Transactions of the American Philological Association 121 (1991) 47–61

THE POET'S *ELPIS* AND THE OPENING OF *ISTHMIAN* 8

JOSEPH W. DAY
Wabash College

Isthmian 8 opens with two common epinician motifs. The victor's efforts require a *kômos* as recompense, but something threatens the success of the celebration. Pindar brings these *topoi* of obligation and hindrance to life by inserting himself dramatically into an argument for celebrating the victory. The first two stanzas tell us much about Pindar's image of himself in the odes and his often misunderstood use of the first person.

The argument in the first stanza is straightforward.[1] A god has removed the terrible threat of Xerxes' invasion; but the war's pain and losses continue to depress everyone. Now Kleandros' victories have created, not only an obligation to celebrate, but an opportunity to dispel the melancholy in the celebration. The argument might have ended here (line 10), but it continues through most of the second stanza (11–16a S-M):

> ...ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δεῖμα μὲν παροιχομένων
> καρτερὰν ἔπαυσε μέριμναν. τὸ δὲ πρὸ ποδὸς
> ἄρειον ἀεὶ βλέπειν
> χρῆμα πάν· δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι κρέμαται,
> ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον· ἰατὰ δ' ἔστι βροτοῖς σύν γ' ἐλευθερίᾳ 15
> καὶ τά. χρὴ δ' *ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδ'* ἀνδρὶ μέλειν. 15a
> χρὴ δ' ἐν ἑπταπύλοισι Θήβαις τραφέντα
> Αἰγίνᾳ Χαρίτων ἄωτον προνέμειν... 16a

Several problems arise, which we shall see are interconnected; but I am chiefly concerned here with the last two sentences. The final one states the poet's obligation to begin the *kômos* and creates a transition to the myth about Aigina and her descendants. But what is the point of line 15a, and how does it relate to the following sentence?

A correct understanding of ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα holds the key. Most translate literally "good hope," taking the words quite generally, without connotation, perhaps meaning no more than "a sanguine, confident attitude."[2] *Agathê elpis* can certainly carry such a meaning in classical Greek.[3] *Elpis* might have its

[1] See C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (New York 1981) 185–90; M. R. Lefkowitz, "Autobiographical Fiction in Pindar," *HSCP* 84 (1980) 31–35; E. Thummer, *Pindar: Die isthmischen Gedichte* 2 (Heidelberg 1969) 127–30.

[2] See Carey (above, note 1) 190–92; M. W. Dickie, "On the Meaning of ἐφήμερος," *ICS* 1 (1976) 10–11 with n. 17; W. Schadewaldt, *Der Aufbau des pindarischen Epinikion* (Repr. Darmstadt 1966) 280; Thummer (above, note 1) 131–32.

[3] See Soph. *Trach.* 125 (667 has *kalê elpis*); Ar. *Plut.* 212; [Arist.] *VV* 8.1251B34. Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 1.644C. However, see below, pages 52–53.

primordial neutral sense, "supposition, expectation,"[4] in which case the modifier specifies it as "expectation of something good, hope." Alternatively and more often, *elpis* and *elpomai* connote a desire for what is supposed or expected,[5] so "hope" is a satisfactory translation, even without the modifier. The adjective *agathê* simply reinforces the idea, as "good" does "hope" in English. The problem with all this as an explanation of Pindar's ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα is that early Greek poets did not trust hopeful *elpis*. They felt its dangerous combination of thought about the future and intense desire engendered the sort of false confidence that leads people into self-destructive behavior. Given Pindar's apparently wholehearted acceptance of this hostile attitude to *elpis*,[6] it seems peculiar for him to recommend "good hope" so directly in *Isthmian* 8.

Assuming that ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα does mean simply "good hope," most critics believe line 15a merely closes an essentially parenthetical gnomic passage (lines 12–15) with yet another general truth. The main argument to resist melancholy was nearly won at the beginning of the second stanza; but the supporting series of gnomes introduced the idea of life's vicissitudes as a side issue. Pindar countered this dark thought with lines 15–15a. The treacherousness of life's voyage is endurable as long as we have freedom, which of course the end of the war has provided. Thus, "a man" should have "good hope, cheerful optimism." The "man" does not refer to anyone in particular; the advice applies to everyone. Line 16 returns us rather abruptly to the main argument. Thus, no significant connection exists between the two sentences joined by the anaphora, χρὴ δέ...χρὴ δέ. That device merely effects a transition between two unrelated thoughts by means of the idea of obligation in χρή.[7]

In what follows, I shall argue that Pindar does not leave the gnomic remarks so loosely tied to his main argument and that ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα carries a more specific connotation than has been noticed before. The context of *Isthmian* 8.1–16a and its similarity to various epinician and other passages suggest this is a particular kind of "hope," one that motivates a noble competitor bent on achieving some great feat of *aretê*. In epinician poetry, this is the *elpis* of athletic victors, warriors, and heroes; but I shall show how it also belongs to the poet, who hopes to succeed in his great, but difficult endeavor. Such is the case in *Isthmian* 8. Pindar plays so major a role in the first stanza, he almost seems to be arguing with himself to begin the celebration. The same is true of the second stanza, where the argument begins and ends with the poet, and the gnomes apply to him as well as the chorus and audience. Lines 15a–16, then, bring the whole argument to a successful conclusion by, in effect, demanding

[4] See O. Lachnit, *Elpis: Eine Begriffsuntersuchung* (Diss. Tübingen 1965); S. Noica, "La boîte de Pandore et 'l'ambiguité' de l'*elpis*," *Platon* 36 (1984) 100–24; J. N. O'Sullivan, *LfgrE*, s.v. ἐλπίς, Ἐλπίς, (ἐ)έλπομαι, and ἐλπωρή; J. J. A. Schrijen, *Elpis: De Voorstelling van de Hoop in de Griekse Literatuur tot Aristoteles* (Groningen 1965).

[5] *Velle* and *wollen* are cognates; see P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 2 (Paris 1970) 342.

[6] See F. J. Nisetich, "The Leaves of Triumph and Mortality," *TAPA* 107 (1977) 235–64.

[7] Carey (above, note 1) 193, 206.

that Pindar foster his special poet's *elpis* to begin the *kômos*. The anaphora graphically symbolizes this point.

Epinician *elpis*

Early Greek poetry abounds in the hopes of ambitious people. *Elpis* drives them to undertake difficult action in the face of dangerous competition. They hope for the highest rewards of wealth, status, and victory in war or athletics. Over half the uses of *elpomai* in the *Iliad* are of this sort, and the tendency is more pronounced in lyric. Far more often than not, such *elpides* end in tragedy.[8] People's intense hopes for success blind them to the gods', or fate's, or fortune's control over their futures. They mistakenly expect to succeed at whatever ambitious goal they set, arrogantly trying to push beyond the appropriate limits of the human condition. This leads ultimately to delusion, excess, disaster. In the *Iliad*, some eighty percent of those ambitious *elpomenoi* end in such failure. The Trojans, and Hector in particular, regularly "hope" to breach the Greek palisade, burn the ships, and kill the best of the Achaeans. Wiser heads explicitly question these hopes, as when Nestor says (10.104–5):[9]

> οὔ θην Ἕκτορι πάντα νοήματα μητίετα Ζεὺς
> ἐκτελέει, ὅσα πού νυν ἐέλπεται...

The lyric poets retained this Homeric distrust of ambitious *elpis*, sometimes inveighing against it as a major cause of the futility of human endeavors.[10] The end of *Nemean* 11 shows the extent to which Pindar adopted their attitude (42–48):

> ...καὶ θνατὸν οὕτως ἔθνος ἄγει
> μοῖρα. τὸ δ' ἐκ Διὸς ἀνθρώποις σαφὲς οὐχ ἕπεται
> τέκμαρ· ἀλλ' ἔμπαν μεγαλανορίαις ἐμβαίνομεν,
> ἔργα τε πολλὰ μενοινῶντες· δέδεται γὰρ ἀναιδεῖ
> ἐλπίδι γυῖα· προμαθείας δ' ἀπόκεινται ῥοαί.
> κερδέων δὲ χρὴ μέτρον θηρευέμεν·
> ἀπροσίκτων δ' ἐρώτων ὀξύτεραι μανίαι.

Elpis that "shrinks from nothing" can lead us into "mad passions...unrealizable desires."[11]

Nemean 11 does not, however, condemn *elpis* outright.[12] We *can* seek the measure by bringing our hopes into line with what is feasible. Such moderation is difficult. Most often we exceed the mean, but the parents of the *laudandus* fell short of it. Their ἐλπίδες ὀκνηρότεραι (line 22) kept him from competing in panhellenic contests he could have won. For the *laudandus*, for panhellenic

[8] See Nisetich (above, note 6); O'Sullivan (above, note 4); G. Crane, "'Ελπίς in Pindar *Ol.* 13.83," *Mnemosyne* 41 (1988) 117–18; V. Leinieks, "'Ελπίς in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 96," *Philologus* 128 (1984) 1–8.

[9] Cf. 13.813–14; 18.259–61 (see below, page 59).

[10] See Sem. 1 W; Sol. 13 W (esp. 33–36); Sim. 8 W; Thgn. 333, 637–42, 823, and 1135–50 (if ironic). See below, note 22.

[11] W. J. Verdenius, "Pindar's Eleventh Nemean Ode," *ICS* 7 (1982) 35, 39.

[12] See Verdenius (above, note 11) 33–40.

athletes, and for all of us,[13] *elpis* is a *sine qua non* for high achievement; but we must keep to the measure. Pindar has modified the more unreservedly negative view of ambitious *elpis*, as well he must. Epinician poets praise ambition and achievement. They must portray successful *elpides* as possible and glorious, albeit difficult and requiring both self-control and the gods' help.[14]

In *Isthmian* 8, the series of gnomes leading up to Pindar's call for "good hope" suggests he has in mind this ambitious yet moderate *elpis*.[15] The first proverb is a strong call for moderation (12–14): τὸ δὲ πρὸ ποδὸς / ἄρειον ἀεὶ βλέπειν / χρῆμα πάν. The conventional motif of "the near" as opposed to "the distant" recalls the μέτρον of *Nemean* 11.47 and, like it, can be used as the proper limit for ambitious *elpis*. In *Pythian* 3, the immoderate ambitions of Koronis and Asklepios led to disaster. The moral of their stories: Know τὸ πὰρ ποδός and seek what is appropriate to your circumstances (59–60). Ignoring this, Koronis acted like a person... (22–23):[16]

> ὅστις αἰσχύνων ἐπιχώρια παπταίνει τὰ πόρσω,
> μεταμώνια θηρεύων *ἀκράντοις ἐλπίσιν*.

Pindar does not, however, leave us with so negative a view of *elpis*. Koronis' *elpis* serves as a foil for a better hope described later in the ode (110–11)[17]:

> εἰ δέ μοι πλοῦτον θεὸς ἀβρὸν ὀρέξαι,
> *ἐλπίδ' ἔχω* κλέος εὑρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω.

The first person was probably intended to give added force to a truth that is applicable to everyone:[18] when the gods do grant the right circumstances, then we should strive ambitiously for glory.

Pindar justifies his advice to observe "the near" in *Isthmian* 8 with a proverb on life's vicissitudes (14–15): δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι κρέμαται, / ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον. This thought too appears in passages cautioning against excessive *elpides*. Hope grows immoderate because we cannot see the future (cf. *Nemean* 11), especially disasters that lurk there. The nautical metaphor in ἐλίσσων recalls particularly *Olympian* 12.[19] Unable to see where Tycha is steering their great endeavors (3–5), people pursue unstable hopes (5–

[13] Lines 22, 29–32, and 42–48 are thematically interconnected. See M. R. Lefkowitz, "Pindar's *Nemean* XI," *JHS* 99 (1979) 49–56; K. Crotty, *Song and Action* (Baltimore and London 1982) 14–15; *pace* Verdenius (above, note 11) 33–40.

[14] Pindar espoused a moderate heroism, eschewing naked ambition; see M. R. Lefkowitz, "The Poet as Hero," *CQ* N.S. 28 (1978) 459–69.

[15] See below, pages 58–59.

[16] τὸ πὰρ ποδός (60) corresponds to ἐπιχώρια (22). See D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar*, Mnemosyne suppl. 9 (1968) 35–36, 43, 116–20. Cf. *P.* 10.55–64.

[17] See R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford 1962) 84–89; Crotty (above, note 13) 49–51. Lefkowitz (above, note 1) 48–49 sees *P.* 8.88–97 as parallel.

[18] Young (above, note 16) 58–63, *pace* Burton (above, note 17) 88–89; M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode* (Park Ridge 1976) 155.

[19] See J. Péron, *Les images maritimes de Pindare*, Études et Commentaires 87 (1974) 122–37, 193–96.

6a):

αἴγε μὲν ἀνδρῶν
πόλλ' ἄνω, τὰ δ' αὖ κάτω
ψεύδη μεταμώνια τάμνοισαι κυλίνδοντ' *ἐλπίδες*.

As in *Nemean* 11 and *Pythian* 3, though, Pindar does not paint an irredeemably grim picture for ambitious hopes. The *laudandus* himself had been a victim of Tycha's vicissitudes, but in the end the goddess' interference created opportunities to win panhellenic crowns. Now his achievements will live on forever in poetry,[20] which must be, after all, the athlete's, or warrior's, or hero's ultimate *elpis*. *Olympian* 12 implies as much, and Bacchylides makes it explicit in *Ode* 1.

The long gnomic passage at the end of Bacchylides 1 contrasts the way two types of people "hope." It begins (159–65):

φαμὶ καὶ φάσω μέγιστον
κῦδος ἔχειν ἀρετάν· πλοῦ-
τος δὲ καὶ δειλοῖσιν ἀνθρώπων ὁμιλεῖ,
ἐθέλει δ' αὔξειν φρένας ἀν-
δρός· ὁ δ' εὖ ἔρδων θεούς
ἐλπίδι κυδροτέραι
σαίνει κέαρ.

Those who strive to accumulate wealth hope, without knowing it, for a lesser *kudos*. Even the base lay claim to it, since wealth can consort with δειλοῖσιν (161).[21] Wealth inflates their opinions of themselves (αὔξειν φρένας, 162), causing them to reject moderation and to hope for more than their fair share of *kudos*.[22] Their striving proves futile (176–79):[23]

...ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τὰ φεύ-
γοντα δίζηνται κιχεῖν.
...κουφότατα*ι*
θυμὸν δονέουσι μέριμναι...

What τιμά the wealthy have won dies with them (180–81). Their hopes for lasting glory remain unfulfilled. Those who strive in the sphere of *areta*, on the

[20] See Nisetich (above, note 6) 255–64. Cf. Bacch. 3.74–98, with Lefkowitz (above, note 18) 135–39.

[21] Cf. Bacch. 10.35–51, with H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides* 1.2, Mnemosyne suppl. 62 (1982) 189–93. For older examples, cf. Sol. 13.39–42 W, and Sem. 1.10 W, if ἀγαθοῖσιν is masculine.

[22] See Maehler (above, note 21) 21–22. For others who futilely "hope" for unfair success, see Hom. *Il.* 9.371–72; Archil. 181.12 W, with M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 14 (1974) 134; Alcaeus, 69.8 LP, with D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 226–33; Thgn. 823–24; Pind. *O.* 1.64 (Tantalos).

[23] Motifs and language regularly associated with *elpis* appear throughout; see Maehler (above, note 21) 9, 24–25. For τὰ φεύγοντα, cf. τὰ πόρσω at *P.* 3.22 (above, page 50); "unrealizable desires" at *N.* 11.48 (above, page 49). For δίζηνται, cf. Sim. 542.22 *PMG* (below, page 56). For *kouphê*, see Sol. 13.36 W, with Crane (above, note 8). For *merimna*, see below, note 57.

contrary, enjoy a "more glorious hope."[24] Bacchylides clearly has athletes in mind. The victorious athlete does not hoard his wealth; he is the ideal *euergetês*.[25] He spends liberally on his own training, and his successes bring benefits to his *polis* in victory celebrations and thank offerings (εὖ ἔρδων θεούς). The ode itself is a perfect example. It praises the Muses and Poseidon (1ff.), thanks Apollo and the Graces (147–54), and attributes the victor's success to his father's offerings to Zeus (ἀντ' [εὐε]ργεσιᾶν, 157). It also honors the victor's homeland by glorifying the progenitors of Keos (?19–139). People like the victor, thanks to their piety and public-mindedness, as much as their excellence and hard work (ἀρετὰ ἐπίμοχθος, 181), can hope to leave behind after death a permanent memorial of glory in Bacchylides' song (εὐκλείας ἄ[γαλ]μα, 184).[26]

A parallel for the *kudrotera elpis* of Bacchylides' *agathoi* may exist in the ἀδείας ἐλπίδας of the Argonauts at *Pythian* 4.201. Hera instilled in them a sweet (γλυκύν, 184) urge to risk their all in seeking ἐπὶ καὶ θανάτῳ φάρμακον κάλλιστον ἐᾶς ἀρετᾶς (186–87). Pindar seems to mean that they will seek, even at the cost of death, the noblest cure (presumably for their mortality), namely, the cure effected by heroic achievement.[27] After prayers and favorable omens, the seer Mopsos announces "pleasant hopes" of success, and the journey begins. These hopes and Bacchylides' "more glorious hope" share with the *agathê elpis* of initiates in the mysteries[28] an expectation of at least partly defeating death with the gods' help.

Do these eschatological hopes have anything in common with Pindar's ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα in *Isthmian* 8? Newman argues that Pindar has the mysteries' "good hope" in mind,[29] but he fails to consider the distinction between poetic and religious concepts of immortality. Pindar is surely thinking of poetry as remedy or compensation for noble, risky action. He leads into his recommendation of "good hope" by remarking that life's vicissitudes are "curable" (15–15a): ἰατὰ δ' ἔστι βροτοῖς σύν γ' ἐλευθερίᾳ / καὶ τά. At one level, this means only: "Now that the war is over, we are free to get on with life in spite of its uncertainty."[30] However, the idea of a "cure" recalls the theme of recompense introduced in the first line.[31] Our freedom allows us to begin the celebration,

[24] See A. P. Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* (Cambridge and London 1985) 176n. 16; R. C. Jebb, *Bacchylides: Poems and Fragments* (Cambridge Univ. 1905) 249; Maehler (above, note 21) 20–28.

[25] For wealth that serves epinician *elpis*, see *I.* 5.57–58, with Thummer (above, note 1) 95–96. Cf. *O.* 2.51–56 and *P.* 8.88–92, with note 57, below, on *merimna*.

[26] See E. L. Bundy, "*Studia Pindarica* II," *UCPCP* 18 (1962) 85–88. At *N.* 1.31–33, the victor's hopes are communal benefactions; see Carey (above, note 1) 118, *pace* Nisetich (above, note 6) 245. See also Bacch. 3.57–98, with Lefkowitz (above, note 18) 133–39.

[27] I owe this wording to Ruth Scodel; W. H. Race, "Pindar's Heroic Ideal," *AJP* 106 (1985) 350–56, interprets somewhat differently and argues that the "cure" must be fame conferred by poetry.

[28] See F. Cumont, *Lux Perpetua* (Paris 1949) 401–5.

[29] J. K. Newman, "*Pindarica*," *RM* 130 (1987) 89–91.

[30] See Carey (above, note 1) 192.

[31] Λύτρον εὔδοξον. See Lefkowitz (above, note 1) 33.

which is the "cure," or recompense, for the victor's private exertions (καμάτων, 1) and Aegina's public efforts and losses in the war (πενθέων, 6; πόνον, 8; μόχθον, 11). The remedy for "life's treacherous course" lies in celebration's power to immortalize in song achievements like the victor's. One who lives his kind of life, therefore, can entertain a "good hope" of finding ἐπὶ καὶ θανάτῳ φάρμακον κάλλιστον ἐᾶς ἀρετᾶς (*Pythian* 4.186–87).[32] The idea that a god (τις θεός, 10) provides an opportunity to "cure" life's vicissitudes in the *kômos*, as well as the motifs of moderation and public benefaction, all suggest this is what Pindar means by ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα.

The rest of *Isthmian* 8 provides precedents to support the opening argument that the victor is owed a *kômos* as recompense for his *past* achievement.[33] But what bold, ambitious activity is needed *now*? Why must "one," ἀνδρί—presumably all those present—foster an athlete's or hero's *elpis* as they join the *kômos*? And why does the anaphora link this recommendation so strikingly to Pindar himself?

The poet's *elpis*

Strong action motivated by bold *elpis* is needed in *Isthmian* 8, of course, to break the powerful hindrance that threatens the *kômos*. The first stanza, emphasizing the end of the war and the need to put grief behind, did not allay the resistance to celebration. The pain and danger of the war, symbolized in the image of Tantalos' stone, literally carry over to the second stanza. Further on, one of the proverbs with no apparent direct relevance to the historical situation turns out to be the war's grim lesson about the human condition: the treacherous course of life hangs over men's heads just as the Tantalos-stone of war had (ἐπ' ἀνδράσι κρέμαται, 14).[34] The temporary psychology of the war threatens to become permanent. To overcome this hindrance, one must have the courage to stand in isolation against the general mood, the skill and vigor to see and take up a god-given opportunity (τὸ πρὸ ποδός, 12), and the will to benefit the people (e.g., δαμωσόμεθα, 8). As other odes do, *Isthmian* 8 associates such behavior with *elpis*. But whose *elpis* is it?

Hindrance to celebration is a *topos*, but so is the poet as leading opponent of the hindrance. Pindar regularly creates a fictitious persona of himself as athlete, warrior, or hero, struggling courageously and skillfully against such foes of praise as envy.[35] First-person statements in these contexts are not in-

[32] Despite the context at Plato, *Resp.* 1.331, this may have been the idea in Pind. fr. 214 S-M, γλυκεῖα...Ἐλπίς (paraphrased by Plato, ἡδεῖα ἐλπίς...καὶ ἀγαθή). *Agathê elpis* for glory even at the cost of death may have been proverbial; see Demosth. *De cor.* 97, with H. Wankel, *Demosthenes Rede für Ktesiphon über den Kranz* (Heidelberg 1976) 528–34, who compares Menander, fr. 494-Körte.

[33] Cf. esp. lines 56a–65, with C. A. P. Ruck, "*Marginalia Pindarica* III," *Hermes* 96 (1968) 670–74.

[34] A scholiast perceptively called the stone a metaphor for the ἐπικρεμάμενον invasion (17b = Drachmann 3.271). Cf. *O.* 1.57 (κρέμασε). See below, pages 57–58.

[35] See Lefkowitz (above, note 1) 29–49; (above, note 14); "The Poet as Athlete," *SIFC*, 3rd Series, 2 (1984) 5–12.

definite; they refer specifically to this contrived self-image.[36] The poet puts himself forward authoritatively, advocating through his own example the moral qualities that characterize the victor and heroes he praises. He wishes the chorus and audience to follow his lead. This is certainly the case in *Isthmian* 8.[37] Everyone present must struggle to overcome the resistance to celebration, but Pindar must take the lead. The first hint of a problem appears as the poet mentions his own pivotal role (5–6): τῶ καὶ ἐγώ, καίπερ ἀχνύμενος / θυμόν, αἰτέομαι χρυσέαν καλέσαι / Μοῖσαν. A new phase of the argument begins ἀλλ' *ἐμοὶ* δεῖμα...(11).[38] The poet assumes command of the celebrants with imperatives and hortatory subjunctives. Finally, the poet "born in Thebes" (16) must begin the song. To take the lead so vigorously requires a character like the victor's, a point reiterated in the last stanza. Pindar again commands the komasts to praise (66–68), justifying his demand in lines 69–70:

> τὸν (the *laudandus*) αἰνεῖν ἀγαθῷ παρέχει·
> ἦβαν γὰρ οὐκ ἄπειρον ὑπὸ κόλπου καλῶν δάμασεν.

The sort of person who might praise is himself an *agathos*, perhaps recognizing a reflection of his own ambitious, public-spirited character in the victor's rejection of lazy obscurity and miserliness.[39] The remark applies generally, but it harks back to the beginning,[40] where Pindar himself had to lead the *kômos*.

Once we see why ambitious *elpis* is needed in the opening of *Isthmian* 8 and how Pindar portrays himself there, it becomes clear that the *elpis* must in good measure be his own. Since everyone must join the *kômos*, ἀνδρί does have a general meaning; but Pindar himself is the pre-eminent case in point. He in particular must have the *elpis* of heroes and athletes in order to start the *kômos* by singing of Aigina and Theba. The force of the anaphora (χρὴ δέ...χρὴ δέ, 15a–16) now becomes clear. By linking *elpis* and the poet, it indicates a real, not a contrived, connection between the sentences.[41]

The context in *Isthmian* 8 does not have to bear the full weight of this interpretation, since, I shall argue, the poet's *elpis* was a conventional feature of his fictive persona. Ambitious to praise well and defeat all challengers, the poet "hopes" for his own glorious success in conferring glory on another. The frequent metaphor of poet as athlete in these contexts creates the impression that he shares the victor's *elpis*. Also like the victor, the poet "hopes" in the proper way, eschewing immoderate ambitions, attributing success to the gods, and emphasizing the communal benefits accruing from his efforts.

[36] See Lefkowitz (above, note 35), rather than, e.g., Young (above, note 16) 12, 58–61.
[37] Lefkowitz (above, note 1).
[38] See below, pages 57–58.
[39] See D. C. Young, "The Text of Pindar *Isthmian* 8.70," *AJP* 94 (1973) 319–26; T. L. Papillon, "Text and Context in Pindar's *Isthmian* 8," *AJP* 110 (1989) 1–9.
[40] Ἀγαθῷ (69) may contain a faint echo of ἀγαθάν (15a).
[41] For M. R. Lefkowitz, "The First Person in Pindar," *HSCP* 67 (1963) 214, the anaphora shows that "ἀνδρί = Pindar = Theban."

In *Olympian* 1, Pindar hopes to glorify Hieron's future victory in the chariot race (106–12):[42]

> θεὸς ἐπίτροπος ἐὼν τεαῖσι μήδεται
> ἔχων τοῦτο κᾶδος, Ἱέρων,
> μερίμναισιν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ταχὺ λίποι,
> ἔτι γλυκυτέραν κεν ἔλπομαι
> σὺν ἅρματι θοῷ κλείξειν ἐπίκουρον εὑρὼν ὁδὸν λόγων
> παρ' εὐδείελον ἐλθὼν Κρόνιον. ἐμοὶ μὲν ὦν
> Μοῖσα καρτερώτατον βέλος ἀλκᾷ τρέφει...

The poet imagines himself too as a charioteer at Olympia and as an archer, no less mindful of the glory he will win than of that he will confer (lines 114–16). Success requires that a god provide both poet and athlete with helpful opportunities, which they must take up with courage and skill put into motion by ambition and hope.[43]

Usually, as in *Isthmian* 8, the poet hopes for the successful performance of the present ode. For example, the last triad of *Pythian* 10 begins with a bold ἔλπομαι (55). Pindar hopes the victor's status among his fellow citizens will rise as the ode is performed.[44] *Nemean* 4 illustrates how hard such hopes are to fulfill, since envy holds the poet back like an opposing wrestler (lines 36–43).[45] Every epinician poet hopes to praise pre-eminently (91–92): τὰ δ' αὐτὸς ἀντιτύχῃ, / ἔλπεταί τις ἕκαστος ἐξοχώτατα φάσθαι. Success, however, requires him to struggle like a wrestler, skillfully practicing intricate verbal holds as Pindar himself does in lines 93–96. The metaphor changes in *Nemean* 6, as Pindar hopes to hit the target with a vaunt (25–26) about the prowess of the victor's family (26–28):

> ...ἔλπομαι
> μέγα εἰπὼν σκοποῦ ἄντα τυχεῖν
> ὥτ' ἀπὸ τόξου ἰείς...

With the Muse's help, the poet's song can preserve deeds of men long dead (28–30). As Pindar goes on to do this by singing of the victor's ancestors (31–44), he hits the mark of his vaunt. As in *Pythian* 10 and *Nemean* 4, then, the poet's hope is fulfilled virtually as it is uttered aloud in performance.

Poets spurn overly ambitious *elpides*. They can raise a memorial to a dead man, but trying to resurrect him with song would be futile (*Nemean* 8.45):

[42] Cf. *O.* 13.83, 103–5, with Crane (above, note 8); Nisetich (above, note 6) 243–44.

[43] Pelops' ambition (81–85) is similar; see Crotty (above, note 13) 51–52; Lefkowitz (above, note 18) 76–98. Tantalos' immoderate *elpis* (64) is a foil; D. E. Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One*, Phoenix suppl. 15 (1982) 160–73, *pace* W. J. Verdenius, *Commentaries on Pindar* 2, Mnemosyne suppl. 101 (1988) 48–51.

[44] No future event is envisaged; see C. Carey, "The Performance of the Victory Ode," *AJP* 110 (1989) 547–48; A. Burnett, "Performing Pindar's Odes," *CP* 84 (1989) 291. N.b. πὰρ ποδός (62), with page 50, above.

[45] See Lefkowitz (above, note 1) 37–38; Crotty (above, note 13) 41, 58–61.

κενεᾶν δ' ἐλπίδων χαῦνον τέλος. Simonides too, in an encomium resembling an epinician, rejects impossible *elpis* (542.21–24 *PMG*):[46]

οὔ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι
δυνατὸν διζήμενος *κενεὰν ἐς ἄ-*
πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν
αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον.

Since only the gods can attain stable perfection, the poet cannot hope to call his *laudandus* "completely blameless." Simonides must align his *elpis* with what fortune brings and the gods ordain.

In *Pythian* 1, Pindar again hopes to excel in praise, making the most of resources the gods have given (41–45):

ἐκ θεῶν γὰρ μαχαναὶ πᾶσαι βροτέαις ἀρεταῖς,
καὶ σοφοὶ καὶ χερσὶ βιαταὶ περίγλωσ-
σοί τ' ἔφυν. ἄνδρα δ' ἐγὼ κεῖνον
αἰνῆσαι μενοινῶν *ἔλπομαι*
μὴ χαλκοπάραον ἄκονθ' ὡσείτ' ἀγῶ-
νος βαλεῖν ἔξω παλάμᾳ δονέων,
μακρὰ δὲ ῥίψαις ἀμεύσασθ' ἀντίους.

By linking his own *elpis* to athletic and all great aspirations and to a pious reliance on the gods, Pindar reinforces the unity of the whole context (lines 33–57). The preceding lines include a prayer for the fulfillment of Aetna's currently bright expectations (δόξαν, 36); and in what follows, Pindar asks the gods to continue giving Hieron opportunities for success in his desires (ὧν ἔραται καιρόν, 57). Poet, victor, and community mirror one another in their ambitious hopes, expectations, and desires.[47]

A final example of the poet's *elpis* appears in Bacchylides 13, following a ten-line lacuna (220–24):[48]

...*ἐλπίδι* θυμὸν ἰαίν[ει·
τᾶι καὶ ἐγὼ πίσυνο[ς
φοινικοκραδέμνοις [τε Μούσαις
ὕμνων τινὰ τάνδε ν[εόξαντον μίτραν
φαίνω...

Relying on "hope" and the Muses, Bacchylides exhibits his song of praise to the delight of the whole Aeginetan people (παντὶ λα[ῶ]ι, 231). Why this emphatic reliance on *elpis*? Before the lacuna, θερσιεπὴς φθόνος, μῶμος, and δυσμενέων [γλῶσσα] oppose due praise of the victor and his trainer (199–209). In time, the voice of envy shrinks away, in vain, unseen (204–9), while the noble deed blossoms forever. If Bacchylides sustained this idea of competition between envy and the glory of real achievement through the lacuna (210–

[46] See Crotty (above, note 13) 33–40; M. Dickie, "The Argument and Form of Simonides 542 *PMG*," *HSCP* 82 (1978) 21–33.

[47] For δόξαν, see Lefkowitz (above, note 18) 158n. 7. For *elpis* and *doxa*, see D. E. Gerber, ed., *Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (Chico 1984) 129. For *elpis* and *erôs*, see *N.* 11.45–48 (above, page 49). For *elpis* and *kairos*, see Burnett (above, note 24) 176n. 16.

[48] Maehler's text (above, note 21, 1.1) 130.

19), it might have ended with a gnomic thought reminiscent of *Ode* 1.159–65: "[One who struggles for true *areta*] warms his heart with (?a better) *elpis*."[49] The poet then becomes the case in point; he too relies on bold *elpis* in his struggle to defeat envy and to praise superlatively. The context supports this view of poet as competitor. He is described with the same metaphors used of the poem's other protagonists, who employ their *areta*, aided by the gods, to struggle on behalf of the people and win eternal renown for themselves.[50]

The preceding survey suggests the poet's *elpis* belongs to the fictive persona of poet as athletic, heroic competitor. The opening of *Isthmian* 8 presents Pindar in this persona, and various motifs regularly associated with the victor's, hero's, and poet's *elpis* lead up to the recommendation that "one" foster ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα. We can certainly follow the hint of the anaphora and conclude that Pindar is applying this advice to himself: he must foster his own special "good hope" to lead the chorus and people of Aegina in the present *kômos*. Since Pindar begins the myth even as he says this, the poet's *elpis* is, once again, fulfilled as it is uttered. There may, however, be yet another indication that Pindar intended "good hope" here to be construed as peculiarly his own.

Hope and fear

The first full sentence in the second stanza is difficult (11–12 S-M): ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δεῖμα μὲν παροιχομένων / καρτερὰν ἔπαυσε μέριμναν. Carey makes strong cases for Benedictus' emendation παροιχόμενον and for the general meaning of *merimna* ("anxiety, care"). He interprets: "The passing of the danger" put an end to my "mighty dread."[51] The next sentence seems to state the conclusion from this as an elliptical general truth: "It is always better to consider τὸ πρὸ ποδός," i.e., the present happy occasion rather than the evil that has passed. Pindar further justifies this thought with the proverb about life, which is "too uncertain to nurse yesterday's grief."

Such a contrast between past and present would recapture the mood of the first stanza; but as Carey himself insists, "ἀλλ' ἐμοί ought to introduce a forward movement." In fact, the ode's perspective began to change with the image of Tantalos' stone, which represents the experience of those who saw the war coming *in the future*. A scholiast correctly understood its emotional force as a metaphor for τὸν ἐπικρεμάμενον καὶ προσδοκώμενον τοῖς Ἕλλησι φόβον of Xerxes' invasion (17b = 3.271 Drachmann).[52] When we see such a fatal disaster approaching inexorably, we respond with abject fear which drives out our ability

[49] See above, page 51. Cf. Maehler (above, note 21) 288–93.

[50] See Maehler (above, note 21) 254–93, *passim*; Burnett (above, note 24) 89–95. E.g., for φαίνω (224), see 76 (of the victor) and 83 (of Zeus); cf. δόξαν πολύφαντον of Nemean victors (61) and πασιφανὴς Ἀρετά of the Aeacids (176).

[51] Carey (above, note 1) 190–92. Cf. L. R. Farnell, *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar* (Repr. Amsterdam 1961) 378.

[52] This version of Tantalos' punishment emphasizes his fear; Lefkowitz (above, note 41) 248n. 83. Γε after κεφαλᾶς enhances the war's imminence; see Carey (above, note 1) 189.

to act. The threat of the war was so vast, nothing could be done (ἀπράκτων, 7) or even dared (ἀτόλματον, 11).[53]

This emphasis on the intractability of the approaching danger suggests an alternative interpretation of ἀλλ' ἐμοί, κτλ. Wilamowitz, retaining the MSS' παροιχομένων, translated: "Freilich hat das Entsetzen über das, was hinter uns liegt, die Kraft meines Denkens gelähmt."[54] He took "power of my thought" as Pindar's ability and willingness to compose poetry. Thummer translated καρτερὰν μέριμναν more accurately as *das mächtige Streben, den Tatendrang*.[55] Carey objected that this striving for action "has no obvious reference";[56] but as Wilamowitz saw, it *does* in Pindar's desire and ambition to praise, already well-established in the first stanza. The poet's *merimna*, then, would carry a specific connotation similar to his *elpis*, a parallelism that Pindar's use of these words would allow, probably even encourage.[57] Conditions that are *aprakta*, however, render such *merimna* and *elpis* useless; the incapacitating fear of Xerxes' invasion put an end to Pindar's ambition.

We can now see more clearly the flow of Pindar's logic in the second stanza. The war is indeed past, *but*[58] the fear continues. It stifled Pindar's *merimna* once and for all; he still hesitates to act, perhaps frightened the war itself might return. The advice to observe τὸ πρὸ ποδός is surely meant to counter this fear of what might come, not, as Carey would have it, to dissipate melancholy about the past. The gnome regularly opposes the assumption that we can predict the future;[59] and the second proverb justifies the first by noting how life's twisting course precludes reliable prediction. This should relieve Pindar's excessive fears, but it also raises the prospect that our inevitably mortal condition is as terrifying as the war.[60] However, the war was unusual, not falling into the normal ebb and flow of life's vicissitudes. With its end (ἐλευθερίᾳ, 15), we are free again to act boldly and seek a "cure." Therefore, everyone—victor, chorus, and audience—must foster an ambitious *elpis* and begin the celebration; but this applies particularly to the poet. The demand that

[53] Cf. U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 197, *pace* Thummer (above, note 1) 130.

[54] (Above, note 53) 198.

[55] (Above, note 1) 130.

[56] (Above, note 1) 191. His objections to παροιχομένων are stronger; but despite its tense, a scholiast paraphrases τῶν φθασάντων κακῶν (23 = 3.271 Drachmann).

[57] See Lachnit (above, note 4) 36. For *merimna* as "concern for *aretai*, ambition, endeavor," see W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin 1969) 329; Burton (above, note 17) 190, who cites *O*. 1.108, 2.54, *P*. 8.92, *N*. 3.69, and fr. 227 S-M. For *merimna* and *elpis* together as virtual synonyms, see *O*. 1.108–9 (above, page 55), with Gerber (above, note 43) 164–65; *P*. 8.88–92; cf. Bacch. 1.159–81 (above, page 51). Καρτεράν associates Pindar's striving with the victor's (κράτος, 5).

[58] 'Αλλ' ἐμοί is strongly adversative; cf. ...ἐγώ, καίπερ (5).

[59] See above, page 50. A scholiast saw this as advice against reaching for τῶν μελλόντων (26a = 3.271 Drachmann). Carey's parallels (*O*. 1.99–100; *P*. 3.59–60; *P*. 10.61–63; *N*. 3.75; *N*. 6.55–57; *I*. 7.40–47) all counsel the present as against the future or the related idea of the near against the distant (i.e., moderation against excess).

[60] See above, page 53.

he have "good hope" amounts to a recommendation that he overcome his fear and restore his lost *merimna*. Thus, we can see that the vacillation in the first stanza between grief about the past and joy in the present *kômos* gives way in the second to vacillation between incapacitating fear of the future and ambition to seize the present opportunity to praise.

Vacillation between *elpis* and fear is a typical pattern of behavior in contexts of great danger and endeavor.[61] The *Iliad* provides the outstanding early example, and its effect continued to be felt in Pindar's day. Throughout the central books, Homer presents the attacking Trojans as *elpomenoi*, eager for victory and glory.[62] The Greeks, on the contrary, fearfully give up hope of both glory and *nostos*. Thus, Agamemnon despairs at the breach in the wall, which the Greeks had hoped (ἔλποντο, 14.67) would protect them. He fears Zeus intends to have them perish νωνύμνους at Troy (14.70).[63] Sometimes the tide temporarily turns against the Trojans and then turns back in their favor. When it does, the heroes on the previously winning side exchange an *elpis* that pushes them into the fray for a fear that keeps them from risking anything at all. Their opponents have the opposite experience. When *elpis* is present, so also is *thrasos*.[64] When some overwhelming disaster strikes, *phobos* or *deima* displaces *elpis* and *thrasos*, which move to the enemy's side. For instance, after Hector is struck by a boulder like a lightning bolt that takes away a bystander's θράσος (14.416), the Greeks are ἐλπόμενοι (14.422; cf. 15.288). However, after Apollo gives Hector back his *thrasos* (15.254), the normal situation returns as terror again strikes the Greeks. Finally, when Achilles has signaled his imminent return to the fighting, Polydamas understands that the tide has turned for the last time (18.259–61):

> χαίρεσκον γὰρ ἐγώ γε θοῇς ἐπὶ νηυσὶν ἰαύων
> *ἐλπόμενος* νῆας αἱρησέμεν ἀμφιελίσσας.
> νῦν δ' αἰνῶς *δείδοικα* ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.

Fear of an inexorable foe and a warrior's hopes are mutually exclusive.

Bacchylides retains Homer's concern with fear and hope in his adaptation of the Battle of the Ships in *Ode* 13. Before Achilles retired, he so terrified the Trojans they cowered inside Troy and refused to enter the fighting (114–20). When he does retire, the Trojans are compared to sailors who, upon surviving a dreadful nocturnal storm, ἀρπαλέως ἄ- / *ελπτον* ἐξί[κ]οντο χέ[ρσον] (131–32). The end of the hopeless situation leads, not to quiet relief, but to vigorous action. The Trojans pour out of the city, in their turn striking fear into the Greeks (φόβον, 145) and hoping for victory (157–61):[65]

> ...ἦ *μεγάλαισιν ἐλπίσιν*
> πνε⟨ί⟩οντες ὑπερφ[ία]λόν

[61] Cf. J. Schnayder, "*Inter spem metumque*," *Eos* 62 (1974) 115–27.
[62] See above, page 49.
[63] Cf. 17.234 with 239.
[64] For *thrasos* as "courage to act," see *LSJ*; W. Beck, *LfgrE*, s.v. θάρσος. Cf. Plato, *Leg.* 1.644C.
[65] Maehler's text (above, note 21, 1.1). See Maehler (1.2) 279; Jebb (above, note 24) 348–49.

θ' ἰέντες] αὐ̣[δὰ]ν̣
Τ̣[ρῶε]ς ἱππευταὶ κυανώπιδας ἐκ-
— — ⏑ — — —]νέας...

Bacchylides' ἄελπτον (131–32) and ἐλπίσιν (157) characterize the Trojan reversal from passivity to action in a way that would seem familiar to an audience steeped in Homer.

In the second stanza of *Isthmian* 8, Pindar portrays himself like the heroes at Troy who vacillated between incapacitating fear of impending disaster and ambitious *elpis* for victory and glory. Since this was a conventional pattern of heroic behavior,[66] Pindar's audience would have been even more likely to understand δεῖμα, μέριμναν, and ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα in the manner I have suggested.

Conclusion

Discussion about Pindar's use of the first person in the epinicians has recently intensified, thanks to arguments by Lefkowitz and others that the odes were often, even normally, intended for solo performance.[67] I cannot agree with this, especially not in the case of *Isthmian* 8, where Pindar unambiguously alludes to the members of a young men's chorus.[68] However, nothing precludes a chorus' playing the role of the poet, and Lefkowitz' description of Pindar's autobiographical fiction shows what that role is. Many of Pindar's first-person statements serve to create a persona of the poet as athlete, warrior, or hero, boldly leading the praise song against spiteful envy or some other hindrance to the victory celebration. This is the case in *Isthmian* 8.

In this article, I have pointed out that the poet's ambitious *elpis* to praise successfully appears as a motif of the autobiographical fiction regularly in Pindar and once in Bacchylides. I have argued further that ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδα at *Isthmian* 8.15a is an example of this motif. Pindar infuses the first two stanzas with great vitality by introducing his fictive persona into the action as an authoritative figure in perfect empathy with the victor and audience in a highly charged situation. He shares their pain and fear caused by the war. Their will to celebrate and his ambition to praise have been equally stifled. Now they all must put aside their grief for the past and fears for the future, seizing the present opportunity the gods have given to benefit all of Aegina in the *kômos* for Kleandros. To do so, however, requires the courageous, ambitious *elpis* of athletes and warriors. This is especially true of the poet, who must lead the

[66] Some narratives of Xerxes' war itself seem to fit the pattern; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 746, 804, 1027; Hdt. 7.10.2; 8.10.1 with 12.2; see J. W. Day, *The Glory of Athens* (Chicago 1980) 151–54.

[67] M. R. Lefkowitz, "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?," *AJP* 109 (1988) 1–11; M. Heath, "Receiving the κῶμος," *AJP* 109 (1988) 180–95.

[68] Carey (above, note 44) 549–50; Burnett (above, note 44) 286.

kômos. As the anaphora connecting lines 15a and 16 signifies, therefore, he in particular must have "good hope" as his concern.[69]

[69] Many people have influenced my thinking, supplied parallels and bibliography, and saved me from errors at various stages in the writing of this paper; remaining flaws are my own. I thank especially H. H. Bacon, A. E. Raubitschek, L. P. Day, M. W. Dickie, and the anonymous referees of *TAPA*. A special debt is owed to R. Scodel for her patient assistance as editor. Audiences at Wabash College (1987) and meetings of the APA (1986) and CAMWS (1989) commented helpfully on versions of parts of this article. I also acknowledge the National Endowment for the Humanities and Wabash College for financial support, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for the use of its library and other facilities.