SKYTÁLA MOISÂN: SONG AND WRITING IN PINDAR

La défense que fait Pindare de l'oral comme véhicule privilegié de l'éloge manifeste de son inquiétude par l'irruption de l'écrit dans les domaines traditionaux du poête. Malgré quelques métaphores sur l'écriture sa poétique se place carrement comme un alégat en faveur de la transmission orale du *kleos*.

Nemean 5, composed to celebrate a triumph by Pytheas of Aigina in the boys' pancration, opens with an explicit comparison between sculpture and song:

οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθμίδος ἑσταότ'· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας ὁλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ ἀοιδά,
στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλοισ', ὅτι...

N.5.1-3

Scholars have traditionally understood these lines as Pindar's manifesto on the superiority of oral poetry over plastic crafts as a vehicle for fame[1], but such an interpretation was recently challenged by Deborah Steiner in an article in which she read the victory odes as mimicking the immortalizing strategies of inscribed, or 'speaking', objects. In her own words:

> «What are we to make of Pindar's dismissal of the ἀνδριαντοποιός? Does he mean, as some have argued, to belittle the worth of the

[1] Cf. Segal (1974), Svenbro (1976) 187-212, Mullen (1982) 143-162, Gentili (1988) 163-165.

> statue-maker's goods so as to enhance the prestige of his own creations? Or is he sounding a variation on a common poetic conceit that compares the products of the song-maker and those of artists and of sculptors? I will suggest that neither of these two readings gives an adequate account of the place of victory artefacts in the Odes: far from banishing statues and other monuments from his songs, or relegating them to mere images for verse, the poet gives them ample space. He grants them a critical role in the performance of the poems, and explicitly and implicitly draws on their design, their iconography and their inscribed contents. The victory monuments embedded in the songs will clarify two other issues: the ἀγάλματα not only support the poet's claim that he can guarantee the athlete unending fame through space and time; they also suggest a means whereby the performance of the song can be an autonomous and eternal one»[2].

Steiner's article calls into question the roles of oral versus inscribed messages, and entails the existence of an underlying tension in Pindar's poetics between his overt dismissal and his covert assimilation of this new 'inscriptional' imagery. Insightful as it is, her reading concentrates on a metaphor which, although valid, still has a secondary role in Pindar's repertoire. It is true that Pindar often incorporates seemingly incompatible allusions into his poems[3]; there is likewise little doubt that he was familiar with written texts and with the various manners in which inscriptions invited readers to give voice to their text[4]. Nevertheless, nowhere in the extant Pindaric corpus is writing explicitly avowed as a key ingredient in the epinikian process. And yet, by equating the status of the epinikia to that of sculptures and other *oggetti parlanti*, Steiner presumes that, for Pindar, the victory odes already functioned primarily as an object, i.e., as

2 Steiner (1993) 160-161; Froidefond (1989) 77-86 prefigures her contentions.

3 This awareness of Pindaric ambiguity as a deliberate effect of his poetry figures prominently in post-Bundyan readings: cf. the denunciation of the 'monofunctional' approach to Pindar in Most (1985) 36-41. Renehan (1969) analizes individual ambiguities, whereas Hoey (1965) and Gallet (1989) exemplify a more general interpretation under the guise of polysemy. The polyvalence of Pindar's poetry is also evident in its assimilation of different poetic genres: cf. Martin (1984) and Kurke (1990) on advice poetry as an embedded genre and Kurke (1988) for an interpretative *tour de force* which identifies echoes of no fewer than five genres in Isthmian 1. Pindar's absorption of the vocabulary of different performance contexts, such as symposium and *kômos*, is dealt with in Morgan (1993).

4 The various possibilities of enunciation of inscriptions, covering first- and third-person statements as well as second-person addresses to the reader, are analyzed along with their respective implications in Day (1988), Pucci (1988), and Svenbro (1993) 8-64.

a text. Such an interpretation, however, is highly problematic due to the fact that most of the poet's explicit statements on the matter point exactly in the opposite direction, and reveal a consistent effort to impress on his audience that the performance of epinikion is not bound by any pre-existing constraints but rather responds to the moment's inspiration, as corresponds to a true oral song[5]. In the light of such professions of orality, how can inert objects be a model for the performance of song, and how are we to take what claims to be a live oral poem as replicating the operation of a lifeless inscription? Indeed, to first explain inscriptions as speaking objects, i.e., as aspiring to generate speech, and then to interpret live performed poetry as imitating these very objects is a rather backward argument, for such a sequence amounts to having the model follow its imitator[6]. However sound Steiner's insight may be, it only reflects one side of the dilemma and thus does not clarify what is really at stake in Pindar's poetics nor how, and at what cost, the poet manages to strike a compromise between the oral and the written. As a comprehensive analysis of the relevant passages will show, writing is accepted into the sphere of epinikion only in certain respects, while remaining in others a negative counterpart to speech. The alleged assimilation of song to inscriptions is not unrestricted but qualified: they are analogous in one regard but widely different, even antagonistic, in another. And precisely because of their disparity, both the oral and the written must be taken into account separately so as to assess their significance before positing any parallels; and this dual perspective, better supported by the texts, will lead to a new appraisal of the poetic odds faced by Pindar and of the success or failure of his response.

Reacting to a multitude of heterogeneous applications of oral theory to archaic Greek poetry, Bruno Gentili recently attempted to define some common ground for scholarly research by establishing three conditions, one of which at least must be fulfilled for a poem to be considered oral: oral composition, oral performance, and oral

[5] This effect is mainly a result of the break-off formulae, a trope in which the poet interrupts himself as if suddenly altering the course of his song on the spur of the moment; it purports to reflect a performance situation combining memory and improvisation, and as such more likely of a Homeric bard (cf. *Od.*1.337-341) than of a 5th century choral lyric poet. On break-offs in Pindar, cf. Schadewaldt (1928) 268, 286, 312 and Bundy (1986) 73ff.

[6] It is self-evident that the odes have reached us in written format, and that Pindar himself was acquainted with writing; but it is just as undeniable that he consistently, if perhaps anachronistically, privileges the oral over the written model.

transmission[7]. With regards to Pindar's epinikia, it is practically hopeless to investigate whether they were composed orally or with the aid of writing, and most scholars now shun any endeavor to identify traces of oral, i.e. formulaic, composition in archaic poetry[8]. On the other hand, and despite the recent polemic on the precise manner of the performance of epinikia[9], the oral and public nature of the victory song is well attested. Thus Pythian 6 opens with a resounding 'Ακούσατ', and mention of the public character of epinikian celebration is also common to several odes. Isthmian 8 states it quite straightforwardly in proclaiming its business: παυσάμενοι δ' ἀπράκτων κακῶν γλυκύ τι δαμωσόμεθα καὶ μετὰ πόνων (I.8.8)[10]. As for the third condition of orality, the transmission of poetic praise and its attending fame is invariably portrayed in the odes as occurring by word of mouth; thus the height of human achievement can be described as a combination of wealth and good repute[11] or as a blend of *kûdos* and being well spoken of[12]. Given the dynamic nature of the spoken word, reports are likely to spread over long distances in a short time; thus Pindar praises the local hero Peleus as enjoying universal fame in Isthmian 6: οὐδ' ἔστιν οὔτω βάρβαρος οὔτε παλίγγλωσσος πόλις,/ ἅτις οὐ Πηλέος ἀΐει/ κλέος, ἥρως, εὐδαίμονος γαμβροῦ θεῶν (I.6.24-25), and the reputation of Athens is avowed in a similar fashion in Pythian 7: πάσαισι πολίεσι λόγος ὁμιλεῖ Ἐρεχθέος ἀστῶν (P.7.9). Nevertheless, side by side with these claims stand those other less vocal but undeniable allusions adduced by Steiner, infused with inscriptional imagery, which nuance the poet's apology of the purely oral nature of song. Certainly by Pindar's time writing had long been available as a vehicle for the

7 Gentili (1988) 4.

8 Irigoin (1952) 5-9 speculates on the existence of a primary text delivered by the poet to his commissioning patron, but does not go into the details of how this 'original edition' might have been composed. On the difficulties involved in searching for traces of oral composition in archaic Greek poetry, cf. Andersen (1987), Thomas (1992) 107-108.

9 Heath (1988), Lefkowitz (1988), Heath and Lefkowitz (1991) argue for solo performance, while Burnett (1989) and Carey (1989) and (1991) uphold the traditional hypothesis of performance by a chorus. The debate, informative but inconclusive, has in my opinion been superseded by Morgan (1993).

10 On the public nature of epinikian performance, cf. also O.13.49 and I.1.45-46.

11 I.5.12-13: δύο δέ τοι ζωᾶς ἄωτον μοῦνα ποιμαίνοντι τὸν ἄλπνιστον, εὐανθεῖ σὺν ὄλβῳ/ εἴ τις εὖ πάσχων λόγον ἐσλὸν ἀκούῃ.

12 I.1.50-51: ὃ δ' ἀμφ' ἀέθλοις ἢ πολεμίζων ἄρηται κῦδος ἄβρόν,/ εὐαγορηθεὶς κέρδος ὕψιστον δέκεται, πολιατᾶν καὶ ξένων γλώσσας ἄωτον.

recording and preservation of poetry[13]; nor is he the first to suspect writing as an intruding technology on the poet's traditional sphere[14]. Clearly enough, then, Pindar was faced with an option between two alternative models: the inspired poet of tradition and the more or less literate poet whose performance was not improvised but scripted. And yet a sober examination of the epinikia confronts us with an apparent contradiction, as it reveals both these seemingly incompatible models simultaneously at work, even if the oral is most often defended in quite glaring terms. The poet's conflicting statements on the matter may indicate that this was an open, unresolved question he dealt with differently according to the specific context of each commission[15]; however, for all the divergence, there are odes in which Pindar manages to reconcile the oral with the written model and integrates the latter, once purged of its threatening potential, into his epinikian poetics[16]. But in order to appreciate how this is brought about, we must first look at how he constructs his poetics of orality.

THE SUBSTANCE OF EPINIKION

Over twenty years ago, Jesper Svenbro's influential study on the interplay of orality and the written word in archaic Greek poetics interpreted the emergence of craftsmanship metaphors to describe the poet's art as a reflection of two interrelated phenomena: the growth of

13 On the much-disputed recension of the Homeric poems, cf. now Nagy (1996a) 107-152 and (1996b) 29-112. According to Nagy, writing could have come into play as early as the middle of the 6th century BCE.

14 Thus Ford (1991) 136-167 analyzes material objects in the *Iliad*, and especially the Achaean wall, as «a figure for a written-down *Iliad*», and finds «a suspicion of signs and a praise of their oral supplements» (*o.c.*, p. 157, n. 144); from a different angle, cf. Harris (1989) 90: «For much of the fifth century, and even later, writing seems to have had a remarkably ambivalent reputation at Athens, and presumably elsewhere too. This in itself suggests that writing was invading new functional territory» a claim supported by passages like Aesch. *Suppl.* 946-949: ταῦτ οὐ πιναξίν ἐστιν ἐγγεγραμμένα/ οὐδ' ἐν πτυχαῖς βύβλων κατεσφραγισμένα,/ σαφῆ δ' ἀκούεις ἐξ ἐλευθεροστόμου/ γλώσσης.

15 We must keep in mind that Pindar's epinikia have been dated from 498 to 446 BCE, and respond to commissions by patrons of diverse social status and from different corners of the Greek-speaking world; Pindar himself expressly acknowledges his adaptability to context in P.1.75-79.

16 An equivalent gesture of cleansing noxious elements in order to fashion a thing of beauty is undertaken by Athena when she invents flute playing drawing from the grim chant of the Gorgons (P.12.6-8 and 18-21).

literacy and a shift in the social role of poets[17]. Although such metaphors have a long tradition of their own[18], it is nonetheless true that Pindar's use of names and images for epinikian poetry reflects a strong imprint from the sphere of artisanal activity, as metaphors from weaving, architecture and sculpting shed a new light on diverse aspects of his creative process.

The subject of Pindar's metaphors has been widely studied from a variety of perspectives[19]. Despite their multiple and elaborate variations, these poetic figures rest on a limited number of basic images. Among these, some pertain to the manner of poetic composition (e.g., metaphors of weaving[20]); others, to epinikian performance (e.g., allusions to sympotic or komastic settings[21]); but our interest lies exclusively in a third kind of metaphors with definite implications for the mechanisms whereby poetry is transmitted. For all their shimmering brilliance, at a deeper level these representations of song express quite vocally a rather partisan conception of the epinikian craft. As Richard Stoneman argued:

> «So far from being symbols, these metonimies reflect ideas already implicit in the epinician language. (...) Pindar's language does not stimulate new understandings; on the contrary, it reflects assumptions familiar to the hearer in the same way as rhetoricians do. In so far as his images fall into consistent patterns, as do those of drink, or those drawn from the world of nature, they reproduce or reflect a vision of the world which gives epinician poetry its raison d'être: they support the aristocratic ideology. They are echoes from an ideal world where victory is part of a natural order and where the Muses are daily active. Like Homer's traditional metaphors, they are 'an incantation of the heroic'. They are a means of persuasion (always best effected on those

17 Svenbro (1976).

18 Already in *Od.*17.382ff. bards are called *demiourgoi* along with carpenters, doctors, and seers.

19 Stoneman (1981) is an important methodological analysis. The latest comprehensive study is Steiner (1986). Dornseiff (1921), esp. 54-69, Gundert (1935), and Duchemin (1955) 191-266 remain useful as general treatments; Bernardini (1967), Simpson (1969), and Péron (1974) concentrate on specific images; Hubbard (1987) focuses on the underlying polar structure of Pindar's thought.

20 Cf. Gallet (1989) for a persuasive explanation relating the Pindaric *kairós* to poetic composition and the art of the loom.

21 Cf. Morgan (1993).

who already believe what they are about to be told) not of imagination»[22].

In the final analysis, three groups of metaphors are most representative of the potency that Pindar claims for his poetic speech: those related to light, flight, and architecture or sculpture[23]. Light is a recurrent image in Pindar's poetry. Olympian 4 calls the victory revel a «most enduring light»[24]; furthermore, the idea that the poet sets the victor or his *polis* aflame implies not only that the triumphant athlete is conspicuous and admirable among his fellow citizens but that his fame reaches far away as well[25]. The metaphor is also significant in that the opposite of light, *skótos*, is very frequently employed in the odes to mark those undertakings which do not attain the exalted status of epinikian song or even run counter to it[26].

Similarly, images of song as winged or flying consistently serve to mark off the victory ode as a specific kind of discourse[27]. Nemean 6 talks of its patron's family as enjoying winged, and thus widespread, fame: πέταται δ' ἐπί τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης τηλόθεν/ ὄνυμ' αὐτῶν (N.6.48-49). Pindar's own song is also presented as winged on occasion[28]. Once again, the image is significant not only on account of what it affirms but because it sets Pindar's song apart from a very

22 Stoneman (1981) 136. In my opinion, the fact that much of Pindar's imagery is shared by Bacchylides only stregthens his claim for the existence of a repertoire of images appropriately codified for epinikian audiences.

23 Also important on account of their implications are flower images, insofar as they suggest cyclical renewal and thus may imply that the epinikion too blooms every time it is reperformed; cf. O.6.103-105; O.9.48-49; P.1. 66; N.4.48-49; N.5.54; N.9.39 and 48.

24 O.4.9-10: δέξαι Χαρίτων θ' ἕκατι τόνδε κῶμον/ χρονιώτατον φάος εὐρυσθενέων ἀρετᾶν. Cf. also O.10.23; N.3.84; I.2.17; O.13.36; P.3.73-75; P.8.96; O.6. 4; O.1.93-95.

25 Cf. the epithet τηλαυγές, «far-shining» in N.3.64, where it applies to the fame of the Aiakids; cf. also O.6. 4; P.5.45; O.9.21-22; O.1.22-23; N.9.39-42. Gundert (1935) 29 and n. 119 draws a list of light metaphors illustrating the concept of 'Sichtbarmachen', i.e. bringing to light, which in his opinion lay at the heart of Pindar's celebration of athletic prowess and aristocratic virtues.

26 e.g., N.7.12-13: ταὶ μεγάλαι γὰρ ἀλκαί/ σκότον πολὺν ὕμνων ἔχοντι δεόμεναι. Cf. also O.1.82-84; N.4.39-41.

27 Flight imagery has been analyzed by Martin (1989) as indicating a specific genre of speech, namely, an authoritative *mûthos* or speech-act; in Greek lyric, the *locus classicus* for the portrayal of fame as winged is Theognis 237-54; for a lucid analysis of this passage cf. Goldhill (1991) 111-113.

28 A partial list includes O.1.111-112; O.2.89-90; P.8.32-34; N.9.55; I.1.64-65; I.5.63. The eagle images at N.3.80-82 and O.2.86-88 may also be related to this idea, especially insofar as they contrapose lofty effectiveness with lowly bickering.

concrete type of speech, which is portrayed as falling to the ground before reaching its objective, and is generally ascribed to the envious who begrudge the poet's praise. Thus Pindar prays for the success of his song: ἔλπομαι/ μέγα εἰπών σκοποῦ ἄντα τυχεῖν/ ὥτ' ἀπό τόξου ἰείς (N.6.26-28), whereas the ill-disposed machinations of the envious embody the images of darkness and futility: φθονερὰ δ' ἄλλος ἀνὴρ βλέπων/ γνώμαν κενεὰν σκότῳ κυλίνδει/ χαμαὶ πετοῖσαν (N.4.39-41). The negative foil of epinikian praise —be it envy, silence, futile words, or the vain and fragile delights of men[29]— is consistently represented as lurking in or falling to the gound: thus Pindar exhorts himself at the beginning of Olympian 9: πτερόεντα δ' ἴει γλυκύν/ Πυθῶνάδ' ὀιστόν· οὗτοι χαμαιπετέων λόγων ἐφάψεαι (11-12)

A third metaphor, that of architecture, is fused with light imagery and inspires one of Pindar's most celebrated openings, in a brief programmatic statement on epinikian poetics: χρυσέας ὑποστάσαντες εὐτειχεῖ προθύρῳ θαλάμου/ κίονας ὡς ὅτε θαητὸν μέγαρον/ πάξομεν· ἀρχομένου δ' ἔργου πρόσωπον/ χρὴ θέμεν τηλαυγές (O.6.1-4). But whereas the assimilation of the victory ode to several kinds of craftsmanship may illustrate a shift in archaic Greek poetics, for Pindar the idea of material constructs still serves often as foil to indicate what the epinikion is not. Nowhere is this exposed more elaborately than in Pythian 6, which calls itself a *thesaurós* but then proceeds to distinguish between the properties of spoken as opposed to constructed memorials:

> Πυθιόνικος ἔνθ' ὀλβίοισιν Ἐμμενίδαις
> ποταμίᾳ τ' Ἀκράγαντι καὶ μὰν Ξενοκράτει
> ἑτοῖμος ὕμνων θησαυρὸς ἐν πολυχρύσῳ
> Ἀπολλωνίᾳ τετείχισται νάπᾳ·
> τὸν οὔτε χειμέριος ὄμβρος, ἐπακτὸς ἐλθὼν ἐριβρόμου νεφέλας
> στρατὸς ἀμείλιχος, οὔτ' ἄνεμος ἐς μυχοὺς
> ἁλὸς ἄξοισι παμφόρῳ χεράδει
> τυπτόμενον. φάει δὲ πρόσωπον ἐν καθαρῷ
> πατρὶ τεῷ, Θρασύβουλε, κοινάν τε γενεᾷ
> λόγοισι θνατῶν εὔδοξον ἅρματι νίκαν
> Κρισαίας ἐνὶ πτυχαῖς ἀπαγγελεῖ.
>
> P.6.5-18

29 Cf. N.9.6-7; P.6.37; P.8.93-94.

The suspicion of material objects as a memorial to preserve fame is not Pindar's innovation[30], but his outline of the distinctive potency of the spoken word certainly is the most substantial and elaborate in Greek poetry to his date. To judge from this cursory overview of Pindar's metaphors, then, three features appear to distinguish the epinikion: its spatial reach (explicitly denied of statues in Nemean 5), its temporal endurance (explicitly denied of architecture in Pythian 6), and its successful fulfillment of its objectives. All of these images, however, seem to hint at an underlying but fundamental opposition between mobility and fixity, or permanence and transience; and this dichotomy, which thoroughly permeates Pindar's poetics, is conspicuously reflected in his frequently overt comparisons of the alleged properties of the spoken and the written word.

Song and Artifacts

In the odes, the opposition between speech and material artifacts is likewise most often articulated in terms of their respective endurance. Pindar, revealing his traditional bent, accords spoken words, especially those uttered in poetic performance, the greatest lasting power. This dynamic nature of the spoken word is also often emphasized by comparing it to light. A brief passage in Isthmian 4 makes celebration in oral poetry the necessary condition for the survival of fame: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀθάνατον φωνᾶεν ἔρπει,/ εἴ τις εὖ εἴπῃ τι· καὶ πάγκαρπον ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ διὰ πόντον βέβακεν/ ἐργμάτων ἀκτὶς καλῶν ἄσβεστος αἰεί (I.4.40-42)[31].

However, the decisive feature that elevates the spoken over the written word as a vehicle for the preservation of glory is its potential for recurrent activation in performance. It is as though the spoken word had a brief but renewable life, instead of the inscription's long but ultimately destructible existence. Oral poetry enjoys as it were a new life every time it is voiced on earth; otherwise, it rests in a kind of slumber. Pindar often represents himself as waking up dormant

30 Cf. Ford (1992) 152, who comments on the destruction of physical *sémata* in *Il.* 15.362-364: «In Greek terms, eroding rains, washing streams, and destructive torrents are the elements most inimical to the hopes of graves and tombs». Pindar is not the first lyric poet to question the adequacy of writing for the transmission of fame; cf. Simonides, fr. 581 *PMG*.

31 Cf. nn. 11-12, *supra*.

fame: ἀλλ' ἐμὲ χρὴ μναμοσύναν ἀνεγείροντα φράσαι/ χειρῶν ἄωτον Βλεψιάδας ἐπίνικον (O.8.74-75). The same image operates in Pythian 9, following Pindar's oblique reference to an unspecified debt which his performance will likely satisfy: ἐμὲ δ' οὖν τις ἀοιδᾶν/ δίψαν ἀκειόμενον πράσσει χρέος, αὖτις ἐγεῖραι/ καὶ παλαιὰν δόξαν ἐῶν προγόνων (103-105)[32].

Thus, it seems, the hopelessly inert nature of inscriptions reduces their effectiveness as vehicles for the transmission of fame. On the other hand, the spoken word's potential for repeated activation in performance is amply advertised by Pindar. In this spirit, the poet exhorts his patron, in the final instructions that bring Isthmian 2 to a close, not to let his poem lie idle but to continue to lend it his voice even once its initial performance is over: μήτ' ἀρετάν ποτε σιγάτω πατρῴαν,/ μηδέ τούσδ' ὕμνους· ἐπεί τοι/ οὐκ ἐλινύσοντας αὐτοὺς ἐργασάμαν (44-46).

As we have seen, the allusion to sculpture, only implicit in the above passage of Isthmian 2, is developed as an explicit comparison in Nemean 5[33]. The introduction to this ode turns the material advantage of speech over stone into a programmatic statement for the entire epinikian genre: song outperforms sculpture as a memorial because of its potential for dissemination. Pindar's choice of words is especially meaningful: οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθμίδος/ ἑσταότ'· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας ὁλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ' ἀοιδά, στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλοισ', ὅτι... (N.5.1-3). The double occurrence of *ergázomai*, «to fashion», in Isthmian 2 and Nemean 5, both times linked to *elinúo,* «to rest unmoved», strongly suggests that *ergázomai* indicates the crafting of a material object. The two verbs occur only in these two passages of the epinikia[34], and both times in conjunction with one another.

32 Likewise, N.1 has Pindar stirring to life the ancient fable of Herakles: ἐγὼ δ' Ἡρακλέος ἀντέχομαι προφρόνως/ ἐν κορυφαῖς ἀρετᾶν μεγάλαις, ἀρχαῖον ὀτρύνων λόγον (33-34). Fame is also mentioned as needing to be woken up from sleep in I.4.19-24 and I.7.16-19. Along with plant imagery and its attending suggestion of cyclical bloom, such metaphors may indicate the poet's expectation that his epinikia will be performed more than once, as contemplated by Pindar himself in N.4.13-16 and portrayed by Aristophanes as a customary, if outmoded, sympotic practice in *Nubes* 1355-1356.

33 Cf. p. 1, *supra*.

34 *Elinuo* occurs a third time in fr. 104b.4: ἀσκὸς δ' οὔτε τις ἀμφορεὺς ἐλίνυεν δόμοις.

Olympian 8 also dwells on the topic of the permanence of material objects. At line 42, Apollo announces to Aiakos that Troy will be captured, several generations later, due to the weakness of the section of the wall built by his mortal hands: «Πέργαμος ἀμφὶ τεαῖς, ἥρως, χερὸς ἐργασίας ἁλίσκεται». In all these passages, human labor (*ergasía*) yields material results that are ultimately destined to break down and disappear. If we consider the implications of *ergázomai* we have just exposed in Nemean 5 and Isthmian 2, it is easy to conclude that, in Pindar's poetics, *ergázomai* and *ergasía* seem to denote an essentially static and perishable hand-made creation[35]. In all three passages it is the very physical nature of these hand-crafted objects that exposes them to the danger of paralysis or destruction. The statues in Nemean 5 stay put, unable to disseminate fame like songs do, over sea and land; likewise, the part of the Trojan wall born from Aiakos' labor is signalled by Apollo's prophecy as the one vulnerable spot through which the Greeks of a later generation will pour into the city on their way to laying it waste.

However, other odes, such as Nemean 4, embody a substantially less polemic spirit towards material artifacts. At the start of the ode, Pindar affirms the comparative advantage of song not over writing, but over the actions of men: ῥῆμα δ' ἐργμάτων χρονιώτερον βιοτεύει,/ ὅ τί κε σὺν Χαρίτων τύχᾳ/ γλῶσσα φρενὸς ἐξέλοι βαθείας (6-8)[36]; his reference to the Graces clarifies the poetic nature of these long-lasting proclamations. Later in the ode, Pindar likens his composition to an inscribed stele, comparing stone and song as monuments: εἰ δέ τοι/ μάτρῳ μ' ἔτι Καλλικλεῖ κελεύεις/ στάλαν θέμεν Παρίου λίθου λευκοτέραν (79-81)(...) κεῖνος ἀμφ' Ἀχέροντι ναιετάων ἐμάν/ γλῶσσαν εὑρέτω κελαδῆτιν (85-86). The comparative *leukotéran* hints that even if the durability of a stele may approach that of song, a poetic memorial is far more conspicuous than a material one. Furthermore, in assuring Timasarchos that his dead uncle shall hear this

35 In contrast with ἔργμα, meaning «achievement, exploit», and ἔργον, usually a synonym of the former, but which can also mean a generic «work of art»: cf. O.6.3 (a palace); O.7.84 (athletic prizes); O.13.17 (a work of art); and Pa. 8.74 (the third temple of Apollo at Delphi). On the destruction of the Achaean wall in *Il.* 12.13-33, which might have been Pindar's model for Olympian 8, cf. Nagy (1979) 159 and Ford (1992) 146-152.

36 Likewise, Olympian 4 portrays song metonymically through the *kômos* as the most enduring light: Οὐλυμπιονίκαν/ δέξαι Χαρίτων θ' ἕκατι τόνδε κῶμον/ χρονιώτατον φάος εὐρυσθενέων ἀρετᾶν (8-10). Nowhere in the extant Pindaric corpus is the adjective *chrónios*, in the sense of «lasting», applied to anything other than song or fame: cf. P.3.115.

song, Pindar is claiming for his craft a potency that is utterly beyond the reach of the inert inscription on stone. The establishment of lasting fame is likewise symbolized by the setting up of a stele in Nemean 8, as Pindar rejects the temptation to call back the soul of the deceased Megas, father of the Aeginetan victor Deinis, but offers instead to erect a memorial for his clan, and calls his song a «stone of the Muses»: ὦ Μέγα, τὸ δ' αὖτις τεὰν ψυχὰν κομίξαι/ οὔ μοι δυνατόν· κενεὰν δ' ἐλπίδων χαῦνον τέλος·/ σεῦ δὲ πάτρᾳ Χαριάδαις τ' ἐλαφρὸν/ ὑπερεῖσαι λίθον Μοισαῖον (44-47)[37]. It is natural to suppose that the *líthos* of the Muses, just like the stone tablets inscribed with the names of athletic victors[38], contains a written message. However, we have already seen how Pindar defends epinikian song as more conspicuous than inscribed monuments in Nemean 4, further implying that it alone is capable of reaching the dead. Besides its endurance and visibility, the range of speech even extends to the underworld, and consequently the epinikia may on occasion directly address the deceased. It might seem an unusual gesture, but Pindar's stance is not at all unwarranted given the close ties of praise poetry to the genre of the funeral lament[39]; Olympian 8 shows him justifying it quite explicitly, and contrary to traditional literary renditions of the afterlife: ἔστι δὲ καὶ τι θανόντεσσιν μέρος/ κἀν νόμον ἐρδομένων·/ κατακρύπτει δ' οὐ κόνις/ συγγόνων κεδνὰν χάριν (77-80). It is the uniquely dynamic quality of the spoken word that can project it even across the great divide that separates the dead from the living. When Pindar asserts that the former somehow share in the praise that is bestowed either on them or on one of their kin, he is probably drawing his inspiration from the actual practices of private rituals conducted by the families of the deceased[40]. But in order to appreciate the novelty of

37 Cf. also I. 8.62, which likewise compares the ode to a *mnáma*, or stele.

38 Pindar mentions writing in connection with the recording of the names of victors at athletic contests in O.7. 87: ἐν Μεγάροισίν τ' οὐχ ἕτερον λιθίνα ψᾶφος ἔχει λόγον.

39 Thus Gianotti (1975) 130; Goldhill (1991) 124 comments on the evolving relationship between funeral commemoration, praise and fame in archaic Greece: «This epitaph (Simonides fr. 362 P), then, demonstrates clearly the poet's function in the construction and preservation of *kleos* for mighty martial deeds. What has changed in the context of the *polis* is the conditions of the possibility of fame. Now a 'noble death', which makes possible the destiny of a 'fine fame' and even heroic status, depends on fighting in and for the collectivity of the state». For funeral ideology and praise in classical Athens, cf. Loraux (1981).

40 Pindar´s most explicit statement regarding the participation of the deceased in epinikian celebration is P.5.96-103. For the ritual practices involved in the cult of the dead, cf. Rohde (1966)

his claim, surprising as it is in a poet concerned with the praise of limits as much as the limits of praise[41], we need only consider the bleak picture of the afterlife prevalent in the traditional epic and lyric lamentations of human mortality[42]. It is in the light of such innovative statements that we can glimpse the exalted status which Pindar attributes to his calling as an encomiastic poet.

SONG AND WRITING

The predominantly negative overtones conveyed by this inscriptional imagery reveal Pindar´s concern regarding the fate of his creation once the initial performance is over. His exhortation to Xenokrates in Isthmian 2 not to let his song lie idle manifests a logical anxiety over the predicament of poetry in a literate environment. As a written text, the delivery of a poem no longer requires its author´s physical presence. It can be shipped abroad, and lies in danger of becoming merely another commodity, stored as a family heirloom, and soon forgotten and thus deprived of its essential power which lies in repeated performance. A written poem enjoys no better fortune than a statue or an inscription: although not completely fixed in space, it too has to passively await the appearance of a reader[43].

162-174, Kurtz and Boardman (1971), Vermeule (1979); for the practice of *choai*, cf. Burkert (1985) 190-94. Pindar's treatment of the matter is analyzed in Kurke (1991) 62-82.

41 Goldhill (1991).

42 Cf. Glaukos' comparison of the generations of men to leaves in *Il.* 6.146-9, echoed in Mimnermus fr. 2 and commented upon by Simonides fr. 85 (Bergk); further elaborations of this topic are Alcaeus 38a *L-P*, Ibycus 32 *PMG*, Anacreon 395 *PMG*.

43 Cf. O.3.29-30, where Eurystheus asks Herakles to bring back from the Danube a hind sacred to the goddess Artemis. The animal apparently carries the votive inscription on its body: χρυσόκερων ἔλαφον θέλειαν ἄξονθ', ἄν ποτε Ταυγέτα/ ἀντιθεῖσ' Ὀρθωσίας ἔγραψεν ἱεράν. Like the stone pebble of O.7.87, these uses of writing reflect a common motivation: the dedication of a memorial for either ritual purposes or the glorification of athletic achievement. Significantly, the written word serves in these passages to pass sentence of death or eternal life on its recipients. However, unlike the poet, neither the hind nor the stone tablet can speak out for themselves; they must carry their memorial inscribed on them if it is to survive their muteness. Even less favorable a picture of writing emerges from the proem to Olympian 10, where Pindar begins his song claiming forgetfulness —an essentially negative concept in the epinikian context— in an almost Platonic trope: Τὸν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν ἀνάγνωτέ μοι/ Ἀρχεστράτου παῖδα, πόθι φρενός/ ἐμᾶς γέγραπται· γλυκὺ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέλος ὀφείλων ἐπιλέλαθ' (O.10.1-3). Although Pindar asserts it is the commission, not the written name, that he has forgotten, the implication quite naturally follows that writing was to some extent responsible for his forgetfulness. The famous Platonic denunciation of the deleterious effects of writing is in *Phaedrus* 274b-278b.

The evidence for either written, and therefore material, or oral composition of the epinikia is indirect. At most, we may infer from a number of oblique references that writing was used at some stage in the process in between the commissioning of the ode and its performance before the patron[44]. Thus Pythian 2 refers to sending the song overseas as if it were a piece of merchandise: τόδε μὲν κατὰ Φοίνσσαν ἐμπολὰν/ μέλος ὑπὲρ πολιᾶς ἁλὸς πέμπεται (P.2.66-67)[45]. Beyond this inference, little more can be argued. Even if we accept the foregoing interpretation of the crafted *húmnoi* of Isthmian 2 as an implicit reference to a written text[46], we cannot be certain at what stage in the transaction between poet and patron —comprising the commissioning, composition, and transmission of the ode— would writing come into play. However, what is clearly illustrated by all these citations is the ambiguity of Pindar´s response to the consequences of writing. While it is true that his poetics is based by and large on this «myth of presence»[47], which stresses the poet´s direct connection with divine inspiration, the conclusion to Isthmian 2 portrays him as conscious of the encroachment of writing upon the space that mediates between any performing poet and his audience. The possibility that *ergasáman* in Isthmian 2, 46 also indicates a written poem is supported by Pindar´s

44 Cf. Irigoin (1952).

45 Cf. Steiner (1993) 179-180: «Mullen [*Choreia. Pindar and Dance* (1982) 29-31] rightly cautions that the term πέμπω can mean to escort as well as to send, and may describe the poet accompanying his verse. But an escort is bound ultimately to leave the thing he brings». On the alleged travels of poet and song, cf. also Tedeschi (1985). In a different context, Medea´s long speech in Pythian 4 has also been explained as implicitly referring to written words: ἦ ῥα Μηδείας ἐπέων στίχες, ἔπταξαν δ' ἀκίνητοι σιωπᾷ/ ἥροες ἀντίθεοι πυκινὰν μῆτιν κλύοντες (57-58). Commenting on the passage, Charles Segal interpreted the expression «ranks of words», however tentatively, as reflecting the image of written lines of text: «Medea´s speech begins as a 'pneumatological' voice, conveying the full force of divine presence and divine will. It then re-emerges as 'grammatological' in the 'ranks' of her utterances, which, while not explicitly meaning 'verses', can imply the linear form of written words» (Segal (1986) 153). Nevertheless, the same term occurs later in the ode, this time designating deep-sounding winds: δίδυμαι γὰρ ἔσαν ζωαί, κυλινδέσκοντό τε κραιπνότεραι/ ἢ βαρυγδούπων ἀνέμων στίχες (P.4.209-210). Thus, if we insist on associating the material content of this metaphor with a specific poetic model, it could be argued that the idea of 'rank' applies as much to the 'grammatological' as it does to the 'pneumatological': Pindar´s *stíches* may equally represent written words or rumbling winds. Segal (*o.c.*, 155, n. 5) does acknowledge the presence of ἀνέμων στίχες in line 210, but insists on the image of written lines of text for line 58.

46 I.2.44-46; cf. p. 9, *supra*.

47 Segal (1986) 158; Goldhill (1991) 70 speaks of the «assumption, common throughout early Greek writing, that presence is a prerequisite of accurate knowledge»; cf. *Il.*2.484-487, *Od.* 8.487-491.

request to a certain Nikasippos to impart it to Xenokrates, the victor in the chariot race, to whom it is dedicated: ταῦτα, Νικάσιππ', ἀπόνειμον, ὅταν/ ξεῖνον ἐμὸν ἠθαῖον ἔλθῃς (47-48). Although the verb *aponémo* need not necessarily imply reading or writing, the request explicitly breaks the ideal effect of direct presence which inspires the poet's stance in most odes.

Still, an ode like Nemean 6 embodies a substantially positive attitude towards writing, developing its image into a metaphor that encompasses the activity of both the poet and the victor's family. It is first mentioned in the introduction, in connection with the features which set mortals apart from the gods. The Olympian deities enjoy an undisturbed existence forever, but mortals are subject to an uncertain destiny: καίπερ ἐφαμερίαν οὐκ εἰδότες οὐδὲ μετὰ νύκτας/ ἄμμε πότμος/ ἄντιν' ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν (6-7). If the expression *státhman gráphein* refers to writing, then it fulfills a double function in conveying the decrees of fate: it expresses their steadfast authority, but it also withholds knowledge of their contents from men (*ouk eidótes*). Inscrutable like the designs of the gods, writing eludes the comprehension of mortals.

The precise meaning of *státhma* in the above passage has caused some debate[48]. The traditional reading, that men run unawares towards the end of their lives, combines the imagery of two other passages of the odes. Pythian 9 contributes the idea of running towards a finishing line, in this case the mark where Antaios places his daughter as a prize for the fastest runner among her suitors: ποτὶ γραμμᾷ μὲν αὐτὰν στᾶσε κοσμήσαις, τέλος ἔμμεν ἄκρον (118). The finishing line for the race is called *grámma*, the same term that designates alphabetical letters: both the finish line and inscribed letters are marks scratched on a surface. Stoneman however argues that *státhma* means 'guideline' instead of 'finishing line', and concludes that the expression does not imply that men are ignorant of their destination, «but that they don't know, from one moment to the next, where they are going to have to turn: they are ἐπάμεροι, beings whose life, being out of their control, may at any moment suffer reversal»[49].

48 Cf. Stoneman (1979).

49 Stoneman (1979) 76. Cf. Theognis 945-46: εἶμι παρὰ στάθμην ὀρθὸν ὁδόν, where *státhma* describes a course of travel; also P.6.45, where Stoneman argues for πρός = along: τῶν

This interpretation agrees better with the imagery that infuses the ode. In lines 8-9, Pindar adduces the experience of the victor Alkimidas as proof that the generations of men show their virtue in ways similar to corn fields that yield fruit and lie fallow on alternate years: τεκμαίρει δὲ καί νυν Ἀλκιμίδας τὸ συγγενὲς ἰδεῖν/ ἄγχι καρποφόροις ἀρούραισιν. The idea of confirmation is then complemented by the image of progressing along well-established tracks. Line 13 shows Alkimidas following the destiny allotted to him by Zeus: ταύταν μεθέπων Διόθεν αἶσαν. As if to emphasize the gesture, the next verses portray him as duly following in his grandfather's footsteps as well: ἴχνεσιν ἐν Πραξιδάμαντος ἑὸν πόδα νέμων (15).

The idea of following in others' footsteps is not unique to this poem[50]. What is remarkable, however, is that Pindar also represents himself as reiterating the course of earlier poets as he activates the glory of Alkimidas' family: καὶ ταῦτα μὲν παλαιότεροι/ ὁδὸν ἀμαξιτὸν εὗρον· ἕπομαι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔχων μελέταν (53-54). The image of this much-traveled path links the performances of poet and athlete by predicating a similar pattern of achievement for their respective endeavors. As Alkimidas has obtained his triumph, namely, by following a prescribed course of athletic training like his grandfather, so can Pindar effectively bestow praise on the new victor like the poets of old. The performance of both *laudandus* and *laudator* is thus presented as a successful recreation of signs. They both retrace the careers of their predecessors, and this in turn enables them to reenact their accomplishments[51].

Furthermore, the tracks of Nemean 6 are reminiscent of the grammatological *stíches* of Pythian 4. Pindar's insistence on material tracks in this ode suggests that rather than operating exclusively within the pneumatological model of direct presence and inspiration, he does not eschew the distinctive potency of the written word. Nemean 6 combines both speech and grammatological metaphor within a short span, in a programmatic request to the Muse: εὔθυν' ἐπὶ τοῦτον,

νῦν δὲ καὶ Θρασύβουλος πατρῴαν μάλιστα πρὸς στάθμαν ἔβα. On the meaning of *ephémeros*, cf. Fränkel (1946); *contra*, Dickie (1976).

50 Cf. P.8.35-36: παλαισμάτεσσι γὰρ ἰχνεύων ματραδελφεούς/ Οὐλυμπίᾳ τε Θεόγνητον οὐ κατελέγχεις, and again in P.10.12: τὸ δὲ συγγενὲς ἐμβέβακεν ἴχνεσιν πατρός.

51 On the uses of such markers (*sémata*) in Homer, cf. Nagy (1990b) 202-221.

ἄγε, Μοῖσα,/ οὖρον ἐπέων/ εὐκλέα·παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων,/ ἀοιδαὶ καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλά σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν·/ Βασσίδαισιν ἅ τ' οὐ σπανίζει, παλαίφατος γενεά,/ ἴδια ναυστολέοντες ἐπικώμια, Πιερίδων ἀρόταις,/ δυνατοὶ παρέχειν πολὺν ὕμνὸν ἀγερώχων/ ἔνεκεν (28-34). The pneumatological inspires several of these tropes. It is first evoked in the address to the Muse, especially in the breath of song which she is requested to direct upon the Bassidai; secondly, their clan is exalted as the object of renown and song from the days of old (*palaíphatos*); and thirdly, a few lines later Pindar celebrates another Aiginetan clan, the mythical Aiakids, to whom he attributes the highest distinction that oral poetry can bestow, the possession of «winged fame»[52].

The ensuing praise of the Bassidai resorts to shipping and agricultural metaphors to indicate the treasury of poetic praise earned by this family's exploits. As we have seen, references to merchandising in the epinikia can suggest either an oral or written format for Pindar's work[53]. Nevertheless, the epithet «ploughmen of the Pierides» applied to poets suggests, especially in the light of the preceding discussion of the significance of terms like *státhma* and *grámma*, that Pindar is playing again with the connotations of the grammatological model[54]. Men's fates run along a prescribed course; thus Alkimidas can follow his grandfather's guiding footsteps on his way to athletic excellence. Likewise, the achievements of the Bassidai clan have been celebrated by earlier «ploughmen of the Pierides»; if the generations of men are like fields of corn, presumably these poetic ploughmen have 'cultivated' the Bassidai in like manner to digging furrows into the earth. We have already seen that the same Greek word, *grámma*, can denote either letters or marks scratched on the earth; likewise, fate writes down (*égrapse*) the line (*státhma*) along which mortal lives run. Thus, both the language and the imagery of Nemean 6 strongly suggest that Pindar is referring here to written poems of praise composed by his

52 In the form of a name that flies: πλατεῖαι πάντοθεν λογίοισιν ἐντὶ πρόσοδοι/ νᾶσον εὐκλέα τάνδε κοσμεῖν· ἐπεί σφιν Αἰακίδαι/ ἔπορον ἔξοχον αἶσαν ἀρετὰς ἀποδεικνύμενοι μεγάλας,/ πέταται δ' ἐπί τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσας τηλόθεν/ ὄνυμ' αὐτῶν (N.6.45-49).

53 Written: P.2.67-68; oral: N.5.1-3; cf. pp. 66 and 70, *supra*.

54 Agricultural metaphors for poetry also occur in Pythian 6: 'Ακούσατ'· ἦ γὰρ ἑλικώπιδος 'Αφροδίτας ἄρουραν ἢ Χαρίτων ἀναπολίζομεν (1-3), and Nemean 10: (Theaios) Μοίσαισί τ' ἔδωκ' ἀρόσαι (26).

predecessors. But once again, the extent of his involvement with writing is uncertain: whether his claim to follow in the footsteps of encomiastic precursors justifies the assumption that he too wrote down Nemean 6, and whether we are to suppose that he read these old poems of praise, and perhaps even used them as models, just as the young Alkimidas imitated in his actions the pattern of his grandfather's exploits, are questions we can only speculate about. What must be clear, however, is that Pindar does not invariably represent writing as threatening or even foreign to his poetic program[55].

THE SURVIVAL OF SONG

But besides the indirect evidence afforded by the allusive imagery that suffuses Nemean 6, there is one further connection which allows Pindar to negotiate a compromise between the oral and written paradigms, thereby integrating the latter into his oral poetics while still preserving the privileged potency he claims for transmission by word of mouth. As several studies have shown, the epinikion is closely connected to funerary cults in its origins and ends. On the one hand, praise poetry is related to the dirge in its genealogy and also draws much inspiration from the local cults of the heroes commemorated in the games[56]. On the other hand, and like much preceding poetry, the victory ode also presents itself as a remedy against death and oblivion, through the reviving glory it professes to confer on its recipients. Although primarily composed as a secular hymn to celebrate manly vigor, the virtues of aristocratic lineages, and the festive brilliance surrounding their test and confirmation through athletic competition,

[55] Two further references to writing exist in the extant odes. The first occurs in Olympian 13, if we accept the proposed emendation of A. Wasserstein whereby ἀγγνώσομαι, «I shall read» should be substituted for the problematic γνώσομαι, «I shall make known», in line 3. The text then reads: Τρισολυμπιονίκαν/ ἐπαινέων οἶκον ἥμερον ἀστοῖς,/ ξένοισι δὲ θεράποντ', ἀγγνώσομαι/ τὰν ὀλβίαν Κόρινθον Ἰσθμίου/ πρόθυρον Ποτειδᾶνος, ἀγλαόκουρον· (1-5). Parallels for the public proclamation of the names of the victor and his city are found in P.1.30-32, O.5.8, P.10.9, and I.2.23; cf. Wasserstein (1982) 278-80. The second instance is O.1.103-5: πέποιθα δὲ ξένον/ μή τιν' ἀμφότερα καλῶν τε ἴδριν ἅμα καὶ δύναμιν κυριώτερον/ τῶν γε νῦν κλυταῖσι δαιδαλωσέμεν ὕμνων πτυχαῖς, where the *ptykhaí* of song might contain an allusion to a written format, as in Aeschylus *Suppl.* 946-9 (cf. n. 14, *supra*).

[56] Thus Aristotle (*Poetics* 48b18, 24-30) located epic in the tradition of praise poetry. On the connections between the genres of epic, praise and lament poetry, Nagy (1979) 176-177; on those between hero cults and archaic Greek poetry, cf. Nagy (1979), Burkert (1985), Nagy (1990a).

the epinikion still echoes the traditional meditations of Greek poetry on the significance of human life and the burdens of human mortality[57]. If, among other things, passing away entails ceasing to speak and to be spoken of in one´s community, Pindar offers his patrons a memorial similar in kind to the athletic contests celebrated at the shrines of heroes: they may continue to receive homage through public performance every time their victory ode is recited. The privileged power of oral poetry to keep fame alive is a recurrent trope in Pindar´s poetry: a good reputation survives first in the speech of the community, whence poets collect it and elevate it to Panhellenic fame[58].

But perhaps the most eloquent testimony to the central role assigned to speech in Pindar´s poetics lies in those passages in which the spoken word functions as the distinctive sign of life and physical presence. In this vein, Olympian 13 tells the story of Bellerophon´s invention of the bridle through the agency of Athena, who appears to the hero in his sleep. At first she seems a dream, but soon her apparition is revealed as real. What prompts Bellerophon´s recognition of Athena is her voice, which Pindar proceeds to relay in direct speech, as the hero must have heard it: ἐξ ὀνείρου αὐτίκα/ ἦν ὕπαρ, φώνασε δ'· «Εὔδεις Αἰολίδα βασιλεῦ» (66-67)[59]. Furthermore, as David Young has made clear[60], Nemean 10 extends and fully exploits this motif. When Zeus grants Polydeukes the option of recalling his dead brother to life for one half of every year, the hero revives Kastor by inverting the steps of the

57 Since Homer, the traditional response of Greek poetry to the limits of mortality —first embodied in statements by the heroes of the epic poems, then in the claims of the lyric poets themselves— was the pursuit of *kleos*: cf. Sarpedon's speech in *Il.* 12.322-328, Ibycus fr. 1.47-48, Theognis 237-254. Pindar himself calls the Argonauts' expedition «a *phármakon* for their youth, even at the cost of death» (P.4.186-7) and asserts their success in procuring *kleos* (P.4.174). This motif, often embodied in pithy gnomes, is usually advanced in order to stress the need for epinikian celebration (cf. P.8.88-97; N.11.13-18). Nemean 4 calls the victory ode «the best doctor of pains», alluding first to the physical exertion involved in wrestling (1-5), then to the transience of human achievement, overcome by the mediation of poetry (6-8). For a general treatment of fame in Greek poetry, cf. Maehler (1963) and Goldhill (1991); for Pindar, cf. Duchemin (1955) 267-334, Lloyd-Jones (1985), Steiner (1986) 122-135.

58 P.1.92-93: ὀπιθόμβροτον αὔχημα δόξας/ οἷον ἀποιχομένων ἀνδρῶν δίαιταν μανύει καὶ λογίοις καὶ ἀοιδοῖς. A similar process is outlined in Olympian 11: εἰ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ τις εὖ πράσσοι, μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι/ ὑστέρων ἀρχὰ λόγων/ τέλλεται καὶ πιστὸν ὅρκιον μεγάλαις ἀρεταῖς (O.11.4-6). P.3.112-115 alludes to the Homeric poems as instances of this stream of *kleos*.

59 On the difference between *óneiros* and *húpar*, cf. *LSJ s.vv.*

60 Young (1982) 174.

typical family funeral ritual, first opening his eyes and then restoring his voice: ὣς ἄρ' αὐδάσαντος οὐ γνώμᾳ διπλόαν θέτο βουλάν,/ ἀνὰ δ' ἔλυσεν μὲν ὀφθαλμόν, ἔπειτα δὲ φωνὰν χαλκομίτρα Κάστορος (89-90). Here, Kastor's recovery of his voice is what signals his return to life. It is also a fitting parallel of what Pindar professes to do on behalf of his *laudandus*. Like the mythic hero, and like all mortals, the patrons and athletes celebrated in the epinikia are condemned to pass away and thereby lose their voice. The poet cannot grant pure immortality, nor bring back from the dead those who have left this world[61]; but by bestowing memorable praise on his patrons he is in effect endowing them with a voice that, like Kastor's, can be revived even after death.

In the end, it is in this connection between song and life, which presents the spoken word as a sign of vitality and physical presence, that Pindar is able to strike a compromise between the oral and the written as vehicles for praise. Olympian 6 expressly alludes to writing in the metaphor that describes the role of the epinikian chorus leader. As the ode approaches its conclusion, Pindar addresses Aineas[62]:

> ὄτρυνον νῦν ἑταίρους,
> Αἰνέα, πρῶτον μὲν Ἥραν Παρθενίαν κελαδῆσαι,
> γνῶναί τ' ἔπειτ', ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ἀλαθέσιν
> λόγοις εἰ φεύγομεν, Βοιωτίαν ὗν. ἐσσὶ γὰρ ἄγγελος ὀρθός,
> ἠυκόμων σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν, γλυκὺς κρατὴρ ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν
>
> O.6.87-91

Despite our acquired tolerance for such Pindaric impromptus, now accepted as a rhetorical, if somewhat eccentric, feature of his style, this proclamation still constitutes a most surprising trope: usually, break-offs create the effect of a poet who improvises as he sings[63], but this passage seems to run contrary to and even undermine that notion, implying as it does that the author of the ode is not present at its

61 Cf. Pythian 3 and Pythian 10, as analyzed in Young (1969) and Rose (1992).

62 In fact, the poet's praise of his *laudandus* entails a privilege beyond the reach of ancestral heroes, as explained by Pòrtulas (1985) 212: «L'éxaltation des héros n'est possible qu' après leur mort, tandis que certaines mortels ont le privilège d' y atteindre avant», in line with his previous claim that «l' épinicie offre à un homme l' expérience singulière d entendre, de son vivant, comment sa renomée agira après sa mort».

63 This is, in fact, the effect caused by the preceding lines: δόξαν ἔχω τιν' ἐπὶ γλῶσσᾳ λιγυρᾶς ἀκόνας,/ ἃ μ' ἐθέλοντα προσέρπει καλλιρόαισι πνοαῖς (O.6.82-83).

performance. First, Aineas is called a «truthful messenger»[64]; then, he is termed a *skytála.* Taken separately, neither instance necessarily entails that Aineas had been dispatched by Pindar to perform the ode in his absence; but their joint occurrence strengthens the impression that such an eventuality was contemplated at some point or other, and the poem's concluding lines do mention a future journey to Syracuse, home of its *laudandus*[65]. According to *LSJ,* the *skytála* was «a staff or baton, used as a cypher for writing dispatches: a strip of leather was rolled slantwise round it, on which the dispatches were written lengthwise, so that when unrolled they were unintelligible: commanders abroad had a staff of like thickness, round which they rolled these papers, and so were able to read the dispatches»[66]. By playing with the original sense of *skytála*, Pindar´s metaphor assimilates writing, while yet revealing its ambiguous status in a semi-literate society: it can both communicate and conceal. On the other hand, the metaphor points to a shared code between the poet and those who know, the *sophoí*, and can adequately receive his message; furthermore, the *skytála* image seems to posit a corresponding, non-verbal fitting device, which in this case would be the social status of those who share in the celebration of epinikian poetry: not simply the *sophoí*, but the *agathoí* and *phíloi* as well[67]. But the address to Aineias also opens a new angle on the representation of the authorial voice in the epinikia; when Pindar asks him about the audience´s response and entrusts him with the proper transmission of the epinikion, he portrays the *choregós* as a proxy for the poet and a mediator between the author and his listeners. The stream of song, then, cascades down a hierarchical course: from Pindar to chorus-leader, and thence to both patron and audience. However, as reflected in this

64 On ὀρθός, «straight», as a metaphor for «true» in archaic Greek poetry, cf. Goldhill (1991) 162.

65 O.6.98-105.

66 *LSJ s.v.* σκυτάλη. Surprisingly, the meaning given for Pindar´s usage is «message», which confuses signifier and signified. Slater (1969a) 467 gives a basic meaning of «message stick», from which is derived the metaphorical meaning «message bringer». On Archilochus' fr. 188 T, which likewise calls its addressee a *skytále,* cf. Gentili (1985) 20 and n. 77.

67 Nagy (1990a) 148. Cf. Nagy (1979) 240: «Only those who can understand (the **sunetoí**) can deliver or hear the message of praise»; the enabling bond that determines who can and cannot understand the exclusive message of praise poetry is represented by «the ties that bind **phíloi hetaîroi** together» (*o. c.,* 241). Cf. O.2. 85, P.5.107, Bacch. 3.85, and Theognis 681-682: ταῦτά μοι ἠνίχθω κεκρυμμένα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν/ γινώσκοι δ' ἄν τις καὶ κακὸς ἂν σοφὸς ἦ.

sequence, the integration of writing only comes at the cost of breaking the ideal effect of direct presence. The address to Aineas, like the injunction to Nikasippos to impart the song to Xenokrates at the end of Isthmian 2, implies that, even as he witnesses the public performance of his hymn of praise, the patron is already at one remove from the original source of song. In the ultimate analysis, what Pindar sacrifices in these tropes is no more and no less than the effect of improvised oral composition of epinikion; but what he gains thereby is the effect of direct transmission of song by word of mouth. Such passages, then, exemplify the ideal manner in which Pindar implies song should be transmitted between men and thus preserved for all time to come: not inscribed on an inert material object, however 'speaking' it may be, but entrusted instead to a living and mindful messenger, whose name is in turn 'inscribed' into the victory ode as a sign of this successful transmission[68].

M. J. SCHMID

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68 In this same spirit, Ford (1992)167 comments on the different representations of fame in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and based on the latter's episode at the cave of the Nymphs affirms: «Its hero's *kleos* will not be carried in any tomb, however splendid, but is already reaching heaven as its hero lives and moves and extends it himself; his fame resides in performance and action, not inscription».

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