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# STATUS AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN PINDAR'S EPINICIAN ODES

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CAITLIN LENORE MILLER

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*Vreme trece, vreme vine,*
*Toate-s vechi şi nouă toate;*
*Ce e rău şi ce e bine*
*Tu te-ntreabă şi socoate;*
*Nu spera şi nu ai teamă,*
*Ce e val ca valul trece;*
*De te-ndeamnă, de te cheamă,*
*Tu rămâi la toate rece.*

Mihai Eminescu
"Glossă," 1883

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In her poem “Prayer,” Jorie Graham writes: “The longing / is to be pure. What you get is to be changed.” This may be one description of writing a dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that Pindar's epinician odes, composed in the first half of the fifth century BCE, functioned as both ideology and practice in attempting to stabilize, legitimize, and perpetuate the social status of Pindar's patrons and their families. It reads the extant epinician odes as the evidence of sociocultural practices and discourses of the fifth century BCE, and shows that predecessors, contemporaries, and later receivers of Pindaric epinician in antiquity saw the practice of athletic commemoration and epinician poetry itself as participants in fundamental sociopolitical discourses with high stakes for the well-being of social communities. A critical contemporary role of this poetic form was to naturalize the potentially unstable statuses of elites across the Greek world, under a variety of forms of political organization. In order to argue that the social status of elites was both naturally legitimate and diachronically durable, the epinicians represent inborn *arete* as a ground for physical ability, health, and achievement, which is equated with social and moral value. They consistently narrativize sexuality and childbirth as subject to a system of social regulation and surveillance that supports a narrow definition of reproductive norms and the importance of both material and social inheritance. In their self-conscious reference to their own composition and performance, the poems represent themselves as active participants in, and creators of, the norms of a restricted elite social discourse that both limits and defines the possible investments of their potential audiences. In the metaphors that the odes use to describe their victors, their own nature as cultural products, and the relationship of the poet to his *laudandi,* the poet and his poems are embedded in contemporary social institutions that served elite interests and interconnections. Ultimately, the odes strive to create an audience that is invested in their own reproduction and perpetuation, alongside the social institutions and forms on which their value system relies.

## Introduction

In his 2019 book *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom,* the literary critic and philosopher Martin Hägglund argues that a serious investment in life beyond death has consequences far beyond the individual. In his view, individual belief in an afterlife, and institutional support of this belief, has a significant impact on how people are able to care for one another through the daily actions and more durable social organizations of human life:

> To treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated requires that we recognize our shared finitude, since only finite beings can be in need of mutual care…. If we do not recognize our shared vulnerability and finitude, the demand for mutuality is not intelligible and we cannot be compelled to care for one another as ends in ourselves.[1]

Hägglund's claims arise out of his analysis of the social and personal preoccupations of a society both capitalist and Judeo-Christian, and his prescription is the widespread adoption of secular social democracy. In many ways, early fifth-century BCE Greece could hardly look more different than the broad contours of this twenty-first-century CE historical picture. Nevertheless, Hägglund's central questions offer two related provocations that underlie the interests of this project. First, he questions the "assumption that eternity is desirable," regardless of whether eternal life is possible or achievable, or the specific form that this kind of enduring life might take.[2] Secondly, this question is framed not only in terms of an individual life but in terms of the impact that a desire for eternal life has on our relations with others, and the larger ways in which we organize our societies and economies. This is not only a philosophical preoccupation with the health and happiness of a person alone; it is a sociological question about the ways in which people relate to one another, and the shapes that this relation might take.

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[1] Hägglund 2019, 10-11.
[2] *ibid.,* 28.

In the Pindaric case, the question that interests my project is twofold. First, what makes cultural persistence through poetry desirable in this particular historical period, without assuming that this desire is universal or transhistorical? The dissertation argues that aspirations towards cultural persistence for Pindar and his victors are integrally related to aspirations towards other kinds of persistence—material, social, political, economic, and familial. Secondly, what are the potential social repercussions of elite individuals' investment in cultural persistence, and what kinds of social structures and ideologies must be maintained in order for this investment to make sense for a social actor? I read Pindar's poems not only as expressions of the relation between particular individuals—say, poet and victor, or poet and audience—but as symptoms of larger concerns with the normative relational structures that support and surround the elite individual in the early fifth century.

To speak of literary immortality, particularly in the Classical Greek context, risks sounding staid, uncritical, even reactionary. Variations on this concept have been highly active, however, in the last decades of Pindaric scholarship. For scholars of the last thirty years or so, Pindaric epinician's relation to historicity—that is to say, its capacity for transhistorical persistence and its specificity in its own time—has been a central issue. Epinician can on the one hand be analyzed as an aesthetic and cultural object, which anticipates its own reception by spatially and temporally vast audiences; on the other, it might be analyzed primarily as an experienced, and experiential, response to highly specific, momentary achievements of the fifth century BCE. These dual attributes have been highly productive in the development of Pindaric hermeneutics, reflecting not only on the specific genre of fifth-century epinician but also more widely on the history of Greek literary production.

## I. Background

It has been argued that Pindar's poetry stands both at the threshold of the recognizable cultural form we call Western literature (in Boris Maslov's terms, it demonstrates "the emergence of literature"[3]) and projects itself forward in time, insisting upon and therefore predicting its own persistence and canonization.[4] It participates in the construction of social and political geography and space, and is an active agent in maintaining and responding to social relationships and orders.[5] This Pindaric view of space is a complement to a Pindaric view of time; as a synthetic, syncretic construct that participates in (or frees itself from) the past, present, and future to define, shape, and reinforce particular mythic and cultural narratives.[6] Recent scholarship on the Pindaric corpus has tended to focus attention on Pindar's long afterlife, both historically and as imagined by the poems themselves: either as expressed poetically, in the complicated temporality of the epinician odes, or as the deliberate, material process of editing, selection, and survival in the literary and intellectual culture of antiquity and afterwards.[7] In this framework, Pindaric claims to the gnomic and lasting seem to have been borne out by history; Pindar appears (appropriately) vatic, having foreseen his own poetry's preservation.[8] In its afterlife—and in the future it has projected for

[3] Maslov 2015. Maslov locates epinician's understanding of its own historicity in contemporary Greek cultural concepts of the historical as the domain of the individual and as the transformation of traditional social authority into "a new kind of authority that inhabits the domain of the historical" (183). For his argument, "literature claims and grants immortality by hybridizing pregiven discursive forms" (320). Part of the aim of this project is to critically dissociate the "claiming" of epinician immortality from the possibility of its "granting" in order to deconstruct the discourse of persistence it participates in.

[4] Maslov 2015; Phillips 2016, Sigelman 2016.

[5] As argued in Kurke and Neer 2019 and Epstein 2019, on space; Kurke 1991, on social integration; Morgan 2015, on managing tyranny; Lewis 2019, on Sicilian political integration.

[6] In the terms of Sigelman 2016.

[7] Most prominently, the stratigraphic traditionality and innovation of Maslov 2015; the synthetic, immortal temporalities of Sigelman 2016; the self-conscious textuality of Phillips 2016; the "poetics of permanence" of Spelman 2018.

[8] This vocabulary of the "vatic" is from Johnson 1982, 59, responded to by Payne 2006.

itself—it survives both materially and culturally even as its interpretations may continue to be contested.

Maslov's important application of the methods of Historical Poetics to the Pindaric corpus seeks one kind of epinician historicity in the poems' self-depiction of literary development.[9] In this argument, hybrid, asynchronous, or folkloric "survivals" surface within epinician, and recognizable, "stratified" forms of social discourse can be excavated from the poems without assuming authorial awareness or agency.[10] Epinician's aspirations to cultural "immortality" have also been defined in its synthesis or rejection of multiple temporalities, and often as a privilege granted to the poet by his advantageous relationship with the divine.[11] Viewed as a development of Homeric metapoetics, this poetic endurance might also be equated with cultural memory, for which first oral, then written, poems function as a perpetuating technology.

Asya Sigelman has argued that, text-internally, Pindar leverages a synthetic representation of time and temporality to disassociate his poems from any one particular time period, thereby allowing them to be received and interpreted in the future without being bound to the historical circumstances of their production.[12] Henry Spelman has discussed how Pindar's texts incorporate the history of lyric production to support their claims to traditionality, but also anticipate future performances and audiences beyond the first

[9] Maslov 2015.
[10] Maslov 2015, 8-9. Elsewhere described as "the nonlinear, nonsynchronous historicity of cultural phenomena" (Kliger and Maslov 2015, 6). The dissertation argues implicitly that a description of non- or asynchronous historicity contained in the text (also sometimes called non-linear or anachronistic, e.g. Holmes 2020 on "kairological history," or "untimeliness") is insufficient for understand epinician motivation and agency in terms of its social function and aspirations.
[11] Sigelman 2016, 3—"intrapoetic immortality" is "a god-like existence beyond the stream of time" and a "synoptic vision of past, present and future." Grethlein 2010, 39— "The medium of song in which the dense net of anachronies makes the boundaries of past, present, and future collapse establishes an eternal present." See also Steiner 1986, ch. 11, on natural metaphors, death, and literary permanence in the odes.
[12] Sigelman 2016, who has a strong emphasis on reading odes as literature.

performance to support epinician's perpetuation in the future.[13] In an approach that widens its scope to the material conditions of epinician preservation and historical transmission, Tom Phillips has drawn important connections between the reception of the odes as written texts and the possibilities of their original performance contexts.[14] Other recent treatments of Pindar represent a turn towards ideas of lyric voice, temporality, and potential for both persistence and "disruption,"[15] with less focus on the historical circumstances of their composition. These approaches to Greek lyric tend to locate epinician's capacity for transhistorical legibility in aspects of its poetic form, especially its participation in an identifiable lyric modality.[16]

The most influential view of Pindar's participation in sociopolitical life has been broadly New Historicist, grounded by Leslie Kurke's 1991 monograph *The Traffic in Praise.* Kurke's argument for the social function of epinician expanded on the work of Kevin Crotty, who saw the essential function of Pindar's odes as "completing" and securing the social capital earned by the athletic victory while diffusing the theoretical threat of individual elite achievement.[17] For both Kurke and Crotty, the epinician ode is primarily in service of securing the social status of the victor by re-integrating him into his *polis, oikos,* and family after he has initiated a potential rupture (and become a potential social threat) by virtue of his victory.[18] Both approaches are importantly audience-focused, speculating on how the odes attempt to persuade contemporary audiences of the value and social function of the victor. Kurke suggests that this problem can be solved through the rhetoric of *megaloprepeia* in the

[13] Spelman 2018. For the multiple- and secondary-audience approach to the corpus of Sicilian odes (including their textual transmission and diffusion), see Morrison 2007.
[14] Phillips 2016.
[15] Fearn 2017, ch. 3.
[16] e.g. Payne 2006.
[17] Crotty 1982.
[18] Crotty originally introduces the idea of reintegration to the *polis;* Kurke expands this to include the *oikos*.

*polis,* while Kathryn Morgan has argued that the Sicilian odes portray the Deinomenid tyrants as just and wise (archaic) *basileis* to diffuse the negative associations that might attend the label of "tyranny."[19] Virginia Lewis' recent treatment of the function and ideology of the Sicilian odes has interpreted them as working to integrate a diverse population under the banner of Deinomenid *polis* identities, forging potential new collective identities out of local myths and re-imagined aetiologies; Leslie Kurke and Richard Neer have argued for a "supra-political," non-localized Deinomenid identity that links the Deinomenid tyrants to Panhellenic centers in mainland Greece.[20]

New Historicist approaches tend to argue for Pindar's investment in an "aristocratic ideology," a worldview seen as threatened by developments towards limited direct democracy in fifth-century Greece.[21] They perceive Pindar as negotiating between or strategically endorsing different factions in a sociocultural or socioeconomic struggle—whether between aristocratic victors and the *demos* or between wandering seers and established oracular centers.[22] For Kurke in particular, this means a strong argument that epinician production represents "a kind of counter-revolution on the part of the aristocracy" to Solonic reforms and the developing practices of Athenian democracy.[23] Although she stresses that her ideological readings of Pindar have primarily discursive stakes and are not meant to map strictly onto historical *realia*, they both rely on and attempt to generate social-anthropological arguments about the actual historical context of the epinicians. In addition, sociopolitical realia are in fact important for understanding how this discursive system is

[19] Morgan 2007 (relying on ancient sources for this historical narrative of *basileis;* for issues with this, see Hall 2007). *Pace* Kurke 1991, 220: "In Pindar's poems for tyrants, no attempt is made to defuse the *phthonos* their success awakens."
[20] Lewis 2019; Kurke and Neer 2019, ch. 6.
[21] Or more precisely, Athens, towards which the evidence for democracy in the fifth century is overwhelmingly lopsided.
[22] Kurke 1991; Foster 2017; Nicholson 2005.
[23] Kurke 1991, 258-9.

constructed and how epinician makes use of the critical terms that are central to New Historicist readings. Besides drawing heavily on twentieth-century anthropology and ethnography,[24] these analyses have roots in Marxist and Althusserian approaches to defining ideological structures in terms of class positionality. They therefore tend to project onto this aristocratic-democratic dichotomy an additional element of class conflict between Archaic systems of elite value (represented by the symbolic exchange of precious objects) and Classical "democratic" ideology (theoretically attached to Greek coinage, and thereby to receiving payment in exchange for poetic composition).[25]

For this project, I find the language of "status" rather than "class" more productive, in part to avoid an association with theories about class persistence that can too easily skew transhistorical. It not only seems to more accurately describe epinician aspirations but allows a more precise description of both the agency and anxieties of social actors as well as the dynamics of interaction among elites, a process that is central to Pindar's ambitions.[26] If epinician can be described as an elite, Panhellenic product, its Panhellenism was more of an attitude than an identity, a strategy rather than a reflection of an essential solidarity between diverse elites.[27] And while Pindaric epinician was assuredly produced by and for the privileged few, an approach that assumes a homogeneous aristocratic class can elide the

[24] Kurke 1991 places a particularly heavy structural emphasis on practices of gift exchange, and adopts many concepts from Marcel Mauss and Marshall Sahlins.
[25] Originally, this distinction between short-term (polis) and long-term (aristocratic) transactional orders comes from Sitta von Reden, following the anthropologists Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch. See especially Kurke 1991 and 1999 for the applications of this framework to literary and historiographic practice. For the original argument for class conflict in antiquity, De Ste. Croix 1981.
[26] Ian Morris (1996 and 2000) has argued that what are perceived as "elitist" vs "middling" values are actual two different attitudinal possibilities within the Greek elite; "elitist" identified with interstate networks and "middling" with "polis values." Very possible to argue (I do, below) that these are not necessarily opposed, but the argument that these attitudes are strategic and potentially complementary is important. See Seaford 2002 for an important critique of this polarity and of Kurke 1999's reliance upon it.
[27] See Hall 2002 on the development of Panhellenic cultural identity in the fifth century.

significant differences—and potential competition—between wealthy Greeks of the fifth century, and obscures the possibility of conflict and fluidity within the propertied upper classes.

Pindar composed under the patronage of the Deinomenid tyrants in Sicily and the Battiad monarchy of Cyrene in North Africa, and his victors hailed from powerful families in *poleis* across the Greek world.[28] His poetic activity has therefore been particularly implicated in the advertisement or ideological consolidation of certain kinds of political power—that is to say, hegemonic state power, sole rulership, and aristocratic elitism. Given the historiographical prominence of developing Athenian democratic practices in the late sixth and the fifth century, Pindaric poetry has often come to stand for a politics that reacted against emergent democracy in favor of maintaining elite, oligarchic, or monarchic authority (i.e., preserving the status of his wealthy patrons).[29] In this paradigm, Pindar buttresses the interests of the "elite" in contrast to the *demos.* He supports the archaizing domain of tyrants and aristocrats throughout the Greek world even as the role of sole rulership and a privileged elite is increasing being called into question in the wake of the Persian Wars, the development of early forms of Greek federalism, and the increasing prominence of Athenian power on the world stage.[30] By championing elite achievement and value in the Classical

[28] With important areas of concentration—particularly Sicily, Aigina, and central Greece.
[29] This paradigm is particularly associated with Kurke 1991 and New Historicist scholarship; see also Nicholson 2005 and Rose 1982. It has been challenged by numerous recent treatments of the political and geographic diversity of Pindar's victors and an understanding of how significantly he modulates his vocabulary and terms of praise in different contexts (e.g. Mann 2001, Kowalzig 2011 on the lack of the problem of social integration in odes for athletes of Aigina; Pavlou 2015 arguing that this lack does not reflect a real absence of political tension; Fearn 2009; Fearn (ed.) 2011 for an in-depth treatment of Aigina in particular—the *polis* for which Pindar wrote more odes than any other. Morgan 2007 treats Argos and Corinth).
[30] Smith 2007 argues that trends in victor statues during the same period parallel this same phenomenon: "the last generation of Archaic privilege rode the back of the contemporary revolution in statue-making" (83). There is a legacy of pushback on the idea of Pindaric poetry as reacting strictly to the "rise of democracy;" the best summary is Thomas 2007. See Hornblower and Morgan 2007 for the suggestion that a more appealing framework might be

*polis*, Pindar is therefore seen as consciously resisting a tide of political development and economic change that threatens the imagined stability of elite hegemony.[31] This multifaceted archaism, in conjunction with other poetic techniques, has often been invoked as one of the means by which Pindar's poetry strives to ensure its relevance and power not only in its contemporary context but for times to come. By disassociating its composition and performance from a particular time, place, or political viewpoint, epinician perhaps attempts to flexibly adapt to contexts both anticipated and unknown.[32]

This view on epinician function has the additional advantage of boosting Pindar's potential for diachronic appeal to later audiences of both his texts and re-performances. The relatively broad geographic diversity of victors and communities for which Pindar composed is often invoked as a way of explaining the poems' variety of strategies of appeal. Pindar is thought to orient his poetry towards different ideological practices and cultural spaces, while keeping one eye on the Hellenic, interactional space of the major athletic festivals—and one eye on the historical exigency that threatens the potential monumentality to which his poems aspire. The odes' ultimate synthesis of these multiple purposes is responsible for their contemporary and future success, as well as for establishing certain formal features that are now recognizable in terms of textuality and literariness.

A scholarly search for epinician unity, and the consistent presence of particular techniques of ideological legitimation in the odes, may have helped project the idea of a

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Greek *apoikia* (which, however, introduces its own issues of chronology and definition). See also Athanassaki 2003 and Foster 2017 for perspectives on *apoikia* and epinician; Dougherty 1993 for colonization and Greek poetics more generally. I am interested not so much in how epinician might have reflected particular social and political realities but rather in how it was perceived to do so or leveraged in favor of social and political performance.

[31] For this perspective on the socio-symbolic impact of economic change, Kurke 1991 and 1999. See also Seaford 2004.

[32] Epstein 2019, 16.

homogeneous aristocratic worldview onto Pindaric epinician.[33] Epinician themes labeled "aristocratic" have a broad range of potential meanings, encompassing myth, genealogy, divinity, economic value, and the physical body. Because of the circumstances of epinician composition, Pindar's depiction of familial genealogies, local and multiple aetiological myths, founding stories, and social institutions becomes associated with the social status of his wealthy patrons, who either already held or aspired to certain kinds of social power. The connection between elite self-advertisement, mythic genealogies, and teleological or transhistorical time is so tightly woven that it can be difficult to determine even conceptual directionality between these categories. This is part of the point: Pindaric epinician seeks to obscure that these qualities are being performed, rather than simply demonstrated. As Rosalind Thomas notes, however, juxtaposing putative aristocratic values to opposing values of the *demos* and democracy at the time at which Pindar composed can be at best unhelpful and at worst misleading. The social values and ideologies like "*arete,* beauty, [and] athletic prowess" that pervade Pindaric ethics were also central, for example, to the self-conception of Athenian democracy.[34]

What social practices and institutions were important for Pindaric epinician when it was composed? The athletic games and the social and political interaction that they symbolized and which actually took place there are one obvious example. The persona of the Pindaric poet is closely identified with the individual athlete, and the geographic relations between victor, home *polis*, and the sites of the major athletic festivals are predictably inscribed in the

[33] On Pindar's contributions to the idea of an aristocratic "Wertewelt" (following Fränkel's *Dichtung und Philosophie)*, see Segal 1986, 128. Even if there was not a large hereditary aristocracy, and the composition of the upper classes and social mobility into and out of them varied between poleis, the strongly legitimizing power of heredity encouraged Pindar to depict his victors in this way (see Chapter 2).

[34] Thomas 2007, 142. See also the arguments of Wilson 2000 on status and aristocracy in relation to the tragic chorus.

geographic references made in the epinician odes.[35] The actual performance of epinician probably involved the social institution of choral performance and perhaps ritual, dedication, and other forms of religious practice. Epinician aetiologies conjure up the figure of the oikist, intimations of hero cult, and the practice of *mantike*.[36] The interpersonal, sociosymbolic practices of proxeny, *xenia,* and perhaps developing *theoria* are also frequently invoked.[37]

Virginia Lewis's argument that Pindaric epinician both constructs and reflects new Sicilian identities for the varied places and political contexts of the early fifth century, adopting and manipulating mythological traditions to mediate between the Deinomenids and their Sicilian constituents, is emblematic of New Historist approaches to the odes.[38] Nigel Nicholson, focusing on Western Greece in particular, has argued that epinician poetry found itself in conflict with local narratives of athletic victory, forcing it to compete and evolve. He argues for an essential opposition between the oral tradition about athletic cult-heroes and the epinician poet, focused around oppositions between periphery and core, urban and rural, and local versus foreign.[39] While this system of oppositions is probably too rigid, Nicholson's work points to the "polyvalent" nature of discourse about athletic victory, and the complexity of the cultural landscape in which epinician for Sicilian victors was composed and performed.[40] Carla Antonaccio has argued that the dynamics of interaction and dedication at mainland Greek regional sanctuaries, particularly the practices of Western Greek settlements in the Archaic period, can shed light on the development of interactional networks that

[35] Lefkowitz 1987; Epstein 2021.
[36] Maslov 2015, ch. 3; see also Foster 2017*;* Currie 2005 argues for immortality through hero cult.
[37] See Chapter 4. On perhaps *theoria*, evidence for which otherwise largely postdates Pindar: *N.* 3.67-70. For a thorough account of the debate over the existence and purpose of the *theārion* in *N.* 3, Rutherford 2011.
[38] Lewis 2019, 4-5 for this statement of purpose.
[39] Nicholson 2016. Hornblower and Morgan 2007 argue that epinician may have originated in Western Greece.
[40] See Boterf 2016 for the language of polyvalence.

shaped the demographic distribution of Pindar's patrons.[41] Western Greek patrons and victors are heavily overrepresented among the extant epinicians, but the activity described in the poems generally centers around the sanctuaries of mainland Greece.[42] What this means about the aims of Western Greek participation in epinician patronage has been variously interpreted. Catherine Morgan and Gillian Shepherd have seen this participation of Western Greek *poleis* at mainland religious centers as a form of self-advertisement, in the same way that Virginia Lewis and Heather Reid consider the commissioning and performance of epinician as a way for Sicilian rulers and their subjects to "elevat[e] Sicily and Sicilians for audiences at home and abroad."[43]

Pindar's epinicians depict a world where elite victory in the games is not only the pinnacle of moral excellence but a boon to the victor's home *polis,* his family, and optimal civic functioning. The odes for Sicilian tyrants depict *poleis* under tyranny as prosperous and ethnically integrated; they may use local places, cults, and symbols to support the legitimacy of Deinomenid rule. They might take advantage of the positionality of the Panhellenic games to portray the Deinomenids in the context of a putatively Panhellenic elite.[44] Given the little that we know about the circumstances of Pindaric performance, however, the question of precisely who this message was intended for is still active. It is obviously one that would appeal to Pindar's victors—particularly a group like the Deinomenids, seeking to legitimize their rule.

Can we so confidently say that their subjects would have been convinced, if the performance of epinician odes was even intended for the general population? There is no real evidence for popular perceptions of epinician, or its effects on any kind of broad cross-

[41] Antonaccio 2007.
[42] See Carey 2007 for his examination of how place of performance is depicted.
[43] Morgan 1990; Shepherd 2015; Lewis and Reid 2021, 2.
[44] See also Malkin 2011 on the Panhellenic games and Sikeliote identity arguing for the importance of *theoroi* linking especially Delphi and the Sicilian cities.

section of society. And while it may have been useful to rulers to think that their subjects ascribed to epinician ideologies, poetic performance was only one tool in a suite of strategies for social and political legitimation. Given, again, that epinician was produced for the elite within the framework of elite institutions, it did not necessarily need broad appeal in order to be transmitted and preserved. Pindar's patrons had reasons enough to want to be represented as they are in the epinician odes without their audience needing to be expanded beyond a small tier of elites, within or between *poleis.* And, of course, the very first audience for any ode was the victor himself.[45]

Approaches to Archaic and Classical Greek lyric have often linked poetry's potential for canonization to concepts of Panhellenism, shared aristocratic culture, and the temporal archaism of myth, all concepts that are highly active around portrayals of the four major stephanitic games.[46] Indeed, arguments about literature and its functions in Archaic and early Classical Greece have long been closely intertwined with ideas about Panhellenic performance, transmission, and identity.[47] Gregory Nagy's *Pindar's Homer* was fundamental to the argument that the Greek lyric canon, though fixed through Alexandrian editing, was originally a product of the "organic Panhellenization" of local lyric traditions in the sixth and fifth centuries.[48] This Panhellenic orientation is also an effective canonizing mechanism for the poet, who "becomes a myth" through the process of reperformance, as well as the poems,

[45] Suggestive is Irwin 2005, 77-80 on the difference between sympotic elegy and inscribed epigram as sympotic vs. public. Questions about epinician performance(s) and their potential public or private nature engage similar questions. Variously, sympotic practice by elites can both embody the *polis* and serve as a space of inclusion/exclusion from the *demos*.
[46] See Kowalzig 2007 on myth and ritual at the games, seeing an interplay between a localism of place and Panhellenism of time; Kurke 2005 on ritual in *Paean* 6; Lewis 2019 on Sicilian myth and *polis* identity; Segal 1986 on mythopoiesis in *P.* 4; Morrison 2007; Eckerman 2008; Rutherford 2011 on myth as a Panhellenic "system of stories" in Pindar.
[47] Including of course rhapsodic performance of Homer.
[48] Nagy 1990, 84. Hadjimichael 2019 argues for the inheritance of a fifth- and fourth-century lyric canon by Hellenistic period, with an emphasis on the increasing spatial reach and subsequent recognition of mobile lyric poets.

which achieve recirculation and wide legibility through their theoretical appeal to "all Hellenes for all time to come."[49] For early Greek lyric poets, this framework locates one pathway to canonization in the subsumption of authorial identity into the structures of traditionality.[50]

But for Nagy, things begin to change with Pindar and the early epinician poets. In his view, Pindar, Ibycus, Simonides, and Bacchylides share an incipient "historicity." That is, their poems represent the evolution of distinctive, singular authorship as opposed to simple traditionality—and this is because of their tyrannical patrons. The authority of the tyrant, rooted in the political power of a single individual, theoretically confers a poetic authority that inheres in authorial individuality rather than diffuse traditions of song.[51] At the same time, the distinctiveness of Pindar's poetic project is constituted by how it preserves both the Panhellenic and the local, "grounding its Panhellenized truth values in the legitimacy and authority of native traditions" and thereby both serving a tyrannical master and irretrievably standing apart by its anchoring in the mythic-gnomic tradition of epic.[52] Pindar achieves both historicity and canonization, both individuality and traditionality.

These associations of authorship, Panhellenism, and tyranny have an enduring legacy in Pindaric studies. Panhellenic approaches to Greek literary production suggest that the emergence of a canonical definition of literature itself has something important to do with a late sixth- and fifth-century expansion of cultural identity. Like the subsumption of author into myth, the transmutation of the local into the Hellenic or Panhellenic generates a new understanding of the literary as a shared cultural form. In a strikingly similar way, Hermann Fränkel suggested in the early twentieth century that Pindar's poetry introduces an abstract

[49] Nagy 1990, 80; 114. Note link here between collective ethnic identity and diachronic persistence.
[50] A process analogized to cult heroization (Nagy 1990, 81n142).
[51] Nagy 1990, 411-12.
[52] *ibid.,* 437.

conception of divinity that is correlated with the emergence of Panhellenism, syncretizing local manifestations of the divine into generalizable, shared concepts.[53] More recent scholarship has continued to put primacy on how the Pindaric "I" and author-function is distinctive within his poetic context.[54]

Though the robustness of the Pindaric "I" (or the emergence of the "author-function" as a key component of a new kind of literary tradition) has attracted attention as a potential literary innovation, there is significant precedent for first-person, authorial presence in early Greek poetry.[55] The extent to which first-person forms in Pindar relate to the choral or monodic performance of the epinician odes has also been the subject of extensive discussion.[56] I prefer not to take a strong position on the possibility of choral performance, since arguments for and against it can largely be derived only from either the (ambiguous) text of the odes or the evidence of the Pindaric scholia, both of which have serious

[53] The "Allgemein-Gottliche" discussed at Maslov 2015, 125; also see Maslov 2012 on genealogical metaphor, following Olga Freidenberg.
[54] Especially Maslov 2015; Lefkowitz 1987; D'Alessio 1994; Fearn 2017; Kuhn-Treichel 2020b, with specific attention to role of the Muses and thereby an idea of divinity.
[55] See Felson 1999, n. 30.
[56] e.g. Lefkowitz 1963 and 1985, Eckerman 2010 and 2011a, Carey 1991, p. 192-200; Anzai 1994 makes a strong argument for the chorus. For the argument for choral first performance and monodic reperformance, Morrison 2007, 7-8. An up-to-date treatment of chorality and the "speaking persona" in Pindar is Schironi 2019. Choral performance is one of the most important sociocultural institutions with which epinician concerns itself, and chorality is certainly represented in epinician, whether or not the odes were (in part or in whole) performed by choruses. If they were, chorality is an excellent example of the ideology-in-practice that characterizes epinician performance and transmission. The odes are not only a discourse about institutions, but an institutional practice themselves: not only a meditation on chorality, but a choral performance; not only metaphorical travelers, but real ones; not simply represented as *xenia* gifts, but perhaps actually composed, transmitted, and performed by *xenoi.* The slipperiness and ambiguity of the individual poetic "I" and a possible choral first person need not be perfectly resolved, however, either in making broad claims about Pindaric performance in general or specific odes or passages. It is exactly this interplay between the socially situated individual and broader institutional social practices that characterizes not only the mechanics of epinician transmission and performance, but how epinician understands and thematizes its own form and function.

limitations.[57] However, it is important to separate the socially embedded "I" from the gnomic first person that meditates on moral conduct and mortality (as at, e.g. *I.* 8.37-44).[58] It is true that this second voice might seem more closely related to Pindar's victors and patrons, insofar as it usually espouses the same kind of advice that the poet addresses to, or associates with, his subjects. Formally, however, this kind of gnomic first person is very often performed by the collective voice of a chorus in Archaic and Classical poetry.[59] Its interpretation as a choral voice need not be in opposition to the kinds of individual rhetorical constructions of poetic identity identified in Chapter 4.[60]

In addition, the idea of a Panhellenic poetic culture in this period needs significant nuance.[61] It is important to reflect on the complexity of "Panhellenism" in this period because the association of literary value with broad cultural appeal is integral to how Pindar's poetics are often conceived. A notional poetics that aspires to persuade proliferating present and future audiences tends to imply a kind of universalism, which seeks a cultural foothold through being legible as widely as possible. This argument has consequences not only for how Pindar's poetry is understood in its contemporary context, but for its historical

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[57] See Morgan 1993 on these limitations and the shifting between contrast and identification with *komos* and chorus in the odes. Lefkowitz 1963, 178 on conjectures from the *scholia,* pointedly asserts: "Barring discovery of Pindar's diary, we shall never know for certain whether or not he was in Cyrene when *P* 5 was performed."

[58] In contrast to Lefkowitz 1991, 10-11. In response: D'Alessio 1994, who usefully complicates this picture. Currie 2013 suggests that shifts between the voice of poet and chorus are related to transitions between mythical past and performance present. See Maslov 2015, 101-102 on first-person forms and the choral voice.

[59] Carey 1991, 194 compellingly cites *partheneia*, paeans, dithyrambs, etc., and of course the tragic chorus. For the possibility of these ethical statements in monodic reperformance, Phillips 2017.

[60] Martin Hose has noted the differentiation between the metaphor of the song-journey, closely tied to the image of the poet as a traveling, singular messenger, and Pindaric images of collective processions or *komoi*. The image of the *komos,* however, is more closely associated with imagined events in the past or the future, while the image of the traveling poet is representative of the here-and-now, the actual journey of the poem and perhaps the poet himself (Hose 2017, 39-40). Cf. Eckerman 2010 for the *komos* as a "static" historical celebration rather than a reference to epinician performance itself.

[61] See: D'Alessio 2011 on local identities in lyric; Hadjimichael 2019; Fearn 2011 on Aigina.

persistence and the maintenance of its cultural value. Synchronic Panhellenism theoretically gives way to diachronic endurance, as the textual production of the Classical Greek world evolves towards later cultural prestige and deliberate canonization. This process is supported by the dynamics of ancient and modern cultural reception—from the Hellenistic and Roman periods through to modernity—that consistently looked to Classical Greece as model, foundation, and aetiology for later cultural forms and sociopolitical institutions.

Could Pindar have predicted these processes? What kinds of institutional legitimation seemed available to him at the time that he composed? If we can locate epinician's capacity for diachronic persistence and legibility to diachronic audiences at least partly at the time of its composition, then its potential for transtemporality must be a function of its compositional form and intention as well as its reception and valuation by later audiences.[62] This question implicates the very definition of what literary practice meant to Pindar and his audiences, and approaches to answering it fall on a wide spectrum from cultural-historical to literary-critical. In this vein, there are important reasons to also consider how the formal aspects of lyric are related to its historical-political contexts.[63] Pindar's odes are texts that survive because of deliberate selection and transmission, were produced for and by the elite, and have continued

[62] Phillips 2015, 6 on Pindar's "fame as an historical actuality as well as a textual projection," a nice encapsulation of this issue. Pindaric epinician also emerges as part of a long Greek poetic tradition, particularly a lyric tradition, which has a deep impact on how it represents itself and its history. The contours of how earlier lyric authors navigated their contemporary political landscape, cultural memory, and poetic ephemerality form a critical backdrop for Pindar's poetics. Pindaric epinician draws on—and contrasts with—diverse prior and contemporary lyric traditions, and the ways in which it represents its own politics and form respond both to multiple Greek poetic traditions and the immediate contexts of epinician production in the fifth century. For an important counterpoint to Pindar's aspirations towards persistence in reading archaic lyric, see Dickson 1989 on contrasts between depictions of the body in Pindar and earlier lyric and Nooter 2023, who offers a wide-ranging argument on the interplay between ephemerality and endurance through, especially, theories of performance and embodiment.

[63] Fearn 2017, 169: "Pindar's *Pythian* 1 poses particularly acutely the theoretical question of what to make of the relation between poetry and history." Also see Agócs 2020, and Chapter 4, section V. Both terms—"poetry" and "history"—are of course diversely defined historically and culturally.

to be valued in terms of their status and prestige. In a context like this, ideas about literary value—a value often implicit in definitions of the literary itself—are inextricable from prevailing ideas about social value.[64] The temporalities of epinician—how it mixes past, present, and future, history and legend, how it blurs the boundaries of the here-and-now—are generated not for their own sake, nor for the goal of "immortality" in itself. Rather, the synthetic indeterminacy of epinician temporality supports the ideological endurance of systems of power that sustained the economic and sociocultural dominance of Pindar's victors. His victors' immortality is imagined not only in terms of cultural memory or potential cult worship. It is contingent on the maintenance of contemporary social systems that managed elite status in Pindar's compositional present. One of these systems was epinician poetry.

The following chapters therefore offer some potential answers to what Charles Segal has called "the core problem of Pindaric interpretation," that is, "the question of how, if at all, these poems transcend the limited historical occasions of their origin."[65] How did a poetic form seemingly devoted to precise moments of fleeting triumph, celebrating definitively identified historical individuals, leverage the historical circumstances of its composition in the service of transhistorical persistence and canonization? I suggest that Pindaric strategies of self-legitimation—and in particular, how epinician situates itself in a temporo-material space—are importantly related to the strategies of authorization and legitimation found in other social institutions and practices. Because of the contexts of its production, epinician was necessarily embedded in a variety of forms of fifth-century social, cultural, and economic practice, and it was a more or less eager participant in the support of contemporary

[64] i.e., what counts as "literature" generally already carries implications about social and cultural value.
[65] Segal 1986, 124.

forms of social power.[66] At the same time, however, epinician is usually seen as attempting to wrest its own being out of this specific historical moment in order to effect its subjects' or its own indefinite future perpetuation.

I think that this potential paradox—a poetic form invested in the briefest of temporal moments, that argued for its enduring persistence—is both less active for Pindar than has been previously understood and compensated for by Pindaric poetics. His poems are not only descriptive, perhaps reflecting a cultural shift into a new form of literary practice concerned with authorship and persistence. They are prescriptive: it is in the process of Pindar's invocation to experience his poems in a particular way that new aspects of his literary practice emerge. When he composed his odes, the social institutions and structures of power within which he worked were also working towards persistence and preservation.[67] There is little paradox, then, in Pindar adapting the language and strategies of these institutions to support the institutionalization of his own poetry.

What interests me is not primarily the way in which Pindar provides aetiologies or legitimation for others—political regimes, particular *poleis*, ethnic groups, religious practices—but how the ways in which he argued for his own poetry's identity and value are shared with and support these other forms of social practice. This does not require thinking of epinician as an intelligible generic category in this period, nor that Pindar had a single,

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[66] For qualifications about the wholeheartedness of Pindar's ideological commitment, see Segal 1986, esp. p. 123-180. I tend to agree with Pindar's acknowledgement of ambiguity and contingency but consider it in a different light; see chapters 2-4 on compensation for contingency induced by mobility and discussion of vulnerability and the physical body. See Fearn 2017, ch. 3, for a reading of "the interaction between aesthetics and ideology" (172) in Pindar that follows Rose 2012 (ch. 5 for tyranny, based very much on reading of Solon in tension with Irwin 2005) in suggesting the epinicians' ability to stand outside of the value system of their patrons. I am significantly more skeptical.

[67] This is more than the "social energy" or "depth of meaning" cited by Maslov 2015, 8; I refer specifically to Pindar's own contribution to the legitimation of his own and others' sociopolitical status through participation in and invocation of contemporary approaches to organizing social relations.

coherent understanding of the nature of the "poetry" or "literature" that he composed. The boundaries of epinician have always been hard to define, and the generic label is, of course, an artifact of Alexandrian editing.[68] Regardless of the coherence of Pindar's intentions, his poems' metapoetic imaginary suggests a conception of his own compositional practice, and its relations to synchronic and diachronic systems of value.[69] The Pindaric "I" is prominent in his epinicians in part because of the way the Pindaric poet embodies different social personas while representing himself in the epinician poem—a foreigner, a *xenos,* a *proxenos,* a merchant, a friend. By framing his own identity in this way, he offers us important clues about how epinician was conceptualized as a social practice among other contemporary social practices, and the consequences this had for its ability to celebrate and commemorate its living subjects and the poet himself. Rather than attempt to recuperate Pindaric lyric as a reliable repository of historical evidence or argue for the primacy of its contributions to the development of literary form,[70] this project instead seeks to understand how the literary form and cultural aspirations of Pindaric epinician are related to the social concerns and motivations of contemporary historical actors. Concepts of literary value, historicity, and meaning are themselves historically situated and produced in concert with the sociopolitical, cultural, economic, and geographic circumstances of poet and audiences.

## II. Evidence and method

The approximately forty-five extant epinician poems attributed to Pindar form a rich and detailed corpus within the surviving textual evidence from late Archaic and early Classical Greece.[71] These complex texts not only showcase a famous linguistic and thematic intricacy,

[68] Carey 2009 discusses the history of lyric genre labels.
[69] See Chapter 4.

[71] Particularly as complete texts (and buttressed, of course, by the dithyrambs, paeans, and fragments).

but survey a dizzying assemblage of places, patrons, myths, and monuments that range across the Mediterranean world through about the first half of the fifth century. The project of understanding this poetic richness in the context of its surrounding historical world has been a perennially contested one, which confronts critical methodological problems in literary history and interpretation.

The heterogeneous, fragmented corpus of Archaic and Classical Greek lyric has consistently resisted systematic interpretation, challenging the development of hermeneutic strategies that aim to account for both its synchronic production and performance contexts and its diachronic persistence and reception. While our understanding of the broader sociocultural, economic, and political contexts of lyric production continues to improve, this understanding lacks the granularity of the linguistic and thematic richness that philologists seek to excavate from texts themselves. Moreover, its explanatory potential is limited by ambiguities inherent in the material record as well as by the limited application of historical and archaeological method in philologically oriented work. The concrete, immediate contexts that once surrounded lyric production, early transmission, and first performances remain stubbornly inaccessible.

This hermeneutic gap has reliably driven the development of new methodological approaches to Greek lyric, from New Historicism to cognitive poetics. Above all, perhaps, it has focused attention on the disjunction between the ephemeral moment of occasional specificity (the "first performance") and poetic claims to endurance or even immortality—claims that are often seen as practically constitutive of early Greek attitudes towards literary function and design. This disjunction has come sharply into focus in scholarship on Pindaric epinician. The narrow originating occasion for these poems, along with their categorical claims to enduring *kleos*, make them an ideal subject here, and Pindar's complexity and obscurity offer nearly endless opportunity for philological and historical interpretation.

My aim here is to be as sensitive as possible to both the opportunities and limitations of the epinicians as the specific type of cultural-historical evidence that they are. As texts, the poems have both a material and a cultural life and history, synchronically and diachronically. We know very little, however, about their fifth-century material instantiations. No definite information exists about the places, circumstances, and manner of the original composition and performance of epinician, outside of the slippery and ambiguous evidence given by the odes themselves and much later attestations by the scholia. Inescapably, then, productive analysis of these poems in terms of their social ideology will treat them primarily as records of discursive strategies and forms. The advantage of this kind of qualitative analysis is its ability to describe the complexity and contours of the social practices at work in epinician performance and reception, even as it continually runs the risk of falling into evidentiary biases that may simply be epiphenoma of the Pindaric corpus's own limitations.

This is not to say that historical and material *realia* are not important for this analysis—only that the limitations of situating Pindaric epinician in its historical context are fundamental to the kind of evidence that the odes are. Although the project relies in part on a historical understanding of the late Archaic and early Classical period that emphasizes elite mobility and status instability, the conclusions it draws about the rhetoric and strategies of epinician poetics apply regardless of the actual material and social contingency to which Pindar's victors may have been subject or which they believed themselves to experience. Although recent scholarship on elite heterogeneity and mobility in the Archaic and Classical periods in particular has inspired many of the questions that I ask of the texts themselves,[72] I also show how Pindar's poems directly engage with these problems, how his contemporary interlocuters perceived them, and why they may particularly be at issue for his victors and audiences in the times and places in which Pindar composed.

[72] See Chapter 2, section IV.

For this project, to be "socially discursive" means to reflect, participate in, and construct forms of speech and language that are meant to communicate and perform certain roles and messages between social actors. Ultimately, I use Pindaric epinician as a kind of laboratory for exploring the social motivation for the construction of literary temporality and value, which has stakes beyond these poems themselves. Pindar is well-suited as an experimental subject both because of its historical situation in what is traditionally considered a transitional period between oral and textual literary production,[73] and because of its fundamentally complex relationship to temporality and historicity. Epinician was a kind of poetry produced for immediate performance, about an ephemeral event, traveling long distances in uncertain conditions, and yet claiming for itself and its subjects some kind of persistence and canonicity. These openly stated claims to persistence out of time had a social and political, not just poetic, value—and Pindar's contemporary audiences and later readers recognized this. A careful reading of the Pindaric corpus itself shows a highly developed awareness of these multiple, material contingencies, which affect epinician self-definition much more deeply than has been previously described.

On the level of literary criticism, the project is engaged with recent conversations about the experiential aesthetics of Greek lyric, with a renewed focus on lyric's self-creation of aesthetic experience and status as both "event and artefact."[74] At the same time, it argues that these forms of poetic self-creation are integrally related to historical actors' contemporary forms of social self-creation, and that poems and audience co-constitute a system in which certain aspects of social identity and status were negotiated and maintained. As part of this goal, the project also aims to define some problems of Pindaric poetics in terms of social discourse and practices. At particular issue in the project's reading of Pindaric

[73] And thereby, a shift in technologies of memory and memorialization. For concepts of memory in epinician, Grethlein 2010, ch. 2.
[74] Spelman 2018, 151.

poetry is the status of the Pindaric metaphor, which has been the subject of significant scholarly attention.[75] I propose to read many of these metaphors, particularly those of travel, craft, and commemoration, as neither analogistic in the broad sense nor antagonistic, as part of a defining-against. Rather, the project practices a kind of "surface reading," an experiment in interpreting particular elements of Pindaric texts primarily as serious material referents to their historical world rather than primarily conceptual or imagistic metaphors.[76] By doing so, it hopes to enliven these "dead" or "conventional" tropes as important clues to Pindaric self-representation.[77] As Anna Uhlig has demonstrated in the case of Alcaeus,[78] this kind of reading can also expose a history of scholarly interpretation that has privileged particular sorts of hermeneutic approaches to these texts—in particular, the preeminence of allegorical interpretation and performance context as a lens for interpreting lyric. Performance studies form an important backdrop to the kind of pragmatic interpretation I am practicing here. I combine the interpretive context of poetic performance and re-performance with thinking of these texts as also intimately related to the kinds of performance at work in the arena of sociopolitics: performing status, performing inclusion and exclusion, and performing membership, kinship, and citizenship.

Hand-in-hand with this claim is the dissertation's aim to de-naturalize concepts of social and cultural persistence and to show, in part, how these concepts are deeply and deliberately constructed as natural by Pindaric poetry itself. The third and fourth chapters will most directly engage with these ideas of "the natural" by exploring how Pindaric poetry depicts its

[75] e.g. Steiner 1986, imagery in Maslov 2015, Martin 2015.
[76] For the original advocacy and definition of this method and term, see Marcus and Best 2009. In this I contrast with Maslov 2015, who argues: "Rather than serving the role of surface elaboration, metaphor in Pindar has, fundamentally, a cognitive role: the image is used to supply information that is conceptually relevant" (147).
[77] For spatial approaches to the hodological metaphors of Pindar, see Epstein 2021 and Kurke and Neer 2019, ch. 8.
[78] Uhlig 2018. Uhlig's methodological agenda frames her project as a response to New Historicism and a return to the text and to poetic agency.

relationship to the human body and to human reproduction. The project argues that these depictions of body and birth are critical to how epinician conceives its own contingency and the contingency of victors' status. As they naturalize the grounds for what is in reality social, the poems draw our attention away from the ways in which Pindaric epinician engages in contemporary practices related to the temporality and persistence of hierarchical or hegemonic orders, and the ways in which they systematically advocate the continuity of these orders. This argument is at the heart of the "status and social reproduction" of the project's title.[79]

### III. Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1, "Epinician in Contemporary Social Discourse," argues that authors in antiquity recognized that epinician sought to construct a strategic discourse about social and political value that had repercussions for social practice as well as historical and political thought and action. It begins by briefly summarizing development of proto-epinician before Pindar and surveys the reception of Pindar from the late fifth and early fourth century BCE to the Hellenistic period.[80] The chapter interrogates extant witnesses to the poetic celebration of athletic victory, and to Pindar in particular, to sketch a narrative of epinician's relationship to political tension and value throughout the sixth to third centuries BCE. It argues that first

[79] For social reproduction theory, see Chapter 3, section II.

[80] A quick comment on textual history here, which is related to but conceptually distinct from my project. One significant issue is whether the selection of Pindar's epinician in the textual tradition was supported because of the survival of athletic competitions under Rome (see Rutherford 2012, 101-4). This has more bearing, I think, on the selection of Pindaric poetry that survives (i.e., epinician rather than dithyramb) than on the question of epinician's transhistorical appeal. Athletic competition in the Greek world survived as a fairly continuous practice after Pindar's florescence, so the question becomes why Pindar's epinicians survive through the Roman period, but any potential contemporary victory odes largely do not. As I suggest in the dissertation, there are reasons that elites under Rome may have found resources in Pindar's odes (beyond, of course, the related dynamics of the cultural capital of Classical Athens in ancient Rome).

athletic value and commemoration, and eventually epinician itself, were theorized and strategically deployed to support diverse elite perspectives in relationship to shifting ideas of the *polis* and of political power. In the Hellenistic period, this dynamic becomes additionally entangled in the process of representing Classical Greece and its legacy at Hellenistic imperial centers; epinician, once embedded in local concerns, now comes to stand for hegemonic powers. The evidence given in this chapter frames the claims of the next three chapters, showing that my own claims about the functions and strategies of Pindaric epinician are related to how Pindar's contemporaries and receivers in antiquity already saw epinician.

Chapter 2, "Inventing an Aristocracy," argues that Pindaric epinician strategically presents the status of its victors as legitimate by grounding this status in both genealogy and the body. Regardless of their actual genealogical history or the stability of their current social or political status in their home *poleis*, Pindar represents his victors' physical achievements as naturally legitimized by their illustrious family genealogies. These genealogies are both retrospective and prospective: the victor's achievement is both based on and proves the *arete* of his ancestors, while also predicting the continuation of his family's *kleos* in the future. While the poems also gesture towards the contingencies and constructions of kinship and blood relations, they ultimately provide a framework in which the odes themselves serve to manage these contingencies and maintain the importance and meaning of blood relation for their elite victors.

Chapter 3, "Biological and Social Reproduction," argues that epinician's representations of human reproduction are an integral part of how it seeks the social reproduction of the status of its elite victors and the practices, structures, and ideologies that support that status. Pindar's depictions of sexuality, kinship, and childbirth in the odes serve as an argument for the necessity of the social recognition and regulation of status that is fundamentally grounded in the body and blood. As Chapter 2 also shows, however, the poems depict how status is

actively naturalized through this social surveillance and regulation: neither blood in itself nor social construction alone is sufficient to support status claims based on kinship. As in Chapter 2, the poems both construct particular norms around reproduction and portray themselves as essential actors in the continual regulation and enforcement of these norms, which are constantly in danger of being disrupted.

Chapter 4, "The Poet and the Epinician Poem," addresses how the poet is himself represented in the poem as social actor, and how the odes' self-representation interacts with their social and material contexts. The figure of the poet, and the construction of his social persona, are central to any argument for the ways in which epinician navigates and defines its institutional power. The Pindaric "I" is chiefly defined in terms of social institutions like *xenia* and *proxenia,* which provide the metaphors and narratives that structure the odes' representations of both social and material contingency for their elite victors and mythic exemplars. This chapter also uses the same approach to analyze maritime and hodological metaphors, which connect the physical and material contingencies of the ancient world with the sociocultural contingency of elite status commemoration. The chapter ends with a reading of *Pythian* 4 that shows how teleology and contingency are inextricably linked for epinician poetics, and work together to make an implicit argument for epinician's value to its victors and participation in contemporary institutional practices.

A final note on contexts and stakes for the project. Indisputably, Pindar composed for the wealthy and well-connected of the Hellenic world in the first half of the fifth century. They had an interest in achieving, performing, and maintaining various kinds of power, and Pindaric epinician was invested in helping them do this. The poet aimed to represent his patrons, whose world was far from secure, as stable, rooted, mythical, long-lasting (what David Fearn calls the "rupture at the heart of the lyric poetics of patronage"[81]). These

[81] Fearn 2017, 227.

representations reached into both the past and the future, imagining unbroken lines of legendary genealogy and victorious, fortunate days to come. Pindar's own poetic identity and success is repeatedly tied to the success of his patrons, and so it is reasonable to suspect that he employed similar approaches to representing the stability of both his victors' and his poems' status and historical being.[82] He found these techniques of representation in the world around him, in the ideological and practical institutions that supported contemporary structures of power.

Arguments about Pindar's poetic flexibility and potential for widespread appeal reveal something important about his poetics and the potential impact of his poems, but even taken as a whole they can seem frustratingly inconclusive.[83] Was there a coherent epinician project? If Pindar sought to be as appealing as possible to as broad an audience as possible, this was a choice as deliberate and strategic as any other. Historically, we have very little evidence about epinician performance and who may have actually been in the original epinician audience. Inescapably, the bias of textual evidence from antiquity towards elite cultural production means that we are only likely to find evidence that other canonical authors, prominent historical individuals, and the wealthy and powerful were Pindar's contemporary and later readers (as in the evidence discussed in Chapter 1).

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[82] Lefkowitz 1984 for "poet as athlete."

[83] A useful parallel here might be fifth-century Athenian tragedy, which is increasingly interpreted as incorporating a "polyphony" of possible voices and sociopolitical standpoints despite its embeddedness in the institutions of the Athenian (free, male) democratic state. At the same time, however, (I think) this polyphony should not be interpreted as authentically encompassing the perspective of the subaltern, and (I think) it is meant not to inspire empathy but rather to explore and police the boundaries of citizenship, social power, and political identity. Indeed, the complex ideologies of tragedy—which encompasses all the thorny contours of Athenian democratic thought and practice, not so different from epinician's "aristocratic" and "archaic" value system—and its relationship to its contemporary social context share many similarities with epinician. For the seminal exploration of this fundamental question about tragedy and its historical-discursive form, see Zeitlin 1996.

In Pindar's case, however, there are reasons to believe this bias may be less distorting than it seems on the surface. If the primary purpose of epinician was to support the prestige and preservation of its victors and its poet, and if this cultural preservation was beginning to be conceived in terms of textuality, social status, and institutions of canonization (rather than, for example, widespread oral transmission and traditionality), those possibilities were not found everywhere and could not be realized by just anyone. Institutions with the power to both preserve and elevate status were located in the centers of economic and political power, where wealth, influence, and cultural capital were concentrated. Pindar's awareness of the materiality of his poetic production and his framing of his poetic persona in terms of its relationship to powerful families and patrons strongly suggest a cognizance of both the potential fragility of his work and where the practical and ideological possibilities lay for establishing its enduring value. His poems are constructed, then, to appeal to an existing elite audience and to take advantage of the status anxiety of the elite in order to support their own material and cultural endurance.

At the same time, as this project argues, the rhetorical shape of the poems also constructs any listening or reading subject as an elite actor, a member of a restricted social group and a speaker of a privileged social discourse. By reading, then, we are implicated in this project of social reproduction. In this sense, the problems I describe here continue to be at issue for any moderns exploring—or constructing—a relationship to fifth-century Greece, its texts, and its complex legacies. It is my hope, in part, that the project elucidates some ways in which ideas of literary persistence and its social implications were never quite so natural, nor so neutral, as the evidence of antiquity and its interpreters has sometimes made them seem.

## Chapter One:
## Epinician in Contemporary Social Discourse

A scholiast to *Isthmian* 1.13 observes an inconsistency between the ode and Hesiod's *Theogony*, and judges Pindar to have strategically erred: ἔθος τῷ Πινδάρῳ πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ συμφέρον καὶ τὰς ἱστορίας βιάζεσθαι ("It is the habit of Pindar, for his own advantage, to do violence even to history").[1] The matter at hand—whether Geryon was accompanied by a dog in the singular or dogs in the plural—is trivial, but in the context of Pindaric poetics as a whole, the scholiast's assertion has an air of profundity. Pindar, this commentator argues, privileges poetic effect over historical accuracy.[2] This, it turns out, has been a Pindaric critique since at least the fifth century. In Aristophanes' *Birds,* an opportunistic epinician poet who shows up at the founding of the new bird *polis* insists on performing a poem about the city's origins that he claims to have been singing for a very long time—a functional impossibility, since the city has only just been founded.[3]

Aristophanes cleverly (and the scholiast pedantically) addresses a central problem in Pindaric interpretation, which has complicated an understanding of the historical context and meaning of Pindar's epinicians for modern scholars as well as ancient commentators. The epinicians are famous for their complex, often strategically innovative deployment of mythic-historical narrative to support the reputation and achievement of elite victors and powerful *poleis*.[4] In most cases, no equally complex contemporary textual evidence—often no textual

[1] Drachmann III 200. See Lefkowitz 1985 on the scholia's preference for commentating on the literal in Pindar, their discomfort with his metaphors and tendency to attribute his unique presentation of myth to poetic irrationality.
[2] Myth is here included in *historias* just as it is in the epinician odes, a lack of distinction that is such an important part of their approach to narrating the genealogy of victors and their *poleis*.
[3] See p. 56-60, below.
[4] A poetic technique that has been part of the bedrock for New Historicist approaches to the odes (particularly the Sicilian odes, e.g. Lewis 2019, Foster 2017).

evidence at all— exists to explore possible alternative narratives. It is challenging, then, to adequately understand the extent to which Pindar's presentation of the history, meaning, and genealogy of victors and *poleis* may have been accepted or contested, and to which audiences these narratives may have been directed.[5]

However, we do possess some extant textual evidence that directly or indirectly speaks to contemporary views on the celebration of athletic victory and on epinician poetry—sometimes regarding Pindar in particular. The textual mass of Pindar's own production may dwarf the combined weight of his closest interlocutors, but these texts nonetheless offer an essential window into an ongoing conversation and provide an important counterpoint to the evidence that Pindar provides us himself. Rather than attempting to apply historical theories drawn from other sources of evidence wholesale to Pindaric texts, or risk the circularity of reading historical context out of his poems themselves, this chapter uses the evidence of Pindar's most closely contemporary textual interlocutors to frame the evidence of the epinician poems analyzed in Chapters 2 through 4. In particular—much like Pindar himself—these texts show a highly developed self-awareness of their own evidentiary meaning and value, reflecting on their status in relationship to contemporary social discourse and on their own particular textual forms.

This chapter argues that Pindar's predecessors, contemporaries, and successors engaged in vigorous conversation about epinician value during, before, and after Pindar's period of activity. They attached important social value both to athletic celebration in general and, eventually, to epinician poetry as a politic and poetic form beyond its immediate associations with athletic victory. The audiences of Pindaric epinician varied enormously across time and space, with idiosyncratic and individual interests in thinking about athletic

[5] Although attempts have been made based on other kinds of evidence and on reading potential narratives out of the odes themselves; for example, Nicholson 2016 and Morgan 2015.

and poetic commemoration. They all share, however, a commitment to understanding the stakes of valorizing and memorializing certain individuals within the Greek *polis* as a way of addressing urgent questions about social value, organization, and continuity. Not only the content of epinician was at issue, but its rhetorical forms—its poetics—within a larger world of performed and textualized social discourse.

Tracing the evidence of Pindar's interlocutors on the subject of athletic value and epinician poetry in the Archaic and Classical Greek world contextualizes how Pindaric epinician makes claims for its own enduring social value, both in providing a backdrop against which epinician frames itself and an ongoing conversation in response to Pindar's own poetry.[6] These texts and authors illuminate a rich context for Pindar's own explicit and implicit arguments for his own poetry. In particular, they often draw a contrast between the lofty assertions that Pindaric poetry makes about itself and a historically adjacent discourse of suspicion about athletic celebration, memorialization, and sociopolitical significance. This discourse emerges very early in the history of epinician celebration as we can reconstruct it, and it engages fundamental questions about the relationship of commemoration and poetic form to social and political organization and value. From the very beginning, the value and efficacy of poetic memory itself is at issue—and not taken, as a potential social good or ill, for granted.

## I. Epinician origins

The early history of Greek epinician poetry is fragmentary and uncertain; what we know about early epinician performance outside of what Pindar tells us can be briefly summarized. It is clear that poetry performed on the occasion of an athletic victory was being composed by around the middle of the sixth century BCE; it is most likely that it originated

[6] In Chapters 2-4.

as a subtype of praise-poetry in general, of the *enkōmia* that characterized much early lyric.[7] The fragmentary text of *P.Oxy.* 2735, attributed to either Ibycus or Stesichorus, is now generally considered to be the earliest extant example of epinician composition.[8] Although far from complete, the fragment appears to share a number of characteristics with extant fifth-century epinician, including mythological references, metapoetic language, and epichoric description. Excerpts from the most substantial surviving part of the text show glimpses of these early epinician features:

]τερεν̣ [
] ̣εαπα̣ [
]δ[ ]αριω[
] δ̣ ακ̣τον ἔχω [
ὑπ᾽ α] ὐ̣λητῆρος ἀείδο[ν]
ἁβρὰ π[α] ̣ντῶς [
πό]θος οἷά τ᾽ ἔρω̣τος[

-ο]ιο κατ᾽ αἶσαν ὠ̣ [
]ατον τέλος ἀσφ[
]α δύνασις· κράτ[ος
] ὑ̣νοι μέγα δαί-
μονες] πολὺν ὄλβον ἐδώ[καν
οἷς κ᾽ ἐθ]έλωσιν ἔχεν, τοῖς δ᾽ α[ὐ
βουλα]ῖσι Μοιρᾶν·

] Τυνδαρίδ[αι]σι λαγε[τ
] ̣ ι σάλπιγγος ὅκ᾽ ἐν κε[
Κάστορί] θ᾽ ἱπποδάμωι καὶ π̣[ὺξ ἀγαθῶι Πολυδεύκει
]ες ἀντιθέοι
]νοπάονες· οἷσιν εσ̣ [
] ̣εῖ μεγάλα χρύσαιγις [
]καδέ̣α·

καὶ τὸ] μὲν οὐ φατόν ἐστιν ε[
]ων τεκέεσσι· σὲ δ᾽ αὖ[
οὐρανόθ]εν καταδέρκεται α̣[έλιος
]τα κάλλιστον ἐπιχθ[ονίων
ἀθανάτ]ο̣ις ἐναλ[ί]γκιον εἰδο̣[

[7] Budelmann 2012; Nagy 1994, 24; Spelman 2018, 191. In particular, the line between *enkomia* and epinicians tends to be drawn when poems (in Rosalind Thomas's conception) are composed and performed in celebration of specific people, not simply performed in honor of a victory in general (see Thomas 2007).
[8] See Page 1969, 71, Barron 1984, and Rawles 2012, 5n11 for discussion of attribution. Rawles 2012 discusses several other potentially epinician/encomiastic Ibycean fragments.

] . ς ἄλλος οὐτῶς
οὔτ᾽]ἀν᾽ Ἰάονας οὔτ . [

κ]υδιάνειραν α[ἰ]ὲι[
Λακ] ε̣δαίμονα ναίο[υσι(ν)
]ς τε χοροῖς ἵππο̣[ισί τε
]ᾶν βαθὺν Εὐ-
ρώταν, περ]. ι .τ᾽ ἀμφί τε θαῦμα[
] ἄλσεα λαχνάεντ᾽ ἐλ̣[ατᾶν
κά]πους·

. . . (they) sang to the piper's accompaniment . . . luxurious assuredly . . . (desire?) like love's . . . rightly . . . end (secure?) . . . power; . . . great strength . . . the gods give much prosperity to those whom they wish to have it, but for the others (they destroy it?) by the plans of the Fates; . . . (to) the sons of Tyndareus . . . leader(s) of the people . . . when in . . . the trumpet's . . . to Castor the horse-tamer and to Polydeuces, excellent boxer, . . . godlike (heroes?) . . . henchmen; to whom great (Athena?) of the golden aegis . . . (free?) of cares.

(And that) is not to be spoken . . . (by) the children . . . but upon you on the other hand (the sun) looks down (from the heaven) as upon the most handsome of earth-dwellers, like the immortals in form; (no) other (is) so (beautiful?), (either) among Ionians or (among) . . . (those who) dwell in Lakedaimon famed for its men, always . . . with choruses and horses . . . deep (Eurotas?), round about a wonder . . . shaggy groves (of firs?) . . . [9]

Like Pindar's later descriptions of early epinician song, this fragment is self-conscious of its own existence as song and performance (ἀείδο[ν], 5) and invokes in some way the idea of the chorus (31).[10] It intriguingly references some kind of reflection on proper speech and its relation to children, both notable themes in Pindaric epinician.[11] It is interested in mythological exemplars, here Castor and Polydeuces, as well as the relationship of gods to human beings and gnomic reflection on the variability of fate. It seems, too, that this poem negotiates in some way relationships of geographic space and ethnic identity, with its references to the Ionians and to Lakedaimon, although it is too fragmentary to know exactly how these relationships might have been portrayed.

[9] *P. Oxy*. 2735 = S166-219 Page = Ibycus 282A. Translation from Rawles 2012.
[10] A self-consciousness it also shares with some archaic lyric; for example, Alcman 1's self-reference to its own choral performance.
[11] Treated at more length in Chapters 3 and 4.

Pindar himself provides one of the only attestations of musical athletic celebration located in time before Simonides, citing a *melos,* described as *kallinikos*, composed by Archilochus as part of a spontaneous *komos* taking place at the Olympic games (*O.* 9.1-4). In *Olympian* 10, Pindar locates the origin of encomiastic song performed in the sacred *temenos* at exactly the moment of the mythical founding of the games themselves by Heracles (ἀείδετο δὲ πᾶν τέμενος τερπναῖσι θαλίαις / τὸν ἐγκώμιον ἀμφὶ τρόπον, "all the sanctuary rang with singing and festive joy / in the fashion of victory celebrations," *O.* 10.76-7).[12] Taking this spontaneous, non-personalized musical celebration as a reasonably accurate cultural memory of epinician origins, late sixth- and fifth-century epinician's significant innovation is seen by scholars as the production of commissioned, individualized odes that were performed outside of the immediate context of victory.[13] Pindar's strong presentation of his individual poetic persona bolsters this view, and his poems also position his own work in an ostensible history of epinician performance. In general, he is keen to emphasize the antiquity of epinician (e.g. at *Isthmian* 2.1, *Nemean* 8.50-1) but also to advocate his own exceptionality and that of his victors.[14] Although Pindar's poems energetically incorporate and transform multiple genres of archaic discourse and song that have various relations to

[12] See, for comparison, Nagy 1986 on traditional aetiological myth for the founding of the Olympic games in O. 1.

[13] Given the sparsity of the evidence, this seems probably basically accurate to me; it certainly relies, however, on this passage of *Olympian* 9. See Rawles 2012, 4; Thomas 2007.

[14] See, e.g. *O.* 1.100-116. *I.* 2.1-2: οἱ μὲν πάλαι, ὦ Θρασύβουλε, φῶτες, οἳ χρυσαμπύκων ἐς δίφρον Μοισᾶν ἔβαινον κλυτᾷ φόρμιγγι συναντόμενοι ("the men of old, Thrasyboulos, who mounted the chariot of the Muses with their golden headbands, joining the glorious lyre, lightly shot forth their honey-voiced songs for young men"). *N.* 8.50-1: ἦν γε μὰν ἐπικώμιος ὕμνος / δὴ πάλαι καὶ πρὶν γενέσθαι τὰν Ἀδράστου τάν τε Καδμείων ἔριν ("Yes, truly the hymn of victory existed long ago, even before that strife arose between Adrastos and the Kadmeans"). On Pindar's self-presentation, see Waldo 2019, ch.1; Spelman 2016, 219-230 (also on Bacchylides' self-presentation). Text of Pindar are taken from the Snell-Maehler 1987 edition; translations are adapted from Svarlien 1991 and Race 1997.

social and cultural practice,[15] there are perceptible tensions in how he represents epinician's relationship to oral tradition.[16]

Pindar also composed alongside other epinician authors, of whom at least Simonides and Bacchylides survive from this period. By the last quarter of the sixth century, it is clear that Simonides composed a number of epinician poems, only fragments of which remain; witnesses to his fragments include Aristophanes, Plutarch, and Aristotle.[17] The evidence given by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* suggests that Simonides likely continued to compose until the 480s, thereby overlapping with both Pindar and Bacchylides. An analysis of Aristotle's description of Simonides' ode for Anaxilas of Rhegion in light of contemporary Sicilian politics potentially identifies "some of the contemporary tensions concerning epinician poetry," including political propagandizing, the problem of the poet for hire, and a concern with poetic insincerity.[18] Aristotle depicts Simonides as confrontational and self-interested, displaying a characteristic abrasiveness that comes out in his poetry: καὶ ὁ Σιμωνίδης, ὅτε μὲν ἐδίδου μισθὸν ὀλίγον αὐτῷ ὁ νικήσας τοῖς ὀρεῦσιν, οὐκ ἤθελε ποιεῖν, ὡς δυσχεραίνων εἰς ἡμιόνους ποιεῖν, ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἱκανὸν ἔδωκεν, ἐποίησε "χαίρετ᾽ ἀελλοπόδων θύγατρες ἵππων ("When the winner in a mule-race offered Simonides a small sum, he refused to write an ode, as if he thought it beneath him to write on half-asses; but when he gave him a sufficient amount, he wrote, "Hail, daughters of storm-footed steeds!" *Rhet.* 1405b23). This depiction emphasizes the epinician poet's agency in the composition of his own poetry, and his

[15] Spelman 2016, 185 summarizes. See also Maslov 2015.
[16] Nicholson 2016, 1-19. Spelman 2016, p. 81-86 and p. 197-8 on traditionality.
[17] Ar. *Nub.* 1355-6; Arist*. Rhet.* 1405b; Plut. *Virt. moral.* 6.445c. Simonides' earliest datable composition is placed around 520 (Rawles 2012, 12 n. 32).
[18] Rawles 2012. Simonides seems to have developed a later reputation as the first poet to receive money in exchange for composing epinician (Schol. Pi. I.2, Drachmann III.214).

economic and social interaction with victors—themes that are common in later reception of epinician but which rarely appear in such specific detail before the fourth century.[19]

Aristotle is, however, a late witness for Simonides and the intervening influence of Pindaric epinician itself—not to mention his fifth-century reception, treated below—means that these themes may only be projected anachronistically from later conceptions of epinician function and reputation.[20] There are also potentially significant differences between Simonidean epinician and Pindaric odes, with Simonides perhaps gaining a reputation for a more acerbic approach to power.[21] Nevertheless, this evidence strongly suggests that epinician was already embroiled in an active social discourse, represented by the poet's imagined interaction with his victors and its expression in his poetry, by early in Pindar's poetic career. He inherited not only poetic forms, myths, and performance traditions, but a

[19] Some caution is warranted, however, since this interpretation relies on a reading of the Simonides fragment in the *Rhetoric* as essentially authentic in its thematic concerns, as well as an interpretation of the mule-cart iconography on a tetradrachm from Rhegion that strongly emphasizes inter-Sicilian conflict. Nigel Nicholson, conversely, argues that the numismatic evidence here supports Anaxilas' capitulation, not resistance, to Hieron's rule (Nicholson 2016, 182). In either case, however, Simonides is seen as an active participant in these struggles and advertisements of political power. And Bacchylides, of course, Pindar's closest contemporary, composed for politically powerful patrons—including some of the same ones as Pindar—and produced epinicians that participated in similar sociopolitical discourses. On Bacchylides and Sicilian victors, see Burnett 1985, Crane 1996; on Bacchylides 17 and the Delian League, van Oeveren 1999; aristocrats and Hellenism in Bacchylides, Fearn 2007 (chs. 1 and 2 in particular).

[20] On the (purported) attitude of Simonides, see, perhaps, Carson 1988's suggestive arguments on Simonides' rhetoric. Rawles 2012, 20 puts the problem of evidence well: "Such anecdotes as this are worthy of great scepticism as to their strictly historical value. It is now well understood that the traditions concerning the lives of ancient poets were frequently formed through a process more mythopoeic than properly historical, often involving such dubious procedures as (for instance) taking jokes in comedies as if conveyers of real historical information. There is certainly no reason to suppose that the story told here by Aristotle derives from a genuine tradition which has accurately recorded an incident in Simonides' biography." A similar problem holds for the Hellenistic period: as Mary Lefkowitz notes, Pindar's reception is strongly colored by "the influence of Aristophanes, the biographers, and the Alexandrian commentators" (Lefkowitz 1985, 280).

[21] See also the portrayal of Simonides in the *Hiero* in Chapter 2, and Aristotle's report of his conversation with Hieron's wife at *Rhetoric* 1391a. Rawles 2012, 14 also suggests that, in terms of content, Simonides' poems may have had more of a focus on describing actual athletic events.

dynamically shifting set of terms with which to conceive and celebrate individuals' position in the *polis*. The terms of this discourse carried significant ideological weight and their meaning was hotly contested.

## II. Athletes and the *polis*

A discourse of suspicion about athletic celebration in general emerges very early in the history of epinician poetry *per se*, and continues to appear, in scattered places, into the fourth century. Perhaps concurrently with the hazy early history of athletic *enkomia* or epinician proper, questions about the value of celebrating the athlete in the *polis* are active early in archaic poetry. The earliest surviving example is Tyrtaeus fr. 12 West, on the place of the athlete in Archaic Spartan society:[22]

> Οὔτ´ ἂν μνησαίμην οὔτ´ ἐν λόγῳ ἄνδρα τιθείμην
> οὔτε ποδῶν ἀρετῆς οὔτε παλαισμοσύνης,
> οὐδ´εἰ Κυκλώπων μὲν ἔχοι μέγεθος τε βίην τε,
> νικῳη δὲ θέων Θρηίκιον Βορέην,
> πλουτοίη δὲ Μίδεω καὶ Κινύρεω μάλιον,
> οὐδ᾽ εἰ Τανταλίδεω Πέλοπος βασιλεύτερος εἴη,
> γλῶσσαν δ᾽ Ἀδρήστου μειλιχόγηρυν ἔχοι,
> οὐδ᾽ εἰ πᾶσαν ἔχοι δόξαν πλὴν θούριδος ἀλκῆς·
> οὐ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίγνεται ἐν πολέμῳ,
> εἰ μὴ τετλαίη μὲν ὁρῶν φόνον αἱματόεντα
> καὶ δῄων ὀρέγοιτ´ ἐγγύθεν ἱστάμενος.
> ἥδ´ἀρετή, τόδ´ ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον,
> κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίγνεται ἀνδρὶ νέῳ.
> ξυνὸν δ´ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληι τε παντί τε δήμῳ,
> ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβὰς ἐν προμάχοισι μένῃ…
>
> I would not mention or take account of a man for
> his prowess in running or in wrestling, not even if
> he had the size and strength of the Cyclopes and
> outstripped Thracian Boreas in the race, nor if he
> were more handsome than Tithonus in form and

[22] There is debate about the place of athletic celebration in Archaic and Classical Sparta; see Mann 2001, ch. 4 and Hodkinson 1999. While there is a perhaps conspicuous absence of extant epinician odes for Spartan victors (although see Nobili 2013 for critique of this view) they seem to have participated at a normal rate in athletic competition and other kinds of victory commemoration.

> richer than Midas and Cinyras, nor if he were
> more kingly than Pelops, son of Tantalus, and had a
> tongue that spoke as winningly as Adrastus', nor if
> he had a reputation for everything save furious valour.
> For no man is good in war unless he can endure
> the sight of bloody slaughter and, standing close,
> can lunge at the enemy. This is excellence, this the
> best human prize and the fairest for a young man to
> win. This is a common benefit for the state and all
> the people, whenever a man with firm stance among
> the front ranks never ceases to hold his ground….

The terms in which Tyrtaeus criticizes athletes will be repeated in critiques of athletic achievement and athletic celebration throughout the Archaic and early Classical periods. The fragment begins with a refrain that will become familiar, conjuring the image of a superlative, essentially superhuman athlete, and echoing the language of gods, mythical men, and the supernatural that Pindar and Bacchylides will later make such a distinctive feature of their poems.[23] Tyrtaeus makes a strong point that athletic skill should be subordinate to, or disregarded in favor of, military prowess and performance. He also, perhaps, takes a jab at the inflationary rhetoric that may have already surrounded extraordinary athletic achievement. This passage is a kind of *praeteritio,* where Tyrtaeus expounds at length about something he has just told us he definitively will not describe. It is possible, then, to conjecture that such myth-making and invocation of the age of heroes may have been current in contemporary discourse, poetic activity, or cultic activity around the figure of the athlete.

Importantly, Tyrtaeus uses this figure of the athlete as a foil for the kind of citizen he does want to praise: the warrior. This, too, is a rhetorical strategy that will appear again and again in the texts this chapter treats. The athlete is consistently used as a contrast or foil to prove a point about what norms of celebration and memorialization should ideally look like. The athlete often appears as the subject of misallocated attention which would be better spent

[23] See Luginbill 2002, 405-7 for discussion of attribution. I disagree with Luginbill's argument that Tyrtaios is simply contrasting two different kinds (athletic and martial) of *arete* here.

elsewhere; this misdirection is consequential and its commemoration perpetuates those consequences indefinitely into the future, heightening the importance of regulating the subjects of cultural memory. For Tyrtaeus, as well as later authors, the choice to celebrate or denigrate athletic achievement has real stakes: both for the ideology of the *polis* as a community and for the ways in which the adoption of a particular ideology might affect the actual survival and cohesion of the community of which the author considers himself a part. The Spartan warrior, as a foil to the athlete, represents sacrifice on behalf of the larger community rather than self-aggrandizement at the expense of the *polis* as a whole.

This poem perhaps also alludes to judgements not only about the content of praise, but the importance of its form. In its first lines, Tyrtaeus defines his poetic activity as an agent of memory and the selection of a subject for memorialization: Οὔτ΄ ἂν μνησαίμην οὔτ΄ ἐν λόγῳ ἄνδρα τιθείμην ("I would not mention or put into words a man…"). In other words, Tyrtaeus tells us that although he might be an encomiastic poet, he is not an epinician one. He makes value judgments not only about the relative worth of the warrior and athlete to the *polis* and *demos* in the present. These lines are also a judgment about who deserves to be remembered and to be the subject of song, and the poem begins to touch on the constellation of contemporary commemorative practices within which Tyrtaeus situates his own song. He describes the public nature of the warrior's tomb, the familial rituals that take place around it, and its role in perpetuating his memory through the recognition of these family members throughout time: τὸν δ᾽ ὀλοφύρονται μὲν ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες, / ἀργαλέῳ δὲ πόθῳ πᾶσα κέκηδε πόλις, / καὶ τύμβος καὶ παῖδες ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀρίσημοι / καὶ παίδων παῖδες καὶ γένος ἐξοπίσω ("The young and the old mourn for him alike / and the whole city feels harsh grief from longing, / yet his grave and children are well known to all / along with his children's

children and generations to come," 27-30).[24] It is not individuality *per se* that is demonized here, but the relationship of how individuals are celebrated—and mourned—to their larger social community, both synchronically (ἀργαλέῳ δὲ πόθῳ πᾶσα κέκηδε πόλις, "the whole city feels harsh grief from longing") and diachronically (νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες, παίδων παῖδες καὶ γένος ἐξοπίσω, "the young and the old," "his children's children and generations to come"). This deep connection between synchronic and diachronic social relations is also critical for Pindaric epinician, where it is also so often focalized through the image of familial descent.[25]

Tyrtaeus makes it clear that this poem's function is to memorialize, and that function has significant stakes for "every *polis* and *demos*" (11). He makes an explicit choice about what kind of poetry he chooses to compose as well as a statement about the importance of its relationship to cultural memory and the endurance of social value. It is not surprising for memorialization to be at issue in poems of this period, but it is worth digging a little deeper into the broader implications of memory for these poets and how they envisioned their own contributions to an ongoing discourse. Memorialization is neither an end nor a good in itself, but a tool for perpetuating particular societal ideologies. For Tyrtaeus, poetic memory means the realization not of personal immortality but of social continuity. Individual *arete* is defined in terms of conformity and collective action, not only individual achievement. The threat of the athlete, in this framework, is his decoupling of individual achievement from collective social benefit. Social conformity in the present is also extrapolated to social continuity into the future; the effect of Tyrtaeus' poetry on its listeners should ideally support this intertwined cultural endurance.[26]

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[24] On the relationship of epinician to other forms of commemorating athletic victory (statues, dedications, inscriptions, monumental architecture), see as some representative examples of this substantial discussion: Athanassaki 2011 and 2012, Pavlou 2010, Fearn 2009, Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani 2007, Smith 2007, Steiner 1993 and 1998.

[25] Treated at length in Chapters 2 and 3.

[26] There is also, of course, Tyrtaeus' specific sociopolitical context to consider in Archaic Sparta—and the Spartan audience to which he would have been directing this poem. For all

Xenophanes fr. 2 offers a variation on this discourse, this time substituting the philosopher in place of the Spartan warrior. In his poem, Xenophanes indicts the civic resources spent on athletic celebration and suggests that they might be better spent rewarding his kind of work instead:

ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ταχυτῆτι ποδῶν νίκην τις ἄροιτο
ἢ πενταθλεύων, ἔνθα Διὸς τέμενος
πὰρ Πίσαο ῥοῆις ἐν Ὀλυμπίηι, εἴτε παλαίων
ἢ καὶ πυκτοσύνην ἀλγινόεσσαν ἔχων
εἴτε τὸ δεινὸν ἄεθλον ὃ παγκράτιον καλέουσιν,
ἀστοῖσίν κ᾽ εἴη κυδρότερος προσορᾶν,
καί κὲν προεδρίην φανερὴν ἀγῶσιν ἄροιτο,
καί κεν σῖτ᾽ εἴη δημοσίων κτεάνων
ἐκ πόλεως, καὶ δῶρον ὅ οἱ κειμήλιον εἴη—
εἴτε καὶ ἵπποισιν· ταῦτά κε πάντα λάχοι,
οὐκ ἐὼν ἄξιος ὥσπερ ἐγώ· ῥώμης γὰρ ἀμείνων
ἀνδρῶν ἠδ᾽ ἵππων ἡμετέρη σοφίη.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰκῆι μάλα τοῦτο νομίζεται, οὐδὲ δίκαιον
προκρίνειν ῥώμην τῆς ἀγαθῆς σοφίης·
οὔτε γὰρ εἰ πύκτης ἀγαθὸς λαοῖσι μετείη
οὔτ᾽ εἰ πενταθλεῖν οὔτε παλαισμοσύνην,
οὐδὲ μὲν εἰ ταχυτῆτι ποδῶν, τόπερ ἐστὶ πρότιμον,
ῥώμης ὅσσ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἔργ᾽ ἐν ἀγῶνι πέλει,
τούνεκεν ἂν δὴ μᾶλλον ἐν εὐνομίηι πόλις εἴη·
σμικρὸν δ᾽ ἄν τι πόλει χάρμα γένοιτ᾽ ἐπὶ τῶι,
εἴ τις ἀεθλεύων νικῶι Πίσαο παρ᾽ ὄχθας·
οὐ γὰρ πιαίνει ταῦτα μυχοὺς πόλεως.

But if someone were to gain a victory by the swiftness of his feet
or in the pentathlon, where there is the precinct of Zeus
by Pisa's stream in Olympia, or in wrestling
or engaging in painful boxing or in that terrible contest which they call the pankration,
he would have greater renown in the eyes of his townsmen,
he would gain a conspicuous front seat at the games,
he would have food from the public store
granted by the city, and a gift which would be a treasure for him—
or if even with his horses, he would obtain all these things,
although he is not as deserving as I.
For my expertise is better than the strength of men or horses.
But this custom is quite irrational and it is not right
to give strength precedence over good expertise.
For neither if there were a good boxer among the people
nor one good at the pentathlon or in wrestling or again in the swiftness of his feet,
the most honoured of the deeds of human strength in the contest,

these texts it is fair to say, I think, that generalizations about sociopolitical value should be interpreted mindfully of the specific contexts in which they were composed and received.

would there for that reason be better law and order in the city.
Little would be the city's joy,
if one were to win while contending by the banks of Pisa;
for this does not fatten the city's treasury.

An important feature of Xenophanes' poem is the clarity with which it opposes the work of the poet and the accomplishment of athletes. While dismissing the value of athletic victory, he pointedly opposes ἡμετέρη σοφίη, a periphrasis that probably means something like "poetic skill" but has also been taken to mean "wisdom" or "knowledge" generally.[27] In addition, the majority of the athletic events that Xenophanes refers to here—including what were probably all the major Olympic events before 520 BCE—are individual competitions, with only passing reference to the expensive, sponsored chariot races that were associated with the wealthiest and most powerful competitors.[28] While the first-person subject of Xenophanes' poem is somewhat more prominent than survives in Tyrtaeus fr. 12, Xenophanes also makes an argument for his own importance to the *polis* as a whole. Like Tyrtaeus' coupling of individual *arete* with broader social value, Xenophanes' invocation of elite *sophia* is not simply good in itself but essential to the proper flourishing of the *polis*. He argues for this by contrasting it to what the athlete does not do: namely, contribute to *eunomia* in the *polis* (19).

While the poem delineates a sharp divide between athlete and philosopher, it is in the context of the socially public sphere that Xenophanes worries about the elevation of athletic achievement. The athlete is physically perceived by an audience of peer citizens (ἀστοῖσίν κ'

[27] Bowra 1938, 259. Bowra argues that this specifically means "philosophical and didactic poetry" (260). More recently, Lesher 1992 arguing for the definition "expertise" and Harris 2002 for "practical expertise" (162, and 162n22 for comprehensive citation on the linguistic debate). At *Olympian* 9.8-11, Pindar seems to use *sophia* as part of defining a choral *humnos* for Hieron sung in the precinct at Olympia: ὁ πολύφατος ὕμνος ἀμφιβάλλεται / σοφῶν μητίεσσι, κελαδεῖν / Κρόνου παῖδ' ἐς ἀφνεὰν ἱκομένους / μάκαιραν Ἱέρωνος ἑστίαν, "glorious song enfolds the wisdom of poets, / so that they loudly sing / the son of Kronos, when they arrive at the rich and blessed hearth of Hieron").
[28] Bowra 1938, 258. All dates are BCE unless otherwise specified.

εἴη κυδρότερος προσορᾶν), visually conspicuous in the *prohedria* (προεδρίην φανερήν), and granted material rewards that are *demosia* (σῖτ' εἴη δημοσίων κτεάνων / ἐκ πόλεως) from the city. Worth and value are not simply abstract subjects of debate: they are demonstrated through social activity and regulation, a theme that will become profoundly important in Pindaric poetics.[29]

Although this fragment has been read as the grievance of an anachronistically middle-class professional poet who envies the honors lavished on aristocratic victors, it is difficult to argue that Xenophanes was less than affluent and just as likely that he counted himself among the wealthy and well-connected.[30] The idea that Xenophanes' poem represents the complaint of the merchant class against the aristocrat is more likely retrojected from arguments made about Pindaric epinician, which was written definitively for an age when athletic victory, particularly in the chariot races, was associated with wealth, power, and political legitimacy. There is some evidence that, before the late sixth- or early fifth-century, participation in the stephanitic games may not have always been purely positive for victors' reputations.[31] The legislators of the late sixth century may have worried over the impact of athletic victory on the moral quality of their citizens—far from Pindar's literally shining examples of ethical value—perhaps in response to precisely the growing popularity of the games and of those who succeeded in them.[32] Xenophanes, then, may represent an early critic of this changing cultural landscape, where rising participation in the major stephanitic games began to sow unease with elites back home.

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[29] Chapters 3 and 4.

[30] This idea of aristocratic indignation was originally proposed by Jaeger 1933; see also more recently Edmund 2014, who argues that Xenophanes' objections are professional rather than political. For Harris 2002 he is a "no-nonsense pragmatist" (159).

[31] Bowra 1938, 264-8.

[32] See Thompson 1978 on Solon's reforms and Thompson 1988 for perspectives on political change in Athens and the impact on athletic policies. He assesses the contradictory pictures of Solon's view on athletics given by Lucian, Diodorus Siculus, and Diogenes Laertius—but all much later and in a very different landscape, of course.

Around the turn of the fifth century, celebration of (if not participation in) the games perhaps also began to take on increasing importance at the level of the state. For late Archaic Athens, Zinon Papakonstantinou describes this dynamic as "a tale of intertwined and at times competing processes of centralization and exclusionism."[33] Victors sometimes co-opted the language of communal value, but commemorations of their victories served to emphasize the social distinctiveness of particular elite families. By 490, the Athenian state may have taken the opportunity to incorporate that year's Herakleia competition into the commemoration of victory at Marathon and thereby into developing definitions of Athenian civic identity.[34] The question of whether aristocratic families managed to maintain their grip on athletic prestige throughout the fifth century is an active one, but it is abundantly clear that Pindaric epinician was closely associated with the wealthy elite and that extant literary texts that contend over athletic value see it as closely connected to the maintenance of political power and contestations over civic identity.[35]

Xenophanes' juxtaposition of poet and athlete stands in contrast to Pindaric poetics. Pindar's epinician famously links the accomplishment and remembrance of poet and athlete, constantly and consistently. Athletes lend the strength of their herculean achievement to poets, while poets lend athletes the wide reach of fame by means of their poetic skill.[36] This regular linkage of athlete and poet is a constitutive feature of Pindaric composition, and reading Xenophanes as a foil to it has significant implications for assessing both how Pindar socially situates his poetic persona and the degree to which his poetic strategies can be read as innovative or idiosyncratic. Whether or not Xenophanes is representative of a particularly

[33] Papakonstantinou 2017, 81. Comprehensive treatments of Greek athletics are Kyle 1987, for Athens in particular, Golden 1998, and Mann 2001 (esp. p. 30-40 for conflict and contention, p. 63-120 for Athens) for Archaic and early Classical Greece more generally.
[34] Papakonstantinou 2017, 86-93.
[35] For the debate, see Mann 2001 and Kyle 1993.
[36] Lefkowitz 1987; Sigelman 2016, introduction. See Chapter 4.

widespread contemporary attitude to athletic victors in the sixth century, his poem clearly represents one possible attitude (suspicion) and responds to another (conspicuous social elevation and celebration). It is more difficult—probably not possible—to reliably map these different reactions onto imprecise indicators of social class, philosophical orientation, or forms of political organization. What is clear, though, is that athletic celebration was the subject of debate that centered questions abound the well-being of the *polis* and its citizens, on an individual and a collective level. The interplay between collective and individual is elaborated on the social stage of the *polis*, in public and private, in the theater and in the symposium. The text itself is an active participant in the rhetorical and spectacular social environment it describes, in its deployment of ideologically charged language in the setting of public or semi-private performance.

Exactly who the audience of this poem might have been is challenging to define. Although Xenophanes' juxtaposition of *sophia* and athletics has been read as a philosophical objection about moral worth, the images of his poem are more pragmatic than philosophical. The last lines of the fragment indict the athlete for his lack of contribution to this *polis*: σμικρὸν δ' ἄν τι πόλει χάρμα γένοιτ' ἐπὶ τῶι, / εἴ τις ἀεθλεύων νικῶι Πίσαο παρ' ὄχθας· / οὐ γὰρ πιαίνει ταῦτα μυχοὺς πόλεως ("Little would be the city's joy, / if one were to win while contending by the banks of Pisa; / for this does not fatten the treasury of the city"). Like Tyrtaeus fr. 12, this is a categorical objection: even the best athletes do not belong in the *polis*, and the *polis* that receives them cannot have *eunomia.* Whatever small joy might accompany athletic victory, it is principally felt on foreign banks (line 21), not at home. Sending out athletes and encouraging athletic achievement is the opposite of contributing to one's home *polis*, and Xenophanes' striking word choice (πιαίνει, 22) implies that it is also no source of public wealth or of civic nourishment: in elevating himself, the athlete starves his fellow citizens. This is strongly charged language, which locates individual achievement

abroad and *polis* well-being at home. It need not, however, be mapped onto distinctions between oligarchic and democratic ideology. Whoever it is that *hemetere sophie* applies to beyond Xenophanes, the "we" referred to here is unlikely to mean every citizen. While Xenophanes certainly juxtaposes himself to the athlete, he also indicts the *astoi* who admire the athlete and the *polis* which provides him with gifts. It is probably more likely that this poem invites a (sympotic?) circle of sympathetic peers to identify together.[37] Xenophanes singles out the negative exemplar of the athlete in order to define the group in which he himself belongs and to promote his own social standing. In defining himself against the athlete and the athlete against the social flourishing of the *polis*, Xenophanes both explicitly and implicitly argues for the role that his *sophia* should normatively play in a social, not only philosophical, sense.

Alongside Xenophanes, Athenaeus also quotes a fragment of Euripides' *Autolycus* that indicts the athlete even more emphatically, and this time in a definitively interstate context. Similar language of localism and of consumption is also reflected in the *Autolycus* fragment, which is even more critical and expansive. Nothing in all of Greece, it proclaims, is worse than an athlete:[38]

κακῶν γὰρ ὄντων μυρίων καθ' Ἑλλάδα
οὐδὲν κάκιόν ἐστιν ἀθλητῶν γένους·
….
λαμπροὶ δ' ἐν ἥβῃ καὶ πόλεως ἀγάλματα
φοιτῶσ'· ὅταν δὲ προσπέσῃ γῆρας πικρόν,
τρίβωνες ἐκβαλόντες οἴχονται κρόκας.
ἐμεμψάμην δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἑλλήνων νόμον,
οἳ τῶν δ' ἕκατι σύλλογον ποιούμενοι
τιμῶσ' ἀχρείους ἡδονὰς δαιτὸς χάριν.
τί γὰρ παλαίσας εὖ, τί δ' ὠκύπους ἀνὴρ
ἢ δίσκον ἄρας ἢ γνάθον παίσας καλῶς
πόλει πατρῴᾳ στέφανον ἥρκεσεν λαβών;
πότερα μαχοῦνται πολεμίοισιν ἐν χεροῖν
δίσκους ἔχοντες ἢ δι' ἀσπίδων χερὶ

[37] Budelmann 2012 and Clay 1999 on epinician and the symposium.
[38] Taking the reconstruction of the full fragment (Euripides fr. 282) from Collard and Cropp 2008. Athenaeus preserves only the first lines.

θείνοντες ἐκβαλοῦσι πολεμίους πάτρας;
οὐδεὶς σιδήρου ταῦτα μωραίνει πέλας
†στάς†. ἄνδρας χρὴ σοφούς τε κἀγαθοὺς
φύλλοις στέφεσθαι χὥστις ἡγεῖται πόλει
κάλλιστα σώφρων καὶ δίκαιος ὢν ἀνήρ,
ὅστις τε μύθοις ἔργ' ἀπαλλάσσει κακὰ
μάχας τ' ἀφαιρῶν καὶ στάσεις. τοιαῦτα γὰρ
πόλει τε πάσῃ πᾶσί θ' Ἕλλησιν καλά.

Of countless bad things existing throughout Greece
none is worse than athletes as a breed….
They are splendid in their prime and go proudly about as ornaments to a city;
but when old age in its harshness falls upon them,
they fade away like cloaks that have lost their threads.
I blame too the Greeks' custom
of gathering because of these men
to value useless pleasures for the sake of a feast.
Why—what man who has wrestled well, what man fleet of foot
or that has thrown a discus or boxed a jaw well,
has defended his ancestral city by winning a wreath?
Are they going to fight enemies
with a discus in their hands, or drive enemies from a fatherland
by punching through shields with a fist?
No one is this stupid †when standing† near a sword!
Wreathing with leaves should be for men who are wise and brave,
and for the man who leads a city best through being prudent and just,
and whose words deliver it from evil acts by removing feuds and factions:
such are the things good for every city and all Greeks.

The *Autolycus* is a satyr play, and its gleefully disdainful descriptions of athletes are thereby exaggerated. These generic overstatements, however, suggest that real, less hyperbolic versions of these negative attitudes may have been circulating in late-fifth-century Athens. At the same time, as in Tyrtaeus and Xenophanes, this passage may equally serve as an inverted image of potential positive valuations of athletics within contemporary discourse. A significant difference, however, is the extent to which the idea of Hellas now plays a prominent role. The exemplar of the athlete is not only a criticism of athletics in itself, but explicitly staged as part of a conversation about Hellenic identity and political conflict. The custom of throwing celebratory feasts for athletic victors is τὸν Ἑλλήνων νόμον (13), and Euripides alludes to interstate conflict by satirically highlighting the inefficacy of athletes in πολεμίους πάτρας (21). That is, participation in the Panhellenic games is set up as a

hindrance to the self-defense of any particular *polis*, athletic competition framed as the opposite of political security—much as Tyrtaeus argued centuries earlier.[39] Part of the games' danger is the way they seem to make the *polis* vulnerable, misdirecting the real activity of soldiers into the symbolic activity of athletic competition. There is a probable undercurrent here of political suspicion of athletic victors, who, while seeking personal glory and mingling with the global elite, are not sufficiently focused on benefiting their own state.[40]

Like Xenophanes, the *Autolycus* argues for the preeminence of just and wise men rather than athletes, but here the recommendation is (appropriately to the hyperbolic tone) confined not to one particular *polis* but to every *polis* and to all of Greece (πόλει τε πάσῃ πᾶσί θ' Ἕλλησιν). With this language, its satirical perspective manages to indict both Hellenic identity and parochialism. And like Xenophanes it contrasts athletes with the educated and elite (σοφούς τε κἀγαθοὺς)—including among them, perhaps, rhetoricians or even the playwright (ὅστις τε μύθοις ἔργ' ἀπαλλάσσει κακά, "whose words deliver it from evil acts"). While this fragment does not explicitly discuss practices of memorializing athletes, its contention that the athlete is fundamentally physically ephemeral (ὅταν δὲ προσπέσῃ γῆρας πικρόν, / τρίβωνες ἐκβαλόντες οἴχονται κρόκας, "but when old age in its harshness falls upon them, / they fade away like cloaks that have lost their threads") suggests a contrast with potentially more enduring subjects of cultural commemoration. In making this argument, the text also identifies a problem with the ideological importance of the athletic body, one that also becomes very important—even if often covertly so—for Pindaric epinician.[41]

[39] As well as argue against the idea that athletic competition might be a way to prepare for real warfare.
[40] See section III below for precisely this association with Alcibiades in Euripides' Athens.
[41] See Chapter 2, section I.

For each of these authors, the indictment of athletic valuation and achievement is really an arena for elaborating central themes of the moral-political discourse that is characteristic of sixth- and fifth-century poetic production. The charged ideological territory of the athlete implicates the relationship of the individual to the identity and safety of the *polis* and, eventually—as the elite athlete becomes symbolic of the stephanitic games in particular—the relationship of *poleis* amongst each other and the potential threats of (and to) elite collective identity. What the evidence of Tyrtaeus, Xenophanes, and the *Autolycus* most productively brings to light is the athlete's perceived place in the social and cultural landscape of the sixth- to fifth-century *polis* and its environs, and the extent to which that derives from particular attitudes (whether popular or idiosyncratic) towards the major athletic contests. As spectacular interstate events that were increasingly used as arenas for showcasing and legitimating wealth, prestige, and monumentalism, the stephanitic games became a crucial arena for how these social issues were negotiated and understood. While the resonances for epinician as a commemorative form may be mostly implicit here—as a contrast to these authors' own forms of textual production and performance—in the coming decades and centuries the critique of epinician, and Pindar in particular, develops in both a sociopolitical and a formal sense.

## III. Alcibiades' Athens

The ideological importance of the stephanitic athlete to *polis* identity and relationships seems to have been heightened in the post-Pindaric Athenian context. What significant testimony there is about epinician composition after the 440s is clustered around one prominent Athenian figure: Alcibiades. The one witness for (possible) epinician performance in the late fifth century is an anecdote about an epinician poem allegedly written by Euripides for Alcibiades, on the occasion of an extraordinary triple victory in the chariot

races in the Olympics of 416.[42] This composition is reported in two places by Plutarch, in two slightly different versions. In the *Life of Alcibiades* he quotes the poem and confidently assigns it to Euripides:

> λέγει δ᾽ ὁ Εὐριπίδης ἐν τῷ ᾄσματι ταῦτα·
>
> σὲ δ᾽ ἀείσομαι, ὦ Κλεινίου παῖ.
> καλὸν ἀ νίκα· κάλλιστον δ᾽, ὃ μηδεὶς ἄλλος Ἑλλάνων,
> ἅρματι πρῶτα δραμεῖν καὶ δεύτερα καὶ τρίτα,
> βῆναί τ᾽ ἀπονητί, Διὸς στεφθέντα τ᾽ ἐλαία
> κάρυκι βοᾶν παραδοῦναι·
>
> τοῦτο μέντοι τὸ λαμπρὸν ἐπιφανέστερον ἐποίησεν ἡ τῶν πόλεων φιλοτιμία. σκηνὴν μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ κεκοσμημένην διαπρεπῶς ἔστησαν Ἐφέσιοι, τροφὰς δὲ ἵπποις καὶ πλῆθος ἱερείων παρεῖχεν ἡ Χίων πόλις, οἶνον δὲ Λέσβιοι καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ὑποδοχὴν ἀφειδῶς ἑστιῶντι πολλούς. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διαβολή τις ἢ κακοήθεια γενομένη περὶ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἐκείνην πλείονα λόγον παρέσχε.
>
> The ode of Euripides to which I refer runs thus:—
>
> Thee will I sing, O child of Cleinias;
> A fair thing is victory, but fairest is what no other Hellene has achieved,
> To run first, and second, and third in the contest of racing-chariots,
> And to come off unwearied, and, wreathed with the olive of Zeus,
> To furnish theme for herald's proclamation.
>
> Moreover, this splendor of his at Olympia was made even more conspicuous by the emulous rivalry of the cities in his behalf. The Ephesians equipped him with a tent of magnificent adornment; the Chians furnished him with provender for his horses and with innumerable animals for sacrifice; the Lesbians with wine and other provisions for his unstinted entertainment of the multitude. However, a grave calumny—or malpractice on his part—connected with this rivalry was even more in the mouths of men.[43]

[42] First, second, and fourth according to Thuc. 6.16.2; first, second, and third according to Plutarch's attestation of Euripides' poem. Hornblower 2012 explores the possibility of epinician re-performance for the descendants of Pindar's victors and speculates that there is a possibility of "(not very good) praise-poetry for dynasts and autocrats, perhaps loosely inspired by Pindar and Bacchylides, but no longer tied closely to the Panhellenic games" in the early fourth century, with a particular emphasis on the evidence for poetic composition by Dionysius I (106).

[43] Plut. *Vit. Alc.* 11.2-3.

Plutarch is, unfortunately, our only source for the text.[44] There is, therefore, some skepticism about the authenticity and authorship of the fragment.[45] Nevertheless, Plutarch's description of this alleged poem and event still traffics in the important themes of epinician critique, here presented through the additional lens of Plutarch's first century CE reception of a late fifth-century BCE context.[46] Plutarch's description of the context within which Alcibiades allegedly achieved this triple victory is emphatically international, the value of Alcibiades' victory defined by the competing *philotimia* of prominent *poleis* from across the Greek world. Much like Xenophanes' description of how athletic victors might be fêted, Alcibiades' victory is described in the terms of spectacle and social discourse: it is a conspicuous splendor (λαμπρὸν ἐπιφανέστερον), magnificently adorned (κεκοσμημένην διαπρεπῶς) like an actor on the stage. More (πλείονα) than visually conspicuous, however, Alcibiades is discursively prominent—and in emphatically negative terms. This passage also takes up the theme of conspicuous consumption, suggesting an association between victory celebration and not simply wealth, but, harkening back to Xenophanes and the *Autolycus,* literal consumption of food, wine, and animals for sacrifice.

In the *Life of Demosthenes,* Plutarch suggests that this possible epinician may not have been composed by Euripides. But perhaps more revealingly, this suggestion comes in the context of a meditation on the relation between poets, cities, and virtuous men:

> ὁ μὲν γράψας τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τῆς Ὀλυμπίασιν ἱπποδρομίας εἰς Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐγκώμιον, εἴτ᾽ Εὐριπίδης, ὡς ὁ πολὺς κρατεῖ λόγος, εἴθ᾽ ἕτερός τις ἦν, Σόσσιε, φησὶ χρῆναι τῷ εὐδαίμονι πρῶτον ὑπάρξαι ‘τὰν πόλιν εὐδόκιμον’ ἐγὼ δὲ τῷ μὲν εὐδαιμονήσειν μέλλοντι τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐδαιμονίαν, ἧς ἐν ἤθει καὶ διαθέσει τὸ πλεῖστόν ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρειν ἡγοῦμαι ἀδόξου καὶ ταπεινῆς πατρίδος ἢ μητρὸς ἀμόρφου καὶ μικρᾶς γενέσθαι. γελοῖον γάρ εἴ τις οἴοιτο τὴν ' Ἰουλίδα, μέρος μικρὸν οὖσαν οὐ μεγάλης νήσου τῆς Κέω, καὶ τὴν Αἴγιναν, ἣν τῶν Ἀττικῶν τις ἐκέλευεν ὡς λήμην ἀφαιρεῖν τοῦ Πειραιῶς, ὑποκριτὰς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς τρέφειν

[44] Athenaeus mentions, but does not quote, an *epinikion* by Euripides for Alcibiades (*Deipnosophistae* 1.5.10-11).
[45] Bowra 1960 is the fullest discussion. Radding 2022, p. 149n42 for discussion of debate and p. 140-142 for Radding's own argument for authenticity.
[46] i.e., whether or not this fragment is authentic, Plutarch remains a witness for first-century CE perceptions (and historiographic receptions) of the late fifth century.

καὶ ποιητάς, ἄνδρα δ᾽ οὐκ ἄν ποτε δύνασθαι δίκαιον καὶ αὐτάρκη καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντα καὶ μεγαλόψυχον προενεγκεῖν. τὰς γὰρ ἄλλας τέχνας εἰκός ἐστι πρὸς ἐργασίαν ἢ δόξαν συνισταμένας ἐν ταῖς ἀδόξοις καὶ ταπειναῖς πόλεσιν ἀπομαραίνεσθαι, τὴν δ᾽ ἀρετὴν, ὥσπερ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ διαρκὲς φυτὸν, ἐν ἅπαντι ῥιζοῦσθαι τόπῳ, φύσεώς τε χρηστῆς καὶ φιλοπόνου ψυχῆς ἐπιλαμβανομένην.[47]

The author of the encomium for Alcibiades for his victory in the chariot-race at Olympia, whether he was Euripides, as the prevailing report has it, or some other, says Sosius, that the first requisite to a man's happiness is birth in ‘a famous city’; but in my opinion, for a man who would enjoy true happiness, which depends for the most part on character and disposition, it is no disadvantage to belong to an obscure and mean city, any more than it is to be born of a mother who is of little stature and without beauty. For it were laughable to suppose that Iulis, which is a little part of the small island of Keos, and Aigina, which a certain Athenian was urgent to have removed as an eye-sore of the Piraeus, should breed good actors and poets, but should never be able to produce a man who is just, independent, wise, and magnanimous. The arts, indeed, since their object is to bring business or fame, naturally pine away in obscure and mean cities; but virtue, like a strong and hardy plant, takes root in any place, if she finds there a generous nature and a spirit that shuns no labor.

While earlier authors were principally interested in the relations between the individual athlete and *polis* integrity, Plutarch’s text here picks up on a particularly Pindaric strategy of associating the achievement of the athletic victor strongly with the nature and flourishing of his home (or occasionally, adopted) *polis*.[48] Plutarch instead aims to restore an understanding of the nature of the individual separately from the wealth and status of the *polis*. Critically, this idea of the virtuous man who might be found anywhere is pointedly juxtaposed with the conditions necessary for the flourishing of the arts. Poetry and performance, in this telling, require both economic and reputational support to flourish—but the success of poetry has no necessary relation to the existence of human flourishing as defined by Plutarch. Indeed, this passage subtly suggests that they may even be opposed. Poetry is strongly associated with urban centers of wealth and power, reliant on *doxa* and *ergasia* to support itself—but with no

[47] Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 1.1-3.
[48] Identified by Kurke 1991 as one of the strategies by which Pindar works against the potentially disruptive force of the victor returning home.

necessary association with natural human goodness, expressed through Plutarch's association of the metaphor of plants with human *phusis,* the nature of the soul.

The civic value of athletic victory, and perhaps epinician itself, seems to have been a particularly contentious topic in Athens during the late fifth century, although the extent to which this is true outside of the discourse surrounding Alcibiades is disputed.[49] In Pseudo-Andocides' *Against Alcibiades,* Alcibiades' alleged conduct surrounding his Olympic victories is perhaps the most significant black mark against him, since it represents the damage he does to Athens even as he is honored by the state.[50] The author of the speech frames his own rhetorical *apologia* in the terms of athletic competition: ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀγὼν ὁ παρὼν οὐ στεφανηφόρος ("The current contest is not for a crown," 4.2). The subject at hand is the possibility of exile from Athens, a topic that at once raises the question of the nature of the individual within the state and the nature of Athens itself as a *polis*. In this case, the charge is *misodemia* and the incitement of *stasis* (4.8), and part of Alcibiades' worst offense is how he hides his true danger to Athens' democracy under a veneer of democratic performance: ὃ δὲ πάντων δεινότατόν ἐστι, τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς εὔνους τῷ δήμῳ τοὺς λόγους ποιεῖται, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ὀλιγαρχικοὺς καὶ μισοδήμους ἀποκαλεῖ ("But most monstrous of all is the fact that a man of his character should talk as though he were a friend of the people, and call others oligarchs and foes of the democracy," 4.16). Not only is Alcibiades dangerous to Athens, but the threat is heightened by his rhetorical sleight-of-hand, performing the pretense of a democrat while guilty in truth of *misodemia*.

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[49] Fuller context on views about athletics and epinician (and Alcibiades' impact in particular): Papakonstantinou 2003 and 2016, Rosenbloom 2004, Gribble 2012. See also Radding 2022, 91-97 for an excellent overview of potential views on epinician in Athens in this period. Cf. Kyle 1993, 161-63, for the view that athletic achievement was not particularly politically salient in Athens in the second half of the fifth century. Edmund 2014, Papakonstantinou 2013, Kyle 1987, ch. 5, Pleket 1976 discuss criticism of athletes generally in this period.

[50] [Andoc.] 4.25-31. The text's author points out that other Olympic victors have been subject to Athens' more punitive laws, while Alcibiades seems immune to retribution.

Although direct evidence for an epinician by Euripides may be scant, the Olympics of 420 and 416, in which Alcibiades competed so spectacularly, are treated at length by Thucydides. David Smith has argued that Thucydides' treatment of Alcibiades is highly colored by the language and themes of Pindaric epinician specifically, and that the fragment reported by Plutarch shares in some of the language that characterizes Pindar's odes for Sicilian tyrants. Thucydides, then, marshals Pindar's pro-Sicilian rhetoric to underhandedly characterize Alcibiades, in the fractious political climate of Athens (and its relation to Sicily) in 416, on the order of an early fifth-century tyrant.[51] The *Against Alcibiades,* while probably composed later, is likely to have been written within a few decades of Alcibiades' victory, and both it and Plutarch's *Alcibiades* put significant weight on how Alcibiades is lavishly received by foreign states while at Olympia, in contrast to the harm he causes at home (Plut. *Alc.* 12.1, [Andoc.] 4.30).[52] Descriptions of Alcibiades in the athletic context put equal weight on threats to the integrity of the individual *polis* and to the fraught arena of interstate relations and the individual citizen.[53]

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[51] Smith 2009. His conclusions about Pindar's rhetoric for Sicilian victors rely also on the arguments of Morgan 2015 (see section III below). Smith 2007 (n. 23) makes the useful observation that the rhetoric of *basileia* that Pindar so often applies to the Sicilian tyrants is never employed on inscriptions for monuments dedicated at Olympia by Hieron and Gelon themselves; the operative self-descriptor is "son of Deinomenes." See also Harrell 2002 for an expanded version of this argument that contrasts Pindar's and Bacchylides' engagement with the rhetoric of tyranny with the language of dedicatory inscriptions, which explicitly avoided political titles. For the possible association of athletic victory in Athens with tyranny specifically, rather than an aristocratic/democratic divide, see Thomas 2007, 143-4, citing Herodotus on Kylon and Kimon.

[52] The convergence is unsurprising, since Plutarch cites *Against Alcibiades* (*Alc.* 13.2). For attribution and dating of the text, Cobetto Ghiggia 1995 and Gribble 1997.

[53] Euripides' own work may offer a more secure understanding of his view on epinician poetry, and, as Jonah Radding has argued, it is a flexible one that explores the multiple potential impacts of epinician celebration on polis communities. Euripides' Pindar is squarely involved in relations between the individual—particularly the heroic individual—and the polis, in both positive and negative ways. Epinician language may exalt a hero who brings benefit to his community or, conversely, emphasize the tensions that his exemplary actions create. Radding 2022, ch. 2; responding also Swift 2010 and Kampakoglou 2018: "Euripidean tragedy uses epinician not only to focalize a political question, but also to

Plato's *Apology*, set in 399, may also be participating in a similar conversation. When proposing a penalty that might be appropriate to his alleged crimes, Plato's Socrates makes the provocative suggestion that he be honored by Athens with feasting in the *prytaneion,* like an Olympic victor.[54] Why choose athletes as a foil here? There are obvious answers—the readily available contrast between physical and moral-intellectual prowess, the widespread and lavish nature of athletic celebration—but this rhetorical opportunity also goes beyond the flashy availability of forms of athletic commemoration. In the context of the broader issues raised in the *Apology*, Socrates' tongue-in-cheek proposal is meant to suggest the artificiality, and perhaps fragility, of that prevailing social values about the place of the individual, the influence of wealth, the boundaries of foreignness and citizenship, and the legitimacy of civic institutions in Athenian society. By calling the social value of the athlete into question in these kinds of conceptual surroundings, these authors show how the meaning of athletic commemoration implicated problems that went to the heart of Athenian identity at home and abroad. Like the satirical conventions of the *Autolycus,* Plato's deliberate positioning of Socrates as counter-cultural allows the *Apology* to critique Athenian values and institutions.

Aristophanes' *Birds* offers one of the most trenchant critiques of epinician poetry in this period, and one that demonstrates a heightened attention to epinician form and content far beyond the athlete. Aristophanes marks a significant critical leap in the texts this chapter treats, as his representation of the epinician poet is both specifically Pindaric and almost

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dramatize epinician poetry's power, for better or for worse, in the political arena" (Radding 2022, 91).

[54] οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτι μᾶλλον, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πρέπει οὕτως ὡς τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα ἐν πρυτανείῳ σιτεῖσθαι, πολύ γε μᾶλλον ἢ εἴ τις ὑμῶν ἵππῳ ἢ συνωρίδι ἢ ζεύγει νενίκηκεν Ὀλυμπίασιν ("That is much more appropriate for me than for any of you who has won a race at the Olympic games with a pair of horses or a four-horse chariot," *Apology* 36d). This passage is analyzed with reference to Xenophanes and Euripides, above, in Harris 2009. Plato is at times closely engaged with Pindar, sometimes playfully and other times in more earnest. The *Gorgias* is particularly interested in Pindar's views on *nomos* in the context of fifth-century conflict.

entirely dissociated from the figure of the athletic victor at all. While the epinician critique of the *Birds* is founded on very different grounds from the authors discussed so far, it importantly looks ahead to how Pindaric epinician was received as a political discourse in the late Classical period. Like the scholiast on *Isthmian* 1, and like Isocrates (discussed in section IV), Aristophanes has noticed the fundamentally rhetorical character of epinician, and its slippery relation to the truth of the claims that it might make.

The *Birds* includes a satirical representation of an epinician poet, who models himself after Simonides (*Av.* 919), while his song (here, *epos*) both calls itself Pindaric (Πινδάρειον, 939) and conspicuously invokes Pindar's odes for Hieron in its multiple mentions of the Sicilian Mount Etna. It has been argued that this portrayal is a parody not of Pindar himself, but of Euripides acting in a Pindaric role.[55] While evidence for Euripidean epinician is again disputed, if this is true—or if it were thought to be true at the time—it would surely activate unsavory Alcibiadean associations (the intervening influence of Aristophanes, who frequently parodied both Alcibiades and Euripides, complicates the picture here, too).[56] In either case, this is clearly a portrayal of an epinician poet and Pindar is explicitly named; whether or not epinician was still being consistently composed, Pindar seems to have succeeded in becoming its effective avatar. It would not be surprising if the prominence of his Sicilian odes, and their volatile associations with Alcibiades, contributed to an at least partially negative association with epinician in the last years of the fifth century and a suspicion of epinician motivations.[57] The evidence of Thucydides makes it clear that athletic victory is itself still at issue in terms of the health and safety of the *polis*, but the terms have shifted to an Athenocentric discourse

[55] Smith 2007, 386; Vickers, 1989, 220. The connection between Aristophanes and Alcibiades is well-established; for parody of Alcibiades in the *Birds*, see Vickers 1989.
[56] I see this as a potentially circular argument, depending on where Plutarch draws his sources from, and am not particularly invested in the authenticity of Euripides' epinician in this period. For more perspectives on the debate here, Bowra 1960 and Papakonstantinou 2003.
[57] Gribble 2012, 70 for Thucydides' linkage of Alcibiades' Olympic victory and command of the Sicilian expedition.

in this most Athenocentric of periods.[58] This Athenian focus has lasting effects on how the political value of the games is conceptualized after the fifth century (see section IV, below).

In the *Birds,* the unnamed epinician poet enters on the heels of a priest who has been summoned to help with propitious sacrifices for the founding of the new avian city. This poet is threadbare and shivering, more interested in acquiring a new cloak than consorting with tyrants. In characterizing this poet, Aristophanes adorns him with a number of exaggerated epinician stereotypes. The poet of the *Birds* is acquisitive, although of clothing rather than coinage; he frequently invokes Homer and the Muses; and his elaborate verses are meant as riddles for his true meaning (for example, he invokes the boreal Scythians in a hopeful plea for some new outerwear[59]). As I began this chapter by noting, the poet of the *Birds* claims to have been performing poems[60] for the city since some undetermined, long-ago time: πάλαι πάλαι δὴ τήνδ᾽ ἐγὼ κλῄζω πόλιν ("I've been celebrating this city for a long, long time," 921). A perplexed Peisetairos rejoins that this seems technically impossible: οὐκ ἄρτι θύω τὴν δεκάτην ταύτης ἐγώ / καὶ τοὔνομ᾽ ὥσπερ παιδίῳ νῦν δὴ 'θέμην; ("Have I not just celebrated its tenth-day festival, and just now given it a name, like for a child?," 922-3).

This neat satire plays on the pervasive epinician convention of placing prominence upon (and often innovating) aetiological and foundational claims while keeping their exact timeline conveniently undefined. The opportunistic poet shows up at the foundation of a new city, offering his services in exchange for personal gain; he is unable, however, to shake the habit of deliberate archaism and so appears incongruent at the actual founding moment of a new city, when his services are not yet needed. His inflationary claims about his potential

[58] This is, of course, also a function of the bias of extant evidence. This bias, however, is in part a function of deliberate strategies of canonization and preservation by elites both ancient and modern, which supports the point I am making about the uses of epinician as well as suspicions surrounding its functions.
[59] This is Pindar fr. 105b.
[60] Here, notably, dithyrambs and *partheneia* "in the style of Simonides" (919) rather than epinicians (the generic title not current until the third century).

service to the city cast doubt on the honesty of his assertions, satirizing him as bound by genre and tradition rather than authentically innovative. Aristophanes' character also invokes the names of Simonides and Pindar to insert himself in the epinician tradition, placing himself in a poetic tradition the way that Pindar situates himself in relation to Archilochus in *Olympian* 9.[61] Peisetairos and his companion outfit the poet with a new cloak and usher him offstage, only to be faced with the entrance of a *chresmologos* who insists on offering an oracle for the new city and whom Peisetairos equally satirizes and dispatches. After the *chresmologos* exits a surveyor appears who promises to neatly map out the city's territory, then an overly litigious Athenian administrator who immediately inquires where the new city's *proxenoi* might be found.

Aristophanes' epinician poet, then, is part of a cadre of semi-professional opportunists who seem to consider themselves necessary to the founding narrative of a *polis* and who are depicted in stereotyped and exaggerated ways. The epinician poet arrives on the scene as part of a parade of institutionalizing figures, who promise to outfit Cloudcuckooland with everything a *polis* needs. The poet, sandwiched between priest and diviner, is yet another hermeneutic entrepreneur, ready to offer his advertising services—and ready to seem as if he has always been singing for the city. Aristophanes' clever critique of epinician shows two important developments from sixth- and earlier fifth-century debates about athletic and epinician value. The *Birds* satirizes the persona of the epinician poet*,* not simply the subject or the form of epinician poems. This suggests that the poet's individual persona has gained in visibility, a development that Pindar's poetics and reputation are likely to have contributed significantly to.[62] While the figure of the poet as an individual gains in prominence, the figure

[61] Spelman 2016, p. 242-3 argues that this is a depiction of a minor epinician poet struggling to reach the heights of a Pindar or Bacchylides. I am not so sure, and think this analysis holds in any case.
[62] See Chapter 4 on reading the Pindaric "I" in this context.

of the epinician victor is essentially absent here. Instead, the *Birds'* poet is all about the city: he names Cloudcuckooland twice (904, 917), invokes Aitna (926), and speaks of the *polis* multiple times in his brief moments onstage. What is more, Aristophanes' depiction of the epinician poet seems to stress the poet's claim to the preservation of social memory above all. Along with his claim to creating a false antiquity for the bird city, he suggests that Peisetairos take his verses to heart in the manner of Pindar's: τὺ δὲ τεᾷ φρενὶ μάθε Πινδάρειον ἔπος ("Learn a Pindaric song in your heart," 939). Though Peisetairos might immediately undermine the poet's factual claim to the city's origins, nevertheless, his verses stubbornly stick: ἄνθρωπος ἡμῶν οὐκ ἀπαλλαχθήσεται ("We cannot get rid of this person," 940), Peisetairos complains.

## IV. **Rhetoric in the fourth century**

Evidence from the late fifth and early fourth century, then, shows deep and continued engagement with the question of athletic and at times specifically epinician value, and indications of a sustained shared discourse about the meaning of athletic commemoration in the *polis*. Much of this discourse continues to use language highly reminiscent of Archaic attitudes of suspicion towards athletic celebration, but in the late fifth and earlier fourth century this critique begins to develop into an explicit engagement with the form, poetics, and function of Pindaric epinician. Aspects of this conversation are represented on the highly public stages of the law courts and the tragic theater.[63] Around the turn of the fifth century and into the fourth, a changed political landscape reconfigures the specifics of this conversation, but it remains built on similar terms.

One prominent representative of Pindaric criticism from the late Classical period is Isocrates, who addresses both Pindar specifically and athletic celebration generally in several

[63] Epinician in the tragic theater is explored in Radding 2022, ch. 2.

places. His *Antidosis* mentions Pindar directly, in much the same context as Xenophanes and Plato's Socrates:

> ἔτι δὲ δεινότερον, εἰ Πίνδαρον μὲν τὸν ποιητὴν οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν γεγονότες ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς μόνον ῥήματος, ὅτι τὴν πόλιν ἔρεισμα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὠνόμασεν, οὕτως ἐτίμησαν ὥστε καὶ πρόξενον ποιήσασθαι καὶ δωρεὰν μυρίας αὐτῷ δοῦναι δραχμὰς, ἐμοὶ δὲ πολὺ πλείω καὶ κάλλιον ἐγκεκωμιακότι καὶ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς προγόνους μηδ' ἀσφαλῶς ἐγγένοιτο καταβιῶναι τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον.[64]
>
> It would be even more absurd if, whereas Pindar, the poet, was so highly honored by our forefathers because of a single line of his in which he praises Athens as "the bulwark of Hellas" that he was made *proxenos* and given a present of ten thousand drachmas, I, on the other hand, who have glorified Athens and our ancestors with much ampler and nobler encomiums, should not even be privileged to end my days in peace.

The *Antidosis* takes the form of an Isocratean *apologia,* offering a defense of the orator's conduct in public life. A number of the points the speech raises are particularly relevant here—the experience of Isocrates' family in the Peloponnesian War, his acceptance of wages for pedagogical work, and his relationships with *xenoi* during what he describes as his service to the city of Athens (164-5). This is the context that directly precedes his invocation of Pindar. Although Isocrates does not say this explicitly, it is clear that these same associations—foreignness, remuneration, Athenian imperialism—are activated when he brings up Athenian admiration for Pindar. Much like Archaic and earlier Classical criticism of epinician, absurdities of scale (one line versus many speeches) are used to make a categorical point. Like Xenophanes, Isocrates is probably seeking primarily to endorse himself rather than make a point about Pindar's particular unworthiness. At the same time, however, it is revealing that Pindar comes to stand for someone who enjoys significant renown for achievements of slight magnitude and dubious significance—and someone celebrated despite doing (in Isocrates' view) almost nothing for Athens.[65] For the orator's

[64] Isoc. 15.66.
[65] There are definite echoes here of the discourse around Alcibiades in the 410s.

purpose, Pindar is more style than substance: less efficacious and more entertaining than Isocrates claims he would be instead.

The *Evagoras* offers a few more clues to Isocrates' particular singling out of Pindar. In the *Evagoras,* Isocrates sets himself the unprecedented (so he says) task of delivering an encomium in prose rather than poetry. While advocating the celebration of the historical individual rather than the potentially nonexistent heroes (οὓς οὐκ ἴσασιν εἰ γεγόνασιν, 6) of the Trojan age, Isocrates also advocates the encomiastic superiority of oratorical prose. In particular, he points out that orators are formally constrained in comparison to poets (ἀλλ' ἀποτόμως καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων τοῖς πολιτικοῖς μόνον καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τοῖς περὶ αὐτὰς τὰς πράξεις ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι, "Orators, on the contrary, are not permitted the use of such devices; they must use with precision only words in current use and only such ideas as bear upon the actual facts," 10) and that poets can easily enchant their listeners by employing poetic devices like meter and rhythm (ὅμως αὐταῖς ταῖς εὐρυθμίαις καὶ ταῖς συμμετρίαις ψυχαγωγοῦσι τοὺς ἀκούοντας, "nevertheless by their very rhythm and harmony they bewitch their listeners," 10).[66]

Isocrates' critique, ultimately, is not really about the content of epinician. He explicitly opposes the possibilities opened by its poetic form—critiquing the way that it presents the meaning of victors and their victory, rather than undermining the value of the victory itself. Isocrates assigns plenty of positive meaning to Evagoras's athletic achievement, but he is cautious to qualify what kind of meaning it is and how it contrasts with other potential forms of celebration.[67] In particular, he repeatedly emphasizes that

[66] The danger of deceptive speech, incidentally, is an idea familiar to Pindar (*O.* 1.28–32, N. 7.22–4, *N.*8.32-4).

[67] 9.2: ἡγησάμην Εὐαγόραν, εἴ τίς ἐστιν αἴσθησις τοῖς τετελευτηκόσι περὶ τῶν ἐνθάδε γιγνομένων, εὐμενῶς μὲν ἀποδέχεσθαι καὶ ταῦτα, καὶ χαίρειν ὁρῶντα τήν τε περὶ αὐτὸν ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τὴν σὴν μεγαλοπρέπειαν, πολὺ δ' ἂν ἔτι πλείω χάριν ἔχειν ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν, εἴ τις δυνηθείη περὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν κινδύνων ἀξίως διελθεῖν τῶν ἐκείνῳ πεπραγμένων ("I judged that Evagoras—if the dead have any perception of that which

orators should confine themselves to the facts and to words that are *politika*—here in the meaning of "ordinary" or "current in regular life." Despite his semi-divine ancestry and exceptional achievements, it is important for Isocrates to represent Evagoras not only as a quasi-heroic leader but as a contemporary person authentically engaged with fellow citizens.

Isocrates' stated commitment to some kind of representational accuracy, even "truth," should not be taken at face value here.[68] But his vigorous engagement with these questions signals both the existence of an ongoing debate about forms of memorialization as well as their deep connection to ideas about ethical action and the legitimacy of political power. Isocrates' explicit interest in a kind of contemporaneity and in contemporary language puts extra stress on this problem. He adds moral weight to the relationship between rhetorical temporality, semantic clarity, and pragmatic action, rejecting ambiguity, indeterminacy, and temporal archaism—all prominent features of Pindaric poetics. Although Isocrates does not hesitate to recite a mythical genealogy in his narrative of the Aiakid family (13-18), in his *praeteritio* on Evagoras's potentially supernatural birth he rejects the hermeneutic ambiguity of oracles, signs, and dreams, and claims to use only the facts that "all citizens know" (πάντες οἱ πολῖται συνίσασιν) in his encomium (21).

Isocrates' story of Evagoras is, in part, a story about the restoration of legitimate rule in the face of tyranny. Evagoras represents no particular kind of government but "the best parts of each *politeia*" (46), a benevolent king praised by subjects and foreigners alike. In particular, he is instrumental in restoring Hellenism to Cypriot Salamis, as well as inducing

takes place in this world—while gladly accepting these offerings and rejoicing in the spectacle of your devotion and *megaloprepeia* in honoring him, would feel far greater gratitude to anyone who could worthily recount his principles in life and his dangerous deeds than to all other men"). This invocation of experience beyond death is also an important issue for Pindaric epinician.

[68] This is in part a rhetorical trope—but it is exactly rhetorical tropes, I think, that are at issue in Isocrates' engagement with Pindar.

his foreign neighbors to adopt and praise Hellenic culture (45-6).[69] These are enduring epinician themes, couched in distinctly anti-poetic rhetoric. The *Evagoras* shares definite thematic and structural similarities with Pindaric epinician.[70] Evagoras's physical splendor and athletic prowess are a kind of inevitable symptom of his moral goodness, and by the end of the speech he is elevated to godliness and potential immortality, his semi-divine lineage justified by his actions in the world (70).[71] Why, then, does Isocrates insist on his speech's distinct difference from epinician in the form of a positivist rhetoric, rather than a hermeneutically complex poetics? The speech strives to assign meaning to hereditary sole rulership and elite achievement without being deliberately archaic or transparently anti-democratic.[72] In doing so, Isocrates effectively papers over numerous potential sources of political disjunction under the twin labels of benevolent kingship and Hellenism, and insists on his own rhetorical transparency in comparison to the potentially slippery rhetoric of epinician.[73]

Isocrates' *Panegyricus* is a more direct confrontation with the value of athletics in itself, but that value is again defined in terms of social recognition. The *Panegyricus* is profoundly influenced by a fourth-century geopolitical environment in which Athens now

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[69] Cyprus is a particularly interesting rhetorical arena to set this drama, since its ideological and symbolic place in the Greek imagination allows for its use as an idealizing, spatially distant place from Athens and the Greek mainland (for these conceptions of Cyprus in the Greek imagination, see Kearns 2018).

[70] For formal similarities and differences between Pindar's odes and the *Evagoras,* as well as Isocrates' general relationship to Pindar, Race 1987.

[71] For epinician's approach to the idealism of the physical body, see Ch. 2.

[72] The vocabulary of democracy probably is appropriate for Isocrates, whose reference to *politeiai* invites it.

[73] Particularly considering some of the details that Isocrates leaves out. Hornblower and Morgan 2007, 4: "Pindar shows himself aware of democracy, monarchy, and oligarchy as distinctive constitutions. However, references to the organization of specific societies are generally rare."

" Hornblower 2006 and Morgan 2015 both explore the vocabulary of kingship in Pindar, which appears to be deployed more ideologically than as a literal description of political organization in specific *poleis*.

stands in a much less powerful position than during Pindar's florescence. One aspect of Isocrates' critique is revealing: why are honors awarded to athletes, he asks, rather than "those who worked privately in service of the community" (τοῖς δ' ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν ἰδίᾳ πονήσασι, Isoc. 4.1)? Like the Socrates of Plato's *Apology*, Isocrates argues that the work of a private citizen is worth more to the *demos* than the strength of athletes, but its reward and celebration are not publicly visible in the same way. And Isocrates' context, too, is important; even if the *Panegyricus* was likely not delivered at an athletic festival, it borrows from the genre of orations at the major sanctuaries, and the anxieties it expresses have much to do with navigating the social-symbolic function of the games.

Both fourth-century writers, I suggest, are participating in the same discourse as Xenophanes, whose distinction between unheralded *sophia* and over-lauded athletes works across the lines of public performance and private gain. But the framework of Isocrates' evaluation of athletic honors also involves a broader landscape of inter-*polis* interactions, and the ways in which these concerns come to bear in the first decades of the fourth century. For Isocrates, the call to praise orators rather than victors comes as part of a larger concern with an erosion of Athens' centrality and influence, and his treatment of the athletic festivals is not solely negative. When he does praise the games, however, it is in the service of advocating a Hellenic hegemony in which Athens plays a prominent role.[74]

In the *Panegyricus,* attitudes towards athletic celebration are entangled in a web of critically important cultural and political concepts, including Athenian exceptionalism, Hellenic identity, and the possible configurations of political subordination. The *Evagoras* takes up these ideas as part of a complex discourse about memorialization and the commemoration of the historical individual, abstracting these same preoccupations into

[74] For Isocrates' broader tendency towards advocating Athenian hegemony under the umbrella of Hellenism, Hall 2002, 208 and Too 1995.

something closer to an idealized or gnomic discourse—while steadfastly asserting that this portrait of Evagoras is *not* idealized. Isocrates' texts are profoundly aware of the discursive contexts, pitfalls, and opportunities in which they operate. Their underlying meta-narrative is spurred by an anxiety about the relations between discursive form and meaning and a desire to articulate positivist statements of social value. Like the other authors discussed here—and just like Pindar himself—Isocrates is aware of the contingency of his own discourse and attempts to argue for the importance of rhetorical form to managing that contingency and achieving durable statements about social and moral worth.

Without inclining too much towards generalization, it is possible to sketch a transition—across the course of the fifth century and into the fourth—from a discourse about athletic celebration that is principally focused on the relationship between the individual and the *polis* to one that uses this relationship to think much more broadly about social networks, connections, tensions, and hierarchies. Epinician is a problem (or a potential solution) both at home and abroad, in local tensions as well as relationships between *poleis*. The different nuances of these challenges to epinician self-definition confront concepts at the heart of Pindar's epinician poetics and possible social functions, including conflicting temporalities, pragmatic efficacies, and political representations.

## V. Imperialism and inheritance

Across the fifth century, then, epinician gained the potential to be associated with social division and conflict; it is part of a landscape of authors vying to define stable terms for social value in the *polis*. By the fourth century, this discourse evolved into one where epinician had become strongly associated with individual achievement and hegemonic political power—themes that are deeply connected in *poleis* where political power is concentrated in the hands of a sole ruler or an oligarchic few, but which remain relevant

across different forms of political organization.[75] This legacy becomes particularly clear during the Hellenistic period,[76] where a newly competitive landscape of burgeoning empires provided fertile ground for an epinician revival, just as the stephanitic games continued to play an important role in interstate interaction.[77] New sites of athletic competition proliferated and older ones remained immensely popular as showcases for a Greek political landscape that crisscrossed the Mediterranean and increasingly focused on sole rulership rather than *polis* identity.[78]

This association between epinician and the dramatic spectacles of rulership creeps in as part of later accounts of Alexander the Great—likely, of course, influenced by the ongoing popularity of athletic competition in the Hellenistic period and in the Roman world.[79] Arrian is one of several authors who recounts a version of the story of Alexander's attack on Thebes, Pindar's purported birthplace. In Arrian's way of telling, Alexander spares not only Pindar's house but also his descendants (καὶ τοὺς ἀπογόνους τοῦ Πινδάρου λέγουσιν ὅτι διεφύλαξεν Ἀλέξανδρος αἰδοῖ τῇ Πινδάρου, "they say that Alexander guarded also the descendants of Pindar from respect for Pindar," *Anabasis* 1.9.10).[80] This is not the only time Pindar comes up in the *Anabasis*. When Alexander visits the tomb of Achilles, he praises Homer as a "herald of memory" (κήρυκος ἐς τὴν ἔπειτα μνήμην) and Arrian muses on the lack of poetry written about Alexander. In particular, he laments the lack of the kind of poetry "in which

[75] See Chapter 2.
[76] When Pindar's corpus was also edited and organized into books and genera by Alexandrian editors, whose reception of Pindar through the scholia had a significant impact on later conceptions of his poetics and function.
[77] And, of course, the fifth-century Greek world was a source of increasing interest and reception for poets, scholars, and hegemons in the Hellenistic kingdoms.
[78] Barbantini 2001, 78. Barbantini 2011 on kingship in Callimachus.
[79] For the Roman period, König 2005; Rutherford 2012, 101-4.
[80] See Instinsky 1961 on Pindar and Alexander; esp. citing Wilamowitz's conjecture that this is related to Pindar's ode for Alexander I (Dio Chrysostom 2.28-33). See also the *Vita Thomana* (Drachmann I, 5.11-16), Plutarch (*Life of Alexander* 11.6), Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 7.29), and the *Suda* (π 1619). On Pindar's house in Pausanias (9.25.3; Pindar's tomb in Thebes at 9.23.3) see also Rutherford 2012, 93.

Hieron, Gelon, Theron, and many others not at all comparable with Alexander" have been sung of (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν μέλει ᾖσθη Ἀλέξανδρος, ἐν ὅτῳ Ἱέρων τε καὶ Γέλων καὶ Θήρων καὶ πολλοὶ ἄλλοι οὐδέν τι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐπεοικότες, 1.12.2). This is an obvious reference to Pindaric epinician, which is represented here as a purely commemorative—no longer specifically athletic—genre that stands with Homer as a genre appropriate to the deeds of Alexander, whose territorial ambitions extended far beyond what a Hieron or Gelon ever aimed at. Whatever other associations epinician may have had in this period, the most salient for Arrian is its link with the famous tyrants of the fifth century and its involvement in the perpetuation of cultural memory. And much as Pindar situates himself in relation to the tyrants of Syracuse and Gela, Arrian links his own authorial exemplarity to the exemplarity of Alexander, whose individuality he stresses in contrast to the achievements of large armies or political subordinates (1.22.5).[81] For Arrian, μνήμη is critically preserved and shared ἐν μέλει. Just as Pindar's descendants are spared along with his (alleged) house, Alexander's appropriateness as a subject of song is due to his likeness to Pindar's Sicilian *laudandi*.[82]

[81] Lakin 2005 argues that Arrian uses Alexander as part of a project to assert Arrian's own Hellenic identity.

[82] Pindar's most prominent inheritor is of course Callimachus, whose epinicians for Ptolemaic rulers borrow deliberately from Pindaric odes. These date to the mid-third century and are definitively focused on the Ptolemaic court, as well as the boundaries of their empire. In contrast to the poems of Pindar and Bacchylides, what is extant of Callimachean epinician seems to lack the elements of genealogy and mythology that were so pervasive in the fifth century. Perhaps even more so than Pindaric poetry, however, it is significantly engaged in a discourse about imperial perspectives on geographic space, in a way that is importantly prefigured but not so fully developed in the fifth century. The Sidonian merchant ship of Callimachus fr. 384 hints at an outward-looking perspective that engages with the Mediterranean as both an economic and ideological space—a perspective that might be particularly appropriate to the interests of a Hellenistic imperial court. On Pindar and Callimachus see: Kampakoglou 2019, Phillips 2013, Fuhrer 1988, Richardson 1986, Newman 1985, Lord 1991, Smiley 1914, Trypanis 1958. His contemporaries Theocritus and Apollonius of Rhodes adapt epinician language and themes, in an environment of mixed genres and highly fictionalized contexts. Callimachus seems to have written his epinicians to be actually performed in celebration of the Ptolemies.

Interestingly, a singular reference to Pindar in Polybius hints at a potentially sustained afterlife for Pindar's critics. As part of his discussion of a Messenian debate over whether or not to proactively engage in hostilities, Polybius writes that an oligarchic faction (Οἶνις καὶ Νίκιππος καί τινες ἕτεροι τῶν ὀλιγαρχικῶν) prevailed over the majority (τῶν πολλῶν) in advocating delay. In Polybius's view, this is a significant mistake (ἀγνοοῦντες καὶ πολὺ παραπαίοντες τοῦ δέοντος, κατά γε τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην, "wherein they showed, to my thinking, great ignorance of their true interests," 4.31.2). He compares the situation of Thebes in the Persian Wars:

> ἐπεὶ τί καὶ θρασύνομεν τὴν ἰσηγορίαν καὶ παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ὄνομα πάντες, εἰ μηδὲν ἔσται προυργιαίτερον τῆς εἰρήνης; οὐδὲ γὰρ Θηβαίους ἐπαινοῦμεν κατὰ τὰ Μηδικά, διότι τῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀποστάντες κινδύνων τὰ Περσῶν εἵλοντο διὰ τὸν φόβον, οὐδὲ Πίνδαρον τὸν συναποφηνάμενον αὐτοῖς ἄγειν τὴν ἡσυχίαν διὰ τῶνδε τῶν ποιημάτων
>
> > τὸ κοινόν τις ἀστῶν ἐν εὐδίᾳ τιθεὶς ἐ ευνασάτων μεγαλάνορος ἡσυχίας τὸ φαιδρὸν φάος.[83]
>
> δόξας γὰρ παραυτίκα πιθανῶς εἰρηκέναι, μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ πάντων αἰσχίστην εὑρέθη καὶ βλαβερωτάτην πεποιημένος ἀπόφασιν.[84]
>
> For why do we all vaunt our civic equality and liberty of speech and all that we mean by the word freedom, if nothing is more advantageous than peace? We do not indeed praise the Thebans because at the time of the Persian invasion they deserted Greece in the hour of peril and took the side of the Persians from fear, nor do we praise Pindar for confirming them in their resolution to remain inactive by these verses: "Let any townsman who would put the public good in fair weather seek out proud Peace's shining light." For though at the time this advice seemed plausible it was not long before the decision he recommended proved to be the source of the deepest disaster and disgrace.

Polybius portrays Pindar as an active participant in a conversation that has ramifications for both historical action and political philosophy. His advice might have seemed conveniently validating to the Thebans in the moment, but it is not universally applicable: what seemed prudent at the time comes to be understood in hindsight as harmful and unethical. For Polybius, Pindar lands on the wrong side of history. The historian rejects the authority that

[83] = Pindar fr. 109.
[84] Polybius *Hist.* 4.31.5-7.

the poet attempts to claim, undermining the possibility of his words' enduring relevance. Given the context—criticism of the Messenian ephors—it is also easy to detect a possible association between Pindar and oligarchic power here, or at least an implied opposition between his perspective and the perspective of the majority. In the search for durable political principles, Pindar turns out to have advice that seems good in the moment, but ultimately leads to future disaster.

Like Classical Athenian authors in particular, Polybius not only critiques what Pindar says, but the formal efficacy of his poems in contemporary and future social environments—understanding Pindar to have composed not only for the present, but also for the future.[85] These writers questioned Pindar's influence and claims to authority, including potential claims to the ethical function of his poetry and, increasingly, its aspirations to monumentalization. Above all, they recognized the ideological flexibility of political rhetoric; how the image of the *demos* or *polloi* could be deployed for the interests of a few, antiquity used to justify the present, and ideas about peace or Hellenic unity come to stand for the subordination of some states to others. They saw epinician as a skillful tool for promoting various social and political interests as part of this kind of discourse.[86] The moments when Aristophanes prods at its inconsistencies, Polybius questions its ongoing value, or

[85] The *Against Alcibiades* also uses this same framework to criticize Alcibiades as a political leader: ἐγὼ δὲ νομίζω τὸν τοιοῦτον πονηρὸν εἶναι προστάτην, ὅστις τοῦ παρόντος χρόνου ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀλλὰ μὴ καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος προνοεῖται, καὶ τὰ ἥδιστα τῷ πλήθει, παραλιπὼν τὰ βέλτιστα, συμβουλεύει ("I consider this man a worthless statesman who cares for only the present without also thinking about the future, who advocates the things most pleasing to the people and leaves out the things that would be best," 4.12).

[86] This is basically the thrust of many arguments about Pindar's social function; see Morgan 2015 on the rhetoric of *basileia* for Sicilian tyrants, and Kurke 1991 on assimilation of *oikos* and *polis.* My question is if those strategies were pragmatically effective, and how they were perceived. As a side note, I think it is possible to interpret some of the "Panhellenism" of the Sicilian odes much like Isocrates' "Panhellenism" here—a political strategy rather than (or alongside) a bid for cultural legitimacy.

Xenophanes and Isocrates strive to flip the terms show the central importance of claims and counter-claims to sociopolitical definitions, and epinician's integral relationship to them.

This evidence, though scant, sets out a few of the problems that come to bear on an understanding of epinician as one form of commemorative practice. Though fragmentary, what we can begin to see in the late sixth and early fifth century is a discourse that is suspicious of athletic commemoration in the context of civic flourishing, and that couches its criticism in the language of the *demos* while likely being performed in a relatively private, perhaps relatively wealthy setting.[87] It also begins to address the problem of interstate interaction at the games and elsewhere, a problem that gains greater prominence and urgency in the political environments of the late fifth and early fourth century. By the early fourth century and into the Hellenistic period, the association of epinician with dynastic or individual hegemony was firmly established.

Before the fourth century, epinician had already come to be seen as decidedly outward-looking, negotiating power between states rather than primarily within the individual *polis*. By the Hellenistic age, the limited evidence we have suggests that the idea and practice of epinician, based on the memory of Pindaric poetry, works in concert with powerful regimes to amplify the reputational impact of victory at the major athletic festivals, which continue to play an important role throughout the Mediterranean world. By contrast, evidence about epinician cultural value in the late Classical period comes primarily from an Athenocentric perspective, and is focused in particular around the controversial and highly visible Alcibiades—an association that also conveniently finds material in Pindar's Sicilian odes. These developments broadly track, of course, some of the most historiographically visible political narratives in these periods. For authors like Isocrates and Polybius, epinician

[87] Clay 1999 points out that the symposium, while often thought of as small and private, could be performed on a much grander scale; Budelmann 2012 stresses the public nature of the *komos* versus the symposium.

not only reflects but actively participates in the construction of these narratives and, in fact, might even have an impact on historical events themselves. The epinician poet is a historical and social actor, a vigorous participant in the struggle over social, political, and cultural value that finds expression in fifth- and fourth-century textual production. Other authors' reactions to epinician, and to Pindaric epinician in particular, show how it participated in an elite discourse about social values and the place of the elite individual in embodying and perpetuating them. Tyrtaeus and Xenophanes object to the content of this epinician discourse, Isocrates to the form; Aristophanes shrewdly parodies the aetiological claims of Pindaric epinician to underscore the extent to which its invocation of origins and foundations is strategically constructed to support the valuation of epinician victors in their communities.

Leslie Kurke has argued that the central function of Pindaric epinician was to "re-integrate" the athletic victor not only back into his home *polis*, but also his household and his social class.[88] In this she follows Kevin Crotty, who argues that the athletic victor posed a potential threat to societal stability and that one of epinician's functions was to defuse this antisocial potentiality.[89] In this paradigm, epinician's chief contemporary value lay in how it "skillfully assimilated the interests" of "*oikos* and *polis*,"[90] since both are ideologically public spaces *vis-à-vis* the performance of the victory ode. In this way of reading, epinician's primary function is to maintain harmony and stability in political systems and to regulate the social relationships of elites to the broader community.[91] The central concerns of this paradigm are certainly reflected by the texts in this chapter. But their sophisticated and formal critiques of epinician, including a detailed discourse in the decades following Pindar's documented period of production, throws into question the extent to which this potential

[88] Kurke 1991, 6. See introduction, p. XX.
[89] Crotty 1982, 121.
[90] Kurke 1991, 6.
[91] As also set out by Lewis 2019, 9, following Kurke— "stabilizing and community-building."

epinician function was in fact achieved.[92] It also brings up the question of chronology. Do these readers in antiquity see a function in Pindar that was unintentional, or unimportant during his own period of composition? Or rather, can they point us to a different understanding of epinician, one which does engage these questions seriously even in the early fifth century?

There is a lack of extant meta-commentary about epinician in just Pindar's period of florescence, particularly between the end of the Persian Wars and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. This is a gap, however, that can be (cautiously) filled by Pindaric poetry itself. Whether synchronically or diachronically, these authors are in conversation with Pindar, and Pindar is also in conversation with them.[93] These texts reveal a landscape of contention, vying to define the terms of power in ways that are particularly salient to each author's own interests and contemporary contexts.[94] Ultimately, these authors engage epinician poetry in terms of its content, function, and form, with a particular awareness of its rhetorical force and ability to construct innovative narratives about aetiology and meaning for elites and *poleis*. By the Hellenistic period, this story of struggle for meaning starts to become subsumed into a narrative of continuous imperial power, consciously modeled on Pindar's own presentation of fifth-century hegemons. To understand where Pindar's later audiences

[92] Aloni 2012, 24: "[E]pinician can promote the idea of assimilating a victor to a hero, but it cannot sanction his status. Such sanction must come from the wider community, and in many contexts from the city. Furthermore, as we shall see, in situations of instability and tension epinician may itself become a further factor of instability, and may even become the cause of a crisis in the relationship between the victor and his city."

[93] Pindar's own sophisticated self-consciousness of later readers and audiences, particularly in terms of his potential textual reception, is explored in detail in Phillips 2016.

[94] Like epinician itself, all of the extant textual evidence discussed in this chapter represents what can fairly be called a discourse among the elite. It should be understood not as a representation of the full spectrum of political opinions that circulated in these places and periods, but an indication of the possible terms in which this discourse could be conducted by the relatively powerful, as well as a suggestion of the stakes that it had for them.

found resources for this kind of social ideology requires a close engagement with Pindaric epinician itself.

## Chapter Two:
## Inventing An Aristocracy

### I. Ability and vulnerability: the epinician body

Pindar's odes eventually came to stand for much more than just their engagement with athletic victory, as they capitalized on a conversation that already associated athletic commemoration with different forms of social value and sought to respond to an existing discourse of suspicion about the importance of athletic celebration within the *polis*. Within the odes themselves, this process of transition and association between the figure of the athlete and a broader moral discourse is constantly taking place. A central epinician argument is that elite athletic achievement is fundamentally associated with social, moral, and political value, which both picks up on a pre-Pindaric discourse and offers fodder for Pindar's later interlocutors. The odes' depictions of the athletic victor and his physical achievement serve as a critical ground for the construction of social value that they perform.

As the surface impetus for their composition, Pindar's epinician odes celebrate moments of elite men's extraordinary physical achievement. Throughout the odes, athletic victory is systematically correlated with victors' divine or mythical genealogy, the legitimacy of contemporary status and wealth for his victors and their families, moral worth, truth, and beauty, and the potential for enduring cultural memory through Pindar's own poetic activity. It has long been recognized that Pindar's genealogies lend both legitimacy and potential atemporality to his victors, their families, and their political regimes, particularly his tendency to locate victors' lines of descent in the heroic age and often attribute them divine ancestry.[1] Genealogy is critical to the odes' construction of aetiologies for families, places, and practices, lending both authority and timelessness as a way of projecting their persistence

[1] Currie 2005; Miller 2015 on *O.* 9.

into the future.[2] The trope of descent from heroes, gods, or founders (often combined in the same ancestor) helps to justify and naturalize athletic achievement and vice versa. And the location of stories about victors' ancestors in the distant past or the heroic age further disentangles them from their contemporary moment within the temporalities of the odes.

These functions of the odes rely on ideologies about the value and cultural meaning of the body and its achievements.[3] Pindar's representations of the body are often rhetorically submerged under metaphor, trope, and image. Unlike early examples of epinician, Pindaric odes tend to avoid lengthy descriptions of the athletic contest itself or too much specific physical description of the individual victor.[4] Instead, they rely on an often-implicit ideology of how the physical body—of the victor, the tyrant, the citizen, the mother—supports status and meaning. The body appears dimly, under the density of conventional images that resist interpretation in order to resist deconstruction. That is, the surface simplicity of these images belies the complexity of their construction, and the poem's active role in performing the association of status, youth, health, and elite heredity and inheritance.

In particular, the athletic body in Pindar is associated with conventional metaphors of youth and masculinity, weather and nature, landscape, and cultivation.[5] These metaphors often appear in brief in the odes. At *Olympian* 2.46-54, a son is described as the root of a

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[2] Essentially a typological relation between past and future, following Agócs 2020 here; Chapter 4 discusses this problem in greater detail.

[3] In this case, a body that is invariably gendered male. Emily Hauser has written of "the discourse of masculinity which pervades Pindar's poetry and which crosses between poet, chorus, audience, and the subjects of song," as the odes serve not only to reflect but to actively construct models of normative masculinity through their depictions of their elite victors (Hauser 2022). Hauser's focus is on the construction of a masculine speaking subject; other work has examined the athlete's body as a potential locus of the homoerotic gaze or heterosexual desire (see, e.g. Hubbard 2002). See Chapter 3 for the complementary concern in the odes with the female body, which equally serves as a ground for status anxieties and the naturalization of sociopolitical hierarchies.

[4] See Hadjimichael 2019, 363.

[5] See also Lewis 2019, introduction, on the importance of landscape in the odes and Steiner 1986, ch. 3, on natural metaphors for victors and poetry in Pindar.

plant; at *Olympian* 6.105, the epinicians song is characteristically described as an *anthos*; Olympian 3.24 and 3.31-2 describe the pre-Olympian desert of mythical landscape. There are many places, however, where these images—and the stakes of their representation—are elaborated in greater length and detail. In *Olympian* 9, the relationship between athletic achievement and physical security is expressed in an unusual metaphor:

> οἷον δ᾽ ἐν Μαραθῶνι συλαθεὶς ἀγενείων
> μένεν ἀγῶνα πρεσβυτέρων ἀμφ᾽ ἀργυρίδεσσιν·
> φῶτας δ᾽ ὀξυρεπεῖ δόλῳ
> ἀπτῶτι δαμάσσαις
> διήρχετο κύκλον ὅσσᾳ βοᾷ,
> ὡραῖος ἐὼν καὶ καλὸς κάλλιστά τε ῥέξαις.
>
> τὰ δὲ Παρρασίῳ στρατῷ
> θαυμαστὸς ἐὼν φάνη Ζηνὸς ἀμφὶ πανάγυριν Λυκαίου,
> καὶ ψυχρᾶν ὁπότ᾽ εὐδιανὸν φάρμακον αὐρᾶν
> Πελλάνᾳ φέρε· σύνδικος δ᾽ αὐτῷ Ἰολάου
> τύμβος εἰναλία τ᾽ Ἐλευσὶς ἀγλαΐαισιν.
> τὸ δὲ φυᾷ κράτιστον ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ διδακταῖς
> ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλέος
> ὥρουσαν ἀρέσθαι.
> ἄνευ δὲ θεοῦ, σεσιγάμενον
> οὐ σκαιότερον χρῆμ ἕκαστον· ἐντὶ γὰρ ἄλλαι
>
> ὁδῶν ὁδοὶ περαίτεραι,
> μία δ᾽ οὐχ ἅπαντας ἄμμε θρέψει
> μελέτα· σοφίαι μὲν
> αἰπειναί· τοῦτο δὲ προσφέρων ἆθλον,
> ὄρθιον ὦρυσαι θαρσέων,
> τόνδ᾽ ἀνέρα δαιμονίᾳ γεγάμεν
> εὔχειρα, δεξιόγυιον, ὁρῶντ᾽ ἀλκάν,
> Αἰάντειόν τ᾽ ἐν δαιτὶ Ἰλιάδα νικῶν ἐπεστεφάνωσε βωμόν.[6]
>
> And at Marathon, when he was barred from competing with the beardless youths,
> how he endured the contest for silver cups among the older men!
> Having subdued those men by the trick
> of quickly shifting balance without falling,
> with what a roar of applause did he pass through the ring,
> in his prime, and handsome, and having accomplished the finest deeds.
>
> Again, among the Parrhasian people
> he was marvelous to look at, at the festival of Lykaian Zeus,
> and he carried off as his prize a warm remedy against chilly winds
> at Pellana. The tomb of Iolaos bears witness for him,

[6] *O.* 9.89-113.

and also Eleusis by the sea, for his splendid achievements.
That which is inborn is always the best; but many men strive by training
to win glory with excellence.
But when a god takes part, each deed is no worse
for being left in silence; for some

roads lead farther than others,
and a single occupation will not nourish us all. The paths to skill
are steep; but, while offering this prize of song,
boldly shout aloud that
this man, through divinity, was born
with deftness of hand and litheness of limb, and with valor in his eyes;
and at the banquet of Aias son of Oileus he laid his victorious garland on the altar.

In this poem, athletic victory is metaphorically represented as a protection against the body's physical vulnerabilities. Epharmostos has acquired a *pharmakon* against the cold wind in the form of his athletic achievement, the victory analogized to a remedy for physical suffering.[7] The poem puts extensive weight, unusually even for an epinician ode, on Epharmostos' physical appearance and its reception in multiple communities across the Greek world. He is καλὸς κάλλιστά τε ῥέξαις ("handsome and having accomplished the best things"), his physical beauty equated with his pragmatic achievements. This aesthetic and practical value is also constituted through his being seen and approved by peers. He is surrounded by crowds in the wrestling ring and his appearance is focalized through the response of the Parrhasians, to whom he appears θαυμαστός. Despite this framework of social approval, however, the ode presents his physical qualities as congenital rather than acquired: his audiences seem to reaffirm the inborn qualities he already has. Epharmostos is born (γεγάμεν) with the athletic virtues that make his victory possible. He serves as a paradigmatic example of the importance of inborn ability, giving the poet impetus for a gnomic statement about the value of κλέος that stems from natural qualities rather than acquired skills.[8]

[7] Perhaps also a referent for Aristophanes' parody in the *Birds*.
[8] See Nicholson 2005 for an argument about how these epinician dynamics affect the portrayal of the victor versus the trainer in the odes.

Equally, *Olympian* 8 sees victory as both deeply familial and a metaphorical sign of physical health. The ode, for Alkimedon of Aigina in the boys' wrestling contest, is addressed more to his family members than it is to the victor himself:

> Τιμόσθενες, ὔμμε δ᾽ ἐκλάρωσεν πότμος
> Ζηνὶ γενεθλίῳ· ὃς σὲ μὲν Νεμέᾳ πρόφατον,
> Ἀλκιμέδοντα δὲ πὰρ Κρόνου λόφῳ
> θῆκεν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν.
> ἦν δ᾽ ἐσορᾶν καλός, ἔργῳ τ᾽ οὐ κατὰ εἶδος ἐλέγχων
> ἐξένεπε κρατέων πάλᾳ δολιχήρετμον Αἴγιναν πάτραν.[9]
>
> Timosthenes, fortune has allotted you both
> to the care of your ancestor Zeus, who made you renowned at Nemea,
> and made Alcimedon beside the hill of Cronus
> an Olympic victor.
> He was beautiful to look at, and his deeds did not belie his beauty
> when winning in wrestling he had Aigina
> with her long oars proclaimed as his fatherland.

This passage is directly addressed not to Alkimedon but to his brother Timosthenes. Their familial relationships are explicitly spelled out here, and immediately contextualized by their divine ancestry—which is also used to explain both brothers' achievements at Nemea and Olympia. Like Epharmostos, Alkimedon's physical appearance (εἶδος) is normatively congruent with his accomplishments (ἔργῳ), although the poem gestures to the possibility that they might potentially conflict. Pindar's negative presentation of this possibility is expressed in the language of the law court (ἐλέγχων), a space perhaps analogous to the intensively performative, agonistic social environments of the theater and the field of athletic competition. By alluding to the possibility that Alkimedon's appearance and accomplishments might conflict, Pindar suggests that to be *kalos kagathos* is a restricted, not a necessarily given, status. This congruence remains to be proven, both through the evidence of Alkimedon's family and ancestry and through the performance of Pindar's own ode.

[9] *O.* 8.15-20.

Some commentators have conjectured that Alkimedon and Timosthenes may have recently lost family members to disease, because of how the poem presents Alkimedon's victory for his extended family, the Blepsiads:[10]

> νῦν μὲν αὐτῷ γέρας Ἀλκιμέδων
> νίκαν τριακοστὰν ἑλών·
>
> ὃς τύχᾳ μὲν δαίμονος, ἀνορέας δ᾽ οὐκ ἀμπλακὼν
> ἐν τέτρασιν παίδων ἀπεθήκατο γυίοις
> νόστον ἔχθιστον καὶ ἀτιμοτέραν γλῶσσαν καὶ ἐπίκρυφον οἶμον,
> πατρὶ δὲ πατρὸς ἐνέπνευσεν μένος
> γήραος ἀντίπαλον.
> Ἄΐδα τοι λάθεται
> ἄρμενα πράξαις ἀνήρ.
>
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ χρὴ μναμοσύναν ἀνεγείροντα φράσαι
> χειρῶν ἄωτον Βλεψιάδαις ἐπίνικον,
> ἕκτος οἷς ἤδη στέφανος περίκειται φυλλοφόρων ἀπ᾽ ἀγώνων.
> ἔστι δὲ καί τι θανόντεσσιν μέρος
> κὰν νόμον ἐρδομένων·
> κατακρύπτει δ᾽ οὐ κόνις
> συγγόνων κεδνὰν χάριν.
>
> Ἑρμᾶ δὲ θυγατρὸς ἀκούσαις Ἰφίων
> Ἀγγελίας, ἐνέποι κεν Καλλιμάχῳ λιπαρὸν
> κόσμον Ὀλυμπίᾳ, ὅν σφι Ζεὺς γένει
> ὤπασεν. ἐσλὰ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐσλοῖς
> ἔργ᾽ ἐθέλοι δόμεν, ὀξείας δὲ νόσους ἀπαλάλκοι.
> εὔχομαι ἀμφὶ καλῶν μοίρᾳ Νέμεσιν διχόβουλον μὴ θέμεν·
> ἀλλ᾽ ἀπήμαντον ἄγων βίοτον
> αὐτούς τ᾽ ἀέξοι καὶ πόλιν.[11]
>
> Now it is his honor that Alkimedon
> Has won his thirtieth victory,
>
> who, with divine good fortune, yet without falling short in his own manliness,
> thrust off onto the four limbs of other boys
> a hateful homecoming with contemptuous talk and a secret way back,
> and breathed into his father's father
> the force that wrestles off old age. Hades is forgotten
> by a man with good accomplishments.
>
> But I must awaken memory and tell
> of the choicest victory of hands for the Blepsiads,

[10] See Samaras 2008 on the definition of *nemesis* and its relation to the Blepsiads in this poem.
[11] *O.* 8.65-88.

who are now crowned with their sixth garland
  from the contests flourishing with leaves.
Even the dead have a share
in rites performed according to law;
the dust does not cover
the good grace of their kinsmen.

Having heard the voice of Hermes' daughter,
Angelia, Iphion might tell Kallimakhos
of the splendid adornment at Olympia, which Zeus
gave to their family (*genei*).
May he be willing to grant
noble deeds upon noble deeds, and to ward off bitter diseases.
I pray that, for their share of fine things,
  Zeus may not cause the mind of Nemesis to waver;
rather, may he grant a painless life,
and give new growth to themselves and their city.

The agonistic environment described in this poem is unusually explicit for Pindar. Not only is Alkimedon a winner, but the four other boys have lost. The odes' language surrounding this loss is charged with the vocabulary of social conflict and shame. These four boys return to their home *polis* bitterly or hatefully (νόστον ἔχθιστον), whether this means feeling bitter towards Alkimedon or experiencing this bitterness from their own home communities. This bitter return is paired with *atimoteron* speech (ἀτιμοτέραν γλῶσσαν)—a capacious word with a rich possible range of meanings. Perhaps simply "dishonorable" on the surface, in the context of this *nostos* it also conjures the suggestion of political *atimia,* the deprivation of civic rights in a *polis* context. This threefold conceptual sequence is capped by the deeply Pindaric phrase ἐπίκρυφον οἶμον ("hidden path"). Unlike the straight paths of song, truth in speech, and victory that Pindar represents himself and his victors metaphorically (and sometimes literally) traveling upon, these four unsuccessful boys traverse a metaphorically murky road.[12] This image develops across the previous two: from the literal *nostos* to the discursive *glossa* to this predominantly metaphorical *oimos*, the ode depicts the defeated boys

[12] For an extended treatment of these social concepts as expressed in the "path of song" image in Pindar see Chapter 4, section II.

in a conceptual space of social hostility, discursive conflict and mistrust, and a lack of visibility that perhaps even suggests deception.

Back at home, Alkimedon's victory represents a nearly literal extension of life for his grandfather: πατρὶ δὲ πατρὸς ἐνέπνευσεν μένος / γήραος ἀντίπαλον ("into his father's father breathed the force / that wrestles off old age"). The word ἀντίπαλον tightly connects the idea of victory in the wrestling with victory against age and death; Alkimedon's *menos* compensates for his grandfather's ostensible physical weakness. Pindar's juxtaposition of memory and forgetting here also implicates the poet at the heart of this process. As the accomplished man forgets Hades (Ἀΐδα τοι λάθεται / ἄρμενα πράξαις ἀνήρ), the poet conjures up a living memory in the same way an Iliadic hero (or Olympic victor) "remembers" his own *menos* in the midst of competition. The image suggests that Akimedon not only lends *menos* to his family members but that his own physical *menos* is supported by his genealogical line, the ghosts conjured up by lines 76-78.

The dead men (θανόντεσσιν) in these lines are not fully gone, but still participatory and animated in the institutional setting of ritual performed according to *nomos*.[13] These ancestors might be buried, but the *kharis* of their relatives (συγγόνων) is continually renewable and present. Characteristically, Pindar articulates the visibility of this *kharis* negatively, in terms of what it is not—"covered over" or hidden (κατακρύπτει). This contrast between the hidden body, buried in the ground, and the visibility of living descendants and the attention that they pay to, perhaps, the gravesites of their ancestors, suggests that these ancestors, too, may remain socially visible—even socially alive—through their descendants. In this articulation, the victory is not only a promise about future memory but a physical re-animation of the ancestor's body, living now through the body of the living boy.

[13] See also Kurke 2016, 10-12 on the father's tomb in *Nemean* 10.

Finally, the poet prays (εὔχομαι) to Zeus to confirm the value of this victory with future success. The opposite of benefit (ἐσλὰ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐσλοῖς) is—metaphorically but also, perhaps, literally in this context—sickness (ὀξείας δὲ νόσους). The "painless" (ἀπήμαντον) life equated with "growth" (ἀέξοι, for both *polis* and family) shares in some of the conceptual force of this metaphor. The entire poem seeks to intertwine the success of the normative, healthy physical body with both the persistence of the ancestor whose body has failed and the future continuation of the family's memory. The moment of actual athletic victory is the key upon which this rhetorical intertwining of reality and metaphor turns.

## II. The limits of contingency

*Nemean* 6 was composed for Alkimides of Aigina, another winner of the boys' wrestling contest. Perhaps because both are examples of odes for adolescent victors, this poem, like *Olympian* 9, has an extended interest in heredity and kinship. It opens with a meditation on the broadest possible categories of relatedness:

> ἓν ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
> ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
> δύναμις, ὡς τὸ μὲν οὐδέν, ὁ δὲ χάλκεος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἕδος
> μένει οὐρανός. ἀλλά τι προσφέρομεν ἔμπαν ἢ μέγαν
> νόον ἤτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις,
> καίπερ ἐφαμερίαν οὐκ εἰδότες οὐδὲ μετὰ νύκτας ἄμμε πότμος
> οἷαν τιν᾽ ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν.[14]
>
> There is one race (*genos*) of men, one of gods; and from one mother
> we both draw our breath. Yet the allotment of a wholly different power divides us:
> so that the first is nothing, but for the gods the bronze sky remains a secure home
> forever. Nevertheless, we bear some resemblance, either in greatness
> of mind or in nature, to the immortals,
> although we do not know, by day or by night, towards what goal fortune
> has written that we should run.

This passage describes both the absolutism and contingency of human heredity on a cosmic scale. The first absolute division is between divinity and humanity, and it is defined by

[14] *N.* 6.1-7.

immortality and endurance (the sky that is ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἕδος for the gods) versus the potentiality of nothingness (τὸ μὲν οὐδέν).[15] It is possible for a person to share in some part of the nature of the gods, but this resemblance is both difficult to predict, and potentially ephemeral (ἐφαμερίαν) and volatile. This lack of ability to securely share in part of the gods' immortal nature is also implicated in the limits of human knowledge: *potmos* articulated in the image of an athletic contest.

When it comes to Alkimides himself, his victory serves as a kind of "proof," in the elenchic vocabulary of the poem, of his genealogy:

> τεκμαίρει καί νυν Ἀλκιμίδας τὸ συγγενὲς ἰδεῖν
> ἄγχι καρποφόροις ἀρούραισιν, αἵτ᾽ ἀμειβόμεναι
> τόκα μὲν ὦν βίον ἀνδράσιν ἐπηετανὸν πεδίων ἔδοσαν,
> τόκα δ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἀναπαυσάμεναι σθένος ἔμαρψαν. ἦλθέ τοι
> Νεμέας ἐξ ἐρατῶν ἀέθλων
> παῖς ἐναγώνιος, ὃς ταύταν μεθέπων Διόθεν αἶσαν νῦν πέφανται
> οὐκ ἄμμορος ἀμφὶ πάλᾳ κυναγέτας,
>
> ἴχνεσιν ἐν Πραξιδάμαντος ἐὸν πόδα νέμων
> πατροπάτορος ὁμαιμίου.[16]
>
> Even now Alkimidas gives visible proof that his hereditary qualities
> are like the fruitful fields, which, in alternation,
> at one time give men yearly sustenance from the plains,
> and at another time gather strength from repose. He has come
> from the lovely games of Nemea,
> the athletic boy who, pursuing this ordinance of Zeus, has shown
> that he not a fruitless hunter in the wrestling ring,
>
> by planting his step in the tracks
> of his grandfather, his blood-relative.

The expression of inherited excellence is neither unquestionably given nor sufficient without being demonstrated within and to a surrounding social community, here represented in the language of proof, test, and performance. At the same time, however, inheritance is not entirely contingent. The metaphor of the fertile and fallow fields suggests that heritage

[15] See also, famously, *P.* 8.95-6: τί δέ τις; τί δ᾽ οὔ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ / ἄνθρωπος ("What is someone? What is no one? Man is a dream of a shadow").
[16] *N.* 6.8-14.

remains a ground for status and value even when it might be unexpressed by the achievements of a specific generation; at the same time, however, this genealogical ground is not in itself sufficient to support the realization of achievement.[17] In other words, while an illustrious heritage is strongly associated with contemporary status claims, Pindar's victors must continue to actively demonstrate (with the poet's help) the qualities that their heritage allows them to lay claim to. Resolutely, however, this metaphor argues that their status is far from socially constructed. Even when the fields are fallow, their *bios* still remains; Alkimidas is represented as literally mimicking his grandfather, whose description in the poem (πατροπάτορος ὁμαιμίου) puts multiple layers of linguistic stress on the intensity of their blood relation.

In the proem of *Pythian* 6, the poem itself is figured as a monumental bulwark against the erosive forces of nature:

> ἀκούσατ᾽· ἦ γὰρ ἑλικώπιδος Ἀφροδίτας
> ἄρουραν ἢ Χαρίτων
> ἀναπολίζομεν, ὀμφαλὸν ἐριβρόμου
> χθονὸς ἐς νάϊον προσοιχόμενοι·
> Πυθιόνικος ἔνθ᾽ ὀλβίοισιν Ἐμμενίδαις
> ποταμίᾳ τ᾽ Ἀκράγαντι καὶ μὰν Ξενοκράτει
> ἑτοῖμος ὕμνων
> θησαυρὸς ἐν πολυχρύσῳ
> Ἀπολλωνίᾳ τετείχισται νάπᾳ·
>
> τὸν οὔτε χειμέριος ὄμβρος ἐπακτὸς ἐλθών,
> ἐριβρόμου νεφέλας
> στρατὸς ἀμείλιχος, οὔτ᾽ ἄνεμος ἐς μυχοὺς
> ἁλὸς ἄξοισι παμφόρῳ χεράδει
> τυπτόμενον. φάει δὲ πρόσωπον ἐν καθαρῷ
> πατρὶ τεῷ, Θρασύβουλε, κοινάν τε γενεᾷ

[17] In the same vein is *Olympian* 12.14-20: υἱὲ Φιλάνορος, ἤτοι καὶ τεά κεν, / ἐνδομάχας ἅτ᾽ ἀλέκτωρ, συγγόνῳ παρ᾽ ἑστίᾳ / ἀκλεὴς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε ποδῶν, / εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα Κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτρας. / νῦν δ᾽ Ὀλυμπία στεφανωσάμενος / καὶ δὶς ἐκ Πυθῶνος Ἰσθμοῖ τ᾽, Ἐργότελες, / θερμὰ Νυμφᾶν λουτρὰ βαστάζεις, ὁμιλέων παρ᾽ οἰκείαις ἀρούραις. ("Son of Philanor, truly, like a rooster that fights at home, even the fame of your swift feet would have shed its leaves ingloriously beside your native hearth, if hostile *stasis* had not deprived you of your Knossian fatherland. But as things are, Ergoteles, having been crowned with garlands at Olympia, and twice from Pytho, and at the Isthmus, you exalt the hot baths of the Nymphs, while keeping company with them beside your own fields").

λόγοισι θνατῶν
εὔδοξον ἅρματι νίκαν
Κρισαίαισιν ἐν πτυχαῖς ἀπαγγελεῖ.[18]

Listen! for again the field of dark-eyed Aphrodite,
or of the Graces,
we are ploughing, as we approach the sacred navel
of the loud-roaring earth;
where, for the prosperous Emmenids
and Akragas on the river, and especially for Xenokrates,
a Pythian victor's
treasure-house of songs
has been built and is ready in the glen of Apollo, rich in gold.

It is buffeted by neither the invading onset of winter rain,
the loud-roaring cloud's
pitiless army, nor the wind that sweeps
all kinds of rubble into the depths of the sea.
Its facade, shining in pure light,
will announce your chariot victory
to the speech of men and make it famous—
the victory you share with your father and your family (*genea*), Thrasyboulos,
won in the vales of Crisa.

In the invocation to the song's beginning (ἀκούσατ', "listen!") the ode also narrates an epichoric foundation. The metaphor of "plowing" (ἀναπολίζομεν) conjures both agricultural and reproductive associations, narrating a transition towards cultivated land and the importance of terrestrial fertility. The poem situates itself at the *omphalos*, a site of centrality and origination, which is also associated with the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. Piled on top of this agricultural metaphor is an architectural one.[19] An image of cultivating divinely-associated fields transitions into an image of human monumental craft, a *thesauros* situated within the context of a numinous landscape. The associations of the *thesauros* with wealth and craft are transferred to the glen of Apollo with the adjective *polukhruso,* linking divine landscape to human achievement in general but also specifically to song: this is a treasury of songs (ὕμνων). The ode encounters the *thesauros* at a particular moment in time. It has been

[18] *P.* 6.1-18.
[19] On the *thesauros* of *O.* 6, see Kurke and Neer 2019, ch. 7, Athanassaki 2012, Stamatopoulou 2014, and Kirichenko 2016.

built, in the perfect tense (τετείχισται) and is now "ready" or "realized" (ἑτοῖμος). The poem therefore situates the present moment as the culmination of past time, holding the promise of this past within its current form. The ode then stands on the precipice of a future promise, announcing in future tense (ἀπαγγελεῖ) the positive reputation (εὔδοξον) of Xenokrates' victory (νίκαν).

The protective effect of this metaphorical *thesauros* is in its material monumentalism, lyrically described by the ode. Tucked into its propitious glen, the treasury resists material degradation and decay. It is impervious to the winter rain (χειμέριος ὄμβρος) that appears in other Pindaric metaphors of danger and insecurity and the winds (ἄνεμος) and sea (ἁλός) that often represent changing and uncertain fates in the odes.[20] The language of *kherados* ("silt" or "rubble") being swept by the sea recalls *Iliad* 21.319, where the river Skamander threatens Achilles with burial under the river's sand and silt. In his speech, Skamander asserts that Achilles' strength and appearance (οὔτε βίην…οὔτέ τι εἶδος, *Il.* 21.316) will be meaningless against the strength of the two rivers. Instead of a future funeral mound (τυμβοχόης, *Il.* 21.322), visible and monumental to all, Achilles will be buried to such an extent that even his bones will be irrecoverable by the Achaians (*Il.* 21.318-21). *Olympian* 2's treasury, then, represents the opposite of this striking image, which threatens the memory of the man who is a paradigm of the pursuit of *kleos* in song. What Skamander promises Achilles—but of course, is ultimately unable to carry out—is the frightening foil to what Pindar's poem promises Xenokrates.

Amidst these images of preservation and monumentalism is another system within which the memory of Xenokrates will be protected from loss and decay: his family. Before the name of the victor himself, the poem invokes the Emmenids and their city, Akragas. When his victory is explicitly expressed, it does not belong to him alone. Its meaning is

[20] See Chapter 4 for some central examples.

shared with both his father, Thrasyboulos, and his wider family line (κοινάν τε γενεᾷ, 15). Like the *thesauros,* then, the legitimation of victory within a larger kinship network helps to stabilize and perpetuate its meaning.

*Olympian* 10 also offers a summary of the many-layered relationship between inheritance and achievement as it systematically appears in Pindar:

> θήξαις δέ κε φύντ᾽ ἀρετᾷ ποτὶ
> πελώριον ὁρμάσαι κλέος ἀνὴρ θεοῦ σὺν παλάμᾳ·
>
> ἄπονον δ᾽ ἔλαβον χάρμα παῦροί τινες,
> ἔργων πρὸ πάντων βιότῳ φάος.[21]
>
> By honing someone who is born for excellence,
> a man may encourage him to tremendous fame with the help of a god.
>
> Without toil few have attained joy,
> a light of life above all deeds.

There are three factors at work here, that both limit and enable achievement. One, inborn excellence (φύντ᾽ ἀρετᾷ). Next, the man (ἀνὴρ) who encourages the athlete towards *kleos*; and lastly, the god, who works in concert with human activity. The arrangement of these lines also suggests that is the first and last of these which bound the human activity in between. Inborn *arete* forms the ground, the guidance of *theos* the upper limit (in both a positive and a negative sense). The interconnections, and interactions, in the social world of men fill the space in between.

This poem also adds one more critical factor, which lives between the *aner* and *theos.* This is epinician song:

> χλιδῶσα δὲ μολπὰ πρὸς κάλαμον ἀντιάξει μελέων,
>
> τὰ παρ᾽ εὐκλέϊ Δίρκᾳ χρόνῳ μὲν φάνεν·
> ἀλλ᾽ ὥτε παῖς ἐξ ἀλόχου πατρί
> ποθεινὸς ἵκοντι νεότατος τὸ πάλιν ἤδη, μάλα δέ οἱ θερμαίνει φιλότατι νόον·
> ἐπεὶ πλοῦτος ὁ λαχὼν ποιμένα
> ἐπακτὸν ἀλλότριον,
> θνᾴσκοντι στυγερώτατος·

[21] *O.* 10.20-3.

καὶ ὅταν καλὰ ἔρξαις ἀοιδᾶς ἄτερ,
Ἀγησίδαμ᾽, εἰς Ἀΐδα σταθμὸν
ἀνὴρ ἵκηται, κενεὰ πνεύσαις ἔπορε μόχθῳ βραχύ τι τερπνόν. τὶν δ᾽ ἀδυεπής τε λύρα
γλυκύς τ᾽ αὐλὸς ἀναπάσσει χάριν·
τρέφοντι δ᾽ εὐρὺ κλέος
κόραι Πιερίδες Διός.

ἐγὼ δὲ συνεφαπτόμενος σπουδᾷ, κλυτὸν ἔθνος
Λοκρῶν ἀμφέπεσον μέλιτι
εὐάνορα πόλιν καταβρέχων· παῖδ᾽ ἐρατὸν δ᾽ Ἀρχεστράτου
αἴνησα, τὸν εἶδον κρατέοντα χερὸς ἀλκᾷ
βωμὸν παρ᾽ Ὀλύμπιον,
κεῖνον κατὰ χρόνον
ἰδέᾳ τε καλὸν
ὥρᾳ τε κεκραμένον, ἅ ποτε
ἀναιδέα Γανυμήδει μόρον ἄλαλκε σὺν Κυπρογενεῖ.[22]

Swelling music will answer the reed-pipe in songs

which have come to light beside famous Dirce, after a long time,
but like a long-desired child from the wife of a man
who has already reached the opposite of youth,
who fills his father's mind with the warmth of love;
since his wealth falling into the hands of a stranger
who is master of another home
is the most hateful thing to a dying man.

And, when a man with fine achievements but no songs
Hagesidamos, reaches the house of Hades,
he has spent his strength and his breath in vain
and gained only a short-lived delight with his effort.
But on you the soft-singing lyre
and the sweet flute scatter grace
and the Pierian daughters of Zeus
nurture your wide fame.

And I, earnestly lending my hand, have embraced the famous tribe
of the Locrians, showering with honey
their city of fine men. And I praised the lovely son of Archestratus,
whom I saw winning victory with the valor of his hands
beside the Olympic altar
at that time,
beautiful in form,
and blended with that youthful bloom which once
kept Ganymede from shameless death, with the help of Cyprian Aphrodite.

[22] *O.* 10.84-105.

This passage is not just about song, or epinician song, in general, but specifically about Pindar—these *melea* are "beside famous Dirke" (παρ᾽ εὐκλέϊ Δίρκᾳ), the spring associated with Thebes. But Pindar's song does not stand alone. Like his victors, his song exists in a kind of musical social milieu: the *molpa* answers (ἀντιάξει) the *kalamon,* performing a kind of recognition and conversation. This same antiphonal image is repeated later with reference to Hagesidamos and epinician performance: τὶν δ᾽ ἀδυεπής τε λύρα γλυκύς τ᾽ αὐλὸς ἀναπάσσει χάριν ("But on you the soft-singing lyre / and the sweet flute scatter grace). This song is not simply choral or communal—in fact, only Hagesidamos as an individual is mentioned—but it is socially conversational and reciprocal, between song and pipe and singer to victor.

*Olympian* 10's *molpa* is not only a child (παῖς), but one that has been specifically desired (ποθεινός) and who is born from a wife (ἐξ ἀλόχου). The song is a legitimate child, one whose role is to sustain the recognizable familial line of his father and to enable the inheritance of wealth. And this song-child comes at the moment of the father's perhaps most extreme physical fragility, as the poem constructs a binary between youth-age and mortality-immortality, placing the fortunate father here just on the brink of death in both a physical and genealogical sense. The metaphorical connection here between song and children is clearly articulated by the voice of the poet, at length, and without ambiguity. Rather than leave it up to the audience to interpret the metaphor, the poet specifically constructs our interpretation of the song-child comparison and then directly addresses Hagesidamos as the most immediate receiver of this interpretation.

When Pindar's *ego* turns his attention specifically to the Lokrians and their *polis*, the ode also confronts the normative body in its relationship to mortality, completing the contrast between the fragility of age and the resilience of youth. After narrating the critical fragility of the aging father on the brink, the ode makes a sharp contrast with the divinely-given youth

and literal immortality of the mythical Ganymede. Once again, victory, beauty (ἰδέᾳ τε καλόν), and both physical and metaphorical persistence are integrated into a conceptual whole. The odes' representation of normative physicality is a critical ground for the construction of status and genealogical persistence.

*Pythian* 3 has perhaps the most direct, and complex, relationship to the vulnerability of the physical body of any of Pindar's odes. Composed for Hieron of Syracuse not exactly on the occasion of a victory, the poem tells the story of the birth of Asklepios and his acquisition of medical skills from the centaur Chiron—as well as his ultimate hubris in attempting to raise the dead. It describes Asklepios' patients in terms of their bodies, and the specificity of their diseases:

> τοὺς μὲν ὧν, ὅσσοι μόλον αὐτοφύτων
> ἑλκέων ξυνάονες, ἢ πολιῷ χαλκῷ μέλη τετρωμένοι
> ἢ χερμάδι τηλεβόλῳ,
> ἢ θερινῷ πυρὶ περθόμενοι δέμας ἢ χειμῶνι, λύσαις ἄλλον ἀλλοίων ἀχέων
> ἔξαγεν, τοὺς μὲν μαλακαῖς ἐπαοιδαῖς ἀμφέπων,
> τοὺς δὲ προσανέα πίνοντας, ἢ γυίοις περάπτων πάντοθεν
> φάρμακα, τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς ἔστασεν ὀρθούς.
>
> ἀλλὰ κέρδει καὶ σοφία δέδεται.
> ἔτραπεν καὶ κεῖνον ἀγάνορι μισθῷ χρυσὸς ἐν χερσὶν φανεὶς
> ἄνδρ᾽ ἐκ θανάτου κομίσαι
> ἤδη ἁλωκότα.[23]
>
> And those who came to him
> afflicted with congenital sores, or with their limbs wounded by gray bronze
> or by a far-hurled stone,
> or with their bodies wasting away from summer's fire or winter's cold,
> he released and delivered all of them from their different pains,
> tending some of them with gentle incantations,
> others with soothing potions, or by wrapping remedies all around their limbs,
> and others he set right with surgery.
>
> But even skill is enthralled by the love of gain.
> Gold shining in his hand turned even that man, for a handsome price,
> to bring back from death a man
> who was already caught.

[23] *P.* 3.47-57.

As Brooke Holmes has argued, the relations between the physical, observable manifestations of disease and its hidden workings inside the body were a subject of significant medical and philosophical inquiry in this period.[24] This passage describes disease primarily in terms of the shape and suffering of the physical body. It begins, interestingly, with congenital (αὐτοφύτων) sores—a paradigmatic example of how the outer appearance of the body gives proof of something essential about its nature and birth. Asklepios' remedies, too, involve various approaches to the physicality of the body. His healing songs are *malakais,* and his healing drinks are *prosenes,* "soft" or gentle. His *pharmaka* wrap around the body, like a cloak that shields limbs from the cold. Lastly, he makes his patients *orthos* ("straight," "correct") through surgery (literally "cutting," *tomais*). It is only here that the suggestion of cutting into or disturbing the integrity of the body as a means of healing occurs.

This ending of the list of remedies with surgery leads into Asklepios' ultimate hubris, which is ultimately leads to his death at the hands of Zeus. He turns (ἔτραπεν) away from this path of making bodies straight, in exchange for payment. Medicine, then, has limits—not technical boundaries, but moral limits that are enforced by divine authorization. Effectively, this maps onto *Olympian* 10's description of acquired skill based on inborn ability. The acquisition of athletic (or medical) skill is bounded not by what men are capable of, but to the extent that a god determines it. This bounding regulation is mirrored by the original boundaries set by inherited physical potential. Divine favor and divine sanction, then, are paired with congenital limits and congenital abilities as two sides of the same coin.

Just as the vulnerability of the body may be particularly important to Hieron and the Deinomenids when *Pythian* 3 was composed, the emphasis on family relations in *Pythian* 6

[24] Holmes 2010.

seems to have particularly important to the Emmenids.[25] These odes for prominent Sicilian victors have been interpreted as employing different strategies to allay fears about tyranny and its potential dangers to the *polis*.[26] What tyranny actually means for Pindar, however, is both less specific to tyrants themselves and more integral to the overall function of the odes than taking potential social anxieties about tyranny at face value would suggest. Both the diversity of odes for Sicilian tyrants and their families and their similar preoccupations point to epinicians' larger concerns with heredity and political status *per se*, in every possible manifestation. The problems of tyranny in the fifth century are problems for all of Pindar's elite victors, and they are centered around anxieties about kinship, inheritance, and legitimacy.

## III. Heredity and hegemony

*Pythian* 11, for the boys' race winner Thrasydaios of Thebes, breaks off from narrating the tragedy of the house of Atreus to offer what looks like a normative statement about participation in sociopolitical life:

> τῶν γὰρ ἀνὰ πόλιν εὑρίσκων τὰ μέσα μακροτέρῳ
> ὄλβῳ τεθαλότα, μέμφομ᾽ αἶσαν τυραννίδων.[27]
>
> for within a city I find the middle estate flourishing with more enduring prosperity, and I censure the condition of tyrannies.

The meaning of these lines is difficult to parse. What does Pindar mean by τὰ μέσα*?*[28] By αἶσαν τυραννίδων*?* In what ways are they contrasted or related, and what does it mean to

[25] Heredity (see below) is also of course crucial for the Deinomenids, as is ethnic integration (see Thatcher 2012). See Cummins 2010 for the perspective that family is nevertheless subordinate to the victor in the odes for Emmenids.
[26] Morgan 2015.
[27] *P.* 11.51-2. Although they have leant impetus to many interpretations of the poem that seek to use anti-tyrannical messages to explicate the ode as a whole, tying into the hermeneutic problem of the relevance of the Oresteia myth to the victory of Thrasydaios. There are also a number of other issues in this ode, including Pindar's mention of payment and strange admission to have wandered off course. Bowra 1936, 132 calls *P.* 11 a "national Theban poem."
[28] In Archaic and Classical literature this use of the neuter plural substantive is most often used a description of physical location ("the middle of the *agora*"). In Theognis, three

censure or blame the lot of tyrants? Wilamowitz's strong biographical interpretation imagined a Pindar returning home to a hostile Thebes that disapproved of his compositions for the Deinomenids;[29] *Pythian* 11 thereby looks like an attempt to repudiate his support for the Sicilian tyrants and win back the favor of his countrymen.[30] A less historicist, but perhaps no less schematic, understanding of these lines emphasizes a potential contrast between "middling" and tyrannical and the importance of Pindar's expressed ideological commitment to the former.[31] The scholia give two possible dates for Thrasydaios' victory, 474 and 454 (neither of which should, of course, be taken as completely reliable). A date of 474 would land *Pythian* 11 directly in the Deinomenid period, a close contemporary of the major Sicilian odes; 454 would put its composition comfortably after the deaths of both Hieron and Theron. Any date for this poem, however, poses an open question of what tyranny means to the epinician odes.

*Pythian* 11.51-2 has been variously interpreted as a reference to class solidarity, political forms, moral degradation, and quality of life.[32] In terms of Pindaric poetics as a whole, it is tempting to want to slot this evidence into an overarching orientation towards tyranny as a political form or ethical problem. Some interpretations that seek to characterize epinician function holistically consider a primary goal of Pindar's odes as the mollification of fears of tyranny stemming from the wealth and accomplishment of the aristocratic victor.[33] On the other hand, this passage juxtaposed with Pindar's multiple odes for the Sicilian tyrants

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occurrences of *to meson* refer to moderation (495, 839) or perhaps, fairness (678); *mesa* at 335; *mesos* describing *politai*: Hdt. 1.107, Thuc. 6.54, Aristotle *Politics* 1289b31, 1295b3, 1296a19, 1295b37.

[29] Gildersleeve considers Thuc. 3.62 (speech of the Thebans) as context (relying on an earlier date for the ode).

[30] Wilamowitz 1922, 263.

[31] Kurke 1991, 214-218 for "the suspicion of tyrannical aspirations" (215). Compare Archilochus fr. 19 West and Solon fr. 33 West. Newman 1982 compares Pindar on tyranny in *P.* 11 to Solon.

[32] Finglass 2007, 117-118.

[33] See Kurke 1991, 215 and Nagy 1990, 187.

might lend credence to interpretations that instead emphasize the heterogeneity of approaches that Pindar takes in his poems, tailoring them to victors and audiences from differing political and ethnic backgrounds.[34]

The Sicilian odes, which make up nearly a third of Pindar's extant epinician production, offer tempting possibilities for interpretation. Their interconnection points to a possible systematicity in the programmatics of epinician, and the patronage of the Deinomenid tyrants, combined with robust archaeological evidence from fifth-century Sicily, allows more secure and detailed interpretations of the poems in connection with contemporary political regimes. What is more, *poleis* in Western Greece are usually thought of as having particularly unstable political and cultural identities in this period.[35] Perhaps epinician, along with other forms of victory commemoration, helped them to compete in a process of identity formation aimed at the "home" communities of mainland Greece as well as other Western Greek states.[36] For these reasons, the Sicilian odes have been key in understanding Pindar's approach to political geography and rhetoric.

However, it is perhaps not an accident that of the six odes Wilamowitz declared "im eigentlichen Sinne gar kein Epinikion,"[37] all are for Sicilian victors. While this kind of categorization has been challenged as part of a larger reassessment of the multiformity inherent in epinician,[38] some of the formal characteristics of these poems do set them apart from the majority of Pindar's odes. There are the "epistolary" *Pythian 1, Olympian 2*, and *Isthmian* 2,[39] the direct second-person address of the odes for Hieron and Theron (in this

[34] Kurke 1991, 261: "Pindar is a master of practical logic, responding to the growing heterogeneity of his audience by deploying a multiplicity of models."
[35] Lomas 2006.
[36] See Lewis 2019, ch. 1-3, and Epstein 2021 for the "spatial orientation" of Sicilian odes towards the Peloponnese.
[37] Wilamowitz 1922, 139, on *Pythian* 6. Also included are *P.* 1, *P.* 2, *P.* 3, *I. 2, O. 2*.
[38] Young 1983, 31 n.3 for references.
[39] Treated by Strauss Clay 1999. Köhnken 1970 reassesses *O.* 1.

case, I would also argue for the inclusion of *Pythian* 12, another Sicilian ode, which likewise features a direct second-person address to the victor)[40] and the possibly "consolatory" *Pythian 3*.[41] These odes range across several decades of Pindar's career. They are composed primarily for victories in the Olympian and Pythian games, particularly the chariot races which were perhaps the most expensive and prestigious event at this point in the history of the stephanitic games.

Because of Pindar's multiple odes for Hieron, Theron, and members of the Deinomenid circle, the problem of tyranny looms large in studies of the Sicilian odes. Some scholars interpret Pindaric epinician as something like a nuanced form of public relations for the Deinomenid tyrants during decades of frequent regime change and local conflict. In a time of political upheaval and (Athenocentric) questions about the forms of autocratic government, Pindar has been seen as a proactive force in defining the personae of Hieron of Syracuse and Theron of Akragas, portraying these *tyrannoi* as just and virtuous *basileis*.[42] While acknowledging the overlapping ideologies of different forms of political organization in the Archaic and Classical periods, Rosalind Thomas nevertheless suggests that it is particularly tyranny, as a specific manifestation of athletic power, which is primarily at issue in Pindaric epinician.[43]

What is important here, however, is to stress that the definitions of these terms were not given to Pindar but instead actively in flux, and construction, during the fifth century. A paradigm that contrasts good kingship and bad tyranny in the fifth century is at least partly

[40] This second-person address is also what Smith 2009 picks up on (perhaps too heavily) in his comparison of the epinician Plutarch reports for Alcibiades with Pindar's Sicilian odes for Hieron and Theron.
[41] See conclusion for more on this.
[42] Most prominently, this interpretation is systematically advanced in Morgan 2015. See also Thomas 2007, 143-44; Harrell 2006 and 2002.
[43] Thomas 2007, 143.

retrojected from Plato and Aristotle, writing in the fourth.[44] It is largely later Classical sources who portray tyranny as the consequence of allowing aristocratic power to get out of hand.[45] In addition, assessments of tyranny as a political concept in this period can be easily skewed by an overemphasis on the Athenian context and the ideological legacy of the Peisistratid tyranny and the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton.[46] In the literature and political thought of Classical Athens, a rhetorical opposition between democracy and tyranny could be highly generative—but the rhetoric cut both ways. Athenian democracy, particularly as Athens developed its hegemony in the Aegean, could be characterized as tyrannical, in both positive and negative ways.[47] What is perhaps most useful about "tyranny" as a lens through which to view some of the political work being done by epinician is precisely this conceptual flexibility, and, as the fifth century went on, the potential ideological charge it accrued for later readers (particularly Athenian ones).[48] The question of whether to label an

[44] See Stewart 2021 on tyranny in Plato and Aristotle; Cawkwell 1995 on Aristotle; Mitchell 2013 argues for a largely rhetorical difference between these terms in the Archaic and Classical period, and the productivity of analyzing them under the larger umbrella of "rulership" or "family-based rule." See particularly Luraghi 1994 for criticism of later sources on fifth-century tyranny and approach to the fifth century evidence on its own terms.
[45] On this narrative of tyranny: Anderson 2005, Rhodes 2019. One approach to both "the reality and the language of tyranny" in the fifth century, and analysis of the consequences of later Classical receptions, is McGlew 2018 (p. 4; he describes his approach to tyranny as "a political phenomenon with a distinctive discursive character," 8).
[46] Raaflaub 2003; Anderson 2005. Teegarden 2013 on (possible) perceptions of tyranny in the Athenian democratic context; he argues for close connection between maintenance of democracy and depictions of tyrannicide.
[47] Rhodes 2019, 423-4. Perhaps interesting that more positive associations often have to do with monumental architecture and aesthetic production: "Alternatively, the Athenian demos could itself be viewed as like a tyrant, positively, for erecting great buildings and acting as a patron of arts and crafts as tyrants did, or negatively, by opponents of democracy, for preventing great men from living as otherwise they might, as Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* complains" (424). See Luraghi 2018 for the ambiguity of tyranny in Classical Athens—interestingly, he argues for a focus on individual persona of ruler rather than a systematic description of a political regime.
[48] See Chapter 1. The flexibility of this discourse almost definitely predates Pindar; the terms of social value at issue in Chapter 1 are already established in, for example, Solon, Theognis, and Hesiod, although they are equally debated in the scholarship. Irwin 2005 argues that "Solon exploits the language of tyranny while seeming explicitly to reject it" (243). Park 1998 suggests, however, that tyranny acquired a negative valence in late fifth-century Athens.

individual or regime "tyrannical" becomes essentially a question of whether the regime is legitimate or not in the eyes of the speaker, not whether it appreciably differs from other forms of sole rulership. Depending on the tradition, the tyrant might be anywhere on the spectrum from presumptuous outsider to a member of the internal elite who seizes too much power. The variation has more to say about how later writers were thinking through contemporary political problems than the actual causes of Archaic tyrannies.[49]

Simon Hornblower and Catherine Morgan have suggested that the legacy of Greek *apoikia,* rather than a tension with tyranny and an aspiration to Panhellenism, may more accurately describe the functions of epinician poetry.[50] Foundation myths are central to the odes, and many describe the journey of mythical or "historical" founders from a home *polis* to the new city. Pindar's association of apoikic stories with a particular *polis* often have little to do with what other sources tell us about the foundation of a particular place.[51] In this paradigm, the *polis* and the victory's identity within it takes prominence, along with the relations between *poleis* historically, ideologically, and in terms of actual elite interaction. Both of these paradigms may suggest more promising resources than democratic-aristocratic conflict for understanding Pindaric epinician's self-conception and management of its own interpretative potential. Neither, however, need be a complete answer in itself, nor need an answer be sought under the auspices of one framework alone. Recent work on the Sicilian odes has offered significant evidence that the question of sole rulership and its perception, proper form, and possibility of endurance was active for Pindar and a place where the epinician odes may appreciably differ from contemporaneous forms of victory celebration

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McGlew 2018 calls the tyrant "a progenitor of a political vocabulary that anticipates classical conceptions of sovereignty" (9).

[49] See e.g. Osborne 1996, 192-7.

[50] Hornblower and Morgan 2007; note too that Figueira 2015 suggests *apoikia* could be a way of achieving elite status (for oikists); Dougherty 1993, ch. 4 suggests that marriage and colonization are mutually supporting metaphors; Malkin 1987; Athanassaki 2011.

[51] Hornblower and Morgan 2007, 12.

like victory inscriptions and statue dedications.[52] Although it is important to stress the substantial number of Pindaric odes not written for tyrannical victors, the Sicilian odes are interestingly overrepresented both in the extant Pindaric corpus and in scholarship on the literary dimensions of Pindaric poetics. The conversation about association with the Sicilian tyranny is also the one in which Pindaric poetry figures most prominently in the scant evidence we have from the mid- to late Classical period about the reception and evaluation of epinician poetry and athletic victory.[53]

It may be more fruitful to think about what a discourse surrounding tyranny represents than being too focused on the definition or evaluation of "tyranny" *per se,* in the same way that thinking about the social concepts and problems activated by *apoikia* may be more useful than calling epinician an apoikic genre.[54] The conceptual field of Deinomenid tyranny and Western Greek *apoikia* encompasses the foundation or accumulation of individual political power, the salience of kinship relations (including as a metonym for ethnic and political relations between individuals and *poleis*),[55] and aetiologies of indigeneity, genealogy, and place. These are critical issues for every one of Pindar's victors, regardless of their familial or geographic origin.

A revealing passage of Xenophon's *Hiero* offers some clues about the potential use of the epinician poet to the tyrant. The character of Hieron argues that tyrants are worse off than *idiotai* because it is too dangerous for them to travel away from their cities:

οἱ δὲ τύραννοι οὐ μάλα ἀμφὶ θεωρίας ἔχουσιν. οὔτε γὰρ ἰέναι αὐτοῖς ἀσφαλὲς ὅπου μὴ κρείττονες τῶν παρόντων μέλλουσιν ἔσεσθαι, οὔτε τὰ οἴκοι κέκτηνται ἐχυρά, ὥστε ἄλλοις παρακαταθεμένους ἀποδημεῖν. φοβερὸν γὰρ μὴ ἅμα τε στερηθῶσι τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἀδύνατοι γένωνται τιμωρήσασθαι τοὺς ἀδικήσαντας. εἴποις οὖν ἂν ἴσως σύ, ἀλλ᾽ ἄρα ἔρχεται αὐτοῖς τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ οἴκοι μένουσι. ναὶ μὰ Δία, ὦ Σιμωνίδη, ὀλίγα γε τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ταῦτα τοιαῦτα

[52] Morgan 2015; Harrell 2002; see also Nobili 2021.
[53] See Chapter 1, section III and IV.
[54] As Hornblower and Morgan 2007, 10-19.
[55] Often, of course, tyranny can be defined in opposition to kingship because it is non-hereditary. In practice, fifth-century tyrannies usually aspired to heredity, and this certainly applies to the Deinomenids.

ὄντα οὕτω τίμια πωλεῖται τοῖς τυράννοις ὥστε οἱ ἐπιδεικνύμενοι καὶ ὁτιοῦν ἀξιοῦσι πολλαπλάσια λαβόντες ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ ἀπιέναι παρὰ τοῦ τυράννου ἢ ὅσα ἐν παντὶ τῷ βίῳ παρὰ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων κτῶνται.[56]

But tyrants are not at all concerned with *theoria*. For it is risky for them to go where they will be no stronger than the crowd, and their property at home is too insecure to be left in charge of others while they are abroad. For they fear to lose their throne, and at the same time to be unable to take vengeance on the authors of the wrong. Perhaps you may say: `But, after all, such spectacles come to them even if they stay at home.' No, no, Simonides, only one in a hundred such; and what there are of them are offered to despots at a price so exorbitant that showmen who exhibit some trifle expect to leave the court in an hour with far more money than they get from all the rest of the world in a lifetime.

Later in the dialogue, Hieron also describes the dangers that lurk for tyrants at home, so that they cannot share in the triumph of victory over other states or feel secure around their subjects (2.3-18). They must maintain a constant bodyguard (4.9) and often trust foreigners more than their own citizens (5.6), since they live under the constant shadow of insurrection, deposition, or bodily harm.[57] Roberta Sevieri has argued that Xenophon's deployment of Simonides as Hieron's interlocutor in this dialogue is meant to invoke the figure of the epinician poet, and the text is meant to reflect (what Xenophanes at least perceives as) epinician strategies and values.[58] Laura Chason Takakjy takes this a step farther, calling it "in part an indictment of the core values associated with epinician poetry. Xenophon's work questions the assumption that the consumption and display of song does good."[59] The *Hiero* has also been repeatedly implicated as part of a Classical moral discourse about forms of government, by wrestling with the figure of the "good tyrant" as well as the ethical questions about the place of the poet-philosopher in the halls of power.[60]

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[56] Xen. *Hiero* 1.12-13.
[57] 5.6: ἔτι δὲ ξένοις μὲν μᾶλλον ἢ πολίταις πιστεύειν, βαρβάροις δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ Ἕλλησιν, ἐπιθυμεῖν δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἐλευθέρους δούλους ἔχειν, τοὺς δὲ δούλους ἀναγκάζεσθαι ποιεῖν ἐλευθέρους, οὐ πάντα σοι ταῦτα δοκεῖ ψυχῆς ὑπὸ φόβων καταπεπληγμένης τεκμήρια εἶναι; ("And then, to trust foreigners more than citizens, strangers more than Greeks, to long to keep free men slaves, and yet be forced to make slaves free—do you not think that all these are proof of a soul that is crushed by fears?").
[58] Sevieri 2004.
[59] Takakjy 2017, 52.
[60] Gray 1986; Jordović 2011 and 2020; Strauss 1948, in the political-theoretical sense.

Whether or not Xenophon meant to invoke epinician poetry specifically, this dialogue offers striking interpretative possibilities for Pindar's self-representation as a composer of epinician.[61] It is hard not to detect an echo of Pindaric criticism here, if Pindar did compose the Sicilian odes for performance in Syracuse and the other Deinomenid strongholds. What is more, however, the epinician poet in Pindar's odes is often characterized by his ability to travel, literally or fictionally, in combination with his close relationship to his tyrannical patrons.[62] Xenophon vividly describes the constant threats that the status of tyrants faced, not only in terms of political power but in terms of bodily security and physical safety. Perhaps epinician odes could come to partially stand in for the tyrant himself as they traveled abroad, if they were intended for performance or reperformance outside of the victor's *polis*.

More than this, however, epinician here begins to look like another tool in the tyrant's pocket, the equivalent of a sociocultural bodyguard.[63] Simonides' character in the dialogue exemplifies the vacillation between vaunting praise and moral caution that so often accompanies Pindar's addresses to his tyrannical patrons. This moral rhetoric, however, conceals a more pragmatic function. It is another way of managing and legitimizing the unstable status of the tyrant, which encompasses a double threat: not only of oppression to citizens, but the threat of citizens to the tyrant himself, whose status is determined by equality with other hegemons, the security of his bloodlines and physical body, and dominance over his subjects.[64] The genre of "advice to tyrants" is a fundamentally internal critique, one that

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[61] Chiampa 2021 somewhat speculatively compares the experience of Pindar and Xenophanes as visitors to Hieron's court.
[62] See Chapter 4.
[63] Parks 2018 makes this argument about the figure of Simonides in this text.
[64] Crane 1996 argues that a "contest for legitimacy" surrounds the epinician tyrant. Xenophon actually makes this argument through the figure of the athlete: εἰ δὲ σὺ οἴει ὡς πλείω ἔχων τῶν ἰδιωτῶν κτήματα ὁ τύραννος διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πλείω ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν εὐφραίνεται, οὐδὲ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, ὦ Σιμωνίδη, ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ οἱ ἀθληταὶ οὐχ ὅταν ἰδιωτῶν γένωνται κρείττονες, τοῦτ᾽ αὐτοὺς εὐφραίνει, ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν ἥττους, τοῦτ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἀνιᾷ, οὕτω καὶ ὁ τύραννος οὐχ ὅταν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν πλείω φαίνηται ἔχων, τότ᾽ εὐφραίνεται, ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν ἑτέρων τυράννων ἐλάττω ἔχῃ, τούτῳ λυπεῖται: τούτους γὰρ ἀνταγωνιστὰς ἡγεῖται αὑτῷ τοῦ πλούτου

trades in the ideological currency of the system even as it affects to stand outside of it. In helping to incorporate this so-called critique into the very medium that supports the status of the tyrant, Pindar also deflects the disruptive potential of non-elite perspectives on the sociopolitical system itself.[65] Within the rhetoric of aphorism and *gnome*, the pragmatic effects of political hegemony are made abstract and morally generalized.

The role of heredity in securing political power might seem most urgent in a monarchical or dynastically oligarchic system, but in fact every form of political organization in the *poleis* for which Pindar composed was in some way based around constructions of kinship, relation, and descent. Elites also negotiated social status—not only juridical or citizenship status—through actively constructing relations of mythical and ethnic genealogy, contemporary kinship, and *xenia*. While this landscape of status-making forms a broad backdrop for Pindar's odes, there are also specific reasons why establishing the meaning of heredity might be particularly urgent for some of Pindar's most prominent victors. While some Pindaric families—the Battiads in Cyrene, for example—might have a relatively more credible claim to inherited political power, this was not the case for the tyrants of Sicily.

For fifth-century tyranny, heredity is urgent in part because tyranny's dynastic attributes were generally novel, rather than based on an existing, documentable line of descent.[66] The Deinomenid Gelon and the Emmenid Theron, though not originally related by blood, became related by marriage when Gelon married Theron's daughter Damarete. On Gelon's death, his rule of Syracuse was passed to his brother, Hieron; their third brother, Thrasyboulos, was the

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εἶναι ("If you suppose that just because he has more possessions than the private citizen, the tyrant gets more enjoyment out of them, this is not so either, Simonides. Trained athletes feel no pleasure when they prove superior to amateurs, but it hurts them when they are beaten by a rival athlete; likewise the tyrant feels no pleasure when he is seen to possess more than private citizens, but is grieved when he has less than other tyrants; for he regards them as his rivals in wealth," 4.6).

[65] Despite New Historicist attempts to recover it, such a response is, of course, only theoretical given the evidentiary limitations.

[66] Not to imply a contrast with genuine hereditary monarchies—for which evidence is thin.

last, briefest sole ruler of the city before the end of Deinomenid rule in 466 or 465.[67] Like most of Pindar's epinicians, the Sicilian odes deal in tropes of both genealogy and inheritance, the two pillars of heredity that Alain Duplouy has called "retrospective" and "prospective" strategies: "on the one hand genealogical behaviour which uses the family past to influence present social structure, and on the other hand dynastic behaviour which tries to project present status into the future and to ensure its continuity."[68] Both are central to Pindar's project. As the next chapter shows at greater length, they are also deeply concerned with child-bearing and reproduction—of the family, of the victory, of status into the future.

In the odes for Sicilian tyrants, genealogy, marriage, and childbearing are very much at issue. *Olympian 2* alludes to Oedipus' murder of Laius right before recounting Theron's ostensibly Sicilian ancestors; interestingly, it uses the language of birth to describe the relationship between Theron and Akragas:

> αὐδάσομαι ἐνόρκιον λόγον ἀλαθεῖ νόῳ
> τεκεῖν μή τιν᾽ ἑκατόν γε ἐτέων πόλιν φίλοις ἄνδρα μᾶλλον
> εὐεργέταν πραπίσιν ἀφθονέστερόν τε χέρα
> Θήρωνος.[69]
>
> I will dare to speak with true intent a word sworn by oath:
> no city for a hundred years has given birth to a man more
> beneficent in his mind or more generous with his hand
> than Theron.

A genealogical narrative is being established here, not simply recounted. This is an active attempt to argue for the retrospective legitimacy of the Deinomenids, who were simultaneously making marriage- and family-based arrangements to hold onto power in the future. Likewise, *Olympian* 1 revolves around Pelops' plea for the hand of Hippodameia, in the midst of alluding to the ruptures of kinship relations represented by his father's

[67] Dates originally from Diodorus 11.38.7, 11.86.6 and Aristotle *Pol.* 1315b34-38.
[68] Duplouy 2015, 63.
[69] *O.* 2.91-95.

cannibalism, as well as multiple juxtapositions between mortals and the immortal gods.[70] In *Pythian* 3, Koronis' pregnancy outside of the bounds of marriage sanctioned by the male members of her family is analogized to the hubris of Asklepios raising the dead, which sets the stage for the central concerns of the ode as a whole.[71]

The importance of kinship to status, membership, and legitimacy is not limited to oligarchy and sole rulership, as well. Every form of sociopolitical organization in which Pindar's victors participated implicated kinship, at some level, as a criterion of status and political power. Nearly every one of Pindar's odes includes information about the family of the victor, and beyond the Deinomenids he composed for non-tyrannical family groupings like those of his Aiginetan victors. Familial connections are so important to Pindar that he sometimes offers us the only (innovative?) version of a genealogical relationship, or portrays multiple ones.[72] Kinship and genealogy served as some of the most powerful tools for status-making in the ancient world, whether legislated as part of laws on citizenship, deployed rhetorically in political metaphor, or actually performed through practices from kin marriage and exogamy to the Athenian *dokimasia*.[73] Their particular ability to simultaneously signify the material and conceptual in a discourse of identity supports their actual role in establishing elite, citizen, ethnic, and similar statuses in a juridical as well as sociosymbolic sense.

One clear illustration of the conjunction of these potentialities is *Nemean* 11. Composed not for a specific athletic victory but for Aristagoras' ascension to the political office of *prytanis* in his home of Tenedos, the ode nevertheless takes pains to connect Aristagoras' athletic prowess with his achievement of civic office—even to the extent of its central counterfactual:

ἐλπίδες δ' ὀκνηρότεραι γονέων παιδὸς βίαν

[70] Pitotto 2021 reads *Olympian* 1 in the context of Deinomenid fragility.
[71] See Chapter 4 for an extensive analysis.
[72] Miller 2015 on innovation in *O.* 9.
[73] See, for example, Kasimis 2018 and Lape 2010 on these dynamics.

ἔσχον ἐν Πυθῶνι πειρᾶσθαι καὶ Ὀλυμπίᾳ ἄθλων.
ναὶ μὰ γὰρ ὅρκον, ἐμὰν δόξαν παρὰ Κασταλίᾳ
καὶ παρ᾽ εὐδένδρῳ μολὼν ὄχθῳ Κρόνου
κάλλιον ἂν δηριώντων ἐνόστησ᾽ ἀντιπάλων,
πενταετηρίδ᾽ ἑορτὰν Ἡρακλέος τέθμιον
κωμάσαις ἀνδησάμενός τε κόμαν ἐν πορφυρέοις
ἔρνεσιν.[74]

But his parents' overly cautious expectations kept their
strong son from competing in the games at Pytho and Olympia.
For I swear that, in my judgment, had he gone to Kastalia
and to the well-wooded hill of Kronos,
he would have had a more noble homecoming than his wrestling opponents,
after celebrating the four-year festival ordained by Heracles
with a victory revel and binding his hair in gleaming
wreaths.

Both athletic achievement and political power are naturalized to such an extent here that it is possible to conjecture the pinnacle of athletic success from Aristagoras' assumption of the prytany, rather than derive a directional causality between, for example, his (theoretical) stephanitic victories and his later prytany.[75] It is not so much that either the political office is assimilated to athletic achievement here or the other way around. Both are recognizable determinants of status in a system of value that grounds legitimacy in the body through its birth, descent, performance, and appearance. Aristagoras' genealogy, an important part of the ode, is not only illustrious but both mobile and mythical:

συμβαλεῖν μὰν εὐμαρὲς ἦν τό τε Πεισάνδρου πάλαι
αἶμ᾽ ἀπὸ Σπάρτας· Ἀμύκλαθεν γὰρ ἔβα σὺν Ὀρέστᾳ,
Αἰολέων στρατιὰν χαλκεντέα δεῦρ᾽ ἀνάγων·
καὶ παρ᾽ Ἰσμηνοῦ ῥοὰν κεκραμένον
ἐκ Μελανίπποιο μάτρωος.[76]

It was easy indeed to infer the bloodline of ancient
Pisandros from Sparta—he came here with Orestes from Amyklai
leading a bronze-clad army of Aeolians—
and from the streams of the Ismenus its blending
with that from Melanippos, his mother's ancestor.

[74] *N.* 11.*22*-29.
[75] Interestingly, the ode even specifies the prytany is a year-long office, so it explicitly shares some of the ephemerality of a victory.
[76] *N.* 11.33-37.

Aristagoras' real achievements may be epichoric rather than stephanitic—and the ode puts repeated emphasis on this—but his blood is distinguished not just by an aetiological indigeneity but also by mythical hybridity, linking him to both the origin of Tenedos itself and a broader network of Greek elites.

How might we read this counterfactual history as part of epinician's ideological system?[77] In fact, *Nemean* 11 puts extra stress on the contingency of heredity:[78]

> ἄρχαιαι δ᾽ἀρεταί
> ἀμφέροντ᾽ ἀλλασσόμεναι γενεᾶς ἀνδρῶν σθένος·
> ἐν σχερῷ δ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ὦν μέλαιναι καρπὸν ἔδωκαν ἄρουραι,
> δένδρεά τ᾽ οὐκ ἐθέλει πάσαις ἐτέων περόδοις
> ἄνθος εὐῶδες φέρειν πλούτῳ ἴσον,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἀμείβοντι. καὶ θνατὸν οὕτως ἔθνος ἄγει
> μοῖρα.[79]
>
> Ancient talents (*aretai*)
> produce their strength in alternating generations of men;
> for neither do the dark fields yield continual crops,
> nor in all the circling years are trees wont
> to bear fragrant blossoms of equal worth,
> but in alternation. In the same way fate leads our mortal
> race (*ethnos*).

The ode does not pretend Aristagoras's achievements are inevitable, nor that his status is immutable by virtue of his birth. Rather, it takes pains to inhere the legitimacy of his prytany and athletic talent in an aetiological genealogy even as it acknowledges the instability of hereditary worth. In this scenario, Pindar's ode plays an even more important role: it serves as evidence of Aristagoras' natural social worth, even though Aristagoras has never demonstrated it conventionally as a victor at one of the four major games. The ode, in this sense, stands in for the victory itself.

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[77] See Chapter 3 for a complementary reading of the counterfactuals of *Pythian* 3.
[78] Not to mention that his parents are the ones who have, allegedly, prevented his Panhellenic success.
[79] *N.* 11.37-43. Like *N.* 6, discussed above.

*Nemean* 11's question of indigeneity, or nativity, is a critical one throughout the odes, and it goes hand in hand with representations of kinship. Scholarly questions about whether the odes are primarily "local" or "Panhellenic" in part reveal an anxiety about potential conflicts between these two sources of potential status-making (indigeneity and exogeneity).[80] It is entirely possible, however, for them to be mutually supporting.[81] Stories of exogamy or migrating ancestors located in the distant past offer support for indigenous legitimacy in the present; contemporary connections to other elite families support a victor's social status for an audience of other elites. The legitimizing power of kinship relations works in both ways, strengthened by both myths of descent and networks of alliances.

It also works both synchronically and diachronically, through networks of living relatives, ancestors, and children. Returning to *Olympian* 10 and leaving aside the poetic metaphor for a moment, the poem is also pragmatically describing how legitimate children ensure the maintenance of familial wealth:

> ἀλλ᾽ ὥτε παῖς ἐξ ἀλόχου πατρὶ
> ποθεινὸς ἵκοντι νεότατος τὸ πάλιν ἤδη, μάλα δέ οἱ θερμαίνει φιλότατι νόον·
> ἐπεὶ πλοῦτος ὁ λαχὼν ποιμένα
> ἐπακτὸν ἀλλότριον,
> θνάσκοντι στυγερώτατος[82]
>
> But as a son, born from his wife, is longed for
> by a father already come to the opposite of youth
> and warms his mind with great love:
> since wealth that falls to the care
> of a stranger from elsewhere
> is most hateful to a dying man

[80] See Beck 2020, 161-2, on mythical beginnings as simultaneously local and Hellenic and D'Alessio 2009 for local identities as articulated by foreign (traveling) poets. Harrell 2006 argues for a negotiation between the local and Panhellenic in the ideology of Sicilian tyrannies.
[81] Hornblower and Morgan 2007, 8: "Home status and status abroad (the vertical and horizontal lines of elite identity) were not always in tension, but could be mutually strengthening."
[82] *O.* 10.86-90.

Heredity has a very concrete relationship to status-making: it is a fundamental framework for organizing the inheritance, maintenance, and transfer of wealth. *Olympian* 10 situates anxieties about inheritance and familial continuity at the end of life, associating economic precarity with the vulnerability of the human body itself. Wealth and children are equated here; to have a legitimate son means the conservation of wealth at the end of life, while a lack of children suggests a concurrent material loss.

In *Pythian* 11, if Pindar does mean *ta mesa* and *aisa tyrannidon* only in a moral, not political or economic, sense, this does not except his poetic statement from participating in a sociopolitical discourse. Like Xenophon's Hieron, he asserts that it is better, in eudaimonic terms, to be around average rather than to stand out from the crowd, since it is personally difficult to navigate the anxieties and threats that come with holding political power. Indeed, think of the whole collection of Pindar's gnomic statements about human happiness and proper flourishing, which are a central feature of his poetics. If Pindar's *gnomai* and allusions to limitation and contingency are part of an intra-elite discourse, an internal critique that legitimizes the system even as it seems superficially to warn against abuse, it becomes clear that epinician poetics—not only its commodification or performance—participates in the legitimation of elite power.

These techniques are primarily designed to appeal to an elite audience, not to negotiate the different viewpoints of socioeconomic classes.[83] What is more, the idea of limited resources of wealth, power, and security can contribute to the maintenance of elite networks, as individuals and families seek more secure access to these kinds of material and social goods regardless of the extent to which they were or were not materially scarce. It is principally important that Pindar represents *kleos,* and its associations with physical, economic, and cultural safety and stability, as scarce and often difficult to achieve. A rhetoric

[83] *Pace* Mackie 2003; Kurke 1991; Payne 2006, n.261.

of moderation has no necessary relation to material wealth or the lack thereof. If anything, it is more likely that this rhetoric is strategically deployed to deflect attention from the real accumulation of wealth and to encourage continued defense and maintenance of familial wealth and power in the face of real or putative dangers to it. The more that instability and danger is described, the more urgent the necessity of defense; conveniently, the epinician poet has characterized himself as just such a defender.

There were numerous ways that Pindar's victors—all wealthy, all "elites"—could seek to stabilize and perform their social status through and outside of epinician poetry. The details of local lexicons and practices might differ, but if a central strategy can be identified in Pindar as a whole, it is that odes share a deep investment in supporting social status as a naturalized phenomenon, grounded in an ideology of the body that implicates norms of gender, kinship, beauty, and physical strength. At the same time, however, they acknowledge, and describe, the potential contingencies of birth and body. Acknowledging the potential instability of heredity, relation, and status puts even more weight on epinician's arguments for legitimacy.

This aspect of epinician poetics also speaks to the question of audience. The expansive temporal scope and gnomic assertions of value that characterize epinician style are a form of proto-canonization, an internal gesture towards their own putative prestige and institutional value.[84] The consumption and performance of epinician in its own time marks social distinction, while the synthetic temporalities that epinician asserts seek an erasure of difference *between* times. This combination of differentiation and legitimation (here the

[84] Cf. Payne 2006, 182: "Gnomic lyric…presupposes its own transhistorical reception by addressing abstract formulations to a universal subject created by its own pronominal structures." While I agree, this chapter makes the argument that this presupposing of reception and construction of a listening subject is sought not in itself but in order to address the issue of status instability. Constructing a "universal" subject elides difference in a way that is not equalizing but instead suppresses difference, rhetorically and politically.

various techniques of naturalizing status) is characteristic of elite self-stratification.[85] Status is essentially social: it must be maintained through some level of broader recognition. The construction of the epinician subject as a social community need not mean that epinician truly seeks recognition by the broadest possible spectrum of audiences. We do not know enough about the original commission, composition, and performance contexts of epinician to argue for their actual impact on a *polis* community or communal identity. That they seek to identify victors' success with the success of the *polis* or community; that they argue for high social status as essential and natural; that they aim at their own future transmission; these things tell us much more about the anxieties and aspirations of Pindar and his patrons than they do about any effects epinician may have had beyond them. Even if such evidence is not historically recoverable, however, Pindar's odes need not be interpreted as purely discursive. Their discursive positionality—the possibility, and stakes, of a discursive politics itself—cannot be understood without reference to the historical conditions within which they were composed and imagined their own future perpetuation.

## IV. Aristocracy and anachronism

Critiques of the New Historicist view of class conflict, and Kurke's comments on the ideological implications of coinage, have invited serious challenges.[86] Other readings of the Theognidea and other Archaic sources have failed to see a specific engagement with coinage *per se* as a negative phenomenon, nor a clear-cut distinction in class consciousness either in general or mapped onto specific economic modalities.[87] More recent developments in ancient

[85] Van Wees and Fisher 2015, 15-16. Specific cases obviously oscillate between congruence and tension within these two poles of value.
[86] See especially van Wees and Fisher 2015; Seaford 2002; Kim 1996 on von Reden 1995.
[87] See Seaford 2002 and Figueira 2000 for these critiques of Kurke in particular. In contrast, Rose 2012 makes a strong Marxist argument for class consciousness in Solon and tyranny as a mechanism for diffusing this conflict.

history have troubled and re-defined narratives of political development, ethnic definition, religious practice, and economic value in the late Archaic and early Classical periods.[88] Rather than see this as a period where an established aristocracy resists the rise of democratic practices and forms, a picture emerges of a heterogeneous sociopolitical world where conflict and competition between elites is just as important as the dynamics of their self-identification. Elite strategies of both competition and interconnection were complex and varied, and both dynamics were always at work within the social institutions and practices that characterized both mobility—whether positive or negative—and stability of status in this period.

I use the term "status" in a broadly Bourdieuan sense, with a particular emphasis on the dynamics of how status is naturalized within dominant classes and how it is supported by the acquisition and performance of social and cultural capital.[89] The ways in which epinician defines and grounds the status of its victors blurs a distinction between inborn and achieved status, making it unreliable to use epinician as a guide to actual fifth-century socioeconomic organization. This also speaks to the problem of defining the nature of the elite. A strong definition of "aristocracy" implies two important characteristics, as opposed to a more fluid "upper class." Aristocratic status is hereditary, usually based on inherited wealth, and it is at least partially incorporated into the institutions of the state (e.g., with restrictions on

[88] e.g. Bresson 2015, Ober 2015, Vlassopoulos 2015, Gruen 2011, Hall 2015 and 2002, Malkin 2011, Low 2007.

[89] "Status groups" are "dominant classes that have denied, or, so to speak, sublimated themselves and so legitimated themselves" (Bourdieu 1990, 139). The idea of status is useful in part because it can sidestep the problem of class consciousness or lack of consciousness. Weber 1922 argues that status groups tend to deny their class positionality the more that their economic status is precarious (236-7); he also makes a distinction between class as a function of productivity and status as linked rather to consumption—such as of cultural prestige goods like epinician. Lukács 1971 suggests that: "Status-consciousness—a real historical factor—masks class consciousness; in fact it prevents it from emerging at all" in antiquity (58).

eligibility for particular civic offices and titles).[90] As this chapter and the next show for Pindaric epinician, it is indisputable that the idea of heredity is used to support and legitimize sociopolitical achievement and moral and personal worth across Archaic literature. What is less clear is whether this reflects a reality of descent-based hierarchies in the Archaic and early Classical *polis,* rather than an ideal constructed in the process of seeking firm grounds for legitimizing unstable statuses.[91] I see epinician's aspirations towards status stability working primarily on the level of the elite individual, among other elites, rather than in terms of the individual as a problem for the community as a whole. My focus, therefore, is on how the odes serve to legitimize the status of individuals, rather than how they might differentiate—and then re-integrate—elites in the *polis* or civic community. It is unlikely that a consistent line could have been drawn between hereditary elites and *demos* in all the Greek *poleis* for which Pindar composed. Rather, the language of "aristocratic values" is a vocabulary that grounds high status generally, and practices associated with the elite could be engaged in over a wide spectrum of wealth. Like the moral vocabulary surrounding athletic achievement and celebration discussed in Chapter 1, these terms of value were flexible and deployed strategically depending on the context.

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[90] In the strongest sense, this means a rule by oligarchy where positions in the ruling class are exclusively determined through birth. Van Wees and Fisher 2015, 1-2 note how the use of the term is often less precise, "contain[ing] a fundamental ambiguity about whether or not this exclusivity is based on heredity." There is also a useful distinction to be made here between *de iure* and *de facto* political dominance based on heredity.

[91] See van Wees and Fisher 2015, 4; Duplouy 2006, who focuses on the differentiation of individual elites and argues that terms *aristos, esthlos,* and *agathos* are flexible social identifiers rather than defined classes. Also Duplouy 2015 on the performance of status, which epinician is such a fundamental part of: "Engaging in these social practices can serve to establish a social position, rather than simply display it" (60). He suggests that competition for status resulted in increased social mobility, though this is a strong position that relies on conception of cultural agonism based on Nietzsche and probably overemphasizes the openness of elite status. Wecowski 2014 also argues for social mobility, the expansion and heterogeneity of the elite, and competition as an arena for negotiating ideology of equality, as well as practices like the symposium as a performance of status.

Wherever we locate Pindar's early- to mid-fifth-century victors on the spectrum between a diffuse social elite and a more institutionalized aristocracy, the intentional blurring of the ideological lines between inborn and acquired status is central to the epinician project. What Bourdieu calls the "incorporation" of difference—literally, the situation of difference in the body—is at the heart of this process. This "difference which contains its own legitimation" is perhaps the most concise possible description of what Pindaric epinician is doing.[92] Epinician itself, its expense, its spectacular performance, was a demonstration of social difference based on economic distinction. Text-internally, the odes' strategies and rhetoric perform the legitimation of this economic distinction and naturalize their own importance. Pindar's epinicians, then, represent not so much a concerted attempt to revolt against the rise of the *demos* and bolster a waning aristocracy, but rather a competition for status and stability in a world where the grounds of wealth and power were not secure and their future perpetuation was not guaranteed.

The value of epinician practice is not in insisting on the legitimacy of a historical system of inborn status in danger of becoming unrecognized, but rather in leveraging current forms of social value in an attempt to institutionalize unstable status distinctions. This instability is located not only in an indefinite future, but in a mutable social present and a past that might be either unknown or lacking prestige. The odes' system of representing genealogy and its meanings suggests that these different temporalities are fundamentally interrelated, just as the elite body and divine law are. In order to use a genealogical past as a ground for a social present and future, a stable narrative about that past must also be established out of ambiguity or uncertainty. In turn, the present moment of victory is used as evidence for such a past, creating an irreducibly circular argument for status persistence and stability.

[92] Bourdieu 1990, 169.

## Chapter 3:
## Biological and Social Reproduction

### I. Defining kinship

For Pindar, the search for status stability in the face of elite instability meant placing fundamental importance on the role of heredity excellence in justifying the status and achievements of his elite victors. The importance attached to genealogy in the odes is not only about defining *arete* morally or philosophically. The odes use the idea of inborn *arete* to legitimize victors' contemporary political and social status by both locating the origin of this status in their genealogical past and projecting its maintenance into the future. They do not simply state or dictate this message to their audiences. Across myth, metaphor, and aetiological narratives they construct a world—and their own audience—that actively demonstrates the foundational role that heredity plays in justifying elite status claims. This begins with defining what genealogy is and means for Pindar and his victors, and the stakes of arguing for its explanatory power. While genealogy often provides aetiological explanations for victors and their cities in the epinicians, *Olympian* 9 goes one step further. It narrates, in mythical time, the beginning of human reproduction itself:

> φέροις δὲ Πρωτογενείας
> ἄστει γλῶσσαν, ἵν᾽ αἰολοβρόντα Διὸς αἴσᾳ
> Πύρρα Δευκαλίων τε Παρνασοῦ καταβάντε
> δόμον ἔθεντο πρῶτον, ἄτερ δ᾽ εὐνᾶς ὁμόδαμον
> κτισσάσθαν λίθινον γόνον·
> λαοὶ δ᾽ ὀνύμασθεν.[1]
>
> But lend to the city of Protogeneia,
> your tongue, where, by the ordinance of Zeus
> with the flashing thunderbolt,
> Pyrrha and Deukalion came down from Parnassus
> and made their first home, and without the marriage-bed
> they founded a unified race (*gonos*) of stone offspring,
> and they were called people.

[1] *O.* 9.41-46.

Among the many aetiologies—for people, places, and songs—in the odes, *Olympian* 9's telling of the myth of Pyrrha and Deucalion serves as an aetiology of aetiologies. Pyrrha and Deukalion, the progenitors of the first humans after the flood, generate further generations, as the cause of the process of human generation itself. Like Pindar's victors, Pyrrha and Deukalion are proleptically situated within the social context of a city (ἄστει), and their etymologically descriptive daughter Protogeneia is in fact introduced before her parents, signaling their teleological purpose at the very beginning of their story.[2] In the ode, Protogeneia represents the beginning of sexual reproduction. Pyrrha and Deukalion reproduce ἄτερ εὐνᾶς ("without a bed"), and their creation of the λίθινον γόνος ("stony race") results in a completely homogenous (ὁμόδαμον) human population.

Through its genealogical journey from mythical to historical time, the ode simultaneously explores a transition from ethnic homogeneity to heterogeneity, narrated through stories of reproduction, adoption, and migration. The *laundandus* of *Olympian* 9 is Epharmostos of Opuntian Lokris, whose families were said to trace their descent directly from the first descendants of Pyrrha and Deukalion:

> κείνων ἔσαν
> χαλκάσπιδες ὑμέτεροι πρόγονοι
> ἀρχᾶθεν Ἰαπετιονίδος φύτλας
> κοῦροι κορᾶν καὶ φερτάτων Κρονιδᾶν, ἐγχώριοι βασιλῆες αἰεί,
>
> πρὶν Ὀλύμπιος ἀγεμὼν
> θύγατρ᾽ ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἐπειῶν Ὀπόεντος ἀναρπάσαις, ἔκαλος
> μίχθη Μαιναλίαισιν ἐν δειραῖς, καὶ ἔνεικεν
> Λοκρῷ, μὴ καθέλοι μιν αἰὼν πότμον ἐφάψαις
> ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς. ἔχεν δὲ σπέρμα μέγιστον
> ἄλοχος, εὐφράνθη τε ἰδὼν ἥρως θετὸν υἱόν,
> μάτρωος δ᾽ ἐκάλεσσέ νιν
> ἰσώνυμον ἔμμεν,
> ὑπέρφατον ἄνδρα μορφᾷ τε καὶ
> ἔργοισι. πόλιν δ᾽ ὤπασεν λαόν τε διαιτᾶν.
>
> ἀφίκοντο δέ οἱ ξένοι,

[2] For this characteristic approach to teleology in Pindar, see Chapter 4.

ἔκ τ᾽ Ἄργεος ἔκ τε Θηβᾶν, οἱ δ᾽ Ἀρκάδες, οἱ δὲ καὶ Πισᾶται·[3]

From these
were descended your ancestors with their bronze shields,
young men sprung from the beginning from the stock of the daughters of Iapetos
and from the powerful sons of Kronos, always a native line of kings,

until the ruler of Olympus carried off
the daughter of Opus from the land of the Epeians,
and lay with her peacefully in the glens of Mount Mainalos, and brought her
to Lokros, so that age would not overtake him
laying childlessness on him. His bride was carrying the seed of the greatest god,
and the hero rejoiced to see his adopted son,
and gave him the same name as his mother's father,
a man beyond words in beauty and fine
deeds. He gave him a city and a people to govern,

and strangers (*xenoi*) came to him
from Argos and Thebes, and the Arkadians, and the Pisans.

This genealogy begins with an account of indigeneity that has no definite beginning or end, and is closely associated with the political status of kingship. The rulers in this era are ἐγχώριοι βασιλῆες αἰεί, monarchs at all times native to the land itself. But Lokros' infertility suddenly threatens the possibility of this unbroken enchoric rulership. To compensate, Zeus introduces a divinely authorized exogamy and adoption. This child is not just any foreigner, but the son of Zeus, who has a double parenthood through the god and his grandfather Opus. This human paternity is formally conferred upon him by Lokros through a naming that also invokes his heredity excellence, both physically and pragmatically (ὑπέρφατον ἄνδρα μορφᾷ τε καὶ / ἔργοισι, "a man beyond words in form and in deeds"). As physical and political excellence are linked, so too divine birth and human parentage become complementary. Opus receives a *polis* and *laos* from his adoptive father, and eventually this city and people also begin to incorporate immigrants from around the Greek world. From a beginning in a strictly heredity line of kings to a present in an ethnically heterogenous *polis* community, the ode at each moment integrates a different form of kinship into its genealogical story. Exogamy and

[3] *O.* 9.53-68.

adoption are both divinely sanctioned, and even in the ending vision of a multi-ethnic *polis* political power remains in the hands of the epichoric *basileus*.

Such complex possibilities of relational and reproductive methods are explored throughout the Pindaric corpus. Over and above their many particular narratives, the odes can be taken together to elaborate a conceptual system about what kinship is, means, and should be. Pindaric poetry is more often used as evidence for specific genealogical, ethnic, or political connections in the ancient world than kinship in Pindar is thought of holistically, as a strategy in itself that need not be reduced to "actual" blood relationships (and cannot be taken as unproblematic evidence for them). As an umbrella concept, kinship also extends beyond an idea of the immediate family or *oikos*[4] as well as the extended clan or *genos*.[5] The concept of kinship was a critical factor in defining political membership and status in this period, with different manifestations in different Greek *poleis*.[6] This encompassed all forms of political organization, from the Athenian democracy to Spartan citizenship to Sicilian semi-hereditary tyrannies. Restrictions on membership or rulership in a particular *polis* were frequently delineated through the terms of kinship and descent, such as the Periclean citizenship law of Athens in 451 or the hereditary *basileis* and highly restricted full citizenship of classical Sparta.

This diversity is reflected in the odes, just as it is in the *poleis* of their victors. The odes' concern with kinship is not restricted to any particular political organization or form, nor does it represent a worldview that is more primarily oligarchic, monarchic, or aristocratic than it is democratic. As *Olympian* 9 shows, kinship in Pindar encompasses all forms of blood relations and their representation, and its importance is reflected at the level of the

[4] *Pace* Kurke.
[5] For original conception of the aristocratic *genos* as a group of families with common ancestral descent, Meyer 1907.
[6] For the Athenian case, see Kasimis 2018; more broadly, Jones 1999, Fragoulaki 2013, and Hall 2002 (on representations of kinship in their relation to ethnic definition).

individual as well as the state. Its most important contribution is to support forms of social organization, and hierarchies of social power, by leveraging the legitimizing authority of the blood and the body. These associations are particularly central to the ideologies of epinician because of the ways in which athletic achievement—like kinship—is easily naturalized through the symbol of the physical body, regardless of whether or not the subject of the ode was the one who actually participated in the athletic contest.[7]

In the epinicians, the concrete and symbolic functions of kinship and sociopolitical legitimacy are often elaborated through these narratives of marriage, heredity, and reproduction. The construction of reproduction's social importance is fundamental for supporting the maintenance of status, wealth, and power in epinician and is one of the most powerful aetiological techniques available to the poet. Realities and figurations of reproduction touch on every aspect of Pindaric function and poetics, interwoven with the depiction of myth, aetiology, genealogy, image, and metaphor. Like travel and maritime risk,[8] reproduction appears in both narrative and metaphor for Pindar—and it, too, is a critical mediating force between the world inside the text and the world outside of it. As a poetic symbol, reproduction constructs an ideology of future value and legitimacy; as a social practice in antiquity, regulating reproduction within marriage was one method of maintaining status, wealth, and power.[9] Text-internal poetics lent aetiology and authority to the text-external practices of elite intermarriage, childbearing, social interaction, and inheritance.

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[7] See Nicholson 2005 on the ideology of the athlete without a trainer and the erasure of jockeys and other associated professionals; for a rebuttal to this view, Fisher 2015.

[8] Chapter 4.

[9] The odes' interest in genealogy and marriage is also a participation in the construction of sex- and gender-based structures of power in the Greek *polis*. The importance of normative kinship relations in managing potential status uncertainties also exposes how status-making is built upon a wide range of naturalized social and political hierarchies. Relatedness is not neutral; its usefulness in supporting status and consolidating wealth is managed through, for example, the subjugation of women, the legitimation of reproduction based on marriage, and the implementation of gender- and blood-based criteria for citizenship (see, e.g. how Demetra Kasimis describes gender and *polis* membership in *Medea*: "the membership rules and

This chapter focuses on four particularly detailed narratives that showcase the contingencies that surround legitimate reproduction as well as its close connections to the acquisition, maintenance, and social meaning of wealth and status. In *Pythian* 3, the story of Koronis' adultery and the birth and eventual death of her son Asklepios delineate the boundaries of appropriate social-sexual behaviors and the consequences of their transgression.[10] In *Pythian* 4, the misadventures of Jason, Medea, and the Argonauts put indigeneity and exogamy at issue as critical background to a genealogy of the Battiad monarchy of Cyrene;[11] *Pythian* 9 expends dozens of lines on whether the marriage and sexual intercourse of Cyrene and Apollo is divinely authorized, narrating its result in the foundation of Cyrene and immigration of the Therans (including the founder Battos) to Libya.[12] Finally, *Pythian* 11 castigates Clytemnestra's potential adultery (*P.* 4.24-7) in some of Pindar's sharpest language, and explicitly analogizes Clytemnestra's crimes to contemporary social ethics.

Like the odes' approach to situating victors' achievements in inborn physical excellence, the powerful materiality of blood and body that appears in these reproductive narratives on the surface supports the importance of kinship status as ideologically grounded in the body. Over and over, however, the odes show that the body is not enough: without social recognition, status lacks both meaning and security. Because this naturalization of

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conventions that can turn someone into a refugee enable and are enabled by additional ones that arrange men and women hierarchically" [Kasimis 2020, 414]). Managing the salience of kinship in terms of these social relations also entails the active maintenance of putatively gender- and descent-based social and political hierarchies and systems of alliances between diverse elites.

[10] Compare the married Hippolyta's attempted seduction of Peleus' at *N.* 25-34; Zeus rewards his resistance by giving him Thetis as his bride. See also the problem of Achilles' prophesied birth at *I.* 8.26-35.

[11] Medea's unauthorized marriage is also mentioned at *O.* 13.54, for Xenophon of Corinth, the eventual *polis* of Medea and Jason.

[12] Also compare the story of Zeus and Aegina in *N.* 8, and the poem's clear distinction between legitimate and illegitimate reproduction.

status is a central project of Pindaric epinician, these narratives are integral to understanding the role that concerns about social legitimacy and the reproduction of social status play in the odes. Rather than simply suggesting the rewards of normative behavior by warning against the consequences of transgression, these narratives construct a system of value that involves every aspect of epinician's function within its contemporary sociocultural communities and illustrates the ways in which the aspirations of Pindaric poetics are related to its immediate social context. Myths and *gnomai* about social value inside Pindar's odes are integrally related to how the poems themselves functioned as material and social objects. Poetic techniques like focalization, metaphor, counterfactuals, and *Abbruchsformeln* contribute to the formation of a social discourse that helps to authorize and perpetuate particular values, behaviors, and structures in the odes' contemporary—and future—environments.

## II. Social reproduction theory and its applications

The idea of "social reproduction" was originally introduced, though thinly explicated, by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital* to describe how capitalist production also sought the (re)production of human beings (as wage laborers) in order to perpetuate itself.[13] Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu later broadened this conception to consider the reproduction of ideology and culture alongside and within socioeconomic systems; for Bourdieu, this includes the concept of the *habitus* that shapes individual behavior and contributes to the reproduction of social systems.[14] Twentieth-century feminist theories of social reproduction, what now falls under the label of "social reproduction theory," sought to uncover the ways in

[13] In *Das Kapital,* vol. I, ch. 23.

[14] See especially Althusser 1970; in Brewster's (2001) translation, "the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'" (89).

which capitalist regimes systematically devalued, yet fundamentally relied upon, the labor of social and biological reproduction.[15] The connecting thread in this intellectual history is the argument that the stability of the economic system relies upon social and cultural norms, values, and structures that support how economic value is defined. Reproductive labor is both explicitly devalued and covertly fundamental to the maintenance of economic value as a putatively separate sphere; this structural paradox must be maintained for the economic system to perpetuate itself. To apply social reproduction theory means, in part, to uncover the ways in which the social and economic spheres co-constitute each other, and to reveal how social values and behaviors contribute to these dynamics. For Pindar, this means that the social and economic power of his elite victors is maintained through defining the value of reproduction, childbearing, and heritance in terms of their ability to support elite status into an indefinite future. As a cultural practice, epinician places emphasis on the importance of biological reproduction for reproducing social and economic hierarchies in order to simultaneously support its own persistence and perpetuation as an object and practice of elite culture.

The socioeconomic world that gave rise to twentieth-century theories of social reproduction is a fundamentally different one than the Greek world of the fifth century BCE, and, as chapter 2 discusses, approaches to Pindar that rely on a Marxist framework of class conflict have significant limitations.[16] However, the implications of social reproduction theory can shed important light on the functions of epinician poetry regardless of how the socioeconomic systems and institutions of the fifth century are understood. A broader conception of social reproduction that puts emphasis on the structures that shape individual

[15] In particular, this included labor that was gendered feminine and performed inside the home, including childbirth and childcare. Representatively, see: Vogel 2013, Bakker and Gill 2003.
[16] Chapter 2, section IV.

behavior and contribute to the definition of social and cultural capital is useful for thinking about the functions of epinician and its relations to both status and wealth maintenance in the ancient world.[17]

Contingencies of reproduction and relation are directly implicated in fifth-century practices of legitimizing and stabilizing both social position and economic affluence. This is an important way in which the status of the victor and the poem become intertwined, as the endurance of the poem is represented as contingent upon as well as supporting the endurance of the victor's reputation, wealth, and family. While I see Pindaric epinician as operating primarily in the arena of competition between the elite rather than resolution of tensions between classes, this struggle for status within the elite is premised on the maintenance of a social system reproduced literally through the perpetuation of the family and familial relations, including the maintenance of wealth through legitimate reproduction and inheritance. It seeks the perpetuation of a particular system of socioeconomic relations via the literal and symbolic construction of kinship relations, which epinician represents as simultaneously social and biological. The regulation and naturalization of these relations is a central part of epinician function. The poems cannot, of course, manufacture "actual" blood

[17] The sources and maintenance of economic value and their relationship to norms of social behavior are centrally at issue in Pindar, whether a strong commitment to class ideology and its possible relation to commodity exchange in the fifth century can be made. The epinicians represent competition for status and prestige among the elite, whose social status was intimately tied to the reality or appearance of material wealth—and depended, in part, on the inheritance of both wealth and status. Pindar's odes tie the splendor of victory to the splendor of precious metals and objects: they consistently both analogize and contrast their own being with the materiality of objects in their contemporary world. The literature on this is broad: see especially Kurke and Neer 2019, Athanassaki 2011 and 2012, Pavlou 2010, Fearn 2017, Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani 2007, Steiner 1993 and 1998. Women, of course, are frequently represented as objects of value in Greek literature; Kurke 1991, ch. 5, and Kurke 1999, chs. 4 and 5 discuss these mechanisms of representation in Herodotus, in concert with the book's broader arguments about objecthood and social value in Classical Greece. While there is not space to elaborate this here, I think epinician poems, and their performance, can be seen as a kind of prestige goods with their own kinds of visibility, portability, and ways of storing value.

relation or athletic excellence. However, both the concept of blood relatedness—who counts as related, how can it be proved, what its meanings are—and its importance to social organization are ideologically constructed, within and outside of the poem itself. Both because of the difficulty of determining parentage, descent, and paternity and practices like migration and adoption, all forms of relation are to some extent socially constructed. The epinician poem is ideally positioned to elaborate this ideology through its depictions of male and female bodies, labor and childbirth, mythical and historical genealogies, and metaphor, image, and *gnomai*.

## III. Labor and childbirth in the epinicians

Like Pindar's depictions of athletic achievement, the roles of Pindar's women are grounded in the labor of the body.[18] An exceptional number of narratives in the epinicians are focused on moments of labor and childbirth. These stories strongly support conceptions of familial relations grounded in biological relatedness, a relatedness that requires both witnessing and defining in order to be a ground for social legitimacy. In particular, the odes' focus on the moment of childbirth points to a concern with the legitimacy of blood relations, one complemented by worries about marriage and the necessity of its social authorization. In their depictions of both childbirth and sexuality, worries about deception, uncertainty, and contingency repeatedly come to the fore. The poems demonstrate the importance of defining what legitimate birth and relatedness are and what they mean for Pindar's victors and their families. This means both making an argument for the importance of genealogy to the present

[18] On the body in Pindar, Dickson 1989, who argues: "it has often been observed that among the lyric poets the human body is generally spoken in terms that above all draw attention to its vulnerability" but "the body in Pindar figures primarily as the locus of innate strengths and abilities and the means in and through which such potential comes to be realized" (22). See also Uhlig 2019, ch. 4, on the performing or mimetic body, which both has agency and is figured as an object.

moment but also for the insufficiency of blood relation itself in establishing status and identity. Relation is fundamentally social in these poems: though depicted as grounded in blood and body, the poems themselves show that kinship must be defined through social recognition in order to stabilize its meaning.

*Olympian* 6 narrates the birth of Iamos, the eponymous ancestor of the family of the *laudandus* Hagesias of Syracuse.[19] His mother is Evadne, the daughter of Poseidon and the nymph Pitana, who gives Evadne to the human king Aipytos to be raised. Evadne then becomes pregnant by Apollo; in the ode, the long description of her labor and birth is part of a narrative in which the legitimacy of her son Iamos must be established by his human relatives.[20] The crux of this poem is the genealogy of Hagesias's family, the Iamidai. Its intense focus on the birth of Iamos stands in for the establishment of the *genos* and the affirmation of its divine origins—which are then fulfilled in Hagesias' victory.[21] First, the poem narrates the circumstances of Evadne's own divine birth as part of the song's self-described entrance into part of its own performance. As the mule-cart from Hagesias' victory races through metaphorical gates, the ode also travels back in time. The victory itself breaks open this connection between past and present, as Hagesias' athletic achievement shows his divine genealogy being fulfilled:

> χρὴ τοίνυν πύλας ὕμνων ἀναπίτναμεν αὐταῖς·
> πρός Πιτάναν δὲ παρ᾽ Εὐρώτα πόρον δεῖ σάμερόν μ᾽ ἐλθεῖν ἐν ὥρᾳ
> ἅ τοι Ποσειδάωνι μιχθεῖσα Κρονίῳ λέγεται
> παῖδα ἰόπλοκον Εὐάδναν τεκέμεν.
>
> κρύψε δὲ παρθενίαν ὠδῖνα κόλποις·
> κυρίῳ δ᾽ ἐν μηνὶ πέμποισ᾽ ἀμφιπόλους ἐκέλευσεν
> ἦρωι πορσαίνειν δόμεν Εἰλατίδᾳ βρέφος,

[19] For the mythic paradigms at work in this poem, see Felson 1980, 79-86.
[20] Iamos being the eponymous ancestor of Hagesias's *genos,* the Iamidai. Pindar fr. 33d (Strabo 10.5.2) emphasizes Leto's labor on Delos to ground Apollo's patronage of the island. *N.* 1 and *Paean* 20 both emphasize Alcmene's recent labor to background Heracles' infant strength.
[21] Very much worth noting here that this is also one of few poems that also addresses the poet's own genealogy (*O.* 6.84-7).

ὃς ἀνδρῶν Ἀρκάδων ἄνασσε Φαισάνᾳ λάχε τ᾽ Ἀλφεὸν οἰκεῖν·
ἔνθα τραφεῖσ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ἀπόλλωνι γλυκείας πρῶτον ἔψαυσ᾽ Ἀφροδίτας.[22]

Therefore we must throw open for them the gates of song,
for today it is necessary to go to Pitana
by the course of the Eurotas in good time;
she, they say, lay with Kronos' son Poseidon
and bore a daughter, Evadne of the violet hair.

But she hid her unwedded pregnancy in the folds of her robe.
And in the appointed month she sent servants, and told them
to give the baby to be tended by the hero, son of Eilatos,
who ruled over the Arkadians at Phaisana,
and had his allotted home on the Alpheos,
where Evadne was raised,
and first touched the sweets of Aphrodite beneath Apollo's embrace.

As so often in Pindar, there is a double genealogy in this poem. Evadne has a divine birth from the nymph Pitana, who stands also for the Lakonian city, but she is raised by a human king, Aipytos, giving her both a claim to land-based nativity and participation in securing a genealogy of human political status. For the moment, the poem spotlights rather suppresses the potential fractures in this complex kinship structure, in order to lend the legitimacy of place and power to the line of the Iamidai. As it describes Evadne's parentage and birth, it then moves immediately into the story of Evadne's own pregnancy by Apollo. The similarities between the story of Evadne's own birth and the birth of Iamos intensify the associations between genealogy and identity, conception and teleology. Evadne's own conception and birth prefigure the circumstances of her own later pregnancy; the birth of Iamos is already teleologically predicted in the story of his mother's birth.

Evadne's labor with Iamos is described in detail precisely because she, like her mother, attempts to conceal it (and, eventually, the child):

οὐδ᾽ ἔλαθ᾽ Αἴπυτον ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ κλέπτοισα θεοῖο γόνον.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν Πυθώναδ᾽, ἐν θυμῷ πιέσαις χόλον οὐ φατὸν ὀξείᾳ μελέτᾳ,
ᾤχετ᾽ ἰὼν μαντευσόμενος ταύτας περ᾽ ἀτλάτου πάθας.
ἁ δὲ φοινικόκροκον ζώναν καταθηκαμένα
κάλπιδά τ᾽ ἀργυρέαν, λόχμας ὑπὸ κυανέας

[22] *O.* 6.27-35.

τίκτε θεόφρονα κοῦρον. τᾷ μὲν ὁ Χρυσοκόμας
πραΰμητίν τ᾽ Ἐλείθυιαν παρέστασέν τε Μοίρας·

ἦλθεν δ᾽ ὑπὸ σπλάγχνων ὑπ᾽ ὠδῖνός τ᾽ ἐρατᾶς Ἴαμος
ἐς φάος αὐτίκα.[23]

She could not conceal from Aipytos forever
That she was hiding the god's offspring.
But he went to Pytho, suppressing the unspeakable anger
In his heart with stern discipline,
To obtain an oracle concerning
that unbearable calamity.
She, though, laid down her crimson girdle
And silver pitcher under a dark thicket and began to bear
A divinely inspired boy. To aid her, the golden-haired
God sent gentle-counseling Eleithyia and the Fates

and from her womb amid the welcome
birth pains Iamos
came immediately into the light.

At this moment in the poem, the characters in the narrative have no access to the truth about Evadne's pregnancy, but the audience of the poem does. In its description of the secret birth of Iamos, the poem stages a kind of surveillance of Evadne's labor in direct opposition to her ostensible desire to conceal her pregnancy from her adoptive father (36). At this juncture, text-internal characters are uncertain of the meaning of this pregnancy and its outcomes. Aipytos's appeal to the oracle (though also, of course, ironic here since Apollo is the father of the child) represents his narratological blindness to the genealogical outcomes of the poem (in both Iamos and the *genos* of the Iamidai) and his own experience of Evadne's pregnancy as full of contingency, more likely to be *atlatos pathas* than the divine bestowment it actually is.[24]

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[23] *O.* 6.36-44.

[24] On childbirth and risk in antiquity, Bonnell-Freidin 2018; although in the Roman context, she elegantly phrases the issues at play here: "Most Romans understood childbearing as a woman's telos, her end purpose, as well as the greatest threat to her wellbeing" (iii). Felson 1980 argues that in the description of Evadne's labor, "[t]he sense of danger traditionally linked with childbirth is neutralized, and the favorable characteristics of the delivery even anticipate Iamus' happy future" (82); this is another way, perhaps, that the poem navigates the text-internal and text-external audiences and their perspectives. She also includes a detailed

In succession, Pindar also stages Aipytos's physical search for the infant boy, a representation of the scrutiny required to establish his divine genealogy once he is actually born:

> βασιλεὺς δ᾽ ἐπεὶ
> πετραέσσας ἐλαύνων ἵκετ᾽ ἐκ Πυθῶνος, ἅπαντας ἐν οἴκῳ
> εἴρετο παῖδα, τὸν Εὐάδνα τέκοι· Φοίβου γὰρ αὐτὸν φᾶ γεγάκειν
>
> πατρός, περὶ θνατῶν δ᾽ ἔσεσθαι μάντιν ἐπιχθονίοις
> ἔξοχον, οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκλείψειν γενεάν.
> ὣς ἄρα μάνυε. τοὶ δ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ὢν ἀκοῦσαι
> οὔτ᾽ ἰδεῖν εὔχοντο πεμπταῖον γεγενημένον. ἀλλ᾽ ἐν
> κέκρυπτο γὰρ σχοίνῳ βατιᾷ τ᾽ ἐν ἀπειράτῳ…[25]
>
> But when the king
> arrived after driving from rocky Pytho,
> he questioned everyone in the house
> about the child whom Evadne
> bore, for Phoibos, he said, was his
>
> father, and he would become foremost of mortals
> as a seer for mankind, and his lineage would never fail.
> such did he declare to them, but they vowed
> not to have seen or heard of him,
> although it was the fifth day since his birth. But in fact,
> he had been hidden in a bed of reeds within a vast thicket…

Both Iamos's birth and his divinity, *Olympian* 6 suggests, *cannot* (read: should not) be concealed, no matter how vigorous the attempt. The poem itself acts as the eye by which this surveillance of birth and parentage is achieved, and represents itself above the scrutinizing abilities of the poem's human characters. This is an ability that, for the characters in the mythical narrative, must be divinely inspired—Aipytos is unable to have full knowledge of Iamos's parentage until he consults the oracle of Apollo. The poem sets itself, then, in the role of a powerful observer, in parallel to the prophetic, omniscient, and generative powers of

account of the reproductive imagery in the nesogony of Rhodes in *Olympian* 7 in this article. On contingency and teleology in Pindar in general, Bertoni 2020 has argued that "[i]n Pindar's conception of causality, nothing is left to chance" and that the multiple valences of *tukhe* in the ode "share the same basic sense of 'a bringing about by divine means'" (1).

[25] *O.* 6.47-54.

the god himself. While, to the epinician audience, there is no doubt about the paternity of Iamos, the poem nevertheless stages the *social* affirmation of his paternity as the centerpiece of its drama. Scrutiny, secrecy, and evasion are central themes with powerful consequences, not only for the characters in the mythic narrative but for the historical individuals for whom Pindar's poem helps to establish the legitimacy of their familial genealogy.[26]

Another child of Apollo is at issue in *Pythian* 3, which displays perhaps the most dramatic depiction of childbirth in the odes, and has one of the most interesting relationships to determinacy and contingency. Large portions of the ode are a counterfactual rather than a linear narrative—that is, a narrative of what could have happened, rather than what did.[27] From its very first lines, the ode repeatedly emphasizes its own conditionality, a theme that is elaborated to dramatic effect through the story of the birth of Asklepios. Its mythical centerpiece narrates the birth of Asklepios, son of Apollo and Koronis, in the context of Koronis's sexual transgressions against both the god and her human social community as well as the eventual fate of Asklepios himself. As the story of Koronis and Asklepios is introduced, the ode explicitly disavows teleology: πρὶν τελέσσαι ματροπόλῳ σὺν Ἐλειθυίᾳ, δαμεῖσα χρυσέοις / τόξοισιν ὕπ᾽ Ἀρτέμιδος, / εἰς Ἄΐδα δόμον ἐν θαλάμῳ κατέβα τέχναις

[26] There is no shortage, of course, of association between femininity, secrecy, and deception in Greek literature; for Pindar in particular, see Park 2013, §2-13. For femininity as fundamentally mimetic in Greek literary thought, Zeitlin 1996. Segal 1986, ch. 9 suggests that feminine deception is fundamentally in service of masculine authority in *P.* 4.

[27] Felson 2021, 255-261 puts emphasis on the distance between poet and *laudandus* that these counterfactuals continually stress, although I do not agree so much with her conclusion that the ode definitively accomplishes that which it disavows in these lines: "This series of counterfactuals also allows the poet to remain in Thebes as he composes: his arrival in Sicily is contrary-to-fact. At the same time, in the alternate reality that he creates, he is present at Hieron's court and has arrived (ἐξικόμαν) as a light to that one (κείνῳ φάος). By piling new past counterfactuals atop the previous ones, with two aorist verbs, κατέβαν in the protasis and ἐξικόμαν in the apodosis, Pindar makes his travel to Syracuse increasingly remote." Also see Agócs 2020, on the counterfactuals of *P.* 4, vocalized through Medea: "Pindar's counterfactual history is thus probably a recent invention (perhaps even his own) designed to call attention to the workings of providence in history" (113). For the power of counterfactuals in Euripides' *Medea* as intimately related to norms of gender and nature, see Nooter 2022.

Ἀπόλλωνος ("before [she] could bring him to term with the help of Eleithyia, goddess of childbirth, she was overcome by the golden arrows of Artemis," *P.* 3.9-11).[28] A normative narrative of pregnancy resulting in full-term childbirth is interrupted by the intervention of untimely and violent death; the normative teleology of birth and labor is thereby analogized to the teleology of a human life, which ends in death (and, perhaps, the teleology of the poem itself). The story of Koronis functions to elaborate this theme across the central portion of the ode, through her transgressive sexuality, interrupted labor, and early, unnatural death.

Koronis transgresses doubly at the beginning of the ode: her relationship with Iskhys is both unapproved by her family and offensive to Apollo, whose child she is carrying. Divine sanction and human law align here, putting additional weight on the seriousness of Koronis's sexual and social behavior during her divine pregnancy. Pindar describes in detail the social rituals around marriage that Koronis evades, and condemns her attempted evasion of both her father's knowledge (ἄλλον αἴνησεν γάμον κρύβδαν πατρός, "she consented to another marriage unknown to her father," *P.* 3.13) and, in parallel, the inescapable omniscience of Apollo (οὐδ᾽ ἔλαθε σκοπόν, "she did not elude the watching [Apollo]", *P.* 3.27).

While Koronis is pursued and killed by Artemis, her son—and Apollo's son—does not share her fate.[29] As her body burns on the funeral pyre, Apollo rescues the fetus from her corpse:

> τότ᾽ ἔειπεν Ἀπόλλων· 'οὐκέτι
> τλάσομαι ψυχᾷ γένος ἀμὸν ὀλέσσαι
> οἰκτροτάτῳ θανάτῳ ματρὸς βαρείᾳ σὺν πάθᾳ.'
> ὣς φάτο· βάματι δ᾽ ἐν πρώτῳ κιχὼν παῖδ᾽ ἐκ νεκροῦ

[28] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2010 suggests that πρὶν τελέσσαι "recalls τὰ προτέλεια, the premarital sacrifices usually offered to Artemis" (32).

[29] The inclusion of Artemis here puts extra stress on both kinship (her sibling relationship to Apollo) and the salience of her gender (her murder by a female goddess, the twin of a male one). As Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2010 writes, "Artemis may preside over coming of age, ushering young girls into adulthood and motherhood and assisting in their childbirth and growth, but also kills maidens and new mothers" (32).

ἅρπασε…[30]

Then Apollo said, "No longer
shall I endure in my soul to destroy my own offspring
by a most pitiful death along with his mother's heavy suffering."
Thus he spoke, and with his first stride came
and snatched the child from the corpse…

Asklepios' birth, then, is really an intervention into death. He is delivered by Apollo from the body of his mother, and his rescue is focalized through Apollo's acknowledgement of their patriarchal relation in contrast to the suffering of Koronis. Apollo's intervention in Asklepios' birth puts him, rather than Koronis, in the role of the birthing parent, lending additional legitimacy to his paternity as it simultaneously minimizes Koronis's own physiological relationship to her son.[31] Apollo's interjection is also an interruption of normative teleologies of nature and the human body: of the pyre's consumptive power, of Asklepios' approaching death, and of Asklepios' physical relation to and dependence upon the body of his mother.

This extraordinary origin is a fateful beginning for Asklepios. While he possesses exceptional medical talent, it is his capacity for transcending the bounds between death and life that ultimately lead to his own death at the hands of a god. If *Pythian* 3 is united by a general theme, it is the boundaries of living and dying and the consequences of their transgression. These boundaries are represented also in the boundaries of gender roles and expectations. In the ode, it is Koronis who initially bears the consequences of her social-sexual delinquency, but Asklepios' eventual fate is teleologically marked by the circumstances of his birth and conception. Koronis's fate is not solely individual, either. Artemis' wrath dooms some proportion of her surrounding community to death alongside her

[30] *P.* 3.40-44.
[31] Obviously reminiscent of the character Apollo's arguments on paternity and maternity in *Eumenides*, which vigorously attempt to marginalize the female role in fetal development (*Eumenides* 660-666). As Chesi 2014 notes, these arguments have their grounds in Presocratic debates about reproductive processes (n. 11).

(καὶ γειτόνων πολλοὶ ἐπαῦρον, ἀμᾶ δ᾽ ἔφθαρεν, "and many neighbors shared her fate and perished with her," *P.* 3.35-6). The striking metaphor the ode uses here emphasizes the consequences of the individual's actions on the broader social community: πολλὰν δ᾽ὄρει πῦρ ἐξ ἑνός / σπέρματος ἐνθορὸν ἀίστωσεν ὕλαν ("fire that springs from one spark onto a mountain can destroy a great forest," *P.* 3.36-37). This metaphor also engages in the language of reproduction: Koronis' crime, like her fetus (cf. 15, σπέρμα θεοῦ καθαρόν) is a *sperma* that grows into a social consequence she cannot control. In contrast to the *katharon sperma* that is most closely associated with the paternity of Apollo and therefore Asklepios' eventual rescue from death, the *sperma* that sets off this social flame is reproductively perversive, resulting in chaotic social destruction rather than in the construction and preservation of normative social relationships and hierarchies.[32]

No accident, too, that the definition of *olbon upertaton* in *Pythian* 3 is also associated with the elitest of elite marriage:

> αἰὼν δ᾽ ἀσφαλὴς
> οὐκ ἔγεντ᾽ οὔτ᾽ Αἰακίδᾳ παρὰ Πηλεῖ
> οὔτε παρ᾽ ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται μὰν βροτῶν
> ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἳ σχεῖν, οἵτε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων
> μελπομενᾶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισᾶν καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις
> ἄϊον Θήβαις, ὁπόθ᾽ Ἁρμονίαν γᾶμεν βοῶπιν,
> ὁ δὲ Νηρέος εὐβούλου Θέτιν παῖδα κλυτάν.[33]
>
> But an untroubled life
> did not abide with Aiakos' son Peleus
> or with godlike Kadmus, yet they are said to have attained
> the highest happiness of any men, for they even heard
> the golden-crowned Muses singing on the mountain and
> in seven-gated Thebes, when one marries ox-eyed Harmonia,
> the other Thetis, wise-counseling Nereus' famous daughter.

This anecdote is about a mythical rather than historical time, when intermarriage and reproduction between gods and human beings was once possible. But, as the poem goes on to

[32] Kyriakou 1994, 39-40.
[33] *P.* 3.86-92.

warn, the potential joy of such marriages is also tinged with bitterness and can end in tragedy. These gnomic warnings draw a conventional contrast between the persistence of divine lives and the contingency of human ones, ending on Achilles as a paradigmatic example of the tragedies of mortality and immortality, *kleos* and memory, parenthood and childhood (100-104). Despite the ultimate physical fragility of Thetis' son, Peleus nevertheless attains a kind of persistence through Achilles' memory (and his own descendants).

Koronis's crime is primarily in seeking an exogamous relationship outside of the sanctions of her family, a theme the ode will return to by analogizing her moral errors to Asklepios' hubris in attempting to raise the dead. Koronis is "in love with things far away" (ἀλλά τοι / ἤρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων, 19-20), a phrase that is echoed in the poet's gnomic statement after narrating the death of Asklepios:

> χρὴ τὰ ἐοικότα πὰρ δαιμόνων μαστευέμεν θναταῖς φρασίν,
> γνόντα τὸ πὰρ ποδός, οἵας εἰμὲν αἴσας.
>
> μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον
> σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον ἄντλει μαχανάν.[34]
>
> It is necessary to seek what is proper from the gods with our mortal minds,
> by knowing what lies at our feet and what kind of destiny is ours.
>
> Do not, my soul, strive for the life of the immortals,
> but exhaust the practical means at your disposal.

The first-person voice of the poem self-consciously aligns itself against the hubris of both Koronis and Asklepios. The room for action that it leaves within the constraints of γνόντα τὸ πὰρ ποδός is τὰν ἔμπρακτον μαχανάν, which it seems to explicitly contrast with a striving for βίον ἀθάνατον. If the poem is meant to be consoling Hieron that his memory will live on after his death, why so openly disavow aiming at an immortal life? Read through the framework of naturalizing status and the grounds of the value and persistence of the physical body in Chapter 2, however, these lines take on a different tenor. The poet here self-consciously

[34] *P.* 3.59-62.

articulates not a prohibition against immortality itself, but a prohibition against striving for it. That is, the problem is not in living beyond death, but in trying to achieve this outside of what a god has determined for you.

In addition, the ode here returns to a counterfactual, which seems to perform humility on the part of the poet—just the same humility that the poet has recommended through the negative exemplar of Asklepios:[35]

> εἰ δὲ σώφρων ἄντρον ἔναι᾽ ἔτι Χείρων, καί τί οἱ
> φίλτρον ἐν θυμῷ μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι
> ἀμέτεροι τίθεν· ἰατῆρά τοί κέν νιν πίθον
> καί νυν ἐσλοῖσι παρασχεῖν ἀνδράσιν θερμᾶν νόσων
> ἤ τινα Λατοΐδα κεκλημένον ἢ πατέρος.[36]
>
> Yet if wise Chiron were still living in his cave, and if
> my honey-sounding hymns could put a charm in his heart,
> I would surely have persuaded him to provide a healer
> now as well to cure the feverish illnesses of good men,
> someone called a son of Apollo or of Zeus.

The interplay between possibility and reality here, and in particular, the strong presence of the first-person poetic voice, is highly characteristic of *Pythian* 3. The poet is emphatically present in this poem—for the audience. But he is not physically present for Hieron, a contrast that is continually elaborated through the extended counterfactuals. Pindar has learned the lesson of Koronis and Asklepios, and stays at home. As Nancy Felson has argued, this extended counterfactual has the paradoxical effect of bringing him further and further from Syracuse, and from Hieron, even as it posits at length a theoretical—but impossible—world in which Pindar would have reached the ailing Hieron with his song.[37] This system of counterfactual and constraint, then, also implicates the poet himself and his poetic activity, in his relations to his patrons in his own historical world. As a poetic symbol, the moral system of normative reproduction constructs an ideology of future value and legitimacy in

[35] This is also the conventional rhetoric of advice to tyrants; see Chapter 2.
[36] *P.* 3.63-7.
[37] Felson 2021.

connection with aetiologies of people and place; as a social practice, reproduction within marriage seeks to actually create and maintain status, wealth, and power, through historical systems of alliance and inheritance.

In constructing these norms, however, the odes must also inescapably stage their vulnerabilities. While the voice of the poet, speaking to his victors, may confidently minimize the possibility of disruption to the norm, the contingencies of the body remain a persistent problem for epinician. In *Pythian* 3, thought to be written for an ailing, even dying Hieron, the poem ultimately refuses to approach the reality of a tyrant's body that cannot conform to the ideology of the athletic one. In fracturing this otherwise highly productive relation between poet and victor, the ode shows its own inability to maintain the fiction of the norm—and we should wonder, perhaps, if this poem, thought to be sent to Hieron as a consolation for his illness, was really so comforting to him after all.

This context may also help to understand what is at work in the last lines of *Pythian* 3. What is Pindar saying about the role of the poet and the power of poetic memory here?

> εἰ δέ μοι πλοῦτον θεὸς ἀβρὸν ὀρέξαι,
> ἐλπίδ᾽ ἔχω κλέος εὑρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω.
> Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν᾽, ἀνθρώπων φάτις,
> ἐξ ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοὶ
> ἄρμοσαν, γιγνώσκομεν. ἁ δ᾽ ἀρετὰ κλεινα῀ς ἀοιδα῀ς
> χρονία τελέθει. παύροις δὲ πράξασθ᾽ εὐμαρές.[38]
>
> And if a god should grant me luxurious wealth,
> I hope that I may win lofty fame hereafter.
> We know of Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon, still the talk of men,
> from such echoing verses as wise craftsmen
> constructed. Excellence endures in glorious songs
> for a long time. But few can win them easily.

One way of understanding these verses, which have offered a number of possible interpretations, may be keyed to the cryptic last line.[39] From its beginning, the ode has

[38] *P.* 3.110-115.

[39] For the connections between Nestor and Sarpedon and a self-conscious immortality, see: Sider 1991 and Miller 1994. Most interesting, perhaps, is Miller 1994's suggestion that rather

inquired into the teleology of human life and shown how interruptions to this teleology have devastating social consequences. What relationship do *kleos* and *kleinai aoidai* have to this teleology? *Kleos,* in these lines, is closely connected to the acquisition of *ploutos*—which is obtained through divine favor (110). Together with the ode's repeated invocations of divine contingency and variable human fates, there is a curious abdication of agency in these lines, which ostensibly boast of the power of the poet to immortalize human life. Where there is a conscious assertion of the poet-speaker's own agency it is in the service of acknowledging limitation, not resisting it. It is only through this process of conforming to the boundaries of circumstance that the poem reaches the possibility of commemoration and *kleos.*

And it ends on a note of warning: that while it might be possible to achieve *kleos* that stretches throughout the future, this possibility is restricted based on factors that are largely implied rather than explicitly described here. The effect of this assertion is to heighten the importance of the poem and the poet, but the agency of the poet himself is only implicit. More valuable because of its difficulty and scarcity, the epinician poem promises that its benefits only accrue to the best and fewest—and not only to the wealthy. The construction of this passage suggests that *ploutos* may be a possible precondition for *kleos*, but it is not sufficient to ensure it. While the passage suggests possible contexts for enduring *kleos*—wealth, status, moral achievement, celebration in song—it is not an instruction manual for the definitive acquisition of endurance in memory. Rather, the ambiguity that endures in these lines has a more important function. It ensures that even the performance—or textual endurance—of the poem itself is not sufficient to maintain *kleos* unproblematically. These

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than simply putting the emphasis on immortality in poetic memory (i.e., Homer) the selection of these two characters also has to do with thinking about unusually long—but still bounded—human lives; that "even exceptional longevity, well short of immortality, offers no substantive advantages to human beings in the absence of achievement and celebration" (386). While this is one argument for why the poem would be consolatory to Hieron, it is hard to see this robustly supported in terms of the ode itself.

lines still require interpreters—whether performer, audience, or both—who are prepared to accept and enact the interplay between *laundandus,* poet, and audience that this passage describes.

## IV. Sociality and sexuality

The importance of heterosexual reproduction to the odes means that the regulation of sexual norms is also often at issue in the narratives they present. This is the focus of *Pythian* 9, with Apollo again implicated in questions of legitimacy and genealogy in mythical time. *Pythian* 9's vision of a mythological Cyrenaean foundation opens with an image of the marriage of Apollo and Cyrene as divinely sanctioned—then, a few lines later, cycles back in time to a moment before its consummation, a characteristically Pindaric move that leaves the audience assured of the outcome but brings us back to a place where, in narrative time, that future is still contingent.[40] It is this particular representation of teleology, the "urgent relationship with time" that characterizes Cyrene and Telesikrates in this poem,[41] that shows the integral relationship between poetic temporalities and representations of marriage and reproduction for Pindar.

Apollo makes a rhetorical show of asking Chiron who Cyrene's parents are and if it is proper (*osia*) for him to pursue sexual intercourse with her:

> τίς νιν ἀνθρώπων τέκεν; ποίας δ᾽ ἀποσπασθεῖσα φύτλας
> ὀρέων κευθμῶνας ἔχει σκιοέντων,
> γεύεται δ᾽ ἀλκᾶς ἀπειράντου;

[40] Nancy Felson has characterized Pindar's several representations of Apollo as an epinician character in "story-time" to explore the way that "Apollo inside time is always eclipsed and framed by the timeless Apollo" (Felson 2009, 150), "contradictions… [which] are central to the very genre of the victory ode" (166).

[41] Carson 1982, 125. She also writes: "In summary, the point of the analogy between bride and victor is, at least in part, to remind us that excellence is a public thing, only properly realized in a communal effort. The moment when a bride is plucked in marriage is a kairos analogous to that moment when victory flowers surround the athlete. In each case the kairos represents an intersection of public and private, occurring when an individual reaches out beyond himself to perform an action that mingles him with his community."

ὁσία κλυτὰν χέρα οἱ προσενεγκεῖν,
ἦ ῥα; καὶ ἐκ λεχέων κεῖραι μελιηδέα ποίαν;[42]

What mortal bore her? From what stock has she been severed
that she lives in the glens of the shadowy mountains
and puts to the test her unbounded valor?
Is it right *(osia)* to lay my famous hand upon her
and indeed to reap the honey-sweet flower from the bed of love?

Chiron's response acknowledges the irony of Apollo's asking, and takes a slyly Apollonian stance as he replies with a prophecy for the marriage of Apollo and Cyrene, the birth of their son, and the foundation and flourishing of the city of Cyrene. Much like in *Olympian* 6, however, the clear (and already stated) teleology of Cyrene's marriage and children is, at this point, given a veneer of uncertainty. It is the nature of sex itself, in Chiron's telling, that opens up the possibility for ambiguity, concealment, and even deceit:[43]

κρυπταὶ κλαῖδες ἐντὶ σοφᾶς Πειθοῦς ἱερᾶν φιλοτάτων,
Φοῖβε, καὶ ἔν τε θεοῖς τοῦτο κἀνθρώποις ὁμῶς
αἰδέοντ᾽, ἀμφανδὸν ἀδείας τυχεῖν τὸ πρῶτον εὐνᾶς.
καὶ γὰρ σέ, τὸν οὐ θεμιτὸν ψεύδει θιγεῖν,
ἔτραπε μείλιχος ὀργὰ παρφάμεν τοῦτον λόγον.[44]

Hidden are the keys to sacred lovemaking that belongs to wise Persuasion,
Phoibos, and both gods and humans alike
shy from engaging openly for the first time in sweet love.
And you, for whom it is not right to touch upon a lie,
your amorous impulse prompted you to make this misleading speech.

For Apollo, whose omniscience Chiron describes at length, there is a particularly vivid contrast between the scope of his future knowledge and the stance of uncertainty he

[42] *P.* 9.33-7.
[43] See also *Pythian* 2.25-40 on Ixion: εὐναὶ δὲ παράτροποι ἐς κακότατ᾽ ἀθρόαν / ἔβαλον· ποτὶ καὶ τὸν ἵκοντ᾽· ἐπεὶ νεφέλᾳ παρελέξατο, / ψεῦδος γλυκὺ μεθέπων, ἄϊδρις ἀνήρ·
εἶδος γὰρ ὑπεροχωτάτᾳ πρέπεν οὐρανιᾶν / θυγατέρι Κρόνου· ἅντε δόλον αὐτῷ θέσαν / Ζηνὸς παλάμαι, καλὸν πῆμα ("Unnatural lust throws men into dense trouble; it befell even him, since the man in his ignorance chased a sweet fake and lay with a cloud, for its form was like the supreme celestial goddess, the daughter of Cronus. The hands of Zeus set it as a trap for him, a beautiful misery").
[44] *P.* 9.39-43.

takes at this moment in the narration.[45] This contrast is completely self-conscious for the poem itself. Apollo and Chiron's long conversation means that the poem dwells on this critical moment before the conception of Cyrene's child. The poet self-consciously extends the moment of suspense by, ironically, elaborating its inevitable conclusion and spectacular future at conspicuous length. The moment of contingency, fundamentally symbolized by the secrecy and uncertainty of sex, is enveloped within a triumphant teleological framework.

If Apollo's questions are essentially disingenuous within the internal narrative of the poem, who are these questions really for? They are a performance of human questions, staged for the poem's human audience and in anticipation of the story of human marriage that is the purpose and motivating theme of *Pythian* 9. The ode ends with the depiction of the marriage of Alexidamos, Telesikrates' putative ancestor—a marriage won through a contest styled as a foot race, exactly like the races won which led Telesikrates to commission an epinician in the first place.[46] The symbolism is almost too obvious. Despite the poem's triumphant depiction of Apollo and Cyrene, however, Alexidamos, his marriage, and his races remain firmly in

[45] Arguments that the motivation behind Apollo's questions and Chiron's answer is to emphasize that Cyrene should willingly submit to Apollo (rather than be subject to sexual violence) are given in Winnington-Ingram 1969 and Köhnken 1985, 86-94. While I think a potential contrast between legitimate and illegitimate sexual violence is interesting, like Grethlein 2011, 386-88, I find these arguments unconvincing in terms of the language of the poem. I do not agree with Grethlein, however, that the secrecy around Apollo and Cyrene's relationship marks a contrast between gods and human beings; rather, the potential for secrecy is so self-consciously ironic in the conversation between Apollo and Chiron that it puts extra emphasis on how incongruous it is here. Instone 1990 interestingly inverts the genders when he suggests that "the astonished questions of Apollo, in awe of Kyrene's strength, are what Pindar imagines must have gone through the minds of the women each time they saw their victorious hero Telesikrates" (41); but Segal 1986 rightly argues, I think that this is part of a subsumption of the wildness of femininity to the organizing force of masculine desire (168).

[46] Compare also *Olympian* 7.1-10, where the poet figures his poem as a gift at the occasion of a marriage. Myers 2007 has argued that the description of the footrace also recalls choral imagery, putting even more stress on the equivalence between poem, marriage, and athletic achievement.

human time.[47] The poem itself remains as the vehicle by which Alexidamos and Telesikrates are connected to their illustrious genealogical past, and in which the meaning of both marriage and victory are determined through its deployment of myth and image.

As Chapter 4 also argues, *Pythian* 4 is a paradigmatic example of the way that the nature of the epinician text and the social identity of the poet is constructed through the figuration of a multilayered institutionalism. The poem explores the aetiology and persistence of blood-based rule and its many possible transgressions, in the potent metaphorical context of sea travel, wandering, and closely scrutinized moments of *xenia.* At the core of this palimpsestic imaginary are central concerns about femininity and reproduction, focused around the figure of Medea. *Pythian* 4's situation of Medea and Jason as refugees, in Demetra Kasimis' terms, puts extra stress on how the poem defines political legitimacy and the stakes of claiming political status.[48] In fact, *Pythian* 4 is unusually detailed about the relationship between blood relationships, wealth, and political standing, which are so often intertwined and deliberately conflated in the epinicians.

The poem closely associates femininity, reproduction, and futurity from the beginning of Medea's own speech at line 13:

> κέκλυτε, παῖδες ὑπερθύμων τε φωτῶν καὶ θεῶν·
> φαμὶ γὰρ τᾶσδ᾽ ἐξ ἁλιπλάκτου ποτὲ γᾶς Ἐπάφοιο κόραν
> ἀστέων ῥίζαν φυτεύσεσθαι μελησιμβρότων
> Διὸς ἐν Ἄμμωνος θεμέθλοις.[49]
>
> Hear me, sons of great-hearted men and gods.
> I declare that one day from this sea-beaten land the daughter of Epaphos
> will have planted within her a root of famous cities
> at the foundations of Zeus Ammon.

[47] Grethlein 2011 argues that the poem definitively separates divine and human time, and thereby puts extra stress on the ephemerality of human lives.
[48] Kasimis 2020.
[49] *P.* 4.13-16.

Already, the land (γᾶς) of Libya is analogized to a daughter (κόραν), with a divine, monarchic genealogy in Epaphos and a divine mandate in the foundation of the cult of Zeus Ammon. The deeply conventional alliance of natural metaphor (ἀστέων ῥίζαν φυτεύσεσθαι) to biological reproduction is not so conventional to be bleached of meaning; rather, the way the metaphor itself has been culturally naturalized betrays not only Pindar's individual literary attempt to link reproduction with political foundation but the actual contemporary cultural importance (particularly for the Battiad monarchy) of linking political legitimation to divinely authorized indigeneity and a traceable genealogy. Thera itself is soon characterized as a future *matropolin* (20), and the long story of the wayward clod of earth ends with its analogization, again, to a seed (*sperma*): καί νυν ἐν τᾷδ᾽ ἄφθιτον νάσῳ κέχυται Λιβύας / εὐρυχόρου σπέρμα πρὶν ὥρας ("and now on that island the immortal seed of broad Libya was poured out before its time," 42-44). There is a curious temporal contrast here, with vivid temporal and spatial deictics (νυν ἐν τᾷδ'… νάσῳ) enfolding the adjective ἄφθιτον, "unwithering." This description of the σπέρμα πρὶν ὥρας makes it at once untimely and out of time—a product of contingent chance that becomes everlasting.

At the same time as Libya is the natural soil for nurturing the growth of cities, Thera as *matropolin* offers a double parenthood for Cyrene that ties it to the physical earth of both Libya and Greece. The story of the clod of earth makes this double genealogy circular rather than parallel; the *sperma* of Libya is accidentally left on Thera, the island from which (according to this version of the myth) the original settlers of Cyrene came. It turns out, then, that the two mothers of Cyrene are one and the same, and the city's rootedness in the earth of Libya is anchored in the temporality of myth and the semi-divine as well as in a Theran migration that is locatable in historical time.

It is also the misadventures of this clod that allow the poem to make a crucial contrast between a vision of migratory—but teleological and destined—*apoikia* and the incorporation of a complex, non-indigenous exogamy in Cyrene's, and the Battiads', founding narrative:

> τετράτων παίδων κ᾽ ἐπιγινομένων
> αἶμά οἱ κείναν λάβε σὺν Δαναοῖς εὐρεῖαν ἄπειρον. τότε γὰρ μεγάλας
> ἐξανίστανται Λακεδαίμονος Ἀργείου τε κόλπου καὶ Μυκηνᾶν.
> νῦν γε μὲν ἀλλοδαπᾶν κριτὸν εὑρήσει γυναικῶν
> ἐν λέχεσιν γένος, οἵ κεν τάνδε σὺν τιμᾷ θεῶν
> νᾶσον ἐλθόντες τέκωνται φῶτα κελαινεφέων πεδίων
> δεσπόταν.[50]
>
> The blood of the fourth generation of children born to him [Euphamos]
> would have taken that broad mainland with the Danaans, for at that time
> they are to set out from great Lakedaimon, from the gulf of Argos,
> and from Mycenae.
> Now, however, he will find in the beds of foreign women
> a chosen race, who will come honored by the gods
> to this island and beget a man to be ruler of the plains with dark clouds.

Two visions of territorial hegemony are presented here. In one—which does not come to pass for the Battiads, but is based on the pervasive contemporary mythology of ethnic migrations—monarchical succession is legitimized through blood (αἶμα) even when displaced from its geographic origin (here, Boiotia, in line 46; note the mention of Euphamos' mother and literal place of birth, *Europa…tikte*). This putative Battiad migration would also be teleological, the fulfillment of a divine destiny. What intervenes, however, is human fallibility and maritime risk.[51] Instead, the aetiology of the monarchy becomes grounded in intermarriage between two populations, neither of whom are indigenous to Libya. The γένος ἀλλοδαπᾶν γυναικῶν here is the women of Lemnos, who encounter the Argonauts during their voyage.

All of this is told to us in the narration of Medea, one the most significant mythological exemplars of the many-faceted dangers that conjugal and reproductive

[50] *P.* 4.47-53.
[51] Treated more fully in Chapter 4.

disfunction pose to social stability. In *Pythian* 4, she is depicted as a prophetic figure, her speech embodying the fulfillment of a genealogical future at the same time as she infamously represents a paradigmatic conflict over exactly these issues—the meaning of her marriage and potential children with Jason and their relationship to her own political legitimacy.[52] *Pythian* 4 itself is represented as the teleological fulfillment of this process, focused through the figure of the contemporary Arkesilas. The poet's recapitulation of the Battiad genealogy is directly addressed to Arkesilas (ὦ Ἀρκεσίλα, *P.* 4.250) with its naturalized ending in the wise rulership of the current king (ὀρθόβουλον μῆτιν, 263). It ends with a self-conscious reflection on its own performance before its exiled subject and its monarchic addressee, with its ultimate teleology captured in this moment of performative political membership and social recognition.[53]

Like *Pythian* 3's description of Asklepios' untimely birth, Jason's story of his own birth shares characteristics, in his own narration, with a death:

> πεύθομαι γάρ νιν Πελίαν ἄθεμιν λευκαῖς πιθήσαντα φρασὶν
> ἁμετέρων ἀποσυλᾶσαι βιαίως ἀρχεδικᾶν τοκέων·
> τοί μ', ἐπεὶ πάμπρωτον εἶδον φέγγος, ὑπερφιάλου
> ἀγεμόνος δείσαντες ὕβριν, κᾶδος ὡσείτε φθιμένου δνοφερὸν
> ἐν δώμασι θηκάμενοι, μίγα κωκυτῷ γυναικῶν
> κρύβδα πέμπον σπαργάνοις ἐν πορφυρέοις,
> νυκτὶ κοινάσαντες ὁδόν, Κρονίδᾳ δὲ τράφεν Χείρωνι δῶκαν.[54]
>
> For I am told that lawless Pelias gave in to his white wits
> and usurped it by force from my justly ruling parents,
> who, as soon as I saw the light,
> fearing the violence of the overbearing ruler, made a dark funeral
> in the house and added women's wailing as if I died,
> but secretly sent me away in my purple swaddling clothes,
> and, entrusting the journey to the night, gave me to Chiron,

[52] For this argument on Medea's political status in Euripides at length, see Kasimis 2020; for Medea's relationship to the futurity (and presentness) of children, Nooter 2022. Interestingly, as Segal 1986, 71 notes, *P.* 4 never mentions the children of Jason and Medea. Of course, *P.* 4 is significantly earlier than Euripides' *Medea,* so I do not mean to suggest that the exact preoccupations of Euripides should be read back onto it—only that in particular, here, the resonances of dangerous femininity and exogamy are very important for the poem.
[53] See Chapter 4, p. 193-198.
[54] *P.* 4.109-115.

son of Kronos, to raise.

Why this figuration of his birth in terms of death and mourning—besides its function internal to the narrative? Jason's birth, as he narrates it, comes in the context of the theft of his political birthright by Pelias, who is also the audience for this story. As *Pythian* 4 has it, this violent (βιαίως) usurpation is hubristic and unjust (ἄθεμιν), and Jason seeks the restoration of his family's rightful rule. Like the birth of Asklepios, Jason's birth is figured as its opposite because, in this case, Pelias' interruption of the blood-based right of rulership in Iolcus has thrown the meaning of his birth and genealogy into doubt. Pelias emphasizes Jason's estrangement from his patriarchal birthright when he only makes mention of Jason's mother at their first meeting, not his father (98).[55] He also, perhaps ironically, associates deception about identity with pollution (99-100), while he himself is described frantically hiding his own fear at seeing Jason (95-6). Like in *Olympian* 6, the very concealment of Jason's identity stresses the central importance of its truth and eventual revelation to the poem and the social actors within it. This entire section of the poem narrates the ironic scrutiny of Jason the *xenos,* whose immediate recognition by his own father helps to put their conflict with Pelias into motion; as adult *xenos,* he recapitulates the process of scrutiny that should have established his legitimacy at birth.[56]

The question of familial recognition and rightful political status goes much deeper here, as well. Pelias and Jason's father are actually half-brothers, both born to the same mother, the wife of King Cretheus of Iolcus.[57] But Pelias is the product of an extra-marital affair with Poseidon, not a blood relation of the king himself. The conflict between Jason and Pelias is in fact an intrafamilial one, which puts at issue what a family means and defines legitimacy through the patriarchal line. It is also, practically, a conflict over a relatively

[55] Segal 1986, 174.
[56] See Chapter 4 for more on *xenia* (with specific attention to *P.* 4), as well as Sigelman 2016.
[57] These genealogical relations are explored in detail in Schubert 2004, 19-21.

narrow vision of individual status and power—that is, Jason's definition of the blood criteria for political power in Iolcus is highly restricted, and these criteria are only of blood. This is a conflict between individual elites, over individual inheritance and heritage, rather than any broader conception of class solidarity or of an allied aristocracy.

At issue here is also specifically political status, although the poem acknowledges the ways in which the economic and political are so often integrated. Jason specifically offers the material wealth of the family to Pelias in exchange for his own assumption of the rulership of Iolcus (148-155). This wealth may be legitimately Jason's—he defines it as stolen (149-150)—but, in this telling, it is also separable from the status of Iolcian king. Political status and the rightful accumulation of wealth may be associated, then, but what really grounds political status here is blood, not wealth, and its legitimacy is premised on proof of genealogy rather than the power of affluence.

This is all intimately related to the possible intentions and functions of *Pythian* 4. At the very least, the poem thematizes the return of the exile Damophilos to Arkesilas's court. At most, it may have served as an argument for his re-incorporation as a citizen of Cyrene or a celebration of Arkesilas's acceptance of his return.[58] It is precisely political status that is at issue here, with its attendant possible privileges of security, property, and perhaps the possibility of legitimate marriage and childbearing within the context of Cyrenaean recognition. The poem's incorporation of Medea's mantic voice, along with the poem's privileged view onto the truth behind the concealment of identity and conspiracy against legitimate power, suggests a role for the poet in enforcing a Battiad teleology even amidst the atmosphere of uncertainty, risk, and deception that continually characterizes the narrative action of the poem. It also points out, again and again, the ways that political status must be

[58] See: Potamiti 2015; Schubert 2004, 23-24; Felson 1999, 13; Carey 1980.

recognized and authorized. The poem itself attempts to ground this status in blood, giving it a kind of natural pre-recognition that it is later fulfilled by more ordinary social recognition.[59]

*Pythian* 4's simile of the oak tree powerfully captures this attempt to think of citizenship as natural and essential:

> εἰ γάρ τις ὄζους ὀξυτόμῳ πελέκει
> ἐξερείψειεν μεγάλας δρυός, αἰσχύνοι δέ οἱ θαητὸν εἶδος·
> καὶ φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα διδοῖ ψᾶφον περ᾽ αὐτᾶς,
> εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πῦρ ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον·
> ἢ σὺν ὀρθαῖς κιόνεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν ἐρειδομένα
> μόχθον ἄλλοις ἀμφέπει δύστανον ἐν τείχεσιν,
> ἑὸν ἐρημώσαισα χῶρον.[60]
>
> If someone with a sharp-bladed axe
> should strip the boughs from a great oak tree and ruin its splendid appearance,
> although it cannot bear foliage, it gives an account of itself,
> if ever it comes at last to a winter's fire
> or if, supported by upright columns belonging to a master,
> it performs a wretched labor within alien walls,
> having left its own place desolate.

Taking this simile as it is usually taken, as an imagination of Damophilos's potential life in a foreign city, shows a contrast between nature and artifice being mapped onto Damophilos's Cyrenaean citizenship. Abroad, he will always remain a metic, ἄλλοις… ἐν τείχεσιν, stripped of the place (ἑὸν ἐρημώσαισα χῶρον) where he naturally belongs. The unusual use of ψᾶφον here is perhaps an allusion to political action and participation, couched within a strong image of natural decay and deprivation (φθινόκαρπος, ἐρημώσαισα). There is a violence to this displacement, too, that suggests the gravity of its consequences and the active agency of Arkesilas. It is in his power to effect Damophilos's flourishing in his home of Cyrene or to condemn him to subservience (κιόνεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν) under a different hegemon. The simile also suggests a possible contrast between subservience in a foreign *polis* and a kind of natural freedom in Damophilos's native *polis*—despite the fact that it is, in fact, addressed to

[59] But even inherited excellence, sometimes depicted uncontroversially in Pindar, is subject to uncertainty and contingency: see Chapter 2, section I.
[60] *P.* 4.265-9.

Cyrene's monarchical ruler, and implicitly suggests that the power to certify Damophilos' membership in Cyrene is with Arkesilas alone.

*Pythian* 11, despite its interpretive difficulties, also offers a fruitful ground for thinking through these problems of the poet's voice and social authorization. Like the Medea of *Pythian* 4, there are few more famous examples of feminine transgression than Clytemnestra, whose story is a centerpiece of *Pythian* 11. The ode's disapproval of Clytemnestra's behavior towards her family is emphatic:

> τὸν δὴ φονευομένου πατρὸς Ἀρσινόα Κλυταιμνήστρας
> χειρῶν ὕπο κρατερᾶν ἐκ δόλου τροφὸς ἄνελε δυσπενθέος,
> ὁπότε Δαρδανίδα κόραν Πριάμου
> Κασσάνδραν πολιῷ χαλκῷ σὺν Ἀγαμεμνονίᾳ
> ψυχᾷ πόρευσ᾽ Ἀχέροντος ἀκτὰν παρ᾽ εὔσκιον
>
> νηλὴς γυνά.[61]
>
> [Orestes] who, indeed, at the slaughter of his father, was rescued
> by his nurse Arsinoa out from under the powerful hands of Clytemnestra,
> and away from her grievous treachery,
> when with the grey bronze she dispatched Kassandra,
> Dardanian Priam's daughter, along with Agamemnon's
> soul, to the shadowy shores of Acheron,
>
> pitiless woman.

Clytemnestra violates the norms of motherhood in this poem, highlighted by the contrast it draws between her and Arsinoa—the two names are placed directly next to each other in the line, with no closer juxtaposition possible. Family relationships are first and foremost at issue: Agamemnon is described as a father *(*πατρός, 17)*,* and Kassandra described in relation to her own father. These family roles are also gendered. Clytemnestra's identity as a *gune* is foregrounded, in contrast to the normative gender and family relationships of the *trophos* Arsinoa and *kore* Kassandra. Like Koronis and Medea, Clytemnestra's behavior has meaning far beyond her individual actions, but here the ode explicitly spells out its moral warning. The

[61] *P.* 11.17-22.

tone of this poem, composed for a Theban victor, is strikingly different from the odes for Hieron and the Battiads. As it takes up the problem of rumor spreading among citizens, it also takes on the venomous tone of gossip in the streets:[62]

> πότερόν νιν ἄρ᾽ Ἰφιγένει᾽ ἐπ᾽ Εὐρίπῳ
> σφαχθεῖσα τῆλε πάτρας ἔκνισεν βαρυπάλαμον ὄρσαι χόλον;
> ἢ ἑτέρῳ λέχεϊ δαμαζομέναν
> ἔννυχοι πάραγον κοῖται;[63]
>
> Was it then the sacrificial slaying of Iphigeneia at Euripus
> far from her homeland that provoked her to rouse up her heavy-handed anger?
> Or did nighttime lovemaking lead her astray
> by enthralling her to another's bed?

The voice of the poet performs here as if it is also a social actor, speaking to its peers (*philoi,* at 38) in a familiar social context. The ode then not only supports or describes but actually enacts mechanisms of social approbation that contribute to the enforcement of particular norms. Sometimes a policing eye, now a chiding voice, the ode participates in the social regulation which it also approves through the moral dramas it stages. Like the narration of the birth of Iamos in *Olympian* 6, a fear of concealment and uncertainty pervades this passage. Klytemnestra's potential transgressions are ἔννυχοι, made under the cover of night; the rhetorical force of the questions themselves suggests an atmosphere of ambiguity and uncertainty.

In *Pythian* 11, too, a discussion of the risks and benefits of marriage is closely associated with the social impact of wealth and the risks associated with accumulating it:

> τὸ δὲ νέαις ἀλόχοις
> ἔχθιστον ἀμπλάκιον καλύψαι τ᾽ ἀμάχανον
> ἀλλοτρίαισι γλώσσαις·
> κακολόγοι δὲ πολῖται.
> ἴσχει τε γὰρ ὄλβος οὐ μείονα φθόνον:

---

[62] Compare to *N.* 11, which also parallels *logoi aston* and *aoidai,* and takes up a decidedly colloquial tone: ναὶ μὰ γὰρ ὅρκον, ἐμὰν δόξαν παρὰ Κασταλίᾳ / καὶ παρ᾽ εὐδένδρῳ μολὼν ὄχθῳ Κρόνου / κάλλιον ἂν δηριώντων ἐνόστησ᾽ ἀντιπάλων ("For I swear, in my judgment, whether he went to Kastalia or to the well-wooded hill of Kronos, he would have returned home better than the opponents who competed against him," 30-32).
[63] *P.* 11.22-25.

ὁ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων ἄφαντον βρέμει.[64]

That sin is most hateful in young wives and impossible to conceal
because of others' tongues,
for townsmen are scandalmongers.
Then, too, prosperity sustains a matching envy,
whereas the din of a man of low ambition goes unnoticed.

The exact meaning of these last two lines is, of course, difficult to pin down.[65] But there is certainly an echo here of the tyrant's problem described by Xenophon in his *Hiero* (the tyrant's problem, perhaps, suggested in line 53). Wealth and success mean the risk of attracting attention in a negative way, attention that is clearly imagined as coming from within a political community (*politai*). What is also clear is the poem's preoccupation with the juxtaposition between the hidden and the revealed, the spoken and the unspoken, spurred by concerns about the sexual behavior of new brides. The poem's abrupt cut-off, introduced *philoi* at line 38, and its ever-shifting tone add to this gossipy, conspiratorial atmosphere.[66] Perhaps it is possible to see *Pythian* 11 miming multiple voices within a conversation of *philoi* or *politai,* enacting in its tone the very possibility of hidden, ambiguous speech and action that it thematizes. Particularly if the poem was composed, as consensus now has it, after Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, echoes of the *Oresteia*'s concern with speech, silence, and deception are not hard to see.[67]

The poem's tone following the break-off is almost choral, in its insistence on ethical pronouncement and its invocation of a collective *philoi* combined with the gnomic first person. These exact rhetorical concerns are also central to epinician poetics. As the poems work to construct a social discourse, they make judgments about what should and should not

[64] *P.* 11.25-30.
[65] For recent interpretations, see Hubbard 1990, Instone 1986, and Finglass 2007 *ad loc.*
[66] See Mackie 2003 on the possible use of the break-off in Pindar to navigate between appeals to different audiences—though I think these are all for the same audience.
[67] On dating and relationship to the *Oresteia*, see Kurke 2013, n.2 on dates and *passim* for a potential contrast with the poetics of Aeschylus; Hubbard 1990, 348; on arguing for the 474 date, Finglass 2007, 11-17.

be said, how truth in speech should be determined, and what the potential consequences of deception are. These discursive concerns are part and parcel of concerns about relation and reproduction, the importance of which is also discursively constructed. Socially, relation and reproduction also raise significant anxieties (as poems like *Pythian* 3 and 9 show) about truth and falsity, concealment and deception. When kinship is such a valuable tool for securing wealth and status, the importance of establishing the nature of particular kinship relations has high stakes. The meaning, too, of these relations and the responsibilities they invoke is heightened. For kinship to be an effective system within which status is supported and maintained, norms that regulate the behavior of family members and extended relatives towards each other must also be consistently enforced. Without an expectation that relatives materially support the status of their kin and can be relied upon as part of elite social networks, the social meaning and power of kinship would quickly erode.

Issues of translation aside, the ethical propositions of *Pythian* 11 seem straightforward on the surface. Imagined in the context of a conversation, however, the stiffly gnomic tone of the poem's second half might be seen instead as performative—the adoption of a more socially authorized speech genre when speech threatens to go astray. To confidently censure tyrannies (53) after just worrying that *olbos* will be subject to *phthonos* does not simply mean that the poem consistently contrasts the moral qualities of *tyrannos* and *olbos* as an unproblematic, positivist statement.[68] The form of this discourse is just as important as the content. In a context where the correct and socially useful forms of speech are of paramount importance, the poem itself participates in constructing and promoting certain of these forms. Across this transition between the two parts of the poem, perhaps the persona of the speaker

[68] See Finglass 2007, 117-8 for comparanda in archaic poetry, and the argument, citing Pavese 1975, p. 249, that "the statement is expressed as a comment on the tyrant's quality of life rather than a political judgment." The two functions need not, of course, be exclusive or opposed. Young 1968 agrees: "it is a general statement, in no way personal to Pindar" (15), in arguing against the strong historicism of Wilamowitz and Bowra in particular.

has realized that it, too, might be attracting unwanted attention and seeks to forestall criticism of its own.

The poem serves not only as a mime but also a model for elites who might find themselves in a similar situation. It does not simply reflect the social discourses in which it finds itself but both overtly and implicitly suggests how this discourse should be conducted and what the consequences of these kinds of norm violations might be. The middle break-off in *Pythian* 11 shows that an important and self-conscious transition is happening, between the socially active interest of the first half in transgressive crimes to the overtly moralistic tone of the second half. When the poem has so recently suggested that language is slippery, even dangerous, it is hard to imagine we should fully trust the poet who tells us, so ostentatiously, that he is veering back on course.

## V. **Genealogy and historical narrative**

*Olympian* 10 describes the impetus for the epinician composition alongside its mythological staging of the inception of the Olympic games, tying epinician origins to athletic ones. The story of this founding is full of violent conflict, which culminates in Heracles' triumph and delineation of the sacred precinct of Zeus. In the poem's moralistic interpretation of this story, a temporal teleology returns again:

> ταύτᾳ δ᾽ ἐν πρωτογόνῳ τελετᾷ
> παρέσταν μὲν ἄρα Μοῖραι σχεδὸν
> ὅ τ᾽ ἐξελέγχων μόνος
> ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον
>
> χρόνος. τὸ δὲ σαφανὲς ἰὼν πόρσω κατέφρασεν,
> ὅπα τὰν πολέμοιο δόσιν
> ἀκρόθινα διελὼν ἔθυε καὶ πενταετηρίδ᾽ ὅπως ἄρα
> ἔστασεν ἑορτὰν σὺν Ὀλυμπιάδι πρώτᾳ
> νικαφορίαισί τε.[69]
>
> But in this rite of first birth

[69] *O.* 10.51-9.

the Fates stood close by,
and the one who alone puts
genuine truth to the test,

Time. It moved forward and told the clear and precise story,
how Heracles divided the gifts of war
and sacrificed the finest of them, and how
he established the four years' festival with the first Olympic games
and its victories.

The reproductive metaphor frames the narrative here, as the founding of the Olympic games is depicted as a birth attended by the Fates and supervised—like the birth of Asklepios, or the labor of Evadne—by someone who can determine its meaning. Here, the conceptual metaphor assigns *moira* and *khronos* the supervisory role, and what for an Asklepios or Iamos would be the lineage or legitimacy of the child is here named as the truth of the story (in familiar language, with extra linguistic emphasis in the doubling of noun and adjective: ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον). No accident that birth and truth are associated here, just as the truth of the lineage of a Iamos or Jason (in *Pythian* 4) must be scrutinized and legitimized. Here is the metaphor at its maximal level of abstraction, freighted with the weight of divine authorization and underpinning the entire aetiology and organization of the flagship stephanitic contests at Olympia. Truth, birth, and chronological teleology are morally, and divinely, intertwined.

Like *Olympian* 9, *Olympian* 7 tells a birth story that goes beyond the human, but has ultimate reflexes back into the normative organization of contemporary political communities—in this case, on Rhodes:

φαντὶ δ᾽ ἀνθρώπων παλαιαὶ
ῥήσιες, οὔπω, ὅτε χθόνα δατέοντο Ζεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι,
φανερὰν ἐν πελάγει Ῥόδον ἔμμεν ποντίῳ,
ἁλμυροῖς δ᾽ ἐν βένθεσιν νᾶσον κεκρύφθαι.

ἀπεόντος δ᾽ οὔτις ἔνδειξεν λάχος Ἀελίου·
καί ῥά μιν χώρας ἀκλάρωτον λίπον,
ἁγνὸν θεόν.
μνασθέντι δὲ Ζεὺς ἄμπαλον μέλλεν θέμεν. ἀλλά νιν οὐκ εἴασεν· ἐπεὶ πολιᾶς
εἶπέ τιν᾽ αὐτὸς ὁρᾶν ἔνδον θαλάσσας αὐξομέναν πεδόθεν
πολύβοσκον γαῖαν ἀνθρώποισι καὶ εὔφρονα μήλοις.

ἐκέλευσεν δ᾽ αὐτίκα χρυσάμπυκα μὲν Λάχεσιν
χεῖρας ἀντεῖναι, θεῶν δ᾽ ὅρκον μέγαν
μὴ παρφάμεν,
ἀλλὰ Κρόνου σὺν παιδὶ νεῦσαι, φαεννὸν ἐς αἰθέρα νιν πεμφθεῖσαν ἐᾷ κεφαλᾷ
ἐξοπίσω γέρας ἔσσεσθαι. τελεύταθεν δὲ λόγων κορυφαὶ
ἐν ἀλαθείᾳ πετοῖσαι. βλάστε μὲν ἐξ ἁλὸς ὑγρᾶς

νᾶσος, ἔχει τέ νιν ὀξειᾶν ὁ γενέθλιος ἀκτίνων πατήρ,
πῦρ πνεόντων ἀρχὸς ἵππων· ἔνθα Ῥόδῳ ποτὲ μιχθεὶς τέκεν
ἑπτὰ σοφώτατα νοήματ᾽ ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνδρῶν παραδεξαμένους
παῖδας, ὧν εἷς μὲν Κάμειρον
πρεσβύτατόν τε Ἰάλυσον ἔτεκεν Λίνδον τ᾽· ἀπάτερθε δ᾽ ἔχον,
διὰ γαῖαν τρίχα δασσάμενοι πατρωίαν,
ἀστέων μοῖραν, κέκληνται δέ σφιν ἕδραι.[70]

The ancient stories of men tell
that when Zeus and the immortals were dividing the earth among them,
Rhodes was not yet visible in the expanse of the sea,
but the island was hidden in the salty depths.

Helios was absent, and no one marked out a share for him;
in fact they left him without any allotment of land,
although he was a holy god.
And when Helios mentioned it, Zeus was about to order a new casting of lots, but
Helios did not allow him. For he said in the gray sea,
He himself saw growing from the bottom,
a rich, productive land for men, and a kindly one for flocks.

And he bid Lachesis of the golden headband
raise her hands right away, and speak the great oath of the gods,
not misleadingly,
and consent with the son of Cronus that that island,
when it had risen into the shining air,
should thereafter be his own prize of honor. And the essence of his words
was fulfilled and turned out to be true.
There grew from the waters of the sea
an island, which is held by the birth-giving father of piercing rays,
the ruler of fire-breathing horses. And there he once lay with Rhodes,
and begat seven sons who inherited from him the wisest minds
in the time of earlier men;
and of these one begat Kameiros,
and Ialysos the eldest, and Lindos; each had his own separate share
of cities in their threefold division of their father's land,
and their dwelling-places were named after them.

[70] *O.* 7.54-76.

Here, the story of the birth of Rhodes is also the story of the birth of elite strategies for negotiating the division of resources. The contemporary social problem of conflict between the families and *poleis* of Rhodes is reflected in an original conflict between the gods at the very moment of Rhodes' creation. The birth of Rhodes from the sea is equated with the fulfillment of a prophecy and the taking of an oath, forms of teleologically and socially institutional speech here modelled through the divine authority of the gods in legendary time.[71] Out of this oath comes Rhodes, who then serves—somewhat like Pyrrha and Deucalion—as a generator of historical people through sexual reproduction. The cities of Rhodes are then the next generation from the sons of Rhodes and Zeus, related both to the land itself and to each other.

*Olympian* 7 is said by the scholia to have been inscribed in golden letters on the temple of Athena at Lindos.[72] The only evidence for this is textual, and much later than the poem itself: no extant material evidence supports it. The image is so compelling, however, that Leslie Kurke has argued that the poem's own invocation of materiality prefigured its physical inscription on the temple.[73] The poems discussed in this chapter relate teleology and genealogy on multiple levels: the victory is prefigured by genealogical history, the birth prefigured by conception, the death prefigured by birth. Whether or not this inscription of *Olympian* 7 at Lindos existed historically, the fact that later sources and scholars found the idea persuasive to the extent of searching for, and finding, evidence in the poem for it is telling.

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[71] See Maslov 2015, ch. 3 on representations of *marturia* as part of how "poetic authority is constructed *qua* social authority" (185).

[72] ταύτην τὴν ᾠδὴν ἀνακεῖσθαί φησι Γόργων ἐν τῷ τῆς Λινδίας Ἀθηναίας ἱερῷ χρυσοῖς γράμμασιν "Gorgon says that this ode is dedicated in the temple of Athena Lindia in letters of gold." (Schol. *O*.7, inscr., Drachmann I, 195 = 515 F18 *FGrH*).

[73] Kurke 2017, 18.

*Olympian* 7 was composed before the synoikism of Rhodes, but seems to almost predict this historical event in the way it narrates the origin of and relates the connections between Lindos, Kameiros, and Ialysos.[74] For later readers—around the turn of the third century, in the case of the Gorgon the scholiast, or in the twentieth and twenty-first, in the case of contemporary scholars—Pindar's story of Rhodes' birth seems to predict the island's future.[75] In this way, the poem effects its own reproduction regardless of whether it was inscribed or not. The cultural conversation about Diagoras, the history of Rhodes, and *Olympian* 7 has now outlasted any (potential or otherwise) golden letters at Lindos. The way that the poem associates itself so closely with the persistence of precious materials, and the association of these objects themselves with the athletic victory, has helped sustain its value even in the absence of its physical instantiation in such materials.[76] Inscriptions and dedications—both of which the golden letters represent—worked as both commemoration and performance, legitimizing and materializing the social decision-making that they represented. So, too, does the epinician ode participate in this practice of performing as well as attempting to fix the norms and meaning of social discourse.

[74] Kowalzig 2007, ch. 6, esp. p. 249-50, 262; Kurke 2016. Kowalzig's argument has less to do with Pindaric poetics per se and much more with the ode's embodiment of ritual practice and mythic innovation, which literally performs what it describes.
[75] Not to mention, perhaps, the future of his own poetry. See Felson 1980, 79.
[76] The "thingliness" of *O.* 7 that Kurke 2016, 18 describes. As she notes, *O.* 7's reference to material prizes for a victor is in fact unusual for Pindar.

## Chapter 4:
## The Poet and the Epinician Poem

### I. The poet and his audience

Pindar's patrons are represented in his odes as intensively social individuals, whose precarious status was historically and poetically negotiated within multiple networks of kinship and power and (hopefully) maintained diachronically through the poems' aspiration towards material and cultural persistence. While the focus in the preceding chapters has been on the wider social structures in which these individuals construct their status, the interplay between individual and institution is a constitutive feature of both status-making in a historical sense and the ideological poetics of Pindaric epinician.[1] The epinician victor exists as a dynamic social individual within the *polis* and within interconnected elite networks, but the fragility of individual status—as well individual human life and the body, on which that status partially depends—is also a concurrent site of vulnerability for epinician's aspirations towards cultural persistence.[2] The fragility of human life to which epinician repeatedly gestures is concentrated in the problem of the historical individual, with a vulnerable body, in his relation to both past and future.[3]

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[1] On this framework, see also Kurke 1991 on the twin problems of the tyrant as political individual and the *idiotes* in the *polis* (esp. Ch. 7 and 8). Connecting to the poet is Maslov 2015, 51: "Individuality lies at the heart of the logic of literature." Where I differ significantly from Maslov is in seeing a fundamental continuity, rather than rupture, between contemporary forms of social discourse and Pindar's poetic discourses. Maslov instead argues for "a fundamental disjunction between social discourse—for example, the discourse of religious celebration—and the literary discourse. Whereas the former results in a social fact, the latter aims at becoming what may be called a historical fact" (Maslov 2015, 182). For this project, historicity and sociality are importantly intertwined under the concept of social reproduction.

[2] The relevant distinction here is the individual elite, in competition with other elites, vs. the social institution (*polis,* form of *politeia,* association, religious institution, kinship, marriage) as a context for defining individual identity.

[3] For Pindar's references to the limited term of human life: *N.* 11.15-16, *I.* 8.14, etc. For this connection to contingency, Grethlein 2010, 6: "The temporality of human life is based on contingency, which tradition defines as '*quod nec est impossibile nec est necessarium*.' Denoting what is, logically and ontologically, possible, but not necessary, not only defined

Both the figure of the poet and the poem itself are implicated in this same dynamic of stability and instability. Like his victors, the poet gestures to his own precariousness and also towards the potential fragility of his poetry, both in terms of materiality and temporality and in terms of its social value and the potential persistence of its value socially and culturally. The individuality of the Pindaric poet himself—the voice of the Pindaric "I"—is famously difficult to pin down.[4] Pindar's first person is everywhere in the epinicians, and yet it continues to elude robust sociohistorical contextualization or biographical actuality. The scholia and *Lives* give vivid accounts of his life and work that differ substantially from each other and rely heavily on interpretations of the epinicians themselves.[5] Where we do find the persona of the Pindaric poet robustly represented, however, is in his self-representation as a singer, particularly in his metaphors for his own poetry.[6] This chapter analyzes the odes' metaphors and depictions of the poet and his poems, as well as their relations to the epinician subject, in order to argue that epinician strives to define itself as a social actor within the contemporary social institutions in which the poet and victor participate. In doing so, it

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the realm in which human life unfolds, but also forms our ability to look ahead and back in time." See also Theunissen 2000 on the "pessimism" of contingency that Pindar's metaphors attempt to manage.

[4] See introduction, p. 15-16.

[5] On the *scholia*: Lefkowitz 1976 and 1985.

[6] See Uhlig 2016, 104-5: "There are few ancient poets more overtly invested in fashioning their own life story than Pindar, an author who consistently, almost haphazardly, places his first-person voice and experiences in the foreground of his poetry. Not only does Pindar regularly include descriptions of his own process of composition within his works, he often recounts the social and economic factors that have compelled him to produce a poem and even narrates aspects of his life which, at least at first blush, seem to have little or no connection to a poem's primary purpose. Pindar suffuses his poetry with details of his life. So pervasive is his focus on his own first-person experience that itis hard to escape the conclusion that, as Giovanni Battista D'Alessio has argued, the creative genesis behind the ancient *bios* (or *bioi)* of Pindar must ultimately be traced back to Pindar himself. In other words, Pindar himself shared, indeed pre-empted, the biographers' desire to link his life to his poetic work. Alongside whatever other function they may have served, Pindar deliberately crafted his verses to create his own self-image." See D'Alessio 1994.

grapples with central questions of historicity, contingency, and fragility that these other contemporary institutions and ideologies also sought to address.

These themes are implicated in the odes' depiction of their own being and relation, to both the poetic persona and to the audience and subject of the odes. *Olympian* 6 contains a typical extended metaphor for Pindar's poetic activity, along with one of the rare potential biographical references to the poet himself:

> δόξαν ἔχω τιν᾽ ἐπὶ γλώσσᾳ ἀκόνας λιγυρᾶς,
> ἅ μ᾽ ἐθέλοντα προσέρπει καλλιρόοισι πνοαῖς·
> ματρομάτωρ ἐμὰ Στυμφαλίς, εὐανθὴς Μετώπα,
>
> πλάξιππον ἃ Θήβαν ἔτικτεν, τᾶς ἐρατεινὸν ὕδωρ
> πίομαι, ἀνδράσιν αἰχματαῖσι πλέκων
> ποικίλον ὕμνον.[7]
>
> Upon my tongue I have the sensation of a clear-sounding whetstone,
> which I welcome as it comes over me with lovely streams of breath.
> My grandmother was Stymphalian, blooming Metope,
>
> who bore horse-driving Thebe,
> whose lovely water I shall drink, as I weave for spearmen
> my varied hymn.

*Olympian* 6 represents the poet and his poetry much like one of his victors through this invocation of his own birthplace as mythological and genealogically divine, and the metaphorically naturalized connection between the voice of the poet and the land of his birth. His poem—here *hymnos*[8]—is *poikilos,* an adjective elegantly represented by the intertwined metaphorical threads of this highly self-conscious passage itself. The source of his poetry is

[7] *O.* 6.83-87.
[8] Maslov 2015, 224 on the blending of forms of communal performance with an image of "individual poetic craftsmanship:" "The end of the poem reveals a complicated performance scenario, apparently involving a chorus of Stymphalian citizens traveling to Syracuse, and the foregrounding of the poet's individual voice, mediating between the two communities, seems particularly opportune at that moment."

represented as both craft and divine inspiration at once, two predominant strains of Pindaric metapoetics.[9]

In fact, this very aspect of poetic form is explicitly thematized by Pindar in *Pythian* 1:

> καιρὸν εἰ φθέγξαιο, πολλῶν πείρατα συντανύσαις
> ἐν βραχεῖ, μείων ἔπεται μῶμος ἀνθρώπων. ἀπὸ γὰρ κόρος ἀμβλύνει
> αἰανὴς ταχείας ἐλπίδας·
> ἀστῶν δ᾽ ἀκοὰ κρύφιον θυμὸν βαρύνει
> μάλιστ᾽ ἐσλοῖσιν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλοτρίοις.[10]
>
> If you should speak to the point by combining (*suntanusais*)
> the strands (*peirata*) of many things
> things in brief, less criticism follows from men,
> for cloying excess
> dulls eager expectations,
> and townsmen are grieved in their secret hearts
> especially when they hear of others' successes.

Here, Pindar's own poem offers a social explanation for his characteristic layering of image and metaphor, which tends to skip from image to image without detailed expansion on a single concept.[11] In this self-conception, the richness yet under-elaboration of Pindar's poetic imagery is both a deliberate formal choice and a model for his audience. As in the poems discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Pindar includes himself as part of a discursive community with particular rules and norms, and positions himself as a discursive model for others. These discursive norms have a specific social purpose: the avoidance of enmity from the surrounding community. This persistent theme in the epinicians is not just a reflection on speech or poetry in general, but its functions as part of a community of *astoi,* holding within itself the potential for fracture, competition, and dissent. The shape of the odes is in part a self-conscious representation of social practice; as itself a discourse, it not only represents but

[9] A selection on craft: Steiner 1986, ch. 5, Norman 2022, O'Sullivan 2005, Kurke 1991, ch. 7, Power 2011. On inspiration, Muses, and the divine: Lather 2019, Maslov 2015, p.188- 212, Baxter 2019, ch. 1; Mackie 2003, 47-58. On this spectrum of metaphor: Auger 1987.
[10] *P.* 1.80-84.
[11] *P.* 1, of course, famous for its meditation on the efficacy and power of epinician performance from its very first lines.

actually enacts this practice rhetorically in the performance of the odes in a fifth-century context. It is not that Pindar's assertion here must necessarily reflect a real fear of what others might say about him, or serve as an accurate representation of diverse audiences' potential reactions to the speech of elites and to the poem itself. Rather, it works to create norms for speech that have an ideological underpinning in concerns about social conflict, just like those discussed in Chapter 1.

In particular, this passage does not offer advice to the audience not to be envious of the victor—instead, it cautions the victor about how to speak given the possibility of envious peers. It represents its direct addresses—its first imagined audience—as if they are also victorious elites who might be in danger of criticism. Whether or not this was in fact the primary historical audience of epinician, Pindar's audiences (both contemporary and in reception) are encouraged to identify themselves with both elite achievement and insecurity. While the evidence of Chapter 1 suggests this way of representing elite insecurity was widespread beyond Pindar, it need not be that the world was actually full of speech threatening elites for this to be an effective Pindaric technique.[12] At the same time as he suggests an apotropaic function for his own poetry, Pindar also introduces the idea of threatening speech into the ode before he speaks of how to ward it off.[13]

In addition, there is no indication that the dangerous speech Pindar describes has any particular association with different degrees of wealth or class.[14] In *Pythian* 2, he describes the dangers of envious speech and his own reaction to them while claiming this refers to a *polis* under any form of governance: ἐν πάντα δὲ νόμον εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνὴρ προφέρει, / παρὰ

[12] Following, in some sense, the principle of Uhlig 2016: "it is possible to acknowledge that Pindar's first-person statements are indeed 'biographical' without imputing any historical veracity, literal or contextual, to the claims which they set forth" (106).
[13] In *N.* 11.30-32, this kind of speech is literally introduced, mimicked in the voice of the poet.
[14] Or, *pace* Kurke, aristocratic versus democratic allegiance.

τυραννίδι, χὠπόταν ὁ λάβρος στρατός, / χὥταν πόλιν οἱ σοφοὶ τηρέωντι ("under every type of law the man who speaks straightforwardly prospers: in a tyranny, and where the raucous masses oversee the state, and where men of skill do," *P.* 2.86-8). We can just as easily imagine this discursive community as one of elites jockeying among themselves for status and position, within or between *poleis*—much like runners in an athletic race or sponsors for chariots. Thinking of the kind of intra-elite competition described in Chapter 2 as a primary context for this poetry also does not preclude discussing epinician as an ideology of elite interconnection and stability, which not only seeks to undergird the status of particular individuals but also to selectively project the idea of an interconnected elite identity as a means of forestalling precarity.[15]

In modelling and theorizing the benefits of this kind of discourse—indeed, in describing the poetics of his own poems—Pindar defines his own poetic activity within this sphere of self-effacing elite rhetoric. While this is a way of praising his own poetry and skill, just like the skill of his victors, it also serves to include both Pindar and his victors in a special discursive community marked by the very rhetorical features that so distinguish the forms of his own poetry. Throughout the odes, as well, the Pindaric poet is represented in many of the same images and language with which he represents his victors and their own divine genealogies and connections to place. The poet is repeatedly represented as an athlete, the poem a javelin or chariot that hits the mark or runs the distance.[16] Pindar's poetic "I" is consistently engaged in this project of self-representation, situating himself between the poles of his contemporaneous poetic activity and his social interactions with victors and other elites

[15] All concepts from Ch. 2. I use this word deliberately here despite its presentist overtones, since its combination of economic instability with the emotions associated with (real or possible) social and cultural marginalization is usefully provocative in this context.
[16] For "poet as athlete," Lee 1976, Lefkowitz 1984, Steiner 1986, ch. 10. Simpson 1969.

around him.[17] Yet, in contrast to his victors, the poet more rarely comes into focus as a historical individual through specific details.

One poetic feature of the Pindaric first person that reveals the significance of the epincians' self-representation as part of an active discursive community is the "break-off," or *Abbruchsformel,* where the poet self-consciously declares that he is in danger of saying too much or going too far. These passages often come in the form of a question, implicitly addressed to the contemporary audience(s) or (later) potential readers of the epinicians. The purpose of the break-off has been theorized in multiple ways, including managing tension between diverse audiences, performing humility in the face of divinity, and drawing attention to poetic skill.[18] Here, I focus on the dialogic form of these passages, which explicitly engage the audience of the epinician performance. Among other techniques of stepping into the first person and engaging in a dialogic form of address to the poem's audience, discussed below, these moments often represent a marked emergence of the poet's voice from mythological or other narrative, which comes in tandem with an address to his listeners. In addition, many *Abbruchsformeln* come in the form of metaphors—another moment where the poetic subjectivity, engaged in self-conscious figurativity, comes to the fore. This emergence of the poetic voice along with an implicit invitation of his audience works to create a discursive community of potential speakers between poet and addressees, one that has specific rhetorical norms attached. Regardless of who the actual audience of the poem is, every listener or reader is encouraged to identify as a member of this restricted elite discourse, built on specific aspirations and anxieties.

[17] Kuhn-Treichel 2020a has recently argued that the Pindaric I constituted in the epinicians, as opposed to other Pindaric genres, is particularly defined by its social networks and connections.
[18] See: Mackie 2003; Race 1990, ch. 2; Segal 1974; Patten 2009, p. 208-217.

These techniques of warning against particular types of speech and self-consciously stepping back serve as more than a simple positive model of elite rhetoric. Rather than modeling what should be said, they instead tend to warn of the dangers of saying too much—or the wrong things. In the same way, many of Pindar's self-referential metaphors also evoke uncertainty and danger. Sometimes, these poetic techniques are joined together. When narrating the story of Aristokleides of Aigina in *Nemean* 3, Pindar describes his victory as a metaphorical journey past the pillars of Heracles:

> εἰ δ᾽ ἐὼν καλὸς ἔρδων τ᾽ ἐοικότα μορφᾷ
> ἀνορέαις ὑπερτάταις ἐπέβα παῖς Ἀριστοφάνεος: οὐκέτι πρόσω
> ἀβάταν ἅλα κιόνων ὑπὲρ Ἡρακλέος περᾶν εὐμαρές,
>
> ἥρως θεὸς ἃς ἔθηκε ναυτιλίας ἐσχάτας
> μάρτυρας κλυτάς· δάμασε δὲ θῆρας ἐν πελάγεσιν
> ὑπέροχος, διά τ᾽ ἐξερεύνασε τεναγέων
> ῥοάς, ὅπα πόμπιμον κατέβαινε νόστου τέλος,
> καὶ γᾶν φράδασσε. θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἀλλοδαπὰν
> ἄκραν ἐμὸν πλόον παραμείβεαι;
> Αἰακῷ σε φαμὶ γένει τε Μοῖσαν φέρειν,
> ἕπεται δὲ λόγῳ δίκας ἄωτος, 'ἐσλὸς αἰνεῖν·'
>
> οὐδ᾽ ἀλλοτρίων ἔρωτες ἀνδρὶ φέρειν κρέσσονες·
> οἴκοθεν μάτευε. ποτίφορον δὲ κόσμον ἔλαβες
> γλυκύ τι γαρυέμεν.[19]
>
> Still, if the son of Aristophanes, who is beautiful,
> and whose deeds match his looks,
> embarked on the highest achievements of manliness, it is not
> easy to cross the trackless sea beyond the pillars of Heracles,
>
> which that hero and god set up as famous witnesses
> to the furthest limits of seafaring.
> He subdued the monstrous beasts in the sea,
> and on his own explored the streams of the shallows,
> where he reached the limit that sent him back home,
> and he made the land known. My spirit, towards what foreign
> headland are you turning my voyage?
> I bid you to summon the Muse in honor of Aiakos and his family;
> consummate justice attends the precept, "praise the noble."
>
> And no man should prefer to desire what is alien.[20]

[19] *N.* 3.19-32.

[20] Compare *P.* 3. Also see *I.* 8.10-15: ἀλλά / μοι δεῖμα μὲν παροιχόμενον and

> Search at home; you have won a suitable adornment
> for singing something sweet.

The rest of the ode narrates the achievements of mythical heroes connected to Aigina, tying the victor, poet, and hero together as part of the metaphor of the seafaring journey. But while the hero and, metaphorically, the athlete, reach and inscribe the limits of the known world—despite the difficulty—the poet tells us that he does not. This curious break-off seems to contradict the poet's potential aspirations towards achieving the same kind of fame as his victors, and his other statements about the persistence of song.[21] What it also does, however, is pointedly draw us back into the here-and-now of historical time, and out of mythical time. The nautical metaphor of the break-off is the bridge by which this transition is achieved: between the mythical journeys of Heracles in distant time and the poet's relation to Aristokleides in the moment of performance.[22] This pointed contrast also emphasizes the poet's relationship to Aristokleides and his family, rather than the poetic achievement *per se*. The contrast of the poet's disavowal of ἀλλοδαπὰν ἄκραν to Aristokleides' ἀνορέαις ὑπερτάταις is a self-conscious widening of the gap between victor and poet in the service of circumscribing (and describing) the poet's role in relation to the Aiakidai. Pre-eminent here, then, is the poet's situating of himself both physically (through the metaphor) and relationally close to Aristokleides and his Aiginetan family. Rather than simply parallel his poetic achievements to the achievements of the athlete, he represents his performance as νόστου τέλος, οἴκοθεν. The correct and fitting (ποτίφορον κόσμον) conclusion to the athletic victory

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καρτερὰν ἔπαυσε μέριμναν· τὸ δὲ πρὸ ποδὸς ἄρειον ἀεὶ σκοπεῖν / χρῆμα πᾶν. δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ᾽ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται, / ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον ("But / for me the passing of fear has stopped my strong anxiety; and it is best always to look at what is before your feet. For over men hangs a treacherous time / spinning out the path of life").

[21] See also Fearn 2017, p. 30-35, on the resistance to ethical teleology in the break-off of *Nemean* 5, which he interprets as Pindar inviting the audience, through this marked contradiction, to explore the poem's "open" attitudes towards the representational claims of both sculpture and poetry.

[22] "The poet is looking at past events here from a vantage point that is firmly anchored in the present" (Mackie 2003, 60).

is in the poet's proximity to, and intimacy with, the family of the victor in the here-and-now of, perhaps, Aigina itself.[23] The break-off returns us to historical time and to the primacy of encomiastic discourse between poet and victors, and it does so noticeably and ostentatiously.

## II. Precarity on the path of song

Another shared image between Pindar and his victors is the hodological metaphor, the "path of song" that is one of the most pervasive examples of a metaphor that shifts between image and reality for Pindar. For his songs did travel, and often—as perhaps the poet himself also did, and certainly represents himself as doing.[24] This moralized "straight road" is, like many other moments when Pindar's voice mingles with his social environment, representative of the right and wrong kinds of speech.[25] Returning to *Olympian* 6:

> ἐξ οὗ πολύκλειτον καθ᾽ Ἕλλανας γένος Ἰαμιδᾶν.
> ὄλβος ἅμ᾽ ἔσπετο· τιμῶντες δ᾽ ἀρετὰς
> ἐς φανερὰν ὁδὸν ἔρχονται. τεκμαίρει
> χρῆμ᾽ ἕκαστον· μῶμος ἐξ ἄλλων κρέμαται φθονεόντων
> τοῖς, οἷς ποτε πρώτοις περὶ δωδέκατον δρόμον
> ἐλαυνόντεσσιν αἰδοία ποτιστάξῃ Χάρις εὐκλέα μορφάν.[26]
>
> Since then has the family of the Iamidai been
> much renowned among Hellenes.
> Prosperity attended them, and by esteeming virtuous deeds
> they travel along a conspicuous road; everything they do
> confirms this. But blame coming from
> others who are envious hangs over
> those who ever drive first around the twelve-lap course
> and on whom revered Kharis sheds a glorious appearance…
>
> ὄτρυνον νῦν ἑταίρους,
> Αἰνέα, πρῶτον μὲν Ἥραν Παρθενίαν κελαδῆσαι,
> γνῶναί τ᾽ ἔπειτ᾽, ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ἀλαθέσιν

[23] With its founding mythology connected to the genealogy of the Aiakidai.
[24] See, for example, *O.* 7.13 for Diagoras of Rhodes, where Pindar actually represents himself stepping off the ship alongside Diagoras, presumably in Rhodes.
[25] The path of song: *O.* 9.47, For imagery of the straight road and its connections to athletic success, moral uprightness, and truth in speech: *O.* 7.91-3, *O.* 12.5-7. In particular, *P.* 11.37-40 for the poet's road. See also metaphors of the poet as an athlete and the importance of the straight javelin throw, etc.
[26] *O.* 6.71-76.

λόγοις εἰ φεύγομεν, Βοιωτίαν ὖν. ἐσσὶ γὰρ ἄγγελος ὀρθός,
ἠϋκόμων σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν, γλυκὺς κρατὴρ ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν.[27]

Now, Aineas, urge your companions first to celebrate Hera the Maiden,
and then to know if by our truthful words
we escape the age-old taunt of "Boiotian pig,"
for you are a true messenger,
a message stick of the fair-haired Muses,
a sweet mixing bowl of loudly ringing songs.

Here, the poet inserts himself into the position of the slandered individual, and, once more, opposes an ideology of "truth" to the insidious dangers of rumor. First the Iamidai, then the poet, are in danger of envy. The hodological and athletic metaphors are interwoven in lines 75 and 76, attached to the concept of *kharis* that is so important for Pindar.[28] This rare appearance of the collective first person in a context that explicitly invokes Pindar's own identity involves the poet, in his most individual and personal form, in navigating the treacherous social waters of elite competition. Aineas, too, is invoked in an explicitly social context, the second-person addressee paralleled, in metaphor, exactly to the poet himself (ἐσσὶ γὰρ ἄγγελος ὀρθός / ἠϋκόμων σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν, γλυκὺς κρατὴρ ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν, "for you are a true messenger, / a message stick of the fair-haired Muses, a sweet mixing bowl of loudly ringing songs").

The poem closes with an extended metaphor of maritime travel:

ἀγαθαὶ δὲ πέλοντ᾽ ἐν χειμερίᾳ
νυκτὶ θοᾶς ἐκ ναὸς ἀπεσκίμφθαι δύ᾽ ἄγκυραι. θεός
τῶν τε κείνων τε κλυτὰν αἶσαν παρέχοι φιλέων.
δέσποτα ποντομέδων, εὐθὺν δὲ πλόον καμάτων
ἐκτὸς ἐόντα δίδοι, χρυσαλακάτοιο πόσις
Ἀμφιτρίτας, ἐμῶν δ᾽ ὕμνων ἄεξ᾽ εὐτερπὲς ἄνθος.[29]

On a stormy night it is good
for two anchors to have been cast
from a swift ship. May the god loving grant a glorious destiny for these and for them
lordly ruler of the sea, vouchsafe a direct voyage

[27] *O.* 6.87-91.
[28] See also *P.* 10.64-8. Kurke 1991, ch. 4-6 on *kharis* as part of an ideology of gift exchange in the odes.
[29] *O.* 6.100-105.

that is free from hardship, and, husband of gold-spindled
Amphitrite, cause my hymns' pleasing flower to burgeon.

The environment in which the poem is transmitted, both physically (perhaps on a real ship) and socially ("my hymns' pleasing flower") carries the possibility of danger, for the sailor and for the budding poem. The looming storm requires preparations for its arrival, ones shared between the poet and audience. The imagery of the "two anchors" suggests a kind of mutual assurance, a shared understanding of and orientation towards social danger by the discursive community the poet sets up between himself and the audience, in the service of smoothing the path for both victor and poet.[30]

Likewise, in *Pythian* 2, the connection between hodological metaphor, real contingency, and social discourse structures the poem as a whole. The poem opens with an image of the poet literally traveling from Thebes to Syracuse, carrying the ode with him as a putative message from the Pythian games: ὔμμιν τόδε τᾶν λιπαρᾶν ἀπὸ Θηβᾶν φέρων / μέλος ἔρχομαι ἀγγελίαν τετραορίας ἐλελίχθονος / εὐάρματος Ἱέρων ἐν ᾧ κρατέων / τηλαυγέσιν ἀνέδησεν Ὀρτυγίαν στεφάνοις ("For you I come from splendid Thebes bringing this song / a message of the earth-shaking four-horse race in which Hieron with his fine chariot won the victory / and so crowned Ortygia with far-shining garlands," *P.* 2.3-6).[31] At the same time, the poet heavily thematizes his rejection of Archilochean blame poetry, wrapped up in a larger discourse about deceptive and envious speech and the poet's relation to it.[32]

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[30] See also the strong image at *P.* 10.51-2: κώπαν σχάσον, ταχὺ δ' ἄγκυραν ἔρεισον χθονὶ πρῴραθε, χοιράδος ἄλκαρ πέτρας ("Hold the oar! Quick, let the anchor down from the prow to touch the bottom, to protect us from the rocky reef").

[31] See also *P.* 2.62: εὐανθέα δ' ἀναβάσομαι στόλον ἀμφ' ἀρετᾷ / κελαδέων ("But I shall ascend a ship covered with flowers, and sing the praises of excellence") and 67-8: τόδε μὲν κατὰ Φοίνισσαν ἐμπολὰν / μέλος ὑπὲρ πολιᾶς ἁλὸς πέμπεται ("This song, like Phoenician merchandise, is sent to you over the gray sea").

[32] *P.* 2.53-6: ἐμὲ δὲ χρεὼν / φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν. / εἶδον γὰρ ἑκὰς ἐὼν τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ / ψογερὸν Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν / πιαινόμενον ("For my part, I must avoid the aggressive bite of slander. For I have seen, long before me, abusive Archilochus often in a helpless state, fattening himself with strong words and hatred"). On Pindar and Archilochus, Brown 2006.

ἄμαχον κακὸν ἀμφοτέροις διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες,
ὀργαῖς ἀτενὲς ἀλωπέκων ἴκελοι.
κερδοῖ δὲ τί μάλα τοῦτο κερδαλέον τελέθει;
ἅτε γὰρ εἰνάλιον πόνον ἐχοίσας βαθύν
σκευᾶς ἑτέρας, ἀβάπτιστός εἰμι, φελλὸς ὡς ὑπὲρ ἔρκος ἅλμας.
ἀδύνατα δ᾽ ἔπος ἐκβαλεῖν κραταιὸν ἐν ἀγαθοῖς
δόλιον ἀστόν· ὅμως μὰν σαίνων ποτὶ πάντας, ἄταν πάγχυ διαπλέκει.
οὔ οἱ μετέχω θράσεος· φίλον εἴη φιλεῖν·
ποτὶ δ᾽ ἐχθρὸν ἅτ᾽ ἐχθρὸς ἐὼν λύκοιο δίκαν ὑποθεύσομαι,
ἄλλ᾽ ἄλλοτε πατέων ὁδοῖς σκολιαῖς.[33]

Those who mutter slander are an evil that makes both sides helpless;
they are utterly like foxes in their temper.
But what does the fox really gain by outfoxing?
For while the rest of the tackle labors in the depths,
I am unsinkable, like a cork above the surface of the salt sea.
A crafty citizen is unable to speak a compelling word among noble men;
and yet he fawns on everyone, weaving complete destruction.
I do not share his boldness. Let me be a friend to my friend;
but I will be an enemy to my enemy, and pounce on him like a wolf,
treading every crooked path.

The maritime metaphor surfaces again, this time as an explicit invocation of the danger of sea-slash-speech and the poet's self-representation within this treacherous territory. This famous metaphor boldly declares the poet's exceptionality in terms of his own vulnerability, that is expressed in this maritime metaphor but then immediately connected to the idea of social vulnerability and danger. The poet explicitly gives us this interpretation of the metaphor—on the surface, there is no ambiguity here about what it means to float rather than sink. And the poet does not come by this safety alone. In *Pythian* 2, Hieron is also represented as symbol and securer of physical safety:

σὲ δ᾽, ὦ Δεινομένειε παῖ, Ζεφυρία πρὸ δόμων
Λοκρὶς παρθένος ἀπύει, πολεμίων καμάτων ἐξ ἀμαχάνων
διὰ τεὰν δύναμιν δρακεῖσ᾽ ἀσφαλές.[34]

And you, son of Deinomenes, before her door
the West Locrian girl invokes you; out of the helpless troubles of war,
through your power she looks at the world in security.[35]

[33] *P.* 2.76-85.
[34] *P.* 2.18-21.
[35] On the historical referent here, Woodbury 1978.

Just like this, the poet represents the relationship of his poetry to Hieron as one of safety and security: βουλαὶ δὲ πρεσβύτεραι / ἀκίνδυνον ἐμοὶ ἔπος σὲ ποτὶ πάντα λόγον / ἐπαινεῖν παρέχοντι ("And your wisdom beyond your years provides me with praise of you that cannot be challenged (*akindunon*) in any detail," *P.* 2.65-8). The poet is represented as Hieron's grateful subject in parallel to the Locrian *parthenos*. The gendering of this image puts particular stress on the dependency of social status—here transferring this dependency to the poet—and Hieron's real and figurative role in mitigating contingency for the poet himself. This is then transferred back to Hieron: it is the *epos,* this shared space of discourse benefitting both poet and tyrant, that is *akindunon*.

The ethics of *xenia,* as Asya Sigelman has observed, are consistently connected to both the metaphor of the song-journey and the poet's self-representation as a singer of his odes, as well as the synthetic temporalities of the epinician poems between past and present.[36] In *Olympian* 10, which also narrates the founding of the games at Olympia, the poet opens:

> τὸν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν ἀνάγνωτέ μοι
> Ἀρχεστράτου παῖδα, πόθι φρενός
> ἐμᾶς γέγραπται· γλυκὺ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέλος ὀφείλων ἐπιλέλαθ'· ὦ Μοῖσ', ἀλλὰ σὺ
> καὶ θυγάτηρ
> Ἀλάθεια Διός, ὀρθᾷ χερί
> ρύκετον ψευδέων
> ἐνιπὰν ἀλιτόξενον.
>
> ἕκαθεν γὰρ ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλων χρόνος
> ἐμὸν καταίσχυνε βαθὺ χρέος.[37]

[36] See esp. Sigelman 2016, p. 50-85. On *P.* 4, p. 75-6 and Ch. 4. See also Potamiti 2015 for *xenia* as a structuring principle in *P.* 4 as a whole; Curry 1982, ch. 4 on the theme of *nostos* and the "fallibility" of social communities; Kurke 1991, ch. 1 on *nostos* as the "return to the *oikos*" as part of the victor's reintegration; Theunissen 2000, p. 79-108, on spatial metaphors and conceptions of time, including in *O.* 10. For Grethlein 2010, *Olympian* 2's "emphasis on human fragility facilitates the reintegration of the victor into his community" (13) and "[t]he social return is embedded is a *nostos* to the temporality of human life that the victor has transcended for a moment. The reintegration at the cosmological level reinforces the social reintegration by calling attention to the human condition to which the victor is subjected in the same way as his fellow citizens" (43).

[37] *O.* 10.1-8. *O.* 10 is also interested in *physical* death (a bit like *P.* 2). See Steiner 1986, ch. 11, for physical death and literal immortality in the poems.

> Read me the name of the Olympic victor,
> the son of Arkhestratos, where it is written
> in my mind, for I owe him a sweet song
> and have forgotten. O Muse, but you
> and Zeus' daughter,
> Truth, with a correcting hand,
> Ward off from me the charge of harming a guest friend (*alitoxenon*)
> With broken promises.
>
> For what was then the future has approached from afar
> And shamed my deep indebtedness (*khreos*).

The teleology of the whole poem is represented in terms of a normative, reciprocal *xenia* relationship, as well as the fulfillment of a debt. This is not the only time this language of debt appears. In *Olympian* 3, *Pythian* 8 and *Pythian* 9, the poet also speaks of his relationship to the victor in terms of a debt (*khreos*). [38] In *Olympian* 10, this imagery is also intertwined with the imagery of textuality. In a sense, the poem exists materially before Pindar takes up its subject for performance; the teleology of the poem as a textual object, one situated in the future, is thereby implied even as the poem thematizes its own origins.[39] The logic of socioeconomic reciprocity maps onto the logic of poetic aetiology and teleology. Rather than assuming the poetic impetus comes first, searching for a way to describe itself in its social surroundings—or that the poetic meaning is directly mapped off of the social one—I wonder if this characteristic intertwining of images can be read less directionally. The elaborate layering of metaphors—debt, *xenia,* inscription—into a story about the origin of a poem that is also its *telos* describes an open-ended social world where *kharis* gains an important, iterative temporal dimension. The ideological institutions of elite reciprocity are wrapped into

[38] *O.* 3.7, *P.* 8.32, *P.* 9.104. The authoritative account of the importance of reciprocity and debt in Pindar is Kurke 1991. On this passage of *Olympian* 10, see Nooter 2023 on the interplay between futurity and debt here: "Pindar's opening admission of error thus introduces themes of restored futurity and tradition, suggesting that failure, forgetting, and the inexorable passage of time can be met with due compensation in the future, the same promise implicit in oaths, pledges, and financial contracts" (175-6).

[39] See Phillips 2017, p. 6-9 on "the debt…repaid before it has been constructed" and the resonances of γέγραπται with reading audiences.

Pindar's own story about the impetus for and ultimate function of his poem, supporting each other rather than the epinician poem being simply an imitative form of the institution. It is also through metaphor that these dynamics are fleshed out and their entangledness elaborated.

## III. Hodology, materiality, and *themixeny* in the Aiginetan odes

An enduring case study for the relationship of Pindar's poems to their surrounding environment, and the poet to his victors, is offered by the island of Aigina. Aigina is both privileged in Pindar's oeuvre and uniquely historically positioned in the fifth century. One-fourth of the extant epinician odes were composed for an Aiginetan victor.[40] The independent Aigina depicted in Pindar's odes also had special connections to Thebes, Pindar's birthplace, a relationship that the odes for Aigina emphasize.[41] The Aiginetan odes stand out not just for their number, but also for their unusual and distinctive content. David Fearn has argued that their characteristic invocation of family names and intertextual relationships with Pindar's paeans demonstrate an intimate knowledge of, and perhaps participation in, epichoric cult practices.[42] These epichoric practices are inward- rather than outward-facing; they involve the interaction of Aiginetans among themselves, rather than their performance towards the wider world. Pindaric epinician's relationship to the physical space of Aigina in the fifth century also seems to be one of knowledge and familiarity. The Aiginetan odes consistently display a sophisticated knowledge of Aiginetan spaces and monuments.[43] Though this

[40] Hornblower 2007, 293; there are 11 of 44 or 45 epinicians. The reasons why are contested and include both special characteristics of 5th-century Aigina—closer to the kind of argument I am making here—and speculation about archival practice and Alexandrian editing (also not inimical to my overall argument about the reproduction of elite practices of canonization). See Lowe 2007, Hornblower 2012, and Pavlou 2015 for more of this. Regardless, much of what we can know about how Pindaric epinician understands itself can be usefully gleaned from the Aiginetan odes, and they provide an important contrast (as well as complement) to the Sicilian corpus.

[41] On Thebes and Aigina in Pindar, Fenno 1995, Indergaard 2011.

[42] Fearn 2011.

[43] See, for example, Kurke 2017; Athanassaki 2011.

specificity of place has encouraged the assumption that many of the odes may have been performed *in situ*, the extent to which it is possible to consistently determine Pindar's specific engagement with Aiginetan spaces and places remains uncertain.[44]

Nevertheless, the odes for Aiginetan victors supply a number of central Pindaric metaphors that work towards the poet's self-definition and conception of his poetry. These metaphors are famously engaged with the material status of Pindaric poetry and its relationship to other forms of monumental commemoration in the fifth century, and they are centered around Aigina's reputation as a prolific producer and exporter of statuary. The openings of both *Nemean* 4 and 5, odes to Aiginetan victors, reflect on the relationship of Pindaric poetry to the physical space and cultural resonance of the island and *polis*, as well as to other material objects of commemoration:

> Θεανδρίδαισι δ᾽ ἀεξιγυίων ἀέθλων
> κάρυξ ἑτοῖμος ἔβαν
> Οὐλυμπίᾳ τε καὶ Ἰσθμοῖ Νεμέᾳ τε συνθέμενος,
> ἔνθα πεῖραν ἔχοντες οἴκαδε κλυτοκάρπων
> οὐ νέοντ᾽ ἄνευ στεφάνων, πάτραν ἵν᾽ ἀκούομεν,
> Τιμάσαρχε, τεὰν ἐπινικίοισιν ἀοιδαῖς
> πρόπολον ἔμμεναι. εἰ δέ τοι μάτρῳ μ᾽ ἔτι Καλλικλεῖ κελεύεις
> στάλαν θέμεν Παρίου λίθου λευκοτέραν·[45]
>
> It is for the Theandridai that I contracted
> to come as a ready herald
> of their limb-strengthening contests at Olympia and the Isthmus and Nemea.
> From there, when they compete, they do not return without the fruit
> of glorious crowns to their home, where we hear,
> Timasarkhos, that your clan is devoted to victory songs.
> But if indeed you bid me yet to erect for your maternal uncle Kallikles
> a stele whiter than Parian marble…

[44] For example, while there are no remaining odes that specifically mention the temple of Aphaia, perhaps the most prominent site of Aiginetan monumental architecture, Pausanias mentions a lost poem that Pindar allegedly wrote for the temple (fr. 89b Maehler). Both Lucia Athanassaki and Guy Hedreen have argued that *O.* 8 and *Paean* 6 are 'intertextual' with the pedimental sculpture from the temple, although the validity of this argument depends heavily on the disputed date of the temple's two iterations (Athanassaki 2011 and Hedreen 2011).
[45] N. 4.72-80. This is the only time in the corpus when Pindar uses the phrase ἐπινικίοισιν ἀοιδαῖς.

Like the other passages discussed in this chapter, this passage is characteristic for its mixing of metaphors for poet and poetry. The poet calls himself a κάρυξ, a herald, an image that is not only a representation of the actual announcement of victory but the process of performing and re-performing the epinician poem.[46] At the same time, he also represents his poem as a surpassingly radiant stele, a material object explicitly commissioned by the family and in the process of being constructed, the poem (as in *Olympian* 10) both forming, already formed, and seeking its own preservation in a context explicitly framed by the obligations and connections of kinship.[47] This is the same kind of dynamic, immanent teleology that lends an institutional character to the odes, in the way that they negotiate their endurance at the same time as their contingency, and that the very invocation of material contingency calls out for a framework of continuity.

Similar images arise in the famous opening of *Nemean* 5. Potential interpretations of these lines also demonstrate the ways Pindar's metaphors work as a rich site of interconnection between Pindar's immediate historical context and his aspirations towards future persistence.

> οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ᾽, ὥστ᾽ ἐλινύσοντα ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγάλματ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτᾶς
> βαθμίδος
> ἑσταότ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ πάσας ὁλκάδος ἔν τ᾽ ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ᾽ ἀοιδά,
> στεῖχ᾽ ἀπ᾽ Αἰγίνας, διαγγέλλοισ᾽, ὅτι
> Λάμπωνος υἱὸς Πυθέας εὐρυσθενὴς
> νίκη Νεμείοις παγκρατίου στέφανον,
> οὔπω γένυσι φαίνων τέρειναν ματέρ᾽ οἰνάνθας ὀπώραν,
> ἐκ δὲ Κρόνου καὶ Ζηνὸς ἥρωας αἰχματὰς φυτευθέντας καὶ ἀπὸ χρυσεᾶν
> Αἰακίδας ἐγέραιρεν ματρόπολίν τε, φίλαν ξένων ἄρουραν…[48]
>
> I am not a sculptor, so as to fashion stationary
> statues that stand on their same base. Rather, on board every ship and in every boat, sweet song, go forth from Aigina and spread the news that Lampon's mighty son Pytheas has won the crown for the pancratium in Nemea's games,

[46] See Kuhn-Treichel 2020a, p. 163-7, for the uniqueness of the imagery of the poet as herald in the epinicians.
[47] See Kurke and Neer 2019, ch. 2-3 and 8 on the "light effects" (261) and visibility of marble and one interpretation of Pindar's engagement with statuary.
[48] N. 5.1-7.

> not yet showing on his cheeks late summer, the mother of the grape's soft bloom,
>
> and he has glorified the Aiakidai, heroic warriors
> born of Kronos and Zeus and from the golden Nereids, and his mother city, a land welcoming to foreigners…

The first lines of *Nemean* 5 have become central to the scholarly understanding of Pindaric epinician's self-conception of its function. As here, Pindar's poems often invoke other forms of commemorative media, including inscriptions, statues, and monumental architecture.[49] The kind of relationship—agonistic, mutually supporting, or metaphorical—that these crafts have to each other for Pindar has been the subject of significant debate. *Nemean* 5 has been most often read as antagonistic, even triumphalist: Pindar is demonstrating the superiority of epinician over statuary as a form of commemoration.[50] Like all of Pindar's invocation of other commemorative media, however, this is a general rather than specific statement—that is, Pindar does not seem to allude to any specific statue, although we know of several that commemorated the same victories as his odes.[51] But the early fifth century saw a dramatic increase in the production of statuary, and this would have been an important medium for Pindar's patrons. What we know of Pindar's *floruit* and the heyday of formal epinician commissioning suggests that it tracked the proliferation of (primarily bronze) victor statues, at Olympia at least, quite closely.[52]

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[49] See e.g. Smith 2007 and other articles in Hornblower and Morgan 2007, Steiner 1993, Pavlou 2010.

[50] For the agonistic argument, Segal 1974; Steiner 1993. Fearn 2017, 17-28 both summarizes scholarly views and contests the binaries at work here, seeing this passage as a place where "the efficacy of both art and text, sculpture and poetry is at stake" (23).

[51] Most prominently, the chariot sculpture groups made for Hieron's victories at Delphi and Olympia.

[52] i.e. the last quarter of the sixth through the first half of the fifth century. Smith 2007 makes this argument in detail. There are some intriguing possible parallels in inscriptional practice to possible epinician features like reperformance—for example, the story of the Spartan victor, described by Pausanias, who erected one stele at Sparta and a matching one at Olympia (Paus. 6.16.8).

For R. R. R. Smith, these aristocratic patrons again show their skillful navigation between the old world and the new. Analogously to the functions of epinician poetry, "the last generation of Archaic privilege rode the back of the contemporary revolution in statue making."[53] For Smith, Pindaric epinician performs an analogical function to sculpture, in using new material possibilities to express and support old social ideologies. In different ways, both David Fearn and Richard Neer together with Leslie Kurke have suggested that new understandings of sculptural naturalism provoked Pindaric reflection on the materiality and efficacy of his poetry.[54] In Deborah Steiner's view, inscriptions and statues could be complementary to epinician, in much the same way as Crotty imagined epinician as the completion of the victory at the site of the games. Victory inscriptions, found at sanctuaries and in victor's *poleis*, could theoretically have functioned as an impetus for the re-enactment of an epinician performance, cueing the viewer to recall and re-perform the epinician ode.[55] In this paradigm, epinician is again privileged as the medium that looks furthest into the future, is most repeatable and enduring, and represents the pinnacle of memorialization. The unfulfilled teleology of victory ends in the immortalization of epinician.[56]

These questions, which implicate epinician poetry as both analogous to and deeply involved with other commemorative technologies, point towards an important aspect of epinician that the odes themselves are also concerned with. That is, Pindaric comparison between material objects and performed poetry also necessarily raises the issue of epinician temporality and persistence. It offers an analogical argument for the kind of material object

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[53] Smith 2007, 83. For Smith, the style of early classical sculpture is aimed at representing a new Greek identity in the wake of the Persian Wars; another way in which it imitates one widespread understanding of Pindaric epinician (the Panhellenic).
[54] Fearn 2017, ch. 1 takes up the language of "efficacy" at length; Kurke and Neer 2019.
[55] Steiner 1994, 174. We have no extant inscriptions that suggest this practice existed historically. For Leslie Kurke's argument that *Olympian* 7 was actually designed to be inscribed on the temple of Athena at Lindos, see Kurke 2016 and Chapter 3, section IV.
[56] Returning to Crotty 1982 and Kurke 1991 (for whom the *telos* is in the victor's reintegration).

that epinician poetry considers itself to be—the difficulty is in parsing the resonances of that analogical relationship. What kind of resonances would the invocation of treasuries and statuary have to the elite audiences of epinician?

The rich metaphors of the Aiginetan odes are a productive case study for thinking about the relations of epinician to its material contexts. For epinician's relations to statuary, coinage, inscriptions, and monumental architecture are not only aesthetic or philosophical. While the odes certainly meditate on their own ontology—what kind of objects they are, in a world of other objects—these objects are also socially situated, with important social meaning. Aigina in the fifth and sixth centuries was a prolific and well-known producer of statuary—statues that did move, as cargo on merchant ships sailing from the island to other parts of Greece.[57] When Pindar plays on the relationship of his poetry to statuary, doing so in the Aiginetan context has particular resonance.

A suggestive, though by no means conclusive, parallel for the opening of *Nemean* 5 comes in Book Five of Herodotus.[58] Herodotus tells a story about a conflict between Athens and Aigina, in which the Athenians attempt to topple two Aiginetan cult statues from their

[57] Hornblower 2007, 305. See also *I.* 2.43-8: μή νυν, ὅτι φθονεραὶ θνατῶν φρένας ἀμφικρέμανται ἐλπίδες, / μήτ᾽ ἀρετάν ποτε σιγάτω πατρῴαν, / μηδὲ τούσδ᾽ ὕμνους· ἐπεί τοι / οὐκ ἐλινύσοντας αὐτοὺς εἰργασάμαν. / ταῦτα, Νικάσιππ᾽, ἀπόνειμον, / ὅταν ξεῖνον ἐμὸν ἠθαῖον ἔλθῃς ("therefore, since envious hopes hang about the minds of mortals, / let the son never keep silent his father's excellence, / nor these hymns; for I truly / did not fashion them to remain stationary. / Impart these words to him, Nikasippos, / when you visit my honorable host [*xenos*]").

[58] By far the most detailed and sensitive reading of *N.* 5 together with Herodotus on the Aiginetans is Fearn 2017, ch. 1, with specific reference to this Herodotean passage in section IV, which delves deeply into questions of materiality, context, and aesthetics I can only touch on here. Fearn's suggestion (p. 22) that this reflection on aesthetics in the poem's opening is a self-conscious shift from the specific (Aiginetan) context to an appeal to broader literary audiences has something in common with my approaches in this chapter, although I want to keep my claims more focused around the construction of social discourse. Nevertheless, however, this conception of turning from a narrow to a broader audience is related to my argument for Pindar's deliberate construction of an elite listening subject, not necessarily a specifically local one. See also Indergaard 2011, p. 304-5 for Herodotus on Thebes and Aegina.

bases (ἐκ τῶν βάθρων), since they are made of Attic wood.[59] The plundering Athenians are interrupted by a thunderstorm and earthquake, which drives them back to Athens on their ship, where almost all of them eventually murder each other; in the end, only one Athenian returns alive to Phalerum (5.85.2). According to Herodotus this is the Athenian version; in the Aiginetan version, the put-upon statues fall from their bases to their knees, where they have remained up until the present day (5.86.3). A group of Argives crosses over from Epidauros to aid the Aiginetans, and in doing so meet the Athenians at sea and defeat them (5.86.4).

Herodotus finds this second version of the narrative about the statues less than credible, and the story, which is set around the end of the sixth century but is obviously meant to reflect on mid-fifth-century dynamics between Athens and Aigina, is clearly both anachronistic and allegorical.[60] However, its ideology is instructive. By introducing the Epidaurians, it invokes Aigina's founding stories and Aiginetans' purported ethnic identity. Its images and themes have remarkable resonances with *Nemean* 5: a concern with statues and their movement (or lack thereof), and a view outward to the maritime landscape surrounding Aigina and the risks and opportunities it presents as a sociopolitical landscape. It is suggestive that Pindar represents his songs as quite literal cargo, moving away from Aigina—just as real statues would have.[61] In emphasizing his poetry's ability to facilitate movement and interconnection, he also prominently highlights one of Aigina's central commercial activities. Rather than demonstrating the superiority of epinician, perhaps we can imagine the monumentalism of the statue-maker and the mobility of the epinician poet

[59] ἀπικόμενοι ἐς Αἴγιναν τὰ ἀγάλματα ταῦτα ὡς σφετέρων ξύλων ἐόντα ἐπειρῶντο ἐκ τῶν βάθρων ἐξανασπᾶν, ἵνα σφέα ἀνακομίσωνται ("coming to Aigina, they attempted to tear the images, as being made of their own [Attic] wood, from their bases so that they might carry them away," Hdt. 5.85.1).

[60] This Herodotean *logos* is examined at length, as part of a discussion of Herodotean treatment of Aigina, in Irwin 2011.

[61] A metaphor explored in detail in Kowalzig 2011.

working analogously, or in concert: the poet offering ideological purchase for monumental aspirations in a dynamic, geographically dispersed social discourse.

In this same vein, readings that pit Pindar the poet against immobile statues do not sufficiently engage with Pindar's persistent rhetoric of the risks of maritime movement—and not only as metaphors, but realities that attended poetic transmission.[62] From what we know of its composition and transmission, epinician did have to travel, perhaps relatively quickly, whether in the form of the poet, a written poem, or a chorus of performers.[63] By depicting his poetry as moving merchandise, which it genuinely was, Pindar also exposes it to maritime risk, a familiar feature of fifth-century life.[64] This element of danger is consciously introduced by his maritime metaphors, and the development of metaphor throughout the odes takes into account this precarious atmosphere.

There is more, then, to this metaphor than just a juxtaposition of two commemorative technologies, and not only a complex reflection on aesthetics and commemoration. The metaphors of the Aiginetan odes track the realities of Aiginetan life, and particularly its life in connection with the broader Greek world. Pindar may deny a similarity with immobile statues, but he inevitably summons the thought of Aigina's moving statues, which traveled in exactly the same way, and for some of the same purposes, as his epinicians did. It is therefore in these odes, too, that Pindar begins to deploy some of the techniques of metaphor and

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[62] And, of course, Pindar's own travels, e.g. to Hieron's court at Syracuse.

[63] In *Nemean* 3.1-3, for Aristokleides of Aigina, this temporality is actually explicit: ὦ πότνια Μοῖσα, μᾶτερ ἀμετέρα, λίσσομαι, / τὰν πολυξέναν ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι / ἵκεο Δωρίδα νᾶσον Αἴγιναν ("Lady Muse, our mother, I beg / come in the sacred Nemean month / to the Dorian island of Aigina, much-visited [*poluxenan*]").

[64] As Deborah Steiner: "The symbols of motion and of travel emphasise the instability of human life and fortunes, introducing metaphors of vicissitude and change throughout the poem's course…Motion, impermanence, and change all come together in the image of the voyage which functions at every level of the ode's subject and theme, binding song and material into a close complex" and "the sea includes the workings of such intangible devices as fate and fortune, time and destiny. It shares in the unpredictability these abstract influences display, making man a plaything at their mercy" (Steiner 1986, 66, 68).

figuration that attempt to compensate for the materially uncertain, contingent contexts in which epinician was composed, transmitted, and performed—like the moving, material statues of Aigina, bought, sold, and sailed to and from the island and her neighbors across the Greek world. The Aiginetan odes are where Pindar's rhetoric of *xenia* and *proxenia* is elaborated most consistently and at length.[65] This is part of how the odes compensate for their acknowledgement and description of both social and environmental risk—the slander of townsmen and the dangers of sea travel, which are metaphorically bound together in the odes' rhetoric.

This evocation of *xenia* and *proxenia* in an Aiginetan context is not only a function of, perhaps, expressing Aiginetan identity (the *themixeny* for which the island may have been known[66]) but also of the figure of the Pindaric poet. Henrik Indergaard's suggestion that Pindar may actually have been *proxenos* between Thebes and Aigina, or have modeled the relationships between Theban and Aiginetan odes on this kind of relation, is telling.[67] Elizabeth Irwin has written of "the Aeginetans' several identities—as Dorians, *thlassaokratores,* and as Greeks—and of the relation of these identities to each other that ultimately arose from the early and sustained success of her maritime economy."[68] What is more, the Aiginetan odes also link Aigina to Pindar's own birthplace, Thebes, in their invocation of shared mythological traditions as well as the contemporary political relationships between them.[69]

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[65] Hornblower 2007, 297-302.
[66] Discussed at length in Kowalzig 2011. See also Bacchylides 12.4-5. Again, too, this Aiginetan *themixeny* need not have been a "genuine" identity or cultural feature, unmediated by context—much more likely projected, or constructed, by the Aiginetans or their interlocuters because of their precarious geographic, political, economic position.
[67] Indergaard 2011.
[68] Irwin 2011, 378.
[69] For a thorough exploration of this relationship, Indergaard 2011. Although few of Pindar's Aiginetan odes can be securely dated, Pythian 8 is likely to have been composed in the 450s or 60s, with most of the others spread across the rough period 490-460. This was period of significant political and economic change for Aigina, centered around its (potential)

Unlike the *laudandi* of the Sicilian odes, Aiginetan victors may be wealthy, and connected through important kinship relationships, but the island functions under an oligarchic ruling class rather than the autocratic system of a Hieron or a Theron. These odes are largely for individual victors, in less prestigious and less expensive contests (e.g. wrestling and *pankration* as opposed to the major chariot races). And Pindar's representation of fifth-century Aigina is embedded in a mercantile ethos, which privileges the island's economic exports and prolific maritime connectivity.[70] This connective ethos is at the same time local—it is centered on Aigina and her contemporary residents, not on sanctuaries such as Olympia or Nemea. Rather, the odes have an intimately local texture that emphasizes both internal achievement and outreaching relationships to other Greek *poleis.* When Pindar appears as *proxenos* in the Aiginetan odes, it is as part of a specific, embodied individual relationship between *poleis* that is then abstracted under a larger moral framework.

This connection of the relational individual to the ethics of epinician in its social context is detailed and explicit in the Aiginetan odes:

> ξεῖνός εἰμι· σκοτεινὸν ἀπέχων ψόγον,
> ὕδατος ὥτε ῥοὰς φίλον ἐς ἄνδρ᾽ ἄγων
> κλέος ἐτήτυμον αἰνέσω· ποτίφορος δ᾽ ἀγαθοῖσι μισθὸς οὗτος.
> ἐὼν δ᾽ ἐγγὺς Ἀχαιὸς οὐ μέμψεταί μ᾽ ἀνὴρ
> Ἰονίας ὑπὲρ ἁλὸς οἰκέων· προξενία πέποιθ᾽· ἔν τε δαμόταις
> ὄμματι δέρκομαι λαμπρόν, οὐχ ὑπερβαλών,
> βίαια πάντ᾽ ἐκ ποδὸς ἐρύσαις…[71]
>
> I am a guest-friend. Keeping away dark blame,
> like streams of water I shall bring genuine fame

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mercantile economy, its shifting role in the Persian Wars and connections to other Greek poleis, and, in particular, its contentious relationship to Athens.

[70] Kowalzig 2011 makes this argument in detail, about Aigina itself; as she puts it, the "Aeginetan mythic self is profoundly linked to the island's commercial activities" (129). The relationship of the Aiginetan oligarchic elite to commercial activity has been contested; for these arguments, see Hornblower 2007, 300-302. See also Fisher 2015 against the idea of an Aiginetan aristocracy. For my purposes, what Aiginetans may have actually thought of themselves is less important than how Pindar represents them—and the idea of the island as both vulnerable and interconnected, in part commercially, much more important than that Aiginetans might self-define as merchants rather than landed aristocrats.

[71] *N.* 7.61-7.

with my praises to the man who is my friend,
for that is the proper reward for good men.
If any Akhaian man is nearby, one dwelling beyond
the Ionian Sea, he will not blame me; I also trust in *proxenia*,
and among townsmen
my gaze is bright, since I have not been excessive,
but have removed everything forced from my path…

The vocabulary of moral value and elite interconnection is rich and intertwined here. The poetic speaker identifies himself as a *xenos* as a way of labeling the discourse that follows, which lays out the functions of *xenia. Psogon* and *kleos etetumon* are explicitly opposed; as so often elsewhere in the odes, rumor and insults are made equivalent to lies and slanders. This passage is constructed to connect specific elite social practices to a broader conception of moral and social value. The language of desert and propriety— ποτίφορος δ' ἀγαθοῖσι μισθὸς οὗτος—mixes with ethnic and geographic specificity— ἐὼν δ' ἐγγὺς Ἀχαιὸς οὐ μέμψεταί μ' ἀνὴρ / Ἰονίας ὑπὲρ ἁλὸς οἰκέων ("If any Akhaian man is nearby, one dwelling beyond / the Ionian Sea, he will not blame me"). The poem paints a picture of a social world and community populated by specific kinds of social actors (Ἀχαιὸς ἀνήρ), whose presence (ἐγγύς) regulates and evaluates the behavior of the poet and the victor. Like the shifting deixis of poems like *Pythian* 4, discussed below, the mediation between near (ἐγγύς) and far (ὑπὲρ ἁλὸς οἰκέων) demarcates a distributed social network that operates at multiple scales. In *Nemean* 4, some of these actors are explicitly named; elsewhere, as here, they are defined in terms of geographic location and ethnic identifier.

At the same time, this active social world is also abstracted: "I trust in proxeny," the poet says (προξενίᾳ πέποιθ'), using the abstract noun for the social institution rather than any specific person or *polis*. These are not simply individual relationships, with their heightened risk of uncertainty or failure. Proxeny is a relational institution, which provides a superstructure for the relation of individuals and a model for how the Pindaric persona relates to elite social networks. Pindar has been thought to portray himself, in this poem, *Nemean* 4,

and *Olympian* 9, as a *proxenos* of Thebes to either Aigina or Molossia, or both. Isocrates (*Ant.* 166) reports that he was *proxenos* to the Athenians; an opposing argument is that the Thearion of *Nemean* 7 is *proxenos* from Aigina to Molossia, and Pindar is rather speaking for him.[72] Regardless of whether (or when) Pindar actually was *proxenos* or not, this poem is engaged in defining the function and value of *xenia* and *proxenia* in a specified social community. It embodies the figure of the *proxenos* and theorizes Pindar's persona in terms of an identity as *xenos*.

The signal metaphors of Pindaric art, and the ones that seem to tie him most closely to his mobile, material world—the inaccessible direct context of the poems' composition and performance—flourish in the Aiginetan odes. Their metaphors describe a moving, changing world, where security and success are structured through systems of reciprocity and interconnection that lie somewhere between *polis* identity and individual social identity. At the same time, this particular *polis* context is represented as part of a larger, interconnected elite social world, populated by specific historical individuals as well as indefinite representations of contemporary elites imagined as an audience both for the poem and the behavior of poet and victors. The framework of the social institution and the discursive conditions for its preservation are not confined to tyranny and monarchy—this is represented, in Pindar, as a consistent elite strategy across diverse forms of political organization and places in the Greek world. When the poet appears, he appears as a (real and metaphorical) traveler, a *xenos*, a *proxenos,* a host. The lack of personal detail combined with this identification with contemporary social institutions encourages the identification of the poet with these institutionalized practices, rather than as a particular historical individual.[73]

[72] See Burnett 2005, p. 195 n. 36, for these arguments; also Hornblower 2004, p. 180.
[73] The function of these lacunae might also be central in a literary-critical sense. Pindaric "obscurity," or his working against interpretive clarity, is an important part of his self-canonizing strategies. See especially Hamilton 2003 for this argument, and Patten 2009.

## IV. Metaphor on the surface

How seriously can we take these metaphors as a description of Pindar's contemporary social world? A signal problem in Pindaric studies has been the construal of Pindar's figurative language, which is both wide-ranging and often obscure. In particular, scholarship has focused on the figure of the Pindaric "I" as well as metaphors for Pindaric poems and poetry; what results is a picture of a complex, self-conscious meta-literary discourse.[74] An overarching focus of this body of work is on epinician's arguments for its own re-performance and temporal endurance, as well as its engagement with contemporary social and political environments. Like the emergence of the "poetic I," Pindar's metaphors are a critical site through which he develops a sense of "literariness" and reflects on his own poetic activity.

At the same time, Pindaric metaphors are vivid sites of contact with the extra-textual world in which his poems were commissioned, composed, and performed.[75] Digging into these metaphors as arenas of mediation between what is text-internal and text-external is an essential part of seeking interpretative approaches to Pindar that appropriately balance the contextual evidence available (or more pertinently, not available) and the complexity and opacity of the extant texts. As earlier discussed, Anna Uhlig has recently challenged the allegorical method of reading the ship-of-state poems of Alcaeus, using an approach that opens up important opportunities for Pindaric poetry, as well.[76] Uhlig's readings of Alcaeus seek to answer the question of the poet's maritime imagery not by reference to political

[74] For the first-person in Pindar, see introduction, p. 15-16 and Lefkowitz 1963 and 1995. For Pindaric literary self-consciousness, the most recent (and excellent) study is Maslov 2015; for metaphor in particular, drawing on the work of Olga Freidenberg on metaphor as concept-formation, p.130-146. On metaphors for poet and generally: Steiner 1986, Bernard 1963, Patten 2009, Eckerman 2019.
[75] Compare, perhaps, the Homeric simile—particularly its interpretation in the *Iliad*.
[76] Uhlig 2018.

allegory in a sympotic performance context, but by the material context of actual maritime practice and material experience. In doing so, she exposes the powerful hold that allegorical interpretations of Greek lyric poetry have maintained as part of the late twentieth-century turn towards a focus on the immediate performance contexts of extant poems. Allegorical interpretation, in this reading, fills in the gaps between the poems and the historical record.[77] In the absence of robust historical records, allegorical readings allow the literary and cultural historian to produce nuanced historical narratives through the combination of detailed reading of textual sources with conclusions drawn from less (often, much less) granular sources of historical evidence.

Similarly, understanding Pindar's performance context is hobbled by a lack of evidence for any of its concrete manifestations: outside of the corpus itself, little information remains to us about exactly how Pindar's poetry was composed, transmitted, and performed.[78] As a result, prevailing interpretations have turned instead to Pindar's audiences, imagined largely as local to the odes' subjects but occasionally (as in the case of *Paean* 6) as multi-national audiences in Panhellenic contexts (e.g. sanctuaries and athletic competitions).[79] These audiences are, in part, conjectured from the evidence given in the odes—an approach which can risk circularity. In nearly every case, it is precisely Pindar's metaphors for his own activity that offer evidence for the circumstances of epinician performance.

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[77] Uhlig perceptively argues for the robust links between performance studies and New Historicism regarding archaic and early classical lyric (73-81). Her argument—which I find convincing—is that New Historicist methods have consistently stepped in to fill the gap in historical understanding of specific lyric performance contexts.

[78] Some explorations of this problem include Heath 1988, Carey 2007, Clay 1999, Currie 2004, Eckerman 2007 and 2012, Hubbard 2004, Morris 2012.

[79] See, e.g. Morrison 2007 and Morris 2012 for broad conceptions of audience, across both space and time. For *Paean* 6 and the Aiginetans in particular, Rutherford 1997.

Like the works of Alcaeus, Pindar's poems combine the mythological and the robustly contemporary. They shift between the present of performance and the legendary past, between metaphors that shade into reality and mythology that serves as genealogy and aetiology for living people and recent accomplishments. For Pindar, it is similarly difficult to determine where the boundaries between reality, analogy, and metaphor begin and end. Barbara Kowalzig has written of the "transcultural poetics" of Greek dithyramb, which, in her view, begin to privilege the mobile, international space of the sea over local references and allusions in the late sixth to early fifth century.[80] In this way, the sea shifts between real and imagined space, importing the realities of maritime experience into the expressions of a particular cultural form. Kowalzig interprets the development of these poetics as closely tracking the economic and sociopolitical development of the late sixth to early fifth century Aegean. As in Kurke's interpretation, song's "commodification" is a result of increasing maritime connectivity; the erosion of the local goes hand in hand with the rise of economic development and international relations. Local identity is lost in favor of the shifting, undefined space of the sea—marked not by specific geographic boundaries but by its both real and conceptual associations with mobility, contingency, indeterminacy, and interconnection.[81]

This debate has an important reflection in Pindaric studies. Claims about how closely Pindar's metaphors map onto his fifth-century reality are also claims about the aesthetic and

[80] Kowalzig 2013, 54.

[81] For Kowalzig, local identity in song is supplanted, in the late sixth to early fifth century, by a new Panhellenism that is typified by the maritime space. It may not be necessary to go so far in this argument—and perhaps, again, in Pindar, this "Panhellenism" is an opportunistic projection related to aspirations of elite status maintenance among other elites, not a reflection of real ethnic identification or cultural shift. Uhlig's Alcaeus, in contrast, features in an argument for "maritime aesthetics" that serves "as authentic a feature of archaic song culture as were the symposia in which songs of the sea were so often sung." Rather than a mark of the decline of local identities, it is a persistent, and long-standing, feature of Aegean poetic cultures.

cultural legibility of his poetry; the Pindaric metaphor, and the odes' use of analogy and figurative language more generally, stands at the heart of this process. Blurring the boundaries between materiality and abstraction is part of Pindar's management of his poems' material and cultural contingency, just as his representations of *xenia* and *basileia* are addressed to his and his victors' social instability. The identity of the poet and the nature of his poems—social, cultural, and aesthetic all bound together at once—is negotiated in metaphor, not only in image and concept but in the form of these metaphors and the extent to which the poetic voice interprets or elaborates them (or not). Their deployment draws on the specific textures of Pindar's contemporary social world and the very immediate social questions that surrounded him. Wherever we date a maritime aesthetics, and regardless of the kind of wholesale commitment that can be made to it, a kind of "surface reading" is useful in stressing the elements of Pindaric epinician that have material correlates and are engaged in a complex relationship to the actual practices surrounding epinician composition and performance. An accurate accounting of epinician purpose and form takes into account the spaces and metaphors within which it inscribes itself, as well as the full range of its subjects and analogical relations. Along with their engagement with the victor and *polis*, these metaphors are critically engaged with the figure of the epinician poet and of the epinician poem. They inscribe epinician's relationship with the historical communities it was composed for; at the same time, they allow the poet to identify with both the contingent and the institutional aspects of contemporary practices. This contingency and persistence are not only material: they are consistently engaged with the question of epinician's social value and place in its surrounding—and future—social world.

## V. *Pythian* 4 and the containment of contingency

The fluid, contingent operations of social, political, and economic connection—the moments of meeting, the risk of social trust, the contingency of physical mobility—are everywhere represented in the odes. Alongside their prominent rhetoric of persistence, the epinicians wrestle with uncertainty, possibility, betrayal, and failure. In doing so, they hint, once again, that they seek to construct rather than reflect the social stability that Pindar and his patrons aspired to. This time, the creation of these putatively stable social networks includes the figure of the poet, and implicates the nature of his poetry.

A preeminent example is *Pythian* 4. As Chapter 3 shows, *Pythian* 4's narrative of Jason's legitimate restoration is infused with value judgments about blood-based rights to sociopolitical status, filtered through fundamental concerns with exogamy, foreignness, and status recognition. Outside of the inset narrative, *Pythian* 4 is also practically concerned with legitimacy, nativity, and belonging. The ode is thought to have been written on the occasion of a dispute or resolution between Arkesilas IV of Cyrene and the exile Damophilos. Exactly who commissioned it and on what occasion it was performed is less certain. Perhaps Arkesilas commissioned the poem as an expression of his magnanimity in welcoming Damophilos back into the fold; perhaps it was Damophilos who paid Pindar to compose a magisterial gift, or persuasive argument, to celebrate or convince Arkesilas of the decision to accept his return to Cyrene.[82] Whether Damophilos was welcomed back to Cyrene and whether the poem was ever performed there—or even sent—is impossible to know. The ode itself, however, is carefully constructed to mediate between these multiple possibilities and its own role in effecting them. Nancy Felson has written of the "shifting" temporal and spatial deixis of *Pythian* 4, which layers and moves between the past and present of Cyrene, the

[82] See Nicholson 2000, n. 2 for these potential interpretations.

here-and-now of the performance, Damophilos in Thebes, and ultimately, the experience of "future recipients" and audiences.[83]

It is difficult to measure whether Pindar's epinicians had any effect on social cohesion, political and ethnic identity, or the public approval of any particular victor at the time they were composed and performed. It is reasonable, however, to conjecture that Pindar, his patrons, and members of their diverse elite communities may have believed—or been invested in the possibility—that epinician could have these kinds of functions.[84] Epinician was integrated into social and cultural institutions with significant meaning and power, which supported its importance in the fifth century itself. At the same time, however, it is later perceptions of Pindar's extraordinary literary ability that have credited him with the power of self-canonization and the shaping of historical memory—a function derived, at least in part, from his participation in fifth-century techniques of status-making. Definitions of the "literary" for Pindar's epinicia, then, are importantly grounded in Pindar's approach to representing and participating in fifth-century social practices.[85]

What did success mean for Pindar's epinicians in their contemporary context? Despite the ambitions of audience-focused scholarship, we have little direct evidence about the effect of Pindaric performance, and what we do have (conjectures based on the odes, contemporary or near-contemporary literary references) is confined to a narrow slice of Pindar's potential audiences—educated, elite, cosmopolitan men. That is to say, it belongs primarily to what Simon Hornblower calls the "horizontal" plane of intra-elite communication and status-

[83] Felson 1999, 31.
[84] See Ch.1. As did, for example, the Ptolemaic rulers who revived it.
[85] Well-established ideas about how Pindar adopts and transforms contemporary (esp. "authoritative") forms of social discourse support this development from social practice into literary form; see Maslov 2015 and Wells 2009. Through the "surface reading" of metaphors, I am interested in broadening this conception into practice rather than only discourse, though they are of course related. See also D'Alessio 1994, 138: the "construction of the poet's *literary* persona in this period cannot be divorced from the construction of his *social persona*."

making,[86] and assumptions about Pindar's effect on "vertical" relationships—between rulers and their subjects—are not supported by any similar evidence. For the purposes of this project, it may not mean much whether Pindaric epinician ever "succeeded" in re-integrating a victor, establishing a particular identity for the citizens of a *polis*, or comforting a dying tyrant. The evidence given by epinician itself makes it impossible to distinguish between idealized, constructed, or projected organizations of social power—ones that would benefit Pindaric patrons—and the actual, more complex social contexts that surrounded epinician production.[87]

In the case of the odes for the Battiad monarchy of Cyrene, Peter Agócs has suggested that Pindar's attempt to present Cyrenaean history as teleological and fulfilled by the monarchy's success is belied by historical events: "the monarchy's fall falsified Pindar's ideological fabrications, reducing his odes to the status of literary texts."[88] What constitutes a fabrication in this schema, and what constitutes a reduction? For Agócs, the "literary" means something literally non-historical, a deliberate fiction that strove but failed to affect the course of events in reality. In Agócs' reading of *Pythian* 4 as an example of typological history, the poem's critical flaw is its tendency to look backwards, fixing a vision of the future that must be essentially similar to the past in order to preserve the stability of the monarchy as a political institution. Like the monarchy, the legitimacy of Pindar's story was vulnerable to exogenous shocks, that could not be contained by a stabilizing discourse destined to remain internal to the epinician poems themselves. Using an ideologically inflected, teleological version of the past to argue for an unchanging future encompasses an

[86] Hornblower 2007, p. 8.
[87] Just as it is functionally impossible to distinguish between "real" and "imagined" deixis (Felson 1999).
[88] Agócs 2020, 257. Kurke and Neer 2019 (Ch. 5 and 6) rely on a distinction between the "historical" and "mythological" stories of Cyrene's foundation in the three Cyrenaean odes, but part of the point is that these stories are mutually supporting in their typological construction.

essential weakness, a vulnerability Agócs calls the uncovering of "fabrication" or "fiction"—in opposition to "history" or "truth."[89] The idea of the ode's "reduction" here throws some productive light on Pindar's intertwined ambitions in the poem. Yes, he attempts to represent Cyrenaean history as stable and teleological, out of properly contingent, historical time. However, the mythological narrative of the poem is suffused with images of uncertainty and vulnerability, ones which would map, in a typological schema, onto the present (and future) of poet and audience. In a schema where future events must necessarily repeat past ones in order to validate the efficacy of the ode, epinician's claims must always be vulnerable to disproval.

It is true that this representation of teleological history is a fundamental epinician technique and one of the most common structural patterns in the composition of Pindar's odes, and one Pindar shares with many Greek authors and genres. However, defining exactly what the *telos* of the epinician poem might be—if it cannot be a lack of historical change—is useful in thinking through not only the potential effects of the poem but also how the poet situates himself historically in relation to his audiences. Jonas Grethlein offers an especially useful perspective on ideas of teleology with his definition of the historian's *telos*: "*telos* does not signify the historians' ulterior motives, e.g. to entertain or educate their readers, but the vantage point from which a course of events is told. Posteriorit*y* endows the historian with a superior stance" as the one who constructs a narrative of the past based on a vantage point unavailable to historical actors.[90] *Contra* a strict opposition between teleology- and

[89] And Pindar is no stranger to the discourse of poetic falsehood (e.g. *P*. 2.72-81); see Segal 1986, 127-30 for deception in *Pythian* 4. Fearn 2017, 226, also: "Encomiastic lyric poems necessarily manipulate historical temporalities, but the consequent reconfigurations of those temporalities mean that they do not necessarily conform or map easily back onto the historicities which the powerful may wish to control." 199: "*Pythian* 1 seems to be going out of its way to stress the interstices between lyric and historical constructions of the natural and mythological realms through the poetics of temporality and ecphrasis."
[90] Grethlein 2013, 4.

experience-oriented historiographies, Grethlein suggests that "teleology and experience are not without links…the anticipation of the future by historical agents prefigures the teleologies of historians."[91]

In the same way, the interfolding of temporalities so characteristic of epinician links the future-oriented experience of the past—whether mythic or historical—to the imagined vantage point of the future. Epinician's approach to teleology is neither simplistic nor monolithic, and *Pythian* 4 offers a glimpse into how these schemas are constructed and their potential failure is theorized in terms of the poet and the poem. The ode both gestures at the possibility of contingency and, at a critical moment, argues for the security of the poet rather than the monarchy. Many arguments about Pindaric poetics describe a mutually supporting relationship between victor and poet, in which the achievement and *kleos* of each goes on indefinitely supporting the other, into immortality.[92] And yet, something of value seems to remain in *Pythian* 4 even when the possibility of Battiad persistence has been historically disproven. What kind of persistence can the epinician ode have when it seems to have failed to affect the historical inheritance and maintenance of political power?

Nigel Nicholson has described the "polysemous" ideology of *Pythian* 4, which brims with rich description and a dizzying array of interlayered social and intellectual concepts.[93] The ode performs a multilayered blending of apoikism and foundation stories, genealogy and marriage, *xenia* and familial relations, prophecy and divinity, victory and kingship. Its sense of teleology is strong and it is explicitly invested in the legitimacy of sole rulership (*P.* 4.165-6, τοῦτον ἄεθλον ἑκὼν τέλεσον: καί τοι μοναρχεῖν / καὶ βασιλευέμεν ὄμνυμι προήσειν,

[91] *ibid*., 4. Also useful perhaps: "The look back permits us to master the contingencies to which we are subject in life, to replace vulnerability with sovereignty. Teleology can thus serve as a means of coping with temporality" (5). My suggestion is that this "sovereignty," for Pindar, is both philosophical and literal: it means real social power.
[92] e.g. Lefkowitz 1984.
[93] Nicholson 2000, 192.

"willingly fulfill (*teleson*) this quest, and I swear that I will deliver up to you the royal power (*monarkhein*) and the kingdom (*basileuemen*)"). At the same time, however, the ode sprinkles its representations of the past with insinuations towards indeterminacy. Euphemus' clod of earth, a divine guest-gift (ξένιον, 35), is washed ashore too early (πρὶν ὥρας, 42) after being mistakenly lost at sea. The poet's act of narrating the past means a return to a beginning (τίς γὰρ ἀρχά, 70) which is nearly synonymized with danger (τίς γὰρ κίνδυνος, 71). The potential for genealogical falsehoods, demanded by a stricken, crafty Pelias, recalls the epinician poet's concern with mysteries and lies (99-100). Jason's legitimate return is accompanied by familial reunion and feasting (120-131). After this triumphal narrative, however, danger returns in the form of another voyage, that of the Argo (μή τινα λειπόμενον / τὰν ἀκίνδυνον…αἰῶνα, 185-6), and the risks of the Ἀξείνου στόμα (202, a poetic play on the name of the Euxine or Black Sea) where the Argonauts again find themselves ἐς κίνδυνον βάθυν (207).

It is at this point that the epinician poet of *Pythian* 4 also represents himself as being on a journey, one he says he can manage more safely and quickly than others:

> μακρά μοι νεῖσθαι κατ᾽ ἀμαξιτόν· ὥρα γὰρ συνάπτει· καί τινα
> οἶμον ἴσαμι βραχύν· πολλοῖσι δ᾽ ἄγημαι σοφίας ἑτέροις…[94]
>
> Returning by highway is too long; for time is pressing me
> and I know a short path: for many others I lead the way in skill…

One of the more striking *Abbruchsformeln* in the corpus for its direct reference to the poet's own skill, this passage stands in sharp contrast to the many twists and turns of the Argonauts on their perilous journey within the narrative. In the context of the *xenia*-teleology of the odes discussed so far in this passage, the poet's assertion here has multiple layers of meaning. On the surface, it signals that the ode is making a temporal shift, beginning to reach its end in both the story of Jason and returning to the here-and-now of the performance.

[94] *P.* 4.247-9.

Indeed, the poem immediately afterwards narrates the Argonauts' arrival in Lemnos, planting the seed for the unbroken line of γένος Ευφάμου "the family of Euphamos" (256). The reproductive and migratory journey of these descendants is fulfilled in the founding of Cyrene and in the person of Arkesilas, who is addressed in the second person (259-60). After this, the historical narrative is abandoned, and the voice of the poet takes over. The pressures of time (ὥρα) and space (ἀμαξιτόν, οἶμον) are directly addressed by the epinician poet. These are nothing less than fundamental issues of poetic representation, part metaphor, part aesthetic reflection. The poet may actually be on a highway, or a ship; the time of this statement in the poem may line up perfectly with the time of performance of the actual poem. By associating responses to the exigencies of—perhaps even the manipulation of—time and space with poetic skill, the poet's voice provides an interpretation of his own metaphor. While this risks seeming too obvious on the surface, the formal qualities of this authoritative poetic voice are important here. The emergence of the poet's own hermeneutic authority is central to the last sections of *Pythian* 4, and useful in thinking through what position the poet takes on the function and effectiveness of his own poems.

The last section of *Pythian* 4, after the mythological narrative has been tied up, is suffused with metaphor. The great metaphor of the oak tree that opens this sequence returns us to the present time of the poem's composition and performance:

> γνῶθι νῦν τὰν Οἰδιπόδα σοφίαν. εἰ γάρ τις ὄζους ὀξυτόμῳ πελέκει
> ἐξερείψειεν μεγάλας δρυός, αἰσχύνοι δέ οἱ θαητὸν εἶδος·
> καὶ φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα διδοῖ ψᾶφον περ᾽ αὐτᾶς,
> εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πῦρ ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον·
> ἢ σὺν ὀρθαῖς κιόνεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν ἐρειδομένα
> μόχθον ἄλλοις ἀμφέπει δύστανον ἐν τείχεσιν,
> ἐὸν ἐρημώσαισα χῶρον.[95]
>
> Now come to know the wisdom of Oedipus: if someone
> with a sharp-bladed axe
> should strip the boughs from a great oak tree
> and ruin its splendid appearance,

[95] *P.* 4.263-9.

> although it cannot bear foliage, it gives an account of itself,
> if ever it comes at last to a winter's fire
> or if, supported by upright columns belonging to a master,
> it performs a wretched labor within alien walls,
> having left its own place desolate.

Again, there is an explicit self-consciousness to the metaphor here. The poet as much as calls it a riddle, encouraging the idea that it requires interpretation—and perhaps, the right interpreter. In this sense, the poem is performing, not simply invoking the idea of, a restricted discursive community. The riddle is meant to be recognizable to those who understand the meaning behind the metaphor, and its enigmatic form is also meant to make this understanding self-conscious: an interpreter both understands the metaphor and his own participation in the interpretive game, where meaning is not accessible to everyone. This metaphor, likely meant to evoke Damophilos' potential life in a foreign *polis* under a foreign government, delineates the importance of sociopolitical recognition through the concepts of nature and artifice; like the naturalized genealogies and athletic bodies of Chapter 2, citizenship and belonging is enfolded within these same legitimizing frameworks.

The oak metaphor is paired with two related medical ones:

> ἐσσὶ δ᾽ ἰατὴρ ἐπικαιρότατος, Παιάν τέ σοι τιμᾷ φάος·
> χρὴ μαλακὰν χέρα προσβάλλοντα τρώμαν ἕλκεος ἀμφιπολεῖν.
> ῥᾴδιον μὲν γὰρ πόλιν σεῖσαι καὶ ἀφαυροτέροις·
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ χώρας αὖτις ἔσσαι δυσπαλὲς δὴ γίγνεται, ἐξαπίνας
> εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἀγεμόνεσσι κυβερνατὴρ γένηται.[96]

> But you are a most opportune healer, and Apollo Paean honors your light.
> One must apply a gentle hand to tend a sore wound:
> it is easy even for weak men to shake a city to its foundations,
> but to set it in its place again is indeed a difficult struggle,
> unless a god suddenly comes to guide its rulers.

This metaphor almost certainly refers—and is directly addressed—to Arkesilas, cast as a healer for the potential double affliction of both Cyrene and Damophilos. Later, Damophilos's return is described as the healing of a disease:

[96] *P.* 4.270-74.

ἀλλ᾽ εὔχεται οὐλομέναν νοῦσον διαντλήσαις ποτὲ
οἶκον ἰδεῖν, ἐπ᾽ Ἀπόλλωνός τε κράνᾳ συμποσίας ἐφέπων
θυμὸν ἐκδόσθαι πρὸς ἥβαν πολλάκις, ἔν τε σοφοῖς
δαιδαλέαν φόρμιγγα βαστάζων πολίταις ἡσυχίᾳ θιγέμεν,
μήτ᾽ ὢν τινι πῆμα πορών, ἀπαθὴς δ᾽ αὐτὸς πρὸς ἀστῶν.[97]

But he prays that at some time, when he has drained his cup of ruinous affliction,
he will see his home, and, joining the symposium near the spring of Apollo,
yield his spirit often to the joys of youth, and attain peace,
holding the well-made lyre among his skillful fellow citizens,
bringing no pain to anyone, and himself unharmed by his townsmen.

Like the metaphor of the oak tree, which naturalizes Damophilos's political status in relation to Arkesilas as hegemon, these metaphors of disease and healing cast the ruler and his subject as parts of a sociopolitical body whose health and order is badly disturbed by the exile's displacement. Unlike the metaphor of the oak, the ode actively interprets both of these metaphors of disease for its audience. The epinician poet directly explains what he means by the "wound" and Arkesilas as "healer"—a disturbed city and a god-guided ruler. And for Damophilos, running the course of his disease explicitly means returning home and becoming an uncontroversial participant in his social community: healing means bringing no harm to his peers and receiving no harm from them in return. Rather than thematizing the exile as originally disruptive and his removal as necessary to the security of the state, it is instead Damophilos' absence that fractures Cyrenaean *hesukhia*. The vision of social harmony here is in direct contradiction to the many images of fractious, suspicious *astoi* and *politai* throughout the odes, and this *hesukhia* is tied to some of Pindar's strongest metaphors of safety and good order, physically and politically. Crucially, Damophilos is represented in one last, specific way: as the player of a *phorminx,* exactly as Pindar often represents the persona of the poet and his, in explicitly performance-oriented, here-and-now, or metapoetic contexts.[98] This vision of a restored Damophilos in orderly civic space is also a vision of the

[97] *P.* 4.293-7.
[98] See: O. 1.17, O. 2.1, O. 3.8, O. 4.2, O. 7.12, P. 1.1, P. 2.71, N. 4.44, and N. 9.8. I leave out references to aetiological or mythical performances here. Compare also the self-consciously

place of the poet and his poetry, who occupies the center of a harmonious symposium—*politai* here, then, very likely a synonym for a small circle of elite men.[99]

As the poem returns to the here-and-now, then, there is also a re-emergence of a stronger poetic first-person. This poetic voice not only implies the necessity of interpreting his riddles but actually models this interpretation for the audience. While hermeneutic openness often seems so characteristic of Pindaric epinician, here is a case where the poet attempts to constrain the possible interpretation of his metaphors. Regardless of the poem's actual historical and potential future audience, there is at least one represented listener who is explicitly defined in the poem's closing lines: it is Arkesilas, who is addressed in the second person more than once in this poem. The "short path" that Pindar delineates leads, teleologically, to the present, imagined as the xenophilic reunion of Arkesilas and Damophilos.[100] The poem ultimately ends, however, not with Cyrene but with Thebes:

> καί κε μυθήσαιθ᾽ ὁποίαν, Ἀρκεσίλα,
> εὗρε παγὰν ἀμβροσίων ἐπέων, πρόσφατον Θήβᾳ ξενωθείς.
>
> And he would tell, Arkesilas,
> what a spring of ambrosial verses he found,
> when he was recently a guest (*xenotheis*) at Thebes.

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metapoetic depiction of Achilles playing the *phorminx* at *Iliad* 9.185-190, which is almost certainly a referent here.

[99] On the question of the symposium as a space of exclusion: Jones 2014, Hammer 2004. On the symposium in Pindar between public and private, Indergaard 2011, p. 298-99 and Grethlein 2010, p. 41-3; Clay 1999; Budelmann 2012.

[100] Unlike Agócs, Sigelman sees this intrapoetic vision of harmony as having extra-poetic effects: "However, a look beyond the extrapoetic functions of Pythian 4 suggests a more profound development of the theme of the efficacy of the poetic word: Pythian 4 does not simply request; it actually effects Damophilos' return home to Cyrene. I will discuss how, by submerging the extrapoetic world within the bound-less, sea-like element of song, Pythian 4 achieves that of which it sings right before the eyes of its audience. Extending his poetic-prophetic powers beyond the confines of the epinician songworld, Pindar restores Damophilos to Cyrene, thereby healing pre-existing rifts within the extra-poetic world." (Sigelman 2016, p. 111). I would argue that even if this is the *intention,* it is important to stress that it is impossible for us to know if this was historically the case.

The metaphorical hodology of the poem, then, does not map perfectly onto its theorized socio-spatial teleology—Damophilos returning to Cyrene. While Damophilos is represented as in Cyrene speaking to Arkesilas, his speech locates himself again in the past, with Pindar at (perhaps?) the place of composition of the poem and certainly the home of the poet. At its very end, then, the poem performs another recursion of its shifting spatio-temporal *deixis*, this time in an explicitly defined moment of meta-narrative. Its ultimate *telos* is not simply in Damophilos' restoration of Cyrene, but that this return to social integration in Cyrene allows Damophilos to tell Arkesilas about the hospitality of his host in Thebes, the epinician poet. We end, then, not with the restoration of the individual in historical time but with the repetition of the epinician poet's *kleos* in terms of his self-representation as a *xenos* and its relation to the potential persistence (here, ἀμβροσίων) of his poetry itself.[101]

*Pythian* 4's acknowledgement of historical contingency is expressed primarily through narratives of travel, particularly maritime travel, and travel's accompanying risks—not only dangers to life and limb on the road, but the uncertainty of meeting strangers abroad and the threats that hegemons face by both outside arrivals and pretenders at home. These narratives are consistently emplotted through a series of xenophilic vignettes, making the dangers of the journey also a metaphor for social danger. Relations of *xenia* compensate for contingency experienced on the journey, and are the moments in which the monarch's legitimacy is both contested and restored. Both the content and the context of the poem are linked through the metaphor of the journey. The ode carefully manages social contingency and social status, within its inset narratives, in its self-representation, and in its likely contemporary function.

The last lines of *Pythian* 4, where Arkesilas' and Damophilos' contemporary situation is most directly addressed, are also where the poet appears in one of his most strikingly situated

[101] See, in parallel, Grethlein 2010's argument for the function of *Olympian* 2 in reintegrating the victor Theron and securing his memory, as "the confrontation of the dangerous force of chance and strategies to overcome it."

passages. Like his patrons and victors, metaphors and realities of elite social connection structure Pindar's engagement with contingency and historicity in terms of his poetry as well as his poetic persona. Pindar draws on contemporary social practices to make his poetic persona legible as a socially authorized individual in contexts where political power was often rooted in the physical security, genealogy, and kinship status—the real and metaphorical blood—of the individual body, and in the formalized social relationships between both individuals and states (each sometimes standing for the other). The social institutions meant to safeguard these powerful bodies and statuses are also the terms in which the poet describes himself.

For many audiences, Pindaric epinician seems to offer an irreducible ambiguity in the constant shifting of image and meaning, myth and self-representation. This ambiguity—this openness to interpretation—may be a poetic technique with its eye on a temporally vast set of potential audiences.[102] At the same time, certain of these techniques have recognizable social purposes that are legible within Pindar's contemporary world, and the moments when Pindar resolves his own metaphorical ambiguity are so often moments that describe the norms of discourse and social communities. They create a sense of a specific, restricted elite discourse community connected to potential sociocultural stability and longevity and expressed in metaphors of travel, *xenia*, inscription, debt, and monumentality. The precariousness of both the social and the material are intertwined by metaphor. Poetic language, then, becomes inextricably associated with material conditions—and perhaps, comes to seem necessary for establishing their security.

[102]As Kuhn-Treichel 2020a: since the persona of the poet is "vor allem durch intradiskursive Relationen definiert," "bewirkt die referenzielle Unschärfe in paradoxer Weise einen Gewinn an Aussagepotenzial, weil sie die Rezeptions- und Interpretationsmöglichkeiten des Gedictes steigert" (334).

## Conclusion:
## Textual Reproduction as Social Reproduction

What makes *Pythian* 3 a "consolatory" poem? In its closing lines, the poet tells us that literary fame is precarious and uncertain and implies that only a select few have potential access to it. What kinds of social norms and values is it important for the epinician audience to be invested in in order to see this poem as a consolatory one? And in what sense is it meant to console—on the level of emotion, or logic, or pragmatic recompense for what might be lost? In the framework that this project has established, what Hieron's health and life represent in this poem go beyond the possible loss of an individual life or quality of life. The tyrant's health, both physically and ideologically, is intertwined with outbranching systems of value that always enfold the physical body of the elite individual in terms of his kin, communities, status, and the institutions that regulate the meaning of these terms.

Emotions are social phenomena; their causes and their functions in the world go beyond the internal experience of the individual, particularly in the context of discrepancies in status and power.[1] Political scientists Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker argue that "representation is the process through which individual emotions become collective and political."[2] In a setting like the public performance of epinician, no emotion elicited by the performance could avoid being shaped by the sociopolitical context in which it arises. Even a private reading of Pindar's poems will continue to be shaped by these dynamics, as the potential for both reperformance and transmission through literary reading strategies is laced

[1] Excellent explorations of the dynamics of power and emotion in antiquity include Sanders and Johncock (eds.) 2016, with a particular focus on persuasive rhetoric; Chaniotis 2012 and 2020, Chaniotis and Ducrey 2014, which examine a wide range of evidence.

[2] Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 506. Also: "Representations are neither authentic nor passive. There is always a level of interpretation involved or, to express it differently, there is always a gap between a representation and what is represented therewith. This aesthetic gap is in many ways *the source of politics* for it contains and often masks the power to depict the world from a particular perspective" (506, emphasis mine.)

through the patterns of Pindaric poetics. As Pindar constructs his audience as part of a specific social group with particular norms and regulations, even the later—even much later—reader is implicated in perpetuating and participating in these social frameworks. As Hutchison and Bleiker write:

> Power, then, is central to the constitution of emotional subjectivity; power relations play a key role in determining what can, cannot, should, or even must be said about the self and one's emotions…Emotional power works discursively, diffused through norms, moral values, and other assumptions that stipulate − often inaudibly − how individuals and communities ought to feel and what kind of ensuing behavior is appropriate and legitimate in certain situations.[3]

If modern readers are inclined to mourn for Hieron, then, what is particularly tragic about his depiction in *Pythian* 3? I suggest that a critical approach to this question emphasizes the anxieties of interconnection, longevity, and power that are at the heart of the ode, and the (somewhat suppressed) tension it describes between the potential death of the physical body and the perpetuation of personal status and memory. If this poem is to elicit grief for Hieron, an audience must be seized by the same fear that our status dies with the death of our bodies, and we must be—or become—invested in the same mechanisms of social reproduction that support the maintenance of Hieron's wealth and power beyond his own death.

If the poem is to console Hieron, he—or we—must believe in its ability to maintain his status beyond death, a possibility that the poem itself presents as neither definite nor inevitable. On the other hand, the poem's very invocation of the scarcity of *kleos* serves to heighten a sense of contingency and therefore of potential distress, placing even more importance on an audience's own feelings of (in)security and inclination to invest in institutions that support socioeconomic stability—including epinician itself. *Pythian* 3's excruciating counterfactuals work to continually stress the uncertainty of physical health and the vulnerability and isolation of the physical body.

[3] Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 508.

The primary reason that *Pythian* 3 has been called consolatory is that it seems to have been composed because Hieron was physically ill.[4] Sickness, and the sick body, have profound relations to gender and to power; so, too, the practices of memorialization and mourning.[5] The experience of sickness is not excepted from these relations and Pindar's ostensible response to Hieron's illness needs to be read within this context. *Pythian* 3 includes depictions of physical suffering in its description of Asklepios' cures for a number of specific ailments (47-53). But immediately after this description, the poet self-consciously avoids, very literally, getting too close (the strong adversative ἀλλὰ κέρδει καὶ σοφία δέδεται, 54 closely allied with γνόντα τὸ πὰρ ποδός, 60). Rather than be with Hieron during the tyrant's moment of suffering, the poet creates distance between himself and his *laudandus.*

Specifically, the Pindaric speaker is at home (παρ' ἐμὸν πρόθυρον, 78), unable to travel across the sea to Hieron. This relatively unusual physical separation of poet and *laudandus* draws attention to the distance between them, rather than the more conventional close association of the poet with the victor.[6] In this sense, it is possible to see in *Pythian* 3 the beginnings of the separation of text and *laudandus* that is necessary for thinking of epinician poetry as self-supporting and iterable beyond the bounds of individual human lives. This epinician argument for itself is neither self-evident nor simply elaborated in poetic temporalities or gnomic statements. It is carefully built on a foundation of close association between the vulnerability of the elite body, status, and wealth and the concurrent contingencies surrounding the epinician poet and text, which, on initial composition and performance, lives in the same time and space as the victor. By first analogizing text and

[4] See Young 1968, 27n2.
[5] Good discussions are King 1998 on the female body in medical thought; Holst-Warhaft 1992 on women's lament in tragedy. The experience and expression of emotion is, of course, endlessly gendered, in antiquity and modernity; for antiquity, see van Wees 1999 and Munteanu 2011.
[6] See Athanassaki 2009, 259-60 for a summary of these effects.

victor, the poems put a critical stress on these vulnerabilities and in doing so call out for ways of defending them.

Important to this approach is acknowledging how the rhetoric of emotion is shaped by social and moral norms which prescribe allowable reasons for emotions like grief and fear, as both as conscious experiences and behavioral expression. Like the rhetorical genre of "advice to tyrants" discussed in Chapter 1, this framework also allows a reading beyond the surface of the Pindaric gnome and appeal to divine sanction, showing how these poetic techniques continue to be implicated in the project of status construction and maintenance even as—because—they may elicit strong emotional reactions. Much work on the rhetoric of the contingency of life and status in Pindar has emphasized the *pathos* of these representations and their potential emotional effects on an epinician audience.[7] Pindaric conceptions of justice, virtue, and transgression are never unmediated by their sociopolitical context, however. The emotions that surround these concepts help to continually shape and perpetuate the elite structures and practices that seek their own reproduction through Pindar, giving a visceral ground to elite attempts to maintain individual status stability. The emotional effect of epinician is both motivational, aiming at encouraging epinician's own valuation and perpetuation, and reflective of the social discourse in which it so eagerly participates. The effectiveness of epinician in arguing for its own preservation is premised in part on its ability to speak to the fears and motivations of a specific group of elites, including post-Classical and post-antique elites who shape their own behavior by imitating the model that Pindar has set for them.[8]

To situate emotionality in the realm of the political is not to deny the important role of poetics and aesthetics in creating and negotiating emotional experiences. Rather, it is to argue

[7] See, e.g. Fränkel 1946 on the "violent and tragic" variability of human life in Pindar (113).
[8] e.g. as in Chapter 1, section IV.

that these domains are constituted together: a reading of Pindar's epinicians as expressions of feeling is incomplete without considering their role within structures of sociopolitical power. The way that emotions are represented within the poems, and the emotions that audiences (ancient and modern) might feel at their reading or performance, are made possible within these same structures. Pindar's reassurance to Hieron, couched as it is in the language of counterfactual, demurral, and gnomic warning, is consolatory because of its implicit, not explicit, messaging. While on the surface it warns about the vicissitudes of life, the dangers of hubris, and reversals of fortune, the message it sends to Hieron is this: your status is exclusive, unstable, and valuable, and it is very much in need of protecting.[9] By modeling the voice of his poetic persona, and the functions of his poem, on contemporary social institutions, the poet adds: my poem—regardless of whether it ever reaches you personally—will help you to secure it.

A useful framework for thinking through the stakes of reading this way is Bonnie Honig's influential approach to the reading and reception of *Antigone.* Like Honig's *Antigone,* the "successful" history of Pindaric reception—stemming directly from the anticipatory poetics of epinician itself—has assigned it a sociocultural value that has come to seem natural rather than deliberately constructed. Honig rejects an interpretation of Sophocles' play that is primarily based on an ethics of mourning and lamentation, arguing that an emphasis on mourning as a generalizable, universally understood reaction to human finitude distracts from the potential political possibilities that might otherwise be found in the play.[10] Likewise, I suggest that reading the emotional valence of epinician as an appeal to a

[9] Thus Segal 1986, on *Pythian* 4: "Through the very explicitness of such attempts at Battiad legitimization, however, the ode peeks around the edges of its message, as it were, and shows its self-awareness of the conditioned, limited service that it is performing for its patron. By showing power and authority in the process of being constructed, it also shows the path of their possible destruction" (126).

[10] For modern critics of *Antigone,* Honig argues, "lamentation also reassures as it steps in to take the place of the very thing whose loss we lament: universalism" (Honig 2013, 1).

universal subject obscures the political contestations that shape(d) the possible emotional responses of both ancient and modern audiences. Instead, the very construction of the feeling subject is part and parcel of epinician politics; and the encouragement of identification with this gendered and limited subject is another epinician strategy for supporting the value of status and the prestige of epinician itself.

Chapter 3 argues that Pindar's odes seek to link the reproduction of sociopolitical and socioeconomic systems of power to the act of socially authorized and communally regulated biological reproduction. The text itself acts as a surveyor of the legitimacy of marriage and childbirth, uncovering attempts at secrecy and concealment in concert with a divine or prophetic teleology. Epinician stages itself as a recognition—and thereby, acts as a creation—of particular genealogies and ancestries, whether for cities, families, or individuals. As Chapter 4 shows, the poet himself, and the composition and transmission of epinician poetry, are equal participants within—rather than a potential critic of—this contemporary social hierarchy. If the poet is like the victor, the text is like the child;[11] the genre of epinician is an institution like marriage and inheritance laws and customs, *proxenia*, the symposium, and the games themselves. What the epinician ode does—because of its transmissibility and orientation towards textuality and reperformance—is support the iteration of these related institutional practices into the future. And the ode itself is subject to as well as performing the same social scrutiny as victors, their wives, and their children; it can even take on the voice of a social peer, reproducing a fleeting moment of discourse through the iteration of reperformance and the establishment of textuality.[12]

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Instead, she argues for "a more robust politics of lamentation, in which lamentation is not 'human,' ethical, or maternal—tethered to the fact of finitude—but an essentially contested practice, part of an *agon* among fractious and divided systems of signification and power" (2).

[11] As it is explicitly described in *O.* 10.

[12] See also: I.4; N.4; N.8.

As this project shows, the capacity for cultural persistence of Pindar's victors—and Pindar's poetry—is essentially bound up with the persistence of particular social relations and structures of power. This seeking of social persistence is not passive, natural, or inevitably given, even if it is strategically, and rhetorically, presented in this way. As an emerging social institution, epinician actively works against the fragility of contemporary structures of socioeconomic and political hegemony to provide an ideology for their legitimacy and perpetuation. The institution of epinician poetry is one mechanism through which these structures of power are reproduced, authorized, and abstracted from the material conditions that they necessitate. This function of epinician is inseparable from an understanding of the instability of political regimes and the status of generational political power in its contemporary world.

The futurity of children, the futurity of the text—these are not hoped for in isolation. They are imagined as part the reproduction of systems of socioeconomic power contemporary to the fifth century BCE; in specific cases, they represent the perpetuation of individuals' and families' sociopolitical status through mechanisms of legitimizing kinship and inheritance. The practice and performance of epinician is the creation of a social institution intended to stabilize these structures; epinician's discursive dimension lends that institution an explicit ideology. This function is thematized within epinician itself; as Kurke has noted, even "the victor can be represented as newborn, or by a transfer of the metaphor, the epinician poem itself becomes the heir whose emergence into the light saves the house from oblivion."[13] The characteristic metaphorical syncretism of epinician poetics encourages this identification of the text, wealth, and child, all bound together in an associated system of self-reproduction.[14]

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[13] Kurke 1991, 72. See also her similar analysis of *Olympian* 10, p. 77.

[14] In literary and social criticism, the concept of "reproductive futurism" has been used to both explicate the oppressive perpetuation of heteronormative social structures through heterosexual reproduction and, conversely, as a pathway for liberating an imagined social future from these same conventions and expectations (see, seminally, Edelman 2004). There

I have argued that a central function of epinician was the ideological aetiology and practical support of individual elite status as supported by highly unequal, deeply gendered contemporary socioeconomic systems. At the same time, there are two kinds of concessions to contingency that can be seen in the poems. First, Pindar's overt gnomic acknowledgement of mortality, the vicissitude of human life, and the essential limits on human knowledge of truth and futurity; second, the undercurrent of vividly present, material anxiety that can be uncovered, with attention and effort, from image and metaphor. Either approach invites possible readings that emphasize an epinician acknowledgement of human fragility and the continual possibility of its restless breaking free from—also very overt—epinician attempts to corral it into teleology. What is helpful about this approach is how it encourages an understanding of Pindar's social world that acknowledges its true dynamism and fluidity, and the complexity of Pindar's engagements with his contemporary context.

In my view, however, it is these very concessions to contingency that enable epinician's institutionalizing social project and provide a legitimizing ground for the poet's own social participation. When reading metaphor "on the surface," as well as paying close attention to the rhetorical construction of the poems, the imagery of vulnerability, uncertainty, and danger in these poems is both a reflection of particular material-historical conditions and a strategic projection aimed at managing the status and perception of elite

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are undoubtedly ways that concepts of literary and reproductive futurity can offer emancipatory or expansive possibilities beyond the social context of a particular historical moment; it is often precisely the radical contingency so often associated with childbirth and femininity that opens up these opportunities. Following the late-twentieth-century legacy of deconstruction and post-structuralism, robust arguments have been made for the essential tensions, contradictions, and anxieties of ancient texts, that may continually gesture to the possibility of social critique or alternative futures. More conservatively, it is possible to acknowledge these cracks and contradictions, and their possible emancipatory potential for moderns, without assigning them emancipatory power in antiquity itself. Here, it is important to be able to separate the mechanisms of Pindaric reception from epinician's function in its original context (a separation, of course, that the poems themselves encourage us not to make).

victors. The poems' striving against this material and social vulnerability is repeatedly depicted in terms of contemporary social practices. While this is a critical approach to the functions of the poems, in both senses of the word, taking the epinicians at their word also avoids some of the pitfalls of a hermeneutic "paranoia"[15] that might seem purely deconstructive. Deconstruction, here, is undertaken with the aim of showing how social values and structures meant to be taken for granted need not be seen as natural, or inevitable, at all. While the traces left in the fifth-century record of Pindar may be primarily discursive, the consequences of their interpretation need not be.

As I briefly argued in Chapter 2, the invocation of status contingency and gestures towards an internal self-critique are themselves moves in the game of power, a way of controlling and responding to perceived threats. Social psychologists have argued that people in high-status positions are highly sensitive to threats to their own status or to the status hierarchies from which they benefit, while remaining relatively insensitive to the effects of inequality and injustice on others.[16] This sensitivity to perceived threat is a mechanism by which status is continually re-secured and potential criticism deflected. *Pythian* 3's sympathetic focalization of Apollo as he rescues the fetus Asklepios, coupled with the poem's address to Hieron, defines "threat" to the subjects (and subjective perspectives) of the poem in a very specific way. Pindar's audience, if moved, is moved to empathize with the perspective of hegemonic paternity—with those who benefit from exercising social control, not those who resist it. There is little sympathy or security in these poems for those who were

[15] In Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1997) terms.
[16] See, e.g. Scheepers and Ellemers 2005, and Scheepers et al. 2009, on the threat response high-status actors have to changes in the social status quo, a sort of inverse of the stereotype threat often experienced by members of marginalized minority groups; Halabi et al. 2008, on social dominance and willingness to help others; Morrison et al. 2009 on high status and support for social inequality.

most physically and socially at risk in the ancient world, and an abundance of anxiety about the status of people who were relatively privileged in the sociopolitical hierarchy.[17]

These anxieties about agency, vulnerability, and power are also related to how Pindar's odes approach their own historicity.[18] To be historical, in this sense, is to be subject to—and participate in—temporal and material contingency.[19] Pindaric concepts of teleology, fate, and gnomic constraints on human action allow both victors and poet to self-consciously abdicate agency under the sign of natural structures that ostensibly configure the possibilities of ethical action. These structures are in reality social, and their naturalization is accomplished through a grounding in the (gendered) body and blood of the elite and their families. A consistent Pindaric technique, one this project describes many times, is the narrativizing of uncertainty within a superstructure of determinacy. The poet and his victors are ethical agents only within a carefully circumscribed teleology, which narrativizes not only myth, history, and genealogy but the anxieties of elites both present and future. We need not, of course, respond to Pindar's poems in exactly the way that the poems themselves ask us to. But to begin there invites us to reflect on our role as their interpreters, and the nature of the many social communities—across time and space—within which this practice asks us to imagine ourselves, and to participate.

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[17] In a similar vein, see Kurke 1996, 67 on the sex workers of *Isthmian* 2: Pindar's "appropriative strategy is insidious and complete, absorbing everything into itself, and leaving no gap from which another voice might speak."

[18] On agency: Marcia Anne Dobres and John E. Robb write that "the material world is not just 'central' to social reproduction, but that material culture actually constitutes social relations and meaning making. It is within the tightly woven web of material, symbolic, and social engagement that agency reproduces and transforms society. Social reproduction and culture change, in other words, depend fundamentally on the nexus of agency and materiality" (Dobres and Robb 2000, 162). Replace "materiality" with "text" here (or consider "text" sufficiently material) and this is the framework within which I am also working.

[19] See discussion in Chapter 4.

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