

## Commentary on Bacchylides 3.15-47

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Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold?  
...Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed,  
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves  
And give them title, knee and approbation  
With senators on the bench: this is it  
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;  
...Come, damned earth,  
Thou common whore of mankind, that put'st odds  
Among the route of nations, I will make thee Do  
thy right nature.

—*Timon of Athens*, IV.iii

Live to be the show and gaze o' th' time.  
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,  
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit  
"Here may you see the tyrant."

—*Macbeth*, V.viii

The Guggenheim Museum has reportedly turned down a White House request to borrow a Van Gogh painting, and has instead offered the Trump administration the use of a golden toilet.

—Adam Gabbat, *The Guardian*, 26 January 2018

### PREFACE

The ode is kinetic—a dazzling movement through geographic space, historical time, and the immeasurable height between man and immortal—and one of an elemental trinity of gold, fire, and light, of Hieron, Croesus, and Apollo, of κρίσις, Κροῖσος, and χρυσός.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, as with his other epinician odes, Bacchylides appealed to a broader Greek audience through his invocation of familiar historico-mythic source material and his epic glances towards Homer.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he subtly sewed contemporary Sicilian religious beliefs into the

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<sup>1</sup> See lemma at 26.

<sup>2</sup> In discussing Bacchylides' insertion of mythic narrative more generally, McDevitt (2009: 16) writes, "[Mythology] represented, as we might say, [the Greeks'] 'Dreamtime'; it told them who they were and how they related to the world in which they found themselves."

fabric of the sweeping narrative, a phenomenon which has apparently gone unnoticed in the extant commentaries.<sup>3</sup>

Bacchylides composed the ode for his tyrannical patron, fiercely elegant agitprop like Mozart's (for the court) or Shostakovich's (under communist rule)—high art which is not diminished by such provenanced circumstances. Diodorus Siculus, in lifting Bacchylides' propagandistic veil, wrote of Hieron, the ode's subject:

τὴν δὲ βασιλείαν διαδεξάμενος Ἱέρων ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ἀδελφῶν οὐχ ὁμοίως ἦρχε τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων: ἦν γὰρ καὶ φιλάργυρος καὶ βίαιος καὶ καθόλου τῆς ἀπλότητος καὶ καλοκάγαθίας ἀλλοτριώτατος (11.67.3-4).

But Hieron, the next oldest among the brothers, who succeeded to the throne, did not rule over his subjects in the same manner; for he was avaricious and violent and, speaking generally, an utter stranger to sincerity and nobility of character.<sup>4</sup>

Plutarch reported that Themistocles urged the Greeks to bar Hieron's horses from competing in the games after the latter had repulsed the former:

Θεόφραστος γὰρ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ βασιλείας ἱστορεῖ τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα πέμψαντος εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν Ἱέρωνος ἵππους ἀγωνιστὰς καὶ σκηνὴν τινα κατεσκευασμένην πολυτελῶς στήσαντος, εἰπεῖν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι λόγον, ὥς χρὴ τὴν σκηνὴν διαρπάσαι τοῦ τυράννου καὶ κωλῦσαι τοὺς ἵππους ἀγωνίσασθαι (*Them.* 25.1).

For Theophrastus, in his work 'On Royalty,' tells how, when Hiero[n] sent horses to compete at Olympia, and set up a sort of booth there with very costly decorations, Themistocles made a speech among the assembled Hellenes, urging them to tear down the booth of the tyrant and prevent his horses from competing.<sup>5</sup> I was drawn to this ode, and lines 15-47 in particular, because of its alchemical underpinning (the relationship between gold, fire,

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<sup>3</sup> For 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Sicilians, "death itself could be overcome" (Holloway 2003: 403-404). Catering to Sicilian religious beliefs and to his patron Hieron, could partly explain why Bacchylides has Apollo whisk Croesus and his daughters away to the mythical Hyperboreans (58-61) to live immortally. The action is a mythologizing of an historical figure who either did, indeed, perish on the pyre—as in the case of Herakles who appears in Ode 5 and who was the "paradigmatic initiate of the mysteries of Eleusis," (Cairns 2010: 91), the cult of Demeter and Persephone over which Hieron's family lorded—or lived out his days as an advisor to the Persian king Cyrus, as Herodotus tells us. Either way, Bacchylides signals to the reader that his odes to Hieron are intertwined, especially, via the thread of cult.

<sup>4</sup> Tr. Oldfather (1989).

<sup>5</sup> Tr. Perrin (1914).

light, and immortality), its provenance as “bought praise” from an illegitimate tyrant<sup>6</sup>, and its enduring relevance (golden tripods replaced with golden toilets; bought praise of odes replaced with presidential campaign crowds).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, I am haunted by the prospect that Bacchylides is potentially subversive in this particular ode, a notion which the present commentary lacks in scope to address more

fully.<sup>8</sup>

I have sought opportunities to illuminate unexplored linguistic and thematic issues, particularly with regard to the Delphic scene. I have avoided, where possible, attempts at regurgitating the many commentaries and translations of the ode, unless there are particularly important linguistic or thematic issues that need to be brought to the reader’s attention, those common issues which find their way in the notes of many of the extant commentaries, and which I have cited throughout. I have also avoided detailed comparisons between Bacchylides and his contemporary Pindar, the similarities and differences of which many scholars have already thoroughly examined, including the arguments for Pindar as the superior poet. Ultimately, I have written this commentary not from a defensive position, but rather with the understanding that Bacchylides is a serious poet who possesses a distinctive voice and a singular, artistic vision. I have divided the commentary into three “movements”—Syracuse, Delphi, and Sardis—as one would with a symphony or a string quartet, in an effort to underscore the wide-ranging tonal, temporal, and geographical scope of the ode. Finally, I have based the commentary on Maehler’s 2004 text.

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<sup>6</sup> Burnett (1985: 66).

<sup>7</sup> “Donald Trump Campaign Offered Actors \$50 to Cheer for Him at Presidential Announcement” (Couch 2015, June 17).

<sup>8</sup> See Hieron’s *hubris* in relation to Croesus’ “mingled pride and resignation,” as Burnett (1985: 71) notes, at the end of his speech on the pyre; see the dissonant wordplay of κρίσις, Κροῖσος, and χρυσός (*Ibid*), which is also of note; see the cryptic opening of the final strophe (φρονέοντι συνετὰ γάρῳ) which Cairns (2010: 74) begins to uncover the possibilities hidden within:

These lines, with their suggestion that there is more to be extracted than appears on the surface, follow immediate upon the *gnō mē* ... suggests that the reward for piety may involve more than the comfort of posthumous fame that is the poem’s explicit conclusion.

## I. SYRACUSE

These lines form the latter part of the crowd's speech whose voices seem to melt away into the Croesus myth at line 23.<sup>9</sup> Bacchylides, having inserted a *locus ab auctoritate* with “θήροησε δὲ λαὸς” (9), appeals “to an external source of authoritative judgment” (Carey 1999: 19). Whereas Carey (*Ibid.* 21) compares Bacchylides' technique to Homer, Jebb (1905: 58) dismisses the poet's abrupt transitions, comparing him unfavourably to Pindar.

**15-16 βρυνει...ἀγνυιαί:** The *makarismos*, begun at line 9, continues. Syracuse on Sicily teems with victory celebrations. μὲν (15) is answered not in the line immediately following, but rather at 17 as the poet, once again, hurls his audience towards a new destination.

## II. DELPHI

Having been transported from Olympia (1-8) to Syracuse (9-16), Bacchylides, in “charging” the poem with potential, effervescent energy, now casts us before the eastern façade of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, just as the rising sun shines its brilliance upon two golden tripods, one of which Hieron had previously set up there.<sup>10</sup>

**17-19 λάμπει δ'... πάροιθε ναοῦ:** I propose the following translation: “the gold of the high, richly wrought tripods—set before the temple—sheds beams of brilliance under the [sun's] flickering rays.”<sup>11</sup> Jebb (1905: 255-256) translates the lines as “and the gold shines with flashing rays from high tripods, richly wrought, set in front of the temple...”; Maehler (1982: 63) as “and it shines, the gold, under the shimmer of tall, artfully-crafted tripods; they, before

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<sup>9</sup> cf. Carey 1999: 20 and Maehler 1982: 2.43 for the indeterminacy of speech boundary in Bacchylides.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Jebb 1905: 452-457 for a detailed discussion on the archaeological evidence for their existence. He notes that a statue of Nike, who is invoked at 5 (σεύον]το γὰρ σὺν ὑπερόχῳι τε Νίκῃ), once stood next to Hieron's tripod at Delphi to commemorate his victory at Cumae over the Etruscans. It should be noted as well that Nike was an important and fashionable religious icon in Sicily at the time, as evidenced by the demand for Attic redfigure lekythoi (Holloway 2003: 403). According to Morgan (2007: 223-224), “the phenomenon of city ruling elites commission[ing] odes...is echoed in the material record...most explicitly...in Ep. 3.” These lines are mirrored at 58-62 when Apollo saves Croesus on account of the lavish gifts he had sent to Delphi (*Ibid.*).

<sup>11</sup> “The tripods stood close to the entrance to the temple of Apollo, and just to the north of the Great Altar, at the top of the Sacred Way...the most conspicuous position in the entire sanctuary” (McDevitt 2009: 99).

the temple, stand;”<sup>12</sup> Burnett (1985: 64) as “gleams of glistening gold escape from tripods supremely wrought and set facing a temple;” Campbell (1992) as “and gold shines with flashing light from the high elaborate tripods standing in front of the temple...;” Duchemin and Bardollet (1993: 105) as “under the glittering the gold shines—they set up tripods, with intricately carved tops, in front of the temple;”<sup>13</sup> Slavitt (1998: 19) as “Gold is everywhere, a glitter of finely wrought tripods that flank the Delphic temple’s entrance...;” McDevitt (2009: 36) as “gold gleams amid the sparkle of tripods, finely crafted, standing high before the temple...;” and finally, Cairns (2010: 153) as “And the gold shines under the gleam of the highly wrought tripods set up before the temple...”.

As Maehler (2004: 89) rightly points out, the particle δέ (17), from a textual standpoint, answers the change in venue from Syracuse (βρύει μὲν..., 15-16); however, from a performative standpoint (that is, how the audience would have perceived the chorus singing these lines for whom a quickly passing δέ might scarcely have gone noticed<sup>14</sup>), the change in venue is remarkably abrupt and disorienting<sup>15</sup>. Knowledge of the new venue at Delphi is suspended for nearly four lines (17-20).<sup>16</sup> Bacchylides does not provide a clear *deixis*—a rhetorical marker denoting a change in location—until line 23 when the location changes to Lydia with the beginning of the Croesus myth (ἐπεὶ ποτε...).<sup>17</sup> The phenomenon is a continuation of Bacchylides’ “subtle manipulation of direct speech...one aspect of [his use of] polyphony” (Cairns 2010: 49). Thus, I have omitted “and” from my translation where other

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<sup>12</sup> Translated from the German with original word order preserved where possible.

<sup>13</sup> Translated from the French; see note above.

<sup>14</sup> See the introduction in Cairns (2010) for a detailed discussion surrounding the debate between the performance of epinician odes by a solo poet, *kōmos*, or chorus.

<sup>15</sup> In fact, as Hutchinson (2001: 335) notes, disorientation is made more acute when the “δέ clause...flows over the stanza” and into the antistrophe.

<sup>16</sup> Burnett (1985: 68) notes that “the effect is like that of a montage film, for it makes [Olympia, Syracuse, and Delphi] momentarily one, while it wraps them all in the teeming splendour of the victor’s wealth.”

<sup>17</sup> cf. Felson 1999 for her discussion on “vicarious transport,” particularly in Pindar.

translators, such as Jebb, Maehler, and Cairns, have elected to interpret the Greek particle as an English conjunction.

The gold of the tripods alone cannot shed beams of brilliance without a source of light, that is, Apollo's light which emanates from the sun. With this imagery in mind, I demonstrate that Bacchylides employed a Homeric understanding of μαρμαρυγή<sup>18</sup>—flickering caused by the sun reflecting on an object in motion—and anticipates the innovation of joining ἵστημι with ὑπό and the dative. “under the [sun's] flickering rays” at 17 (ὑπὸ μαρμαρυγαῖς) corrects both Jebb's (1905: 91, 255) dative of attendant circumstances (“with flashing rays,” referring to the gold) and Maehler's (2004: 89-90) assertion that τριπόδων governs ὑπὸ μαρμαρυγαῖς (“from under the tripods”) and not ὁ χρυσός, which would displace Bacchylides' clear emphasis on the shining gold itself. According to Hutchinson (2001: 336), “the article [ὁ] is given sense by what follows...‘Gold’ is the subject rather than ‘golden tripods.’”<sup>19</sup> In *Philebus* (38c-38d) Plato combines ἵστημι, ὑπό, and the dative to describe a thing which stands at rest under another thing: ἐστάναι...ὑπὸ τινι δένδρῳ (Smyth §1698). In furthering the restless, energetic nature of the poem, Bacchylides, in whose odes commentators have demonstrated the eagerness to play with Homeric language, may have also had in mind the inherent *kinēsis* of μαρμαρυγή with which Homer describes the visual effect of dancing feet in Alcinous' palace:

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς | μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν, θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ  
(Od. 8.264-265).

And Odysseus beheld the flickering of their feet and marveled in his heart.

In this passage, the scholia comment on the bright flashing that is caused by the rapidly alternating motion of the Phaeacians' pale feet. Chantraine (1968/1980: s.v. μαρμαίρω) concurs, writing that μαρμαρυγή is “a flicker caused, in particular, by a lively movement.” The

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<sup>18</sup> *pace* Gerber (1984: s.v.) who defines μαρμαρυγά as simply “shimmering.”

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, gold recurs repeatedly throughout the poem—χρυσά[ορος] (28) and χρυσο]δίνας (44)—which Burnett (1985: 67) connects with ὄλβος (22) and which I additionally connect with the fire of the pyre (53) and the light of *aretē* (91).

suffix -υγή, however, is still unaccounted for. I suggest a permutation of αὐγή, a ray of the sun. The source of light in Alcinous' palace was presumably the sun itself, because the dancing occurred when there was still daylight.<sup>20</sup> This Homeric etymology, which Bacchylides must have had in mind, also explains the cause of the flickering at Delphi in the present ode. As rays of light from the sun strike the polished gold of the tripods with its variegated grooves among the intricate carvings, they seem to flicker like the light from the sun that strikes the many dancing feet in Alinous' palace. Thus, μαρμαρυγή appears to be a bringing together of μαρμαίρω (shine), αὐγή (a ray of the sun), and a context of movement.

Bacchylides effectively transports scenes of *kinēsis* from the racing horses and wideswirling river in Olympia (3-7) to the temples and streets of Syracuse (15-16), which teem with festive undertakings, and finally to Delphi where the sun's rays flicker upon golden offerings to Apollo. The imagery of gold and the sun (itself a fiery heavenly body) is echoed the moment Croesus orders the pyre lit (48-49); the bronze walls of his palace must have shone against the flickering, yellow flames. Gold and fire, as part of Bacchylides' elemental trinity, become immortal light at 91: ἀρετᾶ[ς γε μ]ὲν οὐ μινύθει / βροτῶν ἅμα σ[ώμα]τι φέγγος.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to ὑψιδαιδάλτων (18), a *hapax legomenon*, I have concurred with the other commentators on the more accepted meaning, "richly wrought" (*pace* Hutchinson 2001: 336)<sup>22</sup>. Bacchylides' innovation occurs with the addition of the prefix ὑψι-, continuing the threading of the vertical motif that reappears throughout the ode: Hieron's "towering wealth" (πυργωθέντα πλοῦτον, 13); the great pyre that Croesus heaps up and then ascends, raising his hands skyward (32-35); Zeus' quenching the flames from high above (55-56); Apollo's descent and salvation

<sup>20</sup> The sun sets later the same day at *Od.* 8.417: δύσετό τ' ἡέλιος.

<sup>21</sup> cf. Burnett (1985: 75): "The fire of contest has purified his wealth and turned it into pure light...".

<sup>22</sup> Hutchinson argues that δαιδάλλω here means "adorn" rather than "create richly," based, in part, on the archaeological evidence. Indeed, golden tripods were undoubtedly intricately carved, particularly at their tops in which they appeared to be conspicuously adorned, but "adorn" ignores the more accepted Homeric sense of "create richly," which emphasises the creative and artistic production of an object. Gerber (1984: s.v.) defines ὑψιδαιδάλτος as "high and artistically crafted."

of Croesus and his family, carrying them off a great distance away (59-61). “Bigness and height are important aspects of kingly wealth in the poem,” writes Hutchinson (2001: 336).

**21      Θεόν, θ[εό]ν:** Cairns (2010: 202) and Maehler (2004: 90) note the ritual context of the repetition, in particular to “mark epiphany” (Burkert 1985: 272). Carey (1999: 19) notes that the *gnō mē* of victor is a “tactic for the creation of authority shared with Pindar.” Bacchylides, in concentrating the poetic energy generated from the radiant journey from Olympia to Delphi, conjures the golden light of Apollo, an epiphany which illuminates the opening of the Croesus myth and which foreshadows the god’s act of salvation.

**22      ἀγλαΐζέθω:** “ἀγλαΐζέτω, ὅ”; Cairns (2010: 202), Maehler (2004: 90), and Gerber (1984: s.v.) concur with Jebb (1905: 457) and Crusius (1898: 153) that the change from τ to θ in the manuscript is a result of crasis.<sup>23</sup>

### III. SARDIS

The rapid changes in venue continue in the smouldering ruins of Sardis, over two generations before Hieron’s victory. Bacchylides’ extravagance in expanding and contracting space and time reflects the great expense and difficulty in having Sicilian representation at the Olympic games.<sup>24</sup> Most commentators, such as McDevitt (2009: 91) and Cairns (2010: 4043)<sup>25</sup>, have noted the section’s features of ring composition, whereas Nünlist (2007: 250) argues that the Croesus narrative constitutes not ring composition but “initial summary with subsequent elaboration.” The initial summary, which spans lines 23-29, includes the sacking of Sardis and an allusion to Croesus’ salvation, because Apollo was his protector. Unusually, Bacchylides

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Carson (1984: 113) on the extension of radiance throughout the poem generated by the “sound and rhythmic effects” of this “unparalleled” instance of crasis and the instances of hiatus in lines 64 and 92.

<sup>24</sup> “For [the Sicilian tyrants] participation in the games was far more costly than for their competitors in Greece, requiring long voyages for horses, staff, and equipment; and their celebrations of victory were more elaborate, including the commissioning of choral odes and sculptures, the offering of hospitality to the poets, and the issuing of silver coins” (Bell 1995: 15).

<sup>25</sup> Cairns notes the specifically chiasmic structural form.



opens the Croesus narrative in an epode, continuing the disorientation of the audience and displacement of space and time.<sup>26</sup>

**23 ἐπεὶ ποτε:** For the first time in the ode, Bacchylides inserts a marker of time.<sup>27</sup>

**26 κρίσιν:** Burnett (1985: 69) notes the wordplay of κρίσις, Κροῖσος, and χρυσός. Like the instance of crasis at 22 (ἀγλαΐζεθῶ), Bacchylides furthers the development of the poetic sound environment that radiates throughout the ode.

**28 χρυσάλορος:** Bacchylides' wordplay continues here with an epic epithet for Apollo<sup>28</sup>, his sister Artemis<sup>29</sup> who also appears in Ode 5, and Demeter<sup>30</sup> who appears in the opening of the present ode, and who plays an important role in Sicilian religious practices.

Bacchylides subtly ties them together.

**29-31 [ὁ δ' ἐς... δ[ουλοσύ]ναν:** Following Maehler and Cairns<sup>31</sup>, I suggest reading πολυδ[άκρυον] together with δ[ουλοσύ]ναν. With Bacchylides' version of the narrative, he stresses the typically female predicament of enslavement in wartime as an untenable prospect for Croesus who would rather honourably kill himself upon the pyre. For ἔτι, I suggest following McDevitt's (2009: 100) interpretation, "no longer," which heightens the urgency of Croesus' plight.<sup>32</sup> Segal (1998: 93) adds that the poet "casts [Croesus] into the mould of a Homeric hero...[His] pride and τιμή will accept death rather than the taint of cowardice." Herodotus takes the shades of tragedy further by describing Croesus evoking Apollo on the pyre as δακρύοντα (1.87.2). Segal (1998: 282) notes that "Bacchylides' narrative points back

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Segal (1998: 281) for a discussion on Bacchylides' aim in linking Hieron and Croesus.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Pindar O.3.13 (Nünlist 2007: 233).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Pindar P.5.104.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Herod. 8.77.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Hymn Dem.* 4.

<sup>31</sup> *pace* Hutchinson (2001: 339) who instead joins ἄμαρ instead of πολυδ[άκρυον] with δ[ουλοσύ]ναν, because, according to him, "tearful slavery" would have been better suited to a woman's complaint.

<sup>32</sup> *pace* Maehler and Jebb who suggest "as well."

to the archaic world...[whereas] Herodotus' points ahead to the classical," and thus, the flourishing of the tragic paradigm.<sup>33</sup>

**32 χαλκοτειχέος:** The compound adjective is another example of a *hapax legomenon*. The casting of Croesus in the mould of a Homeric hero continues with the nod to Homeric compounds with bronze.

**35 θυγατράσι:** According to McDevitt (2009: 93), Bacchylides likely invented the detail of his wife and daughter accompanying him onto the pyre.

**37 ὑπέρ[βι]ε δαῖμον:** Cairns (2010: 205) considers the epithet pejorative ("overmighty") and Hutchinson (2001: 342) as a reproach "to denote brutal and excessive use of power." Croesus here calls out to the sinister, supernatural forces that have led him to his fate; he does not directly reproach either Apollo or Zeus (Cairns: 2010: 205).<sup>34</sup> Burnett (1985: 70) argues for a parallel with τρισευδαίμων ἀνὴρ (10), "replaced and reversed."

**39 ποῖ δὲ Λατοίδας ἄναξ;:** Cf. ἀγροτέρα / Λατοῦς θυγάτηρ (Ode 5.124-125), an ode which also celebrates another of Hieron's victories. Herodotus, perhaps, expanded on the sense implied in Croesus' laconic invocation of Apollo:<sup>35</sup>

ὥς ὅρα πάντα μὲν ἄνδρα σβεννύντα τὸ πῦρ, δυναμένους δὲ οὐκέτι καταλαβεῖν, ἐπιβώσασθαι τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἐπικαλεόμενον, εἴ τί οἱ κεχαρισμένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐδωρήθη, παραστῆναι καὶ ῥύσασθαι αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ παρόντος κακοῦ (1.87.1).

...and when he saw everyone trying to extinguish the fire but unable to check it, he invoked Apollo, crying out that if Apollo had ever been given any pleasing gift by him, let him offer help and deliver him from the present evil.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See Chiasson (2003) for shades of tragedy in Herodotus.

<sup>34</sup> *pace* Jebb (1905: 259) who argues for Croesus invoking Zeus.

<sup>35</sup> Again, Hutchinson (2001: 341): "The use of the third person, with ποῖ, expresses Apollo's absence and failure to act."

<sup>36</sup> Tr. Godley (1920).

The formula “if ever...” combined with reminding a god of prior offerings is an Archaic feature and can be traced to Homer. After learning of the suitors’ plot to kill Telemachus upon his return from the Peloponnese, Penelope prays to Athena:

κλυθή μευ, αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος, Ἀτρυτώνη, εἴ  
**ποτέ τοι** πολύμητις ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦ  
βοὸς ἢ ὄϊος κατὰ πίονα μηρί’ ἔκηε, τῶν νῦν μοι  
μνηῆσαι, καί μοι φίλον υἷα σάωσον, μνηστῆρας  
δ’ ἀπάλαλκε κακῶς ὑπερηγορέοντας (*Od.*  
4.762-766).

‘Hear me, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, unwearied one. If ever Odysseus, of many wiles, burnt to thee in his halls fat thighpieces of heifer or ewe, remember these things now, I pray thee, and save my dear son, and ward off from him the wooers in their evil insolence.’<sup>37</sup>

Thus, in four words, Bacchylides austere and periphrastically, as is typical of his style, evokes Croesus’ past offerings to Apollo, saying, in effect, “Give, as I gave” in expectation of “reciprocal altruism.”<sup>38</sup>

**40-46 ἐρρουσ[iv... ἄγονται:** Croesus’ description of the sacking of Sardis and the subsequent horrors is a defining feature of Bacchylides’ use of “simultaneous (secondary) narrative”, unparalleled in Pindar, and which Maehler refers to as “Reportage” and not an instance of analepsis (Nünlist 2007: 251).

**47 τὰ πρόσθεν... γλύκιστον:** Segal (1998: 282) notes that in this line “there is an heroic strength in Croesus’ grimly determined conclusion...added in a dry asyndeton and in a tone of unmitigated austerity.” The austerity of his final utterances parallels the terse queries with which he opens his prayer (“Where is the *charis* of the gods? Where is the Lord, son of Leto?”), framing the longer “Reportage” mid-section.

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<sup>37</sup> Tr. Murray (1919).

<sup>38</sup> See Burkert (1985: 54) for a discussion on reciprocal altruism in Greek ritual practices.

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