



## Glory and Identity in Pindar's *Nemean* 10<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The theme of “identity” in Pindar’s *Nemean* 10 has been overlooked by scholars who have referred, especially, to the topics of friendship, loyalty and communication between men and god as essential topics of this Ode. This paper underlines the importance of the theme of “identity” in Pindar’s *Nemean* 10. In this Ode, Pindar emphasizes that the innate traits and tradition that constitute the identity of a person or city are the result, not only of heritage, but also of the personal choices made in relation with other men and the gods. It also highlights the intervention of the gods in defining the identity of a person or city and in granting glory and immortality.

**Keywords:** glory; identity; immortality; justice; fidelity

**Resumo:** O tema da “identidade” na *Nemeia* 10 de Píndaro parece não ter sido tratado com suficiente atenção pelos estudiosos, que apontam, sobretudo, os tópicos da amizade, lealdade e comunicação entre deuses e homens como os tópicos essenciais desta Ode. Este trabalho sublinha a importância do tema da “identidade” na *Nemeia* 10 de Píndaro. Nesta Ode, Píndaro enfatiza que a tradição e os traços inatos que constituem a identidade de uma pessoa ou cidade são resultado não só de herança, mas também das escolhas pessoais feitas em relação aos outros homens e aos deuses. Ela destaca também a intervenção dos deuses na definição da identidade de uma pessoa ou cidade e na concessão de glória e imortalidade.

**Palavras-chave:** glória; identidade; imortalidade; justiça; fidelidade

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Most scholars have highlighted, as fundamental themes of Pindar's *Nemean 10*, the relation between the human and the divine, the importance of friendship and loyalty, and the problem of death and immortality. Farnell asserts that “the myth of Kastor and Poludeukes expresses and ennobles the sentiment of friendship, an emotional moral ideal that was passionately cherished by the Hellene and that entered as a unique element into the highest ethical system of Greece<sup>3</sup>”. According to Stern, “its theme is apparently the communication which exists between the world of men and the world of the divine<sup>4</sup>”. In Bowra's view, this is “a story of loyalty till death and of sacrifice to the utmost, but also of divine justice and fidelity<sup>5</sup>”. Young analyzes the mortal/immortal idea of the Ode and declares that “its application to the victor may even be the principal import of the myth”; as Castor and Polydeuces share mortality and immortality, the victor is mortal but has the immortality of glory<sup>6</sup>.

In fact, friendship, loyalty and communication between men and gods are, undoubtedly, essential topics of this Ode. A contribution, however, can be made to the understanding of this poem by underlining the importance of “identity” as a fundamental theme in it.

In the fourth and fifth triads of the Ode (lines 55-90), the poet presents the myth of Castor and Polydeuces. These brothers are mentioned for the first time in the Ode in line 38 (the second line of the third triad), and Pindar calls them Τυνδαρίδαις (38), the sons of Tyndareus:

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<sup>3</sup> FARNELL, 1930, p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> STERN, 1969, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> BOWRA, 1964, p. 300.

<sup>6</sup> YOUNG, 1993, p. 123.

ἔπεται δέ, Θεαῖε, ματρῶων πολύγνωτον γένος ὑμετέρων  
εὐάγων τιμὰ Χαρίτεσσί τε καὶ σὺν Τυνδαρίδαις θαμάκις. (37-38)<sup>7</sup>

Theaeus, the honor of successful contests often got upon the very well-known race of your maternal ancestors, with the aid of the Graces and the Tyndarids.

In the first stanza of the fourth triad, the brothers are said to spend, alternately, a day beside their dear father Zeus:

μεταμειβόμενοι δ' ἐναλλάξ ἄμεραν τὰν μὲν παρὰ πατρί φίλω  
Δὶ νέμονται, τὰν δ' ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίας ἐν γυάλοις Θεράπνας,  
πότμον ἀμπιπλάντες ὁμοῖον: (55-57)

Exchanging places alternately, they spend one day beside their dear father Zeus and the other beneath the depths of the earth in the hollows of Therapne, fulfilling an equal destiny.

Pindar mentions from the outset of the myth the destiny the brothers will have. Brothers, as they are, they will spend one day as gods in the Olympus and the other beneath the depths of the earth, as the rest of the mortals, “fulfilling an equal destiny”, as is appropriate for brothers who have everything in common.

In line 59, Pindar goes back in the succession of events and presents the conflict. Castor and Polydeuces had a fight with their cousins, the Apharetidae, regarding the cattle<sup>8</sup>, and, while Idas wounded Castor, Lynceus tried to harm Polydeuces, but failed. Lynceus was, however, wounded by Polydeuces, and Zeus beat Idas with a thunder-bolt, deciding the result of the

<sup>7</sup> The Greek text used is that of Sandys (1937).

<sup>8</sup> BOWRA (1964, p. 300) notes that “Pindar glosses over the real and not very reputable cause of their fight with the sons of Aphareus and reduces it to saying that Idas was ἀμφὶ βουσίν πῶς χολῶθεῖς, ‘angered in some matter of cattle’ (60). This helps to acquit the Dioscuri of any imputation of wrong-doing and sets them in as favorable a light as possible.”

battle. In this way, the Apharetidae received the punishment from Zeus. When relating the moment in which Polydeuces approached his brother, Pindar calls him Τυνδαρίδας, the son of Tyndareus.

ταχέως δ' ἐπ' ἀδελφεοῦ βίαν πάλιν χώρησεν ὁ Τυνδαρίδας,  
καί νιν οὔπω τεθναότ', ἄσθματι δὲ φρίσσοντα πνοὰς ἔκιχεν (73-74)

Swiftly the son of Tyndareus (Polydeuces) went back to his mighty brother and found him not yet dead, but shuddering with blasts of breath.

Pindar refers that Polydeuces spoke to his father “Zeus,” entreating him for the life of his brother Castor.

θερμὰ δὴ τέγγων δάκρυα στοναχαῖς  
ὄρθιον φώνασε: πάτερ Κρονίων, τίς δὴ λύσις  
ἔσσεται πενθέων; καὶ ἐμοὶ θάνατον σὺν τῷδ' ἐπίτειλον, ἄναξ.  
οἴχεται τιμὰ φίλων τατωμένῳ φωτί: παῦροι δ' ἐν πόνῳ πιστοὶ βροτῶν  
καμάτου μεταλαμβάνειν. (75-79)

Weeping warm tears with groans  
he spoke aloud: Father, son of Cronus, what release  
will there be of sorrows? Order me to die too with him, Lord.  
A man's honor is gone when he is deprived of friends: but few of the mortals  
are trustworthy in times of hardship to share the toil.

The problem of the identity of the brothers gains relevance in this version of the myth. To attain a deep understanding of the treatment of this matter in Pindar's Ode, it is necessary to go back to the literary antecedents of this myth. Gantz offers a good compilation of the sources<sup>9</sup>. He explains that, in the *Iliad* (3, 237-238), nothing is said about the father of Castor and Polydeuces, but it is suggested that the brothers died a normal death and that “such a fate

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<sup>9</sup> GANTZ, 1993, p. 323.

[...] tip the scale towards Tyndareos as their sire<sup>10</sup>". Gantz reminds that, in the *Odyssey* (11, 298–300), it is said explicitly that they are sons of Leda and Tyndareus, and, in the *Nekuia* passage (11, 301–4), one knows that they have equal honor under the earth being alive one day and dead the next one<sup>11</sup>. Next Gantz mentions the *Ehoiai* (*Catologue of Women* attributed to Hesiod), the *Homeric Hymns* 33 and 17 and a Poem by Alcaeus (34aLP), in which Castor and Polydeuces are sons of Zeus and Leda and their stepfather is Tyndareus, but they are addressed as Tyndarids. Gantz explains that "As such, with a mortal mother, we would expect them themselves to be mortals despite their descent from Zeus<sup>12</sup>". Finally, Gantz refers that in the *Kypria* Castor is mortal and Polydeuces immortal, but nothing is said about the father (fr. 8 PEG)<sup>13</sup>.

In *Nemean* 10, Pindar underlines that Polydeuces determines his own destiny and that of his brother by his election, which is a consequence of the loyalty and fidelity he shows towards his brother. Zeus speaks to Polydeuces directly and makes it clear that he is his son, while Castor is the son of Tyndareus:

Ζεὺς δ' ἀντίος ἤλυθέ οἱ  
καὶ τόδ' ἐξαύδασ' ἔπος: 'ἔσσί μοι υἱός: τόνδε δ' ἔπειτα πόσις  
σπέρμα θνατὸν ματρὶ τεῦ πελάσσαις  
στάξεν ἥρωος. (79–82)

And Zeus came face to face to him and said these words: "You are my son, and then the heroic husband, coming near to your mother, dropped mortal seed in her..."

<sup>10</sup> GANTZ, 1993, p. 323.

<sup>11</sup> GANTZ, 1993, p. 323.

<sup>12</sup> GANTZ, 1993, p. 323.

<sup>13</sup> The abbreviation LP stands for the fragments of Sappho and Alcaeus cited according to E. Lobel and D. L. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta* (Oxford, 1955) and the abbreviation PEG refers to the Fragments of early Greek epic cited according to the edition of A. Bernabé, *Poetae Epici Graeci 1* (Leipzig, 1987).

When Zeus offers his son Polydeuces the possibility of choosing his destiny and that of his brother, Polydeuces realizes that both destinies are connected.

ἄλλ' ἄγε τῶνδέ τοι ἔμπαν αἴρεσιν  
παρδίδωμ' : εἰ μὲν θάνατόν τε φυγῶν καὶ γῆρας ἀπεχθόμενον  
αὐτὸς Οὐλύμπου θέλεις ναίειν ἐμοὶ σὺν τ' Ἀθαναίᾳ κελαινεγχεῖ τ' Ἄρει,  
ἔστι τοι τούτων λάχος: εἰ δὲ κασιγνήτου πέρι  
μάρνασαι, πάντων δὲ νοεῖς ἀποδάσασθαι ἴσον,  
ἥμισυ μὲν κε πνέοις γαίας ὑπένερθεν ἐών,  
ἥμισυ δ' οὐρανοῦ ἐν χρυσεοῖς δόμοισιν.' (82-88)

But see, I grant you the choice of these things; if you yourself  
intend, having escaped death and hated old age to dwell  
in Olympus with me and with Athena and Ares of the dark spear,  
you can have the lot of these things; but if you  
think to contend with your brother and to share with him  
all things equally, then you may breath  
for half the time being below earth, and for  
half the time in the golden homes of heaven.

Polydeuces' choice is a consequence of the discovery of his identity. Zeus, by asking Polydeuces if he wants to share all things with his brother equally, is expressing what the word “brother” means. It is to have all things in common and, therefore, to share an equal destiny. Polydeuces, without doubt, chooses his brother's life and this election builds his identity. He is not only the son of Zeus, but also Polydeuces' brother and the son of the step-father Tyndareus. By understanding his identity, Polydeuces changes his destiny and that of his brother.

Now let us return to the rest of the Ode to consider how the theme of identity is included in it. Bowra explains regarding this Ode that “*Nemean 10* is composed for an Argive victor at a time when after years of defeat and humiliation Argos had begun to reassert herself

and to regain some of her old power<sup>14</sup>". Therefore, to better understand the exaltation of Argos in Pindar's *Nemean 10*, it is necessary to know the events that occurred with regard to this city in the sixth and fifth century B.C. As Kelly explains, after Sparta conquered Tegea, Argos entered in conflict with Sparta soon in the so-called Battle of Champions in 546 B.C. in which Sparta was victorious<sup>15</sup>. Kelly states that "The battle of Champions in 546 [...] assured Sparta of a predominant position within the Peloponnesus and at the same time reduced Argos to a position of secondary importance<sup>16</sup>". After this, in 494 B.C., Sparta defeated the Argives at Sepeia<sup>17</sup>. In the fifth century B.C., Argos began to reemerge. Tomlinson explains that "[...] Argos began to stage a surprising recovery. This belongs essentially to the period after the Persian wars, and ends in 451 B. C. During this time Argos undertook a successful war against Mycenae and Tiryns, which ended with their subjugation; the Argolid was now reunified under Argive control, and remained so<sup>18</sup>".

Pindar's *Nemean 10* offers a praise and exaltation of Argos, which begins with a request to the Graces to sing Argos because of her noble deeds:

Δαναοῦ πόλιν ἀγλαοθρόνων τε πενήκοντα κοῤῥαν, Χάριτες,  
Ἄργος Ἴηρας δῶμα θεοπρεπῆς ὑμνεῖτε: φλέγεται δ' ἀρεταῖς  
μυρίαϊς ἔργων θρασέων ἔνεκεν. (1-3)

<sup>14</sup> BOWRA, 1964, p. 300.

<sup>15</sup> KELLY (1976, p. 137) declares: "When this limited engagement – the so-called Battle of Champions – proved inconclusive, a pitched battle between Spartan and Argive forces ensued. After heavy losses on both sides the Spartans emerged victorious".

<sup>16</sup> KELLY, 1976, p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> KELLY (1976, p. 141) asserts: "[...] so complete was the Argive defeat at Sepeia that it apparently resulted in fundamental governmental change and a complete social revolution within the city, and the Argives used this defeat as an excuse for remaining neutral in the Persian Wars that followed shortly thereafter".

<sup>18</sup> TOMLINSON, 2014, p. 102.

Graces, sing of the city of Danaus and of his fifty daughters on their  
Splendid thrones, Hera's Argos, home suitable for a god; it blazes with countless  
excellences because of her bold deeds.

A long tradition of bold deeds forms the history/identity of Argos. The prestige given to the city by her mythological past is evidenced in the first triad by the enumeration of her mythological figures. Pindar mentions the king Danaus and his fifty daughters, then the story of Perseus and the Gorgon Medusa. Afterwards come both Epaphus and Hypermnestra, whose decision of leaving his husband alive is defended by Pindar. Then Diomedes, son of Adrastus and king of Argos. After him, Amphiaraus, king of Argos, who died fighting against Thebes. With regard to these myths, Race declares: "In *Nem.* 10 the glories of Argos are characterized from the start as numerous and extensive ("thousands of achievements", 3, "long to tell", 4, "many cities", 5.)<sup>19</sup>". The reference to the quantity is relevant here, since the numerous glorious deeds define the history of the city and its identity.

After the enumeration of heroes, Pindar mentions beautiful women related to Argos (καὶ γυναιξὶν καλλικόμοισιν ἀριστεύει πάλαι: 10 ["And Argos has long been the best city for women with beautiful hair"]). These women are Alcmena and Danae, who, having been visited by Zeus, bore by him notable sons, Heracles and Perseus. Afterwards, Pindar returns to the enumeration of conspicuous men: Talaus, the father of Adrastus, and Lynceus, both of whom received from Zeus the gifts of intelligence and justice, and Amphytrion, who was helped by Zeus in his battle against the Teleboae.

The interventions of Zeus are remarkable in all these myths and show how the god favored those who performed excellent deeds; other gods, like Athena, had also an important

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<sup>19</sup> RACE, 1986, p. 111.



participation<sup>20</sup>. Bowra, understanding the significance of this enumeration of heroes and heroines, asserts that “Though *Nemean 10* sets out a list of Argive heroes and heroines, it is much more than mere decoration; it is a tribute to the love of the gods for Argos in the past and therefore in the present<sup>21</sup>”.

Pindar, indeed, magnifies Argos to the point of declaring that he is unable to express with words the importance and greatness of this city:

βραχύ μοι στόμα πάντ' ἀναγήσασθ', ὅσων Ἀργεῖον ἔχει τέμενος  
μοῖραν ἐσλῶν: ἔστι δὲ καὶ κόρος ἀνθρώπων βαρὺς ἀντίσσαι: (19-20)

My mouth is too small to tell the whole story of all the noble things in which the precinct of Argos has a share.

This statement starts the second triad. The *aposiopesis* enables Pindar to effect the transition from the myths that formed the history of Argos to the history of the athlete Theaeus. At the same time, this rhetorical device exalts the greatness of the city whose glorious achievements are so numerous, that it is not possible for the poet to make a full account of them. In this triad, Pindar introduces the reason of the Ode: two victories that Theaeus has obtained in the Games of Hera in Argos, his own city (Οὐλία παῖς ἔνθα νικάσαις δις ἔσχεν Θεαῖος εὐφόρων λάθαν Πόνων (24) [“There the son of Ulias, Theaeus, having won twice, obtained forgetfulness of toils which were patiently borne”]).

The reference to these victories is accompanied by the mention of other ones that Theaeus had obtained in previous times.

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<sup>20</sup> Perseus kills Medusa with the help of Athena; Athena made Diomedes immortal; Zeus saved Amphiaraus from dying in Thebes, he also granted intelligence and justice to Talau and Lynceus, and he is the father of Perseus and Heracles.

<sup>21</sup> BOWRA, 1964, p. 326.

ἐκράτησε δὲ καὶ ποθ' Ἑλλανα στρατὸν Πυθῶνι, τύχῃ τε μολῶν  
καὶ τὸν Ἴσθμοῖ καὶ Νεμέῃ στέφανον, Μοῖσαισὶ τ' ἔδωκ' ἀρόσαι,  
τρὶς μὲν ἐν πόντοιο πύλαισι λαχῶν,  
τρὶς δὲ καὶ σεμνοῖς δαπέδοις ἐν Ἀδραστείῳ νόμῳ. (25–28)

And he once prevailed over the army at Pytho,  
and having gone with good fortune, he won the crown at the Isthmus and at  
Nemea, and he gave the Muses a field to plough,  
having obtained this by lot three times at the gates of the sea  
and three times on the sacred ground, according to the ordinance of Adrastus.

Commenting about the successes of Theaeus, Race states:

The victor is a true reflection of his city: he too has many achievements to relate. Besides victories at local and minor games, he has won one Pythian, three Isthmian, and three Nemean crowns. All he lacks is an Olympic victory, and Pindar prays to Zeus (the victor is tactfully portrayed as too shy to say it outright) that Theaios may go on to win this too<sup>22</sup>.

The victor might be called a true offspring of his city. Pindar praises the person of the victor, but he declares also that all glory comes from Zeus (πᾶν δὲ τέλος / ἐν τὶν ἔργων (29–30) [“All the accomplishment of the deeds is in you (Zeus)”]). After Theaeus' victories, Pindar enumerates those of his family and explains that Theaeus' relatives on the mother-side obtained notable victories with the aid of the Tyndarids, who were once guests of one of his ancestors. As Carne-Ross recognizes, this story “throws a great deal of light on the victory<sup>23</sup>”. He explains:

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<sup>22</sup> RACE, 1986, p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> CARNE-ROSS, 1985, p. 81.

That visit was where everything began; so direct a mark of divine favor left its impress on a family for generations and did much to explain their athletic achievements, since the Twins were great athletes themselves and patrons of the games<sup>24</sup>.

The identity of the family appears, therefore, modeled by the participation of the Graces and the Dioscuri, who were athletes and protectors of athletes. Pindar asserts:

Κάστωρος δ' ἔλθόντος ἐπὶ ξενίαν παρ Παμφάη  
καὶ κασιγνήτου Πολυδεύκεος, οὐ θαῦμα σφίσι  
ἐγγενὲς ἔμμεν ἀεθληταῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν: (49-51)

But since Castor and his brother Polydeuces came to Pamphaës for hospitality, it is no wonder that it is innate in them to be good athletes.

It is worth mentioning that the prestige that defines the family of Theaeus had been exalted already in lines 39-41, when Pindar declared that if he were a kinsman of Thrasiclus and Antias, he would not cover the light from his eyes (ἀξιωθεῖην κεν, ἔων Θρασύκλου/ τε ξύγγονος, Ἄργει μὴ κρύπτειν φάος /ὀμμάτων [“I would think it right not to cover the light from my eyes in Argos”]). Farnell explains the meaning of this expression:

The passage is of historical importance: Theaios and his family are now settled in Argos, but their traditions still cling to Tiruns, where his recent ancestors brought home many athletic triumphs. Therefore Tiruns has recently fallen, and he and his family must have been among those Tirynthians who, according to the Argive tradition (Paus. ii. 25.8), were transplanted by the Argives to reinforce the shrunken population of Argos. This throws a new light on a passage – 39-41 – of which the force has not been seen: Pindar says of them what he nowhere says of any victor's family – “were I of their kin, I would not lower my eyes in Argos”. He says this because the new settlers from Tiruns might be despised by the older inhabitants: therefore he encourages them – “Theaios and his family, having won such distinctions in their former home, may look every Argive in the face”<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> CARNE-ROSS, 1985, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> FARNELL, 1932, p. 321.

Several terms are used in the first and second triads to emphasize the long list of noble deeds that gives prestige to Argos [ἀρεταῖς μυρίαῖς “countless excellences” (2-3), μακρὰ “long” (4), referred to the actions of Perseus, πολλὰ “many” (5) said of the cities founded by Eraphus, πάλαι “long ago” (10), said of Argos which since a long time ago has been the best city for women with beautiful hair), κόρος ἀνθρώπων “satiety of men” (20)]. Similar expressions are employed in the second triad in reference to the achievements of the family of Theaeus (νικαφορίαῖς γὰρ ὅσαις Προίτιοιο τόδ’ ἵπποτρόφον / ἄστῳ θάλησεν Κορίνθου τ’ ἐν μυχοῖς (41-42) [“for with how great victories has this horse-breeding city of Proetus flourished in the glens of Corinth”], and ἀλλὰ χαλκὸν μυρίον οὐ δυνατὸν / ἐξελέγγειν: μακροτέρας γὰρ ἀριθμῆσαι σχολᾶς: (45-46) [“but it is not possible to fully reckon the countless prizes of bronze”].

Race relates the story of the victor to the myth of Castor and Polydeuces by saying that the Twins take care of just men and are faithful, and “these two qualities, “compassion” and “fidelity” are the keynotes of the following narrative of the friendship of Kastor and Polydeukes<sup>26</sup>”. And Fracarolli also points out that there is a connection of the two parts of the Ode:

[... ] la sentenza che gli Dei non vengono meno ai loro devoti, che era stata posta come riassunto dei fatti prima annoverati, ha un nuovo e piú magnifico svolgimento nel mito, e forma il nesso di continuità tra le due parti dell’ode<sup>27</sup>.

In the myths mentioned in the first triad (1-18), Pindar makes clear that the gods, Athena and Zeus, have intervened and favored their protégés, and have also modified their

<sup>26</sup> RACE, 1986, p. 112.

<sup>27</sup> FRACCAROLI, 1894, p. 627.

destiny. When Castor and Polydeuces are fighting with their cousins the Apharetidae, Zeus intervenes deciding the result of the battle. The Apharetidae receive the punishment given by Zeus (καὶ πάθον δεινὸν παλάμαις Ἀφρητίδαι Διός (65) [“and the Apharetidae suffered terribly by the devices of Zeus”]). Zeus takes part also in many of the myths mentioned in the first part of the Ode. The connection among the myths presented in the first triad, the account of Castor and Polydeuces, in the fourth and fifth triads, and the story of the athletic victories of Theaeus that is placed in the middle (triads 2 and 3) is made evident, undoubtedly, by the reference in them to the intervention of the gods (and the Dioscuri with regards to the family of Theaeus), and by the mention of the rewards granted by the gods for the noble deeds and courageous actions of their protégés.

Now it is important to underline that this relationship brings to light an important topic that encompasses all these myths: the topic of identity. As Polydeuces' identity is shaped by his loyalty towards his brother and Zeus' intervention, the victor's identity is formed by his achievements and the marks left in his family by the numerous successes of its members through the favor of the Graces and the Dioscuri; the identity of Argos, on her side, is modeled by a long tradition of heroes and heroines who have enjoyed the favor of the gods because of their excellence and courage. If, as Bowra reminds, *Nemean 10* was performed at a time when Argos was regaining some of her old power after years of defeat<sup>28</sup>, then the theme of the identity of Argos becomes fundamental. Argos needs to reaffirm her identity and a good way in which the poet can help her to do this is by remembering, together with the achievements of the victor, the heroes and heroines that have formed the history the city and the privileged situation enjoyed by them for having the favor of the gods.

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<sup>28</sup> BOWRA, 1964, p. 300.

The connection between the situation of the victor and the myth of Castor and Polydeuces results, therefore, fundamental, since the glorious deeds of the family of Theaeus are explained as favors granted by the Dioscuri for the hospitality of one of its members. In the same way, the notorious actions of the heroes and heroines of the city of Argos are warranted as rewards conceded by the gods, for their excellence and courage. Finally, just as Castor and Polydeuces become both mortal and immortal because of their loyalty and friendship through the intervention of Zeus, in a similar way, the victor is rewarded by the gods with glory and immortality (fame) for his achievements and the good service of his family. The city of Argos, on her side, attains a similar immortality and glory thanks to the long tradition of noble deeds that has built up her identity.

Bowra asserts that “Pindar intended his myths to have an instructional purpose, which he reinforced with maxims at prominent points<sup>29</sup>”. In this Ode, Pindar emphasizes that the innate traits and tradition (history) that constitute the identity of a person or city are the result, not only of heritage, but also of the personal choices made in relation with other men and the gods. He teaches that good and noble acts are rewarded by the gods, who not only grant success, but also contribute to define the identity of those who perform these acts, and bring them not only glory but also immortality. This Ode may have functioned as a means of offering encouragement and recognition to Argos and the victor, and, even now, it brings confidence to anyone who, having faced a period of self-doubt and discouragement, is starting to doubt about his true identity. Two *gnomai* in the Ode are crucial to achieve this goal. The first one, in lines 29-30, states that πᾶν δὲ τέλος ἴεν τὴν ἔργων (29-30) (“All the accomplishment of the deeds is in you (Zeus)”). The second one, in line 54, reminds us that θεῶν πιστὸν γένος (“the race of the gods is trustworthy”).

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<sup>29</sup> BOWRA, 1964, p. 292.

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