

Foundational Voices and Civic Bonds in Pindar's Paeans

This paper will examine the manner in which Pindar's paeans promote civic bonds through the use of the direct speech of mythical founders and personified communities. The goal will be two-fold: to demonstrate a Pindaric tendency to turn to these voices, particularly within his paeans, at moments when the poems attempt to reinforce civic bonds within the communities of the audience and performers; and to suggest that the highly fragmentary end of Pindar's sixth *Paeon* contains another example of this type of voice promoting civic unity.

The first part of my paper focuses on Pindar's second and fourth *Paeans*. In both songs, the promotion of solidarity within the performance- and audience-communities are a main point of the narratives. And in each case, the statements exhorting such solidarity are delivered through the direct speech – itself a relatively rare phenomenon in Pindar's poetry – of a “foundational” speaker: the city of Abdera itself in *Paeon 2*; and Euxantius, the mythical founder of Keos, in *Paeon 4*. As a result, the choral performers embody the founder of the community or indeed the community itself, and they thus relay a powerful message promoting civic unity within the local community (D'Alessio 2009, 159 and 167). My initial suggestion, then, is that we see a pattern, peculiar to Pindar's paeanic production, of the poet promoting civic bonds by availing himself to voices with foundational connections to the communities in question.

From there, I proceed to an examination of the third triad of Pindar's sixth *Paeon*. While the beginning of the triad is relatively intact, very little remains of the antistrophe and epode. Rutherford has suggested that these sections contain a narrative history of the Aiakids, probably delivered by “the mouth of one of the characters as a prophecy,” though most likely not in the voice of Aiakos (cf. Rutherford 2001, 325-28). I argue first that this narration is presented in the voice of Aegina herself, not only on the basis of the paeanic pattern observed above, but also

because it would fulfill the earlier suggestion that Aegina will “declare” the source of her island’s virtues (*Paeon* 6.129: κατερεῖς). And second, that the narrative likely included an exhortation for civic solidarity, something that is further suggested by the available, albeit highly fragmentary, textual evidence.

Paeon 6 would thus be another example of a Pindaric paeon exploiting a foundational voice to promote internal bonds. This in turn provides further evidence of the tendency for Pindar to use his paeans to promote civic solidarity (as argued extensively in Rutherford 2001), and more importantly, it suggests that the direct speech of a community or its founder was a typical and (likely) effective way to do so.

Bibliography

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