

PERFORMING PINDAR'S ODES

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IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED in several places recently that we have been wrong to suppose a choral production for all of Pindar's epinician odes.¹ One scholar, in fact, now assures us that—barring evidence to the contrary—we should assume of any Pindaric ode that it was meant for the solo voice.² Furthermore, "evidence to the contrary" is recognized only if it appears within the song in question, and it is found to be virtually nonexistent.³ Passages in which Pindar might seem to refer to the singing of his chorus are explained in two ways: they refer either to impromptu group activities that were associated with, but quite separate from, the performance of the epinician ode,⁴ or to the behavior of a group of dancers who participated in the performance but did not sing.⁵ A chorus of mutes is allowed to appear sometimes, dancing while the soloist sang; however, if Pindar ever seems to attribute voices to them, he refers only to some kind of rhythmical sound that they made—a humming, or the repetition of a nonsense sound.⁶ This, we are told, will have been "the most convenient arrangement,"⁷ but the basis of this judgment is not revealed. An "arrangement" that set one singer's voice against a background of manifold vocal noises might well have seemed inconvenient, not only to a soloist who wished to be heard but also to a poet who valued his words.⁸ Surely some quality other than "convenience" will have to be urged before we can accept this as one of Pindar's chosen modes.

If we are to appreciate the odes, we need to know what sort of performance Pindar envisioned as he composed them. Did he expect a

1. See J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), p. 31; M. Lefkowitz, "Pindar's *Pythian* V," in *Pindare, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* vol. 31 (Geneva, 1985), pp. 33–69; ead., "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" *AJP* 109 (1988): 1–11; M. Heath, "Receiving the κῶμος: The Context and Performance of Epinician," *AJP* 109 (1988): 180–95.

2. Lefkowitz, "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" p. 4.

3. Lefkowitz, "Pindar's *Pythian* V," pp. 47–48.

4. This is the major tenet of Heath, "Receiving the κῶμος"; cf. Lefkowitz, "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" pp. 5, 9.

5. Participation as "distinct but related": Lefkowitz, "Pindar's *Pythian* V," pp. 47–49, 68–69.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

8. In the complex performance depicted on the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18. 603) there is dancing while the soloist sings, but his voice must compete only with the movements of the chorus and the acrobats, not with their vocalizing.

chorus to take part, and if he did, what did he ask it to do?⁹ Discussion of performance must now take account of the humming hypothesis, and so as a preface to a review of Pindar's own words it should be noted that the Greeks did indeed recognize the making of nonsense sounds as a possible human activity. To do so was *τερετίζειν*, literally "to twitter like a swallow," and anyone who used his voice in this way was apt to be thought disgraceful or funny (cf. Phryn. 14 K., Euphron 1. 34 K.; cf. adesp. 1162 K., and note Alciphron's drunken philosophers, 3. 55). Diogenes, when he could not keep the attention of his audience by making sense, attracted them by uttering sounds that were not words, thus confirming their foolishness (Diog. Laert. 6. 27; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 46B6, of the muttering of an impolite audience). Unintelligible gibber was the mark of someone crude or primitive (Teles p. 7 H.), and the verbal noun *τερέτισμα* came to be used in denigration of remarks that were mere twaddle (Zeno 1. 23, Arist. *An. post.* 83a33, Plut. *Mor.* 1034E8). In a musical context nonsense sounds were even more objectionable. For Theophrastus, to chirp along with the flute-player was typical of ugly and boorish behavior (*Char.* 19. 10), while twaddling an accompaniment to his own dance was what the late-learner did as he tried to show off (ibid. 27. 15). The author of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* took the trouble to point out that though the human voice, when it sang words, was sweeter than the lyre or the pipe, it was inferior to those instruments when it eschewed sense and simply twittered (917b10, 918a30).¹⁰ Most striking is the remark that occurs in Plutarch's *Table Talk* (*Mor.* 706E3), where the conversation turns on the possibility of redeeming one whose taste has been debauched by vulgar art. According to an optimistic speaker, even those who have sunk into such gibberish and gambolings (*ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις τερετίσμασι καὶ σκιρτήμασι*) can be led back to the opposite pole, which is represented by the high art of Menander, Euripides, and Pindar. His Pindar, at any rate, knew nothing of nonsense sounds, and it is natural to wonder whether any poet who was bent on solemn praise would have asked for a practice that carried these low connotations. Or, in reverse, one must wonder

9. This question seems to be answered at *Ol.* 6. 87–91, where the song, having described its own composition (86–87), goes on to call attention to its current performance: Aeneas is to urge his fellows to sing (88 *κελαδήσαι*), presumably because he is their trainer and leader. (The command is the equivalent of "See how Aeneas urges us to sing!") Lefkowitz, however, supposes that Aeneas is a solo singer who represents the poet ("Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" pp. 6–7)—in which case he sits plucking his lyre and exhorting himself by name to do what, exactly? Heath tries to explain ("Receiving the *kōmos*," p. 191) by supposing two songs, both performed at Stymphalus: (1) a solo belonging to Pindar but sung by Aeneas, and (2) a hymn to Hera sung by a *kōmos*. Aeneas performs the first, which is *Ol.* 6, and during the performance he, as Pindar, encourages himself, as Aeneas, to encourage the hymn-singing, and he also instructs himself to "enquire from the *kōmos* whether he and Pindar [= we] have done well"! Heath does not, however, explain why, if the two songs are wholly separate, and if Aeneas has been dispatched by Pindar as his soloist, the members of the local hymn-singing *kōmos*, whether Syracusan or Stymphalian, should be termed the *ἐταῖροι* of Aeneas (or, indeed, what business he has meddling with their presumably traditional performance). As an alternative, Lefkowitz suggests ("Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" pp. 6–7) that Aeneas may after all be the leader of an impromptu and entirely separate *kōmos*; but in this case why should Pindar have termed him a "messenger" and a container of "voiced *ὑμνοι*"?

10. On this passage, see C. E. Ruelle, "Aristote. Problèmes musicaux," *REG* 4 (1891): 240, n. 7.

whether, if Pindar had used voices that did not produce words, the sound of "twittering" would ever have fallen into such disrepute. Would it not rather have been established as a respectable form of vocalization?

This, however, is not the way to enter the current discussion of Pindar's performances. According to its rules, those who still believe in singing choruses must bring "direct evidence" in support of their view. Ancient opinions, and especially the scholia, are not to be trusted, for they are capable of error.¹¹ Furthermore, we cannot draw conclusions from undoubtedly choral works like the Pindaric paeans and partheneia, even though diction, meters, and stanza forms are common to them and the epinicians. Formal structure, we are told, is no indication of performance mode, for the ancients did not recognize generic differences between choral and solo song.¹² Triads, it is now said, could be sung by a lyre-playing soloist, and therefore no argument can be made from what had seemed to be choral tradition.¹³ Not one of these negative assertions is entirely valid, but for the sake of tidiness it may be best to take up the challenge as it is offered, and to consider only the words of Pindaric victory odes as we try to decide how Pindar wished them to be sung.

With all tradition and precedent ruled out, it is reasonable to start with Pindar's own models—the divine originals, in the likeness of which each separate production was formed. Were the heavenly songs that cast themselves over the minds of praise poets (*Ol.* 1. 8) sung, in Pindar's ideal view, by one voice or by many? Were there dancers, and if there were, what did they do? Three passages provide a single answer to these questions.

The first is *Nemean* 5, where the Muses' praise of the Aeacids becomes the ode's own mythic praise of its victor (22–25):

πρόφρων δὲ καὶ κείνοις αἰεὶδ' ἐν Παλῑῳ
Μοισᾶν ὁ κάλλιστος χορός, ἐν δὲ μέσαις
φóρμιγγ' Ἀπόλλων ἐπτάγλωσσον
χρυσέῳ πλάκτρῳ διώκων

ἀγεῖτο παντοίων νόμων·

Here the work of the divine dancers is to sing; so also that of the mortals who imitate them, one would suppose.

11. Lefkowitz, "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" p. 6; cf. "Pindar's *Pythian* V," p. 47.

12. Cf. M. Davies, "Monody, Choral Lyric, and the Tyranny of the Handbook," *CQ* 38 (1988): 52–64.

13. Lefkowitz states that solo performance of triads is proved by the Stesichorean stanzas from the Lille papyrus ("Pindar's *Pythian* V," p. 69; "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" pp. 3–4), but there is nothing in that song that bears in any way on the question of performance, and nothing to suggest a solo singer (see A. P. Burnett, "Jocasta in the West," *CA* 7 [1988]: 107–54). Perhaps she is thinking of the *Geryoneis*, and of the remarks made by M. L. West, "Stesichorus," *CQ* 21 (1971): 302–14, and M. Davies, "The Paroemiographers," *JHS* 102 (1982): 209–10. It has been argued that extended length is incompatible with performance by a chorus, but the dancers of the Aeschylean *Oresteia* sang 217 lines as soon as they entered, then continued to perform throughout the rest of the tetralogy. When one considers the kind of preparation that had to go into any choral performance, it is the short epinician odes, not the longer, that are hard to explain.

Again, in *Isthmian* 8, it is a plurality of Heliconian virgins that pours forth a θρῆνος for Achilles, thus providing the pattern for all epinician ὕμνοι, and specifically for the one now being sung (63–69):

ἀλλά οἱ παρά τε πυρὰν τάφον θ' Ἑλικώνιαι παρθένοι
 στάν, ἐπὶ θρῆνόν τε πολύφαιμον ἔχεαν.
 ἔδοξ' ἄρα καὶ ἀθανάτοις,
 ἑσλὸν γε φῶτα καὶ φθίμενον ὕμνοις θεῶν διδόμεν.

τὸ καὶ νῦν φέρει λόγον, ἔσσυταί τε
 Μοισαῖον ἄρμα Νικοκλέος
 μῦθμα πυγμάχου κελαδῆσαι.

Obviously the earthly replica of these maidens is to be found, not in a single lyre-player, but in the κῶμος so artfully assembled at the beginning of the ode (8).

A third model performance occurs at the opening of *Pythian* 1, where Pindar shows us the ideal that informs all of his songs (1–6):

Χρυσέα φόρμιγξ, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ ἰοπλοκάμων
 σύνδικον Μοισᾶν κτέανον· τὰς ἀκούει
 μὲν βᾶσις ἀγλαΐας ἀρχά,
 πείθονται δ' αἰοῖδοι σάμασιν
 ἀγησιχόρων ὁπότεν προοιμίων
 ἀμβολᾶς τεύχης ἐλελιζόμενα.
 καὶ τὸν αἰχματὰν κεραυνὸν σβεννύεις
 αἰεναῦ πυρός.

The lyre strikes up the prooemium that leads out the chorus, who, as singers, obey while their dance-steps commence. Those who would deny choral performance assert that Pindar here breaks the Muses into two mutually exclusive groups, so that “the singers do not dance and the dancers do not sing.”¹⁴ This would be to rob each Muse of half her power, and Pindar in fact does no such thing. What he says is that the lyre gives the impulse to both rhythm and melody; the distinction is thus not between dancers and singers, but between the feet and the throats of performers who answer the lyre’s commands with both.

These, however, are only ideals.¹⁵ When the Pindaric odes describe the actualities of their own celebrations, the noun κῶμος, with related verbs and compounds, makes a frequent appearance. Since a κῶμος is a group of males who sing and dance, it is natural to suppose that the victory songs bear witness, with these terms, to the mode of their own performance. Those who believe in solo performance, however, counteract this easy supposition with the assertion (indemonstrable) that κῶμος-singing could only be impromptu, and that the κῶμος thus could not, by

14. Lefkowitz, “Who Sang Pindar’s Victory Odes?” p. 3.

15. Heath, “Receiving the κῶμος,” p. 185, admits that the Muses of *Pyth.* 1 are dancing and singing but sets this passage aside as “generalisation” (the sense of his italics is not clear). To these “generalisations” one might add the chorus of the Horae at *Ol.* 4. 1–5, who seem to provide a heavenly model for the present chorus (9 τόνδε κῶμον).

definition, sing a formal epinician ode.¹⁶ Then, since Pindaric odes can say “we, or I, will make a κῶμος” (*Isthm.* 4. 80; *Nem.* 9. 1; *Pyth.* 9. 89), can speak of the victor as being in the κῶμος (*Nem.* 2. 24; *Ol.* 6. 18, 9. 4; *Pyth.* 4. 2), and can point to “this present κῶμος” (*Ol.* 4. 9, 8. 10, 14. 16; *Pyth.* 5. 22), they are forced to argue that the reference in all these cases is to disorganized bands of revelers who perform in some unrehearsed and artless fashion, before or after the singing of the proper song of praise.

The obstacle to any such separation of the Pindaric κῶμος from the Pindaric ode is the fact that the poet’s words again and again announce the interdependence of κῶμος and ὕμνος, which is what Pindar calls his own songs. The oldest example of epinician song is termed ἐπικῶμος ὕμνος at *Nemean* 8. 50. At *Pythian* 10. 53, in a metapoetical passage and so with clear reference to the present song, praise is ἐγκωμίων ἄωτος ὕμνων. At *Pythian* 4. 1–4, the Muse is asked to rouse up an οὖρον ὕμνων for Arcesilaus in κῶμος (2 κωμάζοντι), and again the self-reference is clear, since the Muse does not inspire impromptu revels and this wind of song is to praise Delphi and the children of Leto “today” (1). Moreover, at *Olympian* 3. 4–6, the Muse inspires the poet to find a new way of combining the voice that is the glory of the κῶμος (or that finds its glory in the κῶμος, the φωνὰν . . . ἀγλαόκωμον) with the Doric rhythm; this can only mean that the κῶμος sings the poet’s composition (cf. *Ol.* 11. 16, where the Muses are urged to join the κῶμος).

At *Isthmian* 7. 20, the sweetly melodious ὕμνος is to be the implement of those who make this present κῶμος for Strepsiades: κῶμαζ’ ἐπειτεν ἄδυμελεῖ σὺν ὕμνῳ καὶ Στρεψιάδῃ. And in return, the κῶμος borrows this same epithet from the ὕμνος at *Pythian* 8. 70, where it is itself ἄδυμελής.¹⁷ Surely this is worth thinking about. If the melody of the κῶμος has precisely the same quality as that of the ode, it cannot be that Pindar’s κῶμος is using its voice to give out some accompanying whisper or rhythmic repetition: it is singing the tune that Pindar has composed.¹⁸

16. Cf. Lefkowitz, “Who Sang Pindar’s Victory Odes?” pp. 5, 9. Heath (“Receiving the κῶμος”) argues more fully, contending that κῶμος and χορός must be mutually exclusive terms; that Pindar’s failure to use the latter must be significant; that his use of the former must be the same as the usages of Plato and Aristophanes. Consequently, what he finds in the odes are references to a group of unrehearsed young men engaged in “impromptu and informal dancing as an accompaniment to the song” (p. 186). The “accompaniment” is not, however, simultaneous with the solo rendition of the ode; it occurs en route to the place of performance, or later, after a feast (p. 193). This statement is elsewhere modified: “some epinician poems *may* have been processional and . . . some of these may have been performed by the κῶμος as a whole rather than by a soloist” (p. 192). Nevertheless, Heath’s conclusion is that the odes of Pindar and Bacchylides “were probably most often performed solo by the poet or his proxy” (p. 193).

17. Other epithets of the κῶμος are μελιγάρυς (*Nem.* 3. 4) and ἐρατός (*Isthm.* 2. 31). For the former, cf. Alc. 26. 1 *PMG* παρσενικά μελιγάρυες ἰαρόφωνοι, and the certainly choral voice of Pind. *Pae.* 5. 47.

18. Cf. the close association of ὕμνος with ἐπικῶμος at *Nem.* 6. 32–33; also notable is the ἐπικῶμος ὄψ (*Pyth.* 10. 6) that issues from a plurality of men and gives voice to the ode commissioned by the victor’s relatives. Cf. the ἐγκῶμιον μέλος at *Ol.* 2. 47 and *Nem.* 1. 7. Bacchylides, at 11. 12–13, announces that νέων κῶμοι are at this moment (καὶ νῦν) engaged in praising the victor with song (ὕμνευσιν).

So much for the melody of the chorus; now for its verbal equipment. *Nemean* 9. 1–3 specifies that words are a part of this choric hymn-melody:

Κωμάσομεν παρ' Ἀπόλλωνος Σεκυωνόθε, Μοῖσαι,
τὰν νεοκτίσταν ἐς Αἶτναν . . .
ἀλλ' ἐπέων γλυκὺν ὕμνον πρᾶσσετε.

“We are going to make a κῶμος from Sicily to Etna, so, Muses, . . . supervise the sweet hymn made of words!” Here the song is directed by the Muses, and so is related specifically to memory and to sense; it is a composition, not an on-the-spot pastiche of victory cries. And we find the chorus handling not just words but grand subjects in *Nemean* 3 (65–66):

Ζεῦ, τεὸν γὰρ αἶμα, σέο δ' ἄγών, τὸν ὕμνος ἔβαλεν
ὅπῃ νέων ἐπιχώριον χάρμα κελαδέων.

The ὕμνος tosses Zeus' contest to the young men's voices as the object of their praise. They could not be said to “sing an ἄγών” if their song was limited to rhythmical backup sounds uttered when the soloist paused.

At the beginning of *Nemean* 3 the victory ode explicitly assigns itself for performance to a chorus of young men. Here the audience is taken backstage, the fiction being that we have caught the production while it is still in preparation (cf. *Isthm.* 8). The performers who will make up the κῶμος are ready and waiting at some Aeginetan Asopus-place, but they have not yet received their “voice,” which is to come to them from the Muse, by way of the poet's cleverness. Once the Muse has given him his start, the poet scores a song for the voices of these youths and for an accompanying lyre (1–12):

ᾠ πότνια Μοῖσα, μήτερ ἁμετέρα, λίσσομαι,
τὰν πολυξέαν ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι
ἵκεο Δωρίδα νᾶσον Αἶγιναν· ὕδατι γὰρ
μένοντ' ἐπ' Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρύων τέκτονες
κώμων νεανίαι, σέθεν ὅπα μαϊόμενοι.
διψῇ δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου,
ἀεθλονικία δὲ μάλιστ' αἰοιδὰν φιλεῖ,
στεφάνων ἀρετᾶν τε δεξιωτάταν ὁπαδόν·

τᾶς ἀφθονίαν ὁπαζε μήτιος ἁμᾶς ἄπο·
ἄρχε δ', οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ,
δόκιμον ὕμνον· ἐγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ νιν ὁάροις
λύρᾳ τε κοινάσομαι.

The song's depiction of itself as it comes into being is a choral practice known from Alcman, but we have been disallowed that sort of observation. The points to be noticed are more minute, but they are telling. First, this κῶμος sings, since its epithet is μελιγᾶρος. Next, its voice is the sort that comes from a Muse, and so it deals with sense, not nonsense. This is a song (7 αἰοιδή) that praises virtue, not a “rhythmic

accompaniment" or an informal jubilee. It is provided to the young men from the poet's mind and so it is Pindar's composition, and it is allocated for performance to two parties, not to three. The ὕμνος is made the common property of a plurality of human voices (11 ὅαροις) and a single musical instrument (12 λύρα τε).¹⁹ Nothing suggests that it is portioned out among solo singer, instrument, and wordless, murmuring dancers.²⁰

As evidence that the chorus does not sing words, the term ὄαρος has been emphasized; we are told that it "does not denote a singing voice but rather the sound of quiet conversation," and that it consequently indicates whispered background sounds.²¹ This conclusion, however, is invalidated by Pindar's own usage, for the same word appears at *Nemean* 7. 69, where it represents the song claimed by the ode's first-person singer—the lone singer, by the anti-choral hypothesis! It also appears at the end of *Pythian* 1, where it is part of a generic description of praise performance. Pindar is there establishing a model: εὖ ἀκούειν at its most desirable, the sort of praise that the victor is at this moment receiving, but that Phalaris did not (97–98):

οὐδέ νιν φόρμιγγες ὑπάρόφαιαι κοινανίαν
μαλθακὰν παίδων ὄαροιςι δέκονται.

In this paradigm, praise is the sweet common possession of lyre and of soft voices of boys; there is no other vocal element, and so, if these boys could only murmur nonsense, this perfect song would have no power over fame.²²

The important fact about the word ὄαρος (strongly associated with lovers' whisperings and so with voices that are youthful and dulcet) is that it does denote communication by means of words. Thus Jason's highly rhetorical speech can be called παῦς ὄαρος (*Pyth.* 4. 137–38) because it was spoken in a winning voice and by a young man. Here, in

19. Heath, "Receiving the κῶμος," p. 187, has the opening lines of *Nem.* 3 describe disengaged κῶμος-members standing about longing to hear the Muse's voice as it will sound from the solo performer of this ode. This involves a contorted reading of line 12, however, where the solo singer must somehow make his song the common property of his instrument and these young men's past songs. How can komast voices that have stopped singing share a ὕμνος with a presently sounding lyre?

20. Cf. the similar analysis of the elements of performance at *Ol.* 10. 79, 84–85: καὶ νυν . . . κελαδησόμεθα . . . χλιδῶσα δὲ μολπὰ πρὸς κάλαμον ἀντιάξει μελέων, / τὰ παρ' εὐκλείῃ Δίρκῃ χρόνῳ μὲν φάνεν ("We will sing. . . . And a danced song that has a luxury of melodies—melodies that thus late appear by Dirce—will encounter the pipe"). There is no word for the chorus here, but the plural verb, the term μολπὰ (properly, danced song), and the presence of the pipe all make this an occasion on which dance and song were the mingled responsibility of a group of performers who rendered Pindar's composition.

21. Lefkowitz, "Pindar's *Pythian* V," p. 49; ὄαρος seems to be understood differently at "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" pp. 9–10, where the situation is taken to be much as Heath imagines (see above, n. 19): today's soloist (Pindar) stands at Aegina, singing in such a way as to make his ὕμνος belong both to his lyre and to komasts who have just performed an impromptu song called "conversation."

22. Lefkowitz, "Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" p. 10, takes these boys to be actually conversing at banquet tables while the soloist sings. It is hard to see, however, how such (impolite) conversation would fix good fame, how it could be shared with a musical instrument, and what these boys are doing at the tables among the men.

Nemean 3, the term adds a whiff of erotic charm to the poem's description of itself as a δόκιμος ὕμνος—a song made of words, time-tested and traditional in its form.

The fact that the chorus not only sings, but sings sense and sings the present ode, is once again made clear in *Pythian* 5, where buried kings listen²³ and understand with their entombed minds, as the κῶμος sprinkles family deeds with the sweet dew of song (96–101, reading κῶμων in 100, with the manuscripts, Snell, et al., rather than Bowra's ὕμνων):

ἄτερθε δὲ πρὸ δωμάτων ἕτεροι λαχόντες αἶδαν
 βασιλέες ἱεροὶ
 ἐντί, μέγαν δ' ἄρετάν
 δρόσῳ μαλθακῇ
 ῥανθεῖσαν κῶμων ὑπὸ χεύμασιν
 ἀκούοντί ποι χθονίᾳ φρενί. . . .

In the lines that follow, *Pythian* 5 is even more directly self-described as voiced by a group of young singers. Arcesilaus has commissioned it because, having received the καλλίνικος-song at Delphi, he ought properly to repay Apollo in kind—that is, with expression of honor in another song performed by young men (103–7):

. . . Ἀρκεσίλα· τὸν ἐν αἰοιδᾷ νέων
 πρέπει χρυσάορα Φοῖβον ἀπύειν,

ἔχοντα Πυθωνόθεν
 τὸ καλλίνικον λυτήριον δαπανᾶν
 μέλος καρίεν.

That the present ode is what is meant by this αἰοιδᾷ νέων is indicated by a phrase that came earlier, at lines 22–23, where the visible chorus is described as Apollo's delight: τόνδε κῶμον ἀνέρων, / Ἀπολλώνιον ἄθυρμα.

At the end of *Nemean* 2, the members of a citizen chorus are asked to use their sweetly melodious voices as they lead out a victory celebration in Acharnia (24–25):

τόν, ὦ πολῖται, κωμάξατε Τιμοδά-
 μφ σὺν εὐκλείῃ νόστῳ.
 ἀδυμελεῖ δ' ἐξάρχετε φωνᾷ.

In this case we cannot be absolutely sure that the ode is describing its own performance,²⁴ but the current song is safely placed in the mouths

23. Cf. *Ol.* 14. 15–16 (. . . ἐπακοοῖτε νῦν, . . . / . . . ἰδοῖσα τόνδε κῶμον), where Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia are asked to hear and see the κῶμος.

24. This monostrophic ode might have served as a curtain-raiser for another performance to follow; and if there was a second song, it might have been a popular κῶμος number, rather than a formally composed ode. Another possibility was proposed by H. Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (New York, 1975), p. 429, n. 6: *Nem.* 2 itself may have been repeated over and over again so as to make a long processional song. Either proposal, however, builds on the future at line 24 (κωμάξατε), which is more probably used as a part of this ode's self-description: on such futures see E. L. Bundy, *Studia*

of another such chorus by the phrasing of *Pythian* 10. Those who commissioned the ode wished to lead out the κῶμος-voice of a plurality of men (5–6 θέλοντες / ἀγαγεῖν ἐπικωμίαν ἀνδρῶν κλυτὰν ὄπα). The voice of the ode thus issues from multiple performers, but it is at the same time the voice of Pindar himself—his composition—as the song soon makes plain (55–59):

ἔλπομαι δ' Ἐφυραίων
 ὅπ' ἀμφὶ Πηνειὸν γλυκεῖαν προχεόντων ἑμῶν
 τὸν Ἴπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν αἰοδαῖς
 ἔκατι στεφάνων θαητὸν ἐν ἄλλι-
 ξὶ θησέμεν ἐν καὶ παλαιτέροις,
 νέαισιν τε παρθένοισι μέλημα.

"I hope, while by the Peneus Ephyræan men pour out my sweet voice, to make Hippocleas yet more famous with my songs. . . ."

The future, θησέμεν, probably belongs to the class identified by Bundy and Slater as describing what will be done before this performance comes to its close.²⁵ It occurs at the end of a sequence of metapoetical statements: I stop my mythic narration (51–52) because praise demands that an ode touch on several subjects (53–54), and it is time now to celebrate the victor directly—I will now make him yet more famous (55–59). However, even if this were a reference to a future measured in years—an example of the "hope for future victory" motif—the relation of ode to chorus would remain the same. Pindar says that his expectation of epinician success, now or later, depends upon men who "pour out" his voice, just as the Muses "poured out" the θρῆνος of Achilles that gave the victory ode its ideal form.²⁶

There is one more passage wherein the epinician purpose is clearly identified with a κῶμος that acts as its vehicle. At *Pythian* 8. 67–71, the ode, having finished its mythic account, is making its way back to the topic of the victor. There has been a brief prayer to Apollo, followed, as is often the case at this point, by a metapoetical discussion. Before closing, the ode must list the victor's past triumphs, fully but without ostentation, and this is the most dangerous part of the song. In the present case, indeed, this duty of boasting is peculiarly tricky because there is going to be a rare reference to defeated opponents, thrown by the boy wrestler. The song must validate its version of these events, and only if it strikes the right balance between the boy's achievement and the gods' aid can φθόνος be avoided. *Pythian* 8, however, proceeds with

Pindarica (Berkeley, 1962; repr. 1986), p. 21, and W. J. Slater, "Futures in Pindar," *CQ* 19 (1969): 91–99.

25. See above, n. 24.

26. Of *Pyth.* 10. 55–59 Lefkowitz remarks ("Pindar's *Pythian* V," p. 49): "Pindar says that he hopes to make the victor admired because of his success when the Ephyræans in Thessaly 'pour forth' his voice *and* in his songs, as if he were speaking of two different types of song"; she does not explain the distinction emphasized by her italics. The translation offered later ("Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?" p. 5) is equally puzzling: "I hope, as the citizens of Ephyræ pour forth my sweet voice, and with my songs to make the victor still more admired."

confidence because Dike has stood beside it in its making and its performance. Her presence inspires its continuation at this point. And how does Pindar make this all-important claim? He says (70–71): κῶμος μὲν ἄδυμελεῖ / Δίκᾳ παρέστακε.²⁷ He cannot mean that Justice took part in some disorderly revel that has preceded the singing of his ode, for that would be both irrelevant and absurd. He can mean only that the justice-based validity of his epinician praise is located physically in a group of singing men—in a chorus, in other words.²⁸

In summary, then, we can say first that there is no trace of twittering or humming in the Pindaric odes. They frequently refer to a present group of young men, directly involved in their own performances, and the sound made by this group is described as the sound of song: a melodic enunciation of words, with instrumental guidance. Furthermore, Pindar specifies himself as the source from which this group takes its song, though the Muse stands behind all. It is thus plain that in many cases Pindar's odes were meant to be sung and danced by choruses, just as the scholars of antiquity supposed. Nevertheless, someone might still ask whether there may not have been other cases in which Pindar expected a solo singer to perform, with or without a chorus of mutes. Since there is no evidence of any such practice, I shall attempt only the briefest and most speculative answer to this question.

An epinician ode was paid for, and the buyer got his money's worth only when the song was produced. Performance was everything, and consequently the modes of performance were determined by socio-economic factors as well as by poetic convention. Above all, each new example of praise had to be recognizable as being of its kind and worthy (δόκιμος), for otherwise it would not serve its status-making purpose. And this means that, though the scale might change, we should expect the form of an epinician production to remain stable. Expenditure was a prime virtue in the patron of a victory ode, as Pindar often remarks, but a particular man could clearly surpass others only by doing again, more magnificently, just what they had already done. He would not want a different sort of performance; he would want the ὕμνου τεθμός, with its traditional guarantee of fame. The music was expected to be properly identifiable as one of the ancient modes, and a "new fashion" meant only a more elegant manipulation of the dancers' voices (cf. *Ol.* 3. 4–6). Victors wanted songs that seemed to "luxuriate" in their performances, as Pindar promised that his ode for Hagesidamus would do (*Ol.* 10. 84), but this did not mean innovation, it meant adding instruments, using pipe as well as lyre, or increasing length. Another sort of richness could

27. Cf. *Ol.* 3. 4 Μοῖσα . . . παρέστα μοι. Notice, too, how the first-person statements in this passage of *Pyth.* 8 (67 εὐχομαι, 72 αἰτέω) encompass and include the reference to the κῶμος (70).

28. Cf. *Isthm.* 6. 56–58, where again the song is preparing a list, and the situation is one of embarrassment of riches, some of which must be left unsent. That the ode will be sparing of its potential wealth of subject matter is expressed in this way (57–58): ἤλθον, ὦ Μοῖσα, ταμίας / . . . κῶμων. Here again the κῶμος is inextricably bound up in the ode's progress through its program of subject matter.

be conveyed if a number of odes were presented in the course of a single celebration, as seems to have been the case with *Isthmian* 3 and 4. And of course, the patron's open hand could be most spectacularly shown in choruses wherein the performers were unusually numerous or their dress was strikingly ornate.

Given this context of lavish conventionality, it is hard to see why a patron should ever have wanted his victory ode to be sung by just one stationary voice, if he had the option of a chorus. Nevertheless, let us suppose for the sake of argument that some victor did ask for just such a reduction in spectacle and sound. He surely would not have asked that his single performer should do, alone, what many voices did at other celebrations, for that could only seem thin by comparison with the ἐπικωμίαν ἀνδρῶν κλυτὰν ὅπα (*Pyth.* 10. 6). He would have insisted instead on a solo song of the showiest and most professional kind; one that made a musical display of a sort that only the trained citharode could provide. All of which means that, had it ever developed, the commissioned solo epinician would in all likelihood have sparkled with the endlessly varying melodies that were later the glory of the lyre-song (cf. [Arist.] *Pr.* 12. 918b). It would almost certainly not have retained the potentially tedious repetitions of the strophic system, whose function was to get a multiplicity of amateur performers through the difficulties of memorization.²⁹ And since all of Pindar's epinicians show the strophes or triads that eased the work of a chorus but were alien to the citharodic art, there is no reason to think that any of them were meant for a solo voice. There is every reason, on the other hand, to assume that each was intended for a band of boys or men who represented the victor's class and his community, a group that Pindar could, with a kind of pun, term χώρας ἄγαλμα (*Nem.* 3. 13).³⁰

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29. These suppositions do not apply to amateur songs of praise, which would conform rather to the traditions of the solo banquet-song; and of course, an amateur lyre-player might choose to repeat the words and melody of an epinician originally made for a chorus, if the occasion seemed appropriate: thus, the father of Timasarchus might have repeated *Nem.* 4, had he lived to see and hear it performed (*Nem.* 4. 13–17).

30. In this passage the chorus is a decoration and source of pride to Aegina, just as Castor and Pollux were to their native land (Eur. *Hel.* 206 διδυμογενὲς ἄγαλμα πατρίδος), or Iphigenia to her father's house (Aesch. *Ag.* 208 δόμων ἄγαλμα). As such, its members perform the hymn-task (12 χαρίεντα πόνον) that the poet assigns to them; later, specifically defined as νέοι (66), they will apply their voices to the same hymn, now called ἐπιχώριον χάσμα. For this understanding of *Nem.* 3. 12–13, see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), p. 277, n. 13: "χώρας ἄγαλμα ist die Jugend, welche singen soll, der Schmuck des Landes." It only remains to note that these young men, the flower of Aegina, are by proximity compared to a similar, earlier group, the Myrmidons who appear in the next line.