

# The Six Crowns at Pindar, *Isthmian* 1.10–12

*William H. Race*

Māτερ ἐμά, τὸ τεόν, χρύσασι Θήβα,  
πρᾶγμα καὶ ἀσχολίας ὑπέρτερον  
θήσομαι. μή μοι κραναὰ νεμεσάσαι  
Δᾶλος, ἐν ᾧ κέχυμαι.  
5 τί φίλτερον κεδνῶν τοκέων ἀγαθοῖς;  
εἴξον, ὦ Ἀπολλωνιάς· ἀμφοτερᾶν  
τοὶ χαρίτων σὺν θεοῖς ζεύξω τέλος,  
καὶ τὸν ἀκερσεκόμαν Φοῖβον χορεύων  
ἐν Κέῳ ἀμφιρύτα σὺν ποντίοις  
ἀνδράσιν, καὶ τὰν ἀλιερκέα Ἴσθμοῦ  
10 δειράδ'·

Mother of mine, Thebes of the golden shield,  
I shall put your concern above even my  
business obligations. Do not be angry with me,  
rocky Delos, on whose behalf I have been toiling:  
for what is dearer to good men than their beloved parents?  
Yield, island of Apollo; rest assured that god willing  
I shall combine the completion of both poems,  
not only by celebrating unshorn Phoebus  
on wave-washed Ceos with a chorus of seafaring  
men, but also the Isthmus' sea-girt ridge.

In these opening lines so thoroughly explicated by E. L. Bundy,<sup>1</sup> Pindar sets aside temporarily the commitments of business (*cf.* ἀσχολίας), the composition of a paean commissioned to be performed by a Cean chorus, in order to take up the affair (πρᾶγμα) of Theba, his mother. The καί (2), often neglected by modern translators,<sup>2</sup> adds an essential nuance to his tact of putting

<sup>1</sup> *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley 1962 [hereafter 'Bundy']) 36–48.

<sup>2</sup> Among them A. Puech, *Pindare: Isthmiques et fragments*<sup>3</sup> (Paris 1961) 20; R. Lattimore, *The Odes of Pindar* (Chicago 1947) 130; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 141; F. J. Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Odes* (Baltimore 1980) 294.

aside *even* so pressing a theme as Delos and Apollo, a god to whom he was particularly dedicated and on whose behalf he has been laboring (*cf.* κέχυμαι, 4). He then turns to the other "mother," Delos, whose interests are being slighted, and asks her not to be angered by the delay, thus creating a tension between Delos' potential irritation (νεμεσάσαι, 3) at being put second on the poet's agenda and her willingness to yield her place (εἶξον, 6) to a hometown theme.

In the first place he justifies his choice by a rhetorical question (5): τί φίλτερον κεδνῶν τοκέων ἀγαθοῖς; Every word in this gnomic question plays a rôle in the apology. The word φίλτερον appeals to a spirit of φιλία that surpasses mere business. The word ἀγαθοῖς points to the ethical code of the "noble,"<sup>3</sup> while τοκέων (strengthened by the affectionate κεδνῶν) cannot help but remind Delos of her own dutiful child, Apollo, a point that is made clear when he addresses her by her son's name, Ἀπολλωνιάς (6).<sup>4</sup>

He then assures her (τοι, 6) that both mothers will have their fair share of graces (χαρίτων)<sup>5</sup> because he will celebrate not only Apollo with the forthcoming performance of his paeon on Ceos but also ... the Isthmus. This last place-name comes as a complete surprise at this point in the poem. Suddenly Delos, Apollo, and Ceos, who have been an integral part of the developing plot, are eclipsed by an entirely unexpected arrival. An explanation is called for, and it comes immediately (10ff):

ἐπεὶ στεφάνους  
ἔξ ὧπασεν Κάδμου στρατῶ ἔξ ἀέθλων,  
καλλίνικον πατρίδι κῦδος.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* *Ol.* 4.4f: ξείνων δ' εὖ πρασσόντων | ἔσαναν αὐτίκ' ἀγγελίαν ποτὶ γλυκεῖαν ἔσλοῖ, a gnome that enunciates Pindar's eager reporting of his friend's success—a thing all ἔσλοῖ would do.

<sup>4</sup> Note the cautionary litotes in the first appeal to Delos (μή μοι κραναὰ νεμεσάσαι Δᾶλος, 3f), followed by the more positive appeal (εἶξον, ὦ Ἀπολλωνιάς, 6) with its confident second-person address. This confidence is grounded in Delos' recognition of the dearness of parents to their children as enunciated in the gnomic question in line 5. For other examples of switching from negative expressions to climactic positive ones, see W. H. Race, "Negative Expressions and Pindaric ποικιλία," *TAPA* 113 (1983) 96 n.5.

<sup>5</sup> Here, as elsewhere, χάριτες designate his poetry. *Cf.* W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin 1969) *s.v.* χάρις 1.b.β. For the importance of the word χάρις in hymnal contexts see W. H. Race, "Aspects of Rhetoric and Form in Greek Hymns," *GRBS* 23 (1982) 8-10.

because it bestowed  
six crowns on Cadmus' people from its games,  
the glory of victory for their fatherland.

The exact meaning of this justification has been in doubt since the time of the earliest editors: whose six victories are these? Herodotus'? Thebes'? where were they won? at the Isthmus or elsewhere? or, after all, is there only one victory because the number six is a misreading? what, finally, is the subject of the verb ὤπασεν? is it the Isthmus or the victor Herodotus? A scholium (11c Dr.) records both possibilities only to reject them:

ἔνιοι μὲν οὖν τὸν Ἴσθμὸν ἀκούουσιν, ὡς ἑξάκις νενικηκότων τῶν  
Θηβαίων τὰ Ἴσθμια· ἔνιοι δὲ αὐτὸν τὸν Ἡρόδοτον· τοῦτον γὰρ  
ἑξάκις Ἴσθμια νενικηκέναι Θηβαίων ὄντα. τούτων δὲ οὐδέτερον  
ἐν ταῖς Ἴσθμιακαῖς ἀναγραφαῖς ὁμολόγηται.

According to this account, the records showed *neither* six Isthmian victories by Herodotus *nor* six victories in one Isthmiad by Thebans, thus making it impossible for either the Isthmus or Herodotus to be the subject of ὤπασεν. This predicament was recognized early in the history of Pindaric scholarship, for the scholium goes on to record the efforts of two early editors to address this apparent anomaly. Aristarchus emended ἕξ to ἑξ and read ἐξῶπασαν, thus producing a *hapax legomenon* and a very flat sentence.<sup>6</sup> Aristodemus kept ἕξ but thought that it applied to the victories of Herodotus listed in lines 52–59, and that Apollo was the subject of ὤπασεν. Although most commentators until the end of the nineteenth century rejected these scholiastic interpretations and assumed that the six victories were

<sup>6</sup> In two articles and in his commentary on the *Isthmians* G. A. Privitera has championed the reading ἐξῶπασαν: "Lettura della prima *Istmica* di Pindaro," *QUCC* 28 (1978) 98–104, "Due note alla prima *Istmica* di Pindaro," in *Studi in onore di Anthos Ardizzoni*, edd. E. Livrea and G. A. Privitera (Rome 1978) II 723–27, and *Pindaro: Le Istmiche* (Milan 1982) 140f. In all three he cites approvingly Thummer's comments (*cf.* n.8 *infra*) and tries to defend against possible objections on grammatical and syntactical grounds, but he never addresses the larger issues raised in this article. See n.11 *infra*.

won by Thebans in one festival,<sup>7</sup> the authors of three of the most recent commentaries on the *Isthmians*—Bury, Thummer, and Privitera—have espoused variations of the scholiastic hypotheses.<sup>8</sup>

One thing is obvious: it is unlikely that we shall ever be able to check the victory lists to ascertain the accuracy of the scholiast's remark. That leaves us with only one option: to choose the hypothesis that makes the best sense in the poem.<sup>9</sup> I will try to show that, whatever the consulted lists may have contained, the poem makes it clear that the six victories were gained by Thebans in the most recent Isthmian games. This assumption will, moreover, clarify some unusual features of the hymn to Castor and Iolaus that have never been explained. In the following analysis I shall proceed by adopting the hypothesis that Theban competitors won six crowns; its persuasiveness will be determined by how much it illuminates the argument and development of the poem.

The first argument in favor of six victorious Thebans is, admittedly, based on subjective reasons. It would, I think, be bathetic, after such an elaborate apology to important gods (Delos and Apollo) occupying nine lines, to find out simply that a Theban had won the chariot race at the Isthmian games. Per-

<sup>7</sup> For example F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 309, who glosses στεφάνους ἕξ with "dies kann nichts anderes heissen, als dass sechs Thebaner an derselben d.h. jüngsten Isthmienfeier gesiegt haben."

<sup>8</sup> For Privitera's espousal of Aristarchus' solution see *supra* n.6. J. B. Bury, *The Isthmian Odes of Pindar* (London 1892) 11f, follows Aristodemus; see Bundy's criticism (43 n.24). E. Thummer, *Pindar, Die Isthmischen Gedichte* II (Heidelberg 1969) 13, who also maintains that the six victories are the same as those listed in lines 52–59, argues that Pindar is simply being vague ("In einer solchen Ausdrucksweise liegt freilich eine beabsichtigte Ungenauigkeit bzw. Verdrehung ..."). Against the hypothesis that the six are victories shared by Theban athletes in one Isthmiad he can only say: "dass Pindar in keinem Epinikion Siege, welche von den Bewohnern der Heimatstadt des Siegers gewonnen wurden, erwähnt, dass er sich vielmehr nur um die Siege dessen, dem die Ode gewidmet ist, und dessen Familie kümmert." All one can respond is that, yes, this is the only such ode; in fact, this remarkable situation is precisely the reason for the ode's unusual opening. The latest commentator on the poem, G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico 1982) 281, succinctly presents the various scholiastic interpretations but makes no judgment on them.

<sup>9</sup> See L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* II (London 1932) 336: "it is not Pindar's accuracy that concerns us, but the probable meaning of the words."

haps an Olympic victory might justify such a build-up, but not a victory at the Isthmus by an athlete whose record (*cf.* 52–63) hitherto includes only wins in minor games. On the other hand, six victories by Thebans would fully justify the pride of place given to Mother Thebes.<sup>10</sup>

This interpretation is strengthened by the emphasis the word ἕξ receives by its position at the head of its verse: ἐπεὶ στεφάνους ἑξ, “because crowns | six (of them) did the Isthmus bestow on Cadmus’ people from its games.” In two other odes Pindar calls attention to the number of crowns won by families by similarly placing the number at the head of its verse:

ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ χρὴ μναμοσύναν ἀνεγείροντα φράσαι  
χειρῶν ἄωτον Βλεψιάδαις ἐπίνικον,  
ἕκτος οἷς ἤδη στέφανος περίκειται  
φυλλοφόρων ἀπ’ ἀγώνων.

But I must awaken memory to announce  
the foremost victories by the hands of the Blepsiadae,  
whose *sixth crown* now wreathes them  
won in the leaf-bearing games (*Ol.* 8.74–76).

...ἑπταπύλοισι Θήβαις  
χάριν ἀγώνι τε Κίρρας,  
ἐν τῷ Θρασυδάος ἔμνασεν ἐστίαν  
τρίτον ἐπὶ στέφανον πατρώαν βαλῶν

... in honor of seven-gated Thebes  
and of the contest at Cirrha, in which  
Thrasydacus cause his paternal hearth to be remembered  
by bestowing a *third crown* on it (*Pyth.* 11.11–14).

In these two instances Pindar designates the recent victory with an ordinal number because it constitutes the latest in a series, a

<sup>10</sup> Whether στρατῶ (11) refers to Thebans in general or more particularly to the competitors (*cf.* Ἑλλάνα στρατόν at *Nem.* 10.25 and Ἑλλανίδα στρατιάν at *Pyth.* 11.50), it should govern πατρίδι: “Since [the Isthmus] bestowed six crowns from its games on the Theban people/contestants, [crowns that bring] the fame of victory to *their* fatherland.” Importing a first-person possessive “my” from the participle χορεύων (7), as do Bury, Sandys, and Nisetich, is awkward, unnecessary, and detracts from the dramatic re-entry of the poet in 14: ἀλλ’ ἐγώ.

practice which argues against the view of Bury and Thummer that the cardinal ἕξ designates the sixth victory of Herodotus.<sup>11</sup>

After announcing that Thebans had earned six crowns in the Isthmian games, Pindar pauses to provide a heroic analogue that gives dimension to and helps explain this athletic success. Immediately at hand is Thebes' most famous 'athlete', Heracles (12f):

ἐν ἧ καὶ τὸν ἀδείμαντον Ἀλκμήνα τέκεν  
παῖδα, θρασεῖαι τὸν ποτε Γηρυόνα φρίξαν κύνες.

in which fatherland as well Alcmena bore her dauntless  
son, before whom the fierce dogs of Geryon once cowered.

As in *Nem.* 10, where the phenomenal success of Theaeus' clan is "no wonder" (οὐ θαῦμα, 50), given the loyal patronage of the Tyndaridae, here the allusion to another son of Thebes, whose travels and labors are paradigmatic for athletic competition, serves to explain the present success as being part of a long-standing tradition. Once again the καί—often omitted by translators—adds an important dimension and means "as well (as the present athletes)."<sup>12</sup> After all the references to mothers and sons in the opening apology, it is fitting that here he names Alcmena's parentage (Ἀλκμήνα τέκεν | παῖδα).<sup>13</sup> The epithet ἀδείμαντον is well chosen for this prototypical athlete and it contrasts neatly with the fear of Geryon's hounds (*cf.* φρίξαν, 13) in the brief narrative that follows. This short excursion to the end of the world epitomizes Heracles' career without dwelling on it at too great length and, as Bundy has pointed out,

<sup>11</sup> *Cf.* Thummer (*supra* n.8): "Der istiche Sieg war der sechste Sieg für Herodotos," an interpretation that, as Bundy (43 n.24) pointed out, overlooks the word πάντα (60) in the victory catalogue: Herodotus' career entails more than six victories. In his two articles (*supra* n.6) Privitera argues that the position of ἕξ violates Pindar's normal ("di solito") placement of numerals. Not only can other exceptions be found, but such an argument overlooks the larger rhetorical determinants of style that free the poet from merely repeating grammatical formulae.

<sup>12</sup> Bury (*supra* n.8: 12) rightly observes that "καὶ suggests that Thebes has ancient as well as modern glories to be proud of," but his wording is a bit too general: καὶ links present-day sons with their heroic ancestor.

<sup>13</sup> Coming at the beginning of the epode, the key word παῖδα receives additional emphasis. For the importance of the theme of parents and children in the ode see G. W. Most, *The Measures of Praise* (= *Hypomnemata* 83 [Göttingen 1985]) 54.

serves to divert attention from the six Isthmian victors so that Pindar can single out one of them.<sup>14</sup>

At this point Pindar turns from the six athletes and from their legendary counterpart to one specific individual (14ff):

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ Ἡροδότῳ τεύ-  
 χων τὸ μὲν ἄρματι τεθρίπῳ γέρας,  
 ἀνία τ' ἀλλοτρίαις οὐ χερσὶ νωμάσαντ' ἐθέλω  
 ἢ Καστορείῳ ἢ Ἴολάοι' ἐναρμόξαι νιν ὕμνῳ.

But in rendering my reward to Herodotus for his  
 four-horse chariot,  
 whose reins were plied by no other's hands, I wish  
 to join him in a hymn to Castor or Iolaos.

The μὲν (14) has given all commentators difficulties. At first sight, it seems to be answered by τε (15), but the two clauses are not logically coordinated.<sup>15</sup> Its position, however, shows that it marks the phrase (τὸ ... ἄρματι τεθρίπῳ γέρας), thereby singling out the chariot victory. On the assumption that Theban victors won in several events, the μὲν solitarium turns (on the one hand) to the premier event of the games, the chariot race, while implying that there are others to honor as well (τὸ ... γέρας), but the poet does not go on to name them, for the τε adds such a striking fact (Herodotus drove the chariot himself) that Pindar never returns to the others. Thus the ἀλλά is not turning just from Heracles to Herodotus, but from Heracles and several successful Theban citizens to Herodotus, whose chariot victory

<sup>14</sup> See Bundy 43, who goes on to observe, "The positioning of καί before τὸν ἀδείμαντον ... // παῖδα suggests, without fanfare, comparison of the six Isthmian crowns with Heracles' subduing of the hounds of Geruon" (44). Kirkwood (*supra* n.8) apparently misled by Bundy's vocabulary, says, "Heracles' subduing of animals symbolizes Herodotos's control of his chariot team." But Pindar does not say that Heracles "subdued" Geryon's dogs, only that they cringed before him. The dogs represent opponents, not one's own team about which one could never use the verb φρίσσειν.

<sup>15</sup> Farnell (*supra* n.9) 337: "We cannot here harmonise the μὲν and the τε, but we can see that Pindar wants to emphasise and praise two separate facts: (a) the victory itself; (b) the owner driving it himself." Slater (*supra* n.5: s.v. μὲν) calls them "irregularly coordinated."

sums up all the others.<sup>16</sup> That is why Pindar emphasizes the event in the phrase τὸ μὲν ἄρματι τεθρίπῳ γέρας and stresses the fact that Herodotus drove the team himself. The μὲν tacitly recognizes the other achievements, while singling out the charioteer's special place of honor.

The strongest confirmation of our hypothesis is provided by the hymn to Castor and Iolaus that follows:

κείνοι γὰρ ἠρώων διφρηλάται Λακεδαίμονι καὶ  
                     Θήβαις ἐτέκνωθεν κράτιστοι·  
 ἔν τ' ἀέθλοισι θίγον πλείστων ἀγώνων,  
 καὶ τριπόδεσσιν ἐκόσμησαν δόμον  
 20 καὶ λεβήτεσσιν φιάλαισί τε χρυσοῦ,  
 γευόμενοι στεφάνων  
 νικαφόρων· λάμπει δὲ σαφῆς ἀρετὰ  
 ἔν τε γυμνοῖσι σταδίοις σφίσιν ἔν  
                     τ' ἀσπιδοδούποισιν ὀπλίταις δρόμοις,  
 οἷά τε χερσὶν ἀκοντίζοντες αἰχμαῖς  
 25 καὶ λιθίνοις ὀπότη' ἐν δίσκοις ἴεν.  
 οὐ γὰρ ἦν πενταέθλιον, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ  
 ἔργματι κείτο τέλος.  
 τῶν ἀθρόοις ἀνδησάμενοι θαμάκις  
 ἔρνεσιν χαίτας ῥεέθροισί τε Δίρ-  
                     κας ἔφανεν καὶ παρ' Εὐρώτῃ πέλας,  
 30 Ἴφικλέος μὲν παῖς ὁμόδαμος ἐὼν Σπαρτῶν γένει,  
 Τυνδαρίδας δ' ἐν Ἀχαιοῖς  
                     ὑπίπεδον Θεράπνας οἰκέων ἔδος.  
 χαίρετ'.

For they were the mightiest charioteers of the heroes,  
                     born in Lacedaemon and in Thebes,  
 and in athletics they essayed the most contests,  
 adorning their houses with tripods,  
 cauldrons, and cups of gold,

<sup>16</sup> Bundy (44) maintains that “ἀλλά rejects not Thebes, but *one* of her citizens in favor of *another* whose achievement satisfies, as that of Herakles does not, the category previously selected in the words Ἴσθμοῦ (line 9) and ἀέθλων (line 12),” but according to our argument, the ἀλλά passes from Heracles *and* the other anonymous Theban victors to Herodotus. Cf. W. Christ, *Pindari Carmina* (Leipzig 1986) 327: “Isthmici ludi sex simul coronas Cadmi populo Thebano dederant, inter quas princeps erat curulis victoriae [sic] Herodoti.”



whenever they won the crowns  
of victory; and their excellence shone brightly  
in the naked foot-races and in the race of  
armor with clanging shield;  
and how it shone as they shot javelins from their hands  
and whenever they made casts with discuses of stone—  
there was no pentathlon, but for each event  
a prize was reserved.  
Often, with their hair crowned with thick wreaths from  
these events, did they appear beside Dirce's streams  
and close by the Eurotas,  
the one, Iphicles' son belonging to the race of the Spartoi,  
the other, Tyndareus' son dwelling among the Achaeans  
on his highland abode of Therapna.  
Farewell.

The κείνοι γάρ (17), an adaptation of the rhapsodic hymnal relative that regularly introduces an account of the god's deeds, here means "[I have chosen] these because." Pindar's principal reason for selecting them is obvious: they were διωρηλάται ... κράτιστοι; but in the intervening words, Λακεδαίμονι καὶ Θήβαις ἐτέκνωθεν, he keeps before us the concept of cities' successful children that opened the ode (μᾶτερ ἐμά) and supplied the motive for the elaborate conceit that followed. The verb ἐτέκνωθεν echoes τοκέων (5) and τέκεν (12); each city is featured with a prominent native son: Thebes ~ Pindar, Delos ~ Apollo, Thebes ~ Heracles, Lacedaemon ~ Castor, Thebes ~ Iolaus. At the conclusion of the hymn in lines 29–31, in an impressive display of naming, he again connects the two heroes with their lineage (Σπαρτῶν γένει, ἐν Ἀχαιοῖς), their home (ῥεέθροισι Δίρκας, παρ' Εὐρώτα), and their fathers (Ἴφικλέος παῖς, Τυνδαρίδας).

There is nothing surprising in Pindar's emphasis on chariot driving or in his choice of Castor and Iolaus, who were both famous as charioteers. Likewise, the following lines at the beginning of the next triad, although difficult to understand precisely, duly detail the prizes they won in the games.<sup>17</sup> But in line 22 Pin-

<sup>17</sup> Two interpretations of line 18 are possible, depending on whether θίγον governs the genitive, πλείστων ἀγώνων (= "they participated in the most contests"), or the dative, ἀέθλοισι (= "they won prizes from the most games"). Against the first interpretation is the fact that elsewhere in Pindar θιγγάνω always governs the dative (although it commonly takes a genitive in contemporary authors); against the second is the awkwardness of ἐν (a preposition?)

dar unexpectedly turns to their success in other events: the stadion, the race in armor, the javelin throw, and the discus throw. These unforeseen details raise a number of questions. Why has Pindar chosen *two* heroic athletes to celebrate and why does he cover the full range of their successes, even pointing out that the pentathlon was not yet in existence in their times? No commentator, as far as I know, has adequately addressed these questions.<sup>18</sup> The reason, however, becomes clear if one remembers that there are other Theban victors in the background. Pindar has emphasized the fact that Castor and Iolaus were “sons” of their respective cities and that they gained victories in events of both running and throwing.<sup>19</sup> Presumably some of the other Theban victors won gymnastic events. Pindar omits boxing and wrestling from his list, but since he goes out of his way to mention the pentathlon, one could suppose that it was one event that a Theban won.<sup>20</sup> Castor and Iolaus are therefore exempla, foremost of Herodotus (since they are best known as charioteers), but not exclusively of him. Pindar’s choice of two athletes and his insistence upon the entire range of their athletic prowess would have little point if they applied merely to Herod-

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an adverb? *in tmesi?*). Against Bury (*supra* n.8: 14) and Bundy (46 n.35), I take the first alternative and translate “in athletics they essayed the most contests.” I have, however, translated ἀγώνων by “contests” rather than the more specific “events” to preserve some of the ambiguity of the word.

<sup>18</sup> Most (*supra* n.13: 50–59) raises the issue but offers a reductively formalistic solution that implies that Pindar devised the catalogue as a *pis-aller*: “It was Pindar’s desire for symmetry that led him to create a catalogue of the events in which Castor and Iolaos had won victories to balance the catalogue of the games in which Herodotus had been successful.... Hence a mythic catalogue was needed: and, if not of places, then only of events” (56f). See L. Kurke, “The Poet’s Pentathlon: Genre in Pindar’s First *Isthmian*,” *GRBS* 29 (1988) 99 n.8.

<sup>19</sup> The phrases ἐν τε γυμνοῖσι σταδίοις and οἰά τε χερσίν (23f) sketch the two spheres of gymnastic events, and, taken with διωρηλάται (17), provide the full range of athletic endeavor (*cf.* χεῖρεςσι ποσίν τε καὶ ἄρματι at *Ol.* 10.62). As usual (*cf.* *Ol.* 10.71–73) the throwing events come last and are given a more emotional treatment (οἰά, 24).

<sup>20</sup> L. Dissen (in A. Boeckh, *Pindari opera quae supersunt* II.2 [Leipzig 1821] 487) suggests that Pindar omitted boxing because Spartans were prohibited from engaging in boxing and the pancratium (*cf.* Plut. *Lyc.* 19.4); but Castor’s brother was noted for boxing and Pindar needed have no such scruples about heroic times.

otus' achievement. Only if Herodotus' chariot victory is but one of several Theban successes does the hymn make sense.

There is additional evidence to help explain Pindar's choice of Iolaus and the Tyndaridae as mythical exempla. They seem to have been traditional models for all-round athletic ability. Pausanias reports (5.8.4) that in the Olympic games instituted by Heracles Iolaus won the chariot race, Castor the foot-race, and Polydeuces the boxing-match. They appear together in only one other Pindaric ode, also to a Theban, at the end of *Pyth.* 11.59–62:

ἄ [sc. χάρις] τε τὸν Ἴφικλείδαν  
 διαφέρει Ἰόλαον  
 ὑμνητὸν ἑόντα, καὶ Κάστορος βίαν,  
 σέ τε, ἄναξ Πολύδευκες, υἱοὶ θεῶν....

[the grace] that makes known Iolaus,  
 Iphicles' son  
 as a subject of song, and mighty Castor,  
 and you, king Polydeuces, sons of gods....

Just a few lines earlier, the family of Thrasydaeus was praised for its success both in chariotry and in the stadion (46–50):

τὰ μὲν (ἐν) ἄρμασι καλλίνικοι πάλαι  
 Ὀλυμπία τ' ἀγῶνων πολυφάτων  
 ἔσχον θοὰν ἀκτίνα σὺν ἵπποις,  
 Πυθοῖ τε γυμνὸν ἐπὶ στάδιον καταβάντες ἤλεγξαν  
 Ἑλλανίδα στρατιὰν ὠκύτατι.

they were victorious of old with chariots  
 and in the famous contests at Olympia  
 they captured swift brilliance with their horses, and  
 when they competed in the naked foot-race at Pytho  
 they defeated the Hellenic host in speed.

It seems likely that in *Isthmian* 1 as well these two heroes represent a full range of athletic success, although, of course, as a Theban and foremost a charioteer, Iolaus is the nearer example for Herodotus' own success.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Although Iolaus is the more relevant example, last position in the farewell is reserved for the more distinguished Castor, exactly as in *Pyth.* 11.59ff, where Iolaus (the model relevant to the Theban victor Thrasydaeus) yields to Castor

One might well ask why, if there really were six victories by Thebans in the Isthmian games, Pindar is so vague about it, why he does not provide more specific information. I think that tact is the reason. After all, the ode was commissioned for Herodotus. Yet the city's high spirits in the wake of six victories is too important to omit; therefore Pindar portrays himself as caught up in the general enthusiasm to the extent of postponing his panhellenic business—on such an occasion, what poet would be so tactless as to neglect his dear city's remarkable success? But to give specific information about the other victors would certainly detract from Herodotus' own glory. However, by suggesting comparison of their collective achievement with Heracles' victory over the hounds of Geryon,<sup>22</sup> and by enlarging the hymn to Castor and Iolaus to include the full range of athletic events, Pindar pays tacit tribute to these other "sons" of Thebes without diminishing Herodotus' own glory.<sup>23</sup>

What is the likelihood of one city's winning six victories in one Isthmiad? We have no records of any such occurrence, but when the Oligaethidae at Corinth can claim sixty victories in the Isthmian and Nemean games, the Timodemidae at Acharnae eight Isthmian victories, the Alcmaeonidae at Athens five, the Bassidae of Aegina twenty-five in the crowned games (many of which were undoubtedly won at the Isthmus), and the island of Ceos can claim a total of seventy Isthmian victories in 452 (*cf.* Bacchyl. 2), then it seems probable that a city the size of Thebes could win six in one Isthmiad, especially since one athlete could win multiple victories in any one of three divisions: men's, youths', or boys'.<sup>24</sup>

and Polydeuces, υἱὸι θεῶν. See Bundy 47.

<sup>22</sup> In all other accounts Geryon has but one dog. It is tempting to surmise that Pindar uses the plural because he has in mind the achievements of several athletes.

<sup>23</sup> Entirely in keeping with the motif of parents and children in his ode, Pindar follows the hymn with praise of the victor's father, Asopodorus, a turn neatly prepared for by the patronymics at 30f: Ἰφικλέος παῖς ... Τυνδαρίδας.

<sup>24</sup> Of considerable importance is the fragmentary list of Cean victors in the Isthmian and Nemean games in the 450's (*IG* XII.5 608), conveniently reproduced and discussed by H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* I.2 (Leiden 1982) 1–4 (*cf.* R. C. Jebb, *Bacchylides* [Cambridge 1905] 186ff). The victors appear to be arranged in chronological order, with multiple victories in a given year recorded in order of divisions. Thus in the Isthmian list the brothers Liparion and Phacippides are said to have won on the same day, the former in

As I have said, we shall probably never be in a position to consult the Isthmian victory lists, but whatever they contained, the first two triads of the poem make the most sense on the assumption that Thebans won six victories in the Isthmian games.

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the men's and the latter in the youths' class. The list proves that the three separate classes competed at the Isthmian games and that cities prided themselves on accumulated victories. It is likely that if such a list was kept at Thebes it would have been even more impressive.