here, the song as a herald finds the audience rather than the audience reading the message.

Within *Nemean 5*, Pindar implicitly connects the ability to move to the ability to create sound, and likewise for the inability to move or speak. As mentioned above, these two qualities (movement and sound) go together in lines 1-2, contrasting statues with songs on ships. Furthermore, in line 14 Pindar is “ashamed to tell a mighty deed,” and thus in lines 16-18 he halts and becomes silent. The verb *stausomai* and the noun *sige* function as a pair in order to transition to his main tale. Finally, in lines 50-54, the poet calls for song and for the sailors to prepare to sail. These examples demonstrate the inherent connection between a moving thing and its ability to create sound. By examining the vocabulary of Pindar within the literary and philosophical climate of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, I also hope to suggest how these words of motion and sound may inform the reader on the performative context of these odes.

### Bibliography

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