PART THREE

CHORAL LYRIC

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PINDAR AND BACCHYLIDES

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Pindar

As has been argued in *SAGN* 1, the victory ode is not a narrative genre *per se*.¹ Narrative sections can, but need not be integrated into an epinician ode. What is more, Pindar's narratives display a considerable variety. It is therefore difficult to make generalising statements about his treatment of time that apply to all of them. An exception is the fact that virtually all the narratives are located in a distant past, with the result that the bulk of Pindar's primary narratives are subsequent.² This characteristic also affects the way in which Pindar regularly marks off the narrative section from the surrounding text of the victory ode. The narrative is regularly introduced by the indefinite temporal adverb 'once upon a time' (*pote*, often subsequent to a relative pronoun or adverb that functions as a pivot; *SAGN* 1:35): *O.* 3.13; 6.13; 7.30 (not at the very beginning of the narrative but still part of the first sentence); 13.63; *P.* 1.16; 3.5; 4.4; 8.39; 9.5, 79; 10.31; 12.6; *N.* 4.25; 9.11 (*tote* 'at that time' instead of *pote*, but cf. l. 13); *I.* 4.52 (cf. also *proteron* 'in the past' in *P.* 6.28).³ As an alternative, Pindar can achieve a similar effect by

¹ *SAGN* 1:213. The present chapter only takes into account the epinician odes (translations are taken from Race 1997), nine of which do not comprise a narrative (*SAGN* 1:213): *O.* 5, 11, 12 and 14; *P.* 7; *N.* 2 and 11; *I.* 2; 3. In accordance with the goal of this volume (→ Introduction), 'time' is treated here as a narratological category. Pindar's general concept of *khronos* and its philosophical ramifications would require a study of its own; cf. e.g. Hurst 1985, with literature in n. 1, and, more recently, Theunissen 2000.

² Virtually the only exceptions are cases that are of an 'omnitemporal' nature (e.g. Heracles, made immortal, lives among the gods, *I.* 4.58–60; on 'omnitemporal' narration → Hesiod, → Homeric hymns). Prior narration seems to be confined to secondary narratives.

³ On the introduction of narratives by means of a relative pronoun/adverb and/or *pote* see e.g. Braswell 1988: 64–65 (including examples from authors other than Pindar).

means of adjectives with a distinctly temporal meaning such as ‘ancient’ (*palaios*: *P.* 9.105; *N.* 3.32; *arkhaios*: *N.* 1.34). In fact, even the use of verbs in the past tense (excluding gnomic aorists) has a comparable effect in that they are relatively rare outside the narrative sections of Pindar’s odes. Similar to the demarcation of the beginning, though less frequent, the use of the adverb ‘now’ (*nun*, often *kai nun* ‘and now’) brings about a transition from the narrative of the mythical past back to the here and now of the victory celebration: *O.* 1.90; 3.34; 10.78; *P.* 1.17; 6.44; 9.71; also *I.* 8.61. By inserting a narrative section into the essentially non-narrative genre of the victory ode, the narrator, as it were, steps back into a mythical past, the precise date of which remains vague. While Herodotus (2.145) attempts to date Heracles and the Trojan War, Pindar, whose narratives are inhabited by the same heroes, leaves them in an unspecified, probably remote past. This placement of heroes in the distant past even applies to the cases where the mythical hero is a direct ancestor of the victor and his family (especially Aeacus and his sons as forefathers of the frequently celebrated Aeginetans).⁴

Another feature typical of several Pindaric narratives is their extraordinary compression. The underlying myths are not narrated for their own sake. Rather, a brief mention of the story’s gist, sometimes even a potentially riddling allusion, is considered enough to evoke the whole picture. This characteristic applies to several of the mythological *exempla* that are strewn throughout Pindar’s odes. They are particularly dense in the priamel that opens *Isthmian* 7 (for a Theban victor):

In which of your land’s former glories,
 o blessed Thebes, did your heart
 take most delight? Was it when you raised up
 flowing-haired Dionysus as companion to Demeter
 of the ringing bronze? or when, in a midnight snowstorm
 of gold, you received the greatest of the gods [sc. Zeus],
 when he stood in Amphitryon’s doorway
 and sought his wife to beget Heracles?
 or because of Tiresias’ profound counsels?
 or because of the skillful horseman, Iolaus?
 or ...

(*Isthmian* 7.1–9)

⁴ An exception is *Pythian* 4, where the victor Arcesilaus is said to represent the eighth generation (65) after the founder of Cyrene Battus, who himself is in the seventeenth generation (10) after Medea and the Argonauts. For an analysis of the chronology see Malten 1911: 191–193 (including a comparative table on p. 192).

Needless to say, such *exempla* can occur alone too (e.g. *O.* 10.18–19 on Patroclus, 104–105 on Ganymede, etc.) and need not form a cluster as in *Isthmian* 7.⁵ If it remains questionable whether these passages should actually be treated as narratives at all, it is clear in any case that they are of comparatively little value to an analysis of how Pindar treats time in his narratives. All one can say with confidence is that the ‘narrative’ is extremely summary.⁶ The same description essentially applies to very short narratives such as the one about Philoctetes:

They tell that the godlike heroes came to fetch him [sc. Philoctetes]
from Lemnos, wasting from his wound,
Poias’ archer son,
who destroyed Priam’s city and ended
the Danaans’ toils;
he walked with flesh infirm, but it was the work of destiny.⁷
(*Pythian* 1.52–55)

While the status as narrative is undisputed here, the treatment of the myth is equally summary. Little more than the bare facts are stated. It is, however, the case that such summaries play a role in more extended narratives as well. This trait pertains, for example, to the passages where Pindar opens the narrative section by first giving its gist, which is then elaborated in greater detail. The narrator, as it were, decides not to let the summary speak for itself (as, for instance, in the Philoctetes example), but to give a more extensive narrative. The example from *Pythian* 6 is sufficiently short to be quoted here in full:

[*initial summary*.] In the past [*proteron*] as well, mighty Antilochus
bore such thoughts in mind,
who died to save his father [sc. Nestor] by standing up to
the man-slaughtering general of the Ethiopians,
Memnon. [*elaboration*.] For Nestor’s chariot had become entangled
when his horse was struck by Paris’ arrows, and he [sc. Memnon]
was brandishing his powerful spear.

⁵ For a similar cluster of *exempla* cf. *N.* 10.4–18 and fr. 29.

⁶ Such a brief treatment of the myth presupposes that the narratee is familiar with it, which, however, is not the topic of the present volume (cf. *SAGN* 1:220–221).

⁷ Other short and therefore summary narratives include: *N.* 6.49–53 (on Memnon killed by Achilles); also *O.* 2.38–45 (on Oedipus and his sons), 79–83 (on Achilles killing Hector, Cycnus and Memnon); 4.19–27 (on the Argonaut Erginus); *P.* 10.31–48 (on Bellerophon visiting the Hyperboreans, interrupted in 36–44 by an ‘ethnographic’ description of his hosts); *N.* 4.54–68 (Peleus survives Hippolyta’s attempted seduction and her husband’s ambush and finally marries Thetis). Even the ostensibly long narrative in *Nemean* 3.32–63 falls into this category, because its numerous topics receive a rather summary treatment.

In panic the mind of the old man
 from Messene shouted to his son,
 nor indeed did he hurl forth a word that fell to the ground:
 that godlike man [sc. Antilochus] took a stand right there
 and bought his father's rescue with his own death,
 and, for doing that awesome deed, he was deemed
 by the young men of that ancient generation
 to be foremost in virtuous behavior toward parents. (*Pythian* 6.28–42)

If the elaboration is not dramatically more detailed than the initial summary, this phenomenon is primarily due to the relative brevity of the illustrative example chosen here with a view to space. Other narratives display the same pattern of 'initial summary with subsequent elaboration' (cf. the 'header device', found from → Homer onwards);⁸ and the difference in detail and hence narrative speed can be more poignant than in *Pythian* 6. See, for example, *Nemean* 10.55–59 (initial summary) and 60–90 (elaboration, on the Dioscuri) or *Olympian* 1, where, however, initial summary (25–27) and elaboration (36–89, on Tantalus and Pelops) are separated by no fewer than nine lines of generalizing on the workings of storytelling. See also *Pythian* 2.21–24 (initial summary, including the moral lesson) and 25–48 (elaboration). The only difference here is that the initial summary presupposes rather than states the gist of the myth: Ixion tried to make love to Hera and was punished for it. In all these cases, there is a patent difference in narrative speed between summary and elaboration.

⁸ The description 'initial summary with subsequent elaboration' is borrowed from ancient rhetoric, where the two elements can be called, for example, *kephalaia* ('main points'; cf. already *P.* 4.116 and Illig 1932: 57) and (*ep*)*exergasia* ('elaboration'). Race 1997: I 20–21 gives a similar general description, but, following in the footsteps of Illig 1932: 55–67, then speaks of 'ring composition', a concept that needs to be applied with more caution than is sometimes done. (Race applies the term to the narratives in *O.* 1, 3, 7 and 13; *P.* 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12; *N.* 10.) 'Initial summary with subsequent elaboration' is more apt to capture the difference in narrative detail between the two parts. More generally, it seems advisable to differentiate between thematic ring composition and temporal ring composition. In other words, does the narrator return to the same topic in general (as in most of Race's examples) or to exactly the same scene? Only the latter means that he covers the same ground twice, and such temporal ring composition is comparatively rare. The Pindaric narrative that comes closest is the 'little Oresteia' in *Pythian* 11.17–37 (gnomic interruption in 25–30), but even here the two installments rather complement than repeat each other (similarly *P.* 10.31–48; 12.6–24). In connection with ring composition, Race 1997: I 20 claims that the elaboration 'usually [is] in reverse chronological order', which is not supported by the evidence (see below). For the analysis of Pindar's narratives as 'ring composition' see also Hamilton 1974: esp. 61–65).

Summaries are also of importance in a second recurrent type of Pindaric narrative. Here the Pindaric narrator chooses to focus on a short scene within the larger myth. The chosen scene is narrated in some detail (i.e. slowly), sometimes involving fairly extensive speeches, while the bulk of the entire story is either narrated in a summary fashion or omitted altogether (that is, presupposed as known to the narratees).⁹ In the former case, the result is a striking difference in narrative speed between scene and summary, as can be illustrated, for example, with the narrative in *Olympian* 13. Pindar narrates in quite some detail how Athena visits Bellerophon in his sleep and gives him the bridle and bit with which to yoke Pegasus. Bellerophon then repeats Athena's speech (in indirect speech) to the seer Polyidus, who validates the importance of Athena's visit.¹⁰ The whole account takes up twenty lines:

who [sc. Bellerophon] once [*pote*] suffered much indeed in his yearning
to yoke Pegasus, the snaky Gorgon's
son, beside the spring [sc. Peirene],
until, that is, the maiden Pallas brought him the bridle
with the golden bands, when his dream suddenly became
reality and she spoke: 'Are you asleep, prince of Aiolus' [sc. his great-
grandfather] race?
Come, take this horse charm,
and, sacrificing a white bull,
show it to your father, the Horsetamer [sc. Poseidon].'
So much did the maiden of the dark aegis
seem to say to him as he slept
in the darkness, and he leapt to his feet.
He took the marvel that lay beside him
and gladly sought out the local seer,
the son of Coeranus [sc. Polyidus], to whom he revealed the entire
outcome of the affair, how he slept the night on the
goddess' altar at the bidding of that seer's oracle,
and how the very daughter
of Zeus, whose spear is the thunderbolt, gave him

⁹ Given that the works of the earlier lyric poets are badly fragmented, it is difficult to decide, whether this focus on a short scene is influenced by contemporary tragedy (as suggested by B. Zimmermann 1992: 114, though with a view to Bacchylides' dithyrambs only). After all, tragedy developed from dithyramb according to Aristotle (*Po.* 1449a10–15). The concentration on a shorter episode may well precede tragedy. Besides, even the Homeric epics focus on a comparatively short time span.

¹⁰ This repetition is one of the clearer examples of Pindar 'going over the same ground twice', which, however, is mitigated by the fact that the second installment is in reported speech, that is, shorter.

the spirit-taming gold.
 The seer commanded him to heed the dream
 as quickly as possible, and, upon sacrificing
 a strong-footed victim to the mighty Earthholder,
 to erect at once an altar to Athena Hippiā. (*Olympian* 13.63–82)

Conversely, the ensuing narrative of how Bellerophon actually captures and mounts Pegasus and his subsequent great success in several battles is dealt with in only seven lines, that is, a palpable acceleration of the narrative speed.

And indeed powerful Bellerophon,
 eagerly stretching
 the soothing remedy around its jaws, captured
 the winged horse. He mounted him, and clad in his armor
 of bronze immediately began to make sport in warfare.
 And with that horse thereafter, firing
 from the cold recesses of the empty air, he slew
 the army of female archers, the Amazons,
 and the fire-breathing Chimaera and the Solymi. (*Olympian* 13.84–90)

Interestingly, the gnome that briefly interrupts the narrative states: ‘The gods’ power easily brings into being even what one would swear impossible and beyond hope’ (*O.* 13.83).¹¹ It seems as if the gnome were saying that, due to the support by the goddess Athena, Bellerophon’s exploit is comparatively easy and can therefore be narrated summarily.

Similar changes in narrative speed can be found elsewhere. Part of the narrative in *Olympian* 1 deals with Pelops’ chariot race for the hand of Hippodamia but focuses on his prayer to Poseidon, while the actual race is narrated summarily (*O.* 1.67–87 vs. 88–89). *Olympian* 8 generally recounts how Aeacus helped Apollo and Poseidon build the Trojan wall, but singles out the incident in which three snakes try to jump upon the rampart. Two fail and one succeeds, which is interpreted by Apollo to mean that Troy is doomed to be sacked by Aeacus’ descendants (*O.* 8.31–52). Likewise, Heracles’ exploits together with Telamon’s are dealt with summarily, but when Heracles comes to enlist Telamon as an ally against Troy, the prayer that Telamon be given a valiant son receives much emphasis and narrative space (*I.* 6.27–35 vs. 35–56).

¹¹ Pindar regularly punctuates his narratives with gnomic statements (*O.* 7.31–32, 44–47; 10.39–40; *P.* 2.34–36; 3.11–12; etc.). Similarly, a gnome can also mark the end of the narrative (*SAGN* 1:216).

If these examples are characterised by the discrepancy between summary on the one hand and detailed narrating of a short but crucial incident on the other, other Pindaric narratives only look at a short episode and omit the wider context altogether. Thus the short narrative at the end of *Olympian* 4 deals with a comparatively minor incident during the Argonauts' stay on the island of Lemnos (*O.* 4.19–27). Likewise, the shorter of the two narratives in *Olympian* 6 quotes Adrastus' reaction when Amphiaraus, another of the Seven against Thebes, is swallowed by the earth (*O.* 6.13–17). However, even longer narratives display a similar limitation to a particular moment in the story. An excellent example comes from *Nemean* 10, which describes the fatal encounter of the Dioscuri with Idas and Lynceus and demonstrates that Pindar is fully capable of writing a gripping battle narrative with speeches and all. The comparatively short incident covers no fewer than thirty-six long (dactylo-epitritic) lines. An excerpt must suffice in the present context.

[Castor is shot by Idas and Lynceus:]
 and they [sc. Idas and Lynceus] suffered terribly
 at the hands of Zeus, for immediately
 the son of Leda [sc. Polydeuces] came in pursuit, while they took
 a stand against him beside their father's tomb.
 From it they seized the grave marker of polished stone
 and threw it against Polydeuces' chest, but they did not crush him
 or drive him back. He attacked them with his swift javelin
 and drove the bronze into Lynceus' side.
 Zeus hurled against Idas a smoldering thunderbolt of fire
 and the two men burned all alone. [short gnome omitted]
 The son of Tyndareus [sc. Polydeuces] returned swiftly
 to his mighty brother
 and found him not yet dead,
 but gasping hard for breath.
 Hot indeed were the tears he shed; he groaned
 and cried aloud: 'Father, son of Cronus, what release
 will there ever be from sorrows? Grant me death
 along with him here, lord.'

(*Nemean* 10.65–77)

Zeus replies and presents Polydeuces with the well-known choice either to live on Olympus or to share in his brother's destiny. Polydeuces' acceptance of the latter option is narrated in no more than a dozen words (*N.* 10.89–90), a striking contrast to the leisurely account that precedes.¹²

¹² The ends of the narrative and the entire ode coincide, which is rare. Race 1997:

As has been argued in the Introduction ($\rightarrow$), the most natural order for a narrative is chronological. Pindar is no exception in that several of his narratives are recounted in what is essentially a chronological order. The comparatively long narrative in *Olympian* 6, for example, narrates the genealogy and appointment of the seer Iamus in chronological order (*O.* 6.29–70).¹³ It is true, however, that some narratives are not in chronological order. A rather extreme example is *Olympian* 3, which recounts how Heracles founded the Olympic Games and introduced the olive tree in order to provide shade for the attendants. Reconstructed in chronological order (i.e. as *fabula*) the single steps of the story are: (1) Zeus orders Heracles through Eurystheus to fetch the golden-horned doe, one of the twelve labors. (2) Heracles obeys and meets with Artemis. (3) On his way he happens to see an olive tree with the Hyperboreans and admires it. (4a) Some time later he establishes the Olympic Games, (4b) but misses the shade. (5) He returns to the Hyperboreans and persuades them to give him some olive trees. (6) He brings them to Olympia and plants them. However, this *fabula* is actually narrated (*O.* 3.13–34) in the sequence 6-5-4a-4b-5-2-1-3-4b.¹⁴ This sequence constitutes a complex temporal structure, and a reader who is not familiar with the exact details may need to read the story twice. To describe the structure of the narrative as ‘ring composition’¹⁵ does not seem to do full justice to its complexity. It is true that *Olympian* 3 to some extent resembles the structure that some scholars see as the hallmark of narratives in ring composition: ‘a movement is created backward toward the chronological point from which the narrative may then move forward to the point at which it began’.¹⁶ However, the nar-

I 21 mentions *Nemean* 10 and *Pythian* 9; see also *Olympian* 4, where it is even a speech within the narrative that ends the ode. On Bacchylides’ abrupt endings see below.

¹³ Other essentially chronological narratives include: *O.* 9.42–79 (extensive genealogy of the inhabitants of Opous in Elis, the victor’s hometown, and its most important immigrants); 10.24–78 (Heracles takes revenge on Augeas, who broke his word, then establishes the sanctuary of his father Zeus in Olympia and introduces the Olympic Games); *N.* 1.35–74 (the newborn infant Heracles kills the two snakes sent by Hera and is prophesied a great future); 7.35–47 (after sacking Troy, Neoptolemus misses Scyros on his way home and is eventually killed in a quarrel in Delphi); also *O.* 8.31–52; 13.63–90; *P.* 8.39–56; etc.

¹⁴ This analysis is in general agreement with that by Köhnken 1983 (with literature), including the disputed number of Heracles’ journeys to the Hyperboreans.

¹⁵ Race 1997: I 76.

¹⁶ Slater 1983: 118, who, following in the footsteps of Illig 1932: 1, Schadewaldt [1938] 1966: 84 and others, speaks of ‘lyric narrative’, expressly contrasted with ‘epic (i.e. chronological) narrative’ in an earlier publication (Slater 1979: 64). This is something of

rative in *Olympian* 3 neither reaches the point at which it began, nor will it suffice to see the repetition of story element 4b as a ring (let alone element 5).¹⁷ The schematic structure of *Olympian* 3 is indicative of a certain reluctance to go over the same ground twice. This tendency even applies to the two elements that are repeated, 5 and 4b, which, however are complementary and not exactly repeating.

The bulk of the narrative in *Olympian* 3 essentially displays a gradual movement back towards the beginning of the fabula.¹⁸ A similar structure can be found in *Olympian* 7, which comprises, so to speak, ‘a short history of Rhodes’. The structure is simpler, though, in that it consists of three larger building-blocks:¹⁹ (1) the allotment of Rhodes to the sun god Helios; (2) Helios’ instruction to his children on Rhodes to introduce fireless sacrifice in honor of Athena, born from Zeus’ head with the assistance of Hephaestus; and (3) the foundation of Rhodes by Tlepolemus. The actual sequence of the three units in the narrative of *Olympian* 7 (27–33, 34–53, 54–76) is retrograde: 3–2–1.²⁰ It is, however, not reverse order in a strict sense, because the sequence *within* the three blocks is essentially chronological (i.e. forward). In other words, Pindar uses the standard mode of chronological narrative, but twice makes a substantial step back in time. Interestingly, these steps back are signaled in the same way as the demarcation of the narrative section as such: once by means of the adverb *pote* (‘once’, 34), once by means of the adjective ‘ancient’ (*palaios*, 54).

The preceding emphasis on Pindar’s use of chronological narrative is deliberate, because a glance at modern scholarship could easily lead to the impression that ring composition and non-chronological narrative prevail in Pindar.²¹ But this prevalence is at least an exaggeration.

a misnomer. For ‘lyric narrative’ can be found in epic poetry (cf. the examples discussed by Slater 1983 and → Homer under the rubric ‘epic regression’) and vice versa (cf. e.g. above on *O.* 6). It seems preferable to speak of chronological or non-chronological narratives.

¹⁷ Pindar does speak of the same thing at the beginning and at the end of the narrative, the olive tree, but that is thematic (or verbal) and not temporal ring composition (cf. n. 8).

¹⁸ Cf. van Groningen 1958: 351.

¹⁹ Described as ‘tritych’ by Race 1997: I 118.

²⁰ Rivier 1950: 77–80.

²¹ Slater 1979: 65, for example, counts thirteen instances of ‘lyric narrative’ (*O.* 1, 3 and 10; *P.* 2, 3, 6; 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; *N.* 7 and 10; his distinction between ‘complex’ and ‘simple’ is ignored for the present purposes). Race 1997: I 20–21 finds eleven narratives in ring composition (*O.* 1, 3, 7 and 13; *P.* 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12; *N.* 10).

True, there is one ode, *Pythian* 3, which nicely lends itself to an analysis as ring composition due to its backward-forward movement. The fabula is: (1) Coronis sleeps with Apollo and becomes pregnant. (2) She ignores the divine wrath and sleeps with a human. (3) Apollo learns this and (4) in anger sends Artemis, (5) who kills Coronis before she can give birth to Asclepius. (6) There is a funeral, (7) where Apollo rescues the baby and (8) then brings it to Chiron, (9) who raises the child. (10) Asclepius is a successful doctor, until (11) he tries to revive a dead man, (12) for which he is killed by Zeus. The narrative presents these events in the sequence: 9–(10)–5–2–1–2–3–4–(5)–6–7–8–(9)–10–11–12.²² Note, however, that even in this ‘perfect’ example²³ there is an imbalance with the symmetric axis clearly to the left of the middle. In other words, even in *Pythian* 3, chronological narrative prevails. This phenomenon is even clearer in an ode such as *Pythian* 9, which exhibits a strikingly unbalanced ring composition. Other alleged examples for ring composition are better explained as ‘initial summary with subsequent elaboration’ (see above on *O.* 1; *P.* 2; *N.* 10): the narrator first gives the gist of the story and then narrates it in more detail and in essentially chronological order.²⁴ Still others seem to be examples of *thematic* ring composition but not necessarily of *temporal* ring composition: *Pythian* 10, 11, 12, which all cover a short time span. Needless to say, the presence of non-chronological narrative in Pindar must not be denied. But it is fair to say that, in the final analysis, patently non-chronological narratives such as *Olympian* 3 and 7 or the ring composition of *Pythian* 3 are rather the exception than the rule. The prevalent sequence of Pindar’s narratives is chronological.

For Pindar’s fondness of retrograde narrative see e.g. Köhnken 1983: 52 n. 16 (with literature). R.D. Griffith 1993 adds nothing of importance.

²² Figures in brackets mean that the element is suggested rather than narrated. As seen in *Olympian* 3, Pindar is reluctant to go over the same ground twice. The only exception is story element 2, Coronis’ offence, which even occurs a third time (in connection with element 4, focalized by Apollo). It is tempting to consider this unique repetition as meaningful.

²³ Illig 1932: 59.

²⁴ That is to say, the only real stepping back in time happens between summary and elaboration (on analepsis see below). In that connection, it is worth mentioning that Slater 1979: 64–65 seems to make rather too much of the fact that the beginning of Pindar’s narratives can be ‘followed by either a temporal clause ... or an equivalent aorist participle’. The relevant narratives nevertheless remain essentially chronological, even if one accepts Slater’s questionable argument that these temporal clauses and participles are a step back in time.

This, of course, is not to say that there are no instances of anachrony such as analepsis and prolepsis. Of these, analepsis is more frequent.²⁵ Its most common function is to provide the logical or factual basis for an element in the story. For example, the narrative in *Nemean* 9 states that Adrastus, a native of Argos, ruled over Sicyon. An analepsis explains how he came to be the ruler of Sicyon.

For in time past [*pote*],²⁶ to escape bold-counseling Amphiaraus
and terrible civil strife, he [sc. Adrastus] had fled
from his ancestral home and Argos. No longer were
Talaus' sons [sc. Adrastus and his family] rulers [sc. in Argos]; they had
been overpowered by discord. (*Nemean* 9.13–14)

In accordance with Pindar's general reluctance to go over the same ground twice, his analepses tend to be completing, not repeating. And although parallels to the analepsis just quoted can be found (e.g. *O.* 10.31–34, 50–51; *P.* 9.15–17), it is true that the device as such is not particularly frequent. There are at least three possible explanations for this relative lack of analepses in Pindar's narratives: the frequency of summary narratives, the regular concentration on a short episode, and Pindar's tendency to presuppose knowledge of the underlying myth.

Comparable to the general preponderance of subsequent narrative, there is a clear preference for singulative narrative in Pindar. However, some of the more summary passages not only compress the underlying myth, but also occasionally resort to iterative narrative. Perhaps the clearest example comes from *Isthmian* 1, which praises various athletic victories by Castor and Iolaus:

and in athletic games they took part in the most contests,
adorning their houses with tripods,
cauldrons, and bowls of gold,
whenever they savored the crowns
of victory; [...]
They often crowned their hair with thick wreaths from
these events. (*Isthmian* 1.18–22, 28–29)

The narrative does not specify the individual victories, but gives a summary and iterative account. The same ode contains another example of iterative narrative when Tiresias lists Heracles' future achievements (on the prior narration see below). While some are narrated in singulative

²⁵ For a narratorial prolepsis see *O.* 1.43–45.

²⁶ Note that Pindar marks the anachrony of the analepsis.

(though very summary) fashion, Tiresias also mentions ‘what fortunes he [sc. Heracles] would encounter: all the lawless beasts he would slay on land, and all those in the sea’ (*I.* 1.61–63).²⁷

The relative brevity of Pindar’s narratives and his occasional tendency to focus on comparatively short episodes are not amenable to intricate narratives with multiple storylines or complex instances of simultaneous events. However, a straightforward example for simultaneous events can be found in *Olympian* 6, where Euadne secretly gives birth to her son Iamus, while her foster-father Aepytus consults the oracle in Delphi about her pregnancy (*O.* 6.37–49). However, the simultaneity of the two events remains implicit (a simple *men ... de* construction) and is not marked as such by the narrator.

Given that Pindar often does not attempt to give a full account of the underlying myth, it will be clear that his narratives abound in instances of ellipsis. In most cases these ellipses remain implicit. Now and then, however, the temporal ellipsis is marked as such. For example, the secret birth of the seer Iamus (including his mother Euadne’s justification for naming him thus) is taken up by the clause ‘And when he had plucked the fruit of delightful golden-crowned Hebe, ...’ (*O.* 6.57–58), thereby indicating that his uneventful upbringing is passed over in silence.²⁸

While Pindar has no secondary narrative that equals that of Bacchylides 5 in length or prominence, his odes provide a certain number of shorter examples. More particularly, there is a temporal feature that is worth singling out. While Pindar’s primary narratives are mostly subsequent, he has a clear predilection for having his characters resort to prior narration, mostly in the form of prophecies, which can also be described as instances of (mostly external) prolepsis. Thus Apollo predicts that Troy will be sacked twice by Aeacus’ descendants (*O.* 8.41–46). Likewise, Tiresias informs the stunned parents Amphitryon and Alcmene of the great achievements that their newly born son Heracles will accomplish, ending with his marriage to Hebe, that is, his divinization as a reward (*N.* 1.61–72, in indirect speech). Amphiaras, one of the Seven against Thebes, prophesies that the imminent second expedition against Thebes by the Epigoni will be successful, but Adrastus, another of the Seven, will lose his son (*P.* 8.39–56; the entire narrative

²⁷ Cf. *P.* 3.47–53 (on Asclepius treating various patients); 9.20–25 (on the activities of the huntress Cyrene).

²⁸ Similarly, *O.* 1.67–68 (on Pelops reaching the age for marriage).

covers little more than Amphiaraus' prophecy). Similarly, Heracles interprets Zeus' bird omen and predicts the birth of Telamon's son Ajax (*I.* 6.50–56). A remarkable example is the case where Chiron 'predicts' to Apollo how the god will make love to the virgin huntress Cyrene (*P.* 9.38–66). Not only does Apollo know this himself (as Chiron says with a smile, 43–45), it is also an internal prolepsis.²⁹ The narrator, however, recounts the same event in a very summary fashion (68–69). As in *Olympian* 13, a gnome ('Swift is the accomplishment once gods are in haste, and short are the ways', 67–68), so to speak, 'justifies' the brevity of the narrative. Pindar avoids going over the same ground twice in detail. A comparable case is Themis' recommendation that Thetis be married to a mortal instead of a god, because her son will be more powerful than his father (*I.* 8.26a–46). Again, this is an internal prolepsis, with the 'repetition' by the narrator being very summary (46–47).

The only secondary narrative of some length that is subsequent (and not prior) is the song that the Muses perform at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. They relate how Hippolyta unsuccessfully tried to seduce Peleus, who was then rewarded by Zeus with Thetis' hand (*N.* 5.22–37).

Pythian 4

So far this chapter has largely ignored the ode that in some respects is unique. With its 299 lines *Pythian 4* is more than twice as long as any other, and the contrast is even sharper when one considers the length of the narrative.³⁰ It is little surprise, then, if the longer of the two narratives (175 lines), which deals with Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, has been described as 'epic-like'.³¹ Such a 'slow', that is, detailed narrative can of course be found elsewhere in Pindar, but the sheer length of his 'Argonautica' is unparalleled. The first part, in particular, is quite 'slow' and gives the impression that, for once, the story was indeed narrated for its own sake. In the second part one can see the narrative speed increase, together with a clear tendency to curtail the actual journey of the ship. The order of the entire narrative is essentially chronological, and there is one storyline only.³²

²⁹ To be exact, the second part of the prolepsis (59–65, about their child) is external.

³⁰ For both see the comprehensive table in Hamilton 1974: 31–32.

³¹ Race 1997: I 258; similarly e.g. Braswell 1988: 161.

³² In the following table * means that the scene contains speech(es).

71–78	(7 lines)	a Delphic oracle predicts that Pelias will die at the hand of a son of Aeolus
78–120	(43* lines)	Jason arrives in Iolcus and meets Pelias, whom he does not know
120–131	(12 lines)	Jason's relatives gather and feast for five days
132–168	(37* lines)	second meeting of Jason and Pelias
169–189	(21 lines)	gathering of a crew for the Argo
190–201	(12 lines)	omen and prayer before they set out
202–206	(5 lines)	journey to the Black Sea
207–212	(6 lines)	Symplegades, journey to Colchis
212–223	(12 lines)	Medea made to fall in love and help Jason
224–241	(18* lines)	ploughing contest
241–246	(5 lines)	the Golden Fleece

At this point Pindar interrupts himself with one of his well-known *Abbruchsformeln*. He claims that there is not enough time (247–248) and then deals with the rest of the story (Jason kills the snake and flees together with Medea; the Argonauts on their way home reach Oceanus, the Red Sea and Lemnos) in a mere six lines (249–254). In other words, the most essential story element, the actual winning of the Fleece, is passed over in silence!³³ This rush through the crucial remainder of the story is radical and rather un-epic—after all, the story of the Argonauts appears not to be narrated for its own sake, at least not all of it. But the shock of the extreme compression is to some extent mitigated by the fact that this part of the story is partially covered by the first narrative of *Pythian* 4, which exhibits a complex temporal structure.³⁴

The subject matter of this narrative (4–58) is the colonization of Cyrene (the victor's hometown) by Battus from the island Thera, which is predicted in two prophecies (prior narration). One is by the oracle in Delphi 'some time ago' (*pote*), which is said to confirm an earlier prophecy by Medea when the Argonauts reached Thera.³⁵ Her speech covers the bulk of the narrative (13–56). She both predicts the colonization of Cyrene, including the descent of the founder Battus from the Argonaut Euphemus (14–20, 50–57), and gives a twofold analepsis: how in Libya Euphemus received the clod from Poseidon's son Triton, which was then washed into the sea (20–25, 28–43), and how previously the

³³ Cf. Köhnken 1993 with a possible explanation for this striking fact.

³⁴ For both narratives see the analysis by de Jong 1991b; Hurst 1983 fails to differentiate between the narrative levels.

³⁵ For the exact dating see above n. 4.

Argonauts had come to Libya from Oceanus (25–27). Prior narration in secondary narratives is quite common in Pindar, but the present case is exceptional for at least two reasons: the prophecies fall, as it were, into two stages and in reverse order (Delphic priestess—Medea).³⁶ Secondly, Medea also gives a ‘counterfactual’ prophecy of what would have happened if Euphemus had returned home to Tainaros (43–49) instead of going to Lemnos with the other Argonauts.

It is fair to say that, from a systematic point of view, the narratives in *Pythian* 4 contain little that cannot be found elsewhere in Pindar. It is, however, true that the main narrative is much longer and more detailed than any other, while the former displays an intricate temporal structure of twofold external prolepsis interwoven with an external analepsis in two stages.

Bacchylides

The fact that Bacchylides’ oeuvre is not well preserved also affects our knowledge about the narrative sections within his victory odes. While five shorter poems (B. 2, 4, 6, 10 and 14) can positively be shown to have contained no narrative, for five others (B. 7, 8, 12, 14A and 14B) the question cannot be decided, because they are too fragmentary. The remaining sample of six victory odes that do contain a narrative section (B. 1, 3, 5, 9, 11 and 13) inevitably raises the question to what extent they can be considered typical or representative.³⁷ This general *caveat* must be borne in mind in the following paragraphs that highlight similarities to and differences from Pindar, as developed in the first part of this chapter.

Like Pindar, Bacchylides locates his (generally subsequent) narratives in an unspecified past and regularly marks them off by means of the

³⁶ In a way, one could argue that Medea’s speech is a tertiary narrative that is integrated into the secondary narrative of the Delphic oracle: ‘the priestess ... prophesied ... that Battos would ... fulfill in the seventeenth generation that word spoken ... by Medea, which the high-spirited daughter of Aietes ... had once breathed forth from her immortal’ (*P.* 4.4–11). However, the primary narrator then seems to abandon this construction when he continues ‘Such were her [sc. Medea’s] words to the demigods who sailed with spear-bearing Jason: ...’ (11–12). One should probably treat both prophecies as secondary narratives, which are therefore given in reverse chronological order.

³⁷ Of these, Bacchylides 1 is of very limited use, because only the end of the narrative section has been preserved.

adverb ‘once upon a time’ (*pote*: 3.23; 5.56; 11.40).³⁸ There is a similar contrast between the mythical past and the here and now of the celebration, as evidenced also by the relative distribution of verbs in the past tense (excluding, as before, gnomic aorists). Other similarities are the preponderance of singulative narration (for an example of iterative narration see 13.114–120, on the fear of the Trojans whenever Achilles attacked) and the frequency of temporal ellipsis, which usually remains implicit (explicit example: 11.92–95, Proteus roaming the forests ‘for thirteen whole months’).

Bacchylides also tends to focus on a shorter scene that is particularly amenable to dramatization (often including speeches)³⁹ and regularly does not attempt to narrate the myth as a whole. This tendency results in a detailed, hence comparatively ‘slow’ narrative that covers a short time span. Thus the story of Croesus (3.23–62) highlights the crucial moment when he is about to commit suicide on the pyre and addresses Zeus and Apollo in a speech full of complaints. Similarly, Heracles’ descent to the Underworld in order to fetch Cerberus (5.56–175) focuses on his conversation with Meleager (the Cerberus incident itself is not narrated at all), which, however, provides the frame for an extensive secondary narrative.⁴⁰ Likewise, Ajax’ spectacular defense against the attack of the Trojans (13.105–167) covers a comparatively short episode.⁴¹ While Pindar, too, often focuses on a

³⁸ Cf. also dithyramb 19.15 (with Maehler’s conjecture).

³⁹ Maehler 2004: 21, 23.

⁴⁰ Lefkowitz 1969: passim stresses how much Bacchylides borrowed and adapted from epic poetry in his fifth ode. This model works well at a microstructural level and with a view to the secondary narrative (cf. esp. *Il.* 9.527–599). However, the very short time span of the framing (primary) narrative in Bacchylides is rather un-epic.

⁴¹ A similar predilection for shorter episodes can be found in Bacchylides’ dithyrambs: 15 (Odysseus and Menelaus demand that the Trojans return Helen); 16 (after sacking Oechalia, Heracles sacrifices to the gods, while Deanira plans to send him the fatal garment); 17 (Theseus rescues the maidens from Minos’ attacks by passing a test that involves diving into the sea); likewise, 18 also deals with a short episode, but is better not treated as narrative, because it is purely dialogic. Conversely, 19 (on Io) is Bacchylides’ only dithyramb that attempts to treat an entire myth (B. Zimmermann 1992: 102), albeit in summary fashion. Pindar’s dithyrambs are too fragmentary to allow an extensive comparison of the narrative style. Even if his second dithyramb (fr. 70b; 249; 81) indeed covers a larger part of the myth (B. Zimmermann 1992: 114 n. 4), the question must remain open whether this is representative for all his dithyrambs. To claim, with B. Zimmermann 1992: 116, a fundamental difference between the narrative styles of the two poets is not only based on comparatively little evidence from Bacchylides’ dithyrambs and even less from Pindar’s, but, more importantly, ignores the way in which Pindar structures his narratives in the victory odes.

shorter episode, Bacchylides has a certain penchant for abruptly breaking off his narratives, so to speak, without prior notice (contrast Pindar's explicit *Abbruchformeln*) and before they reach the crucial moment. This phenomenon, however, is more common in the dithyrambs (B. 15, 16 and 17) than in the victory odes (5).⁴²

Conversely, not all Bacchylidean narratives single out a short episode. Thus the story about the madness of Proetus' daughters (11.40–112) is fairly complete, but it, too, highlights salient moments, for example Proetus' desperate prayer to Artemis (95–105), whereas other story elements are narrated more summarily.⁴³

While the last example shows that narrative speed does not remain even throughout Bacchylides' narratives, it is true that he exhibits fewer and less abrupt changes of narrative speed than Pindar. Very short narrative sections and hence extremely summary passages, in particular, seem to be rare in Bacchylides,⁴⁴ who mostly gives the overall impression of a more leisurely and balanced narrator than Pindar.

In terms of temporal structure, Bacchylides' narratives are essentially chronological and overall simpler than Pindar's (there is no equivalent to the chronologically complex *Olympian* 3). There are, nevertheless, instances of anachrony. Thus the story about the madness of Proetus' daughters (11.40–112) contains two major analepses, both of which provide information that is crucial for a proper understanding: why did Hera punish them with madness? Answer: because of their hollow boast that their father's wealth exceeds Hera's (47–52). Why were Proetus and his family living in Tiryns and not in Argos? Answer: because of a quarrel between him and his brother Acrisius (64–72).⁴⁵ Similarly, the final lines of the Croesus narrative (3.61–62) analeptically explain that Apollo rescued him on account of his numerous offerings.⁴⁶ And

⁴² Rengakos 2000, following Wilamowitz 1903: 103, speaks of the 'Abgerissenheit' of Bacchylides' narratives. The poet does give an indication of how the story ends, but in the form of hints and adumbrations, not in the form of explicit prolepses.

⁴³ On the exceptional dithyramb 19 see n. 41 above.

⁴⁴ Thus Hamilton 1974: 80, but cf. 9.10–20.

⁴⁵ The two analepses are both introduced by the explanatory particle *gar* (van Groningen 1958: 196) and provide fundamental information. Maehler's description as 'Exkurse' (1982–1997: II 221) or 'digressions' (2004: 145) is unfortunate. While the second analepsis goes further back in time than the first, the two should not be explained as the retrograde part of a ring composition, because in between (53–63) the narrator returns to the chronologically narrated main story.

⁴⁶ Cf. the explanatory analepsis at the end of dithyramb 16.34–35 (van Groningen 1958: 190). Generally speaking, the narratives of the dithyrambs are even more linear

13.114–120 describe the Trojans' fear before Achilles stopped fighting for the Greeks (the anachrony being marked by *prin* 'before').

While narratorial prolepsis is rare in Pindar, it is difficult to say whether Bacchylides' only example is statistically relevant. Much more important, however, is the fact that it is a memorable instance of narratorial prolepsis. Similarly to Homer's well-known *nēpios*-passages, Bacchylides exposes the Trojans' high hopes after Achilles' retreat as futile.

High-spirited in their great hopes and uttering arrogant shouts those Trojan horsemen [thought that they would lay waste] the dark-eyed ships [and return home again] and that their god-built city would hold feasts in [its streets?]. In truth they were destined first to crimson the eddying Scamander as they died at the hands of the tower-wrecking Aeacidae [i.e. Ajax and Achilles].
(13.157–167; tr. Campbell 1992)

The fact that the narrative ends with this gloomy anticipation of Trojan losses no doubt adds to its effect.

Bacchylides also provides examples for 'initial summary with subsequent elaboration'. Two of his narratives display a close thematic and temporal correspondence between the initial summary and the end of the elaboration. Thus the narrative about Proetus' daughters is framed by:

For her [sc. Artemis] the son of Abas [sc. Proetus] and his fair-robed daughters once [*pote*] established an altar at which many prayers would be made. [67 lines omitted] And they at once built a sanctuary and altar for her and drenched it with sheep's blood and established choruses for women.
(11.40–42, 110–112)

A similar frame can be found around the story about Croesus' rescue (3.23–29, 58–61). It is no surprise, then, if scholars again speak of 'ring composition', as, for example, Illig does, who, however, notes a crucial point ignored by some of his successors: there is only one ring. Bacchylides does not give the retrograde first part of a ring composition, but immediately launches the essentially chronological narrative.⁴⁷ The argument whether 'ring composition' or 'initial summary with subsequent elaboration' better reflects the facts is, of course, of minor impor-

than that of the epinician odes (van Groningen 1958: 193), that is, contain fewer anachronies.

⁴⁷ Illig 1932: 60 even 'rewrites' the beginning of the narrative in Bacchylides 11, in order to demonstrate how Pindar, who according to Illig favors 'true' ring composition (as found in *Pythian* 3), would have structured the narrative.

tance in view of the fundamental observation that chronological order prevails in Bacchylides' narratives.

Turning to secondary narratives, the observation can be made that Bacchylides does not share Pindar's general preference for prior narration (cf., however, 13.54–57: an unidentified goddess predicts the foundation of the Nemean games). Instead, he provides two rather spectacular examples of a feature that cannot be found in Pindar's extant odes: simultaneous (secondary) narration, that is, a character who describes what is happening. The same unidentified goddess gives a gripping account of Heracles' fight with the Nemean lion:

see the neck-breaking hand that Perseus' descendant [sc. Heracles] lays with all manner of skill on the flesh-eating lion; for the gleaming man-mastering bronze refuses to pierce its unapproachable body: his sword was bent back. (13.46–54)

Elsewhere Croesus gives an equally urgent report (underlined by the asyndetic construction)⁴⁸ of how the Persians are taking his city.

[The Persians are sacking my] city, the gold-swirling Pactolus is reddened with blood, the women are shamefully carried off from the well-built halls. (3.43–46)

The latter passage has been called a 'Reportage'.⁴⁹ Indeed, both instances of simultaneous narration turn the secondary narratees (and, by extension, the primary narratees) into immediate witnesses of the action.

The secondary narrative that sticks out for its sheer length is Meleager's 'autobiography' (5.97–154), addressed to Heracles. Its temporal features, however, are straightforward. The narration is subsequent, chronological, singulative and shows comparatively little variation in narrative speed.

Both Pindar and Bacchylides exhibit a considerable variety in the way they handle time in their narratives, as the preceding discussion has attempted to show. It is this very variety that makes it impossible to round off this chapter with a few concluding remarks without forcing oneself into a straitjacket which hardly does justice to the breadth of the evidence.

⁴⁸ Maehler 1982–1997: II 49.

⁴⁹ Maehler 1982–1997: II 49, adducing the passage from *Ode* 13 as a parallel.