

# THE BURNERS: A READING OF BACCHYLIDES' THIRD EPINICIAN ODE

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IT IS A POEM ABOUT EXPENDITURE.<sup>1</sup> That of the horses is taken for granted as they sweep past to victory, their physical effort implied in *θοάς* . . . *σεύοντο* (3–5), their costliness in *ὄλβιον* (8). Our attention is directed at once by this adjective, *ὄλβιον*, to a particular aspect of the victor, an aspect that is shaped into praise at the end of the first strophe (13–14) and richly exemplified in the following antistrophe (15–18): for this poem, what is significant about Hieron is how he uses his money. At his expense, Syracuse brims with festivity and Delphi is illustrious with gold. Yet the expenditure that dominates the poem is Croesus', lit up on a house of wood. This pyre glows unnervingly bright at the poem's core, melodramatized in an arrangement of gold and black that looks more than ornamental. What does Bacchylides mean by celebrating Hieron's greatest victory from a funeral pyre?

A metaphor of light throughout the poem provides the clues to this question. We see Aglaia<sup>2</sup> running with Hieron's horses at Olympia (6), gold tripods flashing from Delphi (17–19), and Croesus lighting a fire whose fuel is to be human life (49). Within each of these three activities, a transformation of energy seems to be in process. In the contest, in Hieron's generosity, in Croesus' immolation, expenditure is attested by light given off. The stuff spent differs from activity to activity but the terms remain

<sup>1</sup>"There is an almost sensational insistence on Hiero's opulence and an exorbitance of tone that goes with it," comments Adam M. Parry in his notes to Robert Fagles, tr., *Bacchylides: Complete Poems* (New Haven and London 1961) 108. See also Sir Richard C. Jebb, *Bacchylides: The Poems and Fragments* (Cambridge 1905) 195; P. T. Brannan, *Hieron and Bacchylides: Literary Study of Odes 3, 4 and 5 and frg. 20c* (diss. Stanford 1971) 142; C. Segal, "Bacchylides Reconsidered," *QUCC* 22 (1976) 109–112; C. Carey, "Bacchylides 3. 85–90," *Maia* 29–30 (1977/78) 70; J. Peron, "Crésus et Méléagre chez Bacchylide," *REG* 91 (1978) 326–329; G. Arrighetti, "Contributi di Egesi Pindarica e Bacchilidea," *Ricerche di Filologia Classica 1: Studi di letteratura greca* (Pisa 1981) 80; H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides 2* (Leiden 1982) 42, 44. These works will be cited by author's name.

<sup>2</sup>Aglaia is the Grace of triumphant emotion made visible and splendid, differing from her sister Euphrosuna as aspect from act: cf. Hom. *Il.* 6.510 (=15.267); *Od.* 17.310; 18.180; Hes. *Th.* 906–909, 945; *Sc.* 272, 285; Soph. *El.* 211 and Jebb *ad loc.*; Pind. *Ol.* 13.14; *Ol.* 14.13. On *ἀγλαός* and related words in Bacchylides' diction, see L. Mallinger, *Musée Belge* 3 (1899) 21–49; J. Stern, "An Essay in Bacchylidean Criticism," in W. M. Calder and J. Stern, eds., *Pindaros und Bakchylides* (Darmstadt 1970) 295. On the force of these words in Pindar and in epinician poetry generally, see J. Duchemin, "Essai sur le symbolisme Pindarique: or, lumière et couleurs," *ibid.* 278–289; D. E. Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One: A Commentary* (Toronto 1982) 142; G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1945) 67; Segal 109–110; Maehler 42.

the same: neither ignition, nor generosity, nor Olympic effort occurs without consumption of vital matter. Racing horses spend strength and spirit, as the giver gives his gold, to make fame catch and flare. At Croesus' pyre the *areta* of wealth and of victory alike is symbolized, conspicuous in expenditure. Jebb reminds us that Croesus' voluntary resolve to die is a Bacchylidean addition, not found in other ancient versions of the tale.<sup>3</sup> The gesture is extravagant. Its verbal chiaroscuro (53–56)<sup>4</sup> and the unreal terms of its resolution (57–60) embody the high style of myth. No athlete competes on such terms, nor can Hieron manifest his wealth without using it up. Yet the fabulous glare of Croesus' pyre has a relevance for the daylight-world of princes and contests. Bacchylides expounds that relevance with a symbol of gold.

Gold is a substance that has two different symbolic faces in epinician poetry. On the one hand, it stands for wealth and should be spent. As such, gold is the cost of *areta* for princes. The generosity of a Croesus or a Hieron, channelling wealth into the public splendour of games, cults, and poems, spends itself to keep civilization alight. The role of wealth in this epinician system of values has been masterfully summarized by Leonard Woodbury.<sup>5</sup> As gold, it emblemizes princes, gods, and all the great, deriving its power from Theia, goddess of the value of victory (Pind. *Isth.* 5.1–3). Rightly used, wealth is not hidden but public and conspicuous, ἀσθήρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐνυμώτατον / ἀνδρὶ φέγγος (Pind. *Ol.* 2.55–56). Its obligation is to finance both occasions of victory and the poetry that saves them from decay, in tireless exercise of the virtue called *megalorepeia* by

<sup>3</sup>Jebb 195; see also J. Harrison, "Notes Archaeological and Mythical on Bacchylides," *CR* 12 (1898) 85; H. Stuart Jones, "Bacchylides and the Fate of Croesus," *ibid.* 84–85; F. Cornelius, "Kroisos," *Gymnasium* 64 (1957) 346–347; B. Gentili, *Bacchilide* (Urbino 1958) 84–90; C. Segal, "Croesus on the Pyre: Herodotus and Bacchylides," *WS* (1971) 40–41; Maehler 33–35.

<sup>4</sup>Bacchylides' *tenebroso* manner here brings Caravaggio to mind, for the aesthetic intent as well as its visual vehemence; cf. Walter Friedlaender's remarks on *The Conversion of St. Paul*: "It is this concentration of almost dialectically contrasted elements within an intentionally narrow and enclosed space which produces the explosive power of this *Conversion* . . . . When light is given a psychological and dramatic impact, then the spectator is inevitably led to seek its source. Indeed, the effect of light may be so enhanced or exaggerated that objects struck by it seem to transcend natural experience, to be endowed with miraculous content" (*Caravaggio Studies* [Princeton 1955] 19, 10).

<sup>5</sup>L. Woodbury, "Pindar and the Mercenary Muse," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 537–539; with Pindar's view of wealth cf. Theog. 16.22–33; Democr., Diels-Kranz 68 B 282 and Gorg., Diels-Kranz 82 B 20; and see P. Colace, "Considerazioni sul concetto di ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ in Pindaro," *Studi in onore di Anthos Ardizzoni* 2 (Rome 1978) 737–745; Carey 70. Maehler's discussion of this matter (57–58) seems to me misleading, for it compounds the epinician notion (that gold must evince its value in expenditure) with texts from Solon and Hesiod concerning the insecurity of ὄλβος and πλοῦτος in order to posit for the ancients a regular use of gold to imply "Unsicherheit und Vergänglichkeit:" a valuable distinction between transience (of all good fortune, and wealth in particular, in the archaic view) and manifestation (of gold in epinician expenditure) is overlooked.

Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 4.2). This aristocratic disposition is seen by Woodbury to be diffused throughout the odes of Pindar, but finds a particular paradigm in Croesus: οὐ φθίνει Κροίσου φιλόφρων ἀρετά (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.94). On the other hand, the *areta* of gold is said by the poets to depend on its being elementally exempt from consumption by time, rust, or decay.<sup>6</sup> (Bacchylides alludes to this tradition in his final triad, 85–87, as we will explore further below.) Gold furnishes a potential for paradox, then, to epinician ethics. If it is to instrumentalize the *areta* of men, the properly incorruptible *areta* of gold must offer itself for expenditure and consumption. Hieron's tripods blaze as brightly as Croesus' pyre, for Croesus setting himself alight is an image of wealth in use (λάμπει, 17; λαμπρόν, 54).<sup>7</sup>

Critics of the third ode have tended to impoverish Bacchylides' meaning by an exclusive focus on one side or the other of gold's symbolic value. But the poem puts both sides in play, in order to make the paradox of gold itself an image of the terms in which mortal life is conceived by epinician verse. To set out these terms, Bacchylides deploys the metaphor of light, of which gold is one aspect, in close association with a certain pattern of verbal and metrical effects. The overall design would have been made sensible to his audience by musical and choreographic means, I believe, heightening the learned pleasure of "the alert" (οἱ φρονέοντες; cf. 85). The design begins with a lighting effect enhanced by verbal echo. Radiance is shed by two cognate words on the moment of victory (σὺν Ἀγλαΐαι, 6) and on Hieron's gift of gold to Delphi (ἀγλαΐζεθῶ, 22). Sound and rhythmic effects then extend this relation through the poem in a sequence of metrical anomalies, for the form ἀγλαΐζεθῶ is itself an "unparalleled" crasis and is set in exact responsion with the "remarkable" examples of hiatus at line 64 and line 92 (cf. Jebb, *ad loc.*). The triple responsion culminates in a third kind of light, the φέγγος of human excellence (92). A parallel, then, between Hieron's use of gold and the terms of mortal life may be inferred from the

<sup>6</sup>See, e.g., Sappho fr. 204 Lobel-Page; Theog. 450–452; Sim. fr. 541.4 PMG; [Arist.] *de Mir. Ausc.* 834a49; J. Duchemin, *Pindare: Poète et Prophète* (Paris 1955) 225; H. L. Lorimer, "Gold and Ivory in Greek Mythology," *Greek Poetry and Life: Essays presented to Gilbert Murray* (Oxford 1936) 14–33.

<sup>7</sup>The theme of self-immolation has other occurrences in Greek myth and these, although without direct relevance for Bacchylides' poem, may suggest how the Greek imagination construed this motif. Gold in various forms is a recurrent feature of such tales (e.g., the golden sandal cast up from Aetna after Empedocles' leap, the 5000 talents dedicated by Peregrinus to his native land before death and the gold statue anticipated by him as a memorial: see Luc. *Peregr.* and H. Lorimer, above, n. 6); so too are the advanced age of the protagonist and his translation to some kind of immortality (as bird, man, or memory) via the flames. The Olympic games provide a popular location for the self-sacrifice, as in the story of Peregrinus recounted by Lucian. By Hellenistic times the gesture connoted a mountebank and was officially discouraged (cf. story of Herostratus in Val. Max. 8.14.5). On self-immolation see Martin P. Nilsson, "Der Flammentod des Heracles auf dem Oite," *Opuscula Selecta* 1 (Lund 1951) 349; on evidence for cremation of the kings of Sardis see J. G. Pedley, ed., *Ancient Literary Sources on Sardis* (Cambridge, Mass. 1972) 41.

responson of line 92 with lines 64 and 22, while the verbal echo of line 6 in line 22 aligns his generosity with a specific mortal effort—the Olympic contest. Luminous expenditure would seem to attest to proper use of both wealth and mortal life.

But a flaw is at once apparent at the centre of this schema—Croesus, whose mode of self-expenditure represents a drastic *impropriety* in the use of wealth and mortal life. Believing his gold ill-spent on ungrateful gods Croesus elects to burn up his life, provoking divine correction. As a result, a black cloud strays across the metaphor of light and the value attached to expenditure elsewhere in the ode is reversed. In Hieron's world expenditure is praised and its manifestation stipulated: no dark covering should hide the brightness of Hieron's gold (13–14) nor silence obscure his princely actions (94–96). Within the myth, on the other hand, standard concepts are inverted (47, cf. 51–52) and unexpectedness prevails (29). For Croesus, quenching darkness functions as a good (55). The verses in which Croesus' pyre is extinguished take the form called ring-composition, an *aba*-shape in which gold (δεινοῦ πυρὸς / λαμπρὸν διάϊσσειν μένος, 53–54) and black (μελαγκευθὲς νέφος / σβέννυνεν, 55–56) and gold (ξανθὰν φλόγα, 56) are sharply alternated. As may easily be seen, the whole poem has such a form, for the central myth of Croesus is framed by praises of Hieron on either side in an *aba*-shape. But more specific observation is called for. A number of motifs that occur in both Hieron-sections are featured within the Croesus-myth in reverse. Point for point, the disaster that overtakes Croesus is represented as the antithesis of Hieron's prosperity.<sup>8</sup> Most significant for our purpose are the concepts of gratitude and ingratitude that inform and inspire this figure.

At the heart of the poem is the gratitude of which Croesus despairs: ποῦ θεῶν ἔστιν χάρις; (38). Encircling this fire-damaged χάρις is the recompense for which Hieron may hope, to be awarded by Clio (3) and by the poet himself (96–98) in the form of epinician hymn. It is our hypothesis that an *aba*-structure is appropriate to the poem because it is the shape of χάρις. That which travels in a ring eventually comes back to the place where it began, just as the χάρις of gratitude and recompense returns to the giver of a gift in the end.<sup>9</sup> The principle of χάρις furnishes epinician

<sup>8</sup>The poet sets a frame of light (6, 17, 21, 54 and 55, 80, 87, 91) around dark (55–56); success (10 and 94) around catastrophe (40); shouts of jubilation (9 and 97) around cries of despair (35, 37, 39); harmony between gods and men (2, 3, 10, 20–22 and 66, 76, 92) around divine hostility (37); knowledge (13 and 85) around ignorance (38–39); τις (21 and 97) around οὐτις (63); manifestation (13–14 and 93–95) around concealment (55–56); χάρις (3 and 97) around lack of χάρις (38); Graces (Aglaiā, 6, and Euphrosunā, 87) around φθόνος (68). Segal records some of these contrasts but I do not follow his scheme of "contracting and expanding epithets" (114) as an interpretation of the poem. See also Maehler 38–39; Peron 327.

<sup>9</sup>The assumption, ubiquitous in Greek usage from Homer through Bekker's *Anecdota*, that χάρις entails a counter-gift or responding favour is fully documented by J. W. Hewitt, "The Terminology of 'Gratitude' in Greek," *CP* 22 (1927) 142–161.

ethics with a rationale for expenditure: what is spent will return. Bacchylides' metaphor of light is a poetic argument for χάρις, shaped to defy the physics of mortality that govern mortal σώματα (cf. 88–90). Within this metaphor, gold functions as a symbol of transcendent expenditure, sharing with σώμα the necessity to expend itself once for all, sharing with ἀρετή the potential to defy that finitude. These two faces of gold reflect the true nature of χάρις: acts of grace entail both specific cost and infinite recompense.

Doubleness, of grace and of gold, has one further reflection in the poem. Time is also double. Apollo speaks to this point in verses 78–84 and, although textual uncertainties in the preceding stanzas make interpretation difficult, I think we can see how Bacchylides intended the myth of Apollo and Admetus to connect with the rest of the ode. His concept of χάρις is the connecting link—more precisely, χάρις in its relation to time.

Diverse tales compose the myth of Apollo and Admetus but they share a central theme: misprizing the situation of man in time. Apollo acquiesces in such a misprison<sup>10</sup> and wins a year of servitude in Admetus' fields; Admetus, in his turn, contrives to revise the time-limit set for him by sending his wife to hell early. The myth of Croesus, as it is shaped in Bacchylides' poem, also conveys a lesson about mortal time-limits: Croesus "was not about to wait any longer" (οὐκ ἔμελλε / μίμνειν ἔτι 30–31) to see what the future would bring. Impatient of this contingency he rushes to anticipate his own appointment with death. But mortal chronometry is not so adjustable. As a creature bound to die in the end (θανάτον εὔντα, 78) and bound to the present day in the meanwhile (ἐφ'αμερίων, 76) man is subject to time and, on this basis, Apollo commends to Admetus a double strategy of waiting (79–82). The form in which his recommendation is cast establishes a still more cogent link between the myths of Admetus and Croesus.

Apollo's advice derives from a paraenetic tradition of Ἀδμήτου λόγοι which figured in the poetic agenda at symposia. Our single extant example of this genre is provocative, for its theme is the securing of χάρις:

Ἀδμήτου λόγον ὦ ἑταῖρε μαθὼν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς φίλει,  
τῶν δειλῶν δ'ἀπέχου γνούς ὅτι δειλῶν ὀλίγα χάρις.

Praxilla 749 *PMG*, cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1238 and schol.

That χάρις should be the theme of a genre named after Admetus is understandable since it is the χάρις of Apollo and then of friends and family to which Admetus lays claim when seeking a death-substitute (e.g., Eur. *Alc.* 299, 660, etc.). More important for our reading, this concern aligns him directly with Croesus who, in Bacchylides' narrative at least, has his

<sup>10</sup>The story of how Apollo acquiesced in the restoration of a dead mortal to life is most fully told in Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 1.9.15; 3.10.3–4). Professor E. Robbins has pointed out to me that Pindar's shaping of the tale puts dramatic emphasis on the theme of gold misused: *Pyth.* 3.54–57.

own urgent claim to make upon χάρις. It is this for which he will not wait: πού θεῶν ἔστιν χάρις; Croesus demands as he goes to the pyre (38). To wait for χάρις, as for death, without knowing when it will come, is a mortal necessity. Through that necessity, as through the pinhole in a *camera obscura*,<sup>11</sup> Bacchylides focuses our gaze upon the strategy of living that will bring highest profit (84). It is a double strategy, conceptualized by Apollo in verses 78–84 and embodied in the doubleness of gold throughout the poem: “*spend like there’s no tomorrow*” is the English idiom. That such a fiscal attitude is as valid for spending money as for spending the time of a human life, Bacchylides makes clear in his final triad, when he sets out both sides of the paradox of gold by means of a priamel.

This priamel deserves scrutiny, for critical assessment of it remains divided. Detractors see here a botched echo of Pindar’s First Olympian 1–7. On this view, the poet begins by asserting the incorruptibility of air and sea, then veers off track to identify gold with εὐφροσύνα. “‘Gold is a joy,’ but the sentiment is not apt here,” says Campbell.<sup>12</sup> “The effectiveness of the climax, in which the poet imitates Pindar *Ol.* 1, is checked by the intrusion of the sentiment ‘gold rejoices the heart of man’ (εὐφροσύνα = εὐφρόσυνον)” is the comment of Weir Smyth.<sup>13</sup> “A lapse comes at the tame word εὐφροσύνα (which has to mean ‘a joy forever’)” Jebb decides.<sup>14</sup> Housman had less patience with the text: “Gold makes glad, but it is not gladness: write εὐφρόσυνος.”<sup>15</sup> Other emendations have been advanced and strategems applied (including the invention of words not extant)<sup>16</sup> without general satisfaction. “Bacchylides’ allusive manner—he does not specify the relationship between the elements and man—and staccato phrasing present more of a riddle than a clear statement such as that of *Ol.* 1.1ff” is the conclusion of William H. Race in his recent study of the priamel-form.<sup>17</sup>

Critics who find something to admire in the priamel interpret it variously but agree on one thing, that the sense assigned to εὐφροσύνα δ’ ὁ χρυσός in line 87 is crucial. There are two aspects to the crux, for the question “What do the words mean?” involves the question “In which direction does the sentence face?” Taken as a climax to what precedes, the sentence has struck Jebb and

<sup>11</sup>Also as in a *camera obscura*, the image at the centre of Bacchylides’ poem (Croesus) presents reality in reverse: cf. above, 114 and n. 8.

<sup>12</sup>D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (London 1967) 422, cf. *The Golden Lyre: The Themes of the Greek Lyric Poets* (London 1983) 72.

<sup>13</sup>Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets* (London and New York 1900) 397.

<sup>14</sup>Jebb 264.

<sup>15</sup>A. E. Housman, “Notes on Bacchylides,” *CR* 12 (1898) 69.

<sup>16</sup>Blass devised εὐχρυσύνα, “glory of colour” (Jebb 265) while F. W. Thomas was moved to broach ὄχρυσος, “as good as gold” in “Notes on Bacchylides,” *CR* 12 (1898) 78.

<sup>17</sup>William H. Race, *The Classical Priamel from Homer to Boethius* (Leiden 1982) 86. On the priamel see also D. E. Gerber (above, n. 2) 3–7 and scholarship to date surveyed by Race, 1–5.

others as inadequate. A different assessment is available, however, to readers who regard *εὐφροσύνα δ'ὁ χρυσός* as preparation for the verses that follow.<sup>18</sup> So considered, "gold" need not be interpreted as one of the eternal elements, "joy" does not imply merely private emotion, and "gold is joy" may be more than a feeble cap for the imperishability of air and sea. This critical approach does some justice to Bacchylides' poetic skill but is susceptible to the criticism (see note 5, above), that it offers only a one-sided view of the meaning of gold. Herwig Maehler, in his recent commentary on the poet, for example, prefers to exclude associations of imperishability and incorruptibility from line 87 and insists on gold here as one of the transient goods of life. Gold is identifiable with "Freude" in the sense that "es schafft etwas, woran die Menschen sich freuen." In Hieron's case this amounts to "Weihgeschenke und Siegesfeste;" such joy is categorized in the priamel with *ἡβη* as a pleasing thing that has no long duration.<sup>19</sup>

Maehler is surely right to refer *εὐφροσύνα* in line 87 to the Delphic gifts and epinician festivity in which Hieron's gold has manifested itself.<sup>20</sup> *Εὐφροσύνα*, as is inferable from his usage of this noun in 9.53 and 10.12, does not imply for Bacchylides private pleasure or a cause to rejoice in possession, much less "a joy forever" as Jebb would have it, but involves the public and communal festivities that follow victory and convey its splendour to the victor's fellow-citizens. We may compare Pindar's veneration of *Εὐφροσύνα* as *φιλησίμολπε* and sister of *Ἀγλαΐα* (*Ol.* 14.13–15; cf. also *Nem.* 4.1–5). In Bacchylides' poem Apollo uses the cognate verb (*εὐφραίνει*, 84) of a state of mind evinced in solemn religious action (*ὄσια δρών*, 84). In an epinician context, gold that is joy is spent gold. But the relevance of epinician gold cannot be *limited* to such expenditure, and all association of gold with the imperishable and incorruptible should not be expelled from our interpretation of line 87. The very persistence of the critical reaction "Line 87 ought to say something like *gold is indestructible*"<sup>21</sup> is strong evidence that the line does not need to state this in order to make the point. With justified confidence, it would seem, Bacchylides assumes a standard characterization of gold as imperishable and incorruptible in context with other such elements and proceeds to exploit the alternative tradition. Gold is useful to Bacchylides here for its ambivalence, that is, for its metaphoric power to represent simultaneously what must and what cannot be expended.

Structurally, as well as conceptually, Bacchylides' gold is an ambivalent factor in the priamel. Most analyses of the passage see a simple contrast between elemental indestructibility on the one hand and human decay on the

<sup>18</sup>So, e.g., Brannan, Segal, Carey, Peron, Arrighetti, and Maehler; B. Gentili (above, n. 3); R. Wind, "Bacchylides and Pindar: A Question of Imitation," *CJ* 67 (1971) 9–12.

<sup>19</sup>Maehler 56–57 and see above, n. 5.

<sup>20</sup>So too Peron 336 and Arrighetti 82–83.

<sup>21</sup>See Brannan 212–218 on the longevity of this complaint.

other (although opinions differ as to which side of the contrast can properly lay claim to the gold). Maehler sorts the priamel into three parts by leaving out the gold.<sup>22</sup> But Bacchylides' thought has four components, articulated by the particles *μὲν* . . . *δέ* . . . *δέ* . . . *δέ*. The first *δέ* is continuative, so that the first two components (air and sea) together compose one side of the contrast, while the fourth component (mortal life) supplies the other side. In between stands a pivotal or transitional component, the problematic *εὐφροσύνα δ'ὁ χρυσός*. This sentence is pivotal in that it faces both forward and back in the process of thought and serves to bridge that thought from one side of its contrast to the other. "Gold is festivity" refers back to that which does not rot (air and sea) by virtue of the traditional reputation of gold as incorruptible, and refers forward to that which must expend itself (man) by the identification of gold with princely celebration.

Have we any precedent for reading Bacchylides' priamel as a four-part structure that opens like a hinge upon its third component? Pindar's first Olympian ode at once presents itself for comparison. Pindar's priamel has four parts proceeding *μὲν* . . . *δέ* . . . *δέ* . . . *δέ*. Its first two components (supremacies of the elemental world, 1–2) are joined to each other by a continuative *δέ*. They are balanced against the climactic fourth component (the supreme contest, 7) by means of a conditional sentence (3–6) which unfolds as a transition from the elemental world to that of human, epinician affairs. This sentence, the pivotal third component, effects its transition by combining references to contests (3) and to cosmic elements (5–6), and so looks both forward and back in the sequence of thought, as does Bacchylides' pivotal and demanding ellipse "gold is joy."

Such a shaping of thought is not uncommon for the priamel-form, as available evidence demonstrates.<sup>23</sup> The format is unsurprising: since the

<sup>22</sup>Maehler 58. In an unpublished dissertation Jacob Stern examines Bacchylidean use of the "pivot word," which he defines as "a word ambiguous in either its essence or in the special context in which it functions, which is used by the poet to make some sort of thematic transition. Its two possible senses will refer backward to the old and forward to the new ideas." *Metrical and Verbal Patterns in the Poetry of Bacchylides* (diss. Columbia 1965). Stern does not take up gold or the priamel of the third ode.

<sup>23</sup>Parallels representing a wide spectrum of genres and periods may be gleaned from Race's study (above, n. 16; Race does not approach the priamel in the same terms as I propose but there seems no incompatibility between our conclusions). Zeus, for instance, executes a deft transition from other women to Hera, amidst his Leporello-catalogue in *Il.* 14, by means of the pivotal phrase *οὐδέ σεῦ αὐτῆς* (327), which makes Hera her own rival within the priamel, permitting her both to enter and to surpass the foregoing list. The fragmentary *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* preserved by Diod. Sic. (3.66.3) demonstrates a fuller form of this structure. Its initial component (*οἱ μὲν*) is followed by a second component in three parts (*οἱ δέ* . . . *οἱ δέ* . . . *οἱ δέ*), then the third component (*οἱ ἄλλοι*) inserts a judgment on all the foregoing (*ψευδόμενοι*) as transition to the fourth and contrasted statement: *σέ δ' ἔτικτε πατήρ*. Sappho's fr. 16 exhibits the same structure: an overall contrast between the views of others (*οἱ μὲν* . . . *οἱ δέ* . . . *οἱ δέ*) and that of the speaker (*ἐγὼ δέ*) pivots from general to personal upon its penultimate component, namely the criterion of *τὸ κάλλιστον* by which these views are seen to differ. This penultimate component faces both forward and back in the sequence of thought for, as Race observes, "Sappho shifts the argument to another level



essential aim of the priamel (distinguishing it from a mere list) is to single out its final member for emphasis,<sup>24</sup> it makes immediate logical and rhetorical sense for the penultimate component to prepare that emphasis with a bridge or pivot of meaning and focus. No more surprising, and equally demonstrable, is the fact that interpretational difficulty typifies the pivotal member.<sup>25</sup> Bridges are miraculously tricky, as Croesus' translation to the Hyperboreans illustrates. But the ἀρετά of a Hieron, where it chooses to expend itself as a light for men, can cross mortal bounds of time and quantity. To transcend such laws requires more than mortal mediation: Apollo's χάρις, evoked by Croesus in the epode of the third triad (38), is matched by the χάρις of Bacchylides himself, descending on Hieron in the responding final epode (97). Both acts of grace convey their recipients beyond the world where what burns must be consumed, and change the gold of human currency into an ἀλαθεία to compete with the permanence of air and sea.<sup>26</sup>

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by stating a principle which embraces their choices as well as her own" ([above, n. 16] 64). Plato furnishes a prosaic example of the pivotal role played by the priamel's penultimate component in *Lys.* 211d–e. In this priamel Plato's first component introduces the general notion that men desire different things; the second component itemizes typical desires in the form ὁ μὲν γάρ τις . . . ὁ δέ . . . ὁ δέ. The third component executes a pivot from the desires of other men to the unique preference of the speaker (ἐγὼ δέ) by means of a μὲν . . . δέ construction which glances back at typical human desires (πρὸς μὲν ταῦτα πράως ἔχω) and moves forward to the speaker's choice (πρὸς δέ τὴν τῶν φίλων κτήσιν); finally, the speaker asserts his own preference resoundingly (βουλοίμην ἄν . . .).

<sup>24</sup>Race (above, n. 16) 7, 13–16, 45–46.

<sup>25</sup>Bacchylides' tenth epinician ode provides an example of such difficulty, which repays comparison with our crux in the third ode. This priamel (10.35–56) is acknowledged to be "not entirely clear" by Race (86), who locates the deepest opacity at lines 47 ff., "a very difficult passage which seems to begin another priamel." This difficult passage would seem to form the penultimate link in a train of thought:

1. various people win glory in various ways (35–38)
2. a catalogue of ways in which people win glory (39–45)
3. the catalogue is checked with summary statements defining the particular glory won by an athletic victor, viz. εὐφροσύνα which is furnished by πλούτος and renders its recipient πολυζήλωτος (45–53)
4. an exhortation to strike up flutes and activate such glory for the present victor (54–56).

In this sequence, as in the priamel of Bacchylides' third epinician, the third or penultimate component executes a transition and injects what appears to us an ellipse in the expression. Ellipse occurs upon the factor of wealth in both priamels. Moreover, wealth is essential to both sequences of thought on the same terms—as that which generates εὐφροσύνα in the form of epinician celebration and so provides a bridge between human achievement and its proper reward in song. The moral syntax reflects the rhetorical: without wealth so conceived, the priamel makes no sense and the victory loses its meaning.

<sup>26</sup>I would like to express gratitude to Professors L. Woodbury and E. Robbins and to the two anonymous readers for *Phoenix*.