

The Erginos myth at Pindar, *Ol.* 4.19-27
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Recent studies have related the project of Pindar and Bacchylides' odes to the rhetoric and context of epinician epigrams and victor statues (e.g., Kurke, in Dougherty and Kurke, edd. *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece*, 1993, 131-63; Steiner, *HSCP* 95 [1993] 159-80). Parallel to this trend has been an increased interest in the erotic aspect of epinician odes and epigrams (e.g., Steiner, *ClAnt* 17.1 [1998] 123-49; Scanlon, *Eros & Greek Athletics*, 2002). In this paper, I will argue that the Erginos myth of Pindar's *Ol.* 4 stands as a clear, yet neglected, example for both lines of inquiry. Upon winning the race in armor at the Lemnian Games, Erginos delivers a speech that shares features with epinician epigram. Furthermore, the mythical context of the episode is suggestive of a strong erotic component.

Although *Ol.* 4 has received some critical attention (e.g., Gerber, *QUCC* n.s. 25 [1987] 7-24; Mader, *Die Psaumis-Oden Pindars*, 1990), scholars have overlooked the fact that the Erginos myth stands as a fully contextualized, inset epinician performance. In his narrative leading up to Erginos' victory speech, Pindar provides much of the victory data typical of epinician texts: father's name, venue, and event (Κλυμένοιο παῖδα Λαμνιάδων γυναικῶν... χαλκίοισι δ' ἐν ἔντεσι νικῶν δρόμον, lines 19-22). Another possible parallel with epigram is the way Erginos relates his speed in the race to his other qualities (χεῖρες δὲ καὶ ἦτορ ἴσον, line 25; cf. Ebert, *Griechische Epigramme auf Sieger*, 1972, nr. 12.3: κάλλιστον μὲν ἰδεῖν, ἀθλεῖν δ' οὐ χείρονα μορφῆς). Erginos' use of the demonstrative at the beginning of his speech (οὗτος ἐγὼ ταχυτάτι, line 24) recalls similar uses in epinician epigram (Ebert, *Griechische Epigramme auf Sieger*, 1972, nr. 12, 22, 31, 47). In epigram demonstratives such as οὗτος and ὅδε would seem to refer to accompanying statues, which Kurke has taken to represent victors at the moment they are crowned (passim, but especially 145). By contrast, Erginos in his speech uses the demonstrative to point to the moment of victory itself.

Another overlooked aspect of the Erginos myth in *Ol.* 4 is its erotic implications. Scholars frequently relate the episode to the brief account of the Lemnian Games given by Pindar at *Pyth.* 4.253-4, but they seldom note that these Games lead to the mating of the Argonauts with the Lemnian Women (the one apparent exception is Gildersleeve, *Olympian and Pythian Odes*, 1885, ad loc.). Pausanias tells a story (9.37.4) that Erginos was a sexual late bloomer, which perhaps helps to explain Pindar's statement in *Ol.* 4 that his "trial" in their Games is what saved Erginos from the Lemnian Women's "dishonor" (διάπειρα... ἅπερ Κλυμένοιο παῖδα Λαμνιάδων γυναικῶν ἔλυσεν ἐξ ἀτιμίας, lines 18-21). By using her name in the dative, Pindar identifies the audience of Erginos' speech as Hypsipyle (line 23) and thus, by implication, the Lemnian Women as a whole. Erginos' vaunt that his "hands and heart are equal" to his speed amounts to an announcement of his availability—and qualifications—for what is to follow.