PINDAR AND THE EPIC CYCLE

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Abstract: This article argues that Pindar refers to cyclic Trojan epics as fixed poems known to his audiences and discusses why this matters for our understanding of his poetry. Section I claims that *Isthmian* 4 alludes to the *Aethiopis* as the work of Homer. Section II examines how *Nemean* 10 closely engages with the *Cypria*. Section III argues that *Nemean* 6 and *Isthmian* 8 signal an intertextual engagement with the *Aethiopis* and the *Cypria*. A conclusion assesses how far we can extrapolate from the preceding arguments to generalize about Pindar's relationship to Trojan epic and then suggests one particular way in which recognizing allusions to lost epic can enrich our understanding of his preserved lyric.

Keywords: Pindar, Homer, the epic cycle

The study of the epic cycle is something of a growth industry. Recent years have seen the publication of Martin West's commentary on the lost Trojan epics[1] and a steady flow of pertinent articles and books. This material claims our interest in no small part because of the light that it might shed on other, better-preserved texts. Increasing interest in cyclic epic has been particularly intertwined with increasing interest in intertextual approaches to Homeric epic. Rather less systematic attention has been paid to the importance of the cycle for our understanding of post-Homeric poetry.

The early history of the poems included in the epic cycle is difficult to chart.[2] Which were known as stable texts? When? Which were commonly regarded as the work of Homer? When? In devising answers to such historical questions we can hope only to identify the best available evidence and then formulate probabilistic inferences on that basis. This article examines one particular chapter in the early history of the cycle, a chapter in which the corpus of available evidence is relatively large and perhaps sufficient to justify some significant conclusions.

Did Pindar know and allude to poems which became part of the epic cycle? Scholars sometimes pass over this issue in silence while others simply assert a positive answer[3] or express doubts in passing.[4] Detailed, systematic and up-to-date arguments are rather harder to find. Ian Rutherford has recently offered by far the most thorough treatment of this topic,[5] and his valuable contribution looks well positioned to become a standard point of reference. Rutherford avoids endorsing conclusions about Pindar's relationship to cyclic epic. This matter is important enough to warrant further discussion. I will concentrate on those areas in which a reasonable degree of confidence seems

[1] West (2013). Unless noted I refer to the following editions: West (2003) for the epic cycle; Race (1997) for Pindar's epinicians; Maehler (1989) for Pindaric fragments; Snell and Maehler (1970) for Bacchylides; Drachmann (1903–1927) for the Pindaric scholia. Translations of Pindar, cyclic epic and Aelian are adapted from the Loeb editions of Race (1997), West (2003) and Wilson (1997), respectively.

[2] See Fantuzzi and Tsagalis (2015) for a recent account. Compare and contrast West (2013) 16–25; (2015); Sammons (2017) 13–16.

[3] For example Henry (2005) 64 on *Nemean* 6: 'the death of Memnon at Troy, taken from the *Aethiopis*'.

[4] For example Burgess (2001) 45: Pindar 'perhaps depended on the poems we know in the Epic Cycle as a source'. I find it difficult to summarize the position of G. Nagy, who writes that 'the presence of heroic narrative in Pindar is the continuation of a living tradition, not the preservation of references to lost epic texts … Pindaric song is both staying in the present and reaching back into the past within itself. It does not have to go outside for the purpose of bringing the epic inside': (1990) 437.

[5] Rutherford (2015).

most achievable and on the most important cases in which a different interpretation of the texts leads me to a different overarching conclusion. I argue that Pindar refers to cyclic epics as poems known to his audiences and discuss why this matters for our understanding of his work. Leaving aside the Theban saga, I concentrate on the epics dealing with the Trojan war and its aftermath. These texts are easier to reconstruct in broad outline and their subject matter is on the whole more important for Pindar's myths.

A preliminary word about methodology is in order. Mythological material recorded in the epic cycle also circulated in other media long before texts of the cyclic epics came into existence and continued to circulate in other media long after.[6] How then can we hope to determine that a Pindaric passage refers not to a broad mythological tradition but rather to one particular epic, and to an almost completely lost epic at that?[7] Two forms of evidence can be especially helpful. First, a close, detailed resemblance between Pindar and cyclic epic might make an allusion to a particular text the most likely hypothesis. Second, an explicit reference to a poetic source might draw attention to a specific precedent.

Section I examines one passage that contains both these types of evidence and argues that Pindar refers to cyclic epic as the work of Homer. Section II discusses resemblances between Pindar and the epic cycle. Section II discusses signposted allusions to cyclic epics. The arguments of these sections reinforce one another and together have cumulative force. Section IV advances conclusions. I discuss how far we can generalize about Pindar's relationship to lost cyclic epic and briefly suggest some implications for our understanding of his preserved poetry.

I. Homer's cycle

Pindar is a pivotal early witness not only to now-lost cyclic epics but also to the preserved *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[8] In Pindar, as relatively seldom in earlier lyric, one finds passages which clearly engage with these two Homeric epics in a complex and fine-grained way.[9] The surviving *Iliad* and *Odyssey* enable us to infer with confidence that Pindar alludes to these as poems known well enough among his contemporaries in order to make such detailed reference worthwhile. Important passages for Pindar's engagement with Homeric epic include *Pythian* 3.80–82, which alludes to *Iliad* 24.527–28,[10] and *Nemean* 2.14, which alludes to *Iliad* 7.198–99,[11] as well as *Paean* 6.51–59, which alludes to the precise diction of *Iliad* 2.484–87.[12] *Olympian* 13.60–62 has attracted less attention but is equally telling.[13] This passage draws on Glaucus' speech in *Iliad* 6, a minor episode

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[6] As scholars generally agree, the cyclic Trojan epics, though textualized later than the *Iliad*, reflect traditional material already known to the *Iliad*-poet: *cf.* Burgess (2001) 11–12, 33–35, 47–49; West (2013) 16–17; Finkelberg (2015) 127.

[7] *Cf.* Spelman (2017) on the challenges of detecting traces of Homeric and non-Homeric epic in the Lesbian poets.

[8] Key discussions of Pindar's relationship to Homer include Köhnken (1985) 86–89; Pelliccia (1987); Nisetich (1989); Nagy (1990); Mann (1994); Sotiriou (1998); West (2011).

[9] *Cf.* Davies and Finglass (2014) 475–76 on Stesich. 170 (in their numeration) and Fowler (1987) 36–37 on Ibyc. S151 *PMGF*. See Ford (1997) and Kelly (2015) for historical approaches to early Homeric allusions.

[10] Mann (1994) 318–22; Ford (1997) 97–98; Sotiriou (1998) 109–11; Morgan (2015) 287. Luppino (1959), connecting λόγων (80) with προτέρων (80), instead understands a reference to the previous verses (compare and contrast Currie (2005) 390–92, proposing a connection

with the mysteries). But this interpretation posits harsh word-order. μανθάνω with a genitive of personal source is a good poetic locution: *cf.* Soph. *Trach.* 187, 408.

[11] Monro (1892) 4; Mann (1994) 323–24; Sotiriou (2000); note also Pind. *fr.* 198a. Sotiriou (2000) 136–37 argues that ἄκουσεν (*Nem.* 2.14) means 'obeyed' ('gehorchen'). This unusual sense of the simplex verb is unparalleled in Pindar and generally goes with requesting and ordering. Monro (1892) and Mann (1994) 323–24 suppose that Pindar depicts Ajax speaking to Hector. Pindar may rather depict Hector overhearing a public proclamation. At *Il.* 7.194–96 Ajax assumes that the Trojans will overhear the Greeks praying.

[12] Radt (1958) 126; Maehler (1963) 98; Ferrari (1992) 145; Hardie (1996) 236. An examination of *POxy* 841 convinces me that at *Pae.* 6.54 Henry (2003) 15–16 is right to prefer the reading ἴσθ' [ὅ]τ[ι] over ἴσ[[σ]]ατ[ε, especially on grounds of space. I hope to discuss this passage in detail elsewhere.

[13] Compare and contrast Hubbard (1986) 35 and Sotiriou (1998) 130–31.

unlikely to have been an established, traditional part of Trojan myth. Pindar refers to Homeric character speech *as character speech* (ἐξεύχετ᾽, *Ol.* 13.61 → εὔχομαι, *Il.* 6.211; cf. *Nem.* 2.14; contrast Simon. 19 West *IE*[2]). Pindar, like Glaucus, goes on to tell of Bellerophon but avoids substantial overlap with Homer and instead narrates the taming of Pegasus, a fantastical tale characteristically suppressed in the *Iliad*.[14] The Iliadic Bellerophon succeeds θεῶν <u>τεράεσσι</u> πιθήσας (6.183), 'trusting in the portents of the gods'; in Pindar the goddess Athena gives Bellerophon the τέρας (*Ol.* 13.73), 'marvel', of the bridle that enables his success. Pindar and Glaucus both pass over in silence Bellerophon's ugly fate (*Il.* 6.200–02; *Ol.* 13.91). This sort of allusion probably presumes a basically stable text of the *Iliad* not radically different from the text read today.[15] In tracing such complex Homeric resonances in Pindar we are not anachronistically using hermeneutic strategies suited to later poetry but applying a sort of literary sophistication which these works explicitly demand from their audiences.[16]

If Pindar and many of his contemporaries took the category of Homeric poetry to extend beyond the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and encompass poems that would go on to form part of the epic cycle, then one would expect to find that Pindar refers to these other 'Homeric' poems in much the same way that he refers to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. I think that this is close to what we do in fact find.

Many in the Archaic and Classical periods attributed cyclic Trojan epics to Homer.[17] Herodotus, writing not too long after Pindar's latest datable ode,[18] shows that scepticism about the Homeric authorship of cyclic epics existed early on, but he hardly sounds like a man relying on public consensus. On the contrary, the historian feels the need to adduce specific textual arguments in order to justify his opinion that Homer was not in fact the author of the *Cypria* (2.117).[19] In 1992 papyri brought to light important new evidence, which is perhaps undervalued in this regard. In his 'Plataea Elegy' (11 West *IE*[2]), Simonides, composing during Pindar's poetic career, makes Homer *solely* responsible for the enduring memory of the heroes of the Trojan War,[20] much as in Pindar's *Nemean* 7 it is because of Homer and Homer alone that Odysseus has acquired an exaggerated reputation (διὰ τὸν ἁδυεπῆ γενέσθ᾽ Ὅμηρον: 21, 'because of sweet-speaking Homer'). The preceding section of the 'Plataea Elegy' apparently describes the death of Achilles (1–8),[21] an episode also recounted in the cyclic *Aethiopis* (*arg.* 3), and certainly takes a synoptic view over the whole Trojan campaign (9–14).[22] Simonides' 'Homer' here seems to be responsible for more than just the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[23]

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[14] *Cf.* Griffin (1977).

[15] *Cf.* Burkert (2001) 105; Cassio (2002) 118–19; West (2011). Pelliccia (2003), Reece (2005) and Jensen (2011) persuasively criticize the leading rival hypothesis. Pindar depicts the reception and reperformance of Homeric epic as comparable to the potential reception and reperformance of his own work (*Isthm.* 4.37–45). It is difficult to imagine a fluid, multiform tradition of triadic lyric celebrating Melissus of Thebes for his Isthmian victory in the *pancratium*. Perceptions of fixity need not track precisely with actual fixity, but Pindar's rhetorical equivalency between epic and lyric is nonetheless significant. If Pind. *fr.* 265 is trustworthy, Pindar will have referred to a written text of the *Cypria*. In his day the *proix*, 'dowry', regularly included movable physical property.

[16] Cf. *Ol.* 11.18–19; *Pyth.* 4.277–78, 6.48-49; *Isthm.* 2.12; Bacchyl. 5.3–6.

[17] Wilamowitz (1884) 351–54; Fitch (1924) 63; Pfeiffer (1968) 43–44, 73; Burkert (2001) 114; Burgess (2001) 8, 129–31; Fantuzzi and Tsagalis (2015) 21–28. Bernabé (1996) 2-3 and West (2013) 28–31 collect primary evidence.

[18] *Pythian* 8 was composed for a victory won in 446 BC. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, I assume that the manuscript date is reliable. Herodotus is often thought to have been writing around 430 BC: Moles (2002) 34, n.13 provides bibliography.

[19] *Cf.* Hdt. 4.32; Graziosi (2002) 194-95.

[20] οἷσιν ἔπ᾽ ἀθά]νατον κέχυται κλέος ἀγ[δρὸς] <u>ἕκητι</u> (15); καὶ ἐπώνυμον ὁπ[λοτέρ]οισιν | ποίησ᾽ ἡμ]ιθέων ὠκύμορον γενεή[ν (17–18); *cf.* Theoc. 16.44–46; Prop. 3.1.25–34. I am not convinced by those who assign ἐπώνυμον (17) a sense other than 'famous': as does Arrighetti (2007); contrast Brillante (2007) 105–09.

[21] *Cf.* Simon. 11.19–20 West *IE*[2]; Hor. *Carm.* 4.6.9–12; West (1993) 5–6; Barchiesi (2001); Rutherford (2001b) 43; Kowerski (2005) 44, 65; Lulli (2011) 78–79. The point depends on West's attractive but uncertain placement of *POxy* 2327 *fr.* 5 just before *POxy* 2327 *fr.* 6.

[22] If πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην (17) is correct, as I think that it probably is, Simonides highlights Homer's comprehensiveness: cf. *Il.* 24.407; *Od.* 11.507, 17.122; and πᾶσαν … ἀρετάν: Pind. *Isthm.* 4.38.

[23] *Cf.* Simon. 564 *PMG*; Lauriola (1998) 1123; Aloni (2001) 94; Sbardella (2012) 239–40; West (2013) 28.

Recent scholars have challenged 'the older view that Pindar saw the Cycle as Homeric'.[24] The burden of proof should be placed on those who would make him, like Herodotus, unusual for his era in this respect. Yet we find evidence to suggest that Pindar attributed cyclic epic to Homer and no evidence to the contrary.

According to Aelian, Pindar 'agrees with' the story that Homer gave the *Cypria* away as a dowry (*VH* 9.15 ≈ Pind. *fr.* 265):

λέγεται δὲ κἀκεῖνο πρὸς τούτοις, ὅτι ἄρα ἀπορῶν ἐκδοῦναι τὴν θυγατέρα, ἔδωκεν αὐτῆι προῖκα ἔχειν τὰ ἔπη Κύπρια. καὶ ὁμολογεῖ τοῦτο Πίνδαρος.

In addition it is said that since he [sc. Homer] had no money when his daughter was married, he gave her as a dowry the epic poem the *Cypria*. Pindar agrees with this.

This second-hand report is plausible and has been regarded as evidence that Pindar may well have in fact told this story.[25] If this is the case, then Pindar entered into pre-existing controversies and affirmed the Homeric authorship of the *Cypria* while explaining the origins of a rival claim.[26] This rhetorical strategy would resemble the way in which he handles the myth of Tantalus in *Olympian* 1.[27] The diction of Aelian's citation (καὶ <u>ὁμολογεῖ</u> τοῦτο Πίνδαρος; 'Pindar agrees with this') suggests a legitimate textual basis.[28] If trustworthy, *fr.* 265 would provide conclusive evidence that Pindar attributed a cyclic epic to Homer. Compelling and specific arguments for distrusting Aelian have not, to my knowledge, been advanced. But an ineliminable measure of doubt lingers on. After all, Aelian elsewhere implausibly reports that Pindar called Corinna a sow.[29]

A preserved Pindaric passage might also bear on the attribution of a cyclic epic and allow for more definite conclusions (*Isthm.* 4.34–42):

καὶ κρέσσον' ἀνδρῶν χειρόνων
ἔσφαλε τέχνα καταμάρψαισ'· ἴστε μάν
Αἴαντος ἀλκάν φοίνιον, τὰν ὀψίαι
ἐν νυκτὶ ταμὼν περὶ ὧι φασγάνωι μομφὰν ἔχει
παίδεσσιν Ἑλλάνων ὅσοι Τροίανδ' ἔβαν.

ἀλλ' Ὅμηρός τοι τετίμα-
   κεν δι' ἀνθρώπων, ὃς αὐτοῦ
πᾶσαν ὀρθώσαις ἀρετὰν κατὰ ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν
θεσπεσίων ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν.
τοῦτο γὰρ ἀθάνατον φωνᾶεν ἕρπει,
εἴ τις εὖ εἴπηι τι· καὶ πάγ-
   καρπον ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ διὰ πόντον βέβακεν
ἐργμάτων ἀκτὶς καλῶν ἄσβεστος αἰεί.

[24] Rutherford (2015) 457, n.38. *Cf.* Nisetich (1989) 9–14; Mann (1994) 325; Burgess (2001) 239, n.284; Kelly (2006) 14, n.60; Currie (2016) 247, n.5.

[25] Lloyd-Jones (1972) 116; Graziosi (2002) 186–87; Fantuzzi and Tsagalis (2015) 22–23. Pindar is interested in the biographies (*fr.* 125, 140b) and, more specifically, in the economic circumstances of earlier poets (*Pyth.* 2.52–56; *Isthm.* 2.1–11).

[26] *Fr.* 264 (= Ps.-Plut. *Vit. Hom.* 2.2 West), a report that Pindar said that Homer was from Chios and Smyrna, might reflect an analogous mediation between competing claims about Homer's origins: cf. *Ol.* 13.18–19 and *fr.* 71 on the development of the dithyramb.

[27] *Ol.* 1.46–51 explains the origins of a false version of the myth, which Pindar rejects (35–36, 52).

[28] For Aelian's use of this verb in textual citations, *cf.* Ael. *VH* 7.14 with Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Ael. *VH* 12.30 with Eupolis *fr.* 202 *PCG* and the comments of Kassel and Austin, Ael. *VH* 12.50 with Thuc. 4.84.2.

[29] *VH* 13.25; *cf.* Pind. *Ol.* 6.89–90; *fr.* 83; Lefkowitz (2012) 67.

And the skill of inferior men can overtake and bring down a stronger man. Surely you know of Ajax's bloodstained valour, which he pierced late at night on his own sword, and thereby casts blame upon all the sons of the Hellenes who went to Troy. But Homer, to be sure, has made him honoured among mankind, who exalted his entire achievement and declared it with his staff of divine verses for future men to play. For that thing goes forth with immortal voice if someone says it well, and over the all-fruitful earth and through the sea has gone the radiance of noble deeds forever undimmed.

Discussing Ajax's suicide, the Pindaric scholia cite cyclic epic (schol. *I.* 4.58b ≈ *Aethiopis* fr. 6):

τὸ δὲ ὀψίαι ἐν νυκτὶ τριχῶς νοεῖται· ἢ γὰρ τὴν ὀψίαν τῆς ἡμέρας· ὅτε γὰρ ὀψὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐστί, τότε ἀρχὴ τῆς νυκτός· οἷον ἀφ᾽ ἑσπέρας· ἢ κατὰ τὸ ὀψὲ τῆς νυκτός οἷον τὸ μεσονύκτιον, μετὰ τὴν ὀψίαν ὥραν τῆς νυκτός ὥστε ὅλον ὅμοιον εἶναι τῶι ἐν νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶι, ὅτε ἀμέλγουσι πρὸς ἑσπέρας· ἢ πρὸς ἔω, ὅτε ἐστὶ τῆς νυκτὸς ὀψὲ πρὸ τοῦ ὄρθρου. τοῖς δὲ τὸν ὄρθρον ἀκούουσι καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἱστορίας συνάιδει· ὁ γὰρ τὴν Αἰθιοπίδα γράφων περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον φησὶ τὸν Αἴαντα ἑαυτὸν ἀνελεῖν.

'In the late night' is understood in three ways: either [it means] the late part of the day; for when it is late in the day then it is the beginning of the night, i.e. from the beginning of evening; or [it means] during the late night, i.e. the middle of the night, after the late hour of the night, so that the whole [phrase] is similar to 'in the dead of night' [as at *Il.* 11.173 and elsewhere], when they milk towards evening; or [it means] towards dawn, when it is the late part of the night before first light. The details of the story also agree with those who understand first light, for the author of the *Aethiopis* says that Ajax killed himself around first light.

The scholia canvass three options for the meaning of Pindar's 'in the late night' (ὀψίαι | ἐν νυκτί: 35b–36): (a) the beginning of the night (ἀρχὴ τῆς νυκτός); (b) the middle of the night (μεσονύκτιον); (c) the end of the night, just before dawn. The *Aethiopis* is adduced in support of the final possibility, which the text of the scholia, as we have it, appears to favour by citing corroborating external evidence. In the *Aethiopis*, according to the scholia, Ajax killed himself περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον, 'around first light', i.e. before dawn and the beginning of day.[30] Here ὄρθρος denotes the time when the first light appears before sunrise (*cf.* πρὸς ἔω, 'towards dawn').[31]

The correct sense of the phrase in question is the third option, in favour of which the scholia adduce the *Aethiopis*: Pindar's 'in the late night' (ὀψίαι | ἐν νυκτί, 35b-36) points to a time late in the course of night and hence close to the beginning of day. It is hard to account otherwise for the temporal adjective.[32] In Greek δείλη often means 'afternoon', while δείλη ὀψία often specifies 'the latter part of the afternoon, evening', i.e. close to the beginning of night.[33] Pindar's 'late night' will mean close to morning, just as more frequently in Greek 'late in the day' means late in the course of the day and thus close to night.[34] Context provides further reasons to suppose that Pindar here agrees with the *Aethiopis* and advertises a debt to previous epic.

[30] Thus West (2003) 117 and Finglass (2011) 27 translate περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον as 'towards dawn'; *cf.* West (2013) 161–62.

[31] On the meaning of ὄρθρος, see Renehan (1975) 153; Wallace (1989); Davies (2016) 83. Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 9.43b opposes the completely dark night with περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον. Our passage in the scholia implies that ὄρθρος constitutes the final part of night: *cf.* schol. Aratus *Phaen.* 303 = Martin (1974) 228: ἐπὶ τῆς ἐσχάτης νὺκτος, ἤγουν ἐπὶ ὄρθρου.

[32] *Cf.* Dissen (1830) *ad loc.*; Fennell (1899) *ad loc.*; Slater (1969) *s.v.* ὄψιος (endorsing the sense 'towards dawn'); Privitera (1982) *ad loc.*; Willcock (1995) *ad loc.* ('in the last part of night'). The bare noun νύξ would have been sufficient to convey the idea of darkness (for example Pind. *Ol.* 1.2), which is still present in Pindar's

more complex expression (contrast Thummer (1968–1969) *ad loc.*; Köhnken (1971) 110). As far as I can tell, in Archaic and Classical Greek poetry 'late at night' (or some similar phrase) is never used to express the idea 'in complete darkness'. Speakers of (American) English should beware of being misled by our idiomatic phrase 'late night'. On the puzzling epic phrase νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶι, see Vergados (2013) on *Hymn. Hom.* 4.7.

[33] See LSJ⁹ *s.vv.* δείλη and ὀψία (not attested as a noun by itself in the Archaic and Classical periods). An implication of impending darkness is clear at Dem. 57.9 (δείλης ὀψίας ... σκότος).

[34] *Cf.* LSJ⁹ *s.v.* ὀψέ 3. An implication of impending darkness is clear at Thuc. 4.25.1–2 (ὀψὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ... νὺξ ἐπεγένετο).

Ajax's late-night suicide is intricately woven into the symbolic economy of Pindar's ode. Ajax killed himself in the gloom of ignominy and in the dark pre-dawn hours, but the resplendent sun-like light of Homer's immortal poetry ensures that his excellence will never lapse into obscurity.[35] The interconnected light imagery of *Isthmian* 4 runs the course of a full day, from the morning star (23–24), to just before dawn (35b–36), to the sun (41–42), to a flame blazing through the night (65–66). It is *prima facie* more likely that Pindar refers to the well-known time of Ajax's suicide as a particular detail drawn from a particular poem rather than a stable feature of the mythological tradition.[36] The logic of our passage supports this inference. Pindar refers to Homer's poetry as something transmitted intact through time and widely known among his contemporaries (δι' ἀνθρώπων: 37; 'among mankind'). It is reasonable to suppose that lines 35b–36 contain a sign-posted allusion to the *Aethiopis* as just such an enduring Homeric poem familiar to Pindar's audiences. ἴστε μάν (35), 'surely you know', thematizes shared knowledge and calls attention to an intertextual background.[37] The reference to Ajax's nocturnal suicide exploits the widespread reception of Homeric epic which this passage celebrates. Audiences do know how Ajax killed himself late at night and they know this through Homer's poetry.

Pindar's description of Homer's achievement also suggests that more than the *Iliad* is at issue here. The *Iliad* famously narrates just a brief sliver of time from the ten-year Trojan War; Pindar credits Homer with a complete record of Ajax's achievements (πᾶσαν … ἀρετάν: 38).[38] One expects that, for Pindar's contemporaries, such a complete record would by definition include Ajax's achievements during the fight over Achilles' corpse, events described in the same cyclic epic to which *Isthmian* 4 earlier seems to allude.[39] According to the *Aethiopis* (*arg.* 3), Ajax killed Glaucus and carried Achilles' body from the fray.[40] The Archaic iconographic record frequently features Ajax with Achilles' corpse.[41] Pindar himself elsewhere prominently refers to Ajax's martial achievements on the day of Achilles' death (*Nem.* 8.28–32).

Frank Nisetich instead argues that Pindar contrasts the *Aethiopis*-poet with Homer, poet of the *Iliad*, and his arguments have found traction with other scholars.[42] The most important phrase for

[35] Homer's poetry is likened to the sun, which Ajax, in the *Aethiopis*, did not live to see rise. ἀκτίς (*Isthm.* 4.42) is a common term for a sunbeam: *cf.* LSJ[9] and Slater (1969) *s.v.* The unending worldwide travel of Homer's poetry recalls the unending worldwide travel of the sun: *cf.* Mimn. 12; Bacchyl. 13.175–81; Segal (1981) 75; Hutchinson (2012) 279–80. On the light imagery of *Isthmian* 4, see McNeal (1978); Segal (1981).

[36] In Sophocles' *Ajax* the eponymous protagonist kills himself during the daytime: *cf.* Ov. *Met.* 13.391–92; Quint. Smyrn. 5. Nisetich (1989) 13, which denies that Pindar attributes the *Aethiopis* to Homer, nonetheless regards a reference to the *Aethiopis* in *Isthmian* 4 as a 'strong' likelihood. The *Little Iliad* (*arg.* 1) also described Ajax's suicide, but we do not know at what time of day it occurred in that poem. It seems significant that the Pindaric scholia invoke the *Aethiopis* but not the *Little Iliad* as a precedent for the myth of *Isthmian* 4.

[37] The particle is best taken as emphatic: *cf.* λέγοντι μάν (*Ol.* 9.49); λέγονται μάν (*Pyth.* 3.88); ἴστε μάν (*Isthm.* 3.15); Hummel (1993) 404. *Isthm.* 4.34–35 seems to allude elliptically to the rhetorical skill displayed by Odysseus in defeating Ajax to win the armour of Achilles: *cf. Nem.* 7.23–27, 8.23–28; Privitera (1982) 178–79; Köhnken (1971) 108–09. This contest in speech could reflect the version of the *Aethiopis* (*cf.* Davies (1989) 57; (2016) 79–81); Rutherford (2015) 454–55

reviews this complex issue. *Isthm.* 4.35–42, on the reading adopted here, provides support for this hypothesis: *cf.* Sbardella (1998) 7–12. Pindar's brief references certainly presuppose a well-known story: *cf. LIMC* 1.1 *s.v.* Aias pp. 326–27.

[38] Nisetich (1989) 12 instead takes πᾶσαν (38) to refer to the fact that Homer has immortalized Ajax 'completely'. But this unusual sense of the adjective would be otiose here. The adjective is more naturally given a more normal meaning: 'his entire achievement': Race (1997) 2.169.

[39] *Cf.* Wilamowitz (1922) 339; Fitch (1924) 58–59. Contrast Rutherford (2015) 457, who writes that *Isthmian* 4 makes 'adequate sense if we understand "Homer" as the author of the *Iliad* … there is no need to infer reference to the Cycle here'.

[40] *Cf.* Bernabé (1996) 70; West (2013) 152. Contrast Nisetich (1989) 9, who writes that there was, 'as far as we can tell, no praise of [Ajax] in the *Aethiopis*'.

[41] *LIMC* 1.1 *s.v.* Achilleus pp. 185–93; Simon (2003) 11–15.

[42] Nisetich (1989) 11–12: 'Pindar's mention of "Homer" seems rather to exclude than to identify the author of the *Aethiopis* or of any other poem depicting Ajax's disgrace and death.' The *Odyssey*, which Pindar attributes to Homer pretty explicitly (*Nem.* 7.20–21), does not directly depict Ajax's 'disgrace and death' but

Nisetich's interpretation is ἀλλ' Ὅμηρός τοι (37), 'but Homer, to be sure'. This marks a contrast, as Nisetich asserts, but the most relevant contrast is between Ajax's rocky relationship with his contemporaries (the topic of the immediately preceding clause) and his posthumous redemption (36b–37), not between Homer and some unnamed poet.[43] In his paraphrase of these lines Nisetich (1989) 12 omits Ajax's contemporaries and inserts Arctinus: '"you know (through Arctinus, perhaps) that Ajax committed suicide, but as you (also) know, Homer has exalted his worth completely, putting it beyond the reach of death"'.

Why should our passage mark a distinction between two poets, one named and praised at length, the other unnamed and unmentioned? In Pindar's day Homer and the author of Trojan cyclic epics were often taken to be one and the same person (see n.17 above). Nisetich (1989) 76, n.19 concedes that a 'wider definition of "Homer" in Pindar's time' is a 'fact'. If the poet were making an unusual distinction in *Isthmian* 4, one expects that he would have made that distinction clearer (*cf.* Hdt. 2.117). On the contrary, he affirms the truth of Ajax's nocturnal suicide (35) and then affirms that Homer was a truthful eulogist of Ajax (37–39).[44] There may well have been some in Pindar's day who doubted or denied that the *Aethiopis* was the work of Homer (cf. *fr.* 265), but one expects *Isthmian* 4 to reflect the most common understanding of Homer's oeuvre since this epinician directs itself, like Homeric epic, to a universal audience (40–45).

Finally, it is not clear how an opposition between Homer and the *Aethiopis*-poet would contribute to the meaning of *Isthmian* 4 as a whole. On the contrary, it seems important to the consolatory rhetoric of this ode that both Pindar and Homer memorialize tragedy and triumph alike. Pindar tells of Melissus' resplendent victory (18–23) but also of the gloomy death of his relatives in battle (16–17b); Homer tells of Ajax's resplendent achievements but also of his gloomy death.[45]

Another Pindaric passage provides some further support for this interpretation of Ajax's suicide in *Isthmian* 4. *Nemean* 7 mentions Ajax's suicide (24–27) immediately after citing Homer's *Odyssey* (20–21) and immediately before alluding to Homer's *Iliad*.[46] It is a natural if not logically necessary inference that Ajax's suicide was also narrated in epic poetry commonly attributed to Homer.[47]

I conclude that *Isthmian* 4 alludes to the *Aethiopis* as a widely known poem composed by Homer. It seems that Pindar's contemporaries knew of Ajax's nocturnal suicide through the *Aethiopis* in the same way that they knew of Odysseus' 'suffering' (πάθαν: *Nem.* 7.21)[48] through the *Odyssey* (διὰ τὸν ἀδυεπῆ … Ὅμηρον; 'because of sweet-speaking Homer': *Nem.* 7.21).

it does presume and activate knowledge of this traditional story: *Od.* 11.543–64 with Heubeck in Heubeck and Hoekstra (1989) 109. Nisetich (1989) 11, however, takes Pindar's Homer to be a radically protean figure and claims that 'Pindar's praise of "Homer" in *Isthmian* 4 does not include the poet of the *Odyssey*.' The wrestling match between Odysseus and Ajax at *Il.* 23.700–39 has been thought to foreshadow their later, graver conflict: for example Kullmann (1960) 81–82, 335.

[43] Wilamowitz (1922) 338–39; Fitch (1924) 58; Farnell (1930–1932) 3.351–52; Thummer (1968–1969) 2.74; McNeal (1978) 151–52; Segal (1981) 76; Willcock (1995) 79.

[44] Contrast *Nem.* 7.20–24. ὀρθώσαις (*Isthm.* 4.38) does not necessarily imply a correction (see Slater (1969) *s.v.*) but it does, in this context, imply correctness. There is no suggestion that any poet has dishonoured Ajax. ἀλκὰν φοίνιον (35b) acknowledges Ajax's praiseworthiness and anticipates πᾶσαν … ἀρετάν (38).

[45] *Isthmian* 4 also affords an unusual amount of attention to how the victor's family had previously failed to win at the major Panhellenic games; this introduces the myth of Ajax, who failed to win the armour of Achilles (28–36b).

[46] ὃν κράτιστον Ἀχιλέος ἄτερ μάχαι | ξανθῶι Μενέλαι δάμαρτα κομίσαι θοαῖς | ἂν ναυσὶ πόρευσαν εὐθυπνόου Ζεφύροιο πομπαί | πρὸς Ἴλου πόλιν (27–30). The idea of Ajax as second-best after Achilles was presumably traditional, but otherwise gratuitous mention of ships travelling to Troy recalls the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships in particular, where the narrator identifies Ajax as the best fighter while Achilles abstained from battle (*Il.* 2.768–70; *cf.* Ibyc. S151.32–35 *PMGF*; Köhnken (1971) 61, n.122).

[47] Fitch (1924) 59; West (2013) 28.

[48] Köhnken (1971) 68; Mann (1994) 327; Loscalzo (2000) *ad loc.* and others plausibly posit a reference to the proem of the *Odyssey* (1.4: πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντωι πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν).

A general point might be thought to militate against this specific contention. In several odes Pindar narrates at some length material also narrated in cyclic epics; he never narrates at comparable length any episode from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.[49] Pindar might treat cyclic epic somewhat differently from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not because he supposed that these works were composed by different poets but rather because of the unique status and distinctive style of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[50] Already during the Archaic period these two epics seem to have been singularly well-known, singularly canonical texts.[51] The cyclic epics, which recounted more mythological material at a faster pace,[52] might have afforded Pindar greater opportunity to expand on certain episodes.[53] A desire to produce his own distinctive and potentially authoritative mythical narratives might have led Pindar to engage in a somewhat different way with less canonical and more compressed 'Homeric' epics which later became part of the epic cycle.[54] Indeed, it is worthwhile trying to establish that Pindar drew on cyclic epic in part because this connection would enable us to better appreciate his rather different relationship to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

II. Convergences and diverges

Isthmian 4 is not the only Pindaric ode which narrates an episode from Trojan myth in agreement with cyclic epic. Μύσιον <u>ἀμπελόεν</u> | αἵμαξε Τηλέφου μέλανι ῥαίνων φόνωι πεδίον ('he [sc. Achilles] bloodied the <u>vine-clad</u> plain of Mysia, sprinkling it with Telephus' dark gore': *Isthm.* 8.49–50), for example, hints at the vine which tripped Telephus and enabled Achilles to wound him, an episode narrated in the *Cypria* (*arg.* 7).[55] But there are also Pindaric passages at variance with cyclic epic. In the *Little Iliad* (*arg.* 2) and, to my knowledge, all other versions, Philoctetes is healed when he finally arrives at Troy; in *Pythian* 1, by contrast, Philoctetes is not restored but rather, like Pindar's ailing patron Hieron, enters battle while suffering (ἀσθενεῖ μὲν χρωτὶ βαίνων; 'he walked with infirm flesh': 55).[56] Pindar gestures toward a traditional background through the *dicitur* motif (φαντί; 'they say': 52) but offers a version of the myth custom tailored to fit his *laudandus*.

Rutherford discusses several other points of agreement and disagreement between Pindar and the epic cycle.[57] What are we to make of this varied material? First, it is important to stress that there is a fundamental asymmetry in potential probative value between instances of agreement and instances of disagreement. Pindar was free, even incentivized, to offer his own distinctive version of well-known mythological episodes. Instances of disagreement can thus do little to establish the negative conclusion that the poet did not know and did not draw on cyclic epic. Instances of agreement can have a different evidentiary force for the positive hypothesis that Pindar did know and did draw on cyclic epic. A Pindaric passage might display such close symmetries with a cyclic passage so as to make allusion the only acceptable hypothesis. A single instance of such convergence would establish the positive conclusion.

[49] The same generally holds true for Bacchylides. But Bacchylides 13 is a telling exception: that ode narrates material from the *Iliad* and extensively discusses poetic fame so as to recall Homeric precedent (168–81 with Fearn (2007) 120–22).

[50] For Pindar the *Iliad* is a more important intertext than the *Odyssey*. This presumably does not entail that he and his contemporaries regarded the *Iliad* as somehow more truly the work of Homer.

[51] *Cf.* Graziosi (2002) 240. Note 66 below collects passages from the Classical era which react to cyclic Trojan epics as fixed texts; it would be much easier to collect a much longer list of passages that react to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as fixed texts.

[52] *Cf.* Griffin (1977) 50; Sammons (2017) 219–20.

[53] Similarly Fantuzzi (2015) 407 on the appeal of

cyclic epic to tragedians: *cf.* Arist. *Poet*. 1459b.

[54] Compare and contrast Stoneman (1981) 62–63; Mann (1994) 333–36; Rutherford (2015) 452.

[55] The story of the vine is recorded in Apollod. *Epit*. 3.17 and attributed to οἱ νεώτεροι by the Homeric scholia (D *Il*. 1.59 van Thiel). I follow Bernabé (1996) 56–57; West (2003) 72 and others in supposing that it featured in the *Cypria*.

[56] *Cf.* Gentili *et al.* (1995) on *Pyth*. 1.54–56. ἀσθενεῖ μὲν χρωτὶ <u>βαίνων</u> (55) looks to the snake bite on Philoctetes' foot (cf. *Il*. 2.721–23; *Cypria arg*. 9). τελεύτασέν τε πόνους Δαναοῖς (*Pyth*. 1.54) and ἀλλὰ μοιρίδιον ἦν (55) look to the tradition that Troy could not be taken without Philoctetes and without Heracles' bow: cf. *Little Iliad arg*. 2; West (2013) 181–82.

[57] Rutherford (2015) 450–52, 454–55.

Nemean 10 provides the single strongest candidate for such convergence. Pindar describes a conflict between the Dioscuri and the Apharetidae (60–65):

> τὸν γὰρ Ἴδας ἀμφὶ βουσίν πως χολω-
>   θεὶς ἔτρωσεν χαλκέας λόγχας ἀκμᾶι.
> ἀπὸ Ταϋγέτου πεδαυγά-
>   ζων ἴδεν Λυγκεὺς δρυὸς ἐν στελέχει
> ἡμένους. κείνου γὰρ ἐπιχθονίων πάν-
>   των γένετ’ ὀξύτατον
> ὄμμα. λαιψηροῖς δὲ πόδεσσιν ἄφαρ
> ἐξικέσθαν, καὶ μέγα ἔργον ἐμήσαντ’ ὠκέως
> καὶ πάθον δεινὸν παλάμαις Ἀφαρητί-
>   δαι Διός·

For Idas, somehow angry about cattle, wounded him [sc. Castor] with the point of his bronze spear. Looking out from Taygetus, Lynceus had seen them sitting in the hollow trunk of an oak tree, for of all mortals he had the sharpest eyesight. The sons of Aphareus came at once on swift feet and quickly devised a mighty deed, and they suffered terribly at the hands of Zeus.

The Pindaric scholia, discussing the text of line 62,[58] transmit a relevant passage from the *Cypria* (*fr.* 16):

> αἶψα δὲ Λυγκεύς
> Τηΰγετον προσέβαινε ποσὶν ταχέεσσι πεποιθώς,
> ἀκρότατον δ’ ἀναβὰς διεδέρκετο νῆσον ἄπασαν
> Τανταλίδεω Πέλοπος· τάχα δ’ εἴσιδε κύδιμος ἥρως
> δεινοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἔσω κοίλης δρυὸς ἄμφω,
> Κάστορά θ’ ἱππόδαμον καὶ ἀεθλοφόρον Πολυδεύκεα.
> νύξε δ’ ἄρ’ ἄγχι στὰ<ς> μεγάλην δρῦν …[59]

At once Lynceus climbed Taygetus, relying on his swift legs, and going up to the summit he surveyed the whole island of Pelops the Tantalid. And with his formidable eyes the glorious hero soon spotted them both sitting inside a hollow oak, Castor the horse-tamer and prize-winner Polydeuces. And [Idas] stood up close and stabbed the great oak …

Both Aristarchus and Didymus adduced these lines in support of their reading of *Nem.* 10.62 (Schol. *N.* 10.104a). It is in itself significant that two ancient scholars, who read far more cyclic epic than we can read today, supposed that Pindar was closely following these lines and used them as evidence. Long ago Albert Severyns wrote that 'Pindare a connu et utilisé cette partie des *Chants Cypriens*: tout le monde s'accorde à le connaître, et il ne vaut pas la peine d'y insister.'[60] It now seems important to argue for a connection and also evaluate its wider implications for Pindar's poetry and for early Greek literary history.[61]

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[58] See Henry (2005) 112–13 for arguments in favour of the correct reading ἡμένους.

[59] At the end of line 7 West (2003) 96 prints Ribbeck's <ὄμβριμος Ἴδας>. *Cypria* fr. 17 shows that Idas was in fact the missing subject. The Pindaric scholia (*Nem.* 10.114b) instead take Lynceus to be the subject, but the scholiast may have had no more of the *Cypria* passage before him than we do (Braswell (2013) 242) or the text of the scholia may be corrupt (see Drachmann's apparatus).

[60] Severyns (1932) 262. *Cf.* Staehlin (1903) 183: 'es ist kein Zweifel, daß Pindar von der Erzählung der Kyprien ausgeht'; Wilamowitz (1922) 428: 'hier kennen wir seine Vorlage, die Kyprien'. More recently, Sbardella (2003) 137 mentions 'il forte grado di dipendenza del testo pindarico dal modello epico'.

[61] Rutherford (2015) 459: *Nemean* 10 'may well draw on, elaborate and adapt the version in the *Cypria*. Even here, however, it is impossible to be certain, and it cannot be ruled out that [Pindar's] primary source was

Nemean 10 agrees with the *Cypria* in numerous broad points of plot: Castor was mortal but Polydeuces was immortal (*Nem.* 10.80–82; *Cypria arg.* 3; *fr.* 9); the Dioscouri and Apharetidae fought over cattle (*Nem.* 10.60; *Cypria arg.* 3; contrast, for example, Theoc. 22.137–38);[62] Lynceus spotted the Dioscouri (*Nem.* 10.61–62; *Cypria* fr. 16); Idas stabbed and killed Castor (*Nem.* 10.59–60; *Cypria arg.* 3; *frr.* 16.7, 17); Zeus granted the Dioscouri immortality on alternating days (*Nem.* 10.55–57; *Cypria arg.* 3; contrast, for example, *Il.* 3.236–44). In only one respect does Pindar certainly depart from his cyclic model in a major way:[63] in the *Cypria* Polydeuces kills both Apharetidae (*arg.* 3); in *Nemean* 10 Zeus kills Idas (71–72). This looks like pointed adaptation. Zeus' intervention evinces the trustworthy nature of the divine (cf. *Nem.* 10.54) and points up the importance of genealogical lineage (cf. 37–38, 50–51), both themes of particular interest to Theaeus of Argos and to Pindar's epinician composed for him.

The congruencies between *Nemean* 10 and the *Cypria* go deeper than the level of plot. Presumably Lynceus' extraordinary eyesight was a traditional feature of myth, not the exclusive property of any single text.[64] But what about his lookout from Mount Taygetus? What about the hollow δρῦς in which he spies the Dioscouri?[65] What about the conjunction of both? These details are omitted from Proclus' brisk summary of the *Cypria* (*arg.* 3), our primary source for its plot. Such minutiae, which make no substantial contribution to the themes of *Nemean* 10, are most plausibly explained as pointed allusions to a poem known to at least some among Pindar's audiences. This is credible. Pindar may well have explicitly attributed the *Cypria* to Homer (see section I); he elsewhere makes similarly detailed allusions to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Later authors engage with cyclic Trojan epics as fixed texts,[66] and Pindar may have done the same.

Nemean 10 seems to react to the *Cypria* much as Theocritus 22 reacts in turn to *Nemean* 10 by both picking up and varying some distinctive features of its predecessor.[67] Indeed, Pindar may engage with his cyclic model not just on the level of narrative details but even on the still more fine-grained level of diction.[68] λαιψηροῖς δὲ πόδεσσιν ἄφαρ ('at once on swift feet': *Nem.* 10.63) may look to αἶψα … ποσὶν ταχέεσσι ('at once … swift feet': *Cypria fr.* 16.1–2). At first glance this might seem like nothing more significant than a coincidental overlap in colourless poetic language. But Pindar, and perhaps also the *Cypria*, could be playing on the name of the Ἀφαρητίδαι (*Nem.* 10.65), 'the sons of Mr Quick'.[69] In any event these parallel pleonasms in parallel contexts are at least noteworthy.

something different, such as the narrative of an otherwise unknown traditional cult hymn to the Tyndaridae.' Parsimony militates against conjecturing an unknown text. On that thesis, moreover, one might have to posit that a conjectural hymn also influenced the *Cypria* (or *vice versa*). Pindar's odes often engage with canonical hexameter texts; they never, as far as we can tell, draw on local cult hymns. In my opinion we need not posit Alcman rather than (or in addition to) the *Cypria* as Pindar's model: compare and contrast Gengler (2003) 138–39.

[62] In the *Cypria* the Dioscouri are caught stealing cattle from Idas and Lynceus (*arg.* 3). Pindar's vague introduction to the story (πως: *Nem.* 10.60) protects the Dioscouri, who are cited as moral *exempla* (54), from explicit negative associations. In epic, cattle raiding is a relatively unproblematic practice (cf. *Od.* 23.356–57; Thuc. 1.5; McInerney (2010) 98–102); matters are different for Pindar: cf. *frr.* 81, 169a.1–8.

[63] One wonders how much of Apollodorus' more extensive account (*Bibl.* 3.11.2) goes back to the *Cypria*: cf. Stoneman (1976) 229–32; Henry (2005) 110–11; West (2013) 94, 96.

[64] *Cf.* Gow (1950) on Theoc. 22.194.

[65] Against the majority of scholars, Staehlin (1903) 191–92, Huxley (1975) 20, Davies (1989) 42 and Rutherford (2015) 458 hold that the Dioscouri are sitting on the stump of the oak, not inside its trunk. But for that sense one expects ἐπί rather than ἐν (*Nem.* 10.61). Neither the Pindaric scholia nor the ancient scholars cited there understood the Greek thus. The link with the *Cypria* also weighs against this reading (ἔσω: *fr.* 16.5).

[66] Hdt 2.117 is thought to incorporate language from the *Cypria*: *cf.* conjecturally reconstructed verses recorded at Bernabé (1996) 52. Euripides seems to allude repeatedly to *Cypria fr.* 1 in a fairly detailed manner: Currie (2015) 295. Ar. *Eq.* 1056–57 plays with a passage from the *Little Iliad* (*fr.* 2). Pl. *Euthphr.* 12a–b quotes the *Cypria* (*fr.* 29).

[67] *Cf.* Sens (1997) 168.

[68] The *Cypria* might use the word δρῦς in a generic sense to denote any tree (see Bond (1981) on Eur. *HF* 241); elsewhere Pindar apparently uses the word to refer to the oak in particular: Braswell (1988) on *Pyth.* 4.264.

[69] So Bury (1890) on *Nem.* 10.63 and Stern (1969) 129; note ὠκέως (64). For etymological play with proper

Nemean 10 provides crucial and unique evidence for Pindar's relationship to cyclic epic more generally. Section I argues that *Isthmian* 4 implies the existence of a notionally stable text of the *Aethiopis* transmitted intact through time. *Nemean* 10 evidently engages with the cyclic *Cypria* as just such a fixed text. Were it not for the fragment of the *Cypria* preserved in the Pindaric scholia, we would be able to say nothing more than what we can say about many other Pindaric odes, that *Nemean* 10 narrates a myth also covered in the epic cycle. One of the most extensive fragments from any lost Trojan epic allows us a rare and hence all the more valuable opportunity to detect a more substantial interaction, as the integrally preserved *Iliad* and *Odyssey* enable us to discern similarly extensive interactions elsewhere in Pindar. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together comprise around 27,000 hexameters; from the 11 books of the *Cypria* known to Proclus, only around 50 hexameters have survived the long and perilous journey into West's Loeb, which prints just two fragments of any cyclic epic longer than the seven lines of *Cypria fr.* 16. It is sobering to imagine what insight we might gain if some benevolent god were to hand us complete texts of the cyclic epics known to Pindar and his audiences. *Nemean* 10 and *Cypria fr.* 16 offer tantalizing hints of what we might be missing.

III. Indices of intertextuality

Nemean 10 provides no explicit indication that it engages, as it evidently does, with the *Cypria*. Two other odes might, like *Isthmian* 4 and unlike *Nemean* 10, signal an intertextual relationship with cyclic epic. *Nemean* 6 advertises its reliance not on the immortal Muses but rather on a mortal tradition (48–54):

> … πέταται δ' ἐπί τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσας τηλόθεν
> ὄνυμ' αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐς Αἰθίοπας
> Μέμνονος οὐκ ἀπονοστή-
>   σαντος ἔπαλτο· βαρὺ δέ σφιν
> νεῖκος Ἀχιλεύς
> ἔμπεσε χαμαὶ καταβαὶς ἀφ' ἁρμάτων,
>
> φαεννᾶς υἱὸν εὖτ' ἐνάριξεν Ἀόος ἀκμᾶι
> ἔγχεος ζακότοιο. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν παλαιότεροι
> ὁδὸν ἁμαξιτὸν εὗρον· ἕπο-
>   μαι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔχων μελέταν.

… and their name [sc. that of the Aeacidae] flies far away over the land and through the sea, and it leapt even to the Ethiopians, when Memnon did not return. Upon them fell a heavy opponent, Achilles, after stepping down from his chariot onto the ground, when he slew the son of shining Dawn with the point of his raging spear. Men of old discovered in these deeds a highway, and I myself follow along, making it my concern.

Achilles' duel with Memnon was also narrated in the cyclic *Aethiopis* (*arg.* 2) and constituted an important episode in that poem, as its very title indicates.[70] It has been suggested in passing that Pindar's παλαιότεροι (*Nem.* 6.53), 'men of old', implicates the *Aethiopis*.[71] More developed arguments can be marshalled in favour of this proposal.

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names in Pindar, cf. *Ol.* 6.53–57, 9.44–46 and *fr.* 33c–33d. For similar play in the *Cypria*, cf. *fr.* 5.1–3 and 10.2–6.

[70] In *Nemean* 3 the same episode is linked to widespread and enduring glory: τηλαυγὲς ἄραρε φέγγος Αἰακιδᾶν αὐτόθεν (64).

[71] For example Nisetich (1989) 22; Gerber (1999) 78; West (2013) 147.

Pindar reiterates a familiar theme, and his narrative is bracketed by references to its renown. πέταται (48, present), 'flies', depicts the Aeacidae's fame as a contemporary fact in the world. ὁδὸν ἀμαξιτόν (54), 'highway', highlights the popularity of a well-trodden story.[72] The central myth of *Nemean* 6, which is exceptionally short,[73] depends on its audiences' shared background knowledge of a longer tale. Resonant details bear this out. ζακότοιο (53), 'exceedingly angry',[74] probably glances at Achilles' anger at the death of his friend Antilochus (cf. *Aethiopis arg*. 2).[75] φαεννᾶς υἱόν … Ἀόος (52), 'the son of shining Dawn', probably glances at Dawn winning immortality for her son (cf. *Aethiopis arg*. 2).

Here we run up against a familiar dilemma: does *Nemean* 6 advertise its dependence on a particular poem or on a mythological tradition? Several considerations support the former alternative. Pindar follows a path established by 'men of old'; this suggests a basic commonality of purpose between the contemporary praise poet and his predecessors (ἕπομαι; 'I follow': 54). In Pindar paths and roads are common metaphors for poetry.[76] εὑρίσκω, 'discover', elsewhere denotes poetic composition.[77] Something may be 'discovered' only once.[78] The plural παλαιότεροι (53), 'men of old', is compatible with reference (at least primarily) to a particular poetic precedent. Thus, for instance, *Pythian* 3.80, which signals an allusion to the *Iliad* (see n.10 above), cites a plurality of 'earlier men' (προτέρων). Other passages similarly use vague references to traditions in order to point up allusions to specific poems.[79]

Some may think that such considerations do not amount to proof that *Nemean* 6 refers to the *Aethiopis* in particular rather than a broader mythological tradition. But these alternatives are not mutually exclusive. Section I claims that *Isthmian* 4 refers to the *Aethiopis* as a poem widely known to Pindar's contemporaries. If this is correct, then this epic constituted an important part of a broader mythological tradition. As it would be misguided to equate myths with poems, so it would be misguided to oppose mythology and poetry. Poetry, as Pindar stresses, played a central role in shaping his audiences' understanding of the past.[80] As his references to his patrons' future fame can include his own epinician but also other channels of memorialization,[81] so too references to the afterlife of the Trojan War may include cyclic epic and also other channels of memorialization, from non-epic poetry (*Isthm*. 5.26–29) to everyday speech (*Pyth*. 3.112).[82] When Pindar refers to

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[72] Pindar follows an established course as others have followed before him (ἕπομαι δὲ <u>καὶ</u> αὐτός: *Nem*. 6.54). Compare and contrast τρι]πτὸν κατ' ἀμαξιτόν (*Pae*. 7b.11 with the text of Rutherford (2001a) 243), of Homer's poetry and the *Hymn to Apollo* in particular. *Pyth*. 4.247 (μακρά μοι νεῖσθαι κατ' ἀμαξιτόν) makes a rather different point: there a long highway is opposed with a shortcut (οἶμον … βραχύν: 248).

[73] Gerber (1999) 75: 'the myth here takes up a much smaller proportion of the ode than in any other ode with central myth'.

[74] *Cf*. schol. *Nem*. 6.85c. The adjective does not imply anything about the points of Achilles' spear (schol. 85b).

[75] *Cf*. West (2013) 145–46; Rengakos (2015) 307. Pind. *Nem*. 3.61–63 mentions Achilles' determination to kill Memnon. *Pyth*. 6.28–43 describes the death of Antilochus.

[76] Nünlist (1998) 228–64.

[77] Gerber (1982) on *Ol*. 1.110; Davies and Finglass (2014) 496.

[78] εὗρον (*Nem*. 6.54, aorist); *cf*. εὑρὼν ὁδὸν λόγων (*Ol*. 1.110).

[79] For example τις λόγος (Simon. 579 *PMG*),

looking to Hes. *Op*. 289–92, and λέγοντι (Pind. *Ol*. 9.49), looking to the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*: *cf*. D'Alessio (2005) 226–27. See, in general, Scodel (2001) 124–25; Pavlou (2012) 107–09. The 'Hellenistic footnote' (Ross (1975) 78) functions similarly. For the plural in our passage, *cf*. προτέρων (Pind. *Pyth*. 3.80); σοφοί (*Pyth*. 3.112); φαντί (*Pyth*. 6.21); σοφῶν (*Isthm*. 8.47). Analogous plurals appear elsewhere: for example Thuc. 1.11; Theoc. 17.6 with Hunter (2003) 102.

[80] *Pyth*. 1.92–94; Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν', ἀνθρώπων φάτις | ἐξ ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοί | ἅρμοσαν, γινώσκομεν (*Pyth*. 3.112–14); ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς ἔσοπτρον ἴσαμεν ἑνὶ σὺν τρόπωι, | εἰ Μναμοσύνας ἕκατι λιπαράμπυκος | εὕρηται ἄποινα μόχθων κλυταῖς ἐπέων ἀοιδαῖς (*Nem*. 7.14–16); ἀμνάμονες δὲ βροτοί, | ὅ τι μὴ σοφίας ἄωτον ἄκρον | κλυταῖς ἐπέων ῥοαῖσιν ἐξίκηται ζυγέν (*Isthm*. 7.17–19); *fr*. 121.2–4. The last three passages make poetry the *sole* medium through which the past is remembered in the present. In this matter the professional poet Pindar of Thebes had reason to exaggerate.

[81] Cf. *Ol*. 11.4–6; Currie (2004) 54–55.

[82] On non-literary modes of mythological discourse, see now Finkelberg (2014).

Hector's enduring fame,[83] one may readily suppose that for his contemporary audiences this would have summoned to mind the *Iliad*, whatever else it might have evoked. *Nemean* 6 may refer to a composite mythological tradition including but not limited to the *Aethiopis*, yet it is reasonable to suppose that the supremely self-conscious poet Pindar is, here and elsewhere, especially concerned with his relationship to older canonical poetry. The diction of our passages supports this inference.

Isthmian 8, like *Nemean* 6, may signal an intertextual relationship with cyclic poetry. Themis proposes that Thetis be married to a mortal (35a–45a), and then Pindar begins to describe the consequences of Thetis' union with Peleus (46–48):

> ἐπέων δὲ καρπός
> οὐ κατέφθινε. φαντὶ γὰρ ξύν' ἀλέγειν
> καὶ γάμον Θέτιος ἄ-
>   νακτα, καὶ νεαρὰν ἔδειξαν σοφῶν
> στόματ' ἀπείροισιν ἀρετὰν Ἀχιλέος.

> And the fruit of her [sc. Themis'] words did not wither away, for they say that the lord [i.e. Zeus? Peleus?] joined the others in favouring the marriage of Thetis, and the mouths of wise men have revealed Achilles' youthful excellence to those unaware of it.

After these lines there follows a highlight reel of Achilles' career: from wounding Telephus (49–50; cf. *Cypria arg.* 7), to killing Hector and Memnon (54–55; cf. *Il.* 22; *Aethiopis arg.* 2) and finally to Achilles' own funeral at which the Muses honoured him with a threnody (56a–60; cf. *Od.* 24.60–62; *Aethiopis arg.* 4).[84] Nothing here was not recounted in Homeric or cyclic epic; nothing here, as far as we can tell, basically disagrees with Homeric or cyclic epic.[85] Hector's death, narrated in the *Iliad*, is put on a par with Achilles' other achievements narrated in other Trojan epics (cf. *Ol.* 2.81–82; *Isthm.* 5.39–42).

Lines 46a–48, I suggest, signal that the following passage narrates material already treated more extensively in older epic poetry. νεαράν … ἀρετάν (47–48) refers to Achilles' 'youthful excellence' in battle, which is described in the immediately following verses.[86] σοφῶν (47), 'wise men', as often in Pindar, refers to poets.[87] Saying that poets informed the ignorant implies through

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[83] λέγεται μὰν Ἕκτορι μὲν κλέος ἀνθῆσαι Σκαμάνδρου χεύμασιν | ἀγχοῦ: *Nem.* 9.39–40.

[84] Mann (1994) 315 persuasively argues that this passage looks primarily to the *Aethiopis*: there the 'funeral was presented not as digression, but as part of the main course of the narrative'. Compare and contrast Sotiriou (1998) 242–44.

[85] One need not suppose with Thummer (1968–1969) *ad loc.* that Achilles here kills Telephus. Emphasis on blood (αἵμαξε … μέλανι ῥαίνων φόνου: 50) is compatible with wounding (LSJ⁹ *s.v.* φόνος I.4: 'blood when shed'). Compare τρῶσεν ἑῷ δορί: *Isthm.* 5.42, where emphasis on Achilles' spear glances at how the same weapon also healed Telephus. Whereas *Isthm.* 8.49–60 agree with cyclic epic, the preceding tale of Thetis' prophecy (26a–46a) very probably differs markedly from the *Cypria* (cf. Rutherford (2015) 456). In other words, Pindar appears to highlight the point at which his narrative comes into alignment with epic tradition.

[86] A reference to Achilles' exploits under Chiron's tutelage would be opaque: contrast Privitera (1982) on *Isthm.* 8.47–48. Warriors are generally young: cf. *Isthm.* 7.34. Youthful achievement is important to *Isthmian* 8

(ἁλικία: 1; ἁλίκων: 67; ἥβαν: 70). The fruit of Themis' words did not wither (46–46a) because (γάρ: 46a) Peleus did in fact marry Thetis (46a–47; *cf.* 44–45) and because Achilles was in fact an awesome force in battle (νεαράν … ἀρετάν: 47–48; *cf.* 36–37). ὃ καί (49) begins a new narrative arc and emphasizes the addition of fresh information: cf. *Hymn. Hom.* 4.20; Hes. [*Sc.*] 57; Pind. *Nem.* 3.33; *Isthm.* 5.35; compare and contrast Denniston (1954) 294–96.

[87] Farnell (1930–1932) and Thummer (1968–1969) *ad loc.* understand prophets. In Pindar this substantive adjective often denotes poets, never prophets: Slater (1969) *s.v.* σοφός b. Carey (1981) *ad loc.* understands poets contemporary with Achilles: *cf.* Maslov (2015) 270. Carey's interpretation entails the somewhat odd idea that bards had already canonized Achilles' boyish achievements before he travelled to Troy. οὐδὲ θανόντ' (56a) might imply that songs celebrated Achilles during his lifetime, but audiences cannot suspend their interpretation of σοφῶν (47) for 11 lines. The vague plural may implicate forgotten bards contemporary with Achilles and also the cyclic epics through which Pindar's contemporaries actually knew of his exploits.

a characteristic litotes[88] that no one is now ignorant of Achilles' youthful achievements; i.e. that everyone knows of them. The audience's shared background knowledge of this material justifies Pindar's cursory treatment of it. Again the subject matter of cyclic epic is presented as widely known (cf. *Nem.* 6.48–49; *Isthm.* 4.35–35b). Again Pindar's vague reference to previous poetry implicates cyclic epic (cf. *Nem.* 6.53–54).

IV. Conclusion

West (2013) 44 is right to assert in passing that 'it is in Pindar that we find the most striking response to the Cycle'. Pindar provides a key data point on which to plot the early reception of cyclic epic. Since this data point derives its meaning as such in relation to other data points which lie well outside the scope of this paper, this final section instead focuses on implications for the study of Pindar's poetry in particular. I briefly discuss how his audiences knew cyclic epic and address how far we can extrapolate from the preceding arguments. To close I suggest one particular way in which recognizing Pindar's allusions to lost epic can enrich our understanding of his preserved lyric.

So far this essay has been mostly absorbed in the detailed discussion of a few key passages. We should take a step back and consider the bigger picture. I have argued that some Pindaric odes refer to some cyclic epics as Homeric poems known to at least some among his fifth-century audiences throughout the Greek world. For the poet and many of his contemporaries, 'Homeric epic' entailed fixed texts and included texts largely unavailable to us. This should not be a surprising conclusion for this period. Simonides offers a *verbatim* quotation of a line of the *Iliad* (Simon. 19.2 West $IE^2 \rightarrow Il.$ 6.146), to my knowledge the earliest in the historical record, but also refers to an otherwise unknown Homeric account of the funeral games for Pelias (564 *PMG*).

How would Pindar's contemporaries have attained the knowledge required to appreciate the sort of allusions posited throughout this essay? While Pindar's creative freedom makes him at best a problematic resource for the perilous project of reconstructing vanished texts, he does provide important witness to the early performance history of cyclic epic. *Nemean* 2 refers to the Homeridae (1–3), a group of rhapsodes who performed the work of their ostensible namesake, and then alludes to one particular scene from the *Iliad* (see n.11 above). In *Isthmian* 4 Homer has transmitted a complete account of Ajax' excellence 'for later men to play' (λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν: *Isthm.* 4.39). This refers to rhapsodic recitations of a sort familiar to Pindar's contemporaries.[89] Section I argues the Homer of this ode must be the author of more than just the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Scholars often hypothesize that the cyclic epics were in some sense more 'local' than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but Pindar depicts the *Aethiopis* as part of a paradigmatically super-local performance tradition.[90] Both *Nemean* 2 and *Isthmian* 4 look to the practice of rhapsodic performances of fixed epic texts as a frequent, widespread phenomenon (cf. τὰ πόλλ': *Nem.* 2.2; δι' ἀνθρώπων: *Isthm.* 4.37). Such performances will have constituted an important conduit through which Pindar's audiences derived knowledge of cyclic epics as well as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. We should not forget that in this era there were probably also readers of epic texts and amateur recitations as well.[91] Herodotus seems to have read his epic and to report much earlier rhapsodic performances of Theban epic in Sicyon.[92]

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[88] Cf. *Pyth.* 9.87–88 with Young (1979); *Isthm.* 6.24–37; Bacchyl. 9.53–55; Soph. *Ant.* 33–34; and, more generally, Köhnken (1976) and Race (1990) chapter 3.

[89] Privitera (1982) 180; Currie (2004) 65; *cf.* n.15 above; contrast Willcock (1995) 80.

[90] Finkelberg (2016) 35 notes that 'the performance history of the Cycle poems is yet to be written'. On the rhapsodic performance of cyclic epic, see Burgess (2004).

[91] Readers: West (2011); amateur recitations: Ar. *Pax* 1270.

[92] Herodotus as a reader of epic: Ford (2002) 148; Jensen (2011) 261. Rhapsodic performances of Theban epics: Hdt. 5.67.1 with Cingano (1985), still the fullest and, in my opinion, the most compelling discussion.

An argument by analogy has been central to the structure of this essay: we expect Pindar to refer to cyclic epics as stable texts because Pindar refers to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as such. Indeed, *Nemean* 10 evidently engages with a passage from the *Cypria* in substantially the same form as it was known to Aristarchus and Didymus centuries later. But there is a potential problem in generalizing from this conclusion. The cyclic epics may have in fact been relatively more fluid and 'multiform' than the two Homeric epics still read today.[93] Herodotus may have known a version of the *Cypria* different from that later summarized by Proclus (Hdt. 2.117; *Cypria arg.* 2). This possibility should give pause. This essay has sought to offer some evidence for the robust early stability of cyclic epics, but these considerations must be held in counterbalance with others.[94] Much here is dark; we owe it to ourselves to be guided by what little light is available.

When discussing Pindar's relationship to cyclic epic, it is best to refer to particular epics, not the Epic Cycle as a unified entity.[95] Rather than relying on broad generalizations, one should judge potential allusions on a case-by-case basis. This paper has discussed passages which provide the strongest available evidence for Pindar's engagement with cyclic epic and has sought to establish that Pindar engaged with two particular poems: the *Cypria* and the *Aethiopis*.[96] If the preceding arguments point in the right direction, then it is very probable that several other Pindaric odes also engage with these same two works.[97]

Can we extrapolate still further and suppose that Pindar alludes to other cyclic Trojan epics besides these two? Material also narrated in the *Little Iliad*, the *Sack of Ilion* and the *Returns* does feature in Pindar (as material from the *Telegony* does not), but we lack the same level of close correspondences and the same sort of signposted allusions to these epics which allow us to be relatively more confident about Pindar's relationship to the *Cypria* and the *Aethiopis* as well as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[98] It would be surprising if Pindar knew and engaged with four Trojan epics which circulated as texts attributed to Homer but did not know and did not engage with other epics which also circulated as texts and were also attributed to Homer. Building a case for an allusion to one of these other Trojan epics will thus involve assessing the cumulative evidence for (a) significant congruencies and divergences in content, (b) signposting of allusions and (c) external indications that a certain poem was known in this period as a fixed text attributed to Homer. The same applies to the Theban epics. Much work remains to be done here. For now, I merely note that there is no reason to assume that Pindar's engagement with 'Homeric' poetry was limited to just those poems for which we have the best evidence for a connection.

If Pindar alludes to cyclic epics known to his contemporary audiences, then we should take account of these when interpreting his work. But can we do more than merely acknowledge the probable existence of connections which we cannot hope to explore in any satisfying detail? How can recognizing allusions to lost epic matter for our understanding of Pindar's preserved poetry? Why should we care?

Proclus' summaries and a patchwork of other sources combine to give us some idea of the broad outlines of cyclic Trojan epics, but very rarely do we know enough about these texts in order to observe a detailed intertextual connection like that at work in *Nemean* 10. Nonetheless, acknowl-

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[93] *Cf.* Finkelberg (2000); Burgess (2002); (2016) 16–18; Sammons (2017) 236–38, which stresses the overall reliability of Proclus' summaries.

[94] Currie (2015) 283: 'occasional divergence between the sources on some details needs to be weighed against striking convergence on others'.

[95] A coherent large-scale body of heroic narrative already lies behind and illuminates the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but the first reference to the epic cycle as a unity is apparently in Aristotle: *An. post.* 77b.31–33; cf.

Soph. el. 171a.9–11. Overlaps and contradictions between various Trojan cyclic epics show that these were not originally linking chapters in one story.

[96] The *Cypria* in *Nemean* 10, *Isthmian* 8 and *fr.* 265; the *Aethiopis* in *Nemean* 6, *Isthmian* 4 and *Isthmian* 8.

[97] *Ol.* 9.70–75; *Pyth.* 6.28–43; *Nem.* 3.59–64; *Isthm.* 5.39–42.

[98] Consider, for example, *Little Iliad* fr. 25; *Sack of Ilion arg.* 2; *Returns arg.* 4; with Pind. *Pae.* 6.109–15.

edging the bare fact that Pindar is drawing on an earlier epic poem can significantly affect our understanding of an ode. *Nemean* 6, discussed in the last section, provides one example. As the enduring *Aethiopis* has contributed to the widespread and lasting glory of Achilles (48–54), so Pindar's poem will travel into the world and last as a memorial for his contemporary patrons even after their death. Indeed, to constitute such a monument is a motivating purpose for his work (28–30):

> εὔ-
> θυν' ἐπὶ τοῦτον, ἄγε, Μοῖσα,
> οὖρον ἐπέων
> εὐκλέα· παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων
>
> ἀοιδοὶ καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλά σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν …

> Come, Muse, aim at this [house] a glorious wind of verses, because when men are dead and gone, songs and words preserve for them their noble deeds …

The enduring *Aethiopis* provides a validating precedent for Pindar's ambition to create his own enduring poem. His allusion to this canonical epic in *Nemean* 6 advances an implicit argument: this new ode will survive as older works have survived. Related ideas are expressed more explicitly in Pindar's *Isthmian* 4 (37–45) and in Simonides' 'Plataea Elegy' (11.15–24 West *IE*²).

By identifying allusions to lost canonical epics in Pindar we can enrich our sense of how thoroughly the aesthetics of canonicity pervade his work. Pindar's engagement with epic has been intricately and convincingly documented in a multitude of individual cases but perhaps has not been sufficiently considered on a more general level. His relationship to older poetry is not reducible to a catalogue of verbal and thematic connections; these *tesserae* add up to a larger picture. Pindar evokes older epics as privileged monuments in literary history. Canonicity is the single most essential feature of Pindar's Homer.[99] His frequently expressed awareness of his own privileged place in contemporary culture (for example *Ol*. 1.116) and in literary history (for example *Ol*. 9.1–10, 47–49) should dissuade us from viewing his presentation of himself as a sort of contemporary heir to Homer as merely a conventional poetic flight of fancy without any basis in reality. Affording no comparable attention to more recent poems and more recent poets, Pindar tends to set his own work alongside canonical epics and to set himself alongside the single most distinguished figure of the poetic past. His work constructs a foreshortened, depopulated large-scale literary history in which he plays a central role. The long line of later Greek and Roman authors who react to Pindar as a major figure in literary history are not just reflecting his actual afterlife in their day but also responding to and affirming an important feature of his poetics.

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[99] All four passages in which Pindar names Homer emphasize that Homer's poetry is already well known: *Pyth*. 4.277–78; *Nem*. 7.20–24; *Isthm*. 4.37–42; *Pae*. 7b.10–12 with the text of Rutherford (2001a) 243; see further Spelman (2018).

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