

Chapter Two

Didymus and lyric*

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Abstract:

Didymus worked extensively on archaic lyric poetry. The greatest amount of surviving material comes from the Pindar scholia and concerns Pindar's *Epinicians*, but there are fragments and testimonies of his commentaries to other authors and a treatise *On Lyric Poets*. This chapter reviews the evidence for Didymus' lyric scholarship before discussing the contents of the *On Lyric Poets*—whose surviving fragments are concerned with the identification of lyric genres and the etymologies of their names—and the threads that run through his Pindaric exegesis: the compilation and evaluation of earlier scholarship, the use of historiographical evidence, textual criticism, a concern for the constitution of the Pindaric corpus and the contextualization of individual poems, and strategies of literary interpretation such as recourse to recurrent Pindaric themes and the train of thought of a passage.

In his invective against philology in the *Letters to Lucilius* (88.37, **T14**), Seneca chastises Didymus for indulging in extravagant disquisitions about literary minutiae.¹ Two of his four examples concern archaic Greek lyric poets: Was Anacreon's life more devoted to lust or to drunkenness? Was Sappho a prostitute? (**396, 397**) Hans Bernsdorff has realised that a fragment of a *hypomnema* to Anacreon casts light on the true scope of the first question, and indeed sounds a warning on Seneca's polemical distortions.² Fr. 2 of *P.Oxy.* LIV 3722 (second century AD) reads as follows (**103**):³

] []]

] θεράπων ἔμηνεν ἐλ [(PMG 454?)

]υτον ἀπὸ τοῦ συμποσίου [

Πυθόμ]ανδρον ἀπιόντα οὗ νυ(v) [

] προπεσών· ὁ μὲν Δί- [

δυμος [. . βέλτ{ε}ιόν φησιν ἐπὶ [

]. ἐρωτικῶν· τόδε μὲν [

* This chapter was written at speed, following the withdrawal of its appointed author, during a long period of library closures. I apologize for any shortcomings that result from these circumstances and I take responsibility for those that don't. The Pindar scholia are cited from Drachmann's edition. All translations are mine.

¹ On this passage see Luzzatto 2011: 8; DiGiulio, this volume, 000–000.

² Bernsdorff 2020: 000–000. I am grateful to Prof. Bernsdorff for sharing his thoughts with us before publication.

³ *CLGP* I.1.2.2 Anacreon 3. For bibliography and an apparatus see *ibid.* and Bernsdorff 2020: 000–000.

τὸ] μὲν γὰρ οἶδα καὶ λ{ε}ῖαν [] ὅτι μεθυσθεὶς παρὰ []
 δηῦτε Πυθόμα]νδρογ : υ[[πεταρτ . . . []
]εφ . [] . . . [] . . . [] (PMG 400?)

The fragment is difficult to supplement into continuous text, but it seems that the first-person speaker in one of Anacreon’s ditties claimed to have experienced a certain mishap: either madness (2 ἔμηνεν) or a fall (4 προπεσῶν), if not both. A *zetema* arose whether this mishap was due to love (6 ἐρωτικῶν) or inebriation (8 μεθυσθεὶς),⁴ and Didymus—the supplement at 4–5 imposes itself—stated that the former was better, with his trademark βέλτιον.⁵

The likely commentary to Anacreon cited by *P.Oxy.* 3722 is another piece in the already extensive jigsaw puzzle of Didymus’ scholarship on archaic Greek lyric. Two marginal notes in *P.Oxy.* XV 1788 fr. 4 testify that he wrote on Alcaeus (**100, 101**).⁶ He is probably mentioned in the margins of another text, *P.Oxy.* XXI 2299 fr. 10b, which could be by either Alcaeus or Sappho (**102**).⁷ Papyrological traces of a work on Alcman are doubtful.⁸ It can perhaps be divined from a scholion to Pindar that he commented on Archilochus.⁹ Herennius Philo and Ammonius refer to a *hypomnema* to Bacchylides’ *Epinicians* (°**175**), and he may have commented on the rest of his poetry too; *P.Oxy.* XXIII 2368, almost certainly from a commentary to Bacchylides’ *Dithyrambs*, is a plausible candidate for Didymean authorship.¹⁰ The most extensive evidence to have come down to us concerns his scholarship on Pindar (**104–174**), preserved mostly by the *scholia vetera* with occasional contributions from papyri and other sources. Beside his work as a commentator, he also wrote a monograph *On Lyric Poets*, from which only scanty fragments survive.

1. *On Lyric Poets*

⁴ Love and drink—both frequent ailments of the Anacreontic narrator, and *de rigueur* at the symposion—are sometimes combined into a single image: *PMG* 376.2 μεθύων ἔρωτι, 450 ἔρωτα πίνων (Bernsdorff 2020: 000).

⁵ See Benelli 2011: 53–54.

⁶ McNamee 2007: 146–7; *CLGP* I.1.1 Alcaeus 4. Both notes are mutilated; the first is quite extensive and may have been paraphrastic, the second explains a critical sign, the ἄλογος (Lobel 1951b: 142; McNamee *l.c.*). *P.Oxy.* 1788 has sometimes been attributed to Sappho, most recently by Liberman 1999: I lxxxvii–xci, but see Lentini 2007.

⁷ McNamee 2007: 158; *CLGP* Alcaeus 18. See Lobel 1951a: 71. Lasserre 1989: 31, 92–93 n. 16 also saw a reference to Didymus in *P.Oxy.* XVII 2076 col. i (Sappho), but the interpretation of the traces is more uncertain.

⁸ *P.Paris* 71 (*CLGP* I.1.2.1 Alcman 5) coll. ii.27, iv.4 as interpreted by Haslam *ap.* Römer 2013: 109.

⁹ *Σ A Ol.* 6.154a–b περι δὲ τῆς σκοτάλης καὶ ἐν τοῖς Ἀρχιλόχου ὑπομνήμασιν εἴρηται. The deduction of a Didymean commentary on Archilochus works if (a) the author of this anonymous note is Didymus, and (b) εἴρηται indicates self-citation. Both of these things are quite possible: Didymus uses εἴρηται time and again for self-citation, so much so that Schmidt used it to assign authorship to anonymous fragments (1854: 243). Yet neither of them can be proved, and Didymus’ commentary on Archilochus remains conjectural.

¹⁰ *CLGP* I.1.4 Bacchylides 4. See Snell 1961: 50*. The doxography fits Didymus’ practice (see §2.1); the generic diatribe concluded by the citation of Dionysius of Phaselis parallels **166**.

The only explicit testimonies for Didymus' *On Lyric Poets* are the Late Antique and Byzantine *Etymologica*.¹¹ They cite it sometimes as Περὶ λυρικῶν ποιητῶν (°347a, c, d), sometimes as Περὶ ποιητῶν (°345a); the true title is probably the former.¹² Material which the *Etymologica* attribute to it turns up in Proclus' *Chrestomathy*, or rather in the summary of its first two books in Photius' *Library*, codex 239;¹³ some of it is also found in the commentary to Athonius by John of Sardis, which (given their similarities) probably took it from Proclus.

The few secure fragments of this work are all concerned with the characteristics of poetic genres: elegy (°345), the paeon (348), the difference between the hymn and the prosodion (°347). Hymns are called so because they are durable (ὕπομονος) and cause remembrance (ὕπόμνησις); in a narrower sense, hymns differ from prosodia in that prosodia are sung to the *aulos* while processing towards (προσιόντες πρός) temples or altars, and hymns are sung to the *kithara* while stationary (μένω again?). Paeans are sung to implore a stop to some evil, deriving as they allegedly do from πάυω. After a sizeable doxography of folk-etymologies of ἔλεγος (from ἔλεος, from εὔ λέγειν, from ἔ ἔ λέγειν...), Didymus is credited with the fascinating theory that the rhythm of the pentameter after the hexameter in the elegiac distich imitates the halting breath of those about to expire. This last point is not present in Proclus, but the rest of Proclus' account of elegy shares several similarities with the doxography in the *Etymologica*, which accordingly may come from Didymus, too.

The parallels between Proclus and the *Etymologica* have raised the prospect that the entire lyric section of the *Chrestomathy* (24–92, or indeed 24–99 Severyns) may depend on Didymus. A repertory of every known lyric genre, down to the most obscure, sounds just like the sort of thing Didymus might write; we know from Σ Ap.Rhod. 1.972 Wendel that he also discussed the *ioulos*, a little-known song for Demeter (349; cf. *PMG* 849 *ap.* Athen. 14.618d), which would fit well here. Devoting three sections specifically to daphnephorics, tripodephorics, and oschophorics suggests someone with Pindaric interests (cf. *frr.* 6c–f, 66, 94b–c Maehler). Details differ, but the difference may be due to the vagaries of transmission. Proclus' account of the *tripodephoria* (79–86 Severyns) mentions a procession from Boeotia to Dodona, while according to Ammonius, Didymus spoke of one to the Ismenion, near Thebes (°172). However, both Didymus and Strabo—who gives largely the same account as Proclus—quote Book 2 of Ephorus as a source, suggesting that their accounts may have originally been closer than they now seem; Proclus' story, moreover, is also found in Zenobius, who had Didymus' *On Proverbs* among his chief sources.¹⁴

The strong etymological slant of the securely attributed fragments is expected, given the sources that transmit them, but the role of etymology in Didymus' work is greater than is

¹¹ On the Περὶ λυρικῶν ποιητῶν see Grandolini 1999. On the *Etymologica* see Reitzenstein 1897 with his corrections in Reitzenstein 1907; Dickey 2007: 91–92, with bibliography; Alpers 2015.

¹² Cohn 1903: 469; see also Grandolini 1999: 2–4.

¹³ On the *Chrestomathy* see Severyns 1938. Disagreement persists on whether its author is the fourth-century Neoplatonic philosopher or an earlier grammarian.

¹⁴ The clue is in the title: ἐπιτομή ἐκ τῶν Ταρραίου καὶ Διδύμου παροιμιῶν, 'epitome from the *Proverbs* of Tarrhaeus and Didymus'.

often realised.¹⁵ It may seem surprising that Didymus' etymology of σκόλιον should come from the *Symposiaka* instead (*EM* p. 718 Gaisford, °338), but the possibility of duplication ought not to be discounted, especially if the *Symposiaka* were a 'best of' of literary and historical *zētēmata* culled from his scholarly works and aimed at a somewhat wider public. But what else was there in the *On Lyric Poets* beyond etymology and genre? The title suggests a work concerned not only with lyric poetry, but also with poets as individuals. Schmidt must have assumed as much when he assigned to the treatise Didymus' discussion of whether Theognis hailed from continental Megara or its Sicilian namesake (Σ Pl. *Leg.* 630a Greene, 346). Yet the same material occurs in Harpocration (θ 6 Keaney): did Didymus rather treat this topic in one of the *hypomnēmata* to the Attic orators? Perhaps the one to Isocrates, who mentions Theognis in 2.43. But, again, duplication is a possibility, and (for instance) the disquisition about Sappho's profession caricatured by Seneca (397) would fit well in an *On Lyric Poets*.¹⁶ Although the evidence for this aspect is scanty, the treatise may have combined biographical material with literary history and criticism, much like Aristotle's Περὶ ποιητῶν and the several later treatises bearing that name.¹⁷

2. Didymus and Pindaric scholarship

We are on firmer footing with Didymus' role in Pindaric scholarship.¹⁸ Tradition has it that the canonical edition of Pindar's poetry was made by Aristophanes of Byzantium (fr. 381 Slater).¹⁹ The *scholia vetera* relate some emendations by Aristophanes' older contemporary, Zenodotus; whether he produced an edition is doubtful.²⁰ The most prominent Pindaric commentator before Didymus is Aristarchus, who is referenced sixty-eight times in the

¹⁵ The *Etymologica* preserve a large number of other fragments, perhaps ultimately deriving from the Περὶ παθῶν (*On Modifications*, sc. of words), containing more or less fantastical etymologies of a variety of words. It is unclear how much of it is genuine Didymus and how much is misinterpreted or misattributed. Unsurprisingly, this area of Didymus' work is understudied (who wants to read the *Etymologica*?), but it would reward careful investigation. On paretyymology in Didymus' scholarship on Aristophanes see Benuzzi, this volume, 000–000.

¹⁶ Schmidt 1854: 384–85 n. 3 regarded the four fragments cited by Seneca as individual works, but such specialized monographs seem alien to what we know of Didymus' writing habits, with the possible exception of the one on Solon's *axones* (XLI). Of course it is possible that the discussion of whether Sappho was a *hetaira* came from a commentary to her poetry (cf. 103 ~ 396 with the discussion above), or perhaps to one of the comedies in which she was a character.

¹⁷ On Aristotle's *On Poets* see Janko 2011: 410–83.

¹⁸ See Deas 1931: 19–27; Irigoin 1952: 67–74; Carnevali 1980; Braswell 2011 and 2017. The latter includes a critical edition, with translation and notes, of all the non-papyrological fragments of Didymus' Pindaric scholarship. It is an indispensable tool, but the translation is frequently incorrect and needs to be handled with care. On Hellenistic scholarship on Pindar see Deas 1931: 1–27; Irigoin 1952: 31–75. On the Pindar scholia, beside Deas 1931, see Calvani Mariotti 1987; David *et al.* (eds) 2009 and 2015; Braswell 2012; and especially Bitto 2012: 63–240.

¹⁹ On the ascription see Slater 1986: 145–46 (against); D'Alessio 1997: 51–55; Negri 2004: 16–27 (in favour).

²⁰ See Irigoin 1952: 32–33; Pfeiffer 1968: 117–18 (in favour); Ferrari 1992 (against). Ruffa 2001 is also relevant, see n. 000 below.

scholia—the second most cited scholar after Didymus himself (seventy-four).²¹ The scholia include a great deal of references to other, ‘minor’ figures. Two in particular, Didymus’ contemporaries Aristonicus and Theon, occur very sparsely in the scholia, but we know from other sources that they too commented on Pindar.²² As for Didymus, he certainly commented the *Epinicians* (104–171) and the *Paeans* (°172),²³ and he is cited in two fragments of *P.Oxy.* XXVI 2442, both *incertae sedis* (fr. 39 and 97, 173–174).²⁴ It is a reasonable conjecture that he commented on the entire Pindaric corpus, as Aristarchus probably had done.

2.1. Doxography

A long-standing critical trope maintains that Didymus’ *hypomnēmata* were ‘the chief, if not the sole, intermediary between his predecessors and his successors’.²⁵ This is not quite true: the scholia incorporate at least another commentary, which was not based on Didymus yet drew on Hellenistic material, including some of Didymus’ own sources.²⁶ Yet we owe a great deal not only to Didymus’ voracious reading, but also to his openness in citing his sources.²⁷ The picture of him as a ‘mere compiler’ is reductive and misleading, but incorporating the scholarship of others was a keystone of his method, with Pindar no less than with Demosthenes (°281).²⁸ This is equally true of information drawn from other branches of learning—history first of all—and of earlier interpretations of Pindar. The doxographic scholia which punctuate the corpus are with all likelihood lifted straight from him. Out of 49

²¹ Aristarchus’ work on Pindar has been rather neglected in comparison to that on Homer; beside Irigoin 1952: 51–56 see Horn 1883; Feine 1883; Vassilaki 2009.

²² See respectively Razzetti 2000; *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2536 and Merro 2018.

²³ The Pindar scholia transmit a further four fragments of a commentary on the *Paeans* introduced by εἴρηται ἐν Παῖσιν *vel sim.* without an author’s name. That they refer to a commentary, rather than to the *Paeans* themselves, is clear (Käppel 1992), but whether the commentary is by Didymus, as has been conjectured since Boeckh 1819: xvii, remains in doubt: Braswell 2017: 261 n. 352 considers the attribution ‘very likely’ but rightly classes them as *dubia* (fr. 69–72 Braswell).

²⁴ *P.Oxy.* 2442 comprises not one but (at least) three manuscripts, preserving fragments of Pindar’s *Hymns*, *Paeans*, and *Prosodia* (Lobel 1961: 31; D’Alessio 1997: 35–37, 40–45). In the absence of external evidence, it is impossible to establish to which of these three books each of the fragments belongs.

²⁵ Deas 1931: 19.

²⁶ See Prodi 2020b.

²⁷ This is not to say that interpretations are always attributed to their originators in the text as we have it; *τινες* and *ἔτιοι* ‘some’ abound even in Didymean scholia (cf. e.g. Σ **BD** *Nem.* 7.1a, **158**). It is tempting to attribute this moniker to careless scribes (cf. **111b**, where Σ **A** *Ol.* 5.27b splits the *pars destruens* and the *pars construens* of Didymus’ interpretation and ascribes the former to him, the latter to *τινες*; contrast **111a**), but Didymus used it too, albeit sparingly, in *P.Berol.* inv. 9780 *recto* (°281). Another set of unspecific labels is οἱ ὑπομνηματισταὶ / ὑπομνηματιστάμενοι / προὑπομνηματιστάμενοι ‘commentators’ / ‘previous commentators’. These occur six times between them, including in conjunction with Didymus (cf. **115a–b**, **146**; other occurrences could be Didymean, too). The meaning seems to me to be the same for all three words, ‘all the commentators to date’ (or ‘all commentators to date except the one quoted individually’); Calvani Mariotti 1999 gives a different interpretation of οἱ προὑπομνηματιστάμενοι. See also Coward, this volume, 000–000 on similar words in the Sophocles scholia.

²⁸ Deas 1931: 22–26.

scholia in which Didymus' opinion is cited together with one or more others, 37 present his opinion at the end, capping the discussion; most of the other 12, too, are informed by Didymus' perspective.²⁹ He seems to have wished to preserve and disseminate earlier scholarship for the benefit of those without access to it, much as he explicitly did Aristotle's poem for Hermias in the *Περὶ Δημοσθένους* (*P.Berol.* inv. 9780 *recto* col. vi.20–22).

Consider the literature review on the myth of *Nemean* 1. The ode celebrates Hieron's henchman Chromios of Aetna; its mythical section (vv. 33–72) narrates Heracles' first heroic feat, the killing of the snakes that Hera had sent against him immediately after its birth, culminating in Tiresias' prophecy of his immortalisation. The unobtrusive connection between the myth and the honorand perplexed ancient critics. Σ **BDPU** *Nem.* 1.49c presents four solutions to the puzzle, each is refuted, and finally Didymus supplies his own interpretation (144). 'Some', Aristarchus related, thought that Pindar had been given that subject, which Aristarchus himself saw as a cop-out (ἀπίθανον, 'unpersuasive'; fr. 58 Horn = 42 Feine). Or perhaps always Pindar praises those who have inborn excellence, like Heracles?³⁰ 'Unpersuasive', again: if that were the point, why only mention this first adventure and not the other, more famous ones? Chaeris (fr. 20 Berndt) suggested that Chromios had toiled at Hieron's side from the beginning and was rewarded with horse-rearing, just as Heracles had toiled and been rewarded with immortality and the hand of Hebe in marriage.³¹ In this case the objection is that the episode narrated does not illustrate Heracles' willingness to toil as much as all the labours together would have done. Chrysippus (fr. 2 Braswell) claimed that Heracles was relevant to this Nemean victory *qua* slayer of the Nemean lion—of which, however, there is no trace in the poem.³² Didymus' 'better' (βέλτιον) explanation is that, just as Heracles' defeat of the snakes inaugurated a lifetime of even greater exploits, so Chromios' first victory intimated more and better victories to come, with Pindar casting himself in Tiresias' prophetic role.

Didymus' rebuttals of Aristarchus and Chaeris are underwhelming, yet his interpretation—right or wrong though it be—belongs to a sensitive reader of Pindar. He quotes a gnomic passage from *Pythian* 1 (33–34) where the poet connects the favourable beginning of a journey to its successful continuation. The maxim is appropriate not only generally, but particularly when viewed in its original context: there, too, it is instrumental to a wish for further victories for the city of Aetna after that just won by her founder, Hieron. So Didymus builds on the explicit connection between that gnomic paradigm and a wish for further victories in *Pythian* 1 to tease out an implicit connection between a mythical instance of that same paradigm and a similar, but unstated, wish.

A similar doxography concerns why *Nemean* 7 begins with an address to E(i)leithyia, the goddess of childbirth.³³ The victor Sogenes was obviously not a newborn, so why involve her? This time we have five explanations, each duly rebutted, capped by one ascribed to

²⁹ See Prodi 2020b: 000–000.

³⁰ The context suggests that this second, anonymous interpretation also belongs to Aristarchus (Horn 1883: 55).

³¹ On Chaeris see Calvani Mariotti 2012.

³² On this Chrysippus see Braswell 2015, with the corrections by Vecchiato 2018a and 2018b.

³³ See Fränkel 1961: 385–94, esp. 391–93; Young 1970: 35–37.

‘Aristodemus the pupil of Aristarchus’ (*BNJ* 383 F 14) which Didymus endorses (βέλτιον ; Σ **BD Nem.** 7.1a, **158**). Unsurprisingly given the methods of Hellenistic Pindarists, several of these explanations consist of inventing ‘facts’ outside the text which purportedly explain the passage. Didymus dismisses each of them by pointing to the lack of documentary proof. That Sogenes was too young to compete and someone else won in his place and gifted him the victory is αὐτοσχέδιον, ‘improvised’, as well as unlikely on other grounds;³⁴ that his father was a priest of Eileithyia is ἀμάτυρον, ‘unattested’. Was his house perhaps in the neighbourhood of a temple of the goddess?³⁵ οὐδὲ τοῦτο δὲ ἱστορεῖται, ‘there is no testimony of this, either’. We might think no better of Aristodemus’ explanation, that Sogenes was a late, long-wanted son and his father was especially grateful to Eileithyia for his birth; the epigram of Simonides which allegedly proved it does not, in fact, do anything of the kind.³⁶ Yet the epigram was there, and this must have satisfied Didymus.

Two things are noteworthy: the dutiful inclusion of earlier solutions to the *zētēma*, even though he regarded them as false; and the unwillingness to countenance extrinsic interpretations which rested on no evidentiary basis. Examples of the first are everywhere in the corpus: Didymus’ opinion occurs on its own in less than a third of the scholia that cite him. The second is of a piece with his historical interests, in the broadest possible sense of the adjective.

2.2. History

The extensive remains of the *Περὶ Δημοσθένους* (°**281**) are almost entirely historical in content; the absence of the fine-grained literary interpretations required by a lyric poet create a much starker imbalance in the commentary on the orator. Yet Didymus’ reliance on documented history, both as a fuel for positive explanation and as a brake on runaway fantasy, plays an essential role in his Pindaric scholarship too.³⁷ Historicising readings of Pindar were not a Didymean innovation: as we have just seen, earlier Pindarists, too, felt the need to read the poetry against the context with which it is so clearly intertwined. Any innovation rather consists of a shift from inference to documentation, putting his vast reading to (sometimes) good use. Scholarship on comedy, with its long-established tradition of works on κωμωδοῦμενοι, may have shown him the way.

³⁴ As we know from Σ **BD Nem.** 7.56a (**160**), this was the opinion of Aristarchus (fr. 54–56 Feine), who used it to explain in one fell swoop both the invocation to Eileithyia at the beginning and the ‘digression’ on Neoptolemus later on in the ode (Neoptolemus being also the name of the putative ‘true’ victor). There, too, Didymus dismisses Aristarchus’ supposition and quotes one by Aristodemus which is equally wrong-headed (Fränkel 1961: 385–91).

³⁵ A similar explanation of a different passage in the ode, again based on the asserted vicinity of the victor’s house to a temple, is attributed to Callistratus by Σ **BD Nem.** 7.150a.

³⁶ Young 1970: 637.

³⁷ The same is true of his work on comedy: see Benuzzi, this volume, 000–000. On Didymus and history generally see Montana, this volume.

A list of Didymus' quotations from the historians in the Pindar scholia can be found in Fausto Montana's chapter.³⁸ They occur in almost a third of the fragments and comprise local historians, antiquarians, and more universal historiography; the prevalence of Timaeus tallies with the Sicilian focus of many of the *Epinicians*. Additionally, the scholia transmit a large number of historiographical quotations without the name of the Pindarist who brought them to bear. One suspects that many of them may come from Didymus, too:³⁹ tellingly, only twice in the scholia does a historian's name occur near that of a Pindarist other than Didymus,⁴⁰ and in neither case it is clear that the historian was cited by that Pindarist.

Sometimes Didymus refers to history in order to provide background information on a victor, or on the circumstances surrounding an ode. Hieron was still Hieron of Syracuse, not Hieron of Aetna, when he won the Olympics in 476 BC (Apollodorus *BNJ* 244 F 69: Σ **HQ Ol.** 1.35c, **104**) and he was a hereditary priest of Demeter (Philistus *BNJ* 556 F 49 and Timaeus *BNJ* 566 F 96: Σ **A Ol.** 6.158c, **114**); Karrhotos, mentioned at *Pyth.* 5.26, was a military ally of the victor Arcesilas rather than his charioteer (Theotimos *BNJ* 470 F 1: Σ **BDEGQ Pyth.** 5.34, **132**); Chromios of Syracuse became Chromios of Aetna when his boss Hieron did the same after 'founding' the city (*inscr. a* **BDPTU Nem.** 1, **140**). Such remarks are not only given for context, but sometimes they elucidate specific parts of the text: Hieron's priesthood justifies the phrase καθαρῶ σκάπτῳ 'with a pure sceptre' (*Ol.* 6.93), and Chromios' change of city explains why the title of the ode calls him Αἰτναῖος.⁴¹

Realien and their sources, too, are often called upon to elucidate an otherwise obscure element in Pindar's text, be it the referent of the cult epithet *Orthosia* at *Ol.* 3.30 (Artemis, citing Apollodorus *BNJ* 244 F 127: Σ **A Ol.** 3.54a, **109**), the location of Phaisana (allegedly in Elis not in Arcadia, citing Istros *BNJ* 334 F 41: Σ **A Ol.** 6.55a, **112a**), the identification of the 'local games of Hera' at *Pyth.* 8.79 (in Argos: Σ **BDEGQ Pyth.** 8.113c, **136**) and of those 'of deep-bosomed Earth' at *Pyth.* 9.101–2 (in Athens: Σ **DEGQ Pyth.** 9.177, **BDEGQ** 178, **137a–b**), or the exact name of the Theban games in honour of Heracles (Herakleia not Iolaeia, citing ὁ περὶ ἀγῶνων ἀναγραψάμενος: Σ **BDP Nem.** 4.32, **151**).

An instructively more complex case involves a passage in *Olympian* 5 (vv. 10–14). The victor Psaumis is said to sing (ἀεΐδει) various landmarks around his city Camarina, including the streams with which the river Hipparis 'waters the people and quickly attaches a high-limbed grove of sturdy halls (κολλᾷ τε σταδίων θαλάμων ταχέως ὑψίγυιον ἄλσος), bringing from helplessness to light the people of this city'.⁴² But what does all this mean? A scholion relates two possible answers (Σ **A Ol.** 5.27b, **111b**):

³⁸ This volume, 000–000. On Didymus' use of history in his Pindaric scholarship see also Deas 1931: 22–23; Irigoin 1952: 71; Braswell 2011: 182–87; Braswell 2012: 13–18; Braswell 2017: 113–16. On historicizing interpretations in the Pindar scholia see Bitto 2012: 220–23; Phillips 2020 (449–50 on Didymus).

³⁹ Cf. Irigoin 1952: 72–73.

⁴⁰ Hellanicus and Aristodemos, Σ **A Ol.** 3.22a; Polemon and Aristarchus, Σ **BCDEQ Ol.** 7.95a.

⁴¹ Despite not going back to Pindar, titles are transmitted together with the text and are often commented on by the scholia, see Prodi 2020a: 463–67. Indeed the headnotes that precede every ode, containing information on the victor and his victory, are effectively scholia on the respective title (*inscriptio*), as Drachmann recognized.

⁴² For clarity's sake I translate the text the way it was understood by ancient commentators, with the Hipparis as the subject of κολλᾷ. For more recent views see Mader 1990: 81–82, 85–86 (the subject is Psaumis); Lomiento

Ἀρίσταρχος παριέναι φησὶ τὸν Ἴππαριν τὴν πόλιν καὶ προσχωννύντα ἰλὸν ἀναπλάσσειν αὐτῇ γῆν, καθάπερ τὸν Ἀχελῷον ταῖς Ἐχινάσι νήσοις καὶ τὸν Νεῖλον τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ· κολλᾷ οὖν ἀντὶ τοῦ προσαναπλάσσει γῆν. τοῦτο δὲ φησιν ὁ Δίδυμος ἀμάρτυρον εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ ἱστορεῖται περὶ τὸν Ἴππαριν καὶ τὴν Καμάριναν τοῦτο γενόμενον· οὐ γὰρ πλημμύρα χρῆται ὁ ποταμὸς καταφερόμενος. βέλτιον οὖν οὕτως τινές· ἐπειδὴ ἐξ ὑπογυίου συνώκισται ἡ Καμάρινα, καθὰ καὶ νέοικον αὐτὴν προσηγόρευσε, γειτιᾷ δὲ Ἴππαρις αὐτῆ, κατὰ τοῦτο φάναι ἐπὶ τοῦ συνοικισμοῦ κολλᾶσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ σταδίων θαλάμων ταχέως ὑψίπυργον ἄλσος, ἐπεὶ τὰ ἐπιτήδεια πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν διὰ τοῦ κατάπλου προσεκομίζετο ὥστε ποιεῖν σταδίους θαλάμους.

Aristarchus says that the Hipparis passes by the city and heaps up earth on it by depositing silt, just like the Achelous in the islands Echinades and the Nile in Egypt: ‘attaches’ stands for ‘heaps up earth onto’. But Didymus says this is unattested, for there is no record of this event concerning the Hipparis and Camarina; the river does not flood as it flows seaward. So, some (explain the passage) better in this way: since Camarina was founded recently – the reason why he also called it ‘newly founded’ – and the Hipparis is adjacent (to it), for this reason he said that upon its foundation it ‘quickly attached a high-limbed grove of sturdy halls’, because with its downward stream it carried to (the city) the materials useful for the construction work so as to build sturdy halls.

Aristarchus (fr. 17 Horn = 16 Feine) maintained that the river ‘attached’ the ‘halls’ because it flooded and deposited silt, which the locals used for brick-making, as our scholion’s twin in the Vatican recension makes clear (Σ **CDEHQ** *Ol.* 5.20e, **111a**);⁴³ Didymus objected because of a lack of evidence. As far as we can judge, there is also no evidence in favour of his own explanation (we know that it is his from **111a**), which indeed is hard to square with the letter of the text. Yet it avoids postulating a physical phenomenon for which one would expect some tangible evidence to have existed, and instead it makes reference to a specific and well-documented historical event, the refoundation of Camarina after its destruction by Gelon in the early years of the fifth century.⁴⁴

Didymus’ history-conscious correction of an autoschediastic inference by Aristarchus is nothing new. We already saw one example (**158**), and there are more; some scholia

in Gentili *et al.* 2013: 442–43 (the subject is the river). On the scholia see also Brunel 1971; Carnevali 1980: 12–15; Lomiento 2006; Vassilaki 2009: 139–44.

⁴³ The scholia to *Ol.* 2–12 are preserved in two ‘recensions’, the Ambrosian (consisting of ms. **A**, in Milan’s Biblioteca Ambrosiana) and the Vatican (found in several manuscripts and taking its name from ms. **B**, in the Vatican Library). See Drachmann 1913: x–xiii; Deas 1931: 50–65.

⁴⁴ These events are expanded upon in Σ **CDEHQ** *Ol.* 5.16, **A** 19a, **CDEHQ** 19b, **ACDEHQ** 19c, **A** 19d, with quotations from Timaeus and Philistus, which accordingly may also be Didymean (for Σ 19a–c see already Irigoin 1952: 72).

explicitly remark his greater adherence to historical fact (τὸ ἀκριβέστερον τῆς ἱστορίας ἐκτίθεται : Σ **BCEHQ** *Ol.* 2.29d, **105b**; ἱστορικώτερον λέγει : Σ **BCDEQ** *Ol.* 3.1d, **108b**).⁴⁵ Yet often Didymus only corrects an unattested element in Aristarchus' interpretation while retaining its fundamentals.⁴⁶ **111** is itself an example: Didymus does away with the floods and the bricks, but still maintains that the subject is the river, that the indirect object is the city, and that the sentence refers to the conveyance of building materials. Another example is **108b** just cited. There, the invocation to the Dioscuri that opens *Olympian* 3 for Theron of Akragas is explained in terms of the particular devotion to the Dioscuri not in Akragas itself, as Aristarchus had surmised (fr. 12 Horn = 11 Feine), but in Theron's ancestral homeland, Argos. Its Ambrosian twin Σ **A** *Ol.* 3.1a (**108a**) is quite right to state that 'Didymus rather inclines towards Aristarchus' explanation': less-attested devotion in Akragas is replaced with better-attested devotion in Argos, but the trajectory of the two interpretations is the same.⁴⁷ Whatever the exact sense of the *Suda*'s claim that Didymus was a γραμματικὸς Ἀριστάρχειος (*Suda* δ 872 Adler, **T1**), his predecessor certainly cast a long shadow on his work. The very notion of reading Pindar historically develops an Aristarchan precedent, albeit on a very different foundation.⁴⁸

2.3. Textual criticism

As far as the scholia go, Didymus' forays into textual criticism were relatively rare. We know of only four conjectures by him; in a few other instances he defended the transmitted text, or a transmitted variant. Characteristically, one emendation stems from a misplaced application of historical knowledge. At *Nem.* 6.31 Pindar mentions an Aeginetan clan, the Bassidai; since (we infer) there was no other record of this clan, and since on the other hand Pythaenetus' *Aiginetika* mentioned a local hero named Boudion (*BNJ* 299 F 2a), Didymus suggested changing Βασσίδαισιν into Βουδίδαισιν, the hero's putative descendants (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 6.53a, **157**). The rest of the scholia to this passage wisely ignore the conjecture (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 6.53b–e, 54a).

Two small emendations are more felicitous. At *Nem.* 4.59, Pindar says that Akastos tried to bring about Peleus' death 'with the knife of Daedalus', τῷ Δαιδάλου δὲ μαχαίρᾳ – a unique expression. One anonymous commentator attempted to explain the transmitted text as a metaphor meaning a deadly ruse (δόλος), such as the one Daedalus visited on Minos through the daughters of Kokalos. Didymus had other ideas (Σ **BDP** *Nem.* 4.95b–c, **152**):

⁴⁵ On ἱστορία and its cognates in the Pindar scholia see Calvani 2006; Vassilaki 2015.

⁴⁶ Deas 1931: 20–21.

⁴⁷ See Vassilaki 2009: 137–39. On the cult of the Dioscuri in Argos see *Pae.* 18.1–2 and Moretti 1998: 237–39.

⁴⁸ Vassilaki 2009, largely followed by Phillips 2020: 441–47, seeks to defend Aristarchus from the charge of ahistoricity levelled by Wilamowitz 1889–1895: I 156 and often repeated. They are right that Aristarchus was not uninterested in history and often proffered broadly historicizing interpretations; yet a historicizing interpretation is not the same thing as an interpretation based on documented historical fact, and Aristarchus had plenty more of the former than of the latter.

Δίδυμος δέ φησι δεῖν γράφειν διὰ τοῦ φ· δαιδάλω δὲ μαχαίρα δόλον ἤρτυσε τῷ Πηλεΐ, παρελόμενος αὐτοῦ κρύφα, ἵνα χωρὶς ἀμυντηρίου ἀλοῦς ὑπὸ τῶν Κενταύρων φθαρῆ. ταῦτα δὲ ἱστοροῦσι πολλοὶ μὲν, ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ Ἡσίοδος λέγων οὕτως (fr. 209 Merkelbach–West):

ἦδε δὲ οἱ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή·
αὐτὸν μὲν σχέσθαι, κρύψαι δ' ἀδόκητα μάχαιραν
καλὴν, ἣν οἱ ἔτευξε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις·
ὥς τὴν μαστεύων οἶος κατὰ Πήλιον αἰπύ
αἶψ' ὑπὸ Κενταύροισιν ὄρεσκόοισι δαμείη.

δαίδαλον δὲ εἶπε τὴν μάχαιραν διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ Ἥφαίστου κατεσκευάσθαι. ἐπικεικῶς δὲ τὰ Ἥφαίστου ἔργα δαίδαλά φησι (*Il.* 18.482):

ποιεῖ δαίδαλα πολλὰ ἰδυίησι πρᾶπίδεςσιν.

But Didymus says it should be written with φ: ‘with an ornamented knife he laid a ruse for Peleus, covertly taking it from him so that when he was caught by the Centaurs without help he would perish’. This story is related by many, including Hesiod who says as follows:

This seemed to him the best plan in his heart:
hold back, but stealthily conceal the sword,
beautiful, which the famous Cripple made him,
so while alone he sought it on steep Pelion
the mountain-lurking Centaurs would soon fell him.

(Pindar) called the knife ‘ornamented’ because it had been made by Hephaestus. He fairly calls Hephaestus’ works ‘ornamented’:

much finery he made with skilful mind.

The passage from the *Catalogue of Women* gave Didymus a fuller narrative of the episode which Pindar simply alluded to.⁴⁹ There was a real weapon, which belonged to Peleus, and Akastos had hidden in the moment of need; it was the work of Hephaestus (Ἀμφιγυήεις, v. 3), not of Daedalus; it was ‘beautiful’, καλή—that is, plausibly, ornamented, i.e. δαίδαλος. He therefore corrected Δαίδαλου to δαιδάλω, eliminating the oddity and aligning Pindar with

⁴⁹ Didymus’ anonymous predecessor may also have had the Hesiodic fragment in mind, or at least the well-known fact that Peleus owned a sword made by Hephaestus: his ‘absurd explanation’ (Henry 2005: 41) presupposes an attempt to avoid the natural interpretation of Pindar’s words, viz. an actual weapon made by Daedalus.

Hesiod.⁵⁰ The Homeric verse strengthened the emendation by confirming that Hephaestus' works could indeed be called δαίδαλα.

An epic parallel is also key to Didymus' intervention on *Nem.* 10.62 (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 10.114a, **165**).⁵¹ The transmitted text has Lynceus espy the Dioscuri from Mt Taygetos while *he* was sitting (ἤμενος) in an oak's hollow trunk, for (γάρ) he had the keenest sight on earth. Surely not: the proof of preternatural sight is to spot someone from afar when *they* are hidden, and the *Cypria* (fr. 15 Bernabé) confirm that the oak contained the Dioscuri, not Lynceus. So Aristarchus changed ἤμενος to the accusative ἤμενον, indicating Castor, for Castor alone was apparently indicated by Apollodorus, *BNJ* 224 F 148 (cf. *Bibl.* 3.1.11; fr. 8 Horn = 59 Feine). Didymus objected that the *Cypria* located both brothers, not only one, in the fateful tree. Accordingly, he proposed to retain the letters of the transmitted text and simply move the accent forward: ἡμένοος, taken as accusative plural (ἀντὶ τοῦ ἡμένους) on the parallel of the accusative use of ἀελλόπος, τρίπος, ἔδος. The analogy does not work linguistically, but the sense is the right one; all recent editors print ἡμένους. Once again Didymus takes the lead from Aristarchus both in the interpretation of the passage and for the type of emendation he proposes.⁵²

The emendation is minimal, if it is one at all (Didymus only speaks of ἀναγιγνώσκειν—'read' in the literal, not text-critical sense). Similarly, Σ **BD** *Nem.* 4.151a (**153**) quotes him as saying that at *Nemean* 4.93 'it is also possible to read' οἷον 'how' (exclamatory, θαυμαστικῶς) rather than οἷον 'only', favoured by Aristarchus (fr. 68 Horn = 51 Feine). He must be right, yet he displays his characteristic tentativeness; μήποτε 'perhaps' occurs so frequently that some past scholars have used it as a fingerprint of sorts, to assign anonymous comments to him.⁵³

In four cases he is recorded as defending the transmitted text, sometimes rightly (πόσις against Aristarchus' unmetrical πόσιος at *Ol.* 2.77: Σ **A** *Ol.* 2.140a, **107**; perhaps ναίω at *Pyth.* 7.6, Σ **BDEGQ** *Pyth.* 7.6a, **135**), sometimes probably not (Ἄλιν against Aristodemus' Ἄλτιν at *Ol.* 10.45: Σ **BCDEQ** *Ol.* 10.55c, **123**; μόλεν against μόλον at *Nem.* 7.34: Σ **BD** *Nem.* 7.47, **159**). When faced with a variant ἄ τραχεῖα πόλις for Ἀτρέκεια πόλιν at *Ol.* 10.13 he opined that it, too, 'makes sense' (ἔχειν λόγον: Σ **A** *Ol.* 10.17c, **122**), but apparently he

⁵⁰ Modern commentators are divided. Like Snell–Maehler (who do not even cite Didymus' suggestion in the apparatus), Willcock 1995, Henry 2005, and Cannatà Fera 2020 retain Δαιδάλου; like Turyn, Braswell 2017: 215, 218 favours the emendation.

⁵¹ On Didymus' use of quotations from earlier poets see Braswell 2011: 188–91 and 2017: 116–18. His use of the Hellenistic poets still awaits investigation, but Callimachus' presence in the Pindar scholia more generally is treated by Phillips 2013. On attitudes towards mythological parallels and variants in the scholia see Bitto 2012: 117–23.

⁵² Aristarchus had similarly corrected ἐσλόος to the required ἐσλούος at *Nem.* 1.24, recognising the transmitted form as a residue of the 'old spelling': Σ **BDPU** *Nem.* 1.34b (fr. 56 Horn = 40 Feine).

⁵³ See Benuzzi, this volume, 000 n. 000. On Didymus' similar use of the potential optative in the Περὶ Δημοσθένους see Gibson 2002: 30–32.

stayed shy of endorsing it – rightly so, because it is unmetrical.⁵⁴ So the picture of Didymus as a textual critic is a mixed one, both in method and in results. Generally he seems unkeen on altering the transmitted text, choosing instead to interpret it when possible and otherwise to amend with a light touch; yet in one case he proposed a major, unwarranted emendation when Pythaenetus sent him off track.

2.4. *Corpus and performance*

Didymus was also interested in the constitution of the collection. Firstly, he seems to have defended the authenticity of *Olympian* 5. Drachmann, followed by Braswell, prints *inscr. a* thus (°110):

αὕτη ἢ ὥδῃ ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἐδαφίοις οὐκ ἦν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς Διδύμου ὑπομνήμασιν
ἐλέγετο Πινδάρου.

This ode was not (by Pindar) in the base texts, but in Didymus' commentaries it was said to be by Pindar.

—following the Vatican recension (**BDEHQ**); **A** has a mundane *περὶ αὐτῆς τάδε* in place of Πινδάρου, presumably referring to *inscr. b* which follows. If the Vatican text is correct, Didymus defended the ode against the charge of spuriousness made in the ἐδάφια, the 'base text' traditionally ascribed to Aristophanes of Byzantium.⁵⁵

Elsewhere he decries that *Nemean* 11 was 'shoved into' the *Epinicians* (συνεῶσθαι: *inscr. a* **BD**, 166). While none of the last three *Nemeans* honours a Nemean victory, as ancient commentators knew (*inscr. BD Nem.* 9), the last one is unique in not being a victory ode altogether. Didymus pointed out, correctly, that it was composed for Aristagoras' inauguration as councillor (citing vv. 9–10), not to celebrate the earlier, minor athletic victories mentioned at vv. 19–21. More perplexingly he added, following Dionysius of Phaselis, that it should have been included in the *Drinking Songs* (Παρoίγια) instead.⁵⁶ Didymus' interest in the occasion of a song transpires also from a remark about *Nem.* 1.6,

⁵⁴ See Braswell 2017: 164. As he remarks, 'in the extant fragments of Didymos' commentary discussion of metre is entirely absent' (p. 124). Whether this betrays 'his ineptitude in that field' (*ibid.*) I am less certain: outside of the *scholia metrica* there is very little metrical discussion altogether in the scholia.

⁵⁵ I follow Ruffa 2001: οὐκ ἦν means not that it 'was not there' but that it 'was marked as spurious' (as in the Homeric scholia); the ἐδάφια are thus likelier to be Aristophanes' canonical edition than a putative earlier one by Zenodotus. Ferrari 2006 instead defends **A**'s text. If he is right and the scholion presents *inscr. b* as a verbatim quotation from Didymus, it could be used as circumstantial evidence to assign to Didymus the short headnotes, with the identification of the victor and the date of the victory, that introduce the scholia to almost every ode. Such a conclusion would be consistent with Didymus' historical interests. Not that the quotation would have to end there: the bit that follows suit in **A** (*inscr. c*, connected by δέ), citing Polemon of Ilium's account of the ἀπήγη (fr. 23 Preller) and offering an improbable etymology of that word, would be entirely at home in Didymus' commentary.

⁵⁶ Discussed by D'Alessio 1997: 54–55 and 2000; Schröder 1999, 146 and n. 2.

where Pindar mentions ‘Aetnaean Zeus’. Apparently Hieron and his entourage used to celebrate victories in the crown games with epinicians performed at the festival of Aetnaean Zeus; Didymus therefore suggests that plausibly (πιθανόν) *Nemean* 1 too was composed for performance at that festival (Σ **BDU** *Nem.* 1.7b, **141**). Didymus’ concern for genre tallies with that shown by the *Περὶ λυρικῶν ποιητῶν*, and an interest in ritual performance contexts is also apparent from his discussion of the tripodaphoric procession in the commentary on the *Paeans* (°**172**) and of the daphnephoric, tripodaphoric, and oschophoric songs in Proclus’ *Chrestomathy*, if that part of the text also goes back to him (see §1).⁵⁷

2.5. Interpretation

For all the importance of history and context, much of Didymus’ Pindaric exegesis consists of down-to-earth interpretation of individual passages. Sometimes he comments on the meaning of a word or its exact connotations. At *Nem.* 1.25 he suggests that τέχνη means not ‘skills’ but ‘guiles’ (δόλους) and μάρνασθαι not ‘fight’ but ‘act’ (ἐνεργεῖν) (Σ **BDPU** *Nem.* 1.36, 38, **142**, **143**). At *Nem.* 5.6 he remarks, contrary to an unnamed predecessor, that the ὀπώρα to which Pindar compares the young victor’s incipient beard is not to be understood as ‘fruit’ but as the season bearing that name, the latter part of the summer (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 5.10a, **155**). Commenting on *Ol.* 9.22 μαλεραῖς ἐπιφλέγων ἀοιδαῖς he improbably maintains that the songs are not ‘flaming’—in keeping with the image of ἐπιφλέγων ‘setting alight’, with the Homeric use of μαλερός, and with Pindar’s frequent equation of song with fire and light—but ‘gentle’ (ἀντὶ τοῦ μαλακαῖς), drawing a parallel with *Isthm.* 2.8 μαλακόφωνοι ἀοιδαί (Σ *Ol.* 9.34c, **120**).

We already saw Didymus use a Pindaric parallel for elucidation in **144**. Elsewhere he buttresses his interpretations with references to Pindar’s usage more generally. Commenting *Nem.* 7.61 σκοτεινὸν ἀπέχων ψόγον ‘keeping dark censure away’, he suggests that the poet is the subject, not the object, of the negated censure: ‘I will blame no-one’, not ‘no-one will blame me’ (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 7.89b, **161**); he adds that ‘this is not alien to Pindar, since he makes many other statements of this sort’ (τοῦτο οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ Πινδάρου, ἀλλὰ γὰρ πολλὰ αὐτῷ τοιαῦτα εἴρηται). Remarkably, when it came to the occurrence of the same motif at *Isthm.* 1.43–45 he gave the opposite interpretation (Σ **BD** *Isthm.* 1.60, **169**).⁵⁸ Or take *Isthm.* 2.12 οὐκ ἀγνώτ’ ἀείδω. When arguing that ἀγνώτ’ is the elision of ἀγνώτι ‘to someone unknowing’ not of ἄγνωτα ‘things unknown’, Didymus refutes the opposite claim as follows (Σ **BD** *Isthm.* 2.19a, **171**):

ὁ δὲ Δίδυμος μειοῦσθαί φησι τὸ ἀξίωμα τοῦ ποιητοῦ, εἰ μηδέπω τοῦ ἐπινίκου συντεταγμένου γνώριμός ἐστιν ἢ τοῦ Ξενοκράτους νίκη· ἔμπαλιν γὰρ ὁ Πίνδαρος ἀφανεῖς καὶ ἀδόξους φησὶν εἶναι τὰς νίκας, εἰς ἃς αὐτὸς μηδὲν γέγραφε.

⁵⁷ On issues of corpus and genre in the Pindar scholia more broadly see Bitto 2012: 195–98.

⁵⁸ On the construal of this scholion see Prodi 2014, *contra* Braswell 2017.

Didymus, however, says that the poet's dignity is diminished if Xenocrates' victory is renowned before the epinician is composed. On the contrary, Pindar says that the victories for which he has not written anything are unseen and unrenowned.

Didymus is right on the general facts, for Pindar does often make fame dependant on his songs (*Ol.* 10.91–93, *Nem.* 7.14–16, etc.), but turning this trope into a rule ignores the rhetorical flexibility of his poetry and imposes on it an ideological consistency which it does not possess.

There is another interesting case in which Didymus discusses what makes, and what does not make, praise. The passage is one of the most textually disputed in the Pindaric corpus, *Nem.* 7.30–37.⁵⁹ In the (probably incorrect) ancient interpretation, Pindar says that after the Trojan War Neoptolemus reached Delphi and died there *τεθνακότων βοαθῶων*, 'after the helpers had died'. But who were these 'helpers'? (*Σ BD Nem.* 7.47, **159**):

ποίη δὲ βοηθῶν; τῶν περὶ τὸν Εὐρύπυλον, οὗς αὐτὸς ὁ Νεοπτόλεμος ἀνελὼν ἐπόρθησε τὴν Ἴλιον. οὕτω γὰρ ἴδιος ὁ πόνοσ ἔσται τοῦ ἥρωος. [...] ἐὰν δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἑκτορα, καθὼς Ἀρίσταρχός φησιν, ἀναδράμωμεν, πρῶτον μὲν μακρόθεν ἔσται τὴν πόρθησιν συνάπτων, δεύτερον δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν κοινότητα μεταβησόμεθα, δι' ἧς τὸ ἐγκώμιον οὐκ ἔσται.

Which helpers? Eurypylus and his companions: Neoptolemus himself killed them and sacked Troy. In this way the labor will be the hero's own. [...] If we go back to Hector and his companions, as Aristarchus argues, firstly the connection with the sack will be distant, and secondly we will switch to generality, through which there will be no praise.

In order to establish their identity, Didymus appeals *a priori* to the workings of ἐγκώμιον, 'praise'. In order to be effective, praise must concentrate on something specific (ἴδιος) to the individual praised; if instead its referent is common to many, no praise of the individual ensues. Pindar means to praise Neoptolemus, *ergo* the 'dead helpers' must be something specific to him, whence their identification with Troy's 'helper' Eurypylus.⁶⁰ A different preoccupation with the general and the particular underlies Didymus' criticism of Aristarchus and Chaeris in *Σ BDPU Nem.* 1.49c (**144**; §2.1 above). Both scholars had sought to draw a general parallel between Heracles and the victor, respectively on account of his inborn excellence and of his φιλοπονία, 'love of labour'. Didymus' objection to both is similar: if Pindar had wanted to draw on a permanent characteristic of Heracles' greatness, he would have told of all the Labours together, rather than select one, minor episode.

⁵⁹ See Most 1986; Braswell 2017: 229–33; Cannatà Fera 2020: 448–49.

⁶⁰ The assumption that the mythical narrative of *Nem.* 7 is 'praise' of Neoptolemus is also noteworthy. It tallies with the insistence on the poet's role elsewhere in the poem: vv. 61–63 (cf. Didymus' interpretation in **161**, discussed above), 64–65, 68–69, and especially 102–104 (where the doxography in *Σ BD Nem.* 7.150a could well be Didymean).

The scholion to *Nemean* 7 just examined combines an appeal to first principles with sensitiveness to context and the train of thought of the passage: Didymus goes on to note that the mythical episode of Neoptolemus' own death illustrates the immediately preceding *gnōmē* that death comes equally to those who are or are not expecting it (vv. 30–31).⁶¹ Another example of contextually sensitive explanation is the list of Theaios' victories at *Nem.* 10.25–28, where Pindar mentions a Pythian victory, three crowns won 'at the gates of the sea', i.e. at the Isthmus, and three 'on the holy ground according to Adrastus' institution' (σεμνοῖς δαπέδοις ἐν Ἀδραστείῳ νόμῳ, 28). Adrastus was a mythical king of Sicyon, so one could easily have assumed that the games of v. 28 are the Pythia celebrated there, for which Pindar composed *Nemean* 9 (the ode immediately preceding this one). However, Didymus realised the context is a list of 'periodic' victories—those obtained in the Panhellenic 'circuit' comprising the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean games—which requires a mention of the games in Sicyon's neighbour Nemea rather than the local Pythia (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 9.49b, **164**).⁶²

In the same scholion, Didymus also discerned correctly that vv. 29–33, immediately after our passage, are a wish for an Olympic victory, completing the περίοδος. This conceit, too, is drawn from Pindar's usage (*Pyth.* 5.124, *Isthm.* 1.64–67, 6.7–9, etc.). Didymus also deployed it to interpret the word προκώμιον, 'prelude', at *Nem.* 4.11: in his view, by using that word Pindar cast the ode as the prelude of hoped-for further epinicians, implicitly expressing a wish for further victories (Σ **BDP** *Nem.* 4.14a, **150**). As we saw, this idea also stands behind the interpretation of the myth of Heracles in *Nemean* 1 as portending future victories (§2.1 above); in that context Didymus quoted *Pyth.* 1.33–34, another parallel passage.⁶³

In Didymus' *hypomnemata* there was room also for interpretations of a more literary bent. To name only one, he recognised the images Pindar uses in his praise of the wrestling trainer Melesias at the end of *Nemean* 4 are drawn, appropriately, from wrestling (ἀπὸ τῶν παλαιόντων δὲ πάλιν ἢ μεταφορά, καὶ τροπικαὶ αἱ λέξεις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀθλήσεως) (Σ **BD** *Nem.* 4.153, **154**; cf. Σ **BD** 151a, **153**).⁶⁴ Nor was the poet immune from criticism: in Didymus' estimation, Apollo's laughter at the 'upright arrogance' of the asses being sacrificed to him at *Pyth.* 10.36 (a reference to an erection) is μετὰ τοῦ γελοίου καὶ ἄσεμνα, 'ridiculous and unseemly' (Σ **BDEGQ** *Pyth.* 10.51b, **139**).⁶⁵

3. Conclusions

⁶¹ This is one way of taking ἀδόκητον and δοκέοντα, the other (and more plausible) being 'obscure' and 'famous'. The controversy is already in Σ **BD** *Nem.* 7.44a.

⁶² For a similar case see Σ **BD** *Isthm.* 1.67 (**170**) with Braswell 2017: 253. Didymus' attempted defence of the variant ἄτραχεῖα at *Ol.* 10.17 (**122**) likewise relies on presupposing continuity of sense with the next clause (Carnevali 1980: 7).

⁶³ Remarkably, no such interpretation is made explicitly in the scholia to *Pythian* 1. The closest thing is the paraphrase in Σ **DEFGQ** *Pyth.* 1.69.

⁶⁴ Σ **BD** *Nem.* 7.150a (which we suggested above, n. 000, as potentially Didymean) also concludes by identifying the domain of a metaphor.

⁶⁵ See Braswell 2011: 195–96. On criticisms of Pindar in the scholia see Cannatà Fera 2018.

Didymus is a central node in scholarship on Greek lyric: not only as a transmissor of earlier scholarship, crucial though that role was, but also as an exegete in his own right. No ancient scholar that we know of contributed so much, and of such value, to the interpretation of Pindar, whether in content or in method. His vast knowledge of historical, geographical, and antiquarian literature enabled him to build historicizing readings on a much firmer foundation than had previously been done. Glitches abound, whether caused by uncritical reliance on sources or by insufficient willingness to depart from precedent; yet the principle—finding things out rather than making them up—is fundamentally sound. His frequent caution and openness to multiple possibilities are praiseworthy. As a textual critic, Didymus gave his best with small-scale emendations (an ending, an accent, a breathing), but he could be misled—again—by excessive reliance on sources or by an unwillingness to reject the transmitted text. When it comes to literary criticism, Didymus shows himself to be a careful and sensitive reader of Pindar, one who noticed patterns and recurring ideas and could retrace the poet’s thinking while keeping in mind the background of pre- (and post-) Pindaric Greek poetry. He could be spectacularly wrong on occasion: Σ **B** *Ol.* 13.27a, **BCEQ** 27d (126) is ‘truly Pythonesque’, as his most recent editor put it.⁶⁶ Yet when compared with his fellow ancient Pindarists he is second to none, not even to Aristarchus. The study of Pindar has made long strides since his times, but little of it would have been possible without his work and his example.

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⁶⁶ Braswell 2017: 124.