

## Proclaiming Arkadians. A Case Study in Social Identity and the Olympic Games

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This paper analyzes the role of social and political identity in two Arkadian epigrams from Classical Olympia. By examining these epigrams in light of contemporary sociology and as complex literary texts in their own right, the paper reveals that epigrams play a role in the establishment of Hellenic and sub-Hellenic identities. *CEG* 381 posits a narrative wherein Oresthasion was visited by the *theoroi*, and in which an ethnic identifier can be situated as part of the proclamation. The epigram demonstrates the necessity of a diverse audience for the construction of effective identities. *CEG* 383 underlines the civic identity of the victor and the similarity of father and son through its periphrastic reference to the father's name. By connecting this declaration to Mantinean synoikism, the paper suggests that the epigram does not simply reflect the synoikist movement, but could be the catalyst for the foundation of the urban centre.

In the introduction to the new Bloomsbury Cultural History of Sport in Antiquity, Paul Christesen and Charles Stocking argue that “the primary goal of a cultural history of sport is to place sport firmly in its broader social context in the service of examining what sport meant to the people who practiced it at any given time and place and how sport contributed to the construction of other categories of thought and practice”.<sup>1</sup> With Christesen and Stocking's suggestion in mind, I use texts from the sporting context to demonstrate the interconnectedness of sport and society, and the ability of athletic texts to have influence on individual, familial, and community identity, both at the time of the victory and dedication and even centuries later. My study focuses on Arkadia, because Arkadia contained numerous entities competing for individual loyalty and attention: villages, *poleis*, *ethne*, and a pan-Arkadian identity all existed concurrently in the fifth century, long before any official political federation clarified the situation in the 360s BCE.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Arkadian epigrams offer evidence for the ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Christesen and Stocking 2021, 1. – This paper was submitted in 2015 and has not been significantly revised to take into account scholarship published since then.

<sup>2</sup> *Ethne*, unique to Arkadia in the fifth-century BCE, are unfortunately obscure. In the Classical period, there were four *ethne*, the Eutranians, Kynasians, Mainalians, and Parrhasians (Str.8.8). This type of regional community was largely confined to the south-west of Arkadia. Morgan (2003, 42) conjectures that this may have more to do with our sources, which are interested in the *synoikism* of Megalopolis from these *ethne*, rather than an actual distinctive and regionally-confined phenomenon.

negotiation of identity, collective and personal, that is at the heart of athletic representation and its inscription.

In the first volume of *CEG* there are five epigrams attributed to Arkadians, but only three of these can be conclusively identified as athletic: *CEG* 379, 381, and 383. The first, while certainly from the athletic context as indicated by the inclusion of a victory catalogue (379.2), provides no extant name, city, or father's name; the provenance is also unknown, and thus, despite the impressive athlete it records (a six-time champion in equestrian competitions at Nemea), I do not analyze it in this paper. *CEG* 380 is a lengthy inscription that records the life of an apparent mercenary and Arkadian émigré, Praxiteles of Mantinea, who lived first in Kamarina, and then, after that city's dissolution, in Syracuse.<sup>3</sup> While this statue base was attached to an impressive dedication and was found at Olympia, there is nothing in the text to suggest that it was an athletic dedication, and I do not comment on it further in this essay. The remainder of this paper examines the mostly complete Arkadian epigrams from Olympia, those of Tellon (*CEG* 381) and Kyniskos (*CEG* 383).

In their ancient or modern institutionalized forms, sports have often prefigured accessibility, participation, and legitimacy through notions of identity based on political, sexual, and socio-economic characteristics. The primacy of the body in sports – in the modern era, Pierre de Coubertin's "aristocracy of muscles" – likely results in the privileging of social identities that purport to be based on visible physical characteristics.<sup>4</sup> According to MacClancy, sport is a "vehicle" that simultaneously reveals one's established identity, and establishes a new one altogether.<sup>5</sup> In the modern context, therefore, athletics and social identity are deeply intertwined. The contemporary analysis of these related concepts is made easier because of the abundance of evidence, eye-witness and participant testimony, and intense contemporary scholarly, governmental, and media attention. In the ancient world, however, recovering the dialectical quality of identity and identification is complicated (though still a necessary task) by the normative and idealizing representations of athletes and athletics, above all in epinician song and epigram. Therefore, my initial premise is that identity, conceived in the

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In other areas, such as in central Arkadia and to the north, larger *poleis* like Tegea and Mantinea held sway over extensive rural holdings (the *great poleis* of Arkadia, according to Ps.-Skylax 44, were Mantinea, Tegea, Orchomenos, Heraia, and Stymphalos). On the social organization of Arkadia in the fifth-century BCE, see Nielsen 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffery 1990, 161; Hornblower 2004, 106.

<sup>4</sup> Coubertin 2000, 265.

<sup>5</sup> MacClancy 1996, 2–3.

modern understanding, had a role to play in athletic participation and victory in the ancient world, and thus has a role to play in analysis of these related phenomena.<sup>6</sup>

One productive way to access the representation and revelation of athletic identity is through the herald's proclamation or *angelia*. At its most basic level, the proclamation is a speech act that signals to an audience, whether reading or listening, the details that permit victory to be properly attributed (these details were normally victor's name, father's name, *polis*, event, age-category (if a *pais* or *ageneioi*), and a form of the verb *νικάω*).<sup>7</sup> The proclamation changes the status of an individual (from competitor to victor), and asserts (or re-asserts) the individual's social identity.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the *angelia* participates in the entire complex of social identities that were part of the Arkadian social, political, and ideological landscape.

Identity is, however, not a straightforward category. As Jenkins argues, identity is problematized in its very conception, since the dialectic of similarity and difference between us and others, and the interaction of our and others' opinions generates a recognized identity; identity is always social, and I refer to identity as a social construction in order to acknowledge its uniquely collaborative ontology.<sup>9</sup> This collaborative origin does not presume its transparency, since individual and collective identities are only potent inasmuch as other individuals and groups recognize these identities. The generation, the recognition, and the promulgation of particular identities are always political, since they depend upon external verification and recognition in order to have any meaningful currency within a given society.<sup>10</sup> The various elements of the *angelia* are necessarily social, because gender, political identity –

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<sup>6</sup> Golden 1998 is especially cogent for this function of ancient sport, which he calls the “discourse of difference” (1998, 4–6).

<sup>7</sup> On the content of the *angelia*, see Nash 1990, 25–26; Day 1994, 64. Wolicki (2002, 76) suggests the similarity of the herald and bard; Crowther (2004) adds the criteria for good heralds, which are remarkably akin to those for good bards. The *angelia* is repeated rather blatantly in some epigrams and epinician songs: e.g., *CEG* 381, 399, 815; Pind. *Pyth.* 9.1–5, *Nem.* 5.1–6.

<sup>8</sup> The proclamation also acts negatively to change the status of the non-winners; once the victor is announced, by virtue of their absence they become losers (cf. Pind. *Ol.* 8, *Pyth.* 9). On losers as implied opposites to winners in epinician song, see Miller 2018. Many years after the event, and outside the confines of the gymnasium or athletic sanctuary, the interconnection of personal with athletic identity is evident. When naming those who have “lived the life of free and honorable men” in his speech against Timarchos, Aeschines (1.156) recalls several individuals by personal name and patronymic, but Timesitheus as simply “the runner”.

<sup>9</sup> Jenkins 2004, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Jenkins 2004, 19–25.

even age – are concepts that require both individual adherence and collective recognition. Moreover, the selection of these categories themselves is an ideological act,<sup>11</sup> as is the representation of the *angelia* in epigram and epinician.<sup>12</sup> By taking my departure from the social quality of apparently individual identity, I resituate athletic epigrams firmly in their context as acts of social identification.

At Olympia social and political identities were especially potent, because the varied and diverse audience of the games and the sanctuary's dedications made possible external validation and the recognition of group status.<sup>13</sup> The dialectic of similarity and difference is apropos to the Olympics, since at the civic level, these games promoted similarity (a pan-Hellenic identity) and difference (the autonomy of *poleis*).<sup>14</sup> In fact, claiming a *polis* identity at the Olympics was particularly effective, because Olympic participation (memorialized only through victory) implied that the victor's community had been visited by the Elean *theoroi*.<sup>15</sup> The *theoroi* sent out by the Eleans to announce the timing of the Olympic festival for the coming year were hosted in political communities across the Greek world – starting at least in the fourth century BCE, this hosting was institutionalized in the form of the *theorodokos*, an individual, probably from the elite, whose function was to house the *theoroi* and mediate between them and the *polis*.<sup>16</sup> The involvement of civic authorities, on both ends of the *epangelia*, whether in the sending

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<sup>11</sup> Consider the identities we find in non-athletic epigrams, which record simply the name of the individual (e.g., *CEG* 49, 51, 69, 77, 84), occupations (*CEG* 62, 87, 191, 193, 217, 243, 396, 572), family names (*CEG* 207?), other family members (*CEG* 223?, 273, 275?, 323, 336, 403), female relations (*CEG* 413), whole family groupings (*CEG* 225?, 269, 407), other ethnic identifiers (*CEG* 209), or citizen class (*CEG* 269) as ways of identifying their dedicators. Despite their absence from the *angelia* or representation of the *angelia*, brothers (*Pind. Ol.* 2.49; *Pyth.* 10.69), uncles (*Nem.* 4.80, 5.43; *Isth.* 6.60–61, 7.23–25), and mothers (*Ol.* 6.77–79; *Nem.* 10.37–38; cf. *Nem.* 1.33–59) were sometimes mentioned in epinician songs; we have some anecdotes, for instance, about mothers having a special interest in the athletic careers of their children (e.g., *Paus.* 8.53). To be sure, some non-athletic dedications mention father's name as well (e.g., *CEG* 194, 195, 201, 221, 237, 251, 280, 293, 320, 322, 417, 418). The point is that there is a variety of identifications possible in non-athletic dedications, whereas athletic dedications tend to restrict themselves to the categories of the *angelia*.

<sup>12</sup> The earliest attested *angelia*, that of Kimon's victory in the Olympics of 532 BCE, was already deployed so as to ensure his return from exile (*Hdt.* 6.103.2). The very fact that proclamations name chariot owner, not charioteer, should alert us to their ideological construction (see Nicholson 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Nielsen 2007, 68–69; Miller 2021, 144–147.

<sup>14</sup> Nielsen 2007, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Nielsen 2004, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Perlman 2000, 63–66.

out of ambassadors or in hosting them, emphasizes the early politicizing (in the literal sense) of athletics.<sup>17</sup>

The first epigram in this study, Tellon's inscription (*CEG* 381), was found reasonably intact at Olympia, embedded in the east Byzantine wall erected near the southern portion of the *Altis*.<sup>18</sup> Pausanias saw the dedication first-hand, and observed that it was next to the dedication for another Arkadian, the Mantinean boy boxer Epikradians (Paus. 6.10.9). The text appears in the *CEG* with some conjectures and supplements:

[Τέλλον τόνδ' ] ἀνέθε[κ]ε Δαέμονος υἱὸς ὁ πύκ]τας,  
 Ἀρκὰς Ὀρεσθάσιος, παῖς ὃ [ — — / — — — ].

Tellon the son of Daemon a boxer dedicated this,  
 an Arkadian Oresthasian and boy ...<sup>19</sup>

While the epigram records Tellon's *polis* identity as Oresthasian, the victor list found on *P.Oxy* II 222 identifies him as Mainalian (col.i, line 29). This striking discrepancy is at the heart of my analysis, since local and regional identities, while concurrent, are not necessarily co-terminous. It seems that for some later writers, possibly working from the list of victors recorded by Hippias of Elis, Oresthasian and Mainalian could be synonymous, which might reflect an alternative source for Olympic victors' information, or some confusion on the part of non-Arkadians as to how Arkadian *ethne* functioned. Different identities, of course, have different meanings to individuals, whether political, legal, or emotional; the imprecision of later writers should not obscure the very real distinction of these identities for contemporary Arkadians.

The settlement of Oresthasion was one of the several that made up the *ethnos* of Mainalos. Both Thucydides (5.64) and Pausanias (8.21.3) place Oresthasion within the Mainalian *ethnos*; however, Euripides, in *Orestes* (1643–1647) and *Electra* (1273–1275) identifies it as part of

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<sup>17</sup> This early political involvement has been further supported in recent years with the publication of an Archaic inscription from Olympia, in which *theoroi* from *poleis* are mentioned at Olympia itself (Ebert and Siewert 1990, 391–412). The early criticisms of Xenophanes (*IEG*<sup>2</sup> fr.2) and Tyrtaios (*IEG*<sup>2</sup> fr.12), concerning the civic benefits meted out to victorious athletes, are further evidence of the mixing of politics and athletics from an early date.

<sup>18</sup> Hyde 1912, 211.

<sup>19</sup> The epigram has been re-inscribed at some point, likely in the first century BCE (*ad loc.* Hansen). For full *apparatus criticus*, see Hansen (*ad loc.*).

Parrhassion.<sup>20</sup> While its location has been tentatively identified near the modern town of Anemodouri, southeast of Megalopolis, to which it contributed settlers and an *oikist* when that city was founded in 370 BCE (Paus.8.27.3), geography offers little to situate it firmly in either *ethnos*.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fact that Euripides' *Electra* states that the site of Oresthasion is "near" the Parrhasian sanctuary of Zeus Lykaios on Mount Lykaion, this is largely inaccurate (the mountain is 40 KM away from Anemodouri on modern roads). The city was known as a staging ground for the mustering of troops of the Peloponnesian League in antiquity, and Anemodouri's location near the E65, the major highway through the southern Peloponnese, attests to its convenient geography. In fact, it may be that the road network offers some explanation: Oresthasion's Mainalian identity was effected, despite distance, by the ease of travel along the roads and river valleys leading north towards and beyond Tegea.<sup>22</sup>

Regardless of the political hegemony under which Oresthasion was situated, the composer of Tellon's epigram seems to have regarded the boy as Arkadian by virtue of the use of the ethnic *Arkas*, even though no pan-Arkadian political entity existed at the time, and the ethnic is usually used by non-Arkadians to refer to Arkadians.<sup>23</sup> *Ethnos* identification is obscured altogether in *CEG* 381, since Tellon is described as an Oresthasian (per the epigram), not a Mainalian (per *P.Oxy* 222) at the time of his victory.<sup>24</sup> The double identity (Arkadian and Oresthasian) would not have been pronounced in the actual *angelia*, and exists

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<sup>20</sup> Willink discusses the discrepancy, though he concludes that Oresthasion, while not in Parrhasia proper, was not too far away to be considered among its outlying settlements (1986, 354). A look at a map of the area, however, is revealing: Oresthasion is separated from Parrhasia by the entirety of the Alpheos River Valley, where Megalopolis (on the Helissos) will eventually be founded.

<sup>21</sup> Excavations on the hill-top near Anemodouri have uncovered sherds dating from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period, and the hill probably represents the acropolis of ancient Oresthasion (Pikoulas 1988, 102–104).

<sup>22</sup> On the road network of ancient Arkadia, with evidence to suggest north-south routes remain visible in the Peloponnese, see Pikoulas 2000, especially 301.

<sup>23</sup> Tellon's is the only certain epigraphic use of the ethnic in the fifth century BCE (Nielsen 1999, 24).

<sup>24</sup> The Oxyrhynchos list, even if it is based off Hippias of Elis' work, was compiled in the early fourth century BCE (Christesen 2007, 46–47). Hippias' catalogue of victors must also be considered in its socio-political context: Elean control of its hinterland as well as the Olympic sanctuary itself was threatened by Spartan attack in the early fourth century BCE (Christesen 2007, 54–55). His work likely accounted for contemporary Elean claims to their hinterland; Pausanias, for example, remarks that the Eleans forced Lepreat victors (from the disputed Triphylian region) to declare themselves as Lepreates *from* Elis (Paus.5.5.3).

only in the inscriptional representation of the *angelia* that persists in the epigram.

The locale of this declaration of Oresthasian and Arkadian identity should not, however, be overlooked. While Tellon's epigram appears to be a re-presentation of the *angelia*, the relationship between an epigrammatic proclamation and the herald's actual proclamation is not the straightforward re-presentation of an utterance, since the ephemeral *angelia* vanished as soon it was pronounced. Tellon's epigram preserves a representation of the *angelia* that stresses his Arkadian ethnicity and simultaneously the *polis* status of Oresthasion. In inscribing Oresthasion, the epigram implicitly preserves a history of visits by the Elean *theoroi*, who would necessarily have been hosted in Oresthasion in order for Oresthasians to participate in the Olympics. In other words, the site of Tellon's epigram reinforces Oresthasian identity: only at Olympia could such a bold claim to social identity be established through so few words.

Golden suggests that the increasing popularity of boys' contests, in which Tellon was victorious, came from their ability to provide further opportunities for victory for the same elite families who managed, organized, and participated in athletic festivals.<sup>25</sup> Boys' victories played the same social and political role as victories by adults. The only distinction was that the victor had less control over the promotion and celebration of his victory, which, we must imagine, was in the hands of his father or another family figure.<sup>26</sup> Since the epigram records an unusual dual identity, which would have had to be insisted upon by the person in charge of commissioning the statue and inscription, the two political identities (*Arkas* and *Oresthasion*) are tied to the involvement of individuals beyond the victor.

As viewers of the statue read aloud the epigram, they re-performed a proclamation of double-identity, that never took place. Indeed, the

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<sup>25</sup> While competitions for boys did not begin at Olympia until 632 BCE (Paus. 5.8.9; Golden 1998, 104), boys' athletics proliferated around Greece after this date. Golden adduces some statistics to support his model of local elite motivation for the increase in the number of competitions: he compares, for example, the proportion of Elean victors in the *andres* category at the Olympics (10.5%) with the number of Elean victors in the *paides* category (22.5%; 1998). Conversely, at relatively distant Delphi, Elean boy-victors represent a paltry one of the fifteen known victors (Golden 1998, 107–108).

<sup>26</sup> Many young victors were probably accompanied to Olympia and other far-flung festival sites by a retinue of male relatives, including fathers, uncles, and prominent familial allies. Victory also ran in families, as the example of the extraordinary success of the family of Diagoras of Rhodes demonstrates: Diagoras himself was a *periodonikes* in boxing, his three sons won Olympic victories in boxing and *pankration*, and his grandsons were also Olympic boxing champions (Paus. 6.7.1–7).

inclusion of both region and *polis* in an epigram at Olympia suggests the necessity of external validation (i.e., the pan-Hellenic audience of the sanctuary) to coherent social and group identity. The epigram insists on the *polis* status of the villages that made up the *ethne* of the Arkadian region (perhaps directly contradicting the ignorance of non-Arkadians like Euripides or Hippias), and the existence of a non-political, but nevertheless pan-Arkadian ethnicity.

My interpretation of Tellon's dedication underscores that epigrams participate in the process of civic and ethnic identification; they are not simply representations of identity. That the context of this act of identification is the Olympics should come as no surprise: sociologists stress the situational salience of ethnicity, and in particular, the new (or revived) potency of ethnic identification outside of home or community.<sup>27</sup> By using the city and regional ethnic, and implicitly narrating the political status of Oresthasion, the epigram claims that the Oresthasian *polis* exists and received envoys; the epigram participates in the representation (and thus generation) of *polis* status, but this creative aspect – the inter-connections between representation, reality, and ideology – is effaced at the moment of inscription. Participation in the Olympics was, for the individual, the act of Hellenic self-identity, and for a *polis*, the act of political autonomy.<sup>28</sup> By reifying the status of Oresthasion, Tellon's dedication ensures the Hellenic identity (i.e., that the residents of Oresthasion were Greek) of the *polis*' inhabitants at the same time as it ensures the political autonomy of the *polis* (i.e., that Oresthasion was a *polis*).

The politics of Olympic inscriptions at the time of their initial dedication allows me to speculate on the context of the epigram's reinscription in the first century BCE. While it is highly unlikely that a descendant or relative four centuries later paid for its reinscription, a civic re-commissioning is far more probable, especially within the context of first century BCE Greece. Strabo offers some evidence for Arkadia's depopulation and relative deterioration under Roman rule, when he refers to the region's desolation and poverty (Str.8.8.1). While Strabo is probably nostalgic for the past glory of Greece, nonetheless, survey archaeology across the future province of Achaëa indicates the loss of population and the eventual abandonment of formerly prominent political centres.<sup>29</sup> By time of the reinscription of CEG 381, Greek *poleis* had, of course, lost all semblance of political autonomy, but the status of individual *poleis* as *poleis* still mattered when it came to internal self-

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<sup>27</sup> Fenton 1999, 108.

<sup>28</sup> Nielsen 2004, 108.

<sup>29</sup> Roy, Lloyd, and Owens 1989, 146–150.



government, tax collection, and the pride of local elites.<sup>30</sup> Alcock points to mobile and prominent elites as potential *euergetai* to their home cities, regardless of their size: Plutarch, for example, although worldly and well-travelled, apparently preferred small scale Chaironeia (*Dem.*2.2).<sup>31</sup> Moreover, beyond these well-heeled native sons, *poleis* could rely on the philhellenic tendencies of Roman consuls, proconsuls, and eventually imperial authorities. These authorities often bestowed benefits based on the city's past history, and although major centres like Athens had pride of place for such largesse (e.g., Appian, *Bella Civila* 2.88), smaller scale *poleis* might look to exploit their lineage or past glory.<sup>32</sup> An Arkadian in the first century BCE did not necessarily care for Tellon as an Olympic victor *per se*, but Tellon's declaration was the starting point for a history of ethnic and political identity. His victory and its concomitant narrative of Oresthasian prominence and *polis*-status attested to the independence of Oresthasion, and its participation in the common sanctuaries of the Greeks; the dedication was thus redeployed as a pronouncement on the political status of Oresthasion in the context of Roman Greece.<sup>33</sup>

The only other Arkadian athletic epigram found in good condition at Olympia is that of Kyniskos (*CEG* 383). The statue is missing, but the inscribed marble base was found in the structure of the Byzantine church built over the ruins of the workshop of Pheidias. Kyniskos' statue is mentioned by Pausanias (6.4.11), who adds the age-category of the victor as well.

πύ[κ]τα[ς] τόνδ' ἀνέθεκε|ν ἅπ' ἐνδόξοιο [Κ]υνί|σκος  
Μαν[τ]ινέας νικῶν | πατρὸς ἔχον | ὄνομα.<sup>34</sup>

A boxer, Kyniskos, from famed Mantinea dedicated this,  
when he won; he has the name of his father.

<sup>30</sup> Alcock 1993, 129. Van Nijf has argued in several publications about the continuing relevance of athletic victory and *polis* identity in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor (2010, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Alcock 1993, 156. Citizenship grants to victorious athletes, both by their home *polis* and other *poleis* also point to the continuing importance of local politics (Van Nijf, 2012, 182–187).

<sup>32</sup> *Poleis* used athletic festivals to claim connections with the Roman political administration (Van Nijf, 2010, 185–186).

<sup>33</sup> If my analysis of the reinscription is correct, the strategy was ultimately unsuccessful. When Pausanias visited Oresthasion in the second century CE, he found only ruins (8.33.1).

<sup>34</sup> For full epigraphic *apparatus criticus*, see Hansen (*ad loc.*).

Pausanias names Polykleitos the sculptor of Kyniskos' statue, and the Roman copy known as the "Westmacott Youth" has often been associated with this dedication (British Museum Sculpture 1754).<sup>35</sup> The pose of the youth, set in the *contrapposto* stance, has been interpreted as that of an athlete crowning himself.<sup>36</sup> The association of athlete and statue, however, has been challenged, since Kyniskos' victory, probably from 464 or 460 BCE, seems too early for Polykleitos.<sup>37</sup> Despite Pausanias' possible error regarding the artist, Kyniskos' statue likely had an appearance similar enough to that of the "Westmacott Youth" to have appeared Polykleitian, and the Roman copy suggests something of the impact of viewing the statue while reading the epigram. If one looks at the layout of the inscription, the two line epigram is broken into five segments, which circle the feet of the statue and return to the statue's front with the last word of the pentameter.<sup>38</sup> The text of the epigram led readers around the statue and displayed to them, as they read the epigram aloud, the three-dimensional dedication. In few surviving epigrams is there such an interplay of epigram, inscription, and statue. Needless to say, this is a potent multimedia dedication, and thus deserves careful scrutiny.

Whereas Tellon indicated both his civic (*Oresthasion*) and ethnic (*Arkas*) identity, Kyniskos' epigram describes himself solely in terms of *polis* (CEG 383.1). Kyniskos' epigram, especially if coupled with a statuary dedication that reflects the conflated moment of proclamation and coronation, implies the *polis* status of Mantinea in the same way as Tellon's epigram performed the status of *Oresthasion* (i.e., a history of visits by the Elean *theoroi*). Kyniskos' dedication does not, however, associate "famed Mantinea" or its victor with the ethnic *Arkas*; instead, Mantinean civic identity, rather conspicuously, stands alone.

While Mantinean political entity probably existed in the early Archaic period, the foundation of the urban centre of Mantinea (as opposed to the traditional four or five villages of the state) likely dates to the 470s–460s BCE, while preeminent Peloponnesian power Sparta was occupied with a revolt of its Helot population and recovery from the earthquake of ca. 465 BCE.<sup>39</sup> If the dating for the formation of Mantinea's urban centre is correct, the correlation with Kyniskos' dedication

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<sup>35</sup> See Ebert 1972, 84.

<sup>36</sup> Richter 1970, 193.

<sup>37</sup> Day 2010, 217 n.174.

<sup>38</sup> See Hansen *ad loc.* for a diagram of the inscription on the statue base.

<sup>39</sup> The earliest definite literary testimony of the town's existence is the mention of the temple of Zeus in the town's agora in the anti-Spartan treaty of 420 BCE (Thuc.5.47.11). Some have argued for an early date, on which, see Hodkinson and Hodkinson 1981, 260–261.

is striking. The formation of an urban centre probably accomplished little for the subsistence farmers, who would have continued to live in their ancestral villages or in temporary shelters near their fields. Wealthy and elite Mantineans, however, now had a central gathering space to demonstrate and perform their elite status.<sup>40</sup> Participation in the Olympics, of course, was prime evidence for the *polis*-status of a given community, the Hellenic identities of individuals, and a primary stage for intra-elite competition. It is noteworthy in this regard that Mantinean victors are virtually restricted to the early years of the fifth century (500–460 BCE; cf. Moretti nos.163, 193, 202, 254, 256, 265); the conventional interpretation is that an increased interest in participation in the pan-Hellenic sanctuaries derived from an increased ability for self-promotion and competition between elites at home, in this newly founded urban centre.<sup>41</sup>

By examining the rhetoric of the epigram in concert with modern approaches to identity-formation, I question this narrative of cause-and-effect, *synoikism* and epigram, since the unusual formulation of the father's name in this epigram highlights the apparent promotion of Kyniskos' victory as a socially and politically-potent event in and of itself.<sup>42</sup> Just as with the epigram of Tellon, the commissioning and phrasing of the epigram were likely out of the hands of the boy-victor himself; therefore, the unusual phrasing used for the name of the father, who probably commissioned the statue, deserves some scrutiny.<sup>43</sup> The evidence for heraldic proclamations at Olympia suggests that the regular formula of the proclamation would have announced the victor as "Kyniskos, the son of Kyniskos" and the proclamation would have

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<sup>40</sup> Hodkinson and Hodkinson 1981, 288.

<sup>41</sup> Hodkinson and Hodkinson 1981, 287.

<sup>42</sup> In only one other epigram in the two volumes of the *CEG* does this phrase occur. In *CEG* 532.1, the name of father and son are tied together and their identity is stressed (1: [τόνο]μα μὲν τόμον καὶ ἐμῶ πατρός ἦδε ἀγορεύ[ει] "this announces my name and that of my father"). Another close parallel is *CEG* 564.1 (παῖ πατέρος σαντοῦ πατρός ἔχων ὄνομα "a child having the name of his grandfather"), but these names are of grandson and grandfather. Neither of these texts are athletic epigrams.

<sup>43</sup> Herodotus tells us that "Kyniskos" (i.e., little dog) was the nickname of the Eurypontid Spartan royal Zeuxidamos, who was the father of the later king Archidamos II (6.71.1). Since Kyniskos won in the boys' competition, we should place his birth in the early 470s. In this case, the father's birth should probably be dated to ca. 510 BCE, or some twenty years after the birth of Zeuxidamos, who may have already acquired the nickname "Kyniskos". Thus the name may suggest elite contacts between Arkadians and Spartans in the late archaic and early Classical periods (Tuplin 1978).

likely included the age-category of the victor, in this case, a *pais*.<sup>44</sup> In Kyniskos' epigram, however, age-category is absent, and the epigram stresses the similarity of the names of father and son (383.2: "he has the name of his father").

The glory of victory, through the proclamation of the father's name and the celebration of the victory at home, redounded to the family and clan of the victor. While the extension of glory could certainly work to reintegrate the victor to his community, and to extoll the virtues of his extended family, Kyniskos' epigram and its unusual naming formula go slightly further.<sup>45</sup> The absence of the age-category and the shared name between father and son stress the sharing of the glory of victory as well. Casual observers of this dedication could not have realized which Kyniskos had even won in the Olympics; the desire for apparent equivalence may explain the absence of the age-category in the inscription. While the herald's proclamation emphasized a specific "Kyniskos the son of Kyniskos", the representation of the proclamation in the epigram instead stresses the similarity of victor and his father. Whether this is a cynical attempt to appropriate the son's glory for the father, or a firm belief in the performative power of inherited ability, the epigram's phrasing forces Kyniskos' father, unnamed except periphrastically, into focus.

The emphasis on the father's identity and his close tie to the athletic victory, and, most importantly, its reification at Olympia, prompt me to re-consider the supposedly causal relationship between Mantinean *synoikism* and the inscribing of Kyniskos' epigram. Cohen argues that "ethnic mobilization requires the active instigation of individuals and organizations".<sup>46</sup> He calls such individuals "entrepreneurs", who demonstrate the salience of ethnic identity and articulate the process of identification. Kyniskos' epigram, which puts great emphasis on identity of father and son, attests to the existence of such "entrepreneur[s]"; this is not to argue for reading the intentions of Kyniskos' father, but rather to recognize and to try to explain the insistent presence of the father in the son's epigram, along with the explicit Mantinean civic identity. The ambiguity of Greek word order reinforces my conclusion: *εὐδόξοιο*, a two-ending adjective, could modify *πατρός* rather than *Μαντινέας*. For some readers, the adjective would apply to *πατρός* – "he

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<sup>44</sup> We rely on Pausanias for the fact that Kyniskos won as a *pais* (Paus.6.4.11). As normally, we have no idea of the source for this extra piece of information, though presumably, Pausanias' guide added the age-category.

<sup>45</sup> On the idea that athletic celebration must reintegrate victor into family, clan, and city, see Kurke 1991.

<sup>46</sup> Cohen 1978, 396–398 (quotations from 396).

has the name of a famed father” – rather than (or along with) “from famed Mantinea”.

Ethnic “mobilization” can occur prior to its justification. In other words, ethnic identities do not necessarily follow their enunciation, but a rationale for their existence can be found after they have been created. From this perspective, it is possible to posit a reversal of the conventional relationship between Mantinean victory dedications and the establishment of a Mantinean urban centre. The Olympic Games are a performative venue for identities, and therefore the inscribing in stone of Mantinean identity represents the emergent mobilization of that ethnic identity: that is, expressing civic identity (in this case “from famed Mantinea”) could itself be the catalyst for the *synoikist* movement, in which Kyniskos the father took part (“from a famous father”). Rather than interpret cause-and-effect relationships between physical and metaphorical communities, my perspective highlights the dialectic of ethnic/civic solidarity and that community’s performative declarations; it also highlights the agency of elite individuals and athletics itself in the generation as well as representation of socio-political identities.

Today, athletics celebrate political identity; perhaps, in no other sphere of the world is unabashed nationalism celebrated with as much fervour as at international sporting competitions, whether the Olympics or FIFA World Cup. National athletic teams crowd out other layers of social identity in the modern world, bypassing civic and regional club affiliations, and reestablishing dormant national identities, especially for diasporic communities and children of immigrants, who often side with their ancestral teams before their actual juridical citizenship. In this paper, I have demonstrated through a close reading of Arkadian epigrams from the fifth-century BCE that the connection between sport and social – particularly political – identity has a long history. Indeed, claims to ancient political identities in these epigrams are productively elucidated through an attention to how modern claims to ethnic, civic, and national identities are enunciated and constructed. While the evidence from the ancient world is, as always, far more meagre than that available to modern historians, nonetheless, the interconnections among social identity, political affiliation and mobilization, and sporting success can be detected by reading between and beyond the lines of these otherwise deceptively simple texts. In this way, athletics and above all texts from the athletic context offer valuable evidence into how various Hellenic and sub-Hellenic identities were conceived and performed, and how they managed to have relevance and resonance after the victory, outside the sanctuary, and across generations.

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