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♫ Hush, Mum and Twin Brother, don't you fear, for Baby Heracles is here ♫. A Note on the Infant Heracles Episode in Pindar's *Nemean* 1*

In Nemean 1 *Pindar celebrates the chariot race victory of Sicilian nobleman Chromius. As usual, the poet praises his commissioner through the attribution of stereotypical outstanding properties and by means of a transcending mythical foil (*pars epica*). But in this case, his choice to relate the winner's success to Heracles's postnatal throttling of the Hera-sent twin snakes disconcerted ancient as well as modern critics and caused them to provide possible explanations. Albeit the great number and ingenuity of their suggestions, the issue still needs further investigation. This paper aims to add clarity by stressing the ode's poetological statement as a contributing factor to Pindar's choice. The argument runs that while the hymnic reminiscences of the entire* pars epica *– among other things – stress Chromius's mortality, the commemoration of the allegedly ancient snake-throttling episode demonstrates the possibility to overcome same mortality thanks to the Muse who never forgets great contests.*

Keywords: Pindar, Chromius, Nemean Games, Infant Heracles, Immortality, Homeric Hymns, Hermes

Nemean 1 celebrates the chariot race victory of Sicilian nobleman Chromius.[1] The ode's first half consists of a hymnic call upon Syracusan off-

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[1] On the ode's date of composition, see BRASWELL (1992: 25–27): An absolute dating is impossible due to the lack of respective information. However, a terminus post quem is signalled by the scholia's reference to Chromius as 'Aitnaios', namely 476 / 475 BC when Hieron I renamed Katane at the foot of Mount Aitna after the volcano and re-

shore island Ortygia (vv. 1–6), the announcement of the festive occasion (vv. 7–9), the invocation of the Muse (vv. 10–13) and the eulogies of the winner's homeland Sicily (vv. 13–18) and himself (vv. 19–33). The ode's second half embodies an elaborate and vivid narration (*pars epica*) of the infant Heracles's fight against the Hera-sent snakes in Alcmene's bedchamber (vv. 33–59) and Tiresias's subsequent prophecy about the prodigy's road of justice to Mount Olympus (vv. 60–72).

As elsewhere, Pindar expresses his commissioner's praise directly, by assigning him outstanding properties, as well as indirectly, by placing him in front of a transcending mythical backdrop.[2] From Antiquity onwards, critics were puzzled as to why a chariot race winner is compared to the infant Heracles and sought to explain the *pars epica*'s rele-

housed its former inhabitants, as to settle mercenaries from Syracuse and the Peloponnesian area instead; on *Nemean* 1's colonial aspects, see FOSTER (2017: 132–134). Considering the Nemean Games' biennial recurrency (Bacchyl. *Epin*. 9,21–24) after their so-called 'world premiere' in 573 BC (according to Hier. *chron. a. Abr*.), the earliest possible date thereafter is 475 BC. By contrast, a terminus ante quem depends on whether one accepts the assumption that Hieron I, who died in 466 BC, was still alive at the time. The latest possible date would then be 467 BC.

On Chromius's biography, see BRASWELL (1992: 27–28): The sources are Pind. *N*. 1 and Pind. *N*. 9 plus the corresponding scholia. Their information must be taken with a pinch of salt, for Pindar, despite his factual obligation, does clearly priorize the winner's praise, and the scholia are themselves based on what they claim to explain. Keeping this in mind, the picture presents itself as follows: Chromius is the son of a not further known Hagesidemus, maybe from Gela on the south coast of Sicily because in his youth he did military service for the local tyrant Hippocrates. The section Pind. *N*. 9, 34–37 praises his outstanding achievements as commander of the cavalry, foot soldier, and captain. When Hippocrates died around 490 BC, Chromius probably entered the service for the subsequent tyrant Gelon, Hieron I's brother. Gelon took him to Syracuse in 485 BC, where Chromius remained even after his master's death in 478 BC, working for the Deinomenid dynasty; on Syracuse under the Deinomenids, see LEWIS (2019: 33–36).

[2] E.g., Pind. *O*. 1, 24–96 (Pelops as mythical backdrop) and 100–117 (explicit praise); on the comparison of Hieron's rulership to that of Zeus, cf. n. 53.

In this case the image of hero-god Heracles. Pindar's metaphorical use of Heracles's columns at the Western end of the Mediterranean as uncrossable boundary marks shows that mere mortals can at best hope for an asymptotic approximation but not for a comparison on equal terms: Pind. *O*. 3, 43–45; *N*. 3, 19–26; *I*. 4, 7–13.

vance to Chromius.[3] Their suggestions can be subsumed under five interpretative approaches:

1. The ethico-religious approach: The most significant explanation stems from the Italian Graecist Giuseppe Aurelio Privitera.[4] Based on vv. 33–34, Privitera deems a direct relation between Chromius and Heracles as secondary.[5] For him, the hero-god embodies a set of contemporary aristocratic values within a world that is governed by the same Zeus to whose joy the epinicion is being sung (Ζηνὸς Αἰτναίου χάριν, v. 6) and with whose cosmic order it ends (πὰρ Δὶ Κρονίδᾳ, σεμνὸν [...] νόμον, v. 72). By attributing to Chromius give or take the same virtues as to the infant Heracles (εἶδε γὰρ ἐκνόμιον / λῆμά τε καὶ δύναμιν / υἱοῦ, vv. 56–58), Pindar places Chromius's chariot race on a categorical level with Heracles's victory over the snakes.

The *pars epica*'s role within this complex, according to Privitera, is to vividly represent these values. Yet, one might wonder together with the ancient commentator whether for the sake of representation alone the poet could not as well have chosen a different Heraclean adventure.[6]

2. The mythical approach: Such an explanation was given by the Greek Grammarian Chrysippus. Chrysippus thinks that the reason for Heracles's appearance in *Nemean* 1 is his well-known connection with the

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[3] Let alone the fact that the correlation of Heracles's deeds with those of the winner is generally conventional and, given Heracles's popularity in Magna Graecia, especially appropriate for a winner from that region, Pindar might have intended to integrate Chromius in the family of the Heraclidae. By tradition, Syracuse is a Doric foundation; it was founded in 733 BC by Archias from Corinthus, a descendant of Heracles (cf. Paus. 5, 7, 3). Chromius not only followed Gelon to Syracuse and helped him to take over the control of the city but, by marrying one of his master's sisters (Σ Pind. *N*. 9, 95 a = Timaeus FGrHist 566 F 21), also became part of the ruling family and thus a Heraclidae successor.

[4] PRIVITERA (1975); cf. ROSE (1974: 150).

[5] No relation whatsoever is assumed by WILAMOWITZ (1922: 256), FARNELL (1930: 159–160) and FRAENKEL (1972: 85–86).

[6] Albeit in a slightly different context, the ancient commentator justly says that Heracles always had bodily strength and a quick mind (Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 c).

Nemean lion.[7] Since there are Pindaric odes in which a myth is told because of its connections to the sporting event, Chrysippus's approach is understandable.[8] However, said connection could at best be considered a minor reason for the poet's choice, because Chrysippus's explanation has three weak spots: It ignores the fact there is no explicit reference to the Nemean lion in *Nemean* 1;[9] it omits the fact that the strangling of the Nemean lion is not the aition of the Nemean games;[10] and it does not explain the *pars epica*'s role at all.

3. The biographical approach: The earliest explanation of this kind dates from the Grammarian Chaeris.[11] Reading Pindar's *Nemean* 9 (on Chromius's second chariot race victory) as a source of historical information, Chaeris recognizes a parallel between the lives of Heracles and Chromius within the numerous toils and hardships (cf. πολυπόνων, v. 33) that ultimately lead to their well-deserved rewards: in the former's case immortality, the marriage with Zeus's daughter Hebe and eternal banquets;[12] in the latter's case immortal glory, the marriage with a noble woman from the Deinomenid dynasty and opulent banquets in his house.[13]

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[7] Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 c. Confronting the Nemean lion famously is Heracles's first of the twelve canonical labours (cf. Pind. *I*. 6, 48; Bacchyl. *Epin*. 9, 8–9; and the fact that the beast's skin is one of Heracles's characteristic attributes during the later adventures [Stesich. F 229]).

[8] Pind. *O*. 1; *O*. 3; *O*. 10; *N*. 9.

[9] As already the ancient commentator rightly objected (Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 c); cf. however MORRISON (2007: 27).

[10] Despite Bacchyl. *Epin*. 13, 44–57; on this, see MAEHLER (1982: 251–253). The actual aition of the Nemean games is the myth of the local hero Opheltes. Being the prince of Nemea, as a baby he was killed by a snake, when his nurse laid him down onto the grass, as to show the Seven against Thebes the way to a nearby water source. The Nemean games were initially held as his funeral games and repeatedly performed (Marmor Parium FGrHist 239 F 22; Pind. *N*. 8,50–51; Pind. *N*. 10,28; Bacchyl. *Epin*. 9, 10–24). As in the case of the Nemean lion, there is no explicit reference to the myth of Opheltes in Pind. *N*. 1.

[11] Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 c.

[12] Cf. Pind. *I*. 4, 76–78 and Hom. *H*. 15, 4–8; in Hom. *Od*. 11, 601–603 Odysseus tells the Phaeacians about meeting Heracles's image in the realm of the dead, whereas the son of Zeus himself lives amongst the gods.

[13] Pind. *N*. 9, 34–48.

Despite the plausibility of this interpretation, which is championed by the US-American classical philologist Bruce Karl Braswell in his commentary on Pindar's *Nemean* 1,[14] there are two reasons why it is not unproblematic: first, the methodological danger of matching Chromius's *vita* with events from Heracles's life, given the lack of more thorough information about the historical background (*petitio principii*); and second, the neglection of the *pars epica*'s independent role, due to the general focus on Heracles's deeds. Admitting his incapability to determine said role, Braswell turns to following ad-hoc explanation: 'It is enough that the poet may have wished to describe a vivid scene which was presumably already familiar to his audience from other versions […] and, no less perhaps, from contemporary vases.'[15]

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[14] BRASWELL (1992: 56) and, building thereupon, MORGAN (2015: 387–390) and LEWIS (2019: 132–135).

[15] BRASWELL (1992: 31). This claim is not only a simplistic ad-hoc explanation, but also an undervaluation of Pindar's operating principles. It appears highly implausible in the light of the plurality of the past proposed interpretations, which contribute to the well-established picture of Pindar as a thoughtful and crafty poet. It seems to be the case that the Theban songwriter, although being a transitory figure between the archaic and classical period, did in some respects even anticipate Hellenistic poetry. In *Nemean* 1 this becomes clear from the fact that the depiction of gods in their youth is a common feature of Hellenistic literature (e.g., Heracles in Theocr. *Id*. 24 or Eros in Apoll. Rhod. 3, 111–155), even though the new humanizing realism (HERTER [1927: 251]) harks back to other texts, e.g., the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (cf. VERGADOS [2013: 28–29]); on the latter's influence on Hellenistic and later writers, see THOMAS (2020: 63–73). Moreover, there lies an epistemological problem within the falsification of the question of the infant Heracles-episode's familiarity in Pindar's time: When BRASWELL states that the episode was presumably already familiar to Pindar's audience from other versions or from contemporary vases, his claim basically relies on three ancient sources – Pherecydes FGrHist 3 F 69, Pind. *Paian*. 20 and, most importantly, red-figure pottery (Musée du Louvre G 192; Museo archeologico nazionale dell'Umbria 73; and Metropolitan Museum of Art 25.28). However, the time of origin of this pottery, as proposed by archaeologists, does not precede the assumed date of composition of *Nemean* 1, and older visual evidence is not available. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that it was the other way around Pindar who originally influenced vase painting, thereby making the myth more popular; cf. MORRISON (2007: 28 and n. 180). This is even more plausible if one considers the fact that, as a general rule, it is usually the visual arts which absorb motives from literature, and not vice versa (e.g., from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, to mention the most famous and influential sources of inspiration – especially the blinding of the Cyclops in Hom. *Od*. 9, 371–394). Also, the scene on the hydria in the

4. The metaphorical approach: Such an explanation was given by Didymus from Alexandria.[16] According to the scholion, he considered the *Nemean* 1's *pars epica* to bear the same meaning as the metaphor of the sailor men's fair wind from Pind. *P*. 1, 33 (πομπεῖος οὖρος): like Heracles, Chromius, after his delightful early triumph, can legitimately hope for many more future victories and an ultimate divine reward.

This interpretation, which is promoted by the German-US-American philologist Thomas Gustav Rosenmeyer,[17] can hardly be denied such undertones, especially because, from the perspective of the Theban servants around Alcmene and Amphitruo, Heracles's first fight (πειρᾶτο δὲ πρῶτον μάχας, v. 43) already belongs to the past, whereas his future heroic deeds, being rendered in a prophetical form, are still to happen.[18]

5. The poetological approach: Such an explanation was given by the US-American classical philologist John Petruccione.[19] Taking the second stanza with its reflection upon the fragility of a mortal's success and life as a starting point, Petruccione interprets the role of the poet, who is labelled the host's friend (vv. 31–32),[20] as not less heroic than the deeds of Chromius and Heracles: to make use of his own innate qualities (vv. 25–28), i.e., writing songs to fight 'the criticisms of the envious and the obscurity of death which Chromius cannot combat without his aid.'[21]

Metropolitan Museum of Art is astonishingly faithful to Pindar's infant Heracles episode: Let aside the presence of the goddess Athena as supporter of brave warriors, one can see the infant Heracles on a κλίνη, fighting the snakes, on the left Amphitruo with pulled sword trying to protect his family, and on the right Alcmene in a reaction of fear, as indicated by the posture of her body and hands – the female attendants and the Theban warlords are missing for spatial reasons, and Alcmene cannot be painted naked because of the rules of the genre. Again, in favour of BRASWELL, one could object the possibility that it is precisely *because* of the written sources, i.e., Pherecydes and especially Pindar, that archaeologists dated the pottery so close after the assumed composition of *Nemean* 1. The argument would then become a circular reasoning.

[16] Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 c.

[17] ROSENMEYER (1969).

[18] Cf. PETRUCCIONE (1986: 34, n. 3).

[19] PETRUCCIONE (1986).

[20] Cf. Pind. *O*. 1, 16–17.

[21] PETRUCCIONE (1986: 44); cf. MORRISON (2007: 38–39).

The *pars epica*'s role attributed by Petruccione shares with that according to Privitera the aspect of representation of heroic aristocratic values. But while for the latter the throttling of the snakes serves as a mythical backdrop only for Pindar's commissioner, Petruccione also relates it to the poet himself and thus emphasizes its poetological significance.

Despite the great number of interpretations, comprising even more[22] than the above listed, Pindar's main emphasis on Heracles's postnatal throttling of the snakes still needs further investigation. To help broaden our understanding of *Nemean* 1, this paper very briefly presents Pindar's promise of immortal renown to his *laudandus*. The argument runs that while the hymnic reminiscences of the entire *pars epica* – among other things – stress Chromius's mortality, the commemoration of the allegedly old snake-throttling episode demonstrates that same mortality can be overcome thanks to the Muse who never forgets great contests.

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The *Nemean* 1's *pars epica* prominently features three aspects which can also be found in the more extensive Greek hymns, most paradigmatically in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*.[23] The first aspect is the earliness of the divine nature's manifestation, which Pindar delineates very briefly albeit vividly:

ὡς, ἐπεὶ σπλάγχνων ὕπο ματέρος αὐ-
τίκα θαητὰν ἐς αἴγλαν παῖς Διός
ὠδῖνα φεύγων διδύμῳ
σὺν κασιγνήτῳ μόλεν,
ὡς {τ'} οὐ λαθὼν χρυσόθρονον
Ἥραν κροκωτὸν σπάργανον ἐγκατέβα·
ἀλλὰ θεῶν βασιλέα

[22] WILAMOWITZ (1922); FINLEY (1955: 124–127); MÉAUTIS (1962: 170–184); RADT (1966); FRAENKEL (1972: 85–89); ROSE (1974); SEGAL (1974).

[23] Even though little Hermes, unlike the Pindaric infant Heracles, is a guileful trickster god with humorous aspects; on this aspect, see VERGADOS (2011: 87–98) and VERGADOS (2013: 37–38). The indicated passages from the Homeric Hymn refer to the critical edition of ALLEN (1912). For a commentary, see THOMAS (2020: 137–470); cf. also VERGADOS (2013: 214–586).

σπερχθεῖσα θυμῷ πέμπε δράκοντας ἄφαρ.
τοὶ μὲν οἰχθεισᾶν πυλᾶν
ἐς θαλάμου μυχὸν εὐ-
ρὺν ἔβαν, τέκνοισιν ὠκείας γνάθους
ἀμφελίξασθαι μεμαῶτες· ὁ δ' ὀρ-
θὸν μὲν ἄντεινεν κάρα, πειρᾶτο δὲ πρῶτον μάχας,
δισσαῖσι δοιοὺς αὐχένων
μάρψαις ἀφύκτοις χερσὶν ἑαῖς ὄφιας.
ἀγχομένοις δὲ χρόνος
ψυχὰς ἀπέπνευσεν μελέων ἀφάτων.[24]

How, immediately after from his mother's womb
the son of Zeus had come to bright daylight,
fleeing birth pang together with
his twin-brother,
not unnoticed by Hera with the golden throne
he climbed into his saffron swaddling clothes;[25]
but the queen of gods
became angry and sent snakes straightaway.
These went through the gates, which opened by themselves,
to the roomy bedchamber's
corner, seeking to wind their swift jaws
round the babies. However, Heracles
craned his neck and made his first combat experience
by grabbing a snake's neck
with each of his inescapable hands.
He strangled them until
life left their ineffable limbs.[26]

The underlined verses representing the basic sequence of events are equivalent to how the early manifestation of Hermes's divine nature is introductorily summarized in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*:[27]

[24] Pind. *N*. 1, 35–47; cf. Paus. 9, 11, 3.
[25] BRASWELL (1992: 57) recognizes a potential inspiration from Hom. *H*. 4, 237.
[26] The responsibility for this paper's translations from ancient Greek into English rests on myself.
[27] Cf. Hom. *H*. 3, 119–134; Call. *Iov*. 55–57; Call. *Ap*. 58–64.

ὃς καὶ ἐπεὶ δὴ μητρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτων θόρε γυίων
οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἔκειτο μένων ἱερῷ ἐνὶ λίκνῳ,
ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἀναΐξας ζήτει βόας Ἀπόλλωνος
οὐδὸν ὑπερβαίνων ὑψηρεφέος ἄντροιο.[28]

After he had leaped from his mother's immortal womb,
Hermes did not stay for long in the holy cradle,
instead darted off to look for Apollo's cattle
outside the threshold of the high-roofed cavern.

The non-underlined verses with the purpose to facilitate the audience's visualisation of the scene correspond to what in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is explained in far greater length: that Hermes, on the very first day of his existence,[29] makes a string instrument out of a tortoise shell (vv. 24–64) and steals Apollo's cattle herd before returning to his cradle on Mount Cyllene (vv. 64–153).

The second aspect shared by both *Nemean* 1 and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is the extraordinariness of the divine nature's manifestation. It is marked by a character's reaction of two-sided astonishment (word stem θαμ- or θαυμ-; in the following underlined). Not only Pindar's Amphitruo has mixed feelings when he sees what his son is capable of:

ἔστα δὲ <u>θάμβει</u> δυσφόρῳ
τερπνῷ τε μιχθείς. εἶδε γὰρ ἐκνόμιον
λᾶμά τε καὶ δύναμιν
υἱοῦ·[…][30]

Amphitruo stood there filled with both uneasy
and pleasant <u>astonishment</u>; for he saw the extraordinary
courage and strength
of his son.

[28] Hom. *H*. 4, 20–23.
[29] As confirmed twice by little Hermes himself in Hom. *H*. 4, 273 (χθὲς γενόμην) and 376 (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ χθιζὸς γενόμην).
[30] Pind. *N*. 1, 55–58.

The Apollo from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* ascribes the same feelings to himself, albeit on two different occasions. The uneasy astonishment (θάμβος δύσφορον, v. 55) occurs as he spots two oxen hides on top of a lofty rock (vv. 403–404):[31]

> Πῶς ἐδύνω δολομῆτα δύω βόε δειροτομῆσαι,
> ὧδε νεογνὸς ἐὼν καὶ νήπιος; αὐτὸς ἐγώ γε
> <u>θαυμαίνω</u> κατόπισθε τὸ σὸν κράτος· οὐδὲ τί σε χρὴ
> μακρὸν ἀέξεσθαι Κυλλήνιε Μαιάδος υἱέ.[32]
>
> How did you manage to kill two oxen,
> you who are new-born and childish? I myself
> henceforth <u>marvel</u> at your strength. Not a bit taller
> you need to grow, Cyllenean, son of Maia!

The pleasant astonishment (θάμβος τερπνόν, v. 56) is engendered by little Hermes's theogony chant accompanied with a new string music (vv. 418–433):[33]

> νῦν δ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ πολύτροπε Μαιάδος υἱὲ
> ἦ σοί γ' ἐκ γενετῆς <u>τάδ'</u> ἅμ' ἕσπετο <u>θαυματὰ ἔργα</u> 440
> ἦέ τις ἀθανάτων ἠὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
> δῶρον ἀγαυὸν ἔδωκε καὶ ἔφρασε <u>θέσπιν ἀοιδήν</u>;
> <u>θαυμασίην γὰρ τήνδε νεήφατον ὄσσαν ἀκούω</u>,
> ἣν οὔ πώ ποτέ φημι δαήμεναι οὔτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν,
> οὔτε τιν' ἀθανάτων οἳ Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσι, 445
> νόσφι σέθεν φηλῆτα Διὸς καὶ Μαιάδος υἱέ.[34]
> […]
> <u>θαυμάζω</u> Διὸς υἱὲ τάδ' ὡς ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζεις.[35]
>
> Come on now and tell me, versatile son of Maia,
> whether <u>these wondrous activities</u> have been yours 440
> since the hour of your birth or some god or mortal man

[31] Cf. Hom. *H*. 3, 440–447; see also THOMAS (2020: 368–369) and VERGADOS (2013: 494).
[32] Hom. *H*. 4, 405–408.
[33] Cf. Hom. *H*. 3, 134–135.
[34] Hom. *H*. 4, 439–446.
[35] Hom. *H*. 4, 455.

gave you this brilliant gift and showed you god-inspired chant.
For wonderful is to my ears this new sound,
which never, methinks, has been learned by any human
or immortal who lives on Mount Olympus
except you, deceiver, son of Zeus and Maia.
[…]
I admire, son of Zeus, how lovely you play the lyre!

The third aspect shared by both *Nemean* 1 and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is the definition of the divine nature's significance for mankind. In the case of the Pindaric Heracles, this significance is defined as the paradigmatic implementation of justice in a Hesiodean sense.[36] Heracles's deeds are perspectivized by Tiresias according to Zeus's law (νόμον, v. 72; contrasting terms in the following underlined), which Heracles continues recommending (αἰνήσειν, v. 72; cf. *Cleanth*. F 1, 39):[37]

ὅσσους μὲν ἐν χέρσῳ κτανών,
ὅσσους δὲ πόντῳ θῆρας ἀϊδροδίκας·
καί τινα σὺν πλαγίῳ
ἀνδρῶν κόρῳ στείχοντα τὸν ἐχθρότατον
φᾶσέ νιν δώσειν μόρον.[38]
καὶ γὰρ ὅταν θεοὶ ἐν
πεδίῳ Φλέγρας Γιγάντεσσιν μάχαν
ἀντιάζωσιν, βελέων ὑπὸ ῥι-
παῖσι κείνου φαιδίμαν γαίᾳ πεφύρσεσθαι κόμαν
ἔνεπεν· […][39]

How many lawless[40] monsters both by land
and by sea Heracles would kill.
Also, a certain man[41] who with crooked

[36] Hes. *Erga* 5–8.
[37] Cf. Pind. *I*. 4, 70–78.
[38] This is the reading of the Mss. By contrast, SNELL–MAEHLER read φᾶ ἑ δᾴωσειν μόρον. On this issue, see BRASWELL (1992: 76–77).
[39] Pind. *N*. 1, 62–69.
[40] Cf. the Cyclopes from the *Odyssey*: Hom. *Od*. 9, 106; 215; 275–276.
[41] Probably rather Antaeus son of Poseidon than Cycnus son of Ares (cf. Pind. *I*. 4, 70–73 and Paus. 9, 11, 6).

> insolence struts along – the most hated
> fate, Tiresias said, Heracles would bring him. 65
> And he said that when the gods
> meet the Giants in battle on the plain of Phlegra,
> the force of his projectiles
> would cause their bright hair to be
> mixed with dirt.

As for the Hermes from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, his significance for mankind is mainly[42] apparent from the bounties which Apollo and Zeus grant him in the context of the two brothers' final reconciliation on Mount Olympus (vv. 504–578): the telling of oracles (vv. 564–566), the protection of flocks (vv. 567–571), the convoy of the dead into Hades (vv. 572–573)[43] and the permission to consort with mortals and gods alike (vv. 576–578).[44]

The three mentioned similarities are limited to the hymn's narrative sections only, while further essential hymnic elements are missing in *Nemean* 1 – such as the stereotyped sacral attributions, the solemn tone and the praying person's request within the context of mutual affection. Also, the *pars epica* does not arise from a cultic setting, but it emanates from the victory celebration which is established at the beginning of the second stanza:

> ἔσταν δ' ἐπ' αὐλείαις θύραις
> ἀνδρὸς φιλοξείνου καλὰ μελπόμενος,
> ἔνθα μοι ἁρμόδιον
> δεῖπνον κεκόσμηται […][45]
>
> I have positioned myself at the manor gate
> of a hospitable man, as I celebrate his deeds,
> where a befitting
> banquet has been arranged for me.

[42] In addition, from the epicleseis in Hom. *H*. 4, 13–15.
[43] Cf. Hom. *Od*. 24, 1–10.
[44] Cf. Hom. *H*. 3, 132. On the nature of this reconciliation, see THOMAS (2020: 426–427).
[45] Pind. *N*. 1, 19–22.

At this point, the ode's antecedent emblematic[46] perspective on the islands Ortygia and Sicily changes to Chromius's house[47] and the banquet there. The scene is marked as a victory celebration by the references to the venue (αὐλείαις θύραις, v. 19) as well as to the aspects of epinician[48] music (καλὰ μελπόμενος, v. 20) and dining (ἁρμόδιον δεῖπνον, vv. 21–22).[49]

Based on the hymnic colouring on hand, it may nonetheless be argued that the *pars epica* evokes the semblance of a hymn to Heracles. This evocation is further enhanced by the fact that the scene is set at Boeotian Thebes, where Heracles, in his sanctuary south of the Cadmea beyond the Electran Gates, was worshipped as a youthful and belligerent deity (πρόμαχος).[50] This suggestion can be assigned three purposes Pindar may have intended to accomplish: first, to implicitly ask Heracles to bless Chromius and his dining party with ἀρετή and ὄλβος (prayer);[51] second, to portray Chromius as a quasi-religiously worshipped protector of his πόλις (analogy); and third, to increase the audience's

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[46] Cf. NEER–KURKE (2019: 223).

[47] Maybe to be localised on Ortygia, Syracuse's most ancient quarter (MORGAN [2015: 384]).

[48] The meaning is not 'beautifully singing' but rather 'singing the fair deeds (of Chromius)'; cf. BRASWELL (1992: 48).

[49] Although the aspects of the verbs ἔσταν (aorist = event; v. 19) and κεκόσμηται (perfect = result; v. 22) coupled with the fact of first-person narration (ἔσταν, v. 19 and μοι, v. 21) express a certain immediacy at the surface, the present celebration is not only an actual but also a literary one. The stereotypical side of its nature is highlighted by the generalizing statement about the frequency of Chromius's banquets (θαμά, v. 22). Accordingly, the outstanding properties which Chromius demonstrated at the sport event in Nemea appear as general traits of his character (vv. 24–33), and the aspect of the *pars epica*'s exemplariness is emphasized. On the inclusive aspect of Pindar's self-fashioning as a guest, see KUHN-TREICHEL (2020: 69–70).

[50] Paus. 9, 11, 4; Isocr. *Or*. 5, 32; Phot. *Bibl*. 148a (190). On the cult of Heracles Promachus, see SCHACHTER (1986: 14–30); on the portrayal of his worship and that of his sons at Thebes in Pind. *I*. 4, 76–86, see KRUMMEN (1990: 35–94); cf. the archaeological findings in ARAVANTINOS (2005: 398–399). That Heracles also protects new-born children might be an influence from the dwarfish Egyptian divinity Bes on the Theban Heracles-tradition (KRUMMEN [1990: 94–97]); on Bes's functions and iconography, see DASEN (1993:55–83, especially 68–75).

[51] Cf. Hom. *H*. 15,9.

awareness of the categorical contrast between his mortal existence and Heracles's immortality (antithesis).

Whereas both prayer and analogy serve the indirect praise of Chromius, the antithesis contributes to the discourse of immortality that is engendered by the juxtaposition of the notion of mankind's fugacity (vv. 32–33) and the image of Heracles's eternal life (vv. 69–72), which frame the *pars epica* in form of an antithetical ring composition.[52] With all due parallels between the lives of Chromius and Heracles,[53] it thus stresses the preliminary gnome's thought that the former has reached the maximum that is humanly possible in terms of great fame in life:

ἀρχαὶ δὲ βέβληνται θεῶν
κείνου σὺν ἀνδρὸς δαιμονίαις ἀρεταῖς.
ἔστι δ' ἐν εὐτυχίᾳ 10
πανδοξίας ἄκρον· μεγάλων δ' ἀέθλων
Μοῖσα μεμνᾶσθαι φιλεῖ.[54]

The foundations have been laid by the gods
and that man's super-human achievements.
Within success lies 10
the top of fame. Great contests
the Muse loves to remember.

[52] Cf. PETRUCCIONE (1986: 39–40). The fugacity of humans is a commonplace often to be found in Pindar, most famously in *P*. 8, 88–97. On Heracles afterlife, see n. 12.

[53] Regarding the *pars epica*'s content, it is immediately evident that Heracles's ἀρετή relating to the promotion of Zeus' law from the very first day of his existence, serves as an honouring mythical mirror for Chromius: Tiresias's prophecy first widens the perspective from the victory celebration to the whole world, highlighting Heracles's exemplary aspect of *Zivilisationsbringer* who fights injustice and establishes order (cf. MORRISON (2007: 30). Subsequently, it closes the ode with the image of Mount Olympus and the eternal banquet as reward for the toils. This image correlates with Chromius's banquet from the second stanza as well as with the characterization of Ortygia as the mound and resting spot of Alpheios river (Ἄμπνευμα σεμνὸν Ἀλφεοῦ, v. 1), thus suggesting an honourable convergence of Nemean athlete and hero-god. Against a possible comparison of Chromius's rulership to that of Zeus argue MORGAN (2015: 386 and 388) and LEWIS (2019: 132–133).

[54] Pind. *N*. 1, 8–12.

But same gnome simultaneously signals a way for Chromius to transcend his mortality. It can be observed on the linguistic level that the contests and protagonists of both *Nemean* 1 and its *pars epica* are deliberately merged, as to stress the aspect that they equally qualify for commemoration: The genitive ἀέθλων (v. 11) does not only denote athletic competitions, but at the same time it holds the special meaning of ἆθλος in the sense of 'labour of Heracles', including the throttling of the snakes.[55] Similarly, the demonstrative pronoun κείνου (v. 9) refers to both Chromius and Heracles. Given its position after the announcement of Chromius's victory (v. 7), before having heard or read the *pars epica*, one naturally assumes that it anaphorically refers to the man of the moment. But in retrospect one realizes that same pronoun cataphorically refers to Heracles, too. The semantics of the genitive ἀνδρός (v. 9) constitute no objection, for Heracles was (partly) likewise a mortal ἀνήρ supported by the gods;[56] and even if the meaning of ἀνήρ in this specific passage was exclusively 'man' as opposed to the earlier stages of development of a male human being,[57] Tiresias's prophecy makes it applicable to little Heracles by integrating his grown-up future self into the present of the scene.

From this poetological perspective, the existential dichotomy between Chromius and Heracles is overcome, for the former is offered the prospect of a kind of immortality that he can effectively reach, i.e., immortal fame.[58] At the time of the ode's initial performance when Chro-

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[55] Cf. MORRISON (2007: 26). Although the throttling of the snakes does not appertain to the canonical twelve labour catalogue, but it is only a so-called προγύμνασμα (preliminary or exercise), it can still be considered a labour of Heracles in the broader sense.

[56] E.g., by Athena when fighting Cycnus and his father Ares in Apollo's grove at the Pagasetic gulf (Hes. *Asp*. 325–471).

[57] The contrasting expression δαιμονίαις ἀρεταῖς (v. 9) rather suggests the meaning 'mortal' as opposed to the immortal gods.

[58] Cf. KUHN–TREICHEL (2020: 170) and Σ Pind. *N*. 1, 49 b: […] ἐπαπορήσειεν ἄν τις, διατί τοῦ Ἡρακλέους μνημονεύει· οὐ γὰρ εὔκαιρος δοκεῖ ἡ μνήμη νῦν Ἡρακλέους. καί φαμεν, ὅτι βουλόμενος δεῖξαι, ὡς οἱ διαφανεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ τοῖς λόγοις ἀθάνατοι γίνονται τῇ μνήμῃ, διὰ τοῦτο μέμνηται Ἡρακλέους ἀρετῆς […]. "One might be puzzled as to why Pindar makes mention of Heracles, for this does not seem the right time to do so. I think he calls to mind Heracles's prowess because he wants to

mius's Nemean victory was still recent,[59] Heracles's throttling of the snakes already lied in a distant past (ἀρχαῖος λόγος, v. 34).[60] Therefore, the fact that it is sung after all this time illustrates the long chronological range of the Muse's love for great contests, suggesting that Chromius's success will still be remembered in a time when it may itself be regarded as an ancient tale.[61]

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show that those who excel in deed and reasoning become immortal through commemoration."

[59] Cf. MORRISON (2007: 28–29).

[60] Cf. SLATER (1969: 74–75). BRASWELL (1992: 57), by contrast, estimates the expanse of the chronological dimension with not more than one to two generations.

[61] The promise of a winner's – and, by association, the poet's – lasting fame is in a victory ode's nature, for glory itself traditionally strives after eternity (κλέος ἄφθιτον, Hom. *Il*. 9, 413). The sung winners are exclusively men, although we have notice of female chariot race winners, Spartan princess Cynisca from the 5th to the 4th century BC being the first and most famous (Paus. 3, 8, 1).

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