

**Derek COLLINS**  
**Corinna and Mythological Innovation**

This paper argues that three myths in the extant fragments of Corinna are best understood not as 'parochial stories' (so Page 1953: 39), but as mythological innovations that engage with and depend upon Panhellenic (viz. Homeric, Hesiodic) versions of these stories for their appeal.

In *PMG* 654 (col. iii.38) Orion is named as the father of Acraephen and the past occupier of the oracular seat at Ptoia. Orion is a standard figure in cosmological Panhellenic myth, as attested for example in Homer (*Iliad* 18.486, 488, cf. 22.29), known for his hunting prowess (*Odyssey* 11.572-75), and his constellation is a regular feature of the Boeotian agricultural calendar, as found in Hesiod (WD 598, 615, 619). Corinna featured Orion along with the exploits of his daughters in several of her poems (*PMG* 656, 662, 673) and makes him, like Hesiod, the son of Hyrieus (*PMG* 654, col. iii.35). Corinna's treatment of Orion is set in the time before he was killed, while his occupation of the Ptoian oracle before his translation to the heavens shows how Corinna makes his localized Boeotian role accord with his Panhellenic destiny.

In the singing contest between Cithaeron and Helicon (*PMG* 654, col. i = P. Berol. 284) the influence of Hesiod and Homer is detectable in Corinna's diction (e.g. Cronus' epithet *angkulom't's*, *PMG* 654, col. i.15). In light of Martin West's (1996: 22) recent reexamination of the Berlin papyrus we now have further grounds to detect a parallel with Hesiod (col. i. 13-14 ~ *Th.* 483), which supports an earlier conjecture by Bolling (1956: 283), as against the similarities with Euripides (*Bacchae* 121-24). A reexamination of the myth of the Curetes as known from Hesiod (fr. 123 MW) and from other sources (e.g. Istros the Callimachean *FGH* 334 F 48) will explain Corinna's innovation of having Rhea successfully steal the baby Zeus from the Curetes on Mt. Ida. Since this tale is narrated by Cithaeron, who wins the contest, Corinna can be seen cleverly to oppose a local Boeotian variant against a Panhellenic version centered on Ida.

Finally, from the title of Corinna's story involving Oedipus and the Teumessian fox (*PMG* 672) we can situate this story in the context of Boeotian hostility toward Athens. Corinna's interest in Theban myths is well attested (*PMG* 659, 661, 690.12). And we may recall in this context her reproach of Pindar for using Atticisms in his poetry (*PMG* 688), as well as Pindar's own objectionable praise of Athens (fr. 76 SM). The story of the Teumessian fox is told in several late versions which all feature Cephalus as the hero and his extraordinary dog. The key to Corinna's innovation is that she substitutes a Theban hero, Oedipus, for the Athenian Cephalus in her version. When set in the context of both its Panhellenic predecessors and of fifth century city-state politics, Corinna emerges as more sophisticated and politically innovative than has previously been noticed.