"Something Like the Gods": A Pindaric Theme and the Myth of *Nemean* 10

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τοὺς ἄμφω ζωοὺς κατέχει φυσίζοος αἶα·
οἳ καὶ νέρθεν γῆς τιμὴν πρὸς Ζηνὸς ἔχοντες
ἄλλοτε μὲν ζώουσ' ἑτερήμεροι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
τεθνᾶσι. τιμὴν δὲ λελόγχασιν ἶσα θεοῖσι. (*Od.* 11.301–04)

Pindar's Tenth *Nemean* ends with the myth in which Polydeuces chooses, over perpetual immortal life for himself, to share his brother's mortality: to live—and to be dead—on alternate days, as in the Homeric version quoted above. Probably no other Pindaric myth receives such unrestrained praise. The following are typical comments: "This story is one of the most impressive narratives in Pindar.... No paraphrase could do justice to the nobility of Pindar's narrative" (Race); "Es ist Pindars schönste Erzählung" (Wilamowitz); "[C]e mythe est fort beau...." (Puech); "the noblest example of Dorian poetry ever written.... [Pindar] has nowhere else attained this perfection of austere beauty" (Norwood).[1] And yet Pindaric scholars have never reached general agreement on the purpose or meaning of this myth. Specific interpretations differ greatly.

Merkelbach, among more recent interpreters, sees it as an aetiological illustration of the origin of the Spartan *Dioscuria,* games held in honor of the brothers.[2] Stern claims the myth demonstrates "the communication which exists between the world of men and the world of the divine."[3] For Maurach,

[1] W. Race, *Pindar* (Boston 1986) 112; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindarus* (Berlin 1922) 428; A. Puech, ed., *Pindare,* III. *Néméenes* (Paris 1923) 128; G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkely 1945) 70 (comparing this myth to the "Aeginetan marbles"). *Cf.* K. Fehr, *Die Mythen bei Pindar* (Zürich 1936) 137.

[2] R. Merkelbach, "Der Anlass zu Pindars zehnter Nemea," *Le mond grec. Hommages à C. Préaux* (Brussels 1975) 94–101.

[3] J. Stern, "The Myths of Pindar's *Nemean* 10," *GRBS* 10 (1969) 125–32 at 125 with 129ff.

following Bury, the main point of the myth is to predict a successful outcome of the victor's prayer for an Olympic victory (29–33); as Zeus fulfills Polydeuces' prayer, so he will fulfill Theaios'.[4] Some have thought that the myth is intended to give a model of brotherly love. Others argue that it is meant to validate the principle expressed in 54, καὶ μὰν θεῶν πιστὸν γένος.[5] Still others find the myth out of place here. Carne-Ross suggests that Pindar would never have chosen this subject for an Argive victor; but his victor-patron, Theaios, prescribed its use because of a tradition in his family's history.[6]

In a somewhat marginal comment Carne-Ross suggests that Pindar may have seen some poetic meaning in the myth, as a by-product of his compulsory assignment. He imagines the poet musing on how the Dioscuri "combine mortal and immortal." "It [the myth]," Pindar thinks to himself, "applies to the victor in a way. Like this.... The Twins—originally one mortal, the other immortal, now both half-mortal for ever. The victor—mortal, but with the shine of immortality that's on every victor."[7] I wish to pursue this mortal/immortal idea further, by suggesting that its application to the victor may even be the principal import of the myth; that Pindar may have chosen this myth for this illustrative literary purpose.

[4] G. Maurach, "Pindars Religiosität in Nem. 10," in D. M. Kriel, ed., *Pro munere grates. Studies Presented to H. L. Gonin* (Pretoria 1971) 117–21; J. B. Bury, *Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 194f, also thought Zeus' granting Polydeuces' wish a harbinger of his granting Theaios' wish for an Olympic victory.

[5] Brotherly love: Puech (*supra* n.1) 129; C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: Nemean and Isthmian Odes* (Cambridge 1899) 120; trustworthiness of the gods: Wilamowitz (*supra* n.1) 429; F. Nisetich, tr., *Pindar's Victory Songs* (Baltimore 1980) 280f. F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 463, 469, combines those two. There are still other interpretations of the myth. K. Crotty, *Song and Action: Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore 1982) 77f, seems, for example, to regard Polydeuces' devotion to Castor as paradigmatic of the epinician poet's devotion to his patron. The myth of *Nem.* 10 has always led to a variety of unrelated interpretations rather than consensus.

[6] D. S. Carne-Ross, *Pindar* (New Haven 1985: hereafter 'Carne-Ross') 80ff. After "several days simply strolling through the streets" of Argos, Carne-Ross imagines, Pindar had dinner with the family and suddenly found himself saddled with telling a myth of the Dioscuri. The style of biographical fabrication here is remininscent of Wilamowitz, with whom Carne-Ross reveals guarded but obvious sympathy (11f, 75, 166 n.). R. Lattimore, *Odes of Pindar*[2] (Chicago 1976) 166, terms the choice of a Spartan myth "curious" for an Argive ode.

[7] Carne-Ross 82f; but see also n.15 *infra*.

Although archaic Greeks were aware of mortal and immortal aspects of such heroes of myth as Herakles and the Dioscuri, they rarely suggest this combination in contemporary historical figures. But the notion of posthumous fame as a successful counter to death occasionally did, in fact, bring out this very theme as a kind of oxymoron and metaphor. Thus Tyrtaeus says of the warrior who dies bravely in battle, οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ γῆς περ ἐὼν γίνεται ἀθάνατος.[8] So also Simonides sees the fame of some warriors (probably those who fell at Plataea) in the same hyperbolic way: οὐδὲ τεθνᾶσι θανόντες, ἐπεὶ σφ᾽ ἀρετὴ καθύπερθεν κυδαίνοισ᾽ ἀνάγει δώματος ἐξ ᾽Αίδεω.[9] These are strong expressions to be applied to contemporaries, hardly less vivid than Homer's ζώουσι ... τεθνᾶσι (of the Dioscuri). Pindar's patrons have not fallen in battle, but he often presents his athletic victor's achievements as parallel to those of the warrior, especially if the patron, as Theaios in *Nem.* 10, has won in a combative event.[10]

Although critics have studied the Dioscuri myth in the context of *Nem.* 10, they have neglected its place in the Pindaric corpus as a whole. And they have missed the significance of the myth's final sentence (90, ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἔλυσεν μὲν ὀφθαλμόν, ἔπειτα δὲ φωνὰν χαλκομίτρα Κάστορος), where culture as much as syntax dictates that the subject be Castor's brother, giving the myth its relevance and poetic force.[11] I begin with a review of the epinician context of the myth and will return to the problem of line 90.

[8] Tyrtaeus 12 West (9 Diehl, Prato), 31f.

[9] Simon. 9 Page (121D), 3f. Like other Simonidean epigrams, this one is often casually rejected as spurious and dated later than Pindar. But J. H. Molyneux, *Simonides: A Historical Study* (Chicago 1992), follows Page and regards this poem as genuine and "no doubt written ... in autumn 479 or winter 479–8" (197).

[10] See D. C. Young, *Pindar Isthmian 7, Myth and Exempla* (=*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 15 [Leiden 1971]) 39–43.

[11] Failure to grasp the implication of that last sentence has even led some scholars to take Zeus as the grammatical subject of ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἔλυσεν. G. Huxley, *Pindar's Vision of the Past* (Belfast 1975) 21, still follows J. Sandys, *Odes of Pindar* (London 1946 [Loeb edn: 1915]) 425, Fennell (*supra* n.5: *ad loc.*), and a scholiast (168a Drachmann) in making Zeus the subject.

I

Pindar several times reminds his audience pointedly that the victors are not gods. His comments are significant and concern a complex set of social attitudes and literary motifs. *Ol.* 5.23f flatly states that the victor can be no god: ὑγιέντα δ' εἶ τις ὄλβον ἄρδει ἐξαρκέων κτεάτεσσι καὶ εὐλογίαν προστιθείς, μὴ ματεύσῃ θεὸς γενέσθαι. So also at *Isthm.* 5.7–11 Pindar praises the athletes who have won κλέος, χερσὶ ... ἢ ταχυτᾶτι ποδῶν,[12] and continues (12–15):

> δύο δέ τοι ζωᾶς ἄωτον μοῦνα ποιμαίνοντι τὸν
> ἄλπιστον, εὐανθεῖ σὺν ὄλβῳ
> εἴ τις εὖ πάσχων λόγον ἐσλὸν ἀκούῃ.
> μὴ μάτευε Ζεὺς γενέσθαι· πάντ' ἔχεις,
> εἴ σε τούτων μοῖρ' ἐξίκοιτο καλῶν.

As the final sentence shows, these passages are not real warnings or rebukes. Rather, they are highly complimentary statements, something like beatitudes, that Pindarists recognize as elements of the *ne plus ultra* theme. This theme states that the victor has reached the pinnacle of human achievement, beyond which no one can go.[13] The main point is always congratulatory praise. But the compliment necessarily cuts the other way as well: it reminds Pindar's patrons they are indeed mortal and will die like all humans.

But Pindar does say that mortals—his patrons—can be god-*like*. He begins *Nem.* 6 by drawing a line between the race of gods and the race of men.

> Ἓν ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
> ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
> δύναμις, ὡς τὸ μὲν οὐδέν, ὁ δὲ
> χάλκεος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἕδος
> μένει οὐρανός. ἀλλά τι προσφέρομεν ἔμπαν ἢ μέγαν
> νόον ἤτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις....

[12] The phrase seems to derive from *Od.* 8.147f, οὐ μὲν γὰρ μεῖζον κλέος ... ἢ ὅ τι ποσσίν τε ῥέξῃ καὶ χερσὶν ἧσιν.

[13] Variations of this crucial thematic line, 'don't seek to be god', are other cases of human limitation: 'you can't go beyond the Pillars of Herakles'; and so on. See E. Thummer, *Pindar, Isthmischen Gedichte* I (Heidelberg 1968) 67–81; Young (*supra* n.10) 28f with n.94; W. H. Race, *Style and Rhetoric in Pindar's Odes* (Atlanta 1990) 191–95.

The powers of the two races are wholly different—so that we are nothing, while the gods live forever in a safe heavenly seat.[14] But Pindar adds, as a counter to this pessimistic, nihilistic view of man, ἀλλὰ ... ἔμπαν ("But, nevertheless, we can be something *like* the gods through greatness, either of mind or of body"). Pindar then points to his patron, Alkimidas, as a concrete example. The same pessimism is countered by a similar optimism in one of Pindar's best known passages, *Pyth.* 8.95ff, where the pessimism of ἐπάμεροι ... σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος is quickly and strongly countered with ἀλλ' ὅταν αἴγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ, λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰών.

Pindar's business is to capture that brief moment of "the god-given gleam" and "the brilliant light"—the brief moment when his athletes are "something like the gods"—and make it permanent, immortalize it in song. If those moments when a man is something like the gods disappear, he ends as nothing and "has breathed in vain."[15] But if the poet fixes those moments in the eternal scheme of things, then mortals can be more than mortal. They die but somehow live on. The forceful "stele of the Muses" in *Nem.* 8 seems something of a Pindaric metaphor for his song that allows a dead man to survive. For he offers it as a feasible alternative to the impossible attempt to return a dead man's soul to actual life:[16]

[14] The first sentence expresses the separation of the two races, not their union: see P. von Kloch-Kornitz, "Die religiöse Problematik in Pindars Nemea VI," *AuA* 10 (1961) 155–59.

[15] It is likely that *Pyth.* 8 and the words αἴγλα διόσδοτος ... λαμπρὸν φέγγος lie behind Carne-Ross' phrase (above) "the shine of immortality that's on every victor." But *Ol.* 10.91ff suggests that this shine is lost without the poet; therefore the shine of immortality is not "on every victor," only on those celebrated in song:

> καὶ ὅταν καλὰ ἔρξαις ἀοιδᾶς ἄτερ,
> Ἀγεσίδαμ', εἰς Ἀίδα σταθμόν
> ἀνὴρ ἵκηται, κενεὰ πνεύσαις ἔπορε μόχθῳ βραχύ τι τερπνόν.

[16] *Nem.* 8.44–47. Many recent editors print the emendation τ' ἐλαφρόν for τε λάβρον of the Mss. because λάβρος often occurs in pejorative contexts. With earlier editors, I accept the received reading, which was in the scholiast's text (he glosses εὔτονον, for which see LSJ): for the word ("loud, boisterous") is not pejorative in itself, and it gives the Muses' vocal stele just the proper contrast with the silence of an ordinary stone. *Cf. Nem.* 5.1–5, where Pindar's animated, mobile song is contrasted with another silent, stationary monument, the victor's statue. For Pindar's claim of preservative power in *Nem.* 8 see C. Carey, "Pindar's Eighth Nemean Ode," *PCPS* N.S. 22 (1976) 26–41, esp. 37f, and J. W. Day, "Rituals in Stone: Early Greek Grave Epigrams and Monuments," *JHS* 109 (1989) 16–28, esp. 23ff.

ὦ Μέγα, τὸ δ' αὖτις τέαν ψυχὰν κομίξαι
οὔ μοι δυνατόν· κένεᾶν δ' ἐλπίδων καῦνον τέλος·
σεῦ δὲ πάτρᾳ Χαριάδαις τε λάβρον ὑπερεῖσαι λίθον
Μοισαῖον....

II

These topics all bear generally on Carne-Ross' comment (*supra* 124), the question of the meaning of *Nem.* 10, and the Dioscuri myth with which it closes. Pindar's patron is Theaios, a wrestler from Argos and a prominent athlete.[17] The poem's tripartite structure is not the usual one. The first part briefly reviews Argive heroes of myth and past Argive glories;[18] there follows a central section that praises Theaios and his family, cataloguing their many athletic victories. The last part, more than a third of the poem (55–90), tells the myth about the Dioscuri. Pindar rarely places the myth at the end of the poem. He almost always returns to comment on the victor's present state, that part of the poem which Schadewaldt called the "zweite Siegerlob." But here, I shall later suggest, the "zweite Siegerlob" is contained in the myth itself.[19]

This myth reveals a typical Pindaric ring form. Before narrating his story, Pindar states the gist at the outset:[20] namely, that the Dioscuri have a life and a non-life, which alternate day by day (54–59); one day they spend with Zeus on Olympus, the next, in the underworld. Polydeuces, he says, chose (εἵλετο) that

[17] Besides the many victories that the catalogue mentions here, Pindar expresses a hope for an Olympic victory, too (22–36). The poem's occasion is not wholly clear. Most scholars assume that the victory celebrated is in the Argive Heraia, because those are the first games mentioned (22); but scholion 1a (Drachmann) notes that some ancients took the poem as a multiple epinician, celebrating several victories. Merkelbach (*supra* n.2) argues that the pertinent victory was in Sparta. The poem is arranged among the *Nemeans* not as a Nemean, of course, but as part of the "Nemean appendix" (J. Irigoin, *Histoire du text de Pindare* [Paris 1952] 33).

[18] *Cf. Isthm.* 7.1–23—which suggests that Theaios' achievements should be seen as the latest in the series of Argive glories just presented in *Nem.* 10.

[19] So also Carne-Ross (83), who saw the structural implications of this interpretation: "End there—no need for the usual return to the victor." For the term "zweite Siegerlob" see W. Schadewaldt, *Der Aufbau des pindarischen Epinikion* (Halle 1928) 284.

[20] See L. Illig, *Zur Form der pindarischen Erzählung* (Berlin 1932), and his explanation (esp. 57, 60) of the "κεφάλαιον."

state over being wholly a god (59, ἢ πάμπαν θεὸς ἔμμεναι). He then tells the tale. There are several earlier references to the Dioscuri's unusual status, and other versions of the basic myth.

The idea that the Dioscuri alternated daily between life and death appears first at *Od.* 11.301–04, the text that heads this paper. We may note the emphasis there on the honor that the Dioscuri enjoy, ἶσα θεοῖσι. Yet Homer's version is not Pindar's.[21] And Homer explicitly states that Tyndareus was the natural father of both Castor and Polydeuces (*Od.* 11.299f). Hesiod apparently claimed the opposite, that both were fathered by Zeus. But the *Cypria* apparently assigned the Dioscuri to separate parents, Castor to Tyndareus, Polydeuces to Zeus; that, at least, is the natural implication of the words Κάστωρ μὲν θνητός, θανάτου δὲ οἱ αἶσα πέπρωται αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἀθάνατος Πολυδεύκης.[22]

In the matter of the Dioscuri's parentage, Pindar clearly agrees with the *Cypria,* not with Homer or Hesiod. But his sources for their altercation with the Apharetidae are not wholly clear. In no other version is Polydeuces given the choice he has in Pindar. Whether original with him or not, Pindar makes Polydeuces' choice a grand focal point.[23] The Dioscuri are attacked by Idas

[21] Homer's text is odd, suggesting that the living and the dead states both occur below the ground (nothing is said of Olympus); so A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey II (Oxford 1989) *ad loc.* Some difficulty may result from the adaptation of common epic formulae to a special situation: see Heubeck.

[22] Hes. fr. 24 M.-W. (91 Rzach); *Cypria* fr. 6, p.120 in T. W. Allen, ed., *Homeri Opera* V (Oxford 1912). For Proclus' summary of the version in the *Cypria,* see p.103.

[23] Proclus' summary of the *Cypria* reports that Polydeuces kills both Idas and Lynkeus, καὶ Ζεὺς αὐτοῖς (Dioscuri) ἑτερήμερον νέμει τὴν ἀθανασίαν. He says nothing of Polydeuces' choice. Apollodorus' version of the tale (3.11.1=3.135ff Wagner) has Idas kill Castor; Polydeuces kills Lynkeus and Idas smites Polydeuces on the head with a rock (πέτρα), knocking him down in a daze (or is he "killed"; could σκοτόω here bear its modern Greek value, "kill"?). Zeus then slays Idas with a thunderbolt (as in Pindar) and carries Polydeuces up into heaven. But Polydeuces will not accept his immortality while his brother is dead, so Ζεὺς ἀμφοτέροις παρ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἐν θεοῖς εἶναι καὶ ἐν θνητοῖς (*sic*) ἔδωκε. That feature is similar to, but not the same as, Polydeuces' choice in Pindar. Perhaps Apollodorus and Pindar have a common, unknown antecedent: the motifs and vocabulary are often similar (*cf.* διώκων in both authors, and πέτρος/πέτρα). If Apollodorus is merely retelling Pindar's own version, he has garbled many details. Besides the discrepancies noted above, in Pindar both Idas and Lynkeus smite Polydeuces with their father's tombstone (πέτρος), but it has no effect; and the blow is struck to the chest, not the head.

and Lynkeus in a dispute over cattle. Idas deals Castor a mortal wound, then Polydeuces kills Lynkeus with his spear, and Idas falls to a thunderbolt from Zeus (60–71). Polydeuces, as he hears his brother's death-rattle (74), is overcome with grief and calls on Zeus. In tears he makes a poignant plea to Zeus, asking for his own death, too, if his beloved brother must die.

With surprising directness, Zeus answers Polydeuces' call. His voice booms out with three short, powerful words: ἔσσι μοι υἱός, "You are my son." But of Castor he says: τόνδε δ' ἔπειτα πόσις σπέρμα θνατὸν ματρὶ τεᾷ πελάσαις στάξεν ἥρως. Zeus then offers to make a deal with Polydeuces, giving him a truly amazing choice, a αἵρεσις (82) such as no one else before or after has ever had to make. "If you yourself wish to flee death and hated old age, live on Olympus with me and other gods, that is your lot. But if you really care so much about your brother, and mean to share everything equally with him, you may breathe half the time below the earth, the other half in the golden homes of heaven."

It is an astounding choice: permanent immortality or dying millions of deaths. Nor can we ignore the implication of the choice. If he chooses the second alternative, Polydeuces will awaken every morning realizing either that he is in the underworld, or that he must descend to it later that very day. And for this, he must give up eternal bliss. But Pindar gives the choice just two lines,[24] one of his most abrupt endings. When Zeus speaks, Polydeuces acts:

> ὣς ἄρ' αὐδάσαντος οὐ γνώμᾳ διπλόαν θέτο βουλάν,
> ἀνὰ δ' ἔλυσεν μὲν ὀφθαλμόν, ἔπειτα δὲ φωνὰν χαλκομίτρα
> Κάστορος.

"Polydeuces gave it no second thought, first he opened the eye, then the voice of bronze-armed Castor." End of poem.

Perhaps this abruptness contributes to the scholarly judgment that this myth has exceptional beauty. For the sudden end tends to leave the audience in quiet, dazzled contemplation of all the wonderful things it has just heard. But there is more. No commentator has noticed the full import of Pindar's words in this last line. They are not just something that the poet tossed off to say, 'Polydeuces brought Castor back to life'. Rather they are highly charged, full of cultural—even ritual—implications and

[24] Ovid might have worked Polydeuces' monumental choice for several paragraphs—or pages: *cf. Met.* 7.19–94, 8.462–512.

literary echoes, given that Polydeuces actually reverses the normal procedure by which Greeks tended to the fresh death of a loved one.

Probably the best known version appears in Plato's account of the death of Socrates (*Phd.* 118). After remarking "Crito, we owe a cock to Asklepios," Socrates forthwith dies and his eyes become fixed: καὶ ὃς τὰ ὄμματα ἔστησεν· ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Κρίτων <u>συνέλαβε</u> τὸ <u>στόμα</u> καὶ τοὺς <u>ὀφθαλμούς</u>. The sight of Socrates lying there dead, with his eyes wide open and his mouth agape, is not pretty. So Crito closes them as he should, for that was the standard Greek practice.

The ritual value of closing the eyes and mouth goes back to Homer. When Odysseus sees Agamemnon in the underworld, Agamemnon gives a stinging indictment of Clytemnestra. Not only did she kill him, but she also denied him the conventional procedure that a family member owes to the departed (*Od.* 11.424ff):

> ἡ δὲ κυνῶπις νοσφίσατ', οὐδέ μοι ἔτλη ἰόντι περ εἰς 'Αΐδαο
> χερσὶ <u>κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑλέειν σύν τε στόμ' ἐρεῖσαι</u>.

Od. 24.292–96 stresses that this ritual is indeed a debt owed by the surviving family and friends: Laertes, thinking Odysseus lost and gone forever, says,

> οὐδέ ἑ <u>μήτηρ</u> κλαῦσε περιστείλασα <u>πατήρ</u> θ' ... οὐδ' <u>ἄλοχος</u> ...
> κώκυσ' ἐν λεχέεσσιν ἑὸν πόσιν, ὡς ἐπεῴκει, <u>ὀφθαλμοὺς</u>
> <u>καθελοῦσα· τὸ γὰρ γέρας</u> ἐστὶ θανόντων.[25]

The same attitudes survive in modern Greece, where the mouth of the deceased is often held closed by a band wrapped around the jaw and over the top of the head. Sometimes the eyes are even sewn shut.[26]

Thus the end of *Nem.* 10 is rich with conventional notions, which Pindar reverses. Instead of closing his brother's eyes and mouth, Polydeuces opens them: ἀνὰ δ' ἔλυσεν μὲν ὀφθαλμόν,

[25] *Cf. Il.* 11.452–55: when Odysseus kills Sokos he boasts, ἆ δείλ', <u>οὐ</u> μὲν σοί γε <u>πατὴρ</u> καὶ πότνια <u>μήτηρ ὄσσε καθαιρήουσι θανόντι</u> περ, ἀλλ' οἰωνοὶ ὠμησταὶ ἐρύουσι, περὶ πτερὰ πυκνὰ βαλόντες. αὐτὰρ ἔμ', εἴ κε θάνω, κτεριοῦσί γε δῖοι 'Αχαιοί.

[26] See L. M. Danforth, *Death Rituals in Rural Greece* (Princeton 1982) pll. 3 ("his lower jaw bound shut with strips of white cloth") and 6. In a modern Greek funeral lament "the deceased prays for rain in order to rot the silk threads that were used to sew his eyes shut" (107; my thanks to Robert Wagman for this reference).

ἔπειτα δὲ φωνάν. And in a final masterly variation, Polydeuces does not open Castor's "mouth," but rather "releases his voice," φωνά, the vital proof that Castor is alive again.[27]

By this clear reference to a conventional ritual which, when reversed, partially reverses the hero's death, the myth underscores its immediate application, that is, Pindar's implicit claim that his present-day songs can reverse, in part, the deaths of present-day men. Carne-Ross: "It applies to the victor in a way"—a very concrete way. That is why Pindar could here forgo the return to the present situation and the "zweite Siegerlob," the final praise of the victor. All the high praise that is usually contained there this poem expresses implicitly in the final myth. Theaios, and other men like him, are something *like* the divine. Though mortal, they are something more than that. They live on. That, of course, contains a contradiction; but so too does the myth of the Dioscuri. And Pindar I think chose to present the half-life of a Dioscurus as a fitting, if rather exaggerated, symbol for the status of his athletic patrons, who achieve great things and are then celebrated and remembered in song.[28] They die and yet live on. Like Simonides' war-heroes οὐδὲ τεθνᾶσι θανόντες, or as Homer says of the Dioscuri, ζώουσι ... τεθνᾶσι.

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[27] An overly literal reading here may produce a difficulty: if a dead person's eyes and mouth are ordinarily open and need to be closed, Polydeuces would not need to open Castor's. Perhaps he "frees" them from an open, fixed state; or we are to imagine Castor as a co-operative near-corpse, who has already closed them on his own. But the point is the symbolic value of the ritual reversed, not the actual state of the dead hero's eyes and mouth.

[28] *Pyth.* 3 is Pindar's major statement of the theme of 'poetic immortality'. The Dioscuri serve as especially apt paradigms for the athletes, for they are known as the athletes *par excellence* of mythology. Pindar also closes *Pyth.* 11 with their example.