

As has been recognized (e.g. Currie 2005), Bundy's insistence on the epinician's encomiastic function need not exclude attention to historical context, especially given the victory ode's public character, acknowledged by Bundy himself. In this paper, I wish to deepen the connection between praise of victor and praise of polis (Kurke 1991), by describing a feature of Pindaric myth-making that is constant enough to belong to Bundy's "grammar of choral style" and particular enough to tie the ode to its first performance and to resonate with audiences, primary or secondary (Currie 2004; Morrison 2007). I refer to Pindar's "mythical antagonism": his epichoric myths take shape in dialogue with competing versions, even when Pindar does not appear to engage in explicit polemic. In a world of political antagonisms (Hubbard 2001; 2004), it is especially fruitful to look to Athens: although the Athenian empire has left little trace in the odes (Hornblower and Morgan 2007), Athenian mythology is a goldmine for competing narratives, precisely because of Athens' political ascendancy and cultural hegemony as early as the 470s. Far from being Athenocentric, this approach sheds light on local perspectives, while at the same time Pindar's allusiveness makes his epinician pan-Hellenic.

Here I focus on the Hyperborean origin of the olive trees in *Ol. 3*. This enigmatic account of Pindaric invention (Krummen 1990) is best viewed against Athenian ideology. By applying the generic ἐλαία instead of κότινος to the victor's wreath, and by stressing Herakles' wonder at the sight of the Hyperborean trees, Pindar fuses the Olympian olive trees with olive trees in general; his intentional vagueness tacitly challenges several Athenian claims: that Athens was the birthplace of olive trees, thought of as Athena's gift (Hdt. 5.82; 8.55; Paus. 1.27.2; Apollod. 3.14.1), and that Athenian olive trees surpassed all others (e.g. S. *OC* 694-706). Their Hyperborean provenance frees the Olympian olive trees from North Wind's effects and evocations of mortality (Krummen 1990; Sfyroeras 2003); by contrast, the Athenians appealed to Boreas as their son-in-law before Artemision, and thanked him with a shrine on the banks of Ilissos (Hdt. 7.189) – the very site of Boreas' abduction of Oreithyia, depicted on contemporary vases with olive trees. The story that Herakles transplanted the olive trees to Olympia from Ilissos' banks (Arist. *De mir. ausc.* 834a) may in fact be an Athenian response to the polemic of *Ol. 3*.

The concomitant symbolic precedence of Olympia over Athens is transferred to Theron, the laudandus of *Ol. 3*, and his polis Akragas, Gelon's ally at the battle of Himera. We may link this rhetorical move to the arguments about the relative merits of Sicilian and Greek victories in the wake of the Persian wars (cf. *P.* 1.71-80), starting perhaps with the acrimonious exchange between Gelon and the Athenians (Hdt. 7. 161-62), which echoes with questions raised in *Ol. 3* and deserves to be compared with it. Even Gelon's riddling remark ("the spring of the year is lost to Greece"), for instance, suggests that the Sicilian cities represent and embody winterlessness – precisely the implicit message of *Ol. 3*.