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Thebes, Akragas, and Syracuse in Two of Pindar's Sicilian Odes[2]

ὔμμιν τόδε τᾶν λιπαρᾶν ἀπὸ Θηβᾶν φέρων
μέλος ἔρχομαι ἀγγελίαν τετραορίας ἐλελίχθονος…

to you I bring this song from lustrous Thebes,
coming with news of that earth-battering team...[3]

Victory odes are designed to be transcendent. In this way, they can satisfy the poet's quest for undying fame (*kleos aphthiton*) and thus fulfill his poetic task (*chreos*). The pragmatic force of these poems can manufacture savvy interpreters (*sophoi* or *sunetoi*) able to fathom a virtual text that integrates all of the textual modalities each ode offers.[4] The understanding and appreciation of these interpreters

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[2] I would like to thank Heather Reid for organizing the Pindar in Sicily conference, and for her unstinting editorial help. I am indebted to Virginia Lewis, Richard Parmentier, and Giovan Battista d'Alessio for astute comments on several versions of the paper, and to Egbert Bakker: an early version was delivered at Yale University. Thanks to Casey Puerzer for editorial improvements. (No thanks to Covid, rampant as I was revising this paper).

[3] *Pythian* 2.3-4. Greek quotations of Pindaric epinicia are from Bruno Snell and H. Maehler, *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis Pars I Epinicia* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008). Translations of epinicia are by Andrew Miller, *Pindar. The Ode*s (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), of the hymn and the dithyramb William Race, *Pindar*, v. 1-2 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[4] Nancy Felson and Richard J. Parmentier, "The 'Savvy Interpreter': Performance and Interpretation in Pindar's Victory Odes," *Signs and Society* 3:2 (2015): 261-305, reprinted in R. J. Parmentier, *Signs and Society: Further Studies in Semiotic Anthropology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 208-38.

can enable each ode to endure across time and space, even though it celebrates particular and time-bound occasions.

Both at the performance and across time and space, Pindar's victory odes invite their audiences and readers to actively exercise their own intelligence and interpretive skills (*technai*) as participatory interpreters. The odes press their interpreters to practice excellence (*aretē*), just like a successful athlete or poet. Semantic parallelisms within the major components of each ode guide interpreters in an imaginative activity that the poet's words may guide but not control. Although Pindar could not have foreseen *who* in the future or in the non-Greek world would interpret his odes, he does acknowledge that the renown (*kleos*) of the victor he commemorates, and of himself as poet, depends on his ode's intelligibility, persuasive power, and aesthetic appeal.

In the two epinicians for Sicilian tyrants, *Pythian* 3 and *Olympian* 2, Pindar situates his poetic *ego* firmly and unequivocally in Thebes, accentuating his intimate connection to past (and occasionally contemporary) Theban events and Theban *personae*. He signals to all his audiences that Thebes is a mytho-historical font and that, as "Pindar of Thebes," he is the best purveyor of the city's distinctive myths. Demonstrating his knowledge of the Isles of the Blessed in *Olympian* 2, he certifies his competence and poetic authority.

While other poets and playwrights may dwell on the negative aspects of Thebes' past,[5] Pindar draws positive lessons from his city's failures and highlights its triumphs. Exalting Thebes, he indirectly bolsters his claim to poetic wisdom (*sophia*) which he lavishes on his clients. Savvy interpreters who "get" his meaning become agents for immortalizing both his clients and his victory odes across time and space. The raw material that Pindar brings from shining Thebes

[5] For fuller detail, see Felson and Parmentier, "'Savvy Interpreter'"; Nancy Felson. "Vicarious Transport: Fictive Deixis in Pindar's *Pythian* Four," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 99 (1999): 1-31, and Nancy Felson, "The poetic effects of deixis in Pindar's Ninth *Pythian* Ode," in "The Poetics of Deixis in Alcman, Pindar, and Other Lyric," *Arethusa* 37.3 (2004): 365-389.

forms a bedrock for his praise of Sicilian victors. Moreover, Pindar pairs his homeland with the victor's and with the site of the Panhellenic games.

My argument in this essay rests on five intertwined premises that can be simply stated:

1. The first-person pronoun is fundamentally polysemous. Every time a chorus utters "*ego*," they speak for Pindar of Thebes, articulating his desire (and obligation) to praise the victor.[6]
2. Pindar the *laudator* and originator of the ode is never to be thought of in isolation: he is always intrinsically connected with his homeland of Thebes and all that for which it stands. It is as if he travels inside a circle of associations (let's call it an 'entourage') that serves as one bundle of the ample raw material upon which he draws.
3. "Pindar of Thebes," the *laudator*, is also intimately connected to the ode he brings or sends out to the homeland of the *laudandus*. Its arrival forges a connection between Thebes, its landscape and unique mythology, and the homeland of the victor and his family.
4. Thebes, as a center for Greek mythology and legend, has the potential to stand for Hellas as a geographical space and a cultural community, a potential often exploited in those odes composed for non-mainlanders.
5. In semiotic terms, Thebes and *ego* are reciprocal indexical signs of one another.[7] The historically-rooted fact of their contiguity,

[6] On the poet's task as a conventional component of the victory ode, see Wolfgang Schadewaldt, D*er Aufbau der Pindarischen Epinikion* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, [1928] 1956), 259-343 and E. L. Bundy *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986 [1962]).

[7] The relation between the indexical sign and its object is based on factual or natural contiguity, whether temporal, logical, or spatial. As C. S. Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 8 vols., eds. Cf. Charles Hartshorn, Paul Weiss, and A. W. Burks

> once established, never changes. Thus the pronoun *ego*, spoken by a chorus of surrogates, never loses its Theban connection, though at a live performance *ego* points, in addition, to the bodies of the performers. In this case of ocular deixis (Bühler's *demonstratio ad oculos)*, the first-person pronoun designates an object before the spectators' eyes.[8]

A programmatic statement from *Dithyramb* 61 (70b) is suggestive of Pindar's role as an epinician poet. In the second part of the dithyramb, lines 24-26, Pindar claims that the Muse has "set me up as the chosen herald of skilled verses for Greece with its beautiful choruses as I was praying in mighty-charioted . . . Thebes" (ἐμὲ δ' ἐξαίρετο**[**ν/ κάρυκα σοφῶν ἐπέων/ Μοῖσ' ἀνέστασ' Ἑλλάδι κα**[**λ**]**λ**[**ιχόρῳ/ εὐχόμενον βρισαρμάτοις ο**[**-˘ Θήβαις).[9] The difficult passage transitions to an account of a prominent Theban theme, the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia. The description of his

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(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-66), writes, indexicality is "essentially an affair of the here and now, its office being to bring the thought [of the interpreter] to a particular experience…" (56).

[8] Karl Bühler, *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language,* trans. D. F. Goodwin (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, [1934] 1990). See also Karl Bühler, "The Deictic Field of Language and Deictic Words," in *Speech, Place, and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics,* eds. Robert J. Jarvella and Wolfgang Klein (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), 9-30. For further definitions and references see Felson, ed., "Poetics of Deixis," esp. "Introduction" (253–266), "Glossary" (445–447), and "Bibliography." Cf. also Nancy Felson and Jared S. Klein, "Deixis in Linguistics and Poetics," 429-33, and Anna Bonifazi, "Deixis (including 1st and 2nd Person)," in *Encyclopedia of Greek Linguistics and Language* vol. I, eds. Georgios Giannakis et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publisher, 2013), 419-29.

[9] This translation by Richard Hamilton, "The Pindaric Dithyramb," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990), 213, ignores the lacuna of three or four syllables between the epithet "mighty-charioted" and "Thebes" (βρισαρμάτοις ο**[**-˘ Θήβαις). My point does not depend on a complete understanding of these untranslatable lines. The transitional ἔνθα ποθ' (26) that follows introduces the Theban theme of the marriage of Harmonia and Cadmus. The programmatic statement, as a whole, suggests the spread of Theban myths from Thebes, the site of composition, out to all of Greece.

dithyrambic activity in the *Dithyramb* aptly captures his epinician activity in non-Theban odes as well: like a herald of wise poetic words selected by the Muse, he exports Theban myth outward from Thebes — to Hellas of the wide-dancing spaces.

According to the principle of "due selection" (*kairos*), Pindar has countless possible themes and topics, as stated and then illustrated in the meta-poetic maxim of *Pythain* 9.76-80:

> ἀρεταὶ δ᾽ αἰεὶ μεγάλαι πολύμυθοι·
> βαιὰ δ᾽ ἐν μακροῖσι ποικίλλειν
> ἀκοὰ σοφοῖς: ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὁμοίως
> παντὸς ἔχει κορυφάν.
>
> Great exploits always issue in much speech.
> Yet, among lengthy themes, to work a few with fineness
> yields worthy hearing for the wise, while due selection renders
> with equal force the essence of the whole.

Here I concentrate on the lengthy *Theban* themes, which the poet mines selectively and judiciously (one may add opportunistically) in two of his fifteen Sicilian odes,[10] *Pythian* 3 and *Olympian* 2.

My approach complements Virginia Lewis's in *Myth, Locality, and Identity in Pindar's Sicilian Odes*. Lewis focuses on how the poet weaves myth into local places and landscapes to "reinforce and develop a sense of place and community for local populations while at the same time raising the profile of physical sites, and the cities and peoples attached to them, for larger audiences across the Greek world."[11] My focus is on how the poet brings Thebes with him, or sends Thebes with his traveling odes, so as to interact with local myth, politics and ritual.

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[10] The fifteen Sicilian odes are *O.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12: *P.* 1, 2, 3, 6, 12; *N*. 1, 9; and *I*. 2.

[11] Virginia Lewis, *Myth, Locality, and Identity in Pindar's Sicilian Odes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), argues that Pindar's Sicilian odes support, shape, and negotiate identity for Sicilian cities and their victors "within a volatile political climate where local traditions were frequently shifting" (2) and highlighting of the victor's home landscape helped stabilize a new regime in turbulent times.

My work also complements the innovative study of Richard Neer and Leslie Kurke, *Pindar, Song, and Space: Towards a Lyric Archaeology*.[12] Their book examines details of landscape, monuments, and sculptures, as well as a network of horizontal or syntagmatic ties. They explore connectivity between localities and their artefacts and myths but do not take into account the embodiment of Thebes in the *persona ego.* Their insights can well be supplemented by the notion that, in Pindar's epinician odes, the deictic center—the intersection of I-here-now—is in *conversation* with the gravitational centers that they identify, e.g., in the three Cyrenean odes. What connects all these geographical locales, in my approach, is the unifying vision of Pindar of Thebes.

One question Pindar must have faced in composing all fifteen of his Sicilian odes is the degree of centrality and peripherality of the victor and his homeland with respect to mainland Greece. Granted, the real-world victor has already demonstrated a measure of Greekness: he has traveled either literally, or through a surrogate,[13] to the Panhellenic games on the mainland and returned home victorious. Moreover, since the site of the games can signify Hellas, the center of civilization, being crowned with leaves from that site signifies that he is Greek. By contagious magic, a victor is Hellenized whenever he receives a victory crown made from leaves that grew from the soil in Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, or the Isthmus. Bringing a

[12] For Richard Neer and Leslie Kurke, *Pindar, Song, and Space: Towards a Lyric Archaeology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), the polyethnic *polis* of Cyrene in *P.* 4, *P.* 5 and *P.* 9 gains its meaning "from the diverse populations that inhabit it, with their separate but intertwined histories, and a governmental system that binds them." For navigating the region of Cyrene the bodies and populations of Cyreneans are the basic point of reference, and, in *O.* 6 for the Syracusan monarch, Pindar has sutured together a network of places (Arkadia, Olympia, and the Greek West), mapping out in song the monuments and their interrelations. At its performance and reperformance, Neer and Kurke suggest, the poem makes this network available for audiences all over the Greek world.

[13] A wealthy patron might send his jockey or charioteer to represent him at the Games—an indexical sign of himself. On this practice, and on the threat to aristocratic status and values of the practice of hiring charioteers and jockeys, see Nigel Nicholson, *Aristocracy and Athletics in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

verdant fragment of Hellas home completes the recognition of any potentially marginal Sicilian athlete as an authentic Greek.

For an example of a horizontal link between Thebes and a Sicilian *polis*, consider the intricate opening of *Pythian* 2 (lines 1-8), which elaborately evokes the city of Syracuse:

> μεγαλοπόλιες ὦ Συράκοσαι, βαθυπολέμου
> τέμενος Ἄρεος, ἀνδρῶν ἵππων τε σιδαροχαρμᾶν δαιμόνιαι
> τροφοί,
> ὕμμιν τόδε τᾶν λιπαρᾶν ἀπὸ Θηβᾶν φέρων
> μέλος ἔρχομαι ἀγγελίαν τετραορίας ἐλελίχθονος,
> εὐάρματος Ἱέρων ἐν ᾇ κρατέων
> τηλαυγέσιν ἀνέδησεν Ὀρτυγίαν στεφάνοις,
> ποταμίας ἕδος Ἀρτέμιδος, ἃς οὐκ ἄτερ
> κείνας ἀγαναῖσιν ἐν χερσὶ ποικιλανίους ἐδάμασσε πώλους.
>
> City of greatness, Syracuse, the precinct
> of Ares wading deep in war, the godlike nurse
> of men and horses iron-clad for battle,
> to you I bring this song from lustrous Thebes,
> coming with news of that earth-battering team of four
> with which, renowned for chariots, Hieron triumphed
> and in far-shining garlands wreathed Ortygia,
> where Artemis of the River dwells, who did not fail
> to aid him when with soothing hands he tamed
> those mares, their reins embroidered brightly.

Lines 3-4 (ὕμμιν...ἀγγελίαν) illustrate the intrinsic connection between *ego*, the poet's homeland, and this song. What we have is a cluster of first- and second-person deixis (φέρων…ἔρχομαι with ὕμμιν). The cluster includes directional verbs (φέρων, and ἔρχομαι), proximal demonstrative deixis that points to the ode as it is being performed (τόδε μέλος),[14] and an efferent prepositional phrase (τᾶν λιπαρᾶν ἀπὸ Θηβᾶν) that designates the birthplace of the poem. The rest of this entangled sentence performs the connectivity

[14] For discourse (or textual) deixis in performance poetry, see Claude Calame, "Deictic Ambiguity and Auto-referentiality: some examples from Greek poetics," tr. Jenny Strauss Clay, in Felson, ed., "Poetics of Deixis," 415-443.

between and among locales: Thebes, Syracuse, Ortygia, and by implication, Delphi, where Hieron, aided by Artemis, tamed his triumphant mares.

Thebes is present whenever first person (proximal) deixis occurs, since the first-person pronoun *ego* (whether explicit or embedded in a verb) always points to Pindar of Thebes, except when it appears in the mythic component of a victory ode. The polysemic and non-mythic *ego* always indexes Pindar of Thebes but, at the first and any subsequent live performance and in readings that imagine live performance, it indexes the performers as well. Recognizing this helps us transcend the either/or question that plagues the debate about the reference of *ego* in Pindaric epinicians.[15] Whether any given member of Pindar's audience or readership would have embraced this interpretive move is unclear: savvy interpreters who did so would understand and appreciate Pindaric complexity and thus perpetuate his, and the poem's, lasting renown.

Pindar uses elaborate analogies to bring past misfortunes and triumphs vividly into the present. He animates distant athletic and mythic events by using imaginative proximal deixis to transport his audiences vicariously to the site of victory and, on occasion, of a mythic encounter and by aligning them with his own activity of composition, which involves the overcoming of obstacles *en route* to resolution and success. He often represents his composition story *in medias res*. In addition, he often subtly inserts a triumph into a Big Picture frame, universalizing it. His widely applicable maxims, often ethical in nature, impart nuggets of wisdom that make activities in the poetic, athletic, and heroic worlds coalesce —values like "don't stay at home by your mother's side."

[15] On the problematic reference of first person in Pindar, see especially Giovan Battista d'Alessio, "First-person problems in Pindar," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 39 (1994), 117-39, and more recently, Giovan Battista d'Alessio, "The Problem of the Absent I: Lyric Poetry and Deixis in 'Mediated' Communication," *AION-SEZ. Di Filolologia Letteratura Classica* 42 (2020), 1–30.

Emphasis on his own historical homeland is one of Pindar's techniques for strengthening points of comparison between the poet, the victor, and mythic heroes. All participate, in Hermann Fraenkel's term, in a world of values—a *Wertwelt*.[16] The mythic figures either fail precipitously and provide a negative exemplum, or triumph through a combination of hard work and innate talent.

Thebes, a center of paradigmatic Greek values, is a major source of poetic authority and wisdom for the quintessential Theban poet. Though Pindar never *name*s himself in his victory odes or other poems, at *Isthmian* 8.16 he does refer to "a man raised in Seven-Gated Thebes" and at *Pythian* 2.3-4, in the passage just cited, he proclaims, "to you I bring this song from lustrous Thebes / coming with news…."[17] Six other epinician odes contain similar self-references: *Olympian* 10.85; *Pythian* 4.299; *Pythian* 9.79-89a; *Isthmian* 6.74-75; and *Isthmian* 8.16-20. This self-designation not only draws attention to his Theban ethnicity; it also helps Pindar humanize *ego*, the struggling and ultimately triumphant protagonist of his composition narrative. In addition, it enables him to create a horizontal axis between Thebes and the victor's homeland and often, as a third coordinate, the site of the victory. The pairing of Theban events, heroes, and cult with already Panhellenic non-Theban ones situates individual Theban themes within a broader Panhellenic framework, or, as in the case of Herakles, it reinforces their already Panhellenic status. When Pindar accentuates his coming from Thebes, he often uses his homeland as a synecdoche for Hellas. Not only is he exporting Thebes (as embodied in *ego*); he is also incorporating the victor's homeland in the larger Hellenic world. The poetic effect is an example of reciprocal hospitality.

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[16] Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy: A History of Greek Epic, Lyric, and Prose to the Middle of the 5th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press [1969, 2nd Ger. ed. 1962] 1975), 554 and 558. He writes: "Pindar's poetry is concerned with the noble, the great, the good, and the godly/ divine—in a single word, with value; and indeed so exclusively that everything is ignored that has no positive or negative connection to values."

[17] The opening of *P.* 2 expresses connectivity by intricate syntax: vocative, subject, object of preposition, directional verb, direct object, and indirect object.

A Voice from Lustrous Thebes

Each time a trained chorus performs *ego*, they represent "Pindar of Thebes" even while speaking (according to the principle of oracular deixis) in their own voice. Along with the poet who composed their words, they fulfill the task of praising the victor. Pindar is always figuratively present as the poem is being performed, or even read long after his death, whether or not he is literally on hand.

Thebes was the major center of mythological events from heroic times and hence an extraordinary native land for a poet. It was "a unique, grand city, depository of the richest mythological and cultural patrimony," as Oretta Olivieri describes it in her systematic book-length study of the Theban mythic system.[18] Her comprehensive study of this rich Theban patrimony explores the strands of narrative under five thematic rubrics: Heroic Founders (Cadmus, Amphion and Zethos); Seers (Tiresias, Amphiareos); Herakles; Dionysus; and Apollo.[19]

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[18] Oretta Olivieri, *Miti e Culti Tebani Nella Poesia di Pindaro* (Pisa/Roma: Fabrizio Serra, 2011), 19. Many scholars since Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: the Greek Origins of European Thought,* trans. Thomas G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 71-89, have documented the centrality of Theban myth in Pindar, including Ettore Cingano, "Tradizioni Su Tebe nell'epica e nella Lirica Greca Arcaica," in *Presenza e funzione della città di Tebe nella cultura greca,* ed. P. A. Bernardini (Urbino: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 2000), 127-61; P. Giannini, "Le Antiche Tradizioni Tebane Negli Epinici di Pindaro," in Bernardini, ed., *Presenza e funzione*, 163-78; S. Symeonoglou, *The Topography of Thebes from the Bronze Age to Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 103; and Daniel W. Berman, "Dirce at Thebes," *Greece & Rome* 54.1 (2007), 18-39 and *Myth, Literature, and the Creation of the Topography of Thebes* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 49-74.

[19] On the epic cycle, see Malcolm Davies, *The Theban Epics* (Cambridge MA: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2014). For a concise overview, see Stephen Scully, "Theban Cycle," in *The Homer Encyclopedia,* v. 3, ed. Margalit Finkelberg (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 858-59.

Hesiod placed the expedition of the Seven against Thebes on the same level as the Trojan War (*Erga* 161–65). He situated these two defining events in his "Age of Heroes," the fourth race in his Myth of Five Races:

> καὶ τοὺς μὲν πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ
> τοὺς μὲν ὑφ' ἑπταπύλῳ Θήβῃ, Καδμηίδι γαίῃ,
> ὤλεσε μαρναμένους μήλων ἕνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο,
> τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐν νήεσσιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης
> ἐς Τροίην ἀγαγὼν Ἑλένης ἕνεκ' ἠυκόμοιο.
>
> Evil war and dread battle destroyed these,
> some under seven-gated Thebes in the land of Cadmus,
> while they fought for the sake of Oedipus's sheep,
> others brought in boats over the great gulf of the sea
> to Troy, for the sake of fair-haired Helen.[20]

This is as close as Greek mythology gets to a codification of these two near-contemporaneous events, to which Hesiod allots equal status and significance. The Theban one, the fight over the flocks of Oedipus, predates by a generation the Greek expedition to Troy.

Pindar draws his inspiration from the Waters of Dirce in Thebes and from the rich Theban tradition, and often ends an ode for a non-Theban victor with a first-person return to Thebes in the composition story, as in the last triad of *Olympian* 2.[21]

The grounding of Pindar's poetic voice in Thebes is most pronounced in poems of various genres that are composed for Thebans to be first performed at Thebes. Consider, for example, the priamel of Pindar's *Hymn for the Thebans* (frag. 29). It begins with a

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[20] Translation from Glenn W. Most, Hesiod. *Theogony. Works and Days. Testimonia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

[21] Pindar's public voice reaches out beyond his community, and even the Panhellenic world of his time. He transcends any narrow "ego-centric" mission by universalizing his own alleged "difficulty," over which he triumphs by completing the ode. This translation of the particular into the universal invites his audience(s) and readers not only to revel in *his* poetic triumphs, which emanate from Thebes, but to embrace the process of struggle-to-triumph as their own, as interpreters. Cf. Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the 5th Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

rhetorical question: "which of the illustrious Theban heroes and heroines are we to hymn?"

> Ἰσμηνὸν ἢ χρυσαλάκατον Μελίαν
> ἢ Κάδμον ἢ Σπαρτῶν ἱερὸν γένος ἀνδρῶν
> ἢ τὰν κυανάμπυκα Θήβαν
> ἢ τὸ πάντολμον σθένος Ἡρακλέος
> ἢ τὰν Διωνύσου πολυγαθέα τιμὰν
> ἢ γάμον λευκωλένου Ἁρμονίας
> ὑμνήσομεν;
>
> Shall it be Ismenos, or Melia of the golden spindle,
> or Cadmus, or the holy race of the Spartoi,
> or Thebe of the dark-blue fillet,
> or the all-daring strength of Herakles,
> or the wondrous honor of Dionysos,
> or the marriage of white-armed Harmonia that we shall hymn?

This assemblage of eight native sons and daughters of Thebes illustrates the scope of Pindar's poetic repertoire. Missing from the list are the much-suffering daughters of Cadmus and Harmonia, along with the Labdacids, whose family crimes had disastrous consequences. To his fellow citizens, Pindar presents Thebes in a positive light. His audience's familiarity with their local heritage makes it unnecessary for Pindar to provide details.[22]

In a similar fashion, Pindar invokes the Theban mythic cycles in the priamel to *Isthmian* 7, an ode that honors the Theban Strepsiades for winning the pankration of ca. 454. Since he and the victor share a homeland, he accomplishes two tasks at once: expanding beyond the compositional narrative to praise the victor's homeland as part of his

[22] But what if the text of the *Hymn* should travel beyond Thebes to be performed elsewhere? See Giovan Battista D'Alessio, "Re-Constructing Pindar's First Hymn: The Theban 'Theogony' and the Birth of Apollo," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 39 (2009), 117-39. He argues that the text of the ode, though composed for performance on a specific occasion, before a specific audience, "was destined to have a wider circulation, and to spread the fame of Thebes, its gods, and its poet, travelling as a written poem, meant to be read, and possibly performed again in different contexts."

commissioned poetic task. Like the *Hymn for the Thebans*, the ode begins with a rhetorical question, followed by a catalogue of Theban themes. Here the poet addresses Thebe, the eponymous nymph:

Τίνι τῶν πάρος, ὦ μάκαιρα Θήβα,
καλῶν ἐπιχωρίων μάλιστα θυμὸν τεόν
εὔφρανας; ἦρα χαλκοκρότου πάρεδρον
Δαμάτερος ἀνίκ' εὐρυχαίταν
ἄντειλας Διόνυσον, ἢ χρυσῷ μεσονύκτιον
νείφοντα δεξαμένα τὸν φέρτατον θεῶν,

ὁπότ' Ἀμφιτρύωνος ἐν θυρέτροις
σταθεὶς ἄλοχον μετῆλθεν Ἡρακλείοις γοναῖς;
ἢ {ὅτ'} ἀμφὶ πυκναῖς Τειρεσίαο βουλαῖς;
ἢ {ὅτ'} ἀμφ' Ἰόλαον ἱππόμητιν;
ἢ Σπαρτῶν ἀκαμαντολογχᾶν; ἢ ὅτε καρτερᾶς
Ἄδραστον ἐξ ἀλαλᾶς ἄμπεμψας ὀρφανόν

μυρίων ἑτάρων ἐς Ἄργος ἵππιον;
ἢ Δωρίδ' ἀποικίαν οὔνεκεν ὀρθῷ
ἔστασας ἐπὶ σφυρῷ
Λακεδαιμονίων, ἕλον δ' Ἀμύκλας
Αἰγεῖδαι <u>σέθεν ἔκγονοι</u> μαντεύμασι Πυθίοις; (1-17)

In which, O blessed Thebe, of your land's
earlier glories has your heart most taken
delight? Was it the time you raised up Dionysus
to sit with flowing hair beside
Demeter of the clashing bronze? Or having once received,
at midnight in a shower of golden snow, the mightiest of gods,

when, standing in the doorway of Amphitryon's house
he came to bring to that man's wife the seed of Herakles?
Or owing to Tiresias's shrewd counsels?
Or for the sake of Iolaus, skilled in horsemanship?
Or for the Sown Men with their tireless lances? Or when from the midst
of ardent battle-shouts you sent Adrastus back, bereft

of countless friends, to Argos famed for horses?
Or because you set upright on its feet
the Dorian outpost of
the Spartans, when the Aegids, your descendants,
captured Amyclae by command of Pythian oracles?

A key phrase at the end of this list, σέθεν ἔκγονοι, "your descendants" (literally "sprung from you"), establishes the general principle of reciprocal indexicality between the eponymous Thebe (Thebes) and her offspring. Those "sprung from you" are always Theban, no matter where they travel, and they remain a permanent source of their homeland's delight. Thebe (Thebes) is also permanently connected to any event, positive or negative, that happened on her soil. In the catalogue, she is even given agency for welcoming the lusty Zeus, who approached Alcmene and impregnated her with Herakles,[23] and she is credited with returning king Adrastos to his home in Argos, the sole survivor of the Seven and the father-in-law of Polynices. The verb ἄμπεμψας, "send back," expresses directionality away from Thebes and thus affirms Thebes as the deictic center. Likewise, in the Aegids' founding of Amyclae near Sparta, the second person possessive pronoun σέθεν, "your," indicates that Thebe (Thebes) acknowledges her connection to the Spartan settlement.[24] Wherever the Aegids travel or settle, they export Theban seed and culture, like the traveling poet who traces their journeys and claims them, in *Pythian* 5.75, as his own forefathers (ἐμοί πατέρες).[25]

In two Sicilian victory odes, *Pythian* 3 and *Olympian* 2, Pindar's build-up of *ego* has an array of poetic effects. Not only does it enhance

[23] Cf. *P.* 9.9 and 56, where first Aphrodite and then Libya welcome the colonizing couple, Apollo and Cyrene, and where, much later, Cyrene herself warmly welcomes the victor bringing *doxa* (73-75).

[24] On the link between nymphs and civic identity, see MacLachlan in this volume.

[25] I read ἐμοί πατέρες in *P.* 5 as referring first to the Theban poet's ancestors, and only secondarily to those of the Cyrenean chorus performing the ode. On the controversy over this and the movement of the Aegids, see Evelyn Krummen, *Pyrsos Hymnon* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 130–41; on the Aegids' Theban ancestry, see Irad Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 98–114.

his own poetic authority as *laudator* of two powerful Sicilian patrons; it also enhances the prestige of Thebes as a city of rich traditions and Panhellenic status. In addition, the subtle incorporation of Syracuse and Akragas into the Hellenic orbit elevates the reputation of each tyrant. *Pythian* 3 offers Hieron and his compatriots reciprocal "as-if" hospitality (*xenia*) in Thebes, vicariously transporting them to his location even as he sends his ode to them in Syracuse. *Olympian* 2 establishes Pindar's authoritative voice: he is an expert on Theban lore and, even more remarkably, the after-life of the privileged few. His demonstration of expertise strengthens the poetic argument that Theron's success in Akragas compensates for the patricide, incest, and fratricide of his Theban ancestors. Theron's victory becomes, in Pindar's hands, the culmination of Labdacid mytho-history! And this consolidates the horizontal ties between Akragas and one hub of Helladic traditions.

Two Sicilian Odes

Pythian 3

This celebratory ode consoles Hieron of Syracuse, victor in the single horse race, the κέλης of 476, as he recovers from an illness. In it, Pindar virtually draws Hieron toward his orbit in Thebes while repeatedly stating his unrealized desire to visit Hieron's Syracuse; he even enumerates what he would do were he to arrive there. The poem thus moves in two directions: toward Syracuse from Thebes (counterfactually) and toward Thebes from Syracuse (in real future time).

What facilitates this bi-directional spatiotemporal movement is the series of counterfactuals, one piled on top of the other. These modal syntactic elements play a structural role: they instantiate the meaning of the ode. The "if…then" sequence that opens *Pythian* 3 is either a contrary-to-fact statement or an unattainable wish, depending on whether the missing verb in the protasis is ἦν or, as

Pelliccia and Currie say, εἰμί.[26] The two subsequent, unambiguous counterfactuals resolve this initial ambiguity, such that, as the ode proceeds, a live audience hearing counterfactual after counterfactual retroactively groups them as a set.

The wish turned counterfactual with which the ode begins (1-7) is deliberately ambiguous:[27]

᾿Ηθελον Χίρωνά κε Φιλλυρίδαν,
εἰ χρεὼν τοῦθ' ἁμετέρας ἀπὸ γλώσσας κοινὸν εὔξασθαι
ἔπος,
ζώειν τὸν ἀποιχόμενον,
Οὐρανίδα γόνον εὐρυμέδοντα Κρόνου, βάσσαισί τ' ἄρχειν
Παλίου φῆρ' ἀγρότερον
νόον ἔχοντ' ἀνδρῶν φίλον· οἷος ἐὼν θρέψεν ποτέ
τέκτονα νωδυνίας ἥμερον γυιαρκέος Ἀσκλαπιόν,
ἥρωα παντοδαπᾶν ἀλκτῆρα νούσων.

Would that Chiron, the son of Philyra—
if it is right that from my lips
this common prayer should fall—
he that is dead and gone, were living still,
offspring of Sky-born Cronus, wide in stewardship,
and ruling over Pelion's glens, that beast of wood and field
whose mind held mankind in affection, as when once he reared
the craftsman of mild remedies for pain,
Asclepius, whose hero's hands
warded from wear bodies all disease.

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[26] Hayden Pelliccia, "Pindarus Homericus: *Pythian* 3.1-80," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 91 (1987), 39-63 and Bruno Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 348–54.

[27] On whether the first "if…then" clause is a counterfactual or an unattainable wish, see Currie, *Cult of Heroes*, 350-1, who expands upon Pelliccia, "Pindarus Homericus" and critiques D.C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar: A Literary Study of* Pythian *11,* Pythian *3 and* Olympian *7* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968). In my reading, the clause is *initially* ambiguous, but as the poem progresses and its argument emerges, the ambiguous clause becomes the first of a series of counterfactuals.

The myth, which takes up lines 8-60 of the ode, is a crime and punishment (*tisis*) story familiar from the corpus of Greek mythology: a demigod or hero commits a crime against the gods and suffers retribution. The action moves from Asclepius's rescue at birth from his mother's womb by his divine father Apollo, to his medical training by the centaur Chiron, to his misuse of that skill when he successfully revives a dead man. His transgression leads Zeus to kill him with a thunderbolt, which, Currie argues, transforms the offender into a hero.[28]

In a maxim at lines 58-60 *ego* proclaims: "We must, with mortal minds, seek from divinity such things as are befitting,/ knowing what lies before our feet, what destiny is ours." He then addresses his own soul: μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον / σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον ἄντλει μαχανάν (61). "Do not, my soul, pursue the life of gods/ with longing, but exhaust all practicable means." To express with impunity what he wished would happen, he continues to employ counterfactuals, this time using two imperfect verbs in the protasis (ἔναι' and τίθεν) and two aorist verbs in the apodoses (πίθον and μόλον):

> εἰ δὲ σώφρων ἄντρον ἔναι' ἔτι Χείρων, καί τί οἱ
> φίλτρον <ἐν> θυμῷ μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι
> ἀμέτεροι <τίθεν>, ἰατῆρά τοί κέν νιν πίθον
> καί νυν ἐσλοῖσι παρασχεῖν ἀνδράσιν θερμᾶν νόσων
> ἤ τινα Λατοΐδα κεκλημένον ἢ πατέρος.
> καί κεν ἐν ναυσὶν μόλον Ἰονίαν τάμνων θάλασσαν
> Ἀρέθοισαν ἐπὶ κράναν παρ' Αἰτναῖον ξένον,
>
> ὃς Συρακόσσαισι νέμει βασιλεύς… (63-70)
>
> Yes, if wise Chiron dwelt still in his cave, and if
> the honeyed discourse of my songs had power

[28] Currie, *Cult of Heroes*, especially 360-63, sees the immortalization of Asclepius as a major theme of the ode and being hit by a thunderbolt as a positive event insofar as it leads to literal immortalization. In contrast, I view the Asclepius narrative as a typical tale of crime and punishment. Pindar situates the hero immortalized through fire *within* his cautionary tale of overstepping boundaries. Thus, in the story world of the epinician myth, the famous healer is a negative exemplum, like Tantalus in *O.* 1.

to charm his will, long since I would have won from him a
healer
for worthy men who now live prey to feverish diseases—
some son of Leto's son or of his father—
and would have journeyed cutting the Ionian Sea,
to Arethusa's spring and Aitna's lord, my host and friend

who in his rule at Syracuse is gentle toward his townsfolk…

The use of a series of counterfactuals saves Pindar from *mis*using his τεχνή, "poetic art," i.e., from the plight of Asclepius. In an elaborate comparison between ἐγώ and the ultimately thunder-bolted Asclepius, both push their art to the limit; but whereas Coronis's son transgresses by retrieving a mortal from death, the exuberant ἐγώ employs counterfactuals to protect himself from linguistic and poetic *hubris*.[29]

This series of counterfactuals also allows the poet to remain in Thebes as he composes: his arrival in Sicily is contrary-to-fact.[30] At the same time, in the alternate reality that he creates, he *is* present at Hieron's court and has arrived (ἐξικόμαν) as a light to that one (κείνῳ φάος). By piling new past counterfactuals atop the previous ones, with two aorist verbs, κατέβαν in the protasis and ἐξικόμαν in the apodosis, Pindar makes his travel to Syracuse increasingly remote:

εἰ κατέβαν ὑγίειαν ἄγων χρυσέαν
κῶμόν τ' ἀέθλων Πυθίων αἴγλαν στεφάνοις,
τοὺς ἀριστεύων Φερένικος ἔλεν Κίρρᾳ ποτέ,
ἀστέρος οὐρανίου

[29] Asclepius is deceitful like his mother Koronis, who slept with Ischys while pregnant with Apollo's seed (24–37). He and Koronis have similar outcomes in the story, though not in terms of cult, where the healer is honored like a god; cf. Bronwen L. Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing in 5th-Century Greece: Between Craft and Cult* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).

[30] On ontological slippages that offer simultaneous real and unreal experiences in *P.* 3, see Cynthia Polsley, *Contrafactual Structures in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Yale University Dissertation, 2019), 21-79. Only the "alternative Pindar," operating in an unreal world, "actually" makes this journey across the sea to Hieron's palace in Syracuse (2-58).

φαμὶ τηλαυγέστερον κείνῳ φάος
ἐξικόμαν κε βαθὺν πόντον περάσαις. (72-76)

If to him I had brought the twofold joy
of golden health and a revel-song
to cast a brightness on the Pythian wreaths
which the triumphant Pherenicus garnered once at Cirrha,
I would, I say, have dawned
upon him as a light outblazing any star
in heaven passing over that deep sea.

In Epode δ, after assuring Hieron of his good fortune, Pindar illustrates the universal principle of vicissitudes by pairing Aeacid and Theban mythic traditions. He singles out Aeacus's son Peleus and Theban Cadmus as paragons of felicity who instantiate a universal heroic pattern:

τὶν δὲ μοῖρ' εὐδαιμονίας ἔπεται.
λαγέταν γάρ τοι τύραννον δέρκεται,
εἴ τιν' ἀνθρώπων, ὁ μέγας πότμος. αἰὼν δ' ἀσφαλής
οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὔτ' Αἰακίδᾳ παρὰ Πηλεῖ
οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται {γε} μὰν βροτῶν
ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἳ σχεῖν, οἵτε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων
μελπομενᾶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισᾶν καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις
ἄϊον Θήβαις, ὁπόθ' Ἁρμονίαν γᾶμεν βοῶπιν,
ὁ δὲ Νηρέος εὐβούλου Θέτιν παῖδα κλυτάν,

καὶ θεοὶ δαίσαντο παρ' ἀμφοτέροις,
καὶ Κρόνου παῖδας βασιλῆας ἴδον χρυ-
σέαις ἐν ἕδραις, ἔδνα τε
δέξαντο· Διὸς δὲ χάριν
ἐκ προτέρων μεταμειψάμενοι καμάτων
ἔστασαν ὀρθὰν καρδίαν. ἐν δ' αὖτε χρόνῳ
τὸν μὲν ὀξείαισι θύγατρες ἐρήμωσαν πάθαις
εὐφροσύνας μέρος αἱ τρεῖς· ἀτὰρ λευκωλένῳ γε Ζεὺς πατήρ
ἤλυθεν ἐς λέχος ἱμερτὸν Θυώνᾳ. (84-99)

Yours is a happy lot: upon a king,
leader of hosts, great Destiny casts smiles
as on no other man. Yet life without sharp change

was granted neither Peleus, Aeacus's son,
nor godlike Cadmus though they say those two
prospered beyond all mortals, having heard the hymns
with which, upon the mountain and in seven-gated Thebes,
the Muses blessed them when one wedded lovely-eyed
Harmonia,
the other, glorious Thetis, daughter of the deep-sea sage.

The gods joined both of them in feasting;
they saw the royal sons of Cronus
seated on golden thrones, and won
from each a bridal gift. So Zeus, through grace
releasing them from former troubles, set
their hearts upright in cheer. With time, however,
the bitter sufferings of three daughters wrenched
a share of happiness from Cadmus; yet
the fourth, Thyone of white arms,
drew Zeus the father to her bed of longing.

As the ode moves toward its conclusion, Pindar places Hieron in the same archetypal set as Peleus and Cadmus. He aligns the Sicilian victor, within his own lifetime, with the Trojan and Theban heroes from the past. All three listen to music: Peleus and Cadmus to the Muses singing, Hieron to this Pindaric ode. Since Pindar the poet, remaining home in Thebes, often (θαμά) hears music at his doorstep, he too partakes of the high status of privileged auditor. Moreover, by building up the figure of the poet as Hieron's counselor and benefactor—indeed, as "a light outblazing any star/ in heaven, passing over that deep sea" (75-76), the housebound poet achieves what he would have wished to achieve had he crossed the sea to Sicily. He also vicariously transports Hieron to his home so as to be present with him as they hear the same music, sung to the Mother by a chorus of maidens.[31] As Hieron in *Olympian* 1.14–17 is surrounded by poets who "often sing/ in playful fashion round his friendly table," so Pindar's house in Thebes in *Pythian* 3 is a center of Theban song.

[31] Currie, *Cult of Heroes*, 387–97, sees mystical elements in the prayer to the Mother.

The two-directional movement in the ode from Thebes to Syracuse and from Syracuse to Thebes fortifies the pairing of Pindar of Thebes and Hieron of Syracuse and affirms their guest-friendship, or *xenia*. Pindar, whose native land has a rich store of myths and ritual practices, can offer a Theban listening experience to his patron in exchange for the hospitality he would have received had he arrived at Syracuse. This poetic ploy helps Pindar develop symmetry between *laudator* and *laudandus* that allows him both to travel imaginatively across the sea to Syracuse, bringing solace to the ailing Hieron, and to remain at home in Thebes.

Olympian 2 for Theron of Akragas

This ode honoring Theron for his victory in the chariot race of 476 uses first- and second-person deixis in its opening strophe and final triad. A resonant diction makes these two portions of the ode cohere, and thus to comprise a composition narrative in the minds of savvy interpreters. The ode begins by invoking the "songs that rule the lyre," asking these *humnoi*, rhetorically, whom are we to celebrate? After dismissing both god and hero as topics for song, it identifies Theron (the ἄνδρα) as the topic at hand.

Ἀναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι,
τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;
ἦτοι Πίσα μὲν Διός· Ὀλυμπιάδα
δ' ἔστασεν Ἡρακλέης
ἀκρόθινα πολέμου·
Θήρωνα δὲ τετραορίας ἕνεκα νικαφόρου
γεγωνητέον, ὄπῑ δίκαιον ξένων,
ἔρεισμ' Ἀκράγαντος,
εὐωνύμων τε πατέρων ἄωτον ὀρθόπολιν·

O songs that rule the lyre
what god, what hero, and what man are we to celebrate?
Pisa, indeed, belongs to Zeus; and Herakles
established the Olympic festival
as the first-fruits of war;
but it is Theron, victor in the four-horse chariot race,
who must be shouted forth, righteous in his regard for
strangers,

bulwark of Akragas,
his city's savior, flower of a famous line… (1-7)

The invocation of "songs that rule the lyre" anticipates *ego*'s later address to his own heart (89, ἄγε θυμέ), when the first-person composition story resumes as he asks his heart, again rhetorically, at whom shall I aim my arrows (90, τίνα). Both second person addresses imply the presence of *ego*.

Pindar praises the tyrant's noble ancestors, the colonizers of Sicily, highlighting Theron's orderly, civic virtue—a theme that later returns. To colonize, in ancient Greek thought, is to triumph over barbarism. The Labdacids undo near extinction when they bring civilization to the Sicilian natives and prosper. Thersander, the grandson of the notorious Oedipus and the lone survivor of the war between Argos and Thebes, resuscitates his royal lineage, which emerges from its Theban disaster in Akragas.[32] By calling these Theban/Argive immigrants "the eye of Sicily" (9-10), Pindar challenges and overrules the well-known historical colonization narrative and exalts Theron and his ancestors. In addition, he sutures their historical ties to Thebes and to mainland Greece.

The maxim at 15–18 on finality of deeds leads to a genealogical connection between the royal families of Akragas and Thebes:

… τῶν δὲ πεπραγμένων
ἐν δίκᾳ τε καὶ παρὰ δίκαν, ἀποίητον οὐδ᾽ ἄν
χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατὴρ δύναιτο θέμεν ἔργων τέλος:
λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ᾽ ἄν.

…Once deeds are done,
for good or ill, just or unjust, not even

[32] Pindar sets up Thebes as central in its own right and not as the anti-type of Athens. In this he differs markedly from the practice of Athenian tragedians, for whom Thebes is the central tragic space and a tool for examining the civic space of Athens. For an overview of Froma Zeitlin's seminal insight into Thebes' function on the tragic stage, see esp. Pat Easterling, "The Image of the Polis in Greek Tragedy," in *The Imaginary City*, ed. M. H. Hansen (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2005), 49-72; for a concise overview of Zeitlin's insight with full references, see David Rosenbaum, "Thebes," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy* Vol. III, ed. Hanna Roisman (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 1390-92.

Time who is father of all things
has power to undo the end·

At first hearing or reading, this maxim might be taken to refer to an event in Akragas—perhaps stasis of the preceding lines. Once we get to line 22, it is clear that it also evokes Theban disasters. Pindar recalls these to accentuate the current success, which in turn corrects events that took place in the past on Theban soil.

The motif of Theron's descent from Thersander (43-47) may well suit Pindar's rhetorical purposes. In Lewis's view, Pindar may have been familiar with contested versions of Akragas's colonization story, and chose to accentuate Theron's ancestral affiliation with Thebes in order to legitimize the Emmenid line.[33] His version in *Olympian* 2 makes Theron a descendant of Polynices, whose son's survival initiates an upward turn in the Labdacids' destiny and counterbalances the deeds of the problematic Theban ancestors, causing forgetfulness of these past events. At the same time, the ode itself brings Theban prestige to Akragas. This gives Pindar the authority to ask Zeus not to disrupt the lineage of the victor but to sustain its good fortune into the future (12-15).

Pindar proceeds by applying the vicissitudes maxim, with its upward turn, to Semele and Ino, who suffered greatly but ended up honored and immortal:

λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ᾽ ἄν.
ἐσλῶν γὰρ ὑπὸ χαρμάτων πῆμα θνάσκει
παλίγκοτον δαμασθέν,

ὅταν θεοῦ Μοῖρα πέμπῃ
ἀνεκὰς ὄλβον ὑψηλόν. <u>ἕπεται δὲ λόγος εὐθρόνοις</u>

[33] For a review of sources on the founding of Akragas, see Lewis, *Pindar's Sicilian Odes*, 205-6. Most consider Gela the mother city of Akragas as founded by Rhodes and Crete; but in another tradition the city was founded directly by Rhodians. For an attempt to unify the different genealogies of the Emmenids, see Antonio Tibiletti, "Commenting on Pindar, *Olympian* 2: The Emmenid Genealogies," *The Cambridge Classical Journal* (2018) 64, 166-177. Tibiletti's elaborate interpretation depends, however, on an untenable reading of line 45 (Ἀδραστιδᾶν θάλος ἀρωγὸν δόμοις, "scion and savior of Adrastus' house") wherein the description refers not to Thersander but to Theron. Nevertheless, his essay has useful material scholia and genealogy.

Κάδμοιο κούραις, ἔπαθον αἰ μεγάλα, πένθος δὲ πίτνει βαρυ
κρεσσόνων πρὸς ἀγαθῶν.
ζώει μὲν ἐν Ὀλυμπίοις ἀποθανοῖσα βρόμῳ
κεραυνοῦ τανυέθειρα Σεμέλα, φιλεῖ δέ νιν Παλλὰς αἰεί,
καὶ Ζεὺς πατὴρ μάλα, φιλεῖ δὲ παῖς ὁ κισσοφόρος·

λέγοντι δ᾽ ἐν καὶ θαλάσσᾳ
μετὰ κόραισι Νηρῆος ἁλίαις βίοτον ἄφθιτον
Ἰνοῖ τετάχθαι τὸν ὅλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον. ἤτοι βροτῶν γε
κέκριται
πεῖρας οὔ τι θανάτου,
οὐδ᾽ ἡσύχιμον ἁμέραν ὁπότε, παῖδ᾽ ἁλίου,
ἀτειρεῖ σὺν ἀγαθῷ τελευτάσομεν: ῥοαὶ δ᾽ ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλαι
εὐθυμιᾶν τε μετὰ καὶ πόνων ἐς ἄνδρας ἔβαν. (18-34)

Forgetfulness, however, may with kindly fortune come;
under the weight of noble joys, pain dies,
its fierce resistance mastered,

whenever Destiny, which comes from god, propels
prosperity aloft. This truth applies to Cadmus's
regal daughters, who suffered hugely: grief
falls heavy to the ground
when blessings gain the upper hand.
One lives among the Olympians, having died
amid the thunder's flash and roar, Semele of the
streaming hair;
she is held dear by Pallas always
and father Zeus, but chiefly by her son, the ivy-crowned.

And then they say that **in** the sea as well,
among the briny Nereids, imperishable life
has been ordained for Ino through the whole of time.
For mortals, truly, no fixed bound
of death has been allotted,
nor can we know, when sunrise brings each day to birth,
whether it will close peacefully, with good unblemished.
Various currents flow
at various times, bearing delights and troubles to mankind.

With the vicissitudes maxim now established as a universal principle, Pindar applies it to Theron's alleged Theban ancestors (35-47). He likens the mutual slaying of Oedipus's sons—a pain (πῆμα, 19) that accompanies heaven-sent happiness—to the suffering of Semele and Ino. Eventually, the Labdacids, like the daughters of Cadmus, find release from sorrow:[34]

οὕτω δὲ Μοῖρ', ἅ τε πατρώϊον
τῶνδ' ἔχει τὸν εὔφρονα πότμον, θεόρτῳ σὺν ὄλβῳ
ἐπί τι καὶ πῆμ' ἄγει,
παλιντράπελον ἄλλῳ χρόνῳ·
ἐξ οὗπερ ἔκτεινε Λᾶον μόριμος υἱός
συναντόμενος, ἐν δὲ Πυθῶνι χρησθέν
παλαίφατον τέλεσσεν.

ἰδοῖσα δ' ὀξεῖ' Ἐρινύς
ἔπεφνέ οἱ σὺν ἀλλαλοφονίᾳ γένος ἀρήϊον·
λείφθη δὲ Θέρσανδρος ἐριπέντι Πολυ-
νείκει, νέοις ἐν ἀέθλοις
ἐν μάχαις τε πολέμου
τιμώμενος, Ἀδραστιδᾶν θάλος ἀρωγὸν δόμοις·
ὅθεν σπέρματος ἔχοντα ῥίζαν πρέπει
τὸν Αἰνησιδάμου
ἐγκωμίων τε μελέων λυρᾶν τε τυγχανέμεν. (35-47)

Thus Destiny, maintaining in hereditary trust
this family's benevolent fate, along with heaven-sent
prosperity brings pain too in some measure,
itself reversible with time.
This has been so since Laius' destined son stepped out
across his path and killed him, and so brought the prophecy
spoken of old at Pytho to fulfillment.

A sharp-eyed Fury marked the deed

[34] Jonas Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the 5th Century BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25, focuses on this theme of overcoming the detrimental force of chance through the construction of continuity, regularity, and development.

and slew his warlike progeny with mutual slaughter;
and yet, though Polynices fell, Thersander still
lived on, in young men's games
and in the brunt of war
much honored, scion and savior of Adrastus's house.
Deriving thence his stock and seed, it is
befitting that Aenesidamus's son
should meet with lyres and revel songs of triumph.

The swerve in family fortune that began with Thersander's survival culminates in Theron's victory in the chariot race of 476. Pindar presents this victory and the traits of the victor as *corrective* of past family tragedies, Theban tragedies. Rather than simply ignoring the friction between the sons of Oedipus that leads up to their mutual slaughter, Pindar uses their conflict in Thebes and the near extermination of their family line to accentuate the current prosperity of the Emmenids in Akragas.

Emphasis on the family's upward trajectory leads to a lengthy reflection on the fate of the soul after death. Here, *ego*'s expertise reaches its highest expression. On the Isles of the Blessed, some humans attain a gentle final destiny as they "pass along the road of Zeus to Cronus's tower" (70). There both Peleus and Cadmus have a resting place (78). Pairing these Iliadic and Theban heroes echoes Hesiod's pairing in his Myth of the Five Races, quoted above, of the Trojan War and the Expedition to Thebes. More importantly, Pindar's pairing establishes his expertise not only on regional Theban themes; he can also see into the beyond and can recount in detail what he has not eye-witnessed, as if he had.

The archery imagery in the final triad provides a transition from the afterlife myth to the here and now of composing (and presenting) *Olympian* 2. The sustained metaphor about his manner of composition recommences the composition story while dramatically aligning the poet with a successful athlete. Accurate selection and hitting of the appropriate target are the first two steps toward a poetic triumph; coverage of themes is the third:

πολλά μοι ὑπ᾽ ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη
ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας

φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πὰν ἑρμηνέων
χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι
παγγλωσσίᾳ, κόρακες ὥς, ἄκραντα γαρύετον

Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον·
ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῷ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ, τίνα βάλλομεν
ἐκ μαλθακᾶς αὖτε φρενὸς εὐκλέας ὀϊστοὺς ἱέντες; ἐπί τοι

Ἀκράγαντι τανύσαις
αὐδάσομαι ἐνόρκιον λόγον ἀλαθεῖ νόῳ
τεκεῖν μή τιν᾽ ἑκατόν γε ἐτέων πόλιν φίλοις ἄνδρα μᾶλλον
εὐεργέταν πραπίσιν ἀφθονέστερόν τε χέρα

Θήρωνος. (83-95)

Many swift arrows lie in store
within the quiver crooked beneath my arm,
having a voice that speaks to experts; but to grasp their gist
requires interpreters. That man has wisdom who knows many
things
by nature; but let those whose skills are learned
fling forth, like boisterous crows, their futile, indiscriminate
chatter.

against the godlike bird of Zeus.
Come, aim the bow now at the target, O my heart!
Who is the one
at whom we now are launching darts of fame
once more with mild intent?
Drawing at Akragas,
I shall proclaim on oath straightforward truth:
no city has within a hundred years produced
a man who toward his friends is more
beneficent in thought or free of hand
than Theron.

This rich and extended athletic metaphor for composing praise poetry forms the second half of the framework of the victory ode for Theron. Archery language (ὠκέα βέλη/ ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας, ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῷ τόξον, τίνα βάλλομεν, εὐκλέας ὀϊστοὺς

ἱέντες, and τανύσαις) links up with language describing choice of words and interpretation (φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν, ἑρμηνέων, γαρύετον, αὐδάσομαι ἐνόρκιον λόγον). Altogether, the extended metaphor expands upon the rhetorical question addressed in the priamel to the songs that rule the lyre: "what god, what hero, and what man are we to celebrate?" Pindar uses first person, proximal deixis in *Olympian* 2 to illustrate how the process of composing an epinician to this victor shapes the poem's success, which can determine its longevity. Pindar works his material in two directions. On the one hand, he brings Theban themes to Theron at Akragas, in particular, the story of the Labdacids and of the miraculous survival (in his revisionist tale) of Thersander. At the same time, his representation of Theron and his brother as descendants of Theban/Argive Thersander allows him to retroject their triumphs and those of the Emmenids into Theban mytho-history. Even his own 'presence' at Akragas (in the ode and, no doubt, historically) affirms the lateral ties between Thebes and Akragas, as if Thebes, and not Rhodes or Crete, were the mother city of the Sicilian colony.

Conclusions

The *sophia* of *ego* is demonstrated in both our Sicilian odes, *Pythian* 3 and *Olympian* 2. At the emotional center of each is the epinician poet. In each ode, as *laudator*, he uses proximal discourse deixis to the hilt, with Thebes as the source of inspiration, the place of departure, and the font of mythological expertise. The more he presents his poetic task as an endeavor, a challenge, a feat, a risk, the more he engages his audiences to become subjects in their own stories—as savvy interpreters. Their participation will enable them to understand the high achievement of the victor and his heroic precursors from Pindar's vantage point, which he invites them to adopt as their own.

Pindar's Thebes and Pindar's composition story are always present, sometimes only by implication, in his epinician odes. As "herald of wise poetic words" and the eagle of Zeus, Pindar proclaims his Theban identity and his Theban themes throughout the Panhellenic world, forging bonds between the victor's homeland and

his own. At the same time, his traveling verse, if preserved, exports Theban wisdom to the larger, non-Greek world for the rest of time. Through his odes, Thebes herself will achieve undying glory, along with the victor and the poet.

At a public premiere, usually in the victor's homeland, a chorus of his compatriots delivers Pindar's poetic words. By playing the poet, these performers bring Pindar of Thebes into the here and now of the occasion and invite their fellow citizens to imaginatively identify with the poet *as he composes*. To the degree that, in performance, the chorus retains its local identity, their first- person utterances exemplify deixis *ad oculos*, alongside imaginary deixis. In "miming" Pindar of Thebes, choruses resemble the Delian Maidens in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, who "know how to mimic the voices of all" (162-64).[35] Each time they utter "*ego,*" following Pindar's script (or instructions, if he is present in person as their trainer), they activate his Theban perspective.

As an ambassador from Thebes, Pindar brings diverse messages. He establishes the idea of his homeland as a source of *sophia*. By *creating* the image of himself as a Theban poet, he makes what is regionally meaningful significant on a larger scale. His presentation of his own poetic struggles and ultimate success alongside the triumphs and failures of Theban heroes and heroines encourages every interpreter to strive for excellence that matches the poet's own. He exports the lessons he has gleaned from negative and positive events on Theban soil. Far from simply celebrating civic pride for the Thebans back home, the idea of Thebes as a font of poetic wisdom informs Pindar's self-references in his epinician odes (as in *Pythian* 2.3-4 and *Isthmian* 8.16) and justifies their claim to endurance through time and space.

[35] Pindar exploits the intrinsic flexibility and polysemy of the first-person pronoun, which in the victory odes is inextricably attached to his homeland. This effect can be replicated, to some degree, by a single re-performer or even by a reader capable of imagining and re-invoking elements of the original performance.