

Thomas K. HUBBARD

The Dissemination of Epinician Lyric: Pan-Hellenism, Reperformance, Written Texts

This paper proposes a scenario to explain how highly occasional poems which appear on the surface to be intended for a single public performance came to be familiar to a broader pan-Hellenic audience through a combination of reperformance at athletic venues and, in some cases, foreign distribution of written texts copied at the expense of the poem's patron. It is well-recognized that Pindar's epinicia promise victors poetic immortality. Such self-confident predictions reveal a poet who feels assured that his work will outlive a single performance and extend beyond a merely local audience. The praise of a city's institutions and mythology resonates especially if the poems are intended ultimately for a pan-Hellenic audience; as such, epinicia function as "public relations" advertisement.

Since the odes expect a pan-Hellenic audience, what were the mechanisms of pan-Hellenic circulation? Some may have been reperformed at the site of the athletic victory during the next Olympiad or Pythiad, perhaps even at many future Olympiads or Pythiads. Herington (*Poetry into Drama*) has assembled the evidence for long traditions of reperforming other lyric forms down to Hellenistic times. In the epinician context, such reperformances would be the equivalent of commemorative statues (the comparandum of *N.5.1-5*) or dedications of precious objects (cf. *P.8.29 anathemen*). The pan-Hellenic gatherings were certainly a locus of epideictic verbal displays, as we know from Gorgias' and Lysias' *Olympic Speech* and Isocrates' *Panegyricus*. Themistocles probably delivered a speech attacking Hieron at the Olympics of 476 (Plutarch, *Them.* 25.1; Aelian, *VH* 9.5). *N.9.1-3* suggests performance at Sicyon (the site of the victory) as well as in Aetna, and perhaps at other Peloponnesian locales in between, as would be consistent with Hieron's program of recruiting Peloponnesian colonists.

Although reperformance at pan-Hellenic assemblies may have contributed to Pindar's pan-Hellenic reputation, it was probably not the only instrument of pan-Hellenic diffusion. Irigoin (*Histoire du texte de Pindare*) long ago proposed that the earliest written texts of Pindar were circulated for use in music schools, but he never explained who was responsible. There is little evidence for an organized book trade prior to the late fifth-century, and Pindar's odes are unlikely to have been assembled into books during his own lifetime. However, wealthy patrons or cities were quite capable of commissioning multiple copies of texts written in their honor and could distribute them through the city's *proxenoi* in other cities, perhaps in the form of gift-exchange. As an elite "vanity publication," this process provides an early model for what would later become a more widespread scribal industry for profit. Such vanity publications, whether privately or publicly financed, are also consistent with Nagy's model (*Pindar's Homer*) of tyrants attempting to fashion a historical identity for themselves by commissioning local histories or epics.