

a competition venue for sports removed from the Olympic Games, allow some sports to move to the Winter program, and affirm a commitment to multiculturalism by including indigenous sports. Eliminating, instead of adding, sports will not be an easy task. If the recently elected IOC President, Dr. Jacques Rogge, is genuinely committed to limiting the size of the Games, he must be prepared to act in a timely fashion, and in the best interests of the athletes, those for whom the Games are intended.

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Kyniska of Sparta- Engendering Olympic Victory?

Ironically, one of the most famous ancient Olympic victors, Kyniska of Sparta, the first woman to win an Olympic victory, because of the ban on women during the festival, was not allowed to be present at Olympia during the games in which she was proclaimed the winner of the four-horse chariot event. Perceptive recent discussions (e.g. Golden, Scanlon), from the perspective of social and cultural history, have agreed in seeing Kyniska's win as exceptional, a notable aberration, but further investigation is needed. The heightened interest in women's sport history in recent years should not lead us to see Kyniska as a champion of women's rights in sport.

This paper reexamines the ancient evidence on Kyniska (an epigram on a base at Olympia; Pausanias, Plutarch, Xenophon) from the traditional but not irrelevant perspective of military and political history. Rather than trying to connect Kyniska to early mythological figures, or to footraces for virgin girls in the Heraia and elsewhere, the paper sets Kyniska's participation in the Olympics against traditions of equestrian competition by elite males from Sparta and rival states. It assesses the initiative of Kyniska, and it suggests more than athletic motivations behind her involvement. The paper contextualizes Kyniska within the political and military relations of Sparta, Elis, and other Greek states in the late fifth and early fourth century BC. More specifically, the reigns of Kyniska's brothers, the Spartan kings Agis (427-400 BC) (e.g. the exclusion of Sparta from Olympia in 420, the flogging of Lichas for defying the ban, Agis' experiences with Alcibiades, the war between Sparta and Elis in 402-400) and Agesilaus (400-359 BC) (e.g. his awkward succession, his

apparent disdain for chariot racing and traditional athletic events, his military and economic agendas) are crucial to understanding Kyniska's Olympic competition.



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