

PINDAR'S NEMEAN 4.33-43: THE CASE OF THE BREAK-OFF

Pindar's *Nemean 4* celebrates the victory of Timasarchos of Aigina, who won the wrestling competition at Nemea, probably between 474-473 B.C.¹ In lines 33-43, after a mythical narrative on the exploits of Herakles and Telamon, Pindar inserts a break-off formula that has generated much scholarly discussion:

τὰ μακρὰ δ' ἔξενέπειν ἐρύκει με τεθμός
ῶραι τ' ἐπειγόμεναι·
ἴνγγι δ' ἔλκομαι ἄτορ νεομηνίᾳ θιγέμεν.
ἔμπα, καίπερ ἔχει βαθεῖα ποντιάς ἄλμα
μέσσον, ἀντίτειν' ἐπιβουλίαις· σφόδρα δόξομεν
δαιῶν ὑπέρτεροι ἐν φάει καταβαίνειν.
φθονερὰ δ' ἄλλος ἀνηρ βλέπων
γνώμαν κενεὰν σκότῳ κυλίνδει
χαμαὶ πετοῖσαν. ἐμοὶ δ' ὅποιαν ἀρετὰν
ἔδωκε Πότμος ἄναξ,
εῦ οἰδ' ὅτι χρόνος ἔρπων πεπρωμέναν τελέσει².

The aim of this paper is to show, firstly, that the passage does not serve to break-off entirely from the mythical narrative that precedes it, but rather to reaffirm the poet's commitment to mythical narratives about the Aiakidai and introduce the catalogue of the heroes that follows; secondly, that it introduces themes central to the catalogue of the Aiakidai and the narrative on Peleus; and thirdly, that this break-off is unique, and thus a testament to the variety of strategies that Pindar's odes utilise to maintain the interest of their audiences. Before presenting my own approach, I shall summarise the various approaches to the passage.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to Prof. C. Carey for his help.

1. The date of the ode is uncertain. Most commentators date the ode to 474-473 B.C.; see T. Bergk, *Pindari Carmina*, Lipsiae 1878, p. 9; G. Méautis, *Pindare le Dorien*, Paris 1962, pp. 311-312; C. Gaspar, *Essai de chronologie pindarique*, Brussels 1900, p. 116; G. Norwood, *Pindar*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1945, p. 178; P. A. Bernardini, *Mito e attualità nelle odi di Pindaro. La Nemea 4, l'Olimpica 9, l'Olimpica 7*, Roma 1983, p. 95; B. M. Bowra, *Pindar*, Oxford 1964, p. 409, p. 412.

2. Line references to Pindar are based on the eighth edition of Snell-Maehler's *Epinicia*, Leipzig 1987.

The first approach begins with the ancient scholiasts, who explained the lines as Pindar's wish to end the story of Herakles (lines 25-32) before he had completed it, and to defend himself against poetic rivals³. The scholia ignore Telamon and his association with Aigina. The scholiasts' statement has been the basis for biographical conjecture. A clear example is Wilamowitz's interpretation of *Nem.* 4.36, where he assumed a real trip of Pindar, specifically, his trip to Sicily, and claimed that the sea prevents him from going to the victor's house⁴. Against this interpretation, a number of scholars, especially in recent decades, see the passage as a conventional formula⁵. A variation and modification of these two approaches can be seen in the recent discussions of Köhnken, Carey, Kyriakou and Miller.

Köhnken, in his long analysis of *Nemean* 4, accepts that the myth begins at line 25. He explains the break-off as Pindar's refusal to praise the Aiakidai, and, through them, the victor, with something outside the Telamon-myth; this is because of the external obstacles of lines 33-4. These obstacles are contrasted – the δέ of line 35 is taken as adversative – with Pindar's internal wish to praise the victor in line 35 fulfilled in lines 44 ff. with the continuation of the myth of the Aiakidai⁶.

There is, however, one main objection to Köhnken's discussion. His equation of praise of the victor with praise of the Aiakidai is logically weak. As Miller has pointed out «if to praise the Aeacids is in fact to praise Timasarchos, as Köhnken 211 asserts, one wonders what kind of "Satzung" could possibly forbid it»⁷. Yet, Köhnken's discussion makes an important contribution, since he applies lines 33-43 to the victor, and discusses the wrestling terms used in these lines, by showing their application to Timasarchos.

Carey offers a slightly different interpretation. Though he agrees with Köhnken that the section is concerned not only with the poet but also with the victor, he sees the mythical narrative of Telamon as quite distinct from the catalogue of the Aiakidai, «for the latter deals with kingship, while the former deals with success and the hardship involved in success»⁸. The break-off serves to separate two distinct myths and to introduce the theme of envy;

3. See schol. 53a, 60b, pp. 73-75 Drachmann.

4. U. Von., Moellendorf, Wilamowitz, *Pindaros*, Berlin 1922, p. 400.

5. J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar*, London 1890, p. 63; I. E. Thummer, *Die isthmischen Gedichte*, 2 vols., Heidelberg 1968, p. 94; Bernardini, op.cit., pp. 122 ff.; J. Péron, *Les Images maritimes de Pindare*, Paris 1974, pp. 92 ff.

6. A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar: Interpretationen zu sechs Pindardichten*, Berlin 1971, pp. 211 ff.

7. A. M. Miller, «N. 4 33-43 and the Defense of Digressive Leisure», *CJ* 78 (1983) 207 n. 18.

8. See C. Carey, «Three Myths in Pindar: N.4, O.9, N.3», *Eranos* 78 (1980) 148.

he also takes lines 25-43 as a separate section, and sees the myth of Telamon as «technically belonging to the program of the ode».

Carey establishes a contrast between the mythic core and the programmatic section⁹. His distinction between two myths is difficult to accept, because Telamon belongs to the Aiakidai, and the adjective Τελαμωνιάδας, in line 47, clearly establishes his connection with what follows after the break-off. Moreover, the distinction between hardship involved in success in the case of Telamon and kingship in the catalogue does not stand up; in the case of Peleus we also have the idea of success involving hardship¹⁰.

Miller's approach to the passage is quite different from the previous interpretations. Starting from Bundy's view on the rhetorical function of the section, Miller sees lines 33-43 as a «defense of digressive leisure». For him, the poet, after setting up obstacles to the continuation of the myth of the Aiakidai in the case of Telamon, thrusts aside these rules (lines 35 ff.) and continues with the myth of the Aiakidai. Lines 35 ff. are seen as establishing a contrast between two types of poet, the generous one who recognises that more must be said about the Aiakidai, and the ungenerous one who obeys his rules. Miller also opposes Köhnken in seeing lines 41-42 as a reference to the poet alone and not the victor¹¹.

The main problem with Miller's position is the fact that it is very unusual for Pindar to thrust aside his rules and continue the same story. Moreover, as will become clear, this interpretation is too narrow in its focus solely on the poet, to the exclusion of the victor. There is, finally, a problem with the term (and the concept) «leisure», which suggests lack of economy on the part of the poet. The poet regularly lays claim to brevity, using the terms ἀσχολος and ἀσχολία (lack of leisure), to avoid μακραγοτία¹².

A different approach to the passage is offered by Kyriakou. She sees the break-off as Pindar's intention to «distance himself emphatically from undue indulgence in digressive practices favoured by others»¹³. The break-off is seen as a poetic reassurance to the audience, primarily to the victor and his family,

9. Carey's, («Three myths...», op.cit., 151) subdivision of the ode is as follows: lines 1-24, victories and victor's family, lines 25-43 labours of Telamon - Timasarchos, ineffectual plots against Timasarchos, lines 44-53 catalogue of the Aiakidai, lines 54-72 ineffectual plots against Peleus, labours of Peleus, lines 73-96, victories and victor's family.

10. For this objection, see also Miller, op.cit., 204 n. 7.

11. Miller's interpretation has been followed by W. H. Race, *Style and Rhetoric in Pindar's Odes*, Atlanta 1990, p. 29, «Pindar forcefully rejects these considerations in the following lines, before finally resuming the catalogue»; P. Bulman, *Phthonos in Pindar*, Berkeley 1992, pp. 63 ff.

12. For Pindar's use of the term ἀσχολία and its cognates, see *Pyth.* 8.29, *Nem.* 10.46; cf. also I. 1.1-6.

13. P. Kyriakou, «A Variation of the Pindaric Break-Off», *AJPh* 117 (1996) 31.

that the delicate issue of digression will be handled carefully and that what follows is going to be a short myth.

Kyriakou's position is the opposite of Miller. While Miller presents Pindar as a poet who is committed to digression and diffuseness, Kyriakou presents him as a poet committed to brevity. Her emphasis is primarily on the poet and his role. She does not explain why the poet needs to reassure his audience that he is going to be brief here. Her statement that the first break-off does not lead to a change of direction, but it is merely «a forceful acknowledgement of the problem»¹⁴ (that the glory of the Aeacids cannot be accommodated in only one song) is to undermine the structural role of the passage.

Of the above approaches, I find Miller's the most appealing, since, in terms of syntax and sequence of ideas, it creates fewest problems. However, this approach requires adjustment because of its narrow focus on the poet. My starting point will be Miller's claim that the poet is thrusting aside his rules and continuing the same story.

The section of lines 33-43 indeed starts as a «break-off» of the myth of Telamon which had started in line 25. Three factors compel the poet to break-off the story: τεθμός, ωραι ἐπειγόμεναι (line 34), and his own desire to focus on Timasarchos and his victory. Some preliminary points should be cleared here.

Much has been said of the first term. *Tethmos* is always presented by the poet as a kind of external compulsion, and has been traditionally viewed by scholars as having to do with the laws or the formal structure of the epinician genre¹⁵. But, as Carey has pointed out, the rule is merely a «useful fiction» for stating his own desire to change subject¹⁶.

The second term is frequently misunderstood in modern discussions of the passage. Scholars have taken it to refer to the time of the performance, translating it as «the pressing hours»¹⁷. In the archaic and classical world, however, there was no way of measuring time precisely, and thus the word *hora* never came to be used with this meaning. It is agreed that the hour-

14. See Kyriakou, op.cit., 30.

15. See F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder*, Leipzig 1880, p. 393; C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: The Nemean and Isthmian Odes*, Cambridge 1899, p. 46; Bowra, op.cit., p. 196; J. H. Finley, *Pindar and Aeschylus*, Cambridge, Mass. 1955, p. 33.

16. In I. 6.19 ff. the poet says that it is τεθμόν to praise the Aiakidai, a statement which leads to the praise of Peleus and Telamon. For the idea that *tethmos* is a fiction used by the poet to externalise his own desire, see Carey «Three myths...», op.cit., 147, who notes the silence of Bacchylides on this issue.

17. See for example W. H. Race (ed. & transl.), *Pindar. Olympian Odes. Pythian Odes* (vol. I), *Pindar. Nemean Odes. Isthmian Odes. Fragments* (vol. II), Cambridge, Mass. & London 1997, p. 37, Kyriakou, op.cit., 21, Bury, op.cit., 72, Miller, op.cit., 207.

system did not come into common use in Greece before the early Hellenistic period¹⁸. The basic sense of the term is «season» (long or short)¹⁹. Pindar uses the term in *Ol.* 4.1 to establish the implication that *horai*, the goddesses, bring things at their season, and dispatch *komos* to his destination. If we accept the traditional meaning of the word²⁰, the phrase ὥραι τ' ἐπειγόμεναι establishes the implication that the ode is expected and is not yet ready. Pindar is pretending that he has yet to complete his commission. This is a fiction similar in function to the opening lines of *Nemean* 3, where the poet pretends that his song is not yet ready²¹. The fiction presents the ode as something spontaneous, created by the poet on the spot²². It generally implies an extemporaneous situation, shared by the poet and its audience, since both knew perfectly well that the ode had already been composed.

In line 35, the poet speaks metaphorically of his overwhelming desire to praise the victor²³. The particle δέ is used here to suggest that the poet's desire is something additional to the previous rules; this is often the case when the poet cites three elements²⁴. The erotic element, implied in ωγξ, is used metaphorically to denote that the poet is drawn to the subject of praise. The bird is usually associated with magical practices, and was used as a love charm. The implication of magic looks back to the magic effect of song on

18. For a useful discussion on this issue, see A. S. Gratwick, «Sundials, Parasites, and Girls from Boeotia», *CQ* 2 (1979) 312 and 321.

19. See *Od.* 19.152-153, *Il.* 6.148-149, *Hes. Theog.* 58-59; also West on *Hes. Theog.* 901, Gratwick, op.cit., 321, who notes the complete absence of seasonal hour-reckonings in Xenophon, Plato, the fragments of fourth-century historians, Comedy and especially the Orators.

20. *Hora* is used for long periods of time in *Ol.* 6.28, *Pyth.* 4.247, *Pyth.* 9.59-60.

21. For a discussion of the fiction in the opening lines of *Nemean* 3, see C. Carey «The Performance of the Victory Ode», *AJPh* 110 (1989) 551-553; S. Instone, *Pindar. Selected Odes. Olympian One, Pythian Nine, Nemeans Two & Three, Isthmian One*, Warminster 1996, p. 156.

22. The idea of spontaneity in archaic poetry has been discussed by C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar: Pythian 2, Pythian 9, Nemean 1, Nemean 7, Isthmian 8*, Salem 1981, pp. 4-5, and C. Carey, «Pindar and the Victory Ode», in L. Ayres (ed.), *The Passionate Intellect. Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions Presented to Professor I. G. Kidd*, New Brunswick & London 1995, pp. 99-100; R. Scodel, «Self-Correction, Spontaneity, and Orality in Archaic Poetry», in Ian Worthington (ed.), *Voice into Text: orality and literacy in ancient Greece*, Leiden 1996, pp. 59-79, and recently by A. Bonifazi, «“Sull” idea di sotterfugio orale negli epinici pindarici», *QUCC* 95 (2000) 70-84.

23. Some have taken the poet's desire to be directed towards the mythical Aiakidai, and not towards the victor, a somewhat difficult suggestion, since the syntax must be «touch on the new moon», which is the regular use of dative with verbs of touching in Pindar. It is difficult to see how this can express a desire to address the mythic narrative, since the mention of new moon has no obvious relevance to the myth. It is more likely to refer to the time in which this particular festival is being celebrated; see Mezger, op.cit., p. 394; G. Fraccaroli, *Le odi di Pindaro*, Verona 1894, p. 316; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar*, London 1932, p. 266. The case of *Nem.* 3.30, on the other hand, is a clear statement for the poet's desire to praise the Aiakidai.

24. For other cases of this use of δέ, see Race, *Style...*, op.cit., p. 14 n. 12 and p. 15.

the victor, in the opening lines of the ode. (cf. the term θέλγω). Clearly the emphasis in both cases is on the psychological effect. Although scholars have noticed the unusual language and the insistence on this third element, they have not explored the reasons for Pindar's insistence on personal desire. The effect is once more to stress the personal bond with the victor, which was implied in lines 22-24, in the poet's emphasis on the *philia* between himself and the victor. The idea of *philia* was also implied in the first lines of the ode, in Pindar's offering of the present song to the victor²⁵.

In lines 36 ff., the poet introduces a self-exhortation. The word ξμπα in the most cases has an adversative force – «nevertheless, nonetheless»²⁶. There is, however, a syntactical problem with καίπερ which usually takes a participle; the use of καίπερ with finite verbs is unusual and suspect²⁷. The problem is sorted out, if we read καίπερ, and translate it as «even if»²⁸. It is clear that these words refer to what the poet has just said. The strong adversative connective (ξμπα) and the poet's emphatic statement of resistance, indicate that he rejects the previously stated compulsions, and is determined to go on with the myth²⁹. This is unique in the Pindaric corpus, but Pindar is an author who experiments with the epinician form³⁰. The poet creates the temporary impression that he is going to return to the praise of the victor, but immediately after disappoints these expectations by stating his intention to continue the myth. For the audience, who receive the ode in a linear way, and could not read forwards, the sudden change of direction frustrates the expectation of a praise of the victor and stimulates their anticipation of what is to follow. In this way, Pindar keeps his audience

25. See L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise. Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* 1991, pp. 143-146.

26. For the adversative force of ξμπα in almost all the cases, see W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar*, Berlin 1969, s.v.; S. L. Radt, *Pindars zweiter und sechster Paian*, Amsterdam 1958, pp. 200-208.

27. See M. M. Willcock, *Pindar. Victory Odes. Olympians 2, 7, 11; Nemean 4, Isthmians 3, 4, 7*, Cambridge 1995, p. 101.

28. This reading was suggested by W. Christ, *Pindari carmina prolegomenis et commentariis instructa*, Lipsiae 1896, p. 263. For a discussion of the difficulties of the syntax of καίπερ, see P. Hummel, *Le Syntaxe de Pindare*, Paris 1993, p. 348.

29. I accept here Miller's position (op.cit.) on page 203, since it gives a better sense; it is more logical for Pindar to say that, 'nevertheless, even if I am prevented from continuing the story of Telamon by *tethmos, hora*, I will go on with the myth' rather than Carey's, «Three Myths...», op.cit., interpretation of this passage on page 149: «nevertheless (even if I am prevented from pursuing the tale of Telamon further) though the deep sea holds you by the waist hold out against the plots»; Carey introduces the reference to plots rather abruptly and implies an abrupt change of direction; he introduces two external sources of compulsion, while Miller sees just one internal, the plot of Pindar's rules.

30. For the idea of experimentation, see Carey, «Pindar and the Victory Ode», op.cit., 103.

guessing about the development of the ode and makes it more attentive to the ode.

The poet, however, frustrates once more the audience's expectations in the next lines, since he does not proceed to a continuation of the mythical narrative, but elaborates on the idea of obstacles in his determination to go on with the myth. This double frustration is especially effective and makes the audience more anxious to see what is to follow. Evident in these lines is the interaction of wrestling and sea imagery. Pindar gives first the image of a swimmer trying to stay afloat. This effort is described in terms that also suggest a wrestling contest: the phrase ἔχει μέσσον denotes both the specific waist lock hold, and in a wider sense, the position of advantage it brings to a wrestler³¹. It is used here to provide a complimentary reference to the victor's own discipline. The imperative ἀντίτεινε has a special force, and gives a dramatic quality in the lines.

The relevance to the poet would be immediately obvious to the audience, since the emphasis has been on the poet's task, but there is good reason not to see a reference solely to the poet. The combination of the wrestling terminology with the *phthonos*-motif, which usually relates to the victor³², suggests a further application to the victor. The use of the term *epiboulia* may imply hostility to both the poet and the victor, since the term relates to the idea of *phthonos* that follows. *Epiboulia* is closely related to *phthonos*, since it suggests treachery and the deliberate effort to conceal another's merit³³. The plots of the envious are always directed against «great men»³⁴, a category which includes both the victor and the poet; the victor attracts envy because of his athletic success, and the poet because of his praise of this success³⁵.

In lines 39-40, the poet relates the idea of treachery and hostility to that of envy. Envy characterises the behaviour of ἄλλος ἀνήρ with whom Pindar contrasts himself. Whereas the poet was victorious, this ἄλλος ἀνήρ, as is clear from the contrast between light and dark, is condemned to failure. The expression χαμαὶ πετοῖσαν shows the futility of his plots³⁶. The imagery

31. See M. B. Poliakoff, *Studies in the Terminology of the Greek Combat Sports*, Meisenheim 1982, p. 119.

32. For the motif of *phthonos* applied to the victor, see *Ol.* 6.74 ff., *Pyth.* 1.81-84, *Pyth.* 7.18-21, *I.* 2.43-45.

33. That *epiboulia* is related to *phthonos* has been suggested by Carey «Three Myths...», op.cit., on page 149: «the audience would have understood it because it was a truism for the Greeks that achievement attracts envy».

34. Cf. ἐν ἀγαθοῖς in *Pyth.* 2.81, ἀπτεται δ' ἐσλῶν in *Nem.* 8.22.

35. *Phthonos* is directed against the poet because of his praise in *Ol.* 8.53-55, *I.* 7.39.

36. Pindar stresses the uselessness and inevitable failure of the envious people in similar terms in *Pyth.* 2.58-61, and 89-93 where we have a violent denunciation against the malevolent

Pindar uses to describe the failure of the plots ties in with the wrestling imagery of the previous lines. The term *κυλίνδω* is also appropriate to the heaving waves³⁷. The interaction of sea and wrestling imagery continues here. Whereas in the previous lines the poet was in a great danger, here the image gives the poet's victory.

This last remark brings us to the issue of the identity of this man. There are two approaches: the first is represented by scholars who see here a reference to a rival poet³⁸. The second approach identifies him with anyone who envies the victor³⁹.

The second approach seems preferable, since Pindar nowhere in the odes speaks explicitly of envious poets. The agonistic connotations of the terms used, and Pindar's tendency to present the reputations of the victor as being at risk, show that the lines can apply to Timasarchos. Though I find myself in sympathy with many aspects of Miller's discussion, where he would apply the lines to the poet alone, I suggest a further implied reference to the victor⁴⁰.

The idea of the need to overcome obstacles and difficulties which emerges in these lines, combined with the language of wrestling and competition, was present both in the opening of the ode (with the emphasis on *ponos* in the first lines) and in the story of Telamon. By presenting himself both as a castaway and a wrestler, the poet suggests that poetic composition is also a difficult job involving pain and effort. Implicit here is the idea of the poet's co-operation with the victor, and the athletic metaphors appear to be for the poet a vivid way to emphasise this idea. The poet's alliance with the victor, looks both backwards to the story of Telamon and his alliance with Herakles, and forwards to the narrative of Chiron's contribution to the victory of Peleus. It also looks forwards to the section on Melesias (lines 93-96) with its themes on plotting, physical effort, alliance with the poet and success⁴¹.

The poet concludes this break-off with a generalised statement (lines 41-43). This gnome has been taken by some modern scholars to refer to the poet, and has been seen as a statement on Pindar's superiority and self-

behaviour of φθονεροί. For attacks against *phthonos*, see also *Pyth.* 7.18 ff., *Pyth.* 11.54-56, *Nem.* 8.21 ff.

37. See Poliakoff, op.cit., p. 140.

38. See Mezger, op.cit., 394, Bury, op.cit., p. 72, Wilamowitz, op.cit., pp. 400 ff., Finley, op.cit., p. 33, Bulman, op.cit., pp. 65 ff., Miller, op.cit., 208-209.

39. See Köhnken, op.cit., pp. 206-208, Willcock, op.cit., p. 101, Péron, op.cit., p. 99.

40. For the application to the victor, see Köhnken, op.cit., pp. 209-220, Carey, «Three Myths...», op.cit., 149, Willcock, op.cit., p. 101.

41. For the parallels between the poet's alliance with the victor, Telamon's alliance with Herakles, see N. Nicholson, «Pindar Nemean 4. 57-58 and the arts of poets, trainers, and wrestlers», *Arethusa* 34 (2001) 48-55.

confidence⁴². This is surely the case, if we take the word ἀρετάν to refer solely to the poet's virtue. But, the word can also be used for the victor's glory⁴³. The presence of Time together with the use of the future suggests the poet's role in preserving the patron's glory. The phrase looks back to the poet's claim in line 6 that words live longer than deeds, and emphasises the necessity of song to survival⁴⁴.

Lines 41-43, however, do not refer only to Timasarchos. They also look forward to the report of the fulfilment of the fate of the Aiakidai and the report of it in Pindar's song (lines 45 ff.; cf. the use of the term πεπρωμένον in line 61, which looks back to line 43). The poet has gradually shifted the focus of the myth from individual battle, in the story of Telamon, through his report of his own and the victor's battles (lines 33-43), to the theme of fame and endurance of fame in time.

My interpretation of lines 41-43 does not mean that a reference to the poet must be excluded here. The emphatic pronoun at the beginning clearly supports, as in other cases, the application to the poet. But it is far more likely (given Pindar's emphasis in the previous lines on the poet's struggles on behalf of the victor, and the identification of the other man with anyone who envies the poet and the victor) that this is a statement about his encomiastic task and his ability to secure the fame of the victor. The application of the lines also to the Aiakidai creates a parallel between the victor and the heroes, which is to be made clear in the story of Peleus. Although most commentators have noted the similarity of line 61 to lines 41-43, they have not discussed its further implications. The use of the term πεπρωμένον in line 61, which looks back to line 43, makes clear that lines 41-43 imply the poetic contribution to the preservation of fame: the poet contributes to the endurance of victor's glory, through song, as Chiron helped Peleus to fulfil his own fate⁴⁵. In the final place, it is the poet's song, which immortalises both the victor's and Peleus's exploits.

The application of the lines to both poet and victor is a significant aid to a proper understanding of the myth. This section is thus seen to change the focus of the myth and its direction, from the emphasis on individual action in

42. See Kyriakou, op.cit., 25-26, Miller op.cit., 208, Bulman op.cit., p. 65, M. R. Lefkowitz, *First-Person Fictions: Pindar's poetic «I»*, Oxford 1991, p. 49.

43. See Slater, op.cit., p. 69; although he cites the passage in the first meaning of the word as «distinction, talent, excellence», he gives the word the additional meaning of «reputation, renown for success, glory».

44. This has been stressed by Carey «Three Myths...», op.cit., 149-150; clearly, the use of the term χρόνος looks back to the use of the term χρονιώτερον in line 6; the reference also to πεπρωμένον in line 43 looks back to τύχαι in line 7.

45. The parallel between Chiron and Peleus has been discussed by Köhnken, op.cit., p. 208.

Telamon's case to the more general emphasis on the expansion of the fame of the Aiakidai. It begins as a break-off, but is actually a kind of «intermezzo» within the myth which deals with both the poet and the victor, and helps to smooth the change of the focus in the myth. On this interpretation, the passage serves a specific transitional function as well as a rhetorical one. The poet defends his choice of continuing with the myth on the grounds that this is good for the reputation of the victor, while the break-off serves to introduce themes on which Pindar is going to expand in the mythic section of the ode. The themes of plots, physical effort and the final success, re-emerge in the story of Peleus, and later in the praise of Melesias (lines 93-96). Finally, it is worth mentioning here that it is with the second break-off (lines 69-72) that the poet ends the whole mythic section. Whereas in the first break-off the poet created expectations of a return to the present occasion, these expectations are actually fulfilled with the second break-off, whose basic function is to smooth the return to the praise of the victor.

This structure (myth interrupted by general reflections on the poet and the victor and then return to myth) is found in other Pindaric odes; these cases are also characterised by a change of focus within the myth. In the first *Olympian*, the poet starts a myth about Pelops (lines 25-28), which he interrupts with general reflections on the art of poetry (lines 29-35); he then continues the myth of Pelops by offering a modification. Similarly, in *Nem.* 5.17-19, the poet breaks off the story of Phokos' murder by Telamon and Peleus with a transitional section of general reflections on his song, and then returns to Peleus, giving a long, full account of his adventures and his marriage to Thetis, as sung by the Muses' chorus. Again the section serves to change the direction and focus of the myth⁴⁶.

The style and language of this break-off are similar to those of the break-off in *Nem.* 3.26-33. As in our case, there too Pindar breaks-off a myth by checking himself. There, however, Pindar makes clear from the beginning that the break-off serves to change the myth, from a narrative about Herakles to one about the Aiakidai. In our ode, both the poet's audience and the modern reader have to work much harder to establish the functions of the break-off. Another difference with the case of *Nemean 3*, is that the break-off there serves to terminate and distinguish the Herakles-story from the Aeginetan myths, while here it changes the focus of the myth.

These cases show the variety of the practical ends achieved by the Pindaric

46. In *Pyth.* 4.63-70 we also have a digression about the victor before Pindar changes the focus of the myth from Medea's prophecy and the reference to Battus to the Argonautic expedition; in *Pyth.* 8.29 ff. the poet breaks off the story of the Aiakidai, and lines 31-39 are devoted to the victor before proceeding to the story of Epigonoi.

break-off. Some are used to end a myth and to effect the transition to another more appropriate one⁴⁷; others change the focus and direction of the same myth by modifying it⁴⁸, or simply by introducing a new theme.

It is also important to bear in mind the possible implications of performative context for Pindar's practice with reference to the break-off. Pindar might have been especially interested in varying the functions of the break-offs, in the Aiginetan odes, since at the performances of these odes, his audience would have been made up of much the same group of people, namely Aigina's ruling families. Aigina's population in 480 B.C. is estimated by Figueira around 42.000, with 7.000-10.000 slaves and freedmen⁴⁹. However, a few leading families were dominant in the island, and this elite consisted of aristocratic clans⁵⁰. Therefore the audience of performance is likely to be much the same. Thus, the device would be easily expected by a large part of the Aiginetan audience. By varying the uses of the break-off, the poet clearly avoids the predictable for an audience that is familiar with his manner.

The use of the break-off formulae is a clear example of how Pindar exploits the fact of performance. The poet's technique of breaking-off an account or a narrative, by reflecting on his own methods of composition or by inventing constraints, is especially effective. The pretence of meditating on the composition of the ode, during the actual performance, creates for the audience the illusion of live, extempore creation, since the audience feels that is witnessing an act of creation, not a ready artefact. The element of surprise is also important: in most cases the audience would not be expecting the break-off.

The above discussion has shown that the Pindaric break-off is varied. Both the position of the break-off structurally and the manner of its introduction varies from ode to ode, so that even if the audience could anticipate the possibility of a break-off at some point, it could not know when, where, and how it would be introduced in the ode. The case of the break-off in *Nemean* four proves that Pindar is willing to test the full potentials of the device and is a clear example of how the poet handles the expectations of his audience.

University of Ioannina

ATHANASIA K. PALAIODEORGOU

47. This is obviously the case of *Nem.* 3.26-33, *Ol.* 9.40-2.

48. This is the case of *Ol.* 1.51 ff.

49. See T. J. Figueira, *Aegina, Society and Politics*, Salem 1981, pp. 37 ff., esp. page 47.

50. For a discussion of Aigina's ruling families, see Figueira, op.cit., pp. 300 ff.